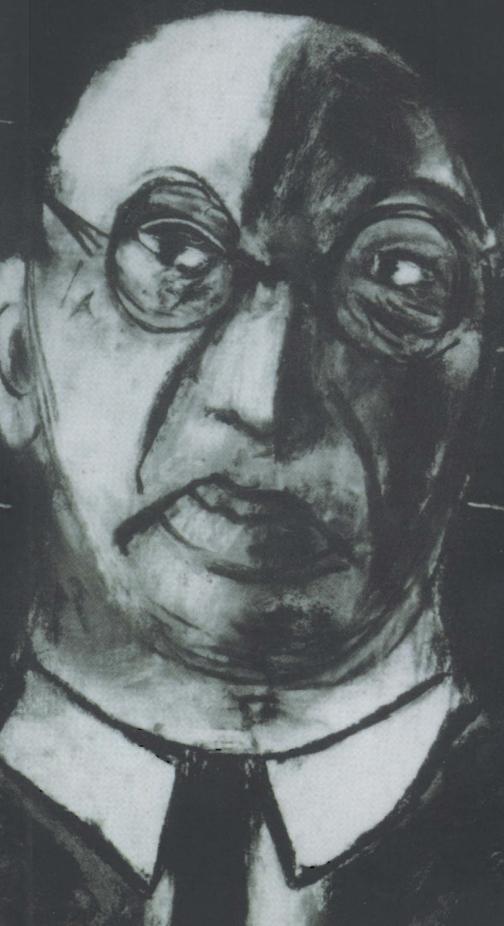


"Alexander Berkman is one of those lost heroes of American radicalism, a rare pure voice of rebellion . . . This anthology is a wonderful introduction to a much overlooked but extraordinary figure of recent history."

HOWARD ZINN, from the foreword

# LIFE OF an anar- chist



THE ALEXANDER BERKMAN  
READER

WITH A NEW FOREWORD BY HOWARD ZINN

EDITED BY Gene Fellner

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LIFE OF AN

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ANARCHIST

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ALEXANDER BERKMAN  
At the time of the Homestead Strike

LIFE OF AN  
ANARCHIST  
The Alexander Berkman Reader

*Edited by Gene Fellner*  
*Foreword by Howard Zinn*

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*“As for my fame (God help us!) and your infame, I would be willing to exchange a good deal of mine for a bit of yours. It is not hard to write what one feels as truth. It is damned hard to live it.”*

Eugene O’Neill to Alexander Berkman  
*January 29, 1927*



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# Foreword

We owe thanks to Gene Fellner for gathering in one volume the writings of that extraordinary American, Alexander Berkman. Yes, American, though Berkman might rebel at this description as he rebelled at almost everything, but though he was born in Russia and deported from this country in the wave of anti-radical deportations following World War I, his chief political activity was in the United States over a period of twenty-five years.

Our gratitude to Gene Fellner is in good part due to the fact that Alexander Berkman is one of those lost heroes of American radicalism, a rare pure voice of rebellion against the state, against capitalism, against war. To bring Berkman to public attention is to present to all of us, and especially to a new generation of young people looking for guidance in a chaotic world, an inspiring example of living an honest life, as well as a vision of a better society.

I doubt you will find the name of Alexander Berkman in any history textbooks used in American schools and colleges. In my many years of studying history, through college and graduate school, up through earning my doctorate at Columbia University in history and political science, I never read or heard the name of Alexander Berkman.

Nor, for that matter, did I hear the name of his life-long comrade, Emma Goldman. True, she is much better known today, since the women's movement of the Sixties resurrected her and brought her into the popular culture, to the point where she became a character in a Hollywood film (Warren Beatty's *Reds*) and in a well-known novel (E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*).

No such attention has been given to Alexander Berkman, though he and Emma Goldman were close associates through a number of remarkable events in American history—the attempted assassination of the industrialist Henry Clay Frick in 1892, the protests against American entrance into the first World War.

I did not get interested in Emma Goldman—though I vaguely knew of her, until around 1970, when I met a fellow historian, Richard Drinnon, who told me about his biography of Emma Goldman, titled *Rebel in Paradise*. It was there, and in Emma's extraordinary autobiography, *Living My Life*, that I learned how important Alexander Berkman was to her, and how their lives intertwined over the years.

Berkman's *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* is surely one of the great works of prison literature, but it was long lost, out of print, and Gene Fellner here reproduces some of its most poignant and powerful moments.

When I began teaching political theory at Boston University in the 1960s, I became aware that the ideas of anarchism were missing from the orthodox histories of political philosophy. I knew that Berkman had written about anarchism, but I could not find any of his writings. However, I discovered that a small anarchist press in England had published a 100-page pamphlet by him, called *The ABC of Anarchism*.

After reading it, and deciding that it was the most concise and lucid presentation of anarchist philosophy I had come across, I ordered hundreds of copies to

be shipped from England for my students to use. Gene Fellner, in this volume, gives us a substantial portion of that pamphlet. Reading it will be an eye-opener for anyone not sure of what anarchism is.

The most common error about anarchism is that it espouses violence. Berkman's discussion of violence, in *The ABC of Anarchism* is remarkable for its subtlety and sophistication. It is as persuasive as any argument I have seen on the subject.

Berkman and Goldman were disillusioned with the Soviet Union and its distortion of the communist idea long before that became clear to so many others on the Left. His writings about that, reproduced here, came from experiencing the early years of Lenin's rule at first hand. What he had to say will be especially interesting today, after the collapse of the Soviet experiment.

In Europe one year, looking for material that would be useful in a play I was writing about Goldman and Berkman, I spent some time in the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. There I found the fascinating correspondence between Emma and Alexander, once lovers, always close friends, written during the years of their European exile, after deportation from the United States. I was happy to see a number of those letters reproduced in Gene Fellner's volume.

Altogether, this anthology is a wonderful introduction to a much overlooked but extraordinary figure of recent history. It is also a welcome introduction to the ideas of anarchism, which appear more and more relevant in this era of bullying governments, corporate ruthlessness, and endless war.

—Howard Zinn  
Auburndale, July 2004

# Introduction

“My attitude,” wrote Alexander Berkman to Emma Goldman in November 1928, “always was and still is that anyone preaching an idea, particularly a high ideal, must try to live, so far at least as possible, in consonance with it.” Berkman did exactly that from the time he was punished in school, at the age of 13 in 1883, for having written an essay entitled “There Is No God” to his death, by suicide, in June 1936. He was a remarkable figure, determined, committed, and fearless; a brilliant organizer and a compelling writer. He suffered prison, torture, sickness, deportation and statelessness because of his political beliefs, but nothing was able to break his spirit or diminish his commitment to anarchism. Through it all he remained convinced that freedom of thought must never be subject to laws nor individuals subject to governments.

In 1892 Berkman was sentenced to 22 years for his bungled attempt on the life of Henry Frick, the labor magnate, during the Homestead Strike. He was convinced he was striking a blow for labor but failed to kill Frick, though he shot him at close range. When he was released, after 14 years, he wrote a compassionate and insightful book, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* (1912), which documented his life behind bars and included not only accounts of torture and solitary confinement but also of sexual feelings within prison, including his growing love for a fellow inmate, and of the loneliness and desperation of prison life. During these years of confinement, Berkman remained active, publishing a clandestine prison newspaper, attempting a desperate escape, working to improve prison conditions, and coming to grips with the fact that not even the “workers” understood, much less supported, his attempt on Frick’s life.

On his release from prison Berkman immersed himself in political activity, touring the country to lecture against restrictions on freedom and organizing among the unemployed. He edited Emma Goldman’s *Mother Earth* and his own magazine, *The Blast*, despite constant harassment by the authorities. He coordinated demonstrations against the massacre of miners in Rockefeller’s mines in Ludlow, Colorado in 1913 and when a bomb, possibly intended for Rockefeller, exploded in the New York City tenement apartment of four anarchists, Berkman organized a public funeral for them in Union Square that was attended by 20,000 demonstrators. During this period Berkman founded the “Anti-Militarist League” and helped found the Ferrer Free School in New York City. When war fever began sweeping the country and the government cried out for U.S. citizens to “be prepared” to fight, Berkman became one of the most effective organizers against conscription. He spoke before tens of thousands of people about anarchism and the lunacy of war at a time when many were receptive to his message, when the government felt threatened by it, and when to speak against U.S. entry into World War I was to put your life in danger. It was due largely to his tireless efforts that Thomas Mooney, falsely convicted of throwing a bomb into the July 22, 1916 preparedness parade in San Francisco, was not executed.

Because of his campaign to oppose conscription and militarism, Berkman was arrested, tried and found guilty of conspiring “to induce persons not to register.”

He was sentenced to two years in prison. While appealing his conviction, Berkman was indicted for murder in California in connection with the Mooney case but, after pressure from the Wilson administration which itself was feeling the heat from international pressure against the indictment, the California district attorney retracted his extradition request. When Berkman's appeal failed, he was once again put behind bars, now at the Atlanta Penitentiary. When he began to organize against the mistreatment of fellow prisoners there, he was put into solitary and denied basic privileges. He spent the last seven and a half months of his sentence in isolation after having already been forced to survive a  $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$  foot cell known as "the hole." The brutality inflicted on Berkman in Atlanta destroyed his health, but his will remained as unbending as ever. When a federal immigration agent went to visit him, Alec refused to answer his questions. Instead he issued a statement in which he declared, "I deny the right of anyone, individually or collectively, to set up an inquisition of thought. Thought is, or should be, free. My social views and political opinions are my personal concern. . . . Free thought, necessarily involving freedom of speech and press, I may tersely define thus: no opinion a law, no opinion a crime. For a government to attempt to control thought . . . is the height of despotism." In 1919, along with Emma Goldman, Berkman was deported to the Soviet Union.

Berkman, initially ecstatic about the prospects of working in Revolutionary Russia, soon became disillusioned with Lenin's policies, which resulted in the liquidation of all opposition, the abridgement of basic human rights, a multi-layered rationing system, and widespread fear and poverty, all of which caused "the elimination of popular initiative." He confronted Lenin on these issues with the same righteousness with which he had confronted U.S. authorities three years earlier and, unfortunately, with the same lack of success. Finally the refusal of the Bolsheviki to permit him to mediate the Kronstadt Uprising and their subsequent massacre of the Kronstadt sailors convinced him that the Russian revolution had been hopelessly sabotaged. In "The Russian Tragedy" (1922) he wrote, "Communism became synonymous in the popular mind with Chekism, the latter the epitome of all that is brutal . . ." and in his diary (*The Bolshevik Myth*, 1920–1922) he noted, "Terror and despotism have crushed the life born in October. . . . Dictatorship is trampling the masses under foot. . . . I have decided to leave Russia."

During the following 14 years of exile, Berkman was a man without a home, living on temporary visas, at the mercy of governments and dependent on friends for support. Still he never yearned to return to either the Soviet Union or the United States. To Tom Mooney he wrote in February 1935, "It is not the shortcoming of Russia I am speaking of. It is the very principles of their "Building" which are reactionary to the core and which inevitably lead to the destruction of the best that there is in human nature. . . . You cannot educate men for liberty by making them slaves." In 1933 he wrote to Emma Goldman, "I DON'T WANT to go to the U.S. on any considerations. Please remember it," and "I do not want to return *under any conditions*. You might as well ask me whether I would go to Mars. . . . As long as capitalism and government exist in the U.S. . . . I would not return nor want to return." During this period, Berkman wrote two pamphlets, *The Kronstadt Rebellion* and *The Russian Revolution* (both 1922), as well as *What Is Communist Anarchism* (1929). In 1936 Berkman, in great pain

from a prostate condition, decided to end his life. But acts of violence were just not his forte, and he died only after suffering for 16 hours from the wound he had created.

This reader is an introduction to Alexander Berkman. It includes sections from *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* and *The Bolshevik Myth*, the entire *The Russian Tragedy* and portions of *The Kronstadt Rebellion*. Following the example set by Freedom Press of London, this reader includes parts one and two of *What is Communist Anarchism* under the title *The ABC of Anarchism*. This reader also includes articles from *The Blast*, the manifesto of the No Conscription League (organized by Berkman and Goldman on May 9, 1917) and the transcript to the League's meeting at Hunts Point Palace on June 4, 1917. These latter documents help clarify Berkman's role as one of the exceptional organizers and agitators of his time, involved in vital issues as they were transpiring and relentless in his efforts to affect public opinion.

I selected some of Berkman's and Emma Goldman's letters, collected in Richard and Anna Maria Drinnon's book *Nowhere At Home*. Placed in this reader before and after texts to which they are relevant, they help to round out the story of Berkman's life, portraying a self-questioning Berkman that is difficult to find in most of his other work and revealing how closely his entire life was linked to Emma Goldman. In Berkman's books (with the exception of *Memoirs*) he seldom mentions Emma, but his letters make clear how central she was to every aspect of his life from his first days in the United States and how they depended on one another for love, guidance, support, and courage. Emma, for her own part, was unequivocal in this regard, writing to Berkman (known as "Sasha" to Emma and other close friends) in November 1935, "It is not an exaggeration when I say that no one ever was so rooted in my being, so ingrained in every fiber, as you have been and are to this day," and to Leonard Ross, an attorney, in 1929 ". . . my connection with Berkman's act and our relationship is the leitmotif of my forty years of life. As a matter of fact it is the pivot around which my story [*Living My Life*] is written." Emma Goldman's autobiography should be read side by side with Berkman's work to understand fully the remarkable lives of these two revolutionaries and the times in which they lived.

Thanks to Daniel Simon, my dear friend and editor, and his partner John Oakes, of Four Walls Eight Windows for soliciting and supporting this project, to Richard Drinnon for reviewing the material I selected and generously allowing me to talk with him about it, to the staff of the Tamiment Library for their help during my days of research, to Karen Hansen for her help proofing and polishing, and to Howard Zinn who, in 1971, introduced me to Alec and Emma.

—G.L.F.  
Jersey City, NJ  
April 1992



# **PART ONE**

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**1892–1906**

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***Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist***  
**and**  
**Two Letters**

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## **Section 1:**

### ***Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist***

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*The Prison Memoirs was first published in 1912 by Emma Goldman's Mother Earth Publishing because no commercial publishing company was willing to accept the manuscript uncensored. As Emma relates in her autobiography, one company was willing to publish the Memoirs if Berkman would leave out the part about anarchism, another if he would omit all parts "relating to homosexuality" in prison. Obviously these conditions were unacceptable. And so Alec and Emma, with the help of a friend Gilbert E. Roe and his wife, as well as a \$200 contribution from the journalist Lincoln Steffens, launched a fundraising campaign that succeeded in collecting the necessary funds to publish the Memoirs independently.*

*The Memoirs tells the story of Berkman's 14 years in prison following his botched attempt on the life of Henry Frick during the Homestead Strike of 1892. It is not, as one might think, a story of loneliness, depression and violence—although all of these elements are present. Rather it is a story of a young and fiercely idealistic man who, despite constant harassment and repression, refuses to let himself be beaten down. Throughout his prison years, Alec organized, agitated and continued to challenge not only prison authorities but himself and the very ideas that drove him to shoot Frick.*

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# From Part One: The Awakening and Its Toll

## CHAPTER 1 THE CALL OF HOMESTEAD

### I

Clearly every detail of that day is engraved on my mind. It is the sixth of July, 1892. We are quietly sitting in the back of our little flat—Fedya and I—when suddenly the Girl\* enters. Her naturally quick, energetic step sounds more than usually resolute. As I turn to her, I am struck by the peculiar gleam in her eyes and the heightened color.

“Have you read it?” she cries, waving the half-open newspaper.

“What is it?”

“Homestead. Strikers shot. Pinkertons have killed women and children.”

She speaks in a quick, jerky manner. Her words ring like the cry of a wounded animal, the melodious voice tinged with the harshness of bitterness—the bitterness of helpless agony.

I take the paper from her hands. In growing excitement I read the vivid account of the tremendous struggle, the Homestead strike, or, more correctly, the lock-out. The report details the conspiracy on the part of the Carnegie Company to crush the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers; the selection, for the purpose, of Henry Clay Frick, whose attitude toward labor is implacably hostile; his secret military preparations while designedly prolonging the peace negotiations with the Amalgamated; the fortification of the Homestead steel-works; the erection of a high board fence, capped by barbed wire and provided with loopholes for sharpshooters; the hiring of an army of Pinkerton thugs; the attempt to smuggle them, in the dead of night, into Homestead; and, finally, the terrible carnage.

I pass the paper to Fedya. The Girl glances at me. We sit in silence, each busy with his own thoughts. Only now and then we exchange a word, a searching, significant look.

### II

It is hot and stuffy in the train. The air is oppressive with tobacco smoke; the

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\*The “Girl” is used by Berkman throughout the *Memoirs* to refer to Emma Goldman [GLF].

boisterous talk of the men playing cards near by annoys me. I turn to the window. The gust of perfumed air, laden with the rich aroma of fresh-mown hay, is soothingly invigorating. Green woods and yellow fields circle in the distance, whirl nearer, close, then rush by, giving place to other circling fields and woods. The country looks young and alluring in the early morning sunshine. But my thoughts are busy with Homestead.

The great battle has been fought. Never before, in all its history, has American labor won such a signal victory. By force of arms the workers of Homestead have compelled three hundred Pinkerton invaders to surrender, to surrender most humbly, ignominiously. What humiliating defeat for the powers that be! Does not the Pinkerton janizary represent organized authority, forever crushing the toiler in the interest of the exploiters? Well may the enemies of the People be terrified at the unexpected awakening. But the People, the workers of America, have joyously acclaimed the rebellious manhood of Homestead. The steel-workers were not the aggressors. Resignedly they had toiled and suffered. Out of their flesh and bone grew the great steel industry; on their blood fattened the powerful Carnegie Company. Yet patiently they had waited for the promised greater share of the wealth they were creating. Like a bolt from a clear sky came the blow: wages were to be reduced! Peremptorily the steel magnates refused to continue the sliding scale previously agreed upon as a guarantee of peace. The Carnegie firm challenged the Amalgamated Association by the submission of conditions which it knew the workers could not accept. Foreseeing refusal, it flaunted warlike preparations to crush the union under the iron heel. Perfidious Carnegie shrank from the task, having recently proclaimed the gospel of good will and harmony. "I would lay it down as a maxim," he had declared, "that there is no excuse for a strike or a lockout until arbitration of differences has been offered by one party and refused by the other. The right of the workingmen to combine and to form trades unions is no less sacred than the right of the manufacturer to enter into association and conference with his fellows, and it must sooner or later be conceded. Manufacturers should meet their men *more than half-way*."

With smooth words the great philanthropist had persuaded the workers to indorse the high tariff. Every product of his mills protected, Andrew Carnegie secured a reduction in the duty on steel billets, in return for his generous contribution to the Republican campaign fund. In complete control of the billet market, the Carnegie firm engineered a depression of prices, as a seeming consequence of a lower duty. But *the market price of billets was the sole standard of wages in the Homestead mills*. The wages of the workers must be reduced! The offer of the Amalgamated Association to arbitrate the new scale met with contemptuous refusal: there was nothing to arbitrate; the men must submit unconditionally; the union was to be exterminated. And Carnegie selected Henry C. Frick, the bloody Frick of the coke regions, to carry the program into execution.

Must the oppressed forever submit? The manhood of Homestead rebelled: the millmen scorned the despotic ultimatum. Then Frick's hand fell. The war was on! Indignation swept the country. Throughout the land the tyrannical attitude of the Carnegie Company was bitterly denounced, the ruthless brutality of Frick universally execrated.

I could no longer remain indifferent. The moment was urgent. The tollers of Homestead had defied the oppressor. They were awakening. But as yet the

steel-workers were only blindly rebellious. The vision of Anarchism alone could imbue discontent with conscious revolutionary purpose; it alone could lend wings to the aspirations of labor. The dissemination of our ideas among the proletariat of Homestead would illumine the great struggle, help to clarify the issues, and point the way to complete ultimate emancipation.

My days were feverish with anxiety. The stirring call, "Labor, Awaken!" would fire the hearts of the disinherited, and inspire them to noble deeds. It would carry to the oppressed the message of the New Day, and prepare them for the approaching Social Revolution. Homestead might prove the first blush of the glorious Dawn. How I chafed at the obstacles my project encountered! Unexpected difficulties impeded every step. The efforts to get the leaflet translated into popular English proved unavailing. It would endanger me to distribute such a fiery appeal, my friend remonstrated. Impatiently I waived aside his objections. As if personal considerations could for an instant be weighed in the scale of the great Cause! But in vain I argued and pleaded. And all the while precious moments were being wasted, and new obstacles barred the way. I rushed frantically from printer to compositor, begging, imploring. None dared print the appeal. And time was fleeting. Suddenly flashed the news of the Pinkerton carnage. The world stood aghast.

The time for speech was past. Throughout the land the toilers echoed the defiance of the men of Homestead. The steel-workers had rallied bravely to the defence; the murderous Pinkertons were driven from the city. But loudly called the blood of Mammon's victims on the banks of the Monongahela. Loudly it calls. It is the People calling. Ah, the People! The grand, mysterious, yet so near and real, People.

\* \* \*

"Ticket, please!" A heavy hand is on my shoulder. With an effort I realize the situation. The card-players are exchanging angry words. With a deft movement the conductor unhooks the board, and calmly walks away with it under his arm. A roar of laughter greets the players. Twitted by the other passengers, they soon subside, and presently the car grows quiet.

I have difficulty in keeping myself from falling back into reverie. I must form a definite plan of action. My purpose is quite clear to me. A tremendous struggle is taking place at Homestead: the People are manifesting the right spirit in resisting tyranny and invasion. My heart exults. This is, at last, what I have always hoped for from the American workingman: once aroused, he will brook no interference; he will fight all obstacles, and conquer even more than his original demands. It is the spirit of the heroic past reincarnated in the steelworkers of Homestead, Pennsylvania. What supreme joy to aid in this work! That is my natural mission. I feel the strength of a great undertaking. No shadow of doubt crosses my mind. The People—the toilers of the world, the producers—comprise, to me, the universe. They alone count. The rest are parasites, who have no right to exist. But to the People belongs the earth—by right, if not in fact. To make it so in fact, all means are justifiable; nay, advisable, even to the point of taking life. The question of moral right in such matters often agitated the revolutionary circles I used to frequent. I had always taken the extreme view. The

more radical the treatment, I held, the quicker the cure. Society is a patient; sick constitutionally and functionally. Surgical treatment is often imperative. The removal of a tyrant is not merely justifiable; it is the highest duty of every true revolutionist. Human life is, indeed, sacred and inviolate. But the killing of a tyrant, of an enemy of the People, is in no way to be considered as the taking of a life. A revolutionist would rather perish a thousand times than be guilty of what is ordinarily called murder. In truth, murder and *Attentat*\* are to me opposite terms. To remove a tyrant is an act of liberation, the giving of life and opportunity to an oppressed people. True, the Cause often calls upon the revolutionist to commit an unpleasant act; but it is the test of a true revolutionist—nay, more, his pride—to sacrifice all merely human feeling at the call of the People's Cause. If the latter demand his life, so much the better.

Could anything be nobler than to die for a grand, a sublime Cause? Why, the very life of a true revolutionist has no other purpose, no significance whatever, save to sacrifice it on the altar of the beloved People. And what could be higher in life than to be a true revolutionist? It is to be a *man*, a complete MAN. A being who has neither personal interests nor desires above the necessities of the Cause; one who has emancipated himself from being merely human, and has risen above that, even to the height of conviction which excludes all doubt, all regret; in short, one who in the very inmost of his soul feels himself revolutionist first, human afterwards.

\* \* \*

“Pitt-s-burgh! Pitt-s-burgh!”

The harsh cry of the conductor startles me with the violence of a shock. Impatient as I am of the long journey, the realization that I have reached my destination comes unexpectedly, overwhelming me with the dread of unpreparedness. In a flurry I gather up my things, but, noticing that the other passengers keep their places, I precipitately resume my seat, fearful lest my agitation be noticed. To hide my confusion, I turn to the open window. Thick clouds of smoke overcast the sky, shrouding the morning with sombre gray. The air is heavy with soot and cinders; the smell is nauseating. In the distance, giant furnaces vomit pillars of fire, the lurid flashes accentuating a line of frame structures, dilapidated and miserable. They are the homes of the workers who have created the industrial glory of Pitts-burgh, reared its millionaires, its Carnegies and Fricks.

The sight fills me with hatred of the perverse social justice that turns the needs of mankind into an Inferno of brutalizing toil. It robs man of his soul, drives the sunshine from his life, degrades him lower than the beasts, and between the millstones of divine bliss and hellish torture grinds flesh and blood into iron and steel, transmutes human lives into gold, gold, countless gold.

The great, noble People! But is it really great and noble to be slaves and remain content? No, no! They are awakening, awakening!

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\*An act of political assassination.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SEAT OF WAR

Contentedly peaceful the Monongahela stretches before me, its waters lazily rippling in the sunlight, and softly crooning to the murmur of the woods on the hazy shore. But the opposite bank presents a picture of sharp contrast. Near the edge of the river rises a high board fence, topped with barbed wire, the menacing aspect heightened by warlike watch-towers and ramparts. The sinister wall looks down on me with a thousand hollow eyes, whose evident murderous purpose fully justifies the name of "Fort Frick." Groups of excited people crowd the open spaces between the river and the fort, filling the air with the confusion of many voices. Men carrying Winchesters are hurrying by, their faces grimy, eyes bold yet anxious. From the mill-yard gape the black mouths of cannon, dismantled breastworks bar the passages, and the ground is strewn with burning cinders, empty shells, oil barrels, broken furnace stacks, and piles of steel and iron. The place looks the aftermath of a sanguinary conflict,—the symbol of our industrial life, of the ruthless struggle in which the *stronger*, the sturdy man of labor, is always the victim, because he acts *weakly*. But the charred hulks of the Pinkerton barges at the landing-place, and the blood-bespattered gangplank, bear mute witness that for once the battle went to the *really strong, to the victim who dared*.

A group of workmen approaches me. Big, stalwart men, the power of conscious strength in their step and bearing. Each of them carries a weapon: some Winchesters, others shotguns. In the hand of one I notice the gleaming barrel of a navy revolver.

"Who are you?" the man with the revolver sternly asks me.

"A friend, a visitor."

"Can you show credentials or a union card?"

Presently, satisfied as to my trustworthiness, they allow me to proceed.

In one of the mill-yards I come upon a dense crowd of men and women of various types: the short, broadfaced Slav, elbowing his tall American fellow-striker; the swarthy Italian, heavy-mustached, gesticulating and talking rapidly to a cluster of excited countrymen. The people are surging about a raised platform, on which stands a large, heavy man.

I press forward. "Listen, gentlemen, listen!" I hear the speaker's voice. "Just a few words, gentlemen! You all know who I am, don't you?"

"Yes, yes, Sheriff!" several men cry. "Go on!"

"Yes," continues the speaker, "you all know who I am. Your Sheriff, the Sheriff of Allegheny County, of the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

"Go ahead!" some one yells, impatiently.

"If you don't interrupt me, gentlemen, I'll go ahead."

"S-s-sh! Order!"

The speaker advances to the edge of the platform. "Men of Homestead! It is my sworn duty, as Sheriff, to preserve the peace. Your city is in a state of lawlessness. I have asked the Governor to send the militia and I hope—"

"No! No!" many voices protest. "To hell with you!" The tumult drowns the

words of the Sheriff. Shaking his clenched fist, his foot stamping the platform, he shouts at the crowd, but his voice is lost amid the general uproar.

“O’Donnell! O’Donnell!” comes from several sides, the cry swelling into a tremendous chorus, “O’Donnell!”

I see the popular leader of the strike nimbly ascend the platform. The assembly becomes hushed.

“Brothers,” O’Donnell begins in a flowing, ingratiating manner, “we have won a great, noble victory over the Company. We have driven the Pinkerton invaders out of our city—”

“Damn the murderers!”

“Silence! Order!”

“You have won a big victory,” O’Donnell continues, “a great, significant victory, such as was never before known in the history of labor’s struggle for better conditions.”

Vociferous cheering interrupts the speaker. “But,” he continues, “you must show the world that you desire to maintain peace and order along with your rights. The Pinkertons were invaders. We defended our homes and drove them out; rightly so. But you are law-abiding citizens. You respect the law and the authority of the State. Public opinion will uphold you in your struggle if you act right. Now is the time, friends!” He raises his voice in waxing enthusiasm. “Now is the time! Welcome the soldiers. They are not sent by that man Frick. They are the people’s militia. They are our friends. Let us welcome them as friends!”

Applause, mixed with cries of impatient disapproval, greets the exhortation. Arms are raised in angry argument, and the crowd sways back and forth, breaking into several excited groups. Presently a tall, dark man appears on the platform. His stentorian voice gradually draws the assembly closer to the front. Slowly the tumult subsides.

“Don’t you believe it, men!” The speaker shakes his finger at the audience, as if to emphasize his warning. “Don’t you believe that the soldiers are coming as friends. Soft words these, Mr. O’Donnell. They’ll cost us dear. Remember what I say, brothers. The soldiers are no friends of ours. I know what I am talking about. They are coming here because that damned murderer Frick wants them.”

“Hear! Hear!”

“Yes!” the tall man continues, his voice quivering with emotion, “I can tell you just how it is. The scoundrel of a Sheriff there asked the Governor for troops, and that damned Frick paid the Sheriff to do it, I say!”

“No! Yes! No!” the clamor is renewed, but I can hear the speaker’s voice rising above the din: “Yes, bribed him. You all know this cowardly Sheriff. Don’t you let the soldiers come, I tell you. First *they*’ll come; then the blacklegs. You want ‘em?”

“No! No!” roars the crowd.

“Well, if you don’t want the damned scabs, keep out the soldiers, you understand? If you don’t, they’ll drive you out from the homes you have paid for with your blood. You and your wives and children they’ll drive out, and out you will go from these”—the speaker points in the direction of the mills—“that’s what they’ll do, if you don’t look out. We have sweated and bled in these mills, our brothers have been killed and maimed there, we have made the damned Company rich, and now they send the soldiers here to shoot us down like the

Pinkerton thugs have tried to. And you want to welcome the murderers, do you? Keep them out, I tell you!”

Amid shouts and yells the speaker leaves the platform.

“McLuckie! ‘Honest’ McLuckie!” a voice is heard on the fringe of the crowd, and as one man the assembly takes up the cry, “‘Honest’ McLuckie!”

I am eager to see the popular Burgess of Homestead, himself a poorly paid employee of the Carnegie Company. A large-boned, good-natured-looking workingman elbows his way to the front, the men readily making way for him with nods and pleasant smiles.

“I haven’t prepared any speech,” the Burgess begins haltingly, “but I want to say, I don’t see how you are going to fight the soldiers. There is a good deal of truth in what the brother before me said; but if you stop to think on it, he forgot to tell you just one little thing. The *how*? How is he going to do it, to keep the soldiers out? That’s what I’d like to know. I’m afraid it’s bad to let them in. The blacklegs *might* be hiding in the rear. But then again, it’s bad *not* to let the soldiers in. You can’t stand up against ‘em: they are not Pinkertons. And we can’t fight the Government of Pennsylvania. Perhaps the Governor won’t send the militia. But if he does, I reckon the best way for us will be to make friends with them. Guess it’s the only thing we can do. That’s all I have to say.”

The assembly breaks up, dejected, dispirited.

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*In Chapter 3, Berkman tells the story of a mother of four who is dispossessed from her small home by Frick after her husband gets crushed beneath 200 tons of metal while working at Homestead. He ends the chapter citing Frick’s refusal to consider the workers’ demands and concludes, “The last hope is gone! The master is determined to crush his rebellious slaves.” Chapter 4 follows.*

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## CHAPTER 4

### THE ATTENTAT

The door of Frick’s private office, to the left of the reception-room, swings open as the colored attendant emerges, and I catch a flitting glimpse of a black-bearded, well-knit figure at a table in the back of the room.

“Mistah Frick is engaged. He can’t see you now, sah,” the negro says, handing back my card.

I take the pasteboard, return it to my case, and walk slowly out of the reception-room. But quickly retracing my steps, I pass through the gate separating the clerks from the visitors, and, brushing the astounded attendant aside, I step into the office on the left, and find myself facing Frick.

For an instant the sunlight, streaming through the windows, dazzles me. I discern two men at the further end of the long table.

“Fr—,” I begin. The look of terror on his face strikes me speechless. It is the dread of the conscious presence of death. “He understands,” it flashes through my mind. With a quick motion I draw the revolver. As I raise the weapon, I see Frick clutch with both hands the arm of the chair, and attempt to rise. I aim at

his head. "Perhaps he wears armor," I reflect. With a look of horror he quickly averts his face, as I pull the trigger. There is a flash, and the high-ceilinged room reverberates as with the booming of cannon. I hear a sharp, piercing cry, and see Frick on his knees, his head against the arm of the chair. I feel calm and possessed, intent upon every movement of the man. He is lying head and shoulders under the large armchair, without sound or motion. "Dead?" I wonder. I must make sure. About twenty-five feet separate us. I take a few steps toward him, when suddenly the other man, whose presence I had quite forgotten, leaps upon me. I struggle to loosen his hold. He looks slender and small. I would not hurt him; I have no business with him. Suddenly I hear the cry, "Murder! Help!" My heart stands still as I realize that it is Frick shouting. "Alive?" I wonder. I hurl the stranger aside and fire at the crawling figure of Frick. The man struck my hand,—I have missed! He grapples with me, and we wrestle across the room. I try to throw him, but spying an opening between his arm and body, I thrust the revolver against his side and aim at Frick, cowering behind the chair. I pull the trigger. There is a click—but no explosion! By the throat I catch the stranger, still clinging to me, when suddenly something heavy strikes me on the back of the head. Sharp pains shoot through my eyes. I sink to the floor, vaguely conscious of the weapon slipping from my hands.

"Where is the hammer? Hit him, carpenter!" Confused voices ring in my ears. Painfully I strive to rise. The weight of many bodies is pressing on me. Now—it's Frick's voice! Not dead? . . . I crawl in the direction of the sound, dragging the struggling men with me. I must get the dagger from my pocket—I have it! Repeatedly I strike with it at the legs of the man near the window. I hear Frick cry out in pain—there is much shouting and stamping—my arms are pulled and twisted, and I am lifted bodily from the floor.

Police, clerks, workmen in overalls, surround me. An officer pulls my head back by the hair, and my eyes meet Frick's. He stands in front of me, supported by several men. His face is ashen gray; the black beard is streaked with red, and blood is oozing from his neck. For an instant a strange feeling, as of shame, comes over me; but the next moment I am filled with anger at the sentiment, so unworthy of a revolutionist. With defiant hatred I look him full in the face.

"Mr. Frick, do you identify this man as your assailant?"

Frick nods weakly.

The street is lined with a dense, excited crowd. A young man in civilian dress, who is accompanying the police, inquires, not unkindly:

"Are you hurt? You're bleeding."

I pass my hand over my face. I feel no pain, but there is a peculiar sensation about my eyes.

"I've lost my glasses," I remark, involuntarily.

"You'll be damn lucky if you don't lose your head," an officer retorts.

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*In Chapter 5, Berkman realizes that he has failed in his attentat, "that Frick is still alive. But Alec vows that rather than permit the state to condemn him to death or prison, he will take his own life. The chapter ends with an account of his interrogation by the chief of police. In Chapter 6 Alec converses with two*

*fellow prisoners, neither of whom understand why Berkman wanted to kill Frick. But Alec finds comfort in the fact that a Homestead worker is also in the jail. Certainly he will understand. Chapter 6 continues below.*

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## CHAPTER 6

### THE JAIL

Next morning, during exercise hour, I watch with beating heart for an opportunity to converse with the Homestead steel-worker. I shall explain to him the motives and purpose of my attempt on Frick. He will understand me; he will himself enlighten his fellow-strikers. It is very important *they* should comprehend my act quite clearly, and he is the very man to do this great service to humanity. He is the rebel-worker; his heroism during the struggle bears witness. I hope the People will not allow the enemy to hang him. He defended the rights of the Homestead workers, the cause of the whole working class. No, the People will never allow such a sacrifice. How well he carries himself! Erect, head high, the look of conscious dignity and strength—

“Cell num-b-ber fi-i-ve!”

The prisoner with the smoked glasses leaves the line, and advances in response to the guard’s call. Quickly I pass along the gallery, and fall into the vacant place, alongside of the steel-worker.

“A happy chance,” I address him. “I should like to speak to you about something important. You are one of the Homestead strikers, are you not?”

“Jack Tinford,” he introduces himself. “What’s your name?”

He is visibly startled by my answer. “The man who shot Frick?” he asks.

An expression of deep anxiety crosses his face. His eye wanders to the gate. Through the wire network I observe visitors approaching from the Warden’s office.

“They’d better not see us together,” he says, impatiently. “Fall in back of me. Then we’ll talk.”

Pained at his manner, yet not fully realizing its significance, I slowly fall back. His tall, broad figure completely hides me from view. He speaks to me in monosyllables, unwillingly. At the mention of Homestead he grows more communicative, talking in an undertone, as if conversing with his neighbor, the Sicilian, who does not understand a syllable of English. I strain my ear to catch his words. The steel-workers merely defended themselves against armed invaders, I hear him say. They are not on strike: they’ve been locked out by Frick, because he wants to non-unionize the works. That’s why he broke the contract with the Amalgamated, and hired the damned Pinkertons two months before, when all was peace. They shot many workers from the barges before the millmen “got after them.” They deserved roasting alive for their unprovoked murders. Well, the men “fixed them all right.” Some were killed, others committed suicide on the burning barges, and the rest were forced to surrender like whipped curs. A grand victory all right, if that coward of a sheriff hadn’t got the Governor to send the militia to Homestead. But it was a victory, you bet,

for the boys to get the best of three hundred armed Pinkertons. He himself, though, had nothing to do with the fight. He was sick at the time. They're trying to get the Pinkertons to swear his life away. One of the hounds has already made an affidavit that he saw him, Jack Tinford, throw dynamite at the barges; before the Pinkertons landed. But never mind, he is not afraid. No Pittsburgh jury will believe those lying murderers. He was in his sweetheart's house, sick abed. The girl and her mother will prove an alibi for him. And the Advisory Committee of the Amalgamated, too. They know he wasn't on the shore. They'll swear to it in court, anyhow—

Abruptly he ceases, a look of fear on his face. For a moment he is lost in thought. Then he gives me a searching look, and smiles at me. As we turn the corner of the walk, he whispers: "Too bad you didn't kill him. Some business misunderstanding, eh?" he adds, aloud.

Could he be serious, I wonder. Does he only pretend? He faces straight ahead, and I am unable to see his expression. I begin the careful explanation I had prepared:

"Jack, it was for you, for your people that I—"

Impatiently, angrily he interrupts me. I'd better be careful not to talk that way in court, he warns me. If Frick should die, I'd hang myself with such "gab." And it would only harm the steel-workers. They don't believe in killing; they respect the law. Of course, they had a right to defend their homes and families against unlawful invaders. But they welcomed the militia to Homestead. They showed their respect for authority. To be sure, Frick deserves to die. He is a murderer. But the mill-workers will have nothing to do with Anarchists. What did I want to kill him for, anyhow? I did not belong to the Homestead men. It was none of my business. I had better not say anything about it in court, or—

The gong tolls.

"All in!"

## VI

I pass a sleepless night. The events of the day have stirred me to the very depths. Bitterness and anger against the Homestead striker fill my heart. My hero of yesterday, the hero of the glorious struggle of the People,—how contemptible he has proved himself, how cravenly small! No consciousness of the great mission of his class, no proud realization of the part he himself had acted in the noble struggle. A cowardly, overgrown boy, terrified at to-morrow's punishment for the prank he has played! Meanly concerned only with his own safety, and willing to resort to lying, in order to escape responsibility.

The very thought is appalling. It is a sacrilege, an insult to the holy Cause, to the People. To myself, too. Not that lying is to be condemned, provided it is in the interest of the Cause. All means are justified in the war of humanity against its enemies. Indeed, the more repugnant the means, the stronger the test of one's nobility and devotion. All great revolutionists have proved that. There is no more striking example in the annals of the Russian movement than that peerless Nihilist—what was his name? Why, how peculiar that it should escape me just now! I knew it so well. He undermined the Winter Palace, beneath the very

dining-room of the Tsar. What debasement, what terrible indignities he had to endure in the role of the servile, simple-minded peasant carpenter. How his proud spirit must have suffered, for weeks and months,—all for the sake of his great purpose. Wonderful man! To be worthy of your comradeship. . . . But this Homestead worker, what a pigmy by comparison. He is absorbed in the single thought of saving himself, the traitor. A veritable Judas, preparing to forswear his people and their cause, willing to lie and deny his participation. How proud I should be in his place: to have fought on the barricades, as he did! And then to die for it,—ah, could there be a more glorious fate for a man, a real man? To serve even as the least stone in the foundation of a free society, or as a plank in the bridge across which the triumphant People shall finally pass into the land of promise?

A plank in the bridge. . . . In the *most*.<sup>\*</sup> What a significant name! How it impressed me the first time I heard it! No, I saw it in print, I remember quite clearly. Mother had just died. I was dreaming of the New World, the Land of Freedom. Eagerly I read every line of “American news.” One day, in the little Kovno library—how distinctly it all comes back to me—I can see myself sitting there, perusing the papers. Must get acquainted with the country. What is this? “Anarchists hanged in Chicago.” There are many names—one is “Most.” “What is an Anarchist?” I whisper to the student near by. He is from Peter,<sup>†</sup> he will know. “S—sh! Same as Nihilists.” “In free America?” I wondered.

How little I knew of America then! A free country, indeed, that hangs its noblest men. And the misery, the exploitation,—it’s terrible. I must mention all this in court, in my defence. No, not defence—some fitter word. Explanation! Yes, my explanation. I need no defence: I don’t consider myself guilty. What did the Warden mean? Fool for a client, he said, when I told him that I would refuse legal aid. He thinks I am a fool. Well, he’s a *bourgeois*, he can’t understand. I’ll tell him to leave me alone. He belongs to the enemy. The lawyers, too. They are all in the capitalist camp. I need no lawyers. They couldn’t explain my case. I shall not talk to the reporters, either. They are a lying pack, those journalistic hounds of capitalism. They always misrepresent us. And they know better, too. They wrote columns of interviews with Most when he went to prison. All lies. I saw him off myself; he didn’t say a word to them. They are our worst enemies. The Warden said that they’ll come to see me tomorrow. I’ll have nothing to say to them. They’re sure to twist my words, and thus impair the effect of my act. It is not complete without my explanation. I shall prepare it very carefully. Of course, the jury won’t understand. They, too, belong to the capitalist class. But I must use the trial to talk to the People. To be sure, an *Attentat* on a Frick is in itself splendid propaganda. It combines the value of example with terroristic effect. But very much depends upon my explanation. It offers me a rare opportunity for a broader agitation of our ideas. The comrades outside will also use my act for propaganda. The People misunderstand us: they have been prejudiced by the capitalist press. They must be enlightened; that is our glorious task. Very difficult and slow work, it is true; but they will learn. Their

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<sup>\*</sup>Russian for “bridge.”

<sup>†</sup>Popular abbreviation of St. Petersburg.

patience will break, and then—the good People, they have always been too kind to their enemies. And brave, even in their suffering. Yes, very brave. Not like that fellow, the steel-worker. He is a disgrace to Homestead, the traitor. . . .

I pace the cell in agitation. The Judas-striker is not fit to live. Perhaps it would be best they should hang him. His death would help to open the eyes of the People to the real character of legal justice. Legal justice—what a travesty! They are mutually exclusive terms. Yes, indeed, it would be best he should be hanged. The Pinkerton will testify against him. He saw Jack throw dynamite. Very good. Perhaps others will also swear to it. The judge will believe the Pinkertons. Yes, they will hang him.

The thought somewhat soothes my perturbation. At least the cause of the People will benefit to some extent. The man himself is not to be considered. He has ceased to exist: his interests are exclusively personal; he can be of no further benefit to the People. Only his death can aid the Cause. It is best for him to end his career in the service of humanity. I hope he will act like a man on the scaffold. The enemy should not gloat over his fear, his craven terror. They'll see in him the spirit of the People. Of course, he is not worthy of it. But he must die like a rebel worker, bravely, defiantly. I must speak to him about it.

The deep bass of the gong dispels my reverie.

## VII

There is a distinct sense of freedom in the solitude of the night. The day's atmosphere is surcharged with noisome anxiety, the hours laden with impending terrors. But the night is soothing. For the first time I feel alone, unobserved. The "night-dog has been called off." How refinedly brutal is this constant care lest the hangman be robbed of his prey! A simple precaution against suicide, the Warden told me. I felt the naïve stupidity of the suggestion like the thrust of a dagger. What a tremendous chasm in our mental attitudes! His mind cannot grasp the impossibility of suicide before I have explained to the People the motive and purpose of my act. Suicide? As if the mere death of Frick was my object! The very thought is impossible, insulting. It outrages me that even a *bourgeois* should so meanly misjudge the aspirations of an active revolutionist. The insignificant reptile, Frick,—as if the mere man were worth a terroristic effort! I aimed at the many-headed hydra whose visible representative was Frick. The Homestead developments had given him temporary prominence, thrown this particular hydra-head into bold relief, so to speak. That alone made him worthy of the revolutionist's attention. Primarily, as an object lesson; it would strike terror into the soul of his class. They are craven-hearted, their conscience weighted with guilt,—and life is dear to them. Their strangling hold on labor might be loosened. Only for a while, no doubt. But that much would be gained, due to the act of the *Attentäter*. The People could not fail to realize the depth of a love that will give its own life for their cause. To give a young life, full of health and vitality, to give all, without a thought of self; to give all, voluntarily, cheerfully; nay, enthusiastically—could any one fail to understand such a love?

But this is the first terrorist act in America. The People may fail to comprehend it thoroughly. Yet they will know that an Anarchist committed the deed. I will talk to them from the courtroom. And my comrades at liberty will use the opportunity to the utmost to shed light on the questions involved. Such a deed must draw the attention of the world. This first act of voluntary Anarchist sacrifice will make the workingmen think deeply. Perhaps even more so than the Chicago martyrdom.\* The latter was pre-eminently a lesson in capitalist justice. The culmination of a plutocratic conspiracy, the tragedy of 1887 lacked the element of voluntary Anarchist self-sacrifice in the interests of the People. In that distinctive quality my act is initial. Perhaps it will prove the entering wedge. The leaven of growing oppression is at work. It is for us, the Anarchists, to educate labor to its great mission. Let the world learn of the misery of Homestead. The sudden thunderclap gives warning that beyond the calm horizon the storm is gathering. The lightning of social protest—

“Quick, Ahlick! Plant it.” Something white flutters between the bars. Hastily I read the newspaper clipping. Glorious! Who would have expected it? A soldier in one of the regiments stationed at Homestead called upon the line to give “three cheers for the man who shot Frick.” My soul overflows with beautiful hopes. Such a wonderful spirit among the militia; perhaps the soldiers will fraternize with the strikers. It is by no means an impossibility: such things have happened before. After all, they are of the People, mostly workingmen. Their interests are identical with those of the strikers, and surely they hate Frick, who is universally condemned for his brutality, his arrogance. This soldier—what is his name? Iams, W. L. Iams—he typifies the best feeling of the regiment. The others probably lack his courage. They feared to respond to his cheers, especially because of the Colonel’s presence. But undoubtedly most of them feel as Iams does. It would be dangerous for the enemy to rely upon the Tenth Pennsylvania. And in the other Homestead regiments, there must also be such noble Iamses. They will not permit their comrade to be court-martialed, as the Colonel threatens. Iams is not merely a militia man. He is a citizen, a native. He has the right to express his opinion regarding my deed. If he had condemned it, he would not be punished. May he not, then, voice a favorable sentiment? No, they can’t punish him. And he is surely very popular among the soldiers. How manfully he behaved as the Colonel raged before the regiment, and demanded to know who cheered for “the assassin of Mr. Frick,” as the imbecile put it. Iams stepped out of the ranks, and boldly avowed his act. He could have remained silent, or denied it. But he is evidently not like that cowardly steel-worker. He even refused the Colonel’s offer to apologize.

Brave boy! He is the right material for a revolutionist. Such a man has no

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\*Refers to the eight anarchists framed for throwing a bomb toward the police, on May 4, 1887, during a demonstration at Haymarket Square in Chicago. The demonstration had been called to demand, among other things, the eight-hour day. Four of the eight, Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engel and Adolph Fischer, were hung on November 11, 1887. Louis Lingg was murdered by the police or committed suicide. Samuel J. Felden and Eugene Schwab were sentenced to life imprisonment; Oscar Neebe received 15 years. They were all convicted solely on the basis of their beliefs and as a measure of support for business interests that wanted to crush the labor movement. On June 26, 1893, Governor Atgeld of Illinois pardoned those still in prison saying that none of the defendants “were proven to be guilty.”

business to belong to the militia. He should know for what purpose it is intended: a tool of capitalism in the enslavement of labor. After all, it will benefit him to be courtmartialed. It will enlighten him. I must follow the case. Perhaps the negro will give me more clippings. It was very generous of him to risk this act of friendship. The Warden has expressly interdicted the passing of newspapers to me, though the other prisoners are permitted to buy them. He discriminates against me in every possible way. A rank ignoramus: he cannot even pronounce "Anarchist." Yesterday he said to me: "The Anarchists are no good. What do they want, anyhow?" I replied, angrily: "First you say they are no good, then you ask what they want." He flushed. "Got no use for them, anyway." Such an Imbecile! Not the least sense of justice—he condemns without knowing. I believe he is aiding the detectives. Why does he insist I should plead guilty? I have repeatedly told him that, though I do not deny the act, I am innocent. The stupid laughed outright. "Better plead guilty, you'll get off easier. You did it, so better plead guilty." In vain I strove to explain to him: "I don't believe in your laws, I don't acknowledge the authority of your courts. I am innocent, morally." The aggravating smile of condescending wisdom kept playing about his lips. "Plead guilty. Take my advice, plead guilty."

Instinctively I sense some presence at the door. The small, cunning eyes of the Warden peer intently through the bars. I feel him an enemy. Well, he may have the clipping now if he wishes. But no torture shall draw from me an admission incriminating the negro. The name Rakhmetov flits through my mind. I shall be true to that memory.

"A gentleman in my office wishes to see you," the Warden informs me.

"Who is he?"

"A friend of yours, from Pittsburgh."

"I know no one in Pittsburgh. I don't care to see the man."

The Warden's suave insistence arouses my suspicions. Why should he be so much interested in my seeing a stranger? Visits are privileges, I have been told. I decline the privilege. But the Warden insists. I refuse. Finally he orders me out of the cell. Two guards lead me into the hallway. They halt me at the head of a line of a dozen men. Six are counted off, and I am assigned to the seventh place. I notice that I am the only one in the line wearing glasses. The Warden enters from an inner office, accompanied by three visitors. They pass down the row, scrutinizing each face. They return, their gaze fixed on the men. One of the strangers makes a motion as if to put his hand on the shoulder of the man on my left. The Warden hastily calls the visitors aside. They converse in whispers, then walk up the line, and pass slowly back, till they are alongside of me. The tall stranger puts his hand familiarly on my shoulder, exclaiming:

"Don't you recognize me, Mr. Berkman? I met you on Fifth Avenue, right in front of the Telegraph building."\*

"I never saw you before in my life."

"Oh, yes! You remember I spoke to you—"

"No, you did not," I interrupt, impatiently.

"Take him back," the Warden commands.

\*The building in which the offices of the Carnegie Company were located.

I protest against the perfidious proceeding. "A positive identification," the Warden asserts. The detective had seen me "in the company of two friends, inspecting the office of Mr. Frick." Indignantly I deny the false statement, charging him with abetting the conspiracy to involve my comrades. He grows livid with rage, and orders me deprived of exercise that afternoon.

The Warden's role in the police plot is now apparent to me. I realize him in his true colors. Ignorant though he is, familiarity with police methods has developed in him a certain shrewdness: the low cunning of the fox seeking its prey. The good-natured smile masks a depth of malice, his crude vanity glorying in the successful abuse of his wardenship over unfortunate human beings.

This new appreciation of his character clarifies various incidents heretofore puzzling to me. My mail is being detained at the office, I am sure. It is impossible that my New York comrades should have neglected me so long: it is now over a week since my arrest. As a matter of due precaution, they would not communicate with me at once. But two or three days would be sufficient to perfect a *Deckadresse*.\* Yet not a line has reached me from them. It is evident that my mail is being detained.

My reflections rouse bitter hatred of the Warden. His infamy fills me with rage. The negro's warning against the occupant of the next cell assumes a new aspect. Undoubtedly the man is a spy; placed there by the Warden, evidently. Little incidents, insignificant in themselves, add strong proof to justify the suspicion. It grows to conviction as I review various circumstances concerning my neighbor. The questions I deemed foolish, prompted by mere curiosity, I now see in the light of the Warden's role as volunteer detective. The young negro was sent to the dungeon for warning me against the spy in the next cell. But the latter is never reported, notwithstanding his continual knocking and talking. Specially privileged, evidently. And the Warden, too, is hand-in-glove with the police. I am convinced he himself caused the writing of those letters he gave me yesterday. They were postmarked Homestead, from a pretended striker. They want to blow up the mills, the letter said; good bombs are needed. I should send them the addresses of my friends who know how to make effective explosives. What a stupid trap! One of the epistles sought to involve some of the strike leaders in my act. In another, John Most<sup>†</sup> was mentioned. Well, I am not to be caught with such chaff. But I must be on my guard. It is best I should decline to accept mail. They withhold the letters of my friends, anyhow. Yes, I'll refuse all mail.

I feel myself surrounded by enemies, open and secret. Not a single being here I may call friend; except the negro, who, I know, wishes me well. I hope he will give me more clippings,—perhaps there will be news of my comrades. I'll try to "fall in" with him at exercise to-morrow. . . . Oh! they are handing out tracts. Tomorrow is Sunday,—no exercise!

### VIII

The Lord's day is honored by depriving the prisoners of dinner. A scanty

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\*A "disguise" address, to mask the identity of the correspondent.

†Anarchist leader, one of Berkman's teachers.

allowance of bread, with a tincupful of black, unsweetened coffee, constitutes breakfast. Supper is a repetition of the morning meal, except that the coffee looks thinner, the tincup more rusty. I force myself to swallow a mouthful by shutting my eyes. It tastes like greasy dishwater, with a bitter suggestion of burnt bread.

Exercise is also abolished on the sacred day. The atmosphere is pervaded with the gloom of unbroken silence. In the afternoon, I hear the creaking of the inner gate. There is much swishing of dresses: the good ladies of the tracts are being seated. The doors on Murderers' Row are opened partly, at a fifteen-degree angle. The prisoners remain in their cells, with the guards stationed at the gallery entrances.

All is silent. I can hear the beating of my heart in the oppressive quiet. A faint shadow crosses the darksome floor; now it oscillates on the bars. I hear the muffled fall of felt-soled steps. Silently the turnkey passes the cell, like a flitting mystery casting its shadow, athwart a troubled soul. I catch the glint of a revolver protruding from his pocket.

Suddenly the sweet strains of a violin resound in the corridor. Female voices swell the melody, "Nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee." Slowly the volume expands; it rises, grows more resonant in contact with the gallery floor, and echoes in my cell, "Nearer to Thee, to Thee."

The sounds die away. A deep male voice utters, "Let us pray." Its metallic hardness rings like a command. The guards stand with lowered heads. Their lips mumble after the invisible speaker, "Our Father who art in Heaven, give us this day our daily bread. . . . Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us—"

"Like hell you do!" some one shouts from the upper gallery. There is suppressed giggling in the cells. Pellmell the officers rush up the stairs. The uproar increases. "Order!" Yells and catcalls drown the Warden's voice. Doors are violently opened and shut. The thunder of rattling iron is deafening. Suddenly all is quiet: the guards have reached the galleries. Only hasty tiptoeing is heard.

The offender cannot be found. The gong rings the supper hour. The prisoners stand at the doors, cup in hand, ready to receive the coffee.

"Give the s— of b— no supper! No supper!" roars the Warden.

Sabbath benediction!

The levers are pulled, and we are locked in for the night.

## IX

In agitation I pace the cell. Frick didn't die! He has almost recovered. I have positive information: the "blind" prisoner gave me the clipping during exercise. "You're a poor shot," he teased me.

The poignancy of the disappointment pierces my heart. I feel it with the intensity of a catastrophe. My imprisonment, the vexations of jail life, the future—all is submerged in the flood of misery at the realization of my failure. Bitter thoughts crowd my mind; self-accusation overwhelms me. I failed! Failed! . . . It might have been different, had I gone to Frick's residence. It was my original intention, too. But the house in the East End was guarded. Besides, I had no time to wait: that very morning the papers had announced Frick's

intended visit to New York. I was determined he should not escape me. I resolved to act at once. It was mainly his cowardice that saved him—he hid under the chair! Played dead! And now he lives, the vampire. . . . And Homestead? How will it affect conditions there? If Frick had died, Carnegie would have hastened to settle with the strikers. The shrewd Scot only made use of Frick to destroy the hated union. He himself was absent, he could not be held accountable. The author of “Triumphant Democracy” is sensitive to adverse criticism. With the elimination of Frick, responsibility for Homestead conditions would rest with Carnegie. To support his role as the friend of labor, he must needs terminate the sanguinary struggle. Such a development of affairs would have greatly advanced the Anarchist propaganda. However some may condemn my act, the workers could not be blind to the actual situation, and the practical effects of Frick’s death. But his recovery. . . .

Yet, who can tell? It may perhaps have the same results. If not, the strike was virtually lost when the steel-workers permitted the militia to take possession of Homestead. It afforded the Company an opportunity to fill the mills with scabs. But even if the strike be lost,—our propaganda is the chief consideration. The Homestead workers are but a very small part of the American working class. Important as this great struggle is, the cause of the whole People is supreme. And their true cause is Anarchism. All other issues are merged in it; it alone will solve the labor problem. No other consideration deserves attention. The suffering of individuals, of large masses, indeed, is unavoidable under capitalist conditions. Poverty and wretchedness must constantly increase; it is inevitable. A revolutionist cannot be influenced by mere sentimentality. We bleed for the People, we suffer for them, but we know the real source of their misery. Our whole civilization, false to the core as it is, must be destroyed, to be born anew. Only with the abolition of exploitation will labor gain justice. Anarchism alone can save the world.

These reflections somewhat soothe me. My failure to accomplish the desired result is grievously exasperating, and I feel deeply humiliated. But I shall be the sole sufferer. Properly viewed, the merely physical result of my act cannot affect its propagandistic value; and that is, always, the supreme consideration. The chief purpose of my *Attentat* was to call attention to our social iniquities; to arouse a vital interest in the sufferings of the People by an act of self-sacrifice; to stimulate discussion regarding the cause and purpose of the act, and thus bring the teachings of Anarchism before the world. The Homestead situation offered the psychologic social moment. What matter the personal consequences to Frick? the merely physical results of my *Attentat*? The conditions necessary for propaganda are there: the act is accomplished.

As to myself—my disappointment is bitter, indeed. I wanted to die for the Cause. But now they will send me to prison—they will bury me alive. . . .

Involuntarily my hand reaches for the lapel of my coat, when suddenly I remember my great loss. In agony, I live through again the scene in the police station, on the third day after my arrest. . . . Rough hands seize my arms, and I am forced into a chair. My head is thrust violently backward, and I face the Chief. He clutches me by the throat.

“Open your mouth! Damn you, open your mouth!”

Everything is whirling before me, the desk is circling the room, the bloodshot

eyes of the Chief gaze at me from the floor, his feet flung high in the air, and everything is whirling, whirling. . . .

“Now, Doc, quick!”

There is a sharp sting in my tongue, my jaws are gripped as by a vise, and my mouth is torn open.

“What d’ye think of *that*, eh?”

The Chief stands before me, in his hand the dynamite cartridge.

“What’s this?” he demands, with an oath.

“Candy,”\* I reply, defiantly.

## X

How full of anxiety these two weeks have been! Still no news of my comrades. The Warden is not offering me any more mail; he evidently regards my last refusal as final. But I am now permitted to purchase papers; they may contain something about my friends. If I could only learn what propaganda is being made out of my act, and what the Girl and Fedya are doing! I long to know what is happening with them. But my interest is merely that of the revolutionist. They are so far away,—I do not count among the living. On the outside, everything seems to continue as usual, as if nothing had happened. Frick is quite well now; at his desk again, the press reports. Nothing else of importance. The police seem to have given up their hunt. How ridiculous the Chief has made himself by kidnaping my friend Mollock, the New York baker! The impudence of the authorities, to decoy an unsuspecting workingman across the State line, and then arrest him as my accomplice! I suppose he is the only Anarchist the stupid Chief could find. My negro friend informed me of the kidnaping last week. But I felt no anxiety: I knew the “silcent baker” would prove deaf and dumb. Not a word could they draw from him. Mollock’s discharge by the magistrate put the Chief in a very ludicrous position. Now he is thirsting for revenge, and probably seeking a victim nearer home, in Allegheny. But if the comrades preserve silence, all will be well, for I was careful to leave no clew. I had told them that my destination was Chicago, where I expected to secure a position. I can depend on Bauer<sup>†</sup> and Nold.<sup>‡</sup> But that man E., whom I found living in the same house with Nold, impressed me as rather unreliable. I thought there was something of the hang-dog look about him. I should certainly not trust him, and I’m afraid he might compromise the others. Why are they friendly, I wonder. He is probably not even a comrade. The Allegheny Anarchists should have nothing in common with him. It is not well for us to associate with the *bourgeois*-minded.

My meditation is interrupted by a guard, who informs me that I am “wanted at the office.” There is a letter for me, but some postage is due on it. Would I pay?

“A trap,” it flits through my mind, as I accompany the overseer. I shall persist in my refusal to accept decoy mail.

“More letters from Homestead?” I turn to the Warden.

\*The nitroglycerine cartridge.

†Henry Bauer, anarchist comrade living in Pittsburgh [GLF].

‡Carl Nold, anarchist comrade living in Pittsburgh [GLF].

He quickly suppresses a smile. "No, it is postmarked, Brooklyn, N. Y."

I glance at the envelope. The writing is apparently a woman's, but the chirography is smaller than the Girl's. I yearn for news of her. The letter is from Brooklyn—perhaps a *Deckadresse!*

"I'll take the letter, Warden."

"All right. You will open it here."

"Then I don't want it."

I start from the office, when the Warden detains me:

"Take the letter along, but within ten minutes you must return it to me. You may go now."

I hasten to the cell. If there is anything important in the letter, I shall destroy it: I owe the enemy no obligations. As with trembling hand I tear open the envelope, a paper dollar flutters to the floor. I glance at the signature, but the name is unfamiliar. Anxiously I scan the lines. An unknown sympathizer sends greetings, in the name of humanity. "I am not an Anarchist," I read, "but I wish you well. My sympathy, however, is with the man, not with the act. I cannot justify your attempt. Life, human life, especially, is sacred. None has the right to take what he cannot give."

I pass a troubled night. My mind struggles with the problem presented so unexpectedly. Can any one understanding my motives, doubt the justification of the *Attentat*? The legal aspect aside, can the morality of the act be questioned? It is impossible to confound law with right; they are opposites. The law is immoral: it is the conspiracy of rulers and priests against the workers, to continue their subjection. To be law-abiding means to acquiesce, if not directly participate, in that conspiracy. A revolutionist is the truly moral man: to him the interests of humanity are supreme; to advance them, his sole aim in life. Government, with its laws, is the common enemy. All weapons are justifiable in the noble struggle of the People against this terrible curse. The Law! It is the arch-crime of the centuries. The path of Man is soaked with the blood it has shed. Can this great criminal determine Right? Is a revolutionist to respect such a travesty? It would mean the perpetuation of human slavery.

No, the revolutionist owes no duty to capitalist morality. He is the soldier of humanity. He has consecrated his life to the People in their great struggle. It is a bitter war. The revolutionist cannot shrink from the service it imposes upon him. Aye, even the duty of death. Cheerfully and joyfully he would die a thousand times to hasten the triumph of liberty. His life belongs to the People. He has no right to live or enjoy while others suffer.

How often we had discussed this, Fedya and I. He was somewhat inclined to sybaritism; not quite emancipated from the tendencies of his *bourgeois* youth. Once in New York—I shall never forget—at the time when our circle had just begun the publication of the first Jewish Anarchist paper in America, we came to blows. We, the most intimate friends; yes, actually came to blows. Nobody would have believed it. They used to call us the Twins. If I happened to appear anywhere alone, they would inquire, anxiously, "What is the matter? Is your chum sick?" It was so unusual; we were each other's shadow. But one day I struck him. He had outraged my most sacred feelings: to spend twenty cents for

a meal! It was not mere extravagance; it was positively a crime, incredible in a revolutionist. I could not forgive him for months. Even now,—two years have passed,—yet a certain feeling of resentment still remains with me. What right had a revolutionist to such self-indulgence? The movement needed aid; every cent was valuable. To spend twenty cents for a single meal! He was a traitor to the Cause. True, it was his first meal in two days, and we were economizing on rent by sleeping in the parks. He had worked hard, too, to earn the money. But he should have known that he had no right to his earnings while the movement stood in such need of funds. His defence was unspeakably aggravating: he had earned ten dollars that week—he had given seven into the paper's treasury—he needed three dollars for his week's expenses—his shoes were torn, too. I had no patience with such arguments. They merely proved his *bourgeois* predilections. Personal comforts could not be of any consideration to a true revolutionist. It was a question of the movement; *its* needs, the first issue. Every penny spent for ourselves was so much taken from the Cause. True, the revolutionist must live. But luxury is a crime; worse, a weakness. One could exist on five cents a day. Twenty cents for a single meal! Incredible. It was robbery.

Poor Twin! He was deeply grieved, but he knew that I was merely just. The revolutionist has no personal right to anything. Everything he has or earns belongs to the Cause. Everything, even his affections. Indeed, these especially. He must not become too much attached to anything. He should guard against strong love or passion. The People should be his only great love, his supreme passion. Mere human sentiment is unworthy of the real revolutionist: he lives for humanity, and he must ever be ready to respond to its call. The soldier of Revolution must not be lured from the field of battle by the siren song of love. Great danger lurks in such weakness. The Russian tyrant has frequently attempted to bait his prey with a beautiful woman. Our comrades there are careful not to associate with any woman, except of proved revolutionary character. Aye, her mere passive interest in the Cause is not sufficient. Love may transform her into a Delilah to shear one's strength. Only with a woman consecrated to active participation may the revolutionist associate. Their perfect comradeship would prove a mutual inspiration, a source of increased strength. Equals, thoroughly solidaric, they would the more successfully serve the Cause of the People. Countless Russian women bear witness—Sophia Perovskaya, Vera Figner, Zassulitch, and many other heroic martyrs, tortured in the casemates of Schlüsselburg, buried alive in the Petropavlovka. What devotion, what fortitude! Perfect comrades they were, often stronger than the men. Brave, noble women that fill the prisons and *étapes*, tramp the toilsome road. . . .

The Siberian steppe rises before me. Its broad expanse shimmers in the sun's rays, and blinds the eye with white brilliancy. The endless monotony agonizes the sight, and stupefies the brain. It breathes the chill of death into the heart, and grips the soul with the terror of madness. In vain the eye seeks relief from the white Monster that slowly tightens his embrace, and threatens to swallow you in his frozen depth. . . . There, in the distance, where the blue meets the white, a heavy line of crimson dyes the surface. It winds along the virgin bosom, grows redder and deeper, and ascends the mountain in a dark ribbon, twining and wreathing its course in lengthening pain, now disappearing in the hollow, and again rising

on the height. Behold a man and a woman, hand in hand, their heads bent, on their shoulders a heavy cross, slowly toiling the upward way, and behind them others, men and women, young and old, all weary with the heavy task, trudging along the dismal desert, amid death and silence, save for the mournful clank, clank of the chains. . . .

“Get out now. Exercise!”

As in a dream I walk along the gallery. The voice of my exercise mate sounds dully in my ears. I do not understand what he is saying. Does he know about the Nihilists, I wonder?

“Billy, have you ever read anything about Nihilists?”

“Sure, Berk. When I done my last bit in the dump below, a guy lent me a book. A corker, too, it was. Let’s see, what you call ‘em again?”

“Nihilists.”

“Yes, sure. About some Nihilists. The book’s called Aivan Strodjoff.”

“What was the name?”

“Somethin’ like that. Aivan Strodjoff or Strogoff.”

“Oh, you mean Ivan Strogov, don’t you?”

“That’s it. Funny names them foreigners have. A fellow needs a cast-iron jaw to say it every day. But the story was a corker all right. About a Rooshan patriot or something. He was hot stuff, I tell you. Overheard a plot to kill th’ king by them fellows—er—what’s you call ‘em?”

“Nihilists?”

“Yep. Nihilist plot, you know. Well, they wants to kill his Nibs and all the dookes, to make one of their own crowd king. See? Foxy fellows, you bet. But Aivan was too much for ‘em. He plays detective. Gets in all kinds of scrapes, and some one burns his eyes out. But he’s game. I don’t remember how it all ends, but—”

“I know the story. It’s trash. It doesn’t tell the truth about—”

“Oh, t’hell with it! Say, Berk, d’ye think they’ll hang me? Won’t the judge sympathize with a blind man? Look at me eyes. Pretty near blind, swear to God, I am. Won’t hang a blind man, will they?”

The pitiful appeal goes to my heart, and I assure him they will not hang a blind man. His eyes brighten, his face grows radiant with hope.

Why does he love life so, I wonder. Of what value is it without a high purpose, uninspired by revolutionary ideals? He is small and cowardly: he lies to save his neck. There is nothing at all wrong with his eyes. But why should I lie for his sake?

My conscience smites me for the moment of weakness. I should not allow inane sentimentality to influence me; it is beneath the revolutionist.

“Billy,” I say with some asperity, “many innocent people have been hanged. The Nihilists, for instance—”

“Oh, damn ‘em! What do I care about ‘em! Will they hang *me*, that’s what I want to know.”

“May be they will,” I reply, irritated at the profanation of my ideal. A look of terror spreads over his face. His eyes are fastened upon me, his lips parted. “Yes,” I continue, “perhaps they will hang you. Many innocent men have suffered such a fate. I don’t think you are innocent, either; nor blind. You don’t need those glasses; there is nothing the matter with your eyes. Now

understand, Billy, I don't want them to hang you. I don't believe in hanging. But I must tell you the truth, and you'd better be ready for the worst."

Gradually the look of fear fades from his face. Rage suffuses his cheeks with spots of dark red.

"You're crazy! What's the use talkin' to you, anyhow? You are a damn Anarchist. I'm a good Catholic, I want you to know that! I haven't always did right, but the good father confessed me last week. I'm no damn murderer like you, see? It was an accident. I'm pretty near blind, and this is a Christian country, thank God! They won't hang a blind man. Don't you ever talk to *me* again!"

## XI

The days and weeks pass in wearying monotony, broken only by my anxiety about the approaching trial. It is part of the designed cruelty to keep me ignorant of the precise date. "Hold yourself ready. You may be called any time," the Warden had said. But the shadows are lengthening, the days come and go, and still my name has not appeared on the court calendar. Why this torture? Let me have over with it. My mission is almost accomplished,—the explanation in court, and then my life is done. I shall never again have an opportunity to work for the Cause. I may therefore leave the world. I should die content, but for the partial failure of my plans. The bitterness of disappointment is gnawing at my heart. Yet why? The physical results of my act cannot affect its propagandistic value. Why, then, these regrets? I should rise above them. But the gibes of officers and prisoners wound me. "Bad shot, ain't you?" They do not dream how keen their thoughtless thrusts. I smile and try to appear indifferent, while my heart bleeds. Why should I, the revolutionist, be moved by such remarks? It is weakness. They are so far beneath me; they live in the swamp of their narrow personal interests; they cannot understand. And yet the croaking of the frogs may reach the eagle's aerie, and disturb the peace of the heights.

The "trusty" passes along the gallery. He walks slowly, dusting the iron railing, then turns to give my door a few light strokes with the cat-o'-many-tails. Leaning against the outer wall, he stoops low, pretending to wipe the doorsill,—there is a quick movement of his hand, and a little roll of white is shot between the lower bars, falling at my feet. "A stiff," he whispers.

Indifferently I pick up the note. I know no one in the jail; it is probably some poor fellow asking for cigarettes. Placing the roll between the pages of a newspaper, I am surprised to find it in German. From whom can it be? I turn to the signature. Carl Nold? It's impossible; it's a trap! No, but that handwriting,—I could not mistake it: the small, clear chirography is undoubtedly Nold's. But how did he smuggle in this note? I feel the blood rush to my head as my eye flits over the penciled lines: Bauer and he are arrested; they are in the jail now, charged with conspiracy to kill Frick; detectives swore they met them in my company, in front of the Frick office building. They have engaged a lawyer, the note runs on. Would I accept his services? I probably have no money, and I shouldn't expect any from New York, because Most—what's this?—because Most has repudiated the act—

The gong tolls the exercise hour. With difficulty I walk to the gallery. I feel feverish: my feet drag heavily, and I stumble against the railing.

“Is yo sick, Ahlick?” It must be the negro’s voice. My throat is dry; my lips refuse to move. Hazily I see the guard approach. He walks me to the cell, and lowers the berth. “You may lie down.” The lock clicks, and I’m alone.

The line marches past, up and down, up and down. The regular football beats against my brain like hammer strokes. When will they stop? My head aches dreadfully—I am glad I don’t have to walk—it was good of the negro to call the guard—I felt so sick. What was it? Oh, the note! Where is it?

The possibility of loss dismays me. Hastily I pick the newspaper up from the floor. With trembling hands I turn the leaves. Ah, it’s here! If I had not found it, I vaguely wonder, were the thing mere fancy?

The sight of the crumpled paper fills me with dread. Nold and Bauer here! Perhaps—if they act discreetly—all will be well. They are innocent; they can prove it. But Most! How can it be possible? Of course, he was displeased when I began to associate with the autonomists. But how can that make any difference? At such a time! What matter personal likes and dislikes to a revolutionist, to a Most—the hero of my first years in America, the name that stirred my soul in that little library in Kovno—Most, the Bridge of Liberty! My teacher—the author of the *Kriegswissenschaft*—the ideal revolutionist—he to denounce me, to repudiate propaganda by deed?

It’s incredible! I cannot believe it. The Girl will not fail to write to me about it. I’ll wait till I hear from her. But, then, Nold is himself a great admirer of Most; he would not say anything derogatory, unless fully convinced that it is true. Yet—it is barely conceivable. How explain such a change in Most? To forswear his whole past, his glorious past! He was always so proud of it, and of his extreme revolutionism. Some tremendous motive must be back of such apostasy. It has no parallel in Anarchist annals. But what can it be? How boldly he acted during the Haymarket tragedy—publicly advised the use of violence to avenge the capitalist conspiracy. He must have realized the danger of the speech for which he was later doomed to Blackwell’s Island. I remember his defiant manner on the way to prison. How I admired his strong spirit, as I accompanied him on the last ride! That was only a little over a year ago, and he is just out a few months. Perhaps—is it possible? A coward? Has that prison experience influenced his present attitude? Why, it is terrible to think of. Most—a coward? He who has devoted his entire life to the Cause, sacrificed his seat in the Reichstag because of uncompromising honesty, stood in the forefront all his life, faced peril and danger,—*he* a coward? Yet, it is impossible that he should have suddenly altered the views of a lifetime. What could have prompted his denunciation of my act? Personal dislike? No, that was a matter of petty jealousy. His confidence in me, as a revolutionist, was unbounded. Did he not issue a secret circular letter to aid my plans concerning Russia? That was proof of absolute faith. One could not change his opinion so suddenly. Moreover, it can have no bearing on his repudiation of a terrorist act. I can find no explanation, unless—can it be?—fear of personal consequences. Afraid *he* might be held responsible, perhaps. Such a possibility is not excluded, surely. The enemy hates him bitterly, and

would welcome an opportunity, would even conspire, to hang him. But that is the price one pays for his love of humanity. Every revolutionist is exposed to this danger. Most especially; his whole career has been a duel with tyranny. But he was never before influenced by such considerations. Is he not prepared to take the responsibility for his terrorist propaganda, the work of his whole life? Why has he suddenly been stricken with fear? Can it be? Can it be? . . .

My soul is in the throes of agonizing doubt. Despair grips my heart, as I hesitatingly admit to myself the probable truth. But it cannot be; Nold has made a mistake. May be the letter is a trap; it was not written by Carl. But I know his hand so well. It is his, his! Perhaps I'll have a letter in the morning. The Girl—she is the only one I can trust—she'll tell me—

My head feels heavy. Wearily I lie on the bed. Perhaps to-morrow. . . a letter. . .

## XII

“Your pards are here. Do you want to see them?” the Warden asks.

“What ‘pards’?”

“Your partners, Bauer and Nold.”

“My comrades, you mean. I have no partners.”

“Same thing. Want to see them? Their lawyers are here.”

“Yes, I'll see them.”

Of course, I myself need no defence. I will conduct my own case, and explain my act. But I shall be glad to meet my comrades. I wonder how they feel about their arrest,—perhaps they are inclined to blame me. And what is their attitude toward my deed? If they side with Most—

My senses are on the alert as the guard accompanies me into the hall. Near the wall, seated at a small table, I behold Nold and Bauer. Two other men are with them; their attorneys, I suppose. All eyes scrutinize me curiously, searchingly. Nold advances toward me. His manner is somewhat nervous, a look of intense seriousness in his heavy-browed eyes. He grasps my hand. The pressure is warm, intimate, as if he yearns to pour boundless confidence into my heart. For a moment a wave of thankfulness overwhelms me: I long to embrace him. But curious eyes bore into me. I glance at Bauer. There is a cheerful smile on the good-natured, ruddy face. The guard pushes a chair toward the table, and leans against the railing. His presence constrains me: he will report to the Warden everything said.

I am introduced to the lawyers. The contrast in their appearance suggests a lifetime of legal wrangling. The younger man, evidently a recent graduate, is quick, alert, and talkative. There is an air of anxious expectancy about him, with a look of Semitic shrewdness in the long, narrow face. He enlarges upon the kind consent of his distinguished colleague to take charge of my case. His demeanor toward the elder lawyer is deeply respectful, almost reverential. The latter looks bored, and is silent.

“Do you wish to say something, Colonel?” the young lawyer suggests.

“Nothing.”

He ejects the monosyllable sharply, brusquely. His colleague looks abashed, like a schoolboy caught in a naughty act.

“You, Mr Berkman?” he asks.

I thank them for their interest in my case. But I need no defence, I explain, since I do not consider myself guilty. I am exclusively concerned in making a public statement in the courtroom. If I am represented by an attorney, I should be deprived of the opportunity. Yet it is most vital to clarify to the People the purpose of my act, the circumstances—

The heavy breathing opposite distracts me. I glance at the Colonel. His eyes are closed, and from the parted lips there issues the regular respiration of sound sleep. A look of mild dismay crosses the young lawyer's face. He rises with an apologetic smile.

"You are tired, Colonel. It's awfully close here."

"Let us go," the Colonel replies.

Depressed I return to the cell. The old lawyer,—how little my explanation interested him! He fell asleep! Why, it is a matter of life and death, an issue that involves the welfare of the world! I was so happy at the opportunity to elucidate my motives to intelligent Americans,—and he was sleeping! The young lawyer, too, is disgusting, with his air of condescending pity toward one who "will have a fool for a client," as he characterized my decision to conduct my own case. He may think such a course suicidal. Perhaps it is, in regard to consequences. But the length of the sentence is a matter of indifference to me: I'll die soon, anyway. The only thing of importance now is my explanation. And that man fell asleep! Perhaps he considers me a criminal. But what can I expect of a lawyer, when even the steel-worker could not understand my act? Most himself—

With the name, I recollect the letters the guard had given me during the interview. There are three of them; one from the Girl! At last! Why did she not write before? They must have kept the letter in the office. Yes, the postmark is a week old. She'll tell me about Most,—but what is the use? I'm sure of it now; I read it plainly in Nold's eyes. It's all true. But I must see what she writes.

How every line breathes her devotion to the Cause! She is the real Russian woman revolutionist. Her letter is full of bitterness against the attitude of Most and his lieutenants in the German and Jewish Anarchist circles, but she writes words of cheer and encouragement in my imprisonment. She refers to the financial difficulties of the little commune consisting of Fedya, herself, and one or two other comrades, and closes with the remark that, fortunately, I need no money for legal defence or attorneys.

The staunch Girl! She and Fedya are, after all, the only true revolutionists I know in our ranks. The others all possess some weakness. I could not rely on them. The German comrades,—they are heavy, phlegmatic; they lack the enthusiasm of Russia. I wonder how they ever produced a Reinsdorf. Well, he is the exception. There is nothing to be expected from the German movement, excepting perhaps the autonomists. But they are a mere handful, quite insignificant, kept alive mainly by the Most and Peukert feud. Peukert, too, the life of their circle, is chiefly concerned with his personal rehabilitation. Quite natural, of course. A terrible injustice has been done him.\* It is remarkable that the false accusations

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\*Joseph Peukert, at one time a leading Anarchist of Austria, was charged with betraying the German Anarchist Neve into the hands of the police. Neve was sentenced to ten years' prison. Peukert always insisted that the accusation against him originated with some of his political enemies among the Socialists. It is certain that the arrest of Neve was not due to calculated treachery on the part of Peukert, but rather to indiscretion.

have not driven him into obscurity. There is great perseverance, aye, moral courage of no mean order, in his survival in the movement. It was that which first awakened my interest in him. Most's explanation, full of bitter invective, suggested hostile personal feeling. What a tremendous sensation I created at the first Jewish Anarchist Conference by demanding that the charges against Peukert be investigated! The result entirely failed to substantiate the accusations. But the Mostianer were not convinced, blinded by the vituperative eloquence of Most. And now . . . now, again, they will follow, as blindly. To be sure, they will not dare take open stand against my act; not the Jewish comrades, at least. After all, the fire of Russia still smolders in their hearts. But Most's attitude toward me will influence them: it will dampen their enthusiasm, and thus react on the propaganda. The burden of making agitation through my act will fall on the Girl's shoulders. She will stand a lone soldier in the field. She will exert her utmost efforts, I am convinced. But she will stand alone. Fedya will also remain loyal. But what can he do? He is not a speaker. Nor the rest of the commune circle. And Most? We had all been so intimate. . . . It's his cursed jealousy, and cowardice, too. Yes, mostly cowardice—he can't be jealous of me now! He recently left prison,—it must have terrorized him. The weakling! He will minimize the effect of my act, perhaps paralyze its propagandistic influence altogether. . . . Now I stand alone—except for the Girl—quite alone. It is always so. Was not “he” alone, my beloved, “unknown” Grinevitzky, isolated, scorned by his comrades? But his bomb. . . how it thundered. . . .

I was just a boy then. Let me see,—it was in 1881. I was about eleven years old. The class was assembling after the noon recess. I had barely settled in my seat, when the teacher called me forward. His long pointer was dancing a fanciful figure on the gigantic map of Russia.

“What province is that?” he demanded.

“Astrakhan.”

“Mention its chief products.”

Products? The name Chernishevsky flitted through my mind. He was in Astrakhan,—I heard Maxim tell mother so at dinner.

“Nihilists,” I burst out.

The boys tittered; some laughed aloud. The teacher grew purple. He struck the pointer violently on the floor, shivering the tapering end. Suddenly there broke a roll of thunder. One—two—With a terrific crash, the window panes fell upon the desks; the floor shook beneath our feet. The room was hushed. Deathly pale, the teacher took a step toward the window, but hastily turned, and dashed from the room. The pupils rushed after him. I wondered at the air of fear and suspicion on the streets. At home every one spoke in subdued tones. Father looked at mother severely, reproachfully, and Maxim was unusually silent, but his face seemed radiant, an unwonted brilliancy in his eye. At night, alone with me in the dormitory, he rushed to my bed, knelt at my side, and threw his arms around me and kissed me, and cried, and kissed me. His wildness frightened me. “What is it, Maximotchka?” I breathed softly. He ran up and down the room, kissing me and murmuring, “Glorious, glorious! Victory!”

Between sobs, solemnly pledging me to secrecy, he whispered mysterious, awe-inspiring words: Will of the People—tyrant removed—Free Russia. . . .

## XIII

The nights overwhelm me with the sense of solitude. Life is so remote, so appallingly far away—it has abandoned me in this desert of silence. The distant puffing of fire engines, the shrieking of river sirens, accentuate my loneliness. Yet it feels so near, this monster Life, huge, palpitating with vitality, intent upon its wonted course. How unmindful of myself, flung into the darkness,—like a furnace spark belched forth amid fire and smoke into the blackness of night.

The monster! Its eyes are implacable; they watch every gate of life. Every approach they guard, lest I enter back—I and the others here. Poor unfortunates, how irritated and nervous they are growing as their trial day draws near! There is a hunted look in their eyes; their faces are haggard and anxious. They walk weakly, haltingly, worn with the long days of waiting. Only “Blackie,” the young negro, remains cheerful. But I often miss the broad smile on the kindly face. I am sure his eyes were moist when the three Italians returned from court this morning. They had been sentenced to death. Joe, a boy of eighteen, walked to the cell with a firm step. His brother Pasquale passed us with both hands over his face, weeping silently. But the old man, their father—as he was crossing the hallway, we saw him suddenly stop. For a moment he swayed, then lurched forward, his head striking the iron railing, his body falling limp to the floor. By the arms the guards dragged him up the stairway, his legs hitting the stone with a dull thud, the fresh crimson spreading over his white hair, a glassy torpor in his eyes. Suddenly he stood upright. His head thrown back, his arms upraised, he cried hoarsely, anguished, “O Santa Maria! Sio innocente, inno—”

The guard swung his club. The old man reeled and fell.

“Ready! Death-watch!” shouted the Warden.

“In-no-cente! Death-watch!” mocked the echo under the roof.

The old man haunts my days. I hear the agonized cry; its black despair chills my marrow. Exercise hour has become insupportable. The prisoners irritate me: each is absorbed in his own case. The deadening monotony of the jail routine grows unbearable. The constant cruelty and brutality is harrowing. I wish it were all over. The uncertainty of my trial day is a ceaseless torture. I have been waiting now almost two months. My court speech is prepared. I could die now, but they would suppress my explanation, and the People thus remain ignorant of my aim and purpose. I owe it to the Cause—and to the true comrades—to stay on the scene till after the trial. There is nothing more to bind me to life. With the speech, my opportunities for propaganda will be exhausted. Death, suicide, is the only logical, the sole possible, conclusion. Yes, that is self-evident. If I only knew the date of my trial,—that day will be my last. The poor old Italian,—he and his sons, they at least know when they are to die. They count each day; every hour brings them closer to the end. They will be hanged here, in the jail yard. Perhaps they killed under great provocation, in the heat of passion. But the sheriff will murder them in cold blood. The law of peace and order!

I shall not be hanged—yet I feel as if I were dead. My life is done; only the last rite remains to be performed. After that—well, I’ll find a way. When the trial is

over, they'll return me to my cell. The spoon is of tin: I shall put a sharp edge on it—on the stone floor—very quietly, at night—

“Number six, to court! Num-ber six!”

Did the turnkey call “six” Who is in cell six? Why, it's *my* cell! I feel the cold perspiration running down my back. My heart beats violently, my hands tremble, as I hastily pick up the newspaper. Nervously I turn the pages. There must be some mistake: my name didn't appear yet in the court calendar column. The list is published every Monday—why, this is Saturday's paper—yesterday we had service—it must be Monday to-day. Oh, shame! They didn't give me the paper to-day, and it's Monday—yes, it's Monday—

The shadow falls across my door. The lock clicks.

“Hurry. To court!”

## CHAPTER 7 THE TRIAL

The courtroom breathes the chill of the graveyard. The stained windows cast sickly rays into the silent chamber. In the sombre light the faces look funereal, spectral.

Anxiously I scan the room. Perhaps my friends, the Girl, have come to greet me. . . . Everywhere cold eyes meet my gaze. Police and court attendants on every side. Several newspaper men draw near. It is humiliating that through them I must speak to the People.

“Prisoner at the bar, stand up!”

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania—the clerk vociferates—charges me with felonious assault on H. C. Frick, with intent to kill; felonius assault on John G. A. Leishman; feloniously entering the offices of the Carnegie Company on three occasions, each constituting a separate indictment; and with unlawfully carrying concealed weapons.

“Do you plead guilty or not guilty?”

I protest against the multiplication of the charges. I do not deny the attempt on Frick, but the accusation of having assaulted Leishman is not true. I have visited the Carnegie offices only—

“Do you plead guilty or not guilty?” the judge interrupts.

“Not guilty. I want to explain—”

“Your attorneys will do that.”

“I have no attorney.”

“The Court will appoint one to defend you.”

“I need no defence. I want to make a statement.”

“You will be given an opportunity at the proper time.”

Impatiently I watch the proceedings. Of what use are all these preliminaries? My conviction is a foregone conclusion. The men in the jury box there, they are to decide my fate. As if they could understand! They measure me with cold, unsympathetic looks. Why were the talesmen not examined in my presence? They were already seated when I entered.

“When was the jury picked?” I demand.

“You have four challenges,” the prosecutor retorts.

The names of the talesmen sound strange. But what matter who are the men to judge me? They, too, belong to the enemy. They will do the master’s bidding. Yet I may, even for a moment, clog the wheels of the Juggernaut. At random, I select four names from the printed list, and the new jurors file into the box.

The trial proceeds. A police officer and two negro employees of Frick in turn take the witness stand. They had seen me three times in the Frick office, they testify. They speak falsely, but I feel indifferent to the hired witnesses. A tall man takes the stand. I recognize the detective who so brazenly claimed to identify me in the jail. He is followed by a physician who states that each wound of Frick might have proved fatal. John G. A. Leishman is called. I attempted to kill him, he testifies. “It’s a lie!” I cry out, angrily, but the guards force me into the seat. Now Frick comes forward. He seeks to avoid my eye, as I confront him.

The prosecutor turns to me. I decline to examine the witnesses for the State. They have spoken falsely; there is no truth in them, and I shall not participate in the mockery.

“Call the witnesses for the defence,” the judge commands.

I have no need of witnesses. I wish to proceed with my statement. The prosecutor demands that I speak English. But I insist on reading my prepared paper, in German. The judge rules to permit me the services of the court interpreter.

“I address myself to the People,” I begin. “Some may wonder why I have declined a legal defence. My reasons are twofold. In the first place, I am an Anarchist: I do not believe in man-made law, designed to enslave and oppress humanity. Secondly, an extraordinary phenomenon like an *Attentat* cannot be measured by the narrow standards of legality. It requires a view of the social background to be adequately understood. A lawyer would try to defend, or palliate, my act from the standpoint of the law. Yet the real question at issue is not a defence of myself, but rather the *explanation* of the deed. It is mistaken to believe *me* on trial. The actual defendant is Society—the system of injustice, of the organized exploitation of the People.”

The voice of the interpreter sounds cracked and shrill. Word for word he translates my utterance, the sentences broken, disconnected, in his inadequate English. The vociferous tones pierce my ears, and my heart bleeds at his meaningless declamation.

“Translate sentences, not single words,” I remonstrate.

With an impatient gesture he leaves me.

“Oh, please, go on!” I cry in dismay.

He returns hesitatingly.

“Look at my paper,” I adjure him, “and translate each sentence as I read it.”

The glazy eyes are turned to me, in a blank, unseeing stare. The man is blind!

“Let—us—continue,” he stammers.

“We have heard enough,” the judge interrupts.

“I have not read a third of my paper,” I cry in consternation.

“It will do.”

“I have declined the services of attorneys to get time to—”

“We allow you five more minutes.”

“But I can’t explain in such a short time. I have the right to be heard.”

“We’ll teach you differently.”

I am ordered from the witness chair. Several jurymen leave their seats, but the district attorney hurries forward, and whispers to them. They remain in the jury box. The room is hushed as the judge rises.

“Have you anything to say why sentence should not be passed upon you?”

“You would not let me speak,” I reply. “Your justice is a farce.”

“Silence!”

In a daze, I hear the droning voice on the bench. Hurriedly the guards lead me from the courtroom.

“The judge was easy on you,” the Warden jeers. “Twenty-two years! Pretty stiff, eh?”

# From Part Two: The Penitentiary

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*Berkman vacillates between hope and despair. In Chapter 2 of Part 2, Berkman finds new strength to live in the thought of breaking out of prison: "No I will struggle and fight. . . I will live, to escape, to conquer!" But in Chapter 3 he concludes, "Escape is hopeless. And this agony of living death—I cannot support it." In Chapter 4 Berkman makes friends with a fellow prisoner, "Wingie," and in Chapter 5, which follows, Berkman is assigned to work in the mat shop.*

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## CHAPTER 5 THE SHOP

### I

I stand in line with a dozen prisoners, in the anteroom of the Deputy's office. Humiliation overcomes me as my eye falls, for the first time in the full light of day, upon my striped clothes. I am degraded to a beast! My first impression of a prisoner in stripes is painfully vivid: he resembled a dangerous brute. Somehow the idea is associated in my mind with a wild tigress,—and I, too, must now look like that.

The door of the rotunda swings open, admitting the tall, lank figure of the Deputy Warden.

"Hands up!"

The Deputy slowly passes along the line, examining a hand here and there. He separates the men into groups; then, pointing to the one in which I am included, he says in his feminine accents:

"None crippled. Officers, take them, hm, hm, to Number Seven. Turn them over to Mr. Hoods."

"Fall in! Forward, march!"

My resentment at the cattle-like treatment is merged into eager expectation. At last I am assigned to work! I speculate on the character of "Number Seven," and on the possibilities of escape from there. Flanked by guards, we cross the prison yard in close lockstep. The sentinels on the wall, their rifles resting loosely on crooked arm, face the striped line winding snakelike through the open space. The yard is spacious and clean, the lawn well kept and inviting. The first breath of fresh air in two weeks violently stimulates my longing for liberty. Perhaps the shop will offer an opportunity to escape. The thought quickens my observation.

Bounded north, east, and south by the stone wall, the two blocks of the cell-house form a parallelogram, enclosing the shops, kitchen, hospital, and, on the extreme south, the women's quarters.

"Break ranks!"

We enter Number Seven, a mat shop. With difficulty I distinguish the objects in the dark, low-ceilinged room, with its small, barred windows. The air is heavy with dust; the rattling of the looms is deafening. An atmosphere of noisy gloom pervades the place.

The officer in charge assigns me to a machine occupied by a lanky prisoner in stripes. "Jim, show him what to do."

Considerable time passes, without Jim taking the least notice of me. Bent low over the machine, he seems absorbed in the work, his hands deftly manipulating the shuttle, his foot on the treadle. Presently he whispers, hoarsely:

"Fresh fish?"

"What did you say?"

"You bloke, long here?"

"Two weeks."

"Wotcher doin'?"

"Twenty-one years."

"Quitther kiddin'."

"It's true."

"Honest? Holy gee!"

The shuttle flies to and fro. Jim is silent for a while, then he demands, abruptly:

"Wat dey put you here for?"

"I don't know."

"Been kickin'?"

"No."

"Den you'se bugs."

"Why so?"

"Dis 'ere is crank shop. Dey never put a mug 'ere 'cept he's bugs, or else dey got it in for you."

"How do *you* happen to be here?"

"Me? De God damn—got it in for me. See dis?" He points to a deep gash over his temple. "Had a scrap wid de screws. Almost knocked me glimmer out. It was dat big bull\* dere, Pete Hoods. I'll get even wid *him*, all right, damn his rotten soul. I'll kill him. By God, I will. I'll croak 'ere, anyhow."

"Perhaps it isn't so bad," I try to encourage him.

"It ain't eh? Wat d'*you* know 'bout it? I've got the con bad, spittin' blood every night. Dis dust's killin' me. Kill you, too, damn quick."

As if to emphasize his words, he is seized with a fit of coughing, prolonged and hollow.

The shuttle has in the meantime become entangled in the fringes of the matting. Recovering his breath, Jim snatches the knife at his side, and with a few deft strokes releases the metal. To and fro flies the gleaming thing, and Jim is again absorbed in his task.

"Don't bother me no more," he warns me, "I'm behind wid me work."

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\*Guard.

Every muscle tense, his long body almost stretched across the loom, in turn pulling and pushing, Jim bends every effort to hasten the completion of the day's task.

The guard approaches. "How's he doing?" he inquires, indicating me with a nod of the head.

"He's all right. But say, Hoods, dis 'ere is no place for de kid. He's got a twenty-one spot."

"Shut your damned trap!" the officer retorts, angrily. The consumptive bends over his work, fearfully eyeing the keeper's measuring stick.

As the officer turns away, Jim pleads:

"Mr. Hoods, I lose time teachin'. Won't you please take off a bit? De task is more'n I can do, an' I'm sick."

"Nonsense. There's nothing the matter with you, Jim. You're just lazy, that's what you are. Don't be shamming, now. It don't go with *me*."

At noon the overseer calls me aside. "You are green here," he warns me, "pay no attention to Jim. He wanted to be bad, but we showed him different. He's all right *now*. You have a long time; see that you behave yourself. This is no play-house, you understand?"

As I am about to resume my place in the line forming to march back to the cells for dinner, he recalls me:

"Say, Aleck, you'd better keep an eye on that fellow Jim. He is a little off, you know."

He points toward my head, with a significant rotary motion.

## II

The mat shop is beginning to affect my health: the dust has inflamed my throat, and my eyesight is weakening in the constant dusk. The officer in charge has repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with my slow progress in the work. "I'll give you another chance," he cautioned me yesterday, "and if you don't make a good mat by next week, down in the hole you go." He severely upbraided Jim for his inefficiency as instructor.

As the consumptive was about to reply, he suffered an attack of coughing. The emaciated face turned greenish-yellow, but in a moment he seemed to recover, and continued working. Suddenly I saw him clutch at the frame, a look of terror spread over his face, he began panting for breath, and then a stream of dark blood gushed from his mouth, and Jim fell to the floor.

The steady whirl of the looms continued. The prisoner at the neighboring machine cast a furtive look at the prostrate form, and bent lower over his work. Jim lay motionless, the blood dyeing the floor purple. I rushed to the officer.

"Mr. Hoods, Jim has—"

"Back to your place, damn you!" he shouted at me. "How dare you leave it without permission?"

"I just—"

"Get back, I tell you!" he roared, raising the heavy stick.

I returned to my place. Jim lay very still, his lips parted, his face ashen.

Slowly, with measured step, the officer approached.

“What’s the matter here?”

I pointed at Jim. The guard glanced at the unconscious man, then lightly touched the bleeding face with his foot.

“Get up, Jim, get up!”

The nerveless head rolled to the side, striking the leg of the loom.

“Guess he isn’t shamming,” the officer muttered. Then he shook his finger at me, menacingly: “Don’t you ever leave your place without orders. Remember, *you!*”

After a long delay, causing me to fear that Jim had been forgotten, the doctor arrived. It was Mr. Rankin, the senior prison physician, a short, stocky man of advanced middle age, with a humorous twinkle in his eye. He ordered the sick prisoner taken to the hospital. “Did any one see the man fall?” he inquired.

“This man did,” the keeper replied, indicating me.

While I was explaining, the doctor eyed me curiously. Presently he asked my name. “Oh, the celebrated case,” he smiled. “I know Mr. Frick quite well. Not such a bad man, at all. But you’ll be treated well here, Mr Berkman. This is a democratic institution, you know. By the way, what is the matter with your eyes? They are inflamed. Always that way?”

“Only since I am working in this shop.”

“Oh, he is all right, Doctor,” the officer interposed. “He’s only been here a week.”

Mr. Rankin cast a quizzical look at the guard.

“You want him here?”

“Y-e-s: we’re short of men.”

“Well, *I* am the doctor, Mr. Hoods.” Then, turning to me, he added: “Report in the morning on sick list.”

### III

The doctor’s examination has resulted in my removal to the hosiery department. The change has filled me with renewed hope. A disciplinary shop, to which are generally assigned the “hard cases”—inmates in the first stages of mental derangement, or exceptionally unruly prisoners—the mat shop is the point of special supervision and severest discipline. It is the bestguarded shop, from which escape is impossible. But in the hosiery department, a recent addition to the local industries, I may find the right opportunity. It will require time, of course; but my patience shall be equal to the great object. The working conditions, also, are more favorable: the room is light and airy, the discipline not so stringent. My near-sightedness has secured for me immunity from machine work. The Deputy at first insisted that my eyes were “good enough” to see the numerous needles of the hosiery machine. It is true, I could see them; but not with sufficient distinctness to insure the proper insertion of the initial threads. To admit partial ability would result, I knew, in being ordered to produce the task; and failure, or faulty work, would be severely punished. Necessity drove me to subterfuge: I pretended total inability to distinguish the needles. Repeated threats of punishment failing to change my determination, I have been assigned the comparatively easy work of “turning” the stockings. The occupation, though tedious, is not exacting. It

consists in gathering the hosiery manufactured by the knitting machines, whence the product issues without soles. I carry the pile to the table provided with an iron post, about eighteen inches high, topped with a small inverted disk. On this instrument the stockings are turned “inside out” by slipping the article over the post, then quickly “undressing” it. The hosiery thus “turned” is forwarded to the looping machines, by which the product is finished and sent back to me, once more to be “turned,” preparatory to sorting and shipment.

Monotonously the days and weeks pass by. Practice lends me great dexterity in the work, but the hours of drudgery drag with heavy heel. I seek to hasten time by forcing myself to take an interest in the task. I count the stockings I turn, the motions required by each operation, and the amount accomplished within a given time. But in spite of these efforts, my mind persistently reverts to unprofitable subjects: my friends and the propaganda; the terrible injustice of my excessive sentence; suicide and escape.

My nights are restless. Oppressed with a nameless weight, or tormented by dread, I awake with a start, breathless and affrighted, to experience the momentary relief of danger past. But the next instant I am overwhelmed by the consciousness of my surroundings, and plunged into rage and despair, powerless, hopeless.

Thus day succeeds night, and night succeeds day, in the ceaseless struggle of hope and discouragement, of life and death, amid the externally placid tenor of my Pennsylvania nightmare.

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*In Chapter 6 Alec answers Emma’s letter: “I sense bitterness and disappointment in your letter. Why do you speak of failure? . . . True morality deals with motives, not consequences.” Chapter 7 follows here.*

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## CHAPTER 7

### WINGIE

The hours at work help to dull the acute consciousness of my environment. The hosiery department is past the stage of experiment; the introduction of additional knitting machines has enlarged my task, necessitating increased effort and more sedulous application.

The shop routine now demands all my attention. It leaves little time for thinking or brooding. My physical condition alarms me: the morning hours completely exhaust me, and I am barely able to keep up with the line returning to the cell-house for the noon meal. A feeling of lassitude possesses me, my feet drag heavily, and I experience great difficulty in mastering my sleepiness.

I have grown indifferent to the meals; the odor of food nauseates me. I am nervous and morbid: the sight of a striped prisoner disgusts me; the proximity of a guard enrages me. The shop officer has repeatedly warned me against my disrespectful and surly manner. But I am indifferent to consequences: what matter what

happens? My waning strength is a source of satisfaction: perhaps it indicates the approach of death. The thought pleases me in a quiet, impersonal way. There will be no more suffering, no anguish. The world at large is non-existent; it is centered in Me; and yet I myself stand aloof, and see it falling into gradual peace and quiet, into extinction.

Back in my cell after the day's work, I leave the evening meal of bread and coffee untouched. My candle remains unlit. I sit listlessly in the gathering dusk, conscious only of the longing to hear the gong's deep bass,—the three bells tolling the order to retire. I welcome the blessed permission to fall into bed. The coarse straw mattress beckons invitingly; I yearn for sleep, for oblivion.

Occasional mail from friends rouses me from my apathy. But the awakening is brief: the tone of the letters is guarded, their contents too general in character, the matters that might kindle my interest are missing. The world and its problems are drifting from my horizon. I am cast into the darkness. No ray of sunshine holds out the promise of spring.

At times the realization of my fate is borne in upon me with the violence of a shock, and I am engulfed in despair, now threatening to break down the barriers of sanity, now affording melancholy satisfaction in the wild play of fancy. . . . Existence grows more and more unbearable with the contrast of dream and reality. Weary of the day's routine, I welcome the solitude of the cell, impatient even of the greeting of the passing convict. I shrink from the uninvited familiarity of these men, the horizontal gray and black constantly reviving the image of the tigress, with her stealthy, vicious cunning. They are not of *my* world. I would aid them, as in duty bound to the victims of social injustice. But I cannot be friends with them: they do not belong to the People, to whose service my life is consecrated. Unfortunates, indeed; yet parasites upon the producers, less in degree, but no less in kind than the rich exploiters. By virtue of my principles, rather than their deserts, I must give them my intellectual sympathy; they touch no chord in my heart.

Only Wingie seems different. There is a gentle note about his manner that breathes cheer and encouragement. Often I long for his presence, yet he seldom finds opportunity to talk with me, save Sundays during church service, when I remain in the cell. Perhaps I may see him to-day. He must be careful of the Block Captain, on his rounds of the galleries, counting the church delinquents.\* The Captain is passing on the range now. I recognize the uncertain step, instantly ready to halt at the sight of a face behind the bars. Now he is at the cell. He pencils in his note-book the number on the wooden block over the door, A 7.

"Catholic?" he asks, mechanically. Then, looking up, he frowns on me.

"You're no Catholic, Berkman. What d'you stay in for?"

"I am an atheist."

"A what?"

"An atheist, a non-believer."

"Oh, an infidel, are you? You'll be damned, shore 'nough."

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\*Inmates of Catholic faith are excused from attending Protestant service, and *vice versa*.

The wooden stairs creak beneath the officer's weight. He has turned the corner. Wingie will take advantage now. I hope he will come soon. Perhaps somebody is watching—

"Hello, Aleck! Want a piece of pie? Here, grab it!"

"Pie, Wingie?" I whisper wonderingly. "Where do you get such luxuries?"

"Swiped from the screw's poke, Cornbread Tom's dinner-basket, you know. The cheap guy saved it after breakfast. Rotten, ain't he?"

"Why so?"

"Why, you greenie, he's a stomach robber, that's what he is. It's *our* pie, Aleck, made here in the bakery. That's why our punk is stale, see; they steals the east\* to make pies for th' screws. Are you next? How d' you like the grub, anyhow?"

"The bread is generally stale, Wingie. And the coffee tastes like tepid water."

"Coffee you call it? He, he, coffee hell. It ain't no damn coffee; 'tnever was near coffee. It's just bootleg, Aleck, bootleg. Know how't's made?"

"No."

"Well, I been three months in th' kitchen. You c'llect all the old punk that the cons dump out with their dinner pans. Only the crust's used, see. Like as not some syph coon spit on 't. Some's mean enough to do't, you know. Makes no diff, though. Orders is, cut off th' crusts an' burn 'em to a good black crisp. Then you pour boiling water over it an' dump it in th' kettle, inside a bag, you know, an' throw a little dirty chic'ry in—there's your *coffee*. I never touch th' rotten stuff. It rooins your stummick, that's what it does, Aleck. You oughtn't drink th' swill."

"I don't care if it kills me."

"Come, come, Aleck. Cheer up, old boy. You got a tough bit, I know, but don't take it so hard. Don't think of your time. Forget it. Oh, yes, you can; you jest take my word for't. Make some friends. Think who you wan' to see tomorrow, then try t' see 'm. That's what you wan' to do, Aleck. It'll keep you hustlin'. Best thing for the blues, kiddie."

For a moment he pauses in his hurried whisper. The soft eyes are full of sympathy, the lips smile encouragingly. He leans the broom against the door, glances quickly around, hesitates an instant, and then deftly slips a slender, delicate hand between the bars, and gives my cheek a tender pat.

Involuntarily I step back, with the instinctive dislike of a man's caress. Yet I would not offend my kind friend. But Wingie must have noticed my annoyance: he eyes me critically, wonderingly. Presently picking up the broom, he says with a touch of diffidence:

"You are all right, Aleck. I like you for 't. Jest wanted t' try you, see?"

"How 'try me,' Wingie?"

"Oh, you ain't next? Well, you see—" he hesitates, a faint flush stealing over his prison pallor, "you see, Aleck, it's—oh, wait till I pipe th' screw."

Poor Wingie, the ruse is too transparent to hide his embarrassment. I can distinctly follow the step of the Block Captain on the upper galleries. He is the sole officer in the cell-house during church service. The unlocking of the yard door would apprise us of the entrance of a guard, before the latter could observe Wingie at my cell.

I ponder over the flimsy excuse. Why did Wingie leave me? His flushed face,

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\*Yeast.

the halting speech of the usually loquacious rangeman, the subterfuge employed to “sneak off,”—as he himself would characterize his hasty departure,—all seem very peculiar. What could he have meant by “trying” me? But before I have time to evolve a satisfactory explanation, I hear Wingie tiptoeing back.

“It’s all right, Aleck. They won’t come from the chapel for a good while yet.”

“What did you mean by ‘trying’ me, Wingie?”

“Oh, well,” he stammers, “never min’, Aleck. You are a good boy, all right. You don’t belong here, that’s what *I* say.”

“Well, I *am* here; and the chances are I’ll die here.”

“Now, don’t talk so foolish, boy. I ‘lowed you looked down at the mouth. Now, don’t you fill your head with such stuff an’ nonsense. Croak here, hell! You ain’t goin’ t’do nothin’ of the kind. Don’t you go broodin’, now. You listen t’me, Aleck, that’s your friend talkin’, see? You’re so young, why, you’re just a kid. Twenty-one, ain’t you? An’ talkin’ about dyin’! Shame on you, shame!”

His manner is angry, but the tremor in his voice sends a ray of warmth to my heart. Impulsively I put my hand between the bars. His firm clasp assures me of returned appreciation.

“You must brace up, Aleck. Look at the lifers. You’d think they’d be black as night. Nit, my boy, the jolliest lot in th’ dump. You seen old Henry? No? Well, you ought’ see ‘im. He’s the oldest man here; in fifteen years. A lifer, an’ hasn’t a friend in th’ woild, but he’s happy as th’ day’s long. An’ you got plenty friends; true blue, too. I know you have.”

“I have, Wingie. But what could they do for me?”

“How you talk, Aleck. Could do anythin’. You got rich friends, I know. You was mixed up with Frick. Well, your friends are all right, ain’t they?”

“Of course. What could they do, Wingie?”

“Get you pard’n, in two, three years may be, see? You must make a good record here.”

“Oh, I don’t care for a pardon.”

“Wha-a-t? You’re kiddin’.”

“No, Wingie, quite seriously. I am opposed to it on principle.”

“You’re sure bugs. What you talkin’ ‘bout? Principle fiddlesticks. Want to get out o’ here?”

“Of course I do.”

“Well, then, quit your principle racket. What’s principle got t’ do with ‘t? Your principle’s ‘gainst gettin’ out?”

“No, but against being pardoned.”

“You’re beyond me, Aleck. Guess you’re joshin’ me.”

“Now listen, Wingie. You see, I wouldn’t apply for a pardon, because it would be asking favors from the government, and I am against it, you understand? It would be of no use, anyhow, Wingie.”

“An’ if you could get a pard’n for the askin’, you won’t ask, Aleck. That’s what you mean?”

“Yes.”

“You’re hot stuff, Aleck. What they call you, Narchist? Hot stuff, by gosh! Can’t make you out, though. Seems daffy; Lis’n t’ me, Aleck. If I was you, I’d take anythin’ I could get, an’ then tell ‘em to go t’hell. That’s what I would do, my boy.”

He looks at me quizzically, searchingly. The faint echo of the Captain's step reaches us from a gallery on the opposite side. With a quick glance to right and left, Wingie leans over toward the door. His mouth between the bars, he whispers very low:

"Principles opposed to a get-a-way, Aleck?"

The sudden question bewilders me. The instinct of liberty, my revolutionary spirit, the misery of my existence, all flame into being, rousing a wild, tumultuous beating of my heart, pervading my whole being with hope, intense to the point of pain. I remain silent. Is it safe to trust him? He seems kind and sympathetic—

"You may trust me, Aleck," Wingie whispers, as if reading my thoughts. "I'm your friend."

"Yes, Wingie, I believe you. My principles are not opposed to an escape. I have been thinking about it, but so far—"

"S-sh! Easy. Walls have ears."

"Any chance here, Wingie?"

"Well, it's a damn tough dump, this 'ere is; but there's many a star in heaven, Aleck, an' you may have a lucky one. Hasn't been a get-a-way here since Paddy McGraw sneaked over th' roof, that's—lemme see, six, seven years ago, 'bout."

"How did he do it?" I ask, breathlessly.

"Jest Irish luck. They was finishin' the new block, you know. Paddy was helpin' lay th' roof. When he got good an' ready, he jest goes to work and slides down th' roof. Swiped stuff in the mat shop an' spliced a rope together, see. They never got 'im, either."

"Was he in stripes, Wingie?"

"Sure he was. Only been in a few months."

"How did he manage to get away in stripes? Wouldn't he be recognized as an escaped prisoner?"

"*That* bother you, Aleck? Why, it's easy. Get planted till dark, then hold up th' first bloke you see an' take 'is duds. Or you push in th' back door of a rag joint; plenty of 'em in Allegheny."

"Is there any chance now through the roof?"

"Nit, my boy. Nothin' doin' *there*. But a feller's got to be alive. Many ways to kill a cat, you know. R'member the stiff you got in them things, tow'l an' soap?"

"You know about it, Wingie?" I ask, in amazement.

"Do I? He, he, you little—"

The click of steel sounds warning. Wingle disappears.

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*Two letters from Alec to Emma make up Chapter 8. In the first he pleads for her to write more often and in the second he speaks of the awkwardness of her first visit with him. In Chapter 9 Berkman comes to the defense of a fellow inmate, Johnny, who is being unjustly punished by prison authorities. Also, Wingie goes crazy after being sent to the dungeon for refusing to betray fellow prisoners who are part of a gambling circle. In Chapter 10 Red, Berkman's assistant in the shop, wants Berkman to be "his kid." Berkman is outraged: "You actually confess to such terrible practices? You're disgusting." Red replies, "Well, you'll learn to know better before your time's up, me virtuous sonny." In Chapter 11, in a*

*letter from Berkman to Emma and his comrade Fedya, Berkman voices disappointment that they didn't plan a prison escape for him. In Chapter 12 Alec and his two anarchist comrades, in prison with him, Henry Bauer and Carl Nold, begin a prison magazine, Zuchthausbleuthen ["Prison Blossoms"], which is surreptitiously circulated within the prison. It includes political articles, anecdotes and verse by prisoners. In Chapter 15 Alec pines for intimacy with a woman. In Chapter 16 and 17, which follow, Alec is taken to the warden's office, but doesn't know why, and then is thrown into the "basket cell."*

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## CHAPTER 16 THE WARDEN'S THREAT

### I

The dying sun grows pale with haze and fog. Slowly the dark-gray line undulates across the shop, and draws its sinuous length along the gloaming yard. The shadowy waves cleave the thickening mist, vibrate ghostlike, and are swallowed in the yawning blackness of the cell-house.

"Aleck, Aleck!" I hear an excited whisper behind me, "quick, plant it. The screw's goin' t' frisk me."

Something small and hard is thrust into my coat pocket. The guard in front stops short, suspiciously scanning the passing men.

"Break ranks!"

The overseer approaches me. "You are wanted in the office, Berk."

The Warden, blear-eyed and sallow, frowns as I am led in.

"What have you got on you?" he demands, abruptly.

"I don't understand you."

"Yes, you do. Have you money on you?"

"I have not."

"Who sends clandestine mail for you?"

"What mail?"

"The letter published in the Anarchist sheet in New York."

I feel greatly relieved. The letter in question passed through official channels.

"It went through the Chaplain's hands," I reply, boldly.

"It isn't true. Such a letter could never pass Mr. Milligan. Mr. Cosson," he turns to the guard, "fetch the newspaper from my desk."

The Warden's hands tremble as he points to the marked item. "Here it is! You talk of revolution, and comrades, and Anarchism. Mr. Milligan never saw *that*, I'm sure. It's a nice thing for the papers to say that you are editing—from the prison, mind you—editing an Anarchist sheet in New York."

"You can't believe everything the papers say," I protest.

"Hm, this time the papers, hm, hm, may be right," the Deputy interposes. "They surely didn't make the story, hm, hm, out of whole cloth."

"They often do," I retort. "Didn't they write that I tried to jump over the wall—it's about thirty feet high—and that the guard shot me in the leg?"

A smile flits across the Warden's face. Impulsively I blurt out:

"Was the story inspired, perhaps?"

"Silence!" the Warden thunders. "You are not to speak, unless addressed, remember. Mr. McPane, please search him."

The long, bony fingers slowly creep over my neck and shoulders, down my arms and body, pressing in my armpits, gripping my legs, covering every spot, and immersing me in an atmosphere of clamminess. The loathsome touch sickens me, but I rejoice in the thought of my security: I have nothing incriminating about me.

Suddenly the snakelike hand dips into my coat pocket.

"Hm, what's this?" He unwraps a small, round object. "A knife, Captain."

"Let me see!" I cry in amazement.

"Stand back!" the Warden commands. "This knife has been stolen from the shoe shop. On whom did you mean to use it?"

"Warden, I didn't even know I had it. A fellow dropped it into my pocket as we—"

"That'll do. You're not so clever as you think."

"It's a conspiracy!" I cry.

He lounges calmly in the armchair, a peculiar smile dancing in his eyes.

"Well, what have you got to say?"

"It's a put-up job."

"Explain yourself."

"Some one threw this thing into my pocket as we were coming—"

"Oh, we've already heard that. It's too fishy."

"You searched me for money and secret letters—"

"That will do now. Mr. McPane, what is the sentence for the possession of a dangerous weapon?"

"Warden," I interrupt, "it's no weapon. The blade is only half an inch, and—"

"Silence! I spoke to Mr. McPane."

"Hm, three days, Captain."

"Take him down."

In the storeroom I am stripped of my suit of dark gray, and again clad in the hateful stripes. Coatless and shoeless, I am led through hallways and corridors, down a steep flight of stairs, and thrown into the dungeon.

Total darkness. The blackness is massive, palpable,—I feel its hand upon my head, my face. I dare not move, lest a misstep thrust me into the abyss. I hold my hand close to my eyes—I feel the touch of my lashes upon it, but I cannot see its outline. Motionless I stand on one spot, devoid of all sense of direction. The silence is sinister; it seems to me I can hear it. Only now and then the hasty scrambling of nimble feet suddenly rends the stillness, and the gnawing of invisible river rats haunts the fearful solitude.

Slowly the blackness pales. It ebbs and melts; out of the sombre gray, a wall looms above; the silhouette of a door rises dimly before me, sloping upward and growing compact and impenetrable.

The hours drag in unbroken sameness. Not a sound reaches me from the cell-house. In the maddening quiet and darkness I am bereft of all consciousness of time, save once a day when the heavy rattle of keys apprises me of the morning:

the dungeon is unlocked, and the silent guards hand me a slice of bread and a cup of water. The double doors fall heavily to, the steps grow fainter and die in the distance, and all is dark again in the dungeon.

The numbness of death steals upon my soul. The floor is cold and clammy, the gnawing grows louder and nearer, and I am filled with dread lest the starving rats attack my bare feet. I snatch a few unconscious moments leaning against the door; and then again I pace the cell, striving to keep awake, wondering whether it be night or day, yearning for the sound of a human voice.

Utterly forsaken! Cast into the stony bowels of the underground, the world of man receding, leaving no trace behind. . . . Eagerly I strain my ear—only the ceaseless, fearful gnawing. I clutch the bars in desperation—a hollow echo mocks the clanking iron. My hands tear violently at the door—“Ho, there! Any one here?” All is silent. Nameless terrors quiver in my mind, weaving nightmares of mortal dread and despair. Fear shapes convulsive thoughts: they rage in wild tempest, then calm, and again rush through time and space in a rapid succession of strangely familiar scenes, wakened in my slumbering consciousness.

Exhausted and weary I droop against the wall. A slimy creeping on my face startles me in horror, and again I pace the cell. I feel cold and hungry. Am I forgotten? Three days must have passed, and more. Have they forgotten me? . . .

The clank of keys sends a thrill of joy to my heart. My tomb will open—oh, to see the light, and breathe the air again. . . .

“Officer, isn’t my time up yet?”

“What’s your hurry? You’ve only been here one day.”

The doors fall to. Ravenously I devour the bread, so small and thin, just a bite. Only one day! Despair enfolds me like a pall. Faint with anguish, I sink to the floor.

## II

The change from the dungeon to the ordinary cell is a veritable transformation. The sight of the human form fills me with delight, the sound of voices is sweet music. I feel as if I had been torn from the grip of death when all hope had fled me,—caught on the very brink, as it were, and restored to the world of the living. How bright the sun, how balmy the air! In keen sensuousness I stretch out on the bed. The tick is soiled, the straw protrudes in places, but it is luxury to rest, secure from the vicious river rats and the fierce vermin. It is almost liberty, freedom!

But in the morning I awake in great agony. My eyes throb with pain; every joint of my body is on the rack. The blankets had been removed from the dungeon; three days and nights I lay on the bare stone. It was unnecessarily cruel to deprive me of my spectacles, in pretended anxiety lest I commit suicide with them. It is very touching, this solicitude for my safety, in view of the flimsy pretext to punish me. Some hidden motive must be actuating the Warden. But what can it be? Probably they will not keep me long in the cell. When I am returned to work, I shall learn the truth.

The days pass in vain expectation. The continuous confinement is becoming distressing. I miss the little comforts I have lost by the removal to the “single”

cell, considerably smaller than my previous quarters. My library, also, has disappeared, and the pictures I had so patiently collected for the decoration of the walls. The cell is bare and cheerless, the large card of ugly-printed rules affording no relief from the irritating whitewash. The narrow space makes exercise difficult: the necessity of turning at every second and third step transforms walking into a series of contortions. But some means must be devised to while away the time. I pace the floor, counting the seconds required to make ten turns. I recollect having heard that five miles constitutes a healthy day's walk. At that rate I should make 3,771 turns, the cell measuring seven feet in length. I divide the exercise into three parts, adding a few extra laps to make sure of five miles. Carefully I count, and am overcome by a sense of calamity when the peal of the gong confuses my numbers. I must begin over again.

The change of location has interrupted communication with my comrades. I am apprehensive of the fate of the *Prison Blossoms*: strict surveillance makes the prospect of restoring connections doubtful. I am assigned to the ground floor, my cell being but a few feet distant from the officers' desk at the yard door. Watchful eyes are constantly upon me; it is impossible for any prisoner to converse with me. The rangeman alone could aid me in reaching my friends, but I have been warned against him: he is a "stool" who has earned his position as trusty by spying upon the inmates. I can expect no help from him; but perhaps the coffee-boy may prove of service.

I am planning to approach the man, when I am informed that prisoners from the hosiery department are locked up on the upper gallery. By means of the waste pipe,\* I learn of the developments during my stay in the dungeon. The discontent of the shop employees with the insufficient rations was intensified by the arrival of a wagon-load of bad meat. The stench permeated the yard, and several men were punished for passing uncomplimentary remarks about the food. The situation was aggravated by an additional increase of the task. The knitters and loopers were on the verge of rebellion. Twice within the month had the task been enlarged. They sent to the Warden a request for a reduction; in reply came the appalling order for a further increase. Then a score of men struck. They remained in the cells, refusing to return to the shop unless the demand for better food and less work was complied with. With the aid of informers, the Warden conducted a quiet investigation. One by one the refractory prisoners were forced to submit. By a process of elimination the authorities sifted the situation, and now it is whispered about that a decision has been reached, placing responsibility for the unique episode of a strike in the prison.

An air of mystery hangs about the guards. Repeatedly I attempt to engage them in conversation, but the least reference to the strike seals their lips. I wonder at the peculiar looks they regard me with, when unexpectedly the cause is revealed.

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\*Berkman learned to communicate with other prisoners by speaking through the pipes connecting toilets [GLF].

## III

It is Sunday noon. The rangeman pushes the dinner wagon along the tier. I stand at the door, ready to receive the meal. The overseer glances at me, then motions to the prisoner. The cart rolls past my cell.

“Officer,” I call out, “you missed me.”

“Smell the pot-pie, do you?”

“Where’s my dinner?”

“You get none.”

The odor of the steaming delicacy, so keenly looked forward to every second Sunday, reaches my nostrils and sharpens my hunger. I have eaten sparingly all week in expectation of the treat, and now—I am humiliated and enraged by being so unceremoniously deprived of the rare dinner. Angrily I rap the cup across the door; again and again I strike the tin against it, the successive falls from bar to bar producing a sharp, piercing clatter.

A guard hastens along. “Stop that damn racket,” he commands. “What’s the matter with you?”

“I didn’t get dinner.”

“Yes, you did.”

“I did not.”

“Well, I s’pose you don’t deserve it.”

As he turns to leave, my can crashes against the door—one, two, three—

“What t’hell do you want, eh?”

“I want to see the Warden.”

“You can’t see ‘im. You better keep quiet now.”

“I demand to see the Warden. He is supposed to visit us every day. He hasn’t been around for weeks. I must see him now.”

“If you don’t shut up, I’ll—

The Captain of the Block approaches.

“What do you want, Berkman?”

“I want to see the Warden.”

“Can’t see him. It’s Sunday.”

“Captain,” I retort, pointing to the rules on the wall of the cell, “there is an excerpt here from the statutes of Pennsylvania, directing the Warden to visit each prisoner every day—”

“Never mind, now,” he interrupts. “What do you want to see the Warden about?”

“I want to know why I got no dinner.”

“Your name is off the list for the next four Sundays.”

“What for?”

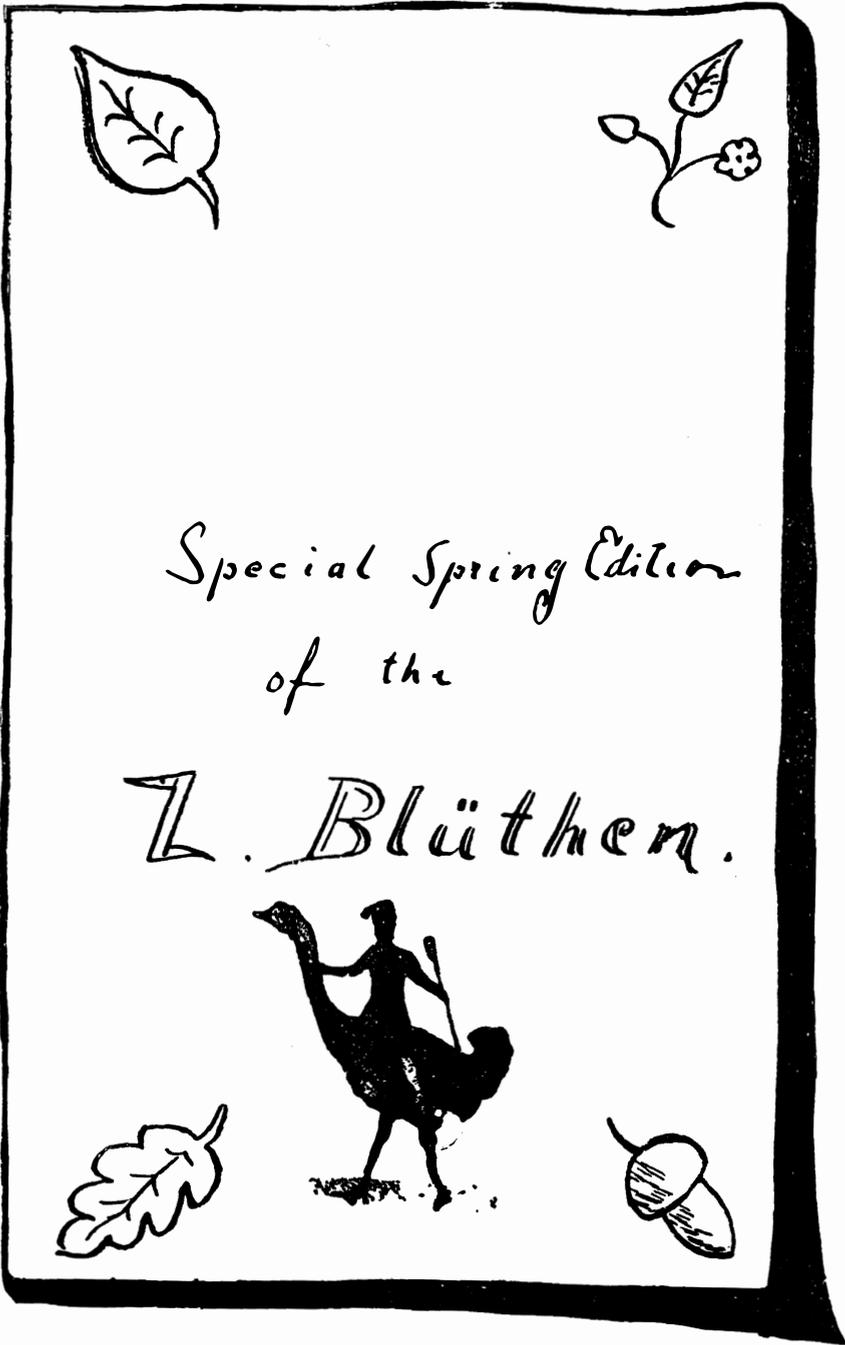
“That you’ll have to ask the boss. I’ll tell him you want to see him.”

Presently the overseer returns, informing me in a confidential manner that he has induced “his Nibs” to grant me an audience. Admitted to the inner office, I find the Warden at the desk, his face flushed with anger.

“You are reported for disturbing the peace,” he shouts at me.

“There is also, hm, hm, another charge against him,” the Deputy interposes.

“Two charges,” the Warden continues. “Disturbing the peace and making demands. How dare you demand?” he roars. “Do you know where you are?”



The cover of *Prison Blossoms*, the underground magazine Alec and his comrades published in prison.

“I wanted to see you.”

“It is not a question of what you want or don’t want. Understand that clearly. You are to obey the rules implicitly.”

“The rules direct you to visit—”

“Silence! What is your request?”

“I want to know why I am deprived of dinner.”

“It is not, hm, for *you* to know. It is enough, hm, hm, that *we* know,” the Deputy retorts.

“Mr. McPane,” the Warden interposes, “I am going to speak plainly to him. From this day on,” he turns to me, “you are on ‘Pennsylvania diet’ for four weeks. During that time no papers or books are permitted you. It will give you leisure to think over your behavior. I have investigated your conduct in the shop, and I am satisfied it was you who instigated the trouble there. You shall not have another chance to incite the men, even if you live as long as your sentence. But,” he pauses an instant, then adds, threateningly, “but you may as well understand it now as later—your life is not worth the trouble you give us. Mark you well, whatever the cost, it will be at *your* expense. For the present you’ll remain in solitary, where you cannot exert your pernicious influence. Officers, remove him to the ‘basket.’”

## CHAPTER 17 THE “BASKET” CELL

Four weeks of “Pennsylvania diet” have reduced me almost to a skeleton. A slice of wheat bread with a cup of unsweetened black coffee is my sole meal, with twice a week dinner of vegetable soup, from which every trace of meat has been removed. Every Saturday I am conducted to the office, to be examined by the physician and weighed. The whole week I look forward to the brief respite from the terrible “basket” cell. The sight of the striped men scouring the floor, the friendly smile on a stealthily raised face as I pass through the hall, the strange blue of the sky, the sweet-scented aroma of the April morning—how quickly it is all over! But the seven deep breaths I slowly inhale on the way to the office, and the eager ten on my return, set my blood aglow with renewed life. For an instant my brain reels with the sudden rush of exquisite intoxication, and then—I am in the tomb again.

The torture of the “basket” is maddening; the constant dusk is driving me blind. Almost no light or air reaches me through the close wire netting covering the barred door. The foul odor is stifling; it grips my throat with deathly hold. The walls hem me in; daily they press closer upon me, till the cell seems to contract, and I feel crushed in the coffin of stone. From every point the whitewashed sides glare at me, unyielding, inexorable, in confident assurance of their prey.

The darkness of despondency gathers day by day; the hand of despair weighs heavier. At night the screeching of a crow across the river ominously voices the black raven keeping vigil in my heart. The windows in the hallway quake and tremble in the furious wind. Bleak and desolate wakes the day—another day, then another—

Weak and apathetic I lie on the bed. Ever further recedes the world of the living. Still day follows night, and life is in the making, but I have no part in the pain and travail. Like a spark from the glowing furnace, flashing through the gloom, and swallowed in the darkness, I have been cast upon the shores of the forgotten. No sound reaches me from the island prison where beats the fervent heart of the Girl, no ray of hope falls across the bars of desolation. But on the threshold of Nirvana life recoils; in the very bowels of torment it cries out *to be!* Persecution feeds the fires of defiance, and nerves my resolution. Were I an ordinary prisoner, I should not care to suffer all these agonies. To what purpose, with my impossible sentence? But my Anarchist ideals and traditions rise in revolt against the vampire gloating over its prey. No, I shall not disgrace the Cause, I shall not grieve my comrades by weak surrender! I will fight and struggle, and not be daunted by threat or torture.

\* \* \*

With difficulty I walk to the office for the weekly weighing. My step falters as I approach the scales, and I sway dizzily. As through a mist I see the doctor bending over me, his head pressing against my body. Somehow I reach the “basket,” mildly wondering why I did not feel the cold air. Perhaps they did not take me through the yard—Is it the Block Captain’s voice? “What did you say?”

“Return to your old cell. You’re on full diet now.”

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*In Chapter 18 Alec writes of the more than a year spent in solitary confinement. In Chapter 19 Berkman, less hopeful of escape, daydreams of his first encounter with Emma and other lovers. Chapter 20 is about prison conditions including medical care, cell searches and the prison “caste” system. Chapters 21 and 22 are individual portraits of prisoners and guards and includes an analysis of how the prison functions. In Chapter 23 Emma mentions to Alec that she might be able to secure a pardon for him, but in Chapter 24 the parole board refuses to hear his case. Berkman begins Chapter 25, which follows, hopeful that a government investigation of prison conditions will have a positive result.*

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## CHAPTER 25

### HOW SHALL THE DEPTHS CRY?

#### I

The change of seasons varies the tone of the prison. A cheerier atmosphere pervades the shops and the cellhouse in the summer. The block is airier and lighter; the guards relax their stern look, in anticipation of their vacations; the men hopefully count the hours till their approaching freedom, and the gates open daily to release some one going back to the world.

But heavy gloom broods over the prison in winter. The windows are closed and

nailed; the vitiated air, artificially heated, is suffocating with dryness. Smoke darkens the shops, and the cells are in constant dusk. Tasks grow heavier, the punishments more severe. The officers look sullen; the men are morose and discontented. The ravings of the insane become wilder, suicides more frequent; despair and hopelessness oppress every heart.

The undercurrent of rebellion, swelling with mute suffering and repression, turbulently sweeps the barriers. The severity of the authorities increases, methods of penalizing are more drastic; the prisoners fret, wax more querulous, and turn desperate with blind, spasmodic defiance.

But among the more intelligent inmates, dissatisfaction manifests more coherent expression. The Lexow investigation in New York has awakened an echo in the prison. A movement is quietly initiated among the solitaries, looking toward an investigation of Riverside.

I keep busy helping the men exchange notes maturing the project. Great care must be exercised to guard against treachery: only men of proved reliability may be entrusted with the secret, and precautions taken that no officer or stool scent our design. The details of the campaign are planned on "K" range, with Billy Ryan, Butch, Sloane, and Jimmie Grant, as the most trustworthy, in command. It is decided that the attack upon the management of the penitentiary is to be initiated from the "outside." A released prisoner is to inform the press of the abuses, graft, and immorality rampant in Riverside. The public will demand an investigation. The "cabal" on the range will supply the investigators with data and facts that will rouse the conscience of the community, and cause the dismissal of the Warden and the introduction of reforms.

A prisoner, about to be discharged, is selected for the important mission of enlightening the press. In great anxiety and expectation we await the newspapers, the day following his liberation; we scan the pages closely. Not a word of the penitentiary! Probably the released man has not yet had an opportunity to visit the editors. In the joy of freedom, he may have looked too deeply into the cup that cheers. He will surely interview the papers the next day.

But the days pass into weeks, without any reference in the press to the prison. The trusted man has failed us! The revelation of the life at Riverside is of a nature not to be ignored by the press. The discharged inmate has proved false to his promise. Bitterly the solitaries denounce him, and resolve to select a more reliable man among the first candidates for liberty.

One after another, a score of men are entrusted with the mission to the press. But the papers remain silent. Anxiously, though every day less hopefully, we search their columns. Ryan cynically derides the faithlessness of convict promises; Butch rages and swears at the traitors. But Sloane is sternly confident in his own probity, and cheers me as I pause at his cell:

"Never min' them rats, Aleck. You jest wait till *I* go out. Here's the boy that'll keep his promise all right. What I won't do to old Sandy\* ain't worth mentionin'."

"Why, you still have two years, Ed," I remind him.

"Not on your tintype, Aleck. Only one and a stump."

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\*Warden Wright.

“How big is the stump?”

“Wa-a-ll,” he chuckles, looking somewhat diffident, “it’s one year, elev’n months, an’ twenty-sev’n days. It ain’t no two years, though, see?”

Jimmy Grant grows peculiarly reserved, evidently disinclined to talk. He seeks to avoid me. The treachery of the released men fills him with resentment and suspicion of every one. He is impatient of my suggestion that the fault may lie with a servile press. At the mention of our plans, he bursts out savagely:

“Forget it! You’re no good, none of you. Let me be!” He turns his back to me, and angrily paces the cell.

His actions fill me with concern. The youth seems strangely changed. Fortunately, his time is almost served.

## II

Like wildfire the news circles the prison. “The papers are giving Sandy hell!” The air in the block trembles with suppressed excitement. Jimmy Grant, recently released, had sent a communication to the State Board of Charities, bringing serious charges against the management of Riverside. The press publishes startlingly significant excerpts from Grant’s letter. Editorially, however, the indictment is ignored by the majority of the Pittsburgh papers. One writer comments ambiguously, in guarded language, suggesting the improbability of the horrible practices alleged by Grant. Another eulogizes Warden Wright as an intelligent and humane man, who has the interest of the prisoners at heart. The detailed accusations are briefly dismissed as unworthy of notice, because coming from a disgruntled criminal who had not found prison life to his liking. Only the *Leader* and the *Dispatch* consider the matter seriously, refer to the numerous complaints from discharged prisoners, and suggest the advisability of an investigation; they urge upon the Warden the necessity of disproving, once for all, the derogatory statements regarding his management.

Within a few days the President of the Board of Charities announces his decision to “look over” the penitentiary. December is on the wane, and the Board is expected to visit Riverside after the holidays.

## III

K. & G.:

Of course, neither of you has any more faith in alleged investigations than myself. The Lexow investigation, which shocked the whole country with its exposé of police corruption, has resulted in practically nothing. One or two subordinates have been “scapegoated”; those “higher up” went unscathed, as usual; the “system” itself remains in *statu quo*. The one who has mostly profited by the spasm of morality is Goff, to whom the vice crusade afforded an opportunity to rise from obscurity into the national limelight. Parkhurst also has subsided, probably content with the enlarged size of his flock and—salary. To give the devil his due, however, I admired his perseverance and courage in face of the storm of ridicule and scorn that met his initial accusations against the glorious

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\*“K” refers to Carl Nold, who was short—*Kleine* in German. “G” refers to Henry Bauer, who was physically a giant [GLF].

police department of the metropolis. But though every charge has been proved in the most absolute manner, the situation, as a whole, remains unchanged.

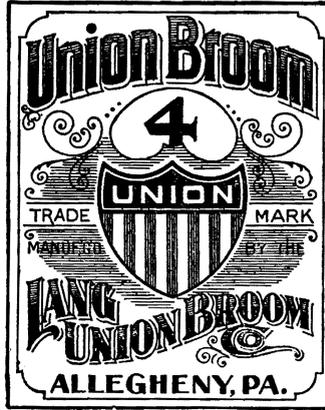
It is the history of all investigations. As the Germans say, you can't convict the devil in the court of his mother-in-law. It has again been demonstrated by the Congressional "inquiry" into the Carnegie blow-hole armor plate; in the terrible revelations regarding Superintendent Brockway, of the Elmira Reformatory—a veritable den for maiming and killing; and in numerous other instances. Warden Wright also was investigated, about ten years ago; a double set of books was then found, disclosing peculation of appropriations and theft of the prison product; brutality and murder were uncovered—yet Sandy has remained in his position.

We can, therefore, expect nothing from the proposed investigation by the Board of Charities. I have no doubt it will be a whitewash. But I think that we—the Anarchist trio—should show our solidarity, and aid the inmates with our best efforts; we must prevent the investigation resulting in a farce, so far as evidence against the management is concerned. We should leave the Board no loophole, no excuse of a lack of witnesses or proofs to support Grant's charges. I am confident you will agree with me in this. I am collecting data for presentation to the investigators; I am also preparing a list of volunteer witnesses. I have seventeen numbers on my range, and others from various parts of this block and from the shops. They all seem anxious to testify, though I am sure some will weaken when the critical moment arrives. Several have already notified me to erase their names. But we shall have a sufficient number of witnesses; we want preferably such men as have personally suffered a clubbing, the bull ring, hanging by the wrists, or other punishment forbidden by the law.

I have already notified the Warden that I wish to testify before the Investigation Committee. My purpose was to anticipate his objection that there are already enough witnesses. I am the first on the list now. The completeness of the case against the authorities will surprise you. Fortunately, my position as rangeman has enabled me to gather whatever information I needed. I will send you to-morrow duplicates of the evidence (to insure greater safety for our material). For the present I append a partial list of our "exhibits":

- (1) Cigarettes and outside tobacco; bottle of whiskey and "dope"; dice, playing cards, cash money, several knives, two razors, postage stamps, outside mail, and other contraband. (These are for the purpose of proving the Warden a liar in denying to the press the existence of gambling in the prison, the selling of bakery and kitchen provisions for cash, the possession of weapons, and the possibility of underground communication.)
- (2) Prison-made beer. A demonstration of the staleness of our bread and the absence of potatoes in the soup. (The beer is made from fermented yeast stolen by the trustees from the bakery; also from potatoes.)
- (3) Favoritism; special privileges of trustees; political jobs; the system of stool espionage.
- (4) Pennsylvania diet; basket; dungeon; cuffing and chaining up; neglect of the sick; punishment of the insane.
- (5) Names and numbers of men maltreated and clubbed.
- (6) Data of assaults and cutting affrays in connection with "kid-business," the existence of which the Warden absolutely denies.
- (7) Special case of A 444, who attacked the Warden in church, because of jealousy of "Lady Goldie."
- (8) Graft:
  - (a) Hosiery department: fake labels, fictitious names of manufacture, false book entries.
  - (b) Broom shop: convict labor hired out, contrary to law, to Lang Bros., broom

manufacturers, of Allegheny, Pa. Goods sold to the United States Government, through sham middleman. Labels bear legend, "Union Broom." Sample enclosed.



- (c) Mats, mattings, mops—product not stamped.
- (d) Shoe and tailor shops: prison materials used for the private needs of the Warden, the officers, and their families.
- (e) \$75,000, appropriated by the State (1893) for a new chapel. The bricks of the old building used for the new, except one outside layer. All the work done by prisoners. Architect, Mr. A. Wright, the Warden's son. Actual cost of chapel, \$7,000. The inmates *forced* to attend services to overcrowd the old church; after the desired appropriation was secured, attendance became optional.
- (f) Library: the 25c. tax, exacted from every unofficial visitor, is supposed to go to the book fund. About 50 visitors per day, the year round. No new books added to the library in 10 years. Old duplicates donated by the public libraries of Pittsburgh are catalogued as purchased new books.
- (g) Robbing the prisoners of remuneration for their labor. See copy of Act of 1883, P. L. 112.

**LAW ON PRISON LABOR AND WAGES OF CONVICTS**  
(Act of 1883, June 13th, P.L. 112)

Section 1—At the expiration of existing contracts, Wardens are directed to employ the convicts under their control for and in behalf of the State.

Section 2—No labor shall be hired out by contract.

Section 4—All convicts under the control of the State and county officers, and all inmates of reformatory institutions engaged in the manufacture of articles for general consumption, shall receive quarterly wages equal to the amount of their earnings, to be fixed from time to time by the authorities of the institution, from which board, lodging, clothing, and costs of trial shall be deducted, and the balance paid to their families or dependents; in case none such appear, the amount shall be paid to the convict at the expiration of his term of imprisonment.

The prisoners receive no payment whatever, even for overtime work, except occasionally a slice of pork for supper.

K. G., plant this and other material I'll send you, in a safe place.

M.\*

## CHAPTER 26

### HIDING THE EVIDENCE

#### I

It is New Year's eve. An air of pleasant anticipation fills the prison; tomorrow's feast is the exciting subject of conversation. Roast beef will be served for dinner, with a goodly loaf of currant bread, and two cigars for dessert. Extra men have been drafted for the kitchen; they flit from block to yard, looking busy and important, yet halting every passer-by to whisper with secretive mien, "Don't say I told you. Sweet potatoes to-morrow!" The younger inmates seem skeptical, and strive to appear indifferent, the while they hover about the yard door, nostrils expanded, sniffing the appetizing wafts from the kitchen. Here and there an old-timer grumbles: we should have had sweet "murphies" for Christmas. "Too high-priced," Sandy said," they sneer in ill humor. The new arrivals grow uneasy; perhaps they are still too expensive? Some study the market quotations on the delicacy. But the chief cook drops in to visit "his" boy, and confides to the rangeman that the sweet potatoes are a "sure thing," just arrived and counted. The happy news is whispered about, with confident assurance, yet tinged with anxiety. There is great rejoicing among the men. Only Sol, the lifer, is querulous: he doesn't care a snap about the "extra feed"—stomach still sour from the Christmas dinner—and, anyhow, it only makes the week-a-day "grub" more disgusting.

The rules are somewhat relaxed. The hallmen converse freely; the yard gangs lounge about and cluster in little groups, that separate at the approach of a superior officer. Men from the bakery and kitchen run in and out of the block, their pockets bulging suspiciously. "What are you after?" the doorkeeper halts them. "Oh, just to my cell; forgot my handkerchief." The guard answers the sly wink with an indulgent smile. "All right; go ahead, but don't be long." If "Papa" Mitchell is about, he thunders at the chief cook, his bosom swelling with packages: "Wotch 'er got there, eh? Big family of kids *you* have, Jim. First thing you know, you'll swipe the hinges off th' kitchen door." The envied bakery and kitchen employees supply their friends with extra holiday tidbits, and the solitaries dance in glee at the sight of the savory dainty, the fresh brown bread generously dotted with sweet currants. It is the prelude of the promised culinary symphony.

The evening is cheerful with mirth and jollity. The prisoners at first converse in whispers, then become bolder, and talk louder through the bars. As night approaches, the cell-house rings with unreserved hilarity and animation,—light-

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\*Stands for Alec Berkman, who was medium in stature compared to Nold and Bauer [GLF].

hearted chaff mingled with coarse jests and droll humor. A wag on the upper tier banters the passing guards, his quips and sallies setting the adjoining cells in a roar, and inspiring imitation.

Slowly the babel of tongues subsides, as the gong sounds the order to retire. Some one shouts to a distant friend, "Hey, Bill, are you there? Ye-es? Stay there!" It grows quiet, when suddenly my neighbor on the left sing-songs, "Fellers, who's goin' to sit up with me to greet New Year's?" A dozen voices yell their acceptance. "Little Frenchy," the spirited grayhead on the top tier, vociferates shrilly, "Me, too, boys. I'm viz you all right."

All is still in the cell-house, save for a wild Indian whoop now and then by the vigil-keeping boys. The block breathes in heavy sleep; loud snoring sounds from the gallery above. Only the irregular tread of the felt-soled guards falls muffled in the silence.

The clock in the upper rotunda strikes the midnight hour. A siren on the Ohio intones its deep-chested bass. Another joins it, then another. Shrill factory whistles pierce the boom of cannon; the sweet chimes of a nearby church ring in joyful melody between. Instantly the prison is astir. Tin cans rattle against iron bars, doors shake in fury, beds and chairs squeak and screech, pans slam on the floor, shoes crash against the walls with a dull thud, and rebound noisily on the stone. Unearthly yelling, shouting, and whistling rend the air; an inventive prisoner beats a wild tattoo with a tin pan on the table—a veritable Bedlam of frenzy has broken loose in both wings. The prisoners are celebrating the advent of the New Year.

The voices grow hoarse and feeble. The tin clanks languidly against the iron, the grating of the doors sounds weaker. The men are exhausted with the unwonted effort. The guards stumbled up the galleries, their forms swaying unsteadily in the faint flicker of the gaslight. In maudlin tones they command silence, and bid the men retire to bed. The younger, more daring, challenge the order with husky howls and catcalls,—a defiant shout, a groan, and all is quiet.

Daybreak wakes the turmoil and uproar. For twenty-four hours the long-repressed animal spirits are rampant. No music or recreation honors the New Year; the day is passed in the cell. The prisoners, securely barred and locked, are permitted to vent their pain and sorrow, their yearnings and hopes, in a Saturnalia of tumult.

## II

The month of January brings sedulous activity. Shops and block are overhauled, every nook and corner is scoured, and a special squad detailed to whitewash the cells. The yearly clean-up not being due till spring, I conclude from the unusual preparations that the expected visit of the Board of Charities is approaching.

The prisoners are agog with the coming investigation. The solitaries and prospective witnesses are on the *qui vive*, anxious lines on their faces. Some manifest fear of the ill will of the Warden, as the probable result of their testimony. I seek to encourage them by promising to assume full responsibility, but several men withdraw their previous consent. The safety of my data causes me grave concern, in view of the increasing frequency of searches. Deliberation finally resolves

itself into the bold plan of secreting my most valuable material in the cell set aside for the use of the officers. It is the first cell on the range; it is never locked, and is ignored at searches because it is not occupied by prisoners. The little bundle, protected with a piece of oilskin procured from the dispensary, soon reposes in the depths of the waste pipe. A stout cord secures it from being washed away by the rush of water, when the privy is in use. I call Officer Mitchell's attention to the dusty condition of the cell, and offer to sweep it every morning and afternoon. He accedes in an offhand manner, and twice daily I surreptitiously examine the tension of the watersoaked cord, renewing the string repeatedly.

Other material and copies of my "exhibits" are deposited with several trustworthy friends on the range. Everything is ready for the investigation, and we confidently await the coming of the Board of Charities.

### III

The cell-house rejoices at the absence of Scot Woods. The Block Captain of the morning has been "reduced to the ranks." The disgrace is signaled by his appearance on the wall, pacing the narrow path in the chilly winter blasts. The guards look upon the assignment as "punishment duty" for incurring the displeasure of the Warden. The keepers smile at the indiscreet Scot interfering with the self-granted privileges of "Southside" Johnny, one of the Warden's favorites. The runner who afforded me an opportunity to see Inspector Nevin, came out victorious in the struggle with Woods. The latter was upbraided by Captain Wright in the presence of Johnny, who is now officially authorized in his perquisites. Sufficient time was allowed to elapse, to avoid comment, whereupon the officer was withdrawn from the block.

I regret his absence. A severe disciplinarian, Woods was yet very exceptional among the guards, in that he sought to discourage the spying of prisoners on each other. He frowned upon the trusties, and strove to treat the men impartially.

Mitchell has been changed to the morning shift, to fill the vacancy made by the transfer of Woods. The charge of the block in the afternoon devolves upon Officer McIlvaine, a very corpulent man, with sharp, steely eyes. He is considerably above the average warder in intelligence, but extremely fond of Jasper, who now acts as his assistant, the obese turnkey rarely leaving his seat at the front desk.

Changes of keepers, transfers from the shops to the two cell-houses are frequent; the new guards are alert and active. Almost daily the Warden visits the ranges, leaving in his wake more stringent discipline. Rarely do I find a chance to pause at the cells; I keep in touch with the men through the medium of notes. But one day, several fights breaking out in the shops, the block officers are requisitioned to assist in placing the combatants in the punishment cells. The front is deserted, and I improve the opportunity to talk to the solitaries. Jasper, "Southside," and Bob Runyon, the "politicians," also converse at the doors, Bob standing suspiciously close to the bars. Suddenly Officer McIlvaine appears in the yard door. His face is flushed, his eyes filling with wrath as they fasten on the men at the cells.

"Hey, you fellows, get away from there!" he shouts. "Confound you all, the 'Old Man' just gave me the deuce; too much talking in the block. I won't stand for it, that's all," he adds, petulantly.

Within half an hour I am haled before the Warden. He looks worried, deep lines of anxiety about his mouth.

"You are reported for standing at the doors," he snarls at me. "What are you always telling the men?"

"It's the first time the officer—"

"Nothing of the kind," he interrupts; "you're always talking to the prisoners. They are in punishment, and you have no business with them."

"Why was I picked out? Others talk, too."

"Ye-e-s?" he drawls sarcastically; then, turning to the keeper, he says: "How is that, Officer? The man is charging you with neglect of duty."

"I am not charging—"

"Silence! What have you to say, Mr. McIlvaine?"

The guard reddens with suppressed rage. "It isn't true, Captain," he replies; "there was no one except Berkman."

"You hear what the officer says? You are always breaking the rules. You're plotting; I know you,—pulling a dozen wires. You are inimical to the management of the institution. But I will break your connections. Officer, take him directly to the South Wing, you understand? He is not to return to his cell. Have it searched at once, thoroughly. Lock him up."

"Warden, what for?" I demand. "I have not done anything to lose my position. Talking is not such a serious charge."

"Very serious, very serious. You're too dangerous on the range. I'll spoil your infernal schemes by removing you from the North Block. You've been there too long."

"I want to remain there."

"The more reason to take you away. That will do now."

"No, it won't," I burst out. "I'll stay where I am."

"Remove him, Mr. McIlvaine."

I am taken to the South Wing and locked up in a vacant cell, neglected and ill-smelling. It is Number 2, Range M—the first gallery, facing the yard; a "double" cell, somewhat larger than those of the North Block, and containing a small window. The walls are damp and bare, save for the cardboard of printed rules and the prison calendar. It is the 27th of February, 1896, but the calendar is of last year, indicating that the cell has not been occupied since the previous November. It contains the usual furnishings: bedstead and soiled straw mattress, a small table and a chair. It feels cold and dreary.

In thought I picture the guards ransacking my former cell. They will not discover anything: my material is well hidden. The Warden evidently suspects my plans: he fears my testimony before the investigation committee. My removal is to sever my connections, and now it is impossible for me to reach my data. I must return to the North Block; otherwise all our plans are doomed to fail. I can't leave my friends on the range in the lurch: some of them have already signified to the Chaplain their desire to testify; their statements will remain unsupported in the absence of my proofs. I must rejoin them. I have told the Warden that I shall remain where I was, but he probably ignored it as an empty boast.

I consider the situation, and resolve to "break up housekeeping." It is the sole means of being transferred to the other cell-house. It will involve the loss of the

grade, and a trip to the dungeon; perhaps even a fight with the keepers: the guards, fearing the broken furniture will be used for defence, generally rush the prisoner with blackjacks. But my return to the North Wing will be assured,—no man in stripes can remain in the South Wing.

Alert for an approaching step, I untie my shoes, producing a scrap of paper, a pencil, and a knife. I write a hurried note to “K,” briefly informing him of the new developments, and intimating that our data are safe. Guardedly I attract the attention of the runner on the floor beneath; it is Bill Say, through whom Carl occasionally communicates with “G.” The note rolled into a little ball, I shoot between the bars to the waiting prisoner. Now everything is prepared.

It is near supper time; the men are coming back from work. It would be advisable to wait till everybody is locked in, and the shop officers depart home. There will then be only three guards on duty in the block. But I am in a fever of indignation and anger. Furiously snatching up the chair, I start “breaking up.”

## CHAPTER 27

### LOVE’S DUNGEON FLOWER

The dungeon smells foul and musty; the darkness is almost visible, the silence oppressive; but the terror of my former experience has abated. I shall probably be kept in the underground cell for a longer time than on the previous occasion,—my offence is considered very grave. Three charges have been entered against me: destroying State property, having possession of a knife, and uttering a threat against the Warden. When I saw the officers gathering at my back, while I was facing the Captain, I realized its significance. They were preparing to assault me. Quickly advancing to the Warden, I shook my fist in his face, crying:

“If they touch me, I’ll hold you personally responsible.”

He turned pale. Trying to steady his voice, he demanded:

“What do you mean? How dare you?”

“I mean just what I say. I won’t be clubbed. My friends will avenge me, too.”

He glanced at the guards standing rigid, in ominous silence. One by one they retired, only two remaining, and I was taken quietly to the dungeon.

The stillness is broken by a low, muffled sound. I listen intently. It is some one pacing the cell at the further end of the passage.

“Halloo! Who’s there?” I shout.

No reply. The pacing continues. It must be “Silent Nick”; he never talks.

I prepare to pass the night on the floor. It is bare; there is no bed or blanket, and I have been deprived of my coat and shoes. It is freezing in the cell; my feet grow numb, hands cold, as I huddle in the corner, my head leaning against the reeking wall, my body on the stone floor. I try to think, but my thoughts are wandering, my brain frigid.

The rattling of keys wakes me from my stupor. Guards are descending into the dungeon. I wonder whether it is morning, but they pass my cell: it is not yet

breakfast time. Now they pause and whisper. I recognize the mumbling speech of Deputy Greaves, as he calls out to the silent prisoner:

“Want a drink?”

The double doors open noisily.

“Here!”

“Give me the cup,” the hoarse bass resembles that of “Crazy Smithy.” His stentorian voice sounds cracked since he was shot in the neck by Officer Dean. “You can’t have th’ cup,” the Deputy fumes.

“I won’t drink out of your hand, God damn you. Think I’m a cur, do you?” Smithy swears and curses savagely.

The doors are slammed and locked. The steps grow faint, and all is silent, save the quickened footfall of Smith, who will not talk to any prisoner.

I pass the long night in drowsy stupor, rousing at times to strain my ear for every sound from the rotunda above, wondering whether day is breaking. The minutes drag in dismal darkness. . . .

The loud clanking of the keys tingles in my ears like sweet music. It is morning! The guards hand me the day’s allowance—two ounces of white bread and a quart of water. The wheat tastes sweet; it seems to me I’ve never eaten anything so delectable. But the liquid is insipid, and nauseates me. At almost one bite I swallow the slice, so small and thin. It whets my appetite, and I feel ravenously hungry.

At Smith’s door the scene of the previous evening is repeated. The Deputy insists that the man drink out of the cup held by a guard. The prisoner refuses, with a profuse flow of profanity. Suddenly there is a splash, followed by a startled cry, and the thud of the cell bucket on the floor, Smith has emptied the contents of his privy upon the officers. In confusion they rush out of the dungeon.

Presently I hear the clatter of many feet in the cellar. There is a hubbub of suppressed voices. I recognize the rasping whisper of Hopkins, the tones of Woods, McIlvaine, and others. I catch the words, “Both sides at once.” Several cells in the dungeon are provided with double entrances, front and back, to facilitate attacks upon obstreperous prisoners. Smith is always assigned to one of these cells. I shudder as I realize that the officers are preparing to club the demented man. He has been weakened by years of unbroken solitary confinement, and his throat still bleeds occasionally from the bullet wound. Almost half his time he has been kept in the dungeon, and now he has been missing from the range twelve days. It is. . . . Involuntarily I shut my eyes at the fearful thud of the riot clubs.

The hours drag on. The monotony is broken by the keepers bringing another prisoner to the dungeon. I hear his violent sobbing from the depth of the cavern.

“Who is there?” I hail him. I call repeatedly, without receiving an answer. Perhaps the new arrival is afraid of listening guards.

“Ho, man!” I sing out, “the screws have gone. Who are you? This is Aleck, Aleck Berkman.”

“Is that you, Aleck? This is Johnny.” There is a familiar ring about the young voice, broken by piteous moans. But I fail to identify it.

“What Johnny?”

“Johnny Davis—you know—stocking shop. I’ve just—killed a man.”

In bewilderment I listen to the story, told with bursts of weeping. Johnny had returned to the shop; he thought he would try again: he wanted to earn his “good” time. Things went well for a while, till “Dutch” Adams became shop

runner. He is the stool who got Grant and Johnny Smith in trouble with the fake key, and Davis would have nothing to do with him. But "Dutch" persisted, pestering him all the time; and then—

"Well, you know, Aleck," the boy seems diffident, "he lied about me like hell: he told the fellows he *used* me. Christ, my mother might hear about it! I couldn't stand it, Aleck; honest to God, I couldn't. I—I killed the lying cur, an' now—now I'll—I'll swing for it," he sobs as if his heart would break.

A touch of tenderness for the poor boy is in my voice, as I strive to condole with him and utter the hope that it may not be so bad, after all. Perhaps Adams will not die. He is a powerful man, big and strong; he may survive.

Johnny eagerly clutches at the straw. He grows more cheerful, and we talk of the coming investigation and local affairs. Perhaps the Board will even clear him, he suggests. But suddenly seized with fear, he weeps and moans again.

More men are cast into the dungeon. They bring news from the world above. An epidemic of fighting seems to have broken out in the wake of recent orders. The total inhibition of talking is resulting in more serious offences. "Kid Tommy" is enlarging upon his trouble. "You see, fellers," he cries in a treble, "dat skunk of a Pete he pushes me in de line, and I turns round t' give 'im hell, but de screw pipes me. Got no chance t' choo, so I turns an' biffs him on de jaw, see?" But he is sure, he says, to be let out at night, or in the morning, at most. "Them fellers that was scrappin' yesterday in de yard didn't go to de hole. Dey jest put 'em in de cell. Sandy knows de committee's comin' all right."

Johnny interrupts the loquacious boy to inquire anxiously about "Dutch" Adams, and I share his joy at hearing that the man's wound is not serious. He was cut about the shoulders, but was able to walk unassisted to the hospital. Johnny overflows with quiet happiness; the others dance and sing. I recite a poem from Nekrassov; the boys don't understand a word, but the sorrowladen tones appeal to them, and they request more Russian "pieces." But Tommy is more interested in politics, and is bristling with the latest news from the Magee camp. He is a great admirer of Quay,— "dere's a smart guy fer you, fellers; owns de whole Keystone shebang all right, all right. He's Boss Quay, you bet you." He dives into national issues, rails at Bryan, "16 to 1 Bill, you jest list'n to 'm, he'll give sixteen dollars to every one; he will, nit!" and the boys are soon involved in a heated discussion of the respective merits of the two political parties, Tommy staunchly siding with the Republican. "Me gran' fader and me fader was Republicans," he vociferates, "an' all me broders vote de ticket. Me fer de Gran' Ole Party, ev'ry time." Some one twits him on his political wisdom, challenging the boy to explain the difference in the money standards. Tommy boldly appeals to me to corroborate him; but before I have an opportunity to speak, he launches upon other issues, berating Spain for her atrocities in Cuba, and insisting that this free country cannot tolerate slavery at its doors. Every topic is discussed, with Tommy orating at top speed, and continually broaching new subjects. Unexpectedly he reverts to local affairs, waxes reminiscent over former days, and loudly smacks his lips at the "great feeds" he enjoyed on the rare occasions when he was free to roam the back streets of Smoky City. "Say, Aleck, my boy," he calls to me familiarly, "many a penny I made on *you*, all right. How? Why, peddlin' extras, of course! Say, dem was fine days, all right; easy money; papers went like hot cakes off the griddle. Wish you'd do it agin, Aleck."

Invisible to each other, we chat, exchange stories and anecdotes, the boys talking incessantly, as if fearful of silence. But every now and then there is a lull; we become quiet, each absorbed in his own thoughts. The pauses lengthen—lengthen into silence. Only the faint steps of “Crazy Smith” disturb the deep stillness.

Late in the evening the young prisoners are relieved. But Johnny remains, and his apprehensions reawaken. Repeatedly during the night he rouses me from my drowsy torpor to be reassured that he is not in danger of the gallows, and that he will not be tried for his assault. I allay his fears by dwelling on the Warden’s aversion to giving publicity to the sex practices in the prison, and remind the boy of the Captain’s official denial of their existence. These things happen almost every week, yet no one has ever been taken to court from Riverside on such charges.

Johnny grows more tranquil, and we converse about his family history, talking in a frank, confidential manner. With a glow of pleasure, I become aware of the note of tenderness in his voice. Presently he surprises me by asking:

“Friend Aleck, what do they call you in Russian?”

He prefers the fond “Sashenka,” enunciating the strange word with quaint endearment, then diffidently confesses dislike for his own name, and relates the story he had recently read of a poor castaway Cuban youth; Felipe was his name, and he was just like himself.

“Shall I call you Felipe?” I offer.

“Yes, please do, Aleck, dear; no, Sashenka.”

The springs of affection well up within me, as I lie huddled on the stone floor, cold and hungry. With closed eyes, I picture the boy before me, with his delicate face and sensitive, girlish lips.

“Good night, dear Sashenka,” he calls.

“Good night, little Felipe.”

In the morning we are served with a slice of bread and water, I am tormented by thirst and hunger, and the small ration fails to assuage my sharp pangs. Smithy still refuses to drink out of the Deputy’s hand; his doors remain unopened. With tremulous anxiety Johnny begs the Deputy Warden to tell him how much longer he will remain in the dungeon, but Greaves curtly commands silence, applying a vile epithet to the boy.

“Deputy,” I call, boiling over with indignation, “he asked you a respectful question. I’d give him a decent answer.”

“You mind your own business, you hear?” he retorts.

But I persist in defending my young friend, and berate the Deputy for his language. He hastens away in a towering passion, menacing me with “what Smithy got.”

Johnny is distressed at being the innocent cause of the trouble. The threat of the Deputy disquiets him, and he warns me to prepare. My cell is provided with a double entrance, and I am apprehensive of a sudden attack. But the hours pass without the Deputy returning, and our fears are allayed. The boy rejoices on my account, and brims over with appreciation of my intercession.

The incident cements our intimacy; our first diffidence disappears, and we become openly tender and affectionate. The conversation lags: we feel weak

and worn. But every little while we hall each other with words of encouragement. Smithy incessantly paces the cell; the gnawing of the river rats reaches our ears; the silence is frequently pierced by the wild yells of the insane man, startling us with dread foreboding. The quiet grows unbearable, and Johnny calls again:

“What are you doing, Sashenka?”

“Oh, nothing. Just thinking, Felipe.”

“Am I in your thoughts, dear?”

“Yes, kiddie, you are.”

“Sasha, dear, I’ve been thinking, too.”

“What, Felipe?”

“You are the only one I care for. I haven’t a friend in the whole place.”

“Do you care much for me, Felipe?”

“Will you promise not to laugh at me, Sashenka?”

“I wouldn’t laugh at you.”

“Cross your hand over your heart. Got it, Sasha?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I’ll tell you. I was thinking—how shall I tell you? I was thinking, Sashenka—if you were here with me—I would like to kiss you.”

An unaccountable sense of joy glows in my heart, and I muse in silence.

“What’s the matter, Sashenka? Why don’t you say something? Are you angry with me?”

“No, Felipe, you foolish little boy.”

“You are laughing at me.”

“No, dear; I feel just as you do.”

“Really?”

“Yes.”

“Oh, I am so glad, Sashenka.”

In the evening the guards descend to relieve Johnny; he is to be transferred to the basket, they inform him. On the way past my cell, he whispers: “Hope I’ll see you soon, Sashenka.” A friendly officer knocks on the outer blind door of my cell. “That you thar, Berkman? You want to b’have to th’ Dep’ty. He’s put you down for two more days for sassin’ him.”

I feel more lonesome at the boy’s departure. The silence grows more oppressive, the hours of darkness heavier.

Seven days I remain in the dungeon. At the expiration of the week, feeling stiff and feeble, I totter behind the guards, on the way to the bathroom. My body looks strangely emaciated, reduced almost to a skeleton. The pangs of hunger revive sharply with the shock of the cold shower, and the craving for tobacco is overpowering at the sight of the chewing officers. I look forward to being placed in a cell, quietly exulting at my victory as I am led to the North Wing. But, in the cell-house, the Deputy Warden assigns me to the lower end of Range A, insane department. Exasperated by the terrible suggestion, my nerves on edge with the dungeon experience, I storm in furious protest, demanding to be returned to “the hole.” The Deputy, startled by my violence, attempts to soothe me, and finally yields. I am placed in Number 35, the “crank row” beginning several cells further.

Upon the heels of the departing officers, the rangeman is at my door, bursting with the latest news. The investigation is over, the Warden white-washed! For an instant I am aghast, failing to grasp the astounding situation. Slowly its full significance dawns on me, as Bill excitedly relates the story. It's the talk of the prison. The Board of Charities had chosen its Secretary, J. Francis Torrance, an intimate friend of the Warden, to conduct the investigation. As a precautionary measure, I was kept several additional days in the dungeon. Mr. Torrance has privately interviewed "Dutch" Adams, Young Smithy, and Bob Runyon, promising them their full commutation time, notwithstanding their bad records, and irrespective of their future behavior. They were instructed by the Secretary to corroborate the management, placing all blame upon me! No other witnesses were heard. The "investigation" was over within an hour, the committee of one retiring for dinner to the adjoining residence of the Warden.

Several friendly prisoners linger at my cell during the afternoon, corroborating the story of the rangeman, and completing the details. The cell-house itself bears out the situation; the change in the personnel of the men is amazing. "Dutch" Adams has been promoted to messenger for the "front office," the most privileged "political" job in the prison. Bob Runyon, a third-timer and notorious "kid man," has been appointed a trusty in the shops. But the most significant cue is the advancement of Young Smithy to the position of rangeman. He has but recently been sentenced to a year's solitary for the broken key discovered in the lock of his door. His record is of the worst. He is a young convict of extremely violent temper, who has repeatedly attacked fellow-prisoners with dangerous weapons. Since his murderous assault upon the inoffensive "Praying Andy," Smithy was never permitted out of his cell without the escort of two guards. And now this irresponsible man is in charge of a range!

At supper, Young Smithy steals up to my cell, bringing a slice of cornbread. I refuse the peace offering, and charge him with treachery. At first he stoutly protests his innocence, but gradually weakens and pleads his dire straits in mitigation. Torrance had persuaded him to testify, but he avoided incriminating me. That was done by the other two witnesses; he merely exonerated the Warden from the charges preferred by James Grant. He had been clubbed four times, but he denied to the committee that the guards practice violence; and he supported the Warden in his statement that the officers are not permitted to carry clubs or blackjacks. He feels that an injustice has been done me, and now that he occupies my former position, he will be able to repay the little favors I did him when he was in solitary.

Indignantly I spurn his offer. He pleads his youth, the torture of the cell, and begs my forgiveness; but I am bitter at his treachery, and bid him go.

Officer McIlvaine pauses at my door. "Oh, what a change, what an awful change!" he exclaims, pityingly. I don't know whether he refers to my appearance, or to the loss of range liberty; but I resent his tone of commiseration; it was he who had selected me as a victim, to be reported for talking. Angrily I turn my back to him, refusing to talk.

Somebody stealthily pushes a bundle of newspapers between the bars. Whole columns detail the report of the "investigation," completely exonerating Warden Edward S. Wright. The base charges against the management of the penitentiary were the underhand work of Anarchist Berkman, Mr. Torrance

assured the press. One of the papers contains a lengthy interview with Wright, accusing me of fostering discontent and insubordination among the men. The Captain expresses grave fear for the safety of the community, should the Pardon Board reduce my sentence, in view of the circumstance that my lawyers are preparing to renew the application at the next session.

In great agitation I pace the cell. The statement of the Warden is fatal to the hope of a pardon. My life in the prison will now be made still more unbearable. I shall again be locked in solitary. With despair I think of my fate in the hands of the enemy, and the sense of my utter helplessness overpowers me.

## **CHAPTER 28** **FOR SAFETY**

DEAR K.:

I know you must have been worried about me. Give no credence to the reports you hear. I did not try to suicide. I was very nervous and excited over the things that happened while I was in the dungeon. I saw the papers after I came up—you know what they said. I couldn't sleep; I kept pacing the floor. The screws were hanging about my cell, but I paid no attention to them. They spoke to me, but I wouldn't answer: I was in no mood for talking. They must have thought something wrong with me. The doctor came, and felt my pulse, and they took me to the hospital. The Warden rushed in and ordered me into a strait-jacket. "For safety," he said.

You know Officer Erwin; he put the jacket on me. He's a pretty decent chap; I saw he hated to do it. But the evening screw is a rat. He called three times during the night, and every time he'd tighten the straps. I thought he'd cut my hands off; but I wouldn't cry for mercy, and that made him wild. They put me in the "full size" jacket that winds all around you, the arms folded. They laid me, tied in the canvas, on the bed, bound me to it feet and chest, with straps provided with padlocks. I was suffocating in the hot ward; could hardly breathe. In the morning they unbound me. My legs were paralyzed, and I could not stand up. The doctor ordered some medicine for me. The head nurse (he's in for murder, and he's rotten) taunted me with the "black bottle." Every time he passed my bed, he'd say: "You still alive? Wait till I fix something up for you." I refused the medicine, and then they took me down to the dispensary, lashed me to a chair, and used the pump on me. You can imagine how I felt. That went on for a week; every night in the strait-jacket, every morning the pump. Now I am back in the block, in 6 A. A peculiar coincidence,—it's the same cell I occupied when I first came here.

Don't trust Bill Say. The Warden told me he knew about the note I sent you just before I smashed up. If you got it, Bill must have read it and told Sandy. Only dear old Horsethief can be relied upon.

How near the boundary of joy is misery! I shall never forget the first morning in the jacket. I passed a restless night, but just as it began to dawn I must have lost consciousness. Suddenly I awoke with the most exquisite music in my ears. It seemed to me as if the heavens had opened in a burst of ecstasy. . . . It was only a little sparrow, but never before in my life did I hear such sweet melody. I felt murder in my heart when the convict nurse drove the poor birdie from the window ledge.

A.

## CHAPTER 29

### DREAMS OF FREEDOM

#### I

Like an endless *miserere* are the days in the solitary. No glimmer of light cheers the to-morrows. In the depths of suffering, existence becomes intolerable; and as of old, I seek refuge in the past. The stages of my life reappear as the acts of a drama which I cannot bring myself to cut short. The possibilities of the dark motive compel the imagination, and halt the thought of destruction. Misery magnifies the estimate of self; the vehemence of revolt strengthens to endure. Despair engenders obstinate resistance; in its spirit hope is trembling. Slowly it assumes more definite shape: escape is the sole salvation. The world of the living is dim and unreal with distance; its voice reaches me like the pale echo of fantasy; the thought of its turbulent vitality is strange with apprehension. But the present is bitter with wretchedness, and gasps desperately for relief.

The efforts of my friends bring a glow of warmth into my life. The indefatigable Girl has succeeded in interesting various circles: she is gathering funds for my application for a rehearing before the Pardon Board in the spring of '98, when my first sentence of seven years will have expired. With a touch of old-time tenderness, I think of her loyalty, her indomitable perseverance in my behalf. It is she, almost she alone, who has kept my memory green throughout the long years. Even Fedya, my constant chum, has been swirled into the vortex of narrow ambition and self-indulgence, the plaything of commonplace fate.

Resentment at being thus lightly forgotten tinges my thoughts of the erstwhile twin brother of our ideal-kissed youth. By contrast, the Girl is silhouetted on my horizon as the sole personification of revolutionary persistence, the earnest of its realization. Beyond, all is darkness—the mystic world of falsehood and sham, that will hate and persecute me even as its brutal high priests in the prison. Here and there the gloom is rent: an unknown sympathizer, or comrade, sends a greeting; I pore eagerly over the chirography, and from the clear, decisive signature, “*Voltaireine de Cleyre*,” strive to mold the character and shape the features of the writer. To the Girl I apply to verify my “reading,” and rejoice in the warm interest of the convent-educated American, a friend of my much-admired Comrade Dyer D. Lum, who is aiding the Girl in my behalf.

But the efforts for a rehearing wake no hope in my heart. My comrades, far from the prison world, do not comprehend the full significance of the situation resulting from the investigation. My underground connections are paralyzed; I cannot enlighten the Girl. But Nold and Bauer are on the threshold of liberty. Within two months Carl will carry my message to New York. I can fully rely on his discretion and devotion; we have grown very intimate through common suffering. He will inform the Girl that nothing is to be expected from legal procedure; instead, he will explain to her the plan I have evolved.

My position as rangeman has served me to good advantage. I have thoroughly familiarized myself with the institution; I have gathered information and explored every part of the cell-house offering the least likelihood of an escape. The prison is almost impregnable; Tom's attempt to scale the wall

proved disastrous, in spite of his exceptional opportunities as kitchen employee, and the thick fog of the early morning. Several other attempts also were doomed to failure, the great number of guards and their vigilance precluding success. No escape has taken place since the days of Paddy McGraw, before the completion of the prison. Entirely new methods must be tried: the road to freedom leads underground! But digging *out* of the prison is impracticable in the modern structure of steel and rock. We must force a passage *into* the prison: the tunnel is to be dug from the outside! A house is to be rented in the neighborhood of the penitentiary, and the underground passage excavated beneath the eastern wall, toward the adjacent bath-house. No officers frequent the place save at certain hours, and I shall find an opportunity to disappear into the hidden opening on the regular biweekly occasions when the solitaries are permitted to bathe.

The project will require careful preparation and considerable expense. Skilled comrades will have to be entrusted with the secret work, the greater part of which must be carried on at night. Determination and courage will make the plan feasible, successful. Such things have been done before. Not in this country, it is true. But the act will receive added significance from the circumstance that the liberation of the first American political prisoner has been accomplished by means similar to those practised by our comrades in Russia. Who knows? It may prove the symbol and precursor of Russian idealism on American soil. And what tremendous impression the consummation of the bold plan will make! What a stimulus to our propaganda, as a demonstration of Anarchist initiative and ability! I glow with the excitement of its great possibilities, and enthuse Carl with my hopes. If the preparatory work is hastened, the execution of the plan will be facilitated by the renewed agitation within the prison. Rumors of a legislative investigation are afloat, diverting the thoughts of the administration into different channels. I shall foster the ferment to afford my comrades greater safety in the work.

During the long years of my penitentiary life I have formed many friendships. I have earned the reputation of a "square man" and a "good fellow," have received many proofs of confidence, and appreciation of my uncompromising attitude toward the generally execrated management. Most of my friends observe the unwritten ethics of informing me of their approaching release, and offer to smuggle out messages or to provide me with little comforts. I invariably request them to visit the newspapers and to relate their experiences in Riverside. Some express fear of the Warden's enmity, of the fatal consequences in case of their return to the penitentiary. But the bolder spirits and the accidental offenders, who confidently bid me a final good-bye, unafraid of return, call directly from the prison on the Pittsburgh editors.

Presently the *Leader* and the *Dispatch* begin to voice their censure of the hurried whitewash by the State Board of Charities. The attitude of the press encourages the guards to manifest their discontent with the humiliating eccentricities of the senile Warden. They protest against the whim subjecting them to military drill to improve their appearance, and resent Captain Wright's insistence that they patronize his private tailor, high-priced and incompetent. Serious friction has also arisen between the management and Mr. Sawhill, Superintendent

of local industries. The prisoners rejoice at the growing irascibility of the Warden, and the deeper lines on his face, interpreting them as signs of worry and fear. Expectation of a new investigation is at high pitch as Judge Gordon, of Philadelphia, severely censures the administration of the Eastern Penitentiary, charging inhuman treatment, abuse of the insane, and graft. The labor bodies of the State demand the abolition of convict competition, and the press becomes more assertive in urging an investigation of both penitentiaries. The air is charged with rumors of legislative action.

## II

The breath of spring is in the cell-house. My two comrades are jubilant. The sweet odor of May wafts the resurrection! But the threshold of life is guarded by the throes of new birth. A tone of nervous excitement permeates their correspondence. Anxiety tortures the sleepless nights; the approaching return to the living is tinged with the disquietude of the unknown, the dread of the renewed struggle for existence. But the joy of coming emancipation, the wine of sunshine and liberty tingles in every fiber, and hope flutters its disused wings.

Our plans are complete. Carl is to visit the Girl, explain my project, and serve as the medium of communication by means of our prearranged system, investing apparently innocent official letters with *sub rosa* meaning. The initial steps will require time. Meanwhile "K" and "G" are to make the necessary arrangements for the publication of our book. The security of our manuscripts is a source of deep satisfaction and much merriment at the expense of the administration. The repeated searches have failed to unearth them. With characteristic daring, the faithful Bob had secreted them in a hole in the floor of his shop, almost under the very seat of the guard. One by one they have been smuggled outside by a friendly officer, whom we have christened "Schraube."\* By degrees Nold has gained the confidence of the former mill-worker, with the result that sixty precious booklets now repose safely with a comrade in Allegheny. I am to supply the final chapters of the book through Mr. Schraube, whose friendship Carl is about to bequeath to me.

The month of May is on the wane. The last note is exchanged with my comrades. Dear Bob was not able to reach me in the morning, and now I read the lines quivering with the last pangs of release, while Nold and Bauer are already beyond the walls. How I yearned for a glance at Carl, to touch hands, even in silence! But the customary privilege was refused us. Only once in the long years of our common suffering have I looked into the eyes of my devoted friend, and stealthily pressed his hand, like a thief in the night. No last greeting was vouchsafed me to-day. The loneliness seems heavier, the void more painful.

The routine is violently disturbed. Reading and study are burdensome: my thoughts will not be compelled. They revert obstinately to my comrades, and storm against my steel cage, trying to pierce the distance, to commune with the absent. I seek diversion in the manufacture of prison "fancy work," ornamental

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\*German for "screw."

little fruit baskets, diminutive articles of furniture, picture frames, and the like. The little mementos, constructed of tissue-paper rolls of various designs, I send to the Girl, and am elated at her admiration of the beautiful workmanship and attractive color effects. But presently she laments the wrecked condition of the goods, and upon investigation I learn from the runner that the most dilapidated cardboard boxes are selected for my product. The rotunda turnkey, in charge of the shipments, is hostile, and I appeal to the Chaplain. But his well-meant intercession results in an order from the Warden, interdicting the expressage of my work, on the ground of probable notes being secreted therein. I protest against the discrimination, suggesting the dismembering of every piece to disprove the charge. But the Captain derisively remarks that he is indisposed to “take chances,” and I am forced to resort to the subterfuge of having my articles transferred to a friendly prisoner and addressed by him to his mother in Beaver, Pa., thence to be forwarded to New York. At the same time the rotunda keeper detains a valuable piece of ivory sent to me by the Girl for the manufacture of ornamental toothpicks. The local ware, made of kitchen bones bleached in lime, turns yellow in a short time. My request for the ivory is refused on the plea of submitting the matter to the Warden’s decision, who rules against me. I direct the return of it to my friend, but am informed that the ivory has been mislaid and cannot be found. Exasperated, I charge the guard with the theft, and serve notice that I shall demand the ivory at the expiration of my time. The turnkey jeers at the wild impossibility, and I am placed for a week on “Pennsylvania diet” for insulting an officer.

## CHAPTER 30

### WHITEWASHED AGAIN

Christmas, 1897.

MY DEAR CARL:

I have been despairing of reaching you *sub rosa*, but the holidays brought the usual transfers, and at last friend Schraube is with me. Dear Carolus, I am worn out with the misery of the months since you left, and the many disappointments. Your official letters were not convincing. I fail to understand why the plan is not practicable. Of course, you can’t write openly, but you have means of giving a hint as to the “impossibilities” you speak of. You say that I have become too estranged from the outside, and so forth—which may be true. Yet I think the matter chiefly concerns the inside, and of that I am the best judge. I do not see the force of your argument when you dwell upon the application at the next session of the Pardon Board. You mean that the other plan would jeopardize the success of the legal attempt. But there is not much hope of favorable action by the Board. We have talked all this over before, but you seem to have a different view now. Why?

Only in a very small measure do your letters replace in my life the heart-to-heart talks we used to have here, though they were only on paper. But I am much interested in your activities. It seems strange that you, so long the companion of my silence, should now be in the very Niagara of life, of our movement. It gives me great satisfaction to know that your experience here has matured you, and helped to strengthen and deepen your convictions. It has had a similar effect upon me. You know what a voluminous reader I am. I have read—in fact, studied—every volume in the library here, and now the Chaplain

supplies me with books from his. But whether it be philosophy, travel, or contemporary life that falls into my hands, it invariably distills into my mind the falsity of dominant ideas, and the beauty, the inevitability of Anarchism. But I do not want to enlarge upon this subject now; we can discuss it through official channels.

You know that Tony and his nephew are here. We are just getting acquainted. He works in the shop; but as he is also coffee-boy, we have an opportunity to exchange notes. It is fortunate that his identity is not known; otherwise he would fall under special surveillance. I have my eyes on Tony,—he may prove valuable.

I am still in solitary, with no prospect of relief. You know the policy of the Warden to use me as a scapegoat for everything that happens here. It has become a mania with him. Think of it, he blames me for Johnny Davis' cutting "Dutch." He laid everything at my door when the legislative investigation took place. It was a worse sham than the previous whitewash. Several members called to see me at the cell,—unofficially, they said. They got a hint of the evidence I was prepared to give, and one of them suggested to me that it is not advisable for one in my position to antagonize the Warden. I replied that I was no today. He hinted that the authorities of the prison might help me to procure freedom, if I would act "discreetly." I insisted that I wanted to be heard by the committee. They departed, promising to call me as a witness. One Senator remarked, as he left: "You are too intelligent a man to be at large."

When the hearing opened, several officers were the first to take the stand. The testimony was not entirely favorable to the Warden. Then Mr. Sawhill was called. You know him; he is an independent sort of man, with an eye upon the wardenship. His evidence came like a bomb: he charged the management with corruption and fraud, and so forth. The investigators took fright. They closed the sessions and departed for Harrisburg, announcing through the press that they would visit Moyamensing\* and then return to Riverside. But they did not return. The report they submitted to the Governor exonerated the Warden.

The men were gloomy over the state of affairs. A hundred prisoners were prepared to testify, and much was expected from the committee. I had all my facts on hand: Bob had fished out for me the bundle of material from its hiding place. It was in good condition, in spite of the long soaking. (I am enclosing some new data in this letter, for use in our book.)

Now that he is "cleared," the Warden has grown even more arrogant and despotic. Yet *some* good the agitation in the press has accomplished: clubbings are less frequent, and the bull ring is temporarily abolished. But his hatred of me has grown venomous. He holds us responsible (together with Dempsey and Beatty) for organizing the opposition to convict labor, which has culminated in the Muehlbronner law. It is to take effect on the first of the year. The prison administration is very bitter, because the statute, which permits only thirty-five per cent of the inmates to be employed in productive labor, will considerably minimize opportunities for graft. But the men are rejoicing: the terrible slavery in the shops has driven many to insanity and death. The law is one of the rare instances of rational legislation. Its benefit to labor in general is nullified, however, by limiting convict competition only within the State. The Inspectors are already seeking a market for the prison products in other States, while the convict manufactures of New York, Ohio, Illinois, etc., are disposed of in Pennsylvania. The irony of beneficent legislation! On the other hand, the inmates need not suffer for lack of employment. The new law allows the unlimited manufacture, within the prison, of products for local consumption. If the whine of the management regarding the "detrimental effect of idleness on the convict" is sincere, they could employ five times the population of the prison in the production of articles for our own needs.

At present all the requirements of the penitentiary are supplied from the outside. The

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\*The Eastern Penitentiary at Philadelphia, Pa.

purchase of a farm, following the example set by the workhouse, would alone afford work for a considerable number of men. I have suggested, in a letter to the Inspectors, various methods by which every inmate of the institution could be employed,—among them the publication of a prison paper. Of course, they have ignored me. But what can you expect of a body of philanthropists who have the interest of the convict so much at heart that they delegated the President of the Board, George A. Kelly, to oppose the parole bill, a measure certainly along advanced lines of modern criminology. Owing to the influence of Inspector Kelly, the bill was shelved at the last session of the legislature, though the prisoners have been praying for it for years. It has robbed the moneyless life-timers of their last hope: a clause in the parole bill held out to them the promise of release after 20 years of good behavior.

Dark days are in store for the men. Apparently the campaign of the Inspectors consists in forcing the repeal of the Muehlbronner law, by raising the hue and cry of insanity and sickness. They are actually causing both by keeping half the population locked up. You know how quickly the solitary drives certain classes of prisoners insane. Especially the more ignorant element, whose mental horizon is circumscribed by their personal troubles and pain, speedily fall victims. Think of men, who cannot even read, put *incomunicado* for months at a time, for years even! Most of the colored prisoners, and those accustomed to outdoor life, such as farmers and the like, quickly develop the germs of consumption in close confinement. Now, this wilful murder—for it is nothing else—is absolutely unnecessary. The yard is big and well protected by the thirty-foot wall, with armed guards patrolling it. Why not give the unemployed men air and exercise, since the management is determined to keep them idle? I suggested the idea to the Warden, but he berated me for my “habitual interference” in matters that do not concern me. I often wonder at the enigma of human nature. There’s the Captain, a man 72 years old. He should bethink himself of death, of “meeting his Maker,” since he pretends to believe in religion. Instead, he is bending all his energies to increase insanity and disease among the convicts, in order to force the repeal of the law that has lessened the flow of blood money. It is almost beyond belief; but you have yourself witnessed the effect of a brutal atmosphere upon new officers. Wright has been Warden for thirty years: he has come to regard the prison as his undisputed dominion; and now he is furious at the legislative curtailment of his absolute control.

This letter will remind you of our bulky notes in the “good” old days when “KG” were here. I miss our correspondence. There are some intelligent men on the range, but they are not interested in the thoughts that seethe within me and call for expression. Just now the chief topic of local interest (after, of course, the usual discussion of the grub, women, kids, and their health and troubles) is the Spanish War and the new diningroom, in which the shop employees are to be fed *en masse*, out of chinaware, think of it! Some of the men are tremendously patriotic; others welcome the war as a sinecure affording easy money and plenty of excitement. You remember Young Butch and his partners, Murtha, Tommy, etc. They have recently been released, too wasted and broken in health to be fit for manual labor. All of them have signified their intention of joining the insurrection; some are enrolling in the regular army for the war. Butch is already in Cuba. I had a letter from him. There is a passage in it that is tragically characteristic. He refers to a skirmish he participated in. “We shot a lot of Spaniards, mostly from ambush,” he writes; “it was great sport.” It is the attitude of the military adventurer, to whom a sacred cause like the Cuban uprising unfortunately affords the opportunity to satisfy his lust for blood. Butch was a very gentle boy when he entered the prison. But he has witnessed much heartlessness and cruelty during his term of three years.

Letter growing rather long. Good night.

A.

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*Chapters 31 to 35 primarily deal with Alec's efforts to concretize his plan of escape. Alec's comrades, following his instructions, begin to build a tunnel into the prison yard from a house across the street from the prison. (See Emma's amazing account of the digging of the tunnel in her autobiography, *Living My Life*.) Chapter 36, which follows, tells the events from Alec's perspective.*

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## CHAPTER 36

### THE UNDERGROUND

May 10, 1900.

MY DEAR TONY:\*

Your letters intoxicate me with hope and joy. No sooner have I sipped the rich aroma than I am athirst for more nectar. Write often, dear friend; it is the only solace of suspense.

Do not worry about this end of the line. All is well. By stratagem I have at last procured the privilege of the yard. Only for a few minutes every morning, but I am judiciously extending my prescribed time and area. The prospects are bright here; every one talks of my application to the Superior Court, and peace reigns—you understand.

A pity I cannot write directly to my dear, faithful comrades, your coworkers. You shall be the medium. Transmit to them my deepest appreciation. Tell "Yankee" and "Ibsen" and our Italian comrades what I feel—I know I need not explain it further to you. No one realizes better than myself the terrible risks they are taking, the fearful toll in silence and darkness, almost within hearing of the guards. The danger, the heroic self-sacrifice—what money could buy such devotion? I grow faint with the thought of their peril. I could almost cry at the beautiful demonstration of solidarity and friendship. Dear comrades, I feel proud of you, and proud of the great truth of Anarchism that can produce such disciples, such spirit. I embrace you, my noble comrades, and may you speed the day that will make me happy with the sight of your faces, the touch of your hands.

A.

June 5.

DEAR TONY:

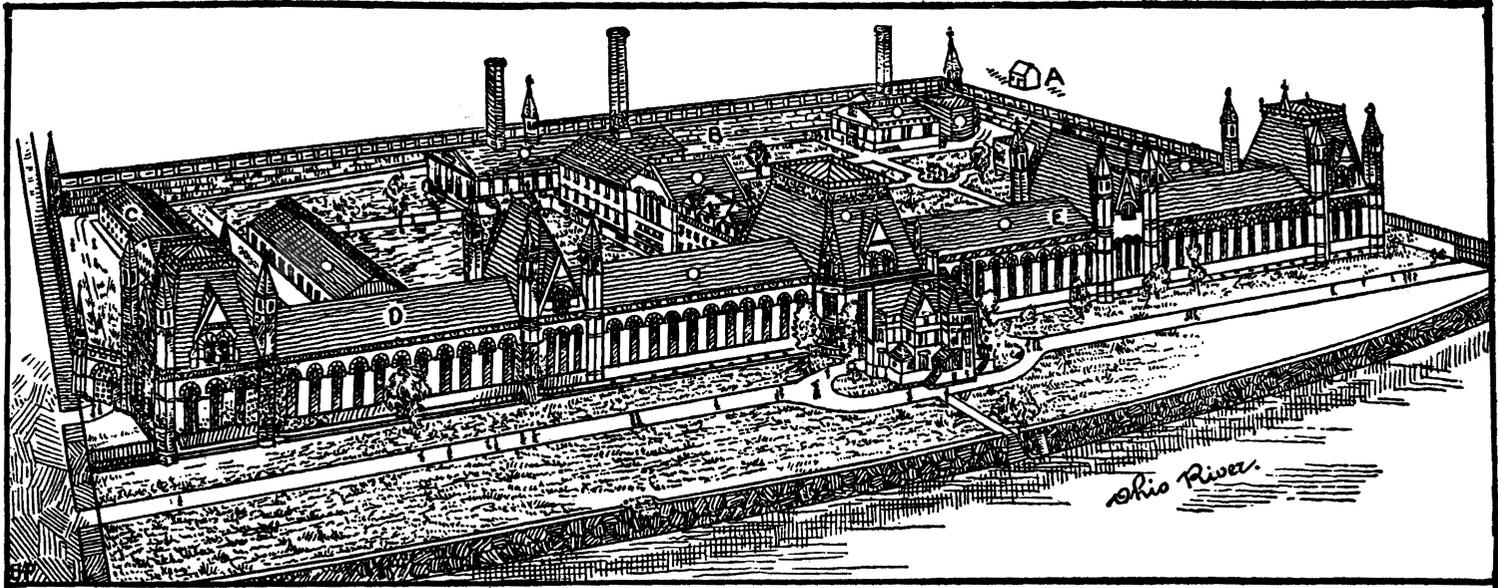
Your silence was unbearable. The suspense is terrible. Was it really necessary to halt operations so long? I am surprised you did not foresee the shortage of air and the lack of light. You would have saved so much time. It is a great relief to know that the work is progressing again, and very fortunate indeed that "Yankee" understands electricity. It must be hellish work to pump air into the shaft. Take precautions against the whirl of the machinery. The piano idea is great.† Keep her playing and singing as much as possible, and be sure you have all windows open. The beasts on the wall will be soothed by the music, and it will drown the noises underground. Have an electric button connected from the piano to the shaft; when the player sees anything suspicious on the street or the guards on the wall, she can at once notify the comrades to stop work.

I am enclosing the wall and yard measurements you asked. But why do you need them? Don't bother with unnecessary things. From house beneath the street, directly toward the southwestern wall. For that you can procure measurements outside. On the inside

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\*A former fellow prisoner now working on the tunnel [GLF].

†Tony et al. had hired a singer to sing and play the piano in order to block out the noise being made during construction of the tunnel [GLF].



A—House on Sterling Street from which the Tunnel started. B—Point at which the Tunnel entered under the east wall. C—Mat Shop, near which the Author was permitted to take his birds for ten minutes every day, for exercise. D—North Block, where the Author was confined at the time of the Tunnel episode. E—South Block.

you require none. Go under wall, about 20–30 feet, till you strike wall of blind alley. Cut into it, and all will be complete. Write of progress without delay. Greetings to all.

A.

June 20.

TONY:

Your letters bewilder me. Why has the route been changed? You were to go to southwest, yet you say now you are near the east wall. It's simply incredible, Tony. Your explanation is not convincing. If you found a gas main near the gate, you could have gone around it; besides, the gate is out of your way anyhow. Why did you take that direction at all? I wish, Tony, you would follow my instructions and the original plan. Your failure to report the change immediately, may prove fatal. I could have informed you—once you were near the southeastern gate—to go directly underneath; then you would have saved digging under the wall; there is no stone foundation, of course, beneath the gate. Now that you have turned the southeast corner, you will have to come under the wall there, and it is the worst possible place, because that particular part used to be a swamp, and I have learned that it was filled with extra masonry. Another point; an old abandoned natural-gas well is somewhere under the east wall, about 300 feet from the gate. Tell our friends to be on the lookout for fumes; it is a very dangerous place; special precautions must be taken.

Do not mind my brusqueness, dear Tony. My nerves are on edge, the suspense is driving me mad. And I must mask my feelings, and smile and look indifferent. But I haven't a moment's peace. I imagine the most terrible things when you fail to write. Please be more punctual. I know you have your hands full; but I fear I'll go insane before this thing is over. Tell me especially how far you intend going along the east wall, and where you'll come out. This complicates the matter. You have already gone a longer distance than would have been necessary per original plan. It was a grave mistake, and if you were not such a devoted friend, I'd feel very cross with you. Write at once. I am arranging a new *sub rosa* route. They are building in the yard; many outside drivers, you understand.

A.

DEAR TONY:

I'm in great haste to send this. You know the shed opposite the east wall. It has only a wooden floor and is not frequented much by officers. A few cons are there, from the stone pile. I'll attend to them. Make directly for that shed. It's a short distance from wall. I enclose measurements.

A.

TONY:

You distract me beyond words. What has become of your caution, your judgment? A hole in the grass *will not do*. I am absolutely opposed to it. There are a score of men on the stone pile and several screws. It is sure to be discovered. And even if you leave the upper crust intact for a foot or two, how am I to dive into the hole in the presence of so many? You don't seem to have considered that. There is only *one* way, the one I explained in my last. Go to the shed; it's only a little more work, 30–40 feet, no more. Tell the comrades the grass idea is impossible. A little more effort, friends, and all will be well. Answer at once.

A.

DEAR TONY:

Why do you insist on the hole in the ground? I tell you again it will not do. I won't consider it for a moment. I am on the inside—you must let me decide what can or cannot be done here. I am prepared to risk everything for liberty, would risk my life a thousand times. I am too desperate now for any one to block my escape; I'd break through a wall of guards, if necessary. But I still have a little judgment, though I am almost insane with

the suspense and anxiety. If you insist on the hole, I'll make the break, though there is not one chance in a hundred for success. I beg of you, Tony, the thing must be dug to the shed; it's only a little way. After such a tremendous effort, can we jeopardize it all so lightly? I assure you, the success of the hole plan is unthinkable. They'd all see me go down into it; I'd be followed at once—what's the use talking.

Besides, you know I have no revolvers. Of course I'll have a weapon, but it will not help the escape. Another thing, your change of plans has forced me to get an assistant. The man is reliable, and I have only confided to him parts of the project. I need him to investigate around the shed, take measurements, etc. I am not permitted anywhere near the wall. But you need not trouble about this; I'll be responsible for my friend. But I tell you about it, so that you prepare two pair of overalls instead of one. Also leave two revolvers in the house, money, and cipher directions for us where to go. None of our comrades is to wait for us. Let them all leave as soon as everything is ready. But be sure you don't stop at the hole. Go to the shed, absolutely.

A.

TONY:

The hole will not do. The more I think of it, the more impossible I find it. I am sending an urgent call for money to the Editor. You know whom I mean. Get in communication with him at once. Use the money to continue work to shed.

A.

Direct to Box A7,  
Allegheny City, Pa.,  
June 25, 1900.

DEAR COMRADE:

The Chaplain was very kind to permit me an extra sheet of paper, on urgent business. I write to you in a very great extremity. You are aware of the efforts of my friends to appeal my case. Read carefully, please. I have lost faith in their attorneys. I have engaged my *own* "lawyers." Lawyers in quotation marks—a prison joke, you see. I have utmost confidence in *these* lawyers. They will, absolutely, procure my release, even if it is not a pardon, you understand. I mean, we'll go to the Superior Court, different from a Pardon Board—another prison joke.

My friends are short of money. We need some *at once*. The work is started, but cannot be finished for lack of funds. Mark well what I say: *I'll not be responsible for anything*—the worst may happen—unless money is procured *at once*. You have influence. I rely on you to understand and to act promptly.

Your comrade,  
Alexander Berkman.

MY POOR TONY:

I can see how this thing has gone on your nerves. To think that you, you the cautious Tony, should be so reckless—to send me a telegram. You could have ruined the whole thing. I had trouble explaining to the Chaplain, but it's all right now. Of course, if it must be the hole, it can't be helped. I understood the meaning of your wire: from the seventh bar on the east wall, ten feet to west. We'll be there on the minute—3 P. M. But July 4th won't do. It's a holiday: no work; my friend will be locked up. Can't leave him in the lurch. It will have to be next day, July 5th. It's only three days more. I wish it was over; I can't bear the worry and suspense any more. May it be my Independence Day!

A.

July 6.

TONY:

It's terrible. It's all over. Couldn't make it. Went there on time, but found a big pile of

stone and brick right on top of the spot. Impossible to do anything. I warned you they were building near there. I was seen at the wall—am now strictly forbidden to leave the cell-house. But my friend has been there a dozen times since—the hole can't be reached: a mountain of stone hides it. It won't be discovered for a little while. Telegraph at once to New York for more money. You must continue to the shed. I can force my way there, if need be. It's the only hope. Don't lose a minute.

A.

July 13.

TONY:

A hundred dollars was sent to the office for me from New York. I told Chaplain it is for my appeal. I am sending the money to you. Have work continued at once. There is still hope. Nothing suspected. But the wire that you pushed through the grass to indicate the spot, was not found by my friend. Too much stone over it. Go to shed at once.

A.

July 16.

Tunnel discovered. Lose no time. Leave the city immediately. I am locked up on suspicion.

A.

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*In Chapters 37 and 38, Berkman is put in solitary, being suspected of having had something to do with the tunnel. Berkman makes plans for another escape but it is foiled by the death of his "coconspirator." Chapter 39 deals with an investigation of prison conditions. In Chapter 40 Russell, a young fellow prisoner and confidant of Berkman's, is killed by a mistaken injection in the prison hospital. Chapter 41 follows here.*

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## CHAPTER 41

### THE SHOCK AT BUFFALO

#### I

July 10, 1901.

DEAR GIRL:

This is from the hospital, *sub rosa*. Just out of the strait-jacket, after eight days.

For over a year I was in the strictest solitary; for a long time mail and reading matter were denied me. I have no words to describe the horror of the last months. . . . I have passed through a great crisis. Two of my best friends died in a frightful manner. The death of Russell, especially, affected me. He was very young, and my dearest and most devoted friend, and he died a terrible death. The doctor charged the boy with shamming, but now he says it was spinal meningitis. I cannot tell you the awful truth,—it was nothing short of murder, and my poor friend rotted away by inches. When he died they found his back one mass of bedsores. If you could read the pitiful letters he wrote, begging to see me, and to be nursed by me! But the Warden wouldn't permit it. In some manner his agony seemed to affect me, and I began to experience the pains and symptoms that Russell described in his notes. I knew it was my sick fancy; I strove against it, but presently my legs showed signs of paralysis,

and I suffered excruciating pain in the spinal column, just like Russell. I was afraid that I would be done to death like my poor friend. I grew suspicious of every guard, and would barely touch the food, for fear of its being poisoned. My "head was workin'," they said. And all the time I knew it was my diseased imagination, and I was in terror of going mad. . . . I tried so hard to fight it, but it would always creep up, and get hold of me stronger and stronger. Another week of solitary would have killed me.

I was on the verge of suicide. I demanded to be relieved from the cell, and the Warden ordered me punished. I was put in the strait-jacket. They bound my body in canvas, strapped my arms to the bed, and chained my feet to the posts. I was kept that way eight days, unable to move, rotting in my own excrement. Released prisoners called the attention of our new Inspector to my case. He refused to believe that such things were being done in the penitentiary. Reports spread that I was going blind and insane. Then the Inspector visited the hospital and had me released from the jacket.

I am in pretty bad shape, but they put me in the general ward now, and I am glad of the chance to send you this note.

Sasha.

## II

Direct to Box A7,  
Allegheny City, Pa.  
July 25th, 1901.

DEAR SONYA\*:

I cannot tell you how happy I am to be allowed to write to you again. My privileges have been restored by our new Inspector, a very kindly man. He has relieved me from the cell, and now I am again on the range. The Inspector requested me to deny to my friends the reports which have recently appeared in the papers concerning my condition. I have not been well of late, but now I hope to improve. My eyes are very poor. The Inspector has given me permission to have a specialist examine them. Please arrange for it through our local comrades.

There is another piece of very good news, dear friend. A new commutation law has been passed, which reduces my sentence by 2 1/2 years. It still leaves me a long time, of course; almost 4 years here, and another year to the workhouse. However, it is a considerable gain, and if I should not get into solitary again, I may—I am almost afraid to utter the thought—I may live to come out. I feel as if I am being resurrected.

The new law benefits the short-timers proportionately much more than the men with longer sentences. Only the poor lifers do not share in it. We were very anxious for a while, as there were many rumors that the law would be declared unconstitutional. Fortunately, the attempt to nullify its benefits proved ineffectual. Think of men who will see something unconstitutional in allowing the prisoners a little more good time than the commutation statute of 40 years ago. As if a little kindness to the unfortunates—really justice—is incompatible with the spirit of Jefferson! We were greatly worried over the fate of this statute, but at last the first batch has been released, and there is much rejoicing over it.

There is a peculiar history about this new law, which may interest you; it sheds a significant side light. It was especially designed for the benefit of a high Federal officer who was recently convicted of aiding two wealthy Philadelphia tobacco manufacturers to defraud the government of a few millions, by using counterfeit tax stamps. Their influence secured the introduction of the commutation bill and its hasty passage. The law would have cut their sentences almost in two, but certain newspapers seem to have taken

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\*Alias for Emma.

offence at having been kept in ignorance of the “deal,” and protests began to be voiced. The matter finally came up before the Attorney General of the United States, who decided that the men in whose special interest the law was engineered, could not benefit by it, because a State law does not affect U.S. prisoners, the latter being subject to the Federal commutation act. Imagine the discomfiture of the politicians! An attempt was even made to suspend the operation of the statute. Fortunately it failed, and now the “common” State prisoners, who were not at all meant to profit, are being released. The legislature has unwittingly given some unfortunates here much happiness.

I was interrupted in this writing by being called out for a visit. I could hardly credit it; the first comrade I have been allowed to see in nine years! It was Harry Gordon, and I was so overcome by the sight of the dear friend, I could barely speak. He must have prevailed upon the new Inspector to issue a permit. The latter is now Acting Warden, owing to the serious illness of Captain Wright. Perhaps he will allow me to see my sister.\* Will you kindly communicate with her at once? Meantime I shall try to secure a pass. With renewed hope, and always with green memory of you,

Alex.

### III

*Sub Rosa,*  
Dec. 20, 1901.

DEAREST GIRL:

I know how your visit and my strange behavior have affected you. . . . The sight of your face after all these years completely unnerved me. I could not think, I could not speak. It was as if all my dreams of freedom, the whole world of the living, were concentrated in the shiny little trinket that was dangling from your watch chain. . . . I couldn't take my eyes off it, I couldn't keep my hand from playing with it. It absorbed my whole being. . . . And all the time I felt how nervous you were at my silence, and I couldn't utter a word.

Perhaps it would have been better for us not to have seen each other under the present conditions. It was lucky they did not recognize you: they took you for my “sister,” though I believe your identity was suspected after you had left. You would surely not have been permitted the visit, had the old Warden been here. He was ill at the time. He never got over the shock of the tunnel, and finally he has been persuaded by the prison physician (who has secret aspirations to the Wardenship) that the anxieties of his position are a menace to his advanced age. Considerable dissatisfaction has also developed of late against the Warden among the Inspectors. Well, he has resigned at last, thank goodness! The prisoners have been praying for it for years, and some of the boys on the range celebrated the event by getting drunk on wood alcohol. The new Warden has just assumed charge, and we hope for improvement. He is a physician by profession, with the title of Major in the Pennsylvania militia.

It was entirely uncalled for on the part of the officious friend, whoever he may have been, to cause you unnecessary worry over my health, and my renewed persecution. You remember that in July the new Inspector released me from the strait-jacket and assigned me to work on the range. But I was locked up again in October, after the McKinley incident.<sup>†</sup> The President of the Board of Inspectors was at the time in New York. He inquired by wire what I was doing. Upon being informed that I was working on the range, he ordered me into solitary. The new Warden, on assuming office, sent for me. “They give you a bad reputation,” he said; “but I will let you out of the cell if you'll

\*Also refers to Emma.

†Berkman and Goldman were suspected of being behind the assassination of President McKinley by Leon Czolgosz on September 6, 1901. See Goldman's *Living My Life* for a fuller account. [GLF]

promise to do what is right by me.” He spoke brusquely, in the manner of a man closing a business deal, with the power of dictating terms. He reminded me of Bismarck at Versailles. Yet he did not seem unkind; the thought of escape was probably in his mind. But the new law has germinated the hope of survival; my weakened condition and the unexpected shortening of my sentence have at last decided me to abandon the idea of escape. I therefore replied to the Warden. “I will do what is right by you, if you treat *me* right.” Thereupon he assigned me to work on the range. It is almost like liberty to have the freedom of the cell-house after the close solitary.

And you, dear friend? In your letters I feel how terribly torn you are by the events of the recent months. I lived in great fear for your safety, and I can barely credit the good news that you are at liberty. It seems almost a miracle.

I followed the newspapers with great anxiety. The whole country seemed to be swept with the fury of revenge. To a considerable extent the press fanned the fires of persecution. Here in the prison very little sincere grief was manifested. Out of hearing of the guards, the men passed very uncomplimentary remarks about the dead president. The average prisoner corresponds to the average citizen—their patriotism is very passive, except when stimulated by personal interest, or artificially excited. But if the press mirrored the sentiment of the people, the Nation must have suddenly relapsed into cannibalism. There were moments when I was in mortal dread for your very life, and for the safety of the other arrested comrades. In previous letters you hinted that it was official rivalry and jealousy, and your absence from New York, to which you owe your release. You may be right; yet I believe that your attitude of proud self-respect and your admirable self-control contributed much to the result. You were splendid, dear; and I was especially moved by your remark that you would faithfully nurse the wounded man, if he required your services, but that the poor boy, condemned and deserted by all, needed and deserved your sympathy and aid more than the president. More strikingly than your letters, that remark discovered to me the great change wrought in us by the ripening years. Yes, in us, in both, for my heart echoed your beautiful sentiment. How impossible such a thought would have been to us in the days of a decade ago! We should have considered it treason to the spirit of revolution, it would have outraged all our traditions even to admit the humanity of an official representative of capitalism. Is it not very significant that we two—you living in the very heart of Anarchist thought and activity and I in the atmosphere of absolute suppression and solitude—should have arrived at the same evolutionary point after a decade of divergent paths?

You have alluded in a recent letter to the ennobling and broadening influence of sorrow. Yet not upon every one does it exert a similar effect. Some natures grow embittered, and shrink with the poison of misery. I often wonder at my lack of bitterness and enmity, even against the old Warden—and surely I have good cause to hate him. Is it because of greater maturity? I rather think it is temperamentally conditioned. The love of the people, the hatred of oppression of our younger days, vital as these sentiments were with us, were mental rather than emotional. Fortunately so, I think. For those like Fedya and Lewis and Pauline, and numerous others, soon have their emotionally inflated idealism punctured on the thorny path of the social protestant. Only aspirations that spontaneously leap from the depths of our soul persist in the face of antagonistic forces. The revolutionist is born. Beneath our love and hatred of former days lay inherent rebellion, and the passionate desire for liberty and life.

In the long years of isolation I have looked deeply into my heart. With open mind and sincere purpose, I have revised every emotion and every thought. Away from my former atmosphere and the disturbing influence of the world’s turmoil, I have divested myself of all traditions and accepted beliefs. I have studied the sciences and the humanities, contemplated life, and pondered over human destiny. For weeks and months I would be absorbed in the domain of “pure reason,” or discuss with Leibnitz the question of free will, and seek

to penetrate, beyond Spencer, into the Unknowable. Political science and economics, law and criminology—I studied them with unprejudiced mind, and sought to slacken my soul's thirst by delving deeply into religion and theology, seeking the "Key to Life" at the feet of Mrs. Eddy, expectantly listening for the voice of the disembodied, studying Koreshanity and Theosophy, absorbing the prana of knowledge and power, and concentrating upon the wisdom of the Yogi. And after years of contemplation and study, chastened by much sorrow and suffering, I arise from the broken fetters of the world's folly and delusions, to behold the threshold of a new life of liberty and equality. My youth's ideal of a free humanity in the vague future has become clarified and crystallized into the living truth of Anarchy, as the sustaining elemental force of my every-day existence.

●ften I have wondered in the years gone by, was not wisdom dear at the price of enthusiasm? At 30 one is not so reckless, not so fanatical and one-sided as at 20. With maturity we become more universal; but life is a Shylock that cannot be cheated of his due. For every lesson it teaches us, we have a wound or a scar to show. We grow broader; but too often the heart contracts as the mind expands, and the fires are burning down while we are learning. At such moments my mind would revert to the days when the momentarily expected approach of the Social Revolution absorbed our exclusive interest. The raging present and its conflicting currents passed us by, while our eyes were riveted upon the Dawn, in thrilling expectancy of the sunrise. Life and its manifold expressions were vexatious to the spirit of revolt; and poetry, literature, and art were scorned as hindrances to progress, unless they sounded the tocsin of immediate revolution. Humanity was sharply divided in two warring camps,—the noble People, the producers, who yearned for the light of the new gospel, and the hated oppressors, the exploiters, who craftily strove to obscure the rising day that was to give back to man his heritage. If only "the good People" were given an opportunity to hear the great truth, how joyfully they would embrace Anarchy and walk in triumph into the promised land!

The splendid naivety of the days that resented as a personal reflection the least misgiving of the future; the enthusiasm that discounted the power of inherent prejudice and predilection! Magnificent was the day of hearts on fire with the hatred of oppression and the love of liberty! Woe indeed to the man or the people whose soul never warmed with the spark of Prometheus,—for it is Youth that has climbed the heights. . . . But maturity has clarified the way, and the stupendous task of human regeneration will be accomplished only by the purified vision of hearts that grow not cold.

And you, my dear friend, with the deeper insight of time, you have yet happily kept your heart young. I have rejoiced at it in your letters of recent years, and it is especially evident from the sentiments you have expressed regarding the happening at Buffalo. I share your view entirely; for that very reason, it is the more distressing to disagree with you in one very important particular: the value of Leon's act. I know the terrible ordeal you have passed through, the fiendish persecution to which you have been subjected. Worse than all must have been to you the general lack of understanding for such phenomena; and, sadder yet, the despicable attitude of some would-be radicals in denouncing the man and his act. But I am confident you will not mistake my expressed disagreement for condemnation.

We need not discuss the phase of the *Attentat* which manifested the rebellion of a tortured soul, the individual protest against social wrong. Such phenomena are the natural result of evil conditions, as inevitable as the flooding of the river banks by the swelling mountain torrents. But I cannot agree with you regarding the social value of Leon's act.

I have read of the beautiful personality of the youth, of his inability to adapt himself to brutal conditions, and the rebellion of his soul. It throws a significant light upon the causes of the *Attentat*. Indeed, it is at once the greatest tragedy of martyrdom, and the most terrible indictment of society, that it forces the noblest men and women to shed human blood, though their souls shrink from it. But the more imperative it is that drastic methods of this

character be resorted to only as a last extremity. To prove of value, they must be motivated by social rather than individual necessity, and be directed against a real and immediate enemy of the people. The significance of such a deed is understood by the popular mind—and in that alone is the propagandistic, educational importance of an *Attentat*, except if it is exclusively an act of terrorism.

Now, I do not believe that this deed was terroristic; and I doubt whether it was educational, because the social necessity for its performance was not manifest. That you may not misunderstand, I repeat: as an expression of personal revolt it was inevitable, and in itself an indictment of existing conditions. But the background of social necessity was lacking, and therefore the value of the act was to a great extent nullified.

In Russia, where political oppression is popularly felt, such a deed would be of great value. But the scheme of political subjection is more subtle in America. And though McKinley was the chief representative of our modern slavery, he could not be considered in the light of a direct and immediate enemy of the people; while in an absolutism, the autocrat is visible and tangible. The real despotism of republican institutions is far deeper, more insidious, because it rests on the popular delusion of self-government and independence. That is the subtle source of democratic tyranny, and, as such, it cannot be reached with a bullet.

In modern capitalism, exploitation rather than oppression is the real enemy of the people. Oppression is but its handmaid. Hence the battle is to be waged in the economic rather than the political field. It is therefore that I regard my own act as far more significant and educational than Leon's. It was directed against a tangible, real oppressor, visualized as such by the people.

As long as misery and tyranny fill the world, social contrasts and consequent hatreds will persist, and the noblest of the race—our Czolgoszes—burst forth in “rockets of iron.” But does this lightning really illumine the social horizon, or merely confuse minds with the succeeding darkness? The struggle of labor against capital is a class war, essentially and chiefly economic. In that arena the battles must be fought.

It was not these considerations, of course, that inspired the nation-wide man-hunt, or the attitude even of alleged radicals. Their cowardice has filled me with loathing and sadness. The brutal farce of the trial, the hypocrisy of the whole proceeding, the thirst for the blood of the martyr,—these make one almost despair of humanity.

I must close. The friend to smuggle out this letter will be uneasy about its bulk. Send me sign of receipt, and I hope that you may be permitted a little rest and peace, to recover from the nightmare of the last months.

SASHA.

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*In Chapter 42 Berkman discusses prison life and the fate of some fellow prisoners. Chapter 43 follows.*

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## CHAPTER 43

### “PASSING THE LOVE OF WOMAN”

The presence of my old friend is a source of much pleasure. George is an intelligent man; the long years of incarceration have not circumscribed his intellectual horizon. The approach of release is intensifying his interest in the life beyond the gates, and we pass the idle hours conversing over subjects of mutual interest, discussing social theories and problems of the day. He has a

broad grasp of affairs, but his temperament and Catholic traditions are antagonistic to the ideas dear to me. Yet his attitude is free from personalities and narrow prejudice, and our talks are conducted along scientific and philosophical lines. The recent death of Liebknecht and the American lecture tour of Peter Kropotkin afford opportunity for the discussion of modern social questions. There are many subjects of mutual interest, and my friend, whose great-grandfather was among the signers of the Declaration, waxes eloquent in denunciation of his country's policy of extermination in the Philippines and the growing imperialistic tendencies of the Republic. A Democrat of the Jeffersonian type, he is virulent against the old Warden on account of his favoritism and discrimination. His prison experience, he informs me, has considerably altered the views of democracy he once entertained.

"Why, Aleck, there *is* no justice," he says vehemently; "no, not even in the best democracy. Ten years ago I would have staked my life on the courts. Today I know they are a failure; our whole jurisprudence is wrong. You see, I have been here nine years. I have met and made friends with hundreds of criminals. Some were pretty desperate, and many of them scoundrels. But I have to meet one yet in whom I couldn't discover some good quality, if he's scratched right. Look at that fellow there," he points to a young prisoner scrubbing an upper range, "that's 'Johnny the Hunk.' He's in for murder. Now what did the judge and jury know about him? Just this: he was a hardworking boy in the mills. One Saturday he attended a wedding, with a chum of his. They were both drunk when they went out into the street. They were boisterous, and a policeman tried to arrest them. Johnny's chum resisted. The cop must have lost his head—he shot the fellow dead. It was right near Johnny's home, and he ran in and got a pistol, and killed the policeman. Must have been crazy with drink. Well, they were going to hang him, but he was only a kid, hardly sixteen. They gave him fifteen years. Now he's all in—they've just ruined the boy's life. And what kind of a boy is he, do you know? Guess what he did. It was only a few months ago. Some screw told him that the widow of the cop he shot is hard up; she has three children, and takes in washing. Do you know what Johnny did? He went around among the cons, and got together fifty dollars on the fancy paper-work he is making; he's an artist at it. He sent the woman the money, and begged her to forgive him."

"Is that true, Doctor?"

"Every word. I went to Milligan's office on some business, and the boy had just sent the money to the woman. The Chaplain was so much moved by it, he told me the whole story. But wait, that isn't all. You know what that woman did?"

"What?"

"She wrote to Johnny that he was a dirty murderer, and that if he ever goes up for a pardon, she will oppose it. She didn't want anything to do with him, she wrote. But she kept the money."

"How did Johnny take it?"

"It's really wonderful about human nature. The boy cried over the letter, and told the Chaplain that he wouldn't write to her again. But every minute he can spare he works on that fancy work, and every month he sends her money. That's the *criminal* the judge sentenced to fifteen years in this hell!"

My friend is firmly convinced that the law is entirely impotent to deal with our

social ills. "Why, look at the courts!" he exclaims, "they don't concern themselves with crime. They merely punish the criminal, absolutely indifferent to his antecedents and environment, and the predisposing causes."

"But, George," I rejoin, "it is the economic system of exploitation, the dependence upon a master for your livelihood, want and the fear of want, which are responsible for most crimes."

"Only partly so, Aleck. If it wasn't for the corruption in our public life, and the commercial scourge that holds everything for sale, and the spirit of materialism which has cheapened human life, there would not be so much violence and crime, even under what you call the capitalist system. At any rate, there is no doubt the law is an absolute failure in dealing with crime. The criminal belongs to the sphere of therapeutics. Give him to the doctor instead of the jailer."

"You mean, George, that the criminal is to be considered a product of anthropological and physical factors. But don't you see that you must also examine society, to determine to what extent social conditions are responsible for criminal actions? And if that were done, I believe most crimes would be found to be misdirected energy—misdirected because of false standards, wrong environment, and unenlightened self-interest."

"Well, I haven't given much thought to that phase of the question. But aside of social conditions, see what a botch the penal institutions are making of it. For one thing, the promiscuous mingling of young and old, without regard to relative depravity and criminality, is converting prisons into veritable schools of crime and vice. The blackjack and the dungeon are surely not the proper means of reclamation, no matter what the social causes of crime. Restraint and penal methods can't reform. The very idea of punishment precludes betterment. True reformation can emanate only from voluntary impulse, inspired and cultivated by intelligent advice and kind treatment. But reformation which is the result of fear, lacks the very essentials of its object, and will vanish like smoke the moment fear abates. And you know, Aleck, the reformatories are even worse than the prisons. Look at the fellows here from the various reform schools. Why, it's a disgrace! The boys who come from the outside are decent fellows. But those kids from the reformatories—one-third of the cons here have graduated there—they are terrible. You can spot them by looking at them. They are worse than street prostitutes."

My friend is very bitter against the prison element variously known as "the girls," "Sallies," and "punks," who for gain traffic in sexual gratification. But he takes a broad view of the moral aspect of homosexuality; his denunciation is against the commerce in carnal desires. As a medical man, and a student, he is deeply interested in the manifestations of suppressed sex. He speaks with profound sympathy of the brilliant English man-of-letters, whom the world of cant and stupidity has driven to prison and to death because his sex life did not conform to the accepted standards. In detail, my friend traces the various phases of his psychic development since his imprisonment, and I warm toward him with a sense of intense humanity, as he reveals the intimate emotions of his being. A general medical practitioner, he had not come in personal contact with cases of homosexuality. He had heard of pederasty; but like the majority of his colleagues, he had neither understanding for nor sympathy with the sex practices

he considered abnormal and vicious. In prison he was horrified at the perversion that frequently came under his observation. For two years the very thought of such matters filled him with disgust; he even refused to speak to the men and boys known to be homosexual, unconditionally condemning them—"with my prejudices rather than my reason," he remarks. But the forces of suppression were at work. "Now, this is in confidence, Aleck," he cautions me. "I know you will understand. Probably you yourself have experienced the same thing. I'm glad I can talk to some one about it; the other fellows here wouldn't understand it. It makes me sick to see how they all grow indignant over a fellow who is caught. And the officers, too, though you know as well as I that quite a number of them are addicted to these practices. Well, I'll tell you. I suppose it's the same story with every one here, especially the long-timers. I was terribly dejected and hopeless when I came. Sixteen years—I didn't believe for a moment I could live through it. I was abusing myself pretty badly. Still, after a while, when I got work and began to take an interest in this life, I got over it. But as time went, the sex instinct awakened. I was young; about twenty-five, strong and healthy. Sometimes I thought I'd get crazy with passion. You remember when we were celling together on that upper range, on R; you were in the stocking shop then, weren't you? Don't you remember?"

"Of course I remember, George. You were in the cell next mine. We could see out on the river. It was in the summer: we could hear the excursion boats, and the girls singing and dancing."

"That, too, helped to turn me back to onanism. I really believe the whole blessed range used to 'indulge' then. Think of the precious material fed to the fishes," he smiles; "the privies, you know, empty into the river."

"Some geniuses may have been lost to the world in those orgies."

"Yes, orgies; that's just what they were. As a matter of fact, I don't believe there is a single man in the prison who doesn't abuse himself, at one time or another."

"If there is, he's a mighty exception. I have known some men to masturbate four and five times a day. Kept it up for months, too."

"Yes, and they either get the con, or go bugs. As a medical man I think that self-abuse, if practised no more frequently than ordinary coition, would be no more injurious than the latter. But it can't be done. It grows on you terribly. And the second stage is more dangerous than the first."

"What do you call the second?"

"Well, the first is the dejection stage. Hopeless and despondent, you seek forgetfulness in onanism. You don't care what happens. It's what I might call mechanical self-abuse, not induced by actual sex desire. This stage passes with your dejection, as soon as you begin to take an interest in the new life, as all of us are forced to do, before long. The second stage is the psychic and mental. It is not the result of dejection. With the gradual adaptation to the new conditions, a comparatively normal life begins, manifesting sexual desires. At this stage your self-abuse is induced by actual need. It is the more dangerous phase, because the frequency of the practice grows with the recurring thought of home, your wife or sweetheart. While the first was mechanical, giving no special pleasure, and resulting only in increasing lassitude, the second stage revolves about the charms of some loved woman, or one desired, and affords intense joy. Therein is its

allurement and danger; and that's why the habit gains in strength. The more miserable the life, the more frequently you will fall back upon your sole source of pleasure. Many become helpless victims. I have noticed that prisoners of lower intelligence are the worst in this respect."

"I have had the same experience. The narrower your mental horizon, the more you dwell upon your personal troubles and wrongs. That is probably the reason why the more illiterate go insane with confinement."

"No doubt of it. You have had exceptional opportunities for observation of the solitaries and the new men. What did you notice, Aleck?"

"Well, in some respects the existence of a prisoner is like the life of a factory worker. As a rule, men used to outdoor life suffer most from solitary. They are less able to adapt themselves to the close quarters, and the foul air quickly attacks their lungs. Besides, those who have no interests beyond their personal life, soon become victims of insanity. I've always advised new men to interest themselves in some study or fancy work,—it's their only salvation."

"If you yourself have survived, it's because you lived in your theories and ideals; I'm sure of it. And I continued my medical studies, and sought to absorb myself in scientific subjects."

For a moment George pauses. The veins of his forehead protrude, as if he is undergoing a severe mental struggle. Presently he says: "Aleck, I'm going to speak very frankly to you. I'm much interested in the subject. I'll give you my intimate experiences, and I want you to be just as frank with me. I think it's one of the most important things, and I want to learn all I can about it. Very little is known about it, and much less understood."

"About what, George?"

"About homosexuality. I have spoken of the second phase of onanism. With a strong effort I overcame it. Not entirely, of course. But I have succeeded in regulating the practice, indulging in it at certain intervals. But as the months and years passed, my emotions manifested themselves. It was like a psychic awakening. The desire to love something was strong upon me. Once I caught a little mouse in my cell, and tamed it a bit. It would eat out of my hand, and come around at meal times, and by and by it would stay all evening to play with me. I learned to love it. Honestly, Aleck, I cried when it died. And then, for a long time, I felt as if there was a void in my heart. I wanted something to love. It just swept me with wild craving for affection. Somehow the thought of woman gradually faded from my mind. When I saw my wife, it was just like a dear friend. But I didn't feel toward her sexually. One day, as I was passing in the hall, I noticed a young boy. He had been in only a short time, and he was rosy-cheeked, with a smooth little face and sweet lips—he reminded me of a girl I used to court before I married. After that I frequently surprised myself thinking of the lad. I felt no desire toward him, except just to know him and get friendly. I became acquainted with him, and when he heard I was a medical man, he would often call to consult me about the stomach trouble he suffered. The doctor here persisted in giving the poor kid salts and physics all the time. Well, Aleck, I could hardly believe it myself, but I grew so fond of the boy, I was miserable when a day passed without my seeing him. I would take big chances to get near him. I was rangeman then, and he was assistant on a

top tier. We often had opportunities to talk. I got him interested in literature, and advised him what to read, for he didn't know what to do with his time. He had a fine character, that boy, and he was bright and intelligent. At first it was only a liking for him, but it increased all the time, till I couldn't think of any woman. But don't misunderstand me, Aleck; it wasn't that I wanted a 'kid.' I swear to you, the other youths had no attraction for me whatever; but this boy—his name was Floyd—he became so dear to me, why, I used to give him everything I could get. I had a friendly guard, and he'd bring me fruit and things. Sometimes I'd just die to eat it, but I always gave it to Floyd. And, Aleck—you remember when I was down in the dungeon six days? Well, it was for the sake of that boy. He did something, and I took the blame on myself. And the last time—they kept me nine days chained up—I hit a fellow for abusing Floyd: he was small and couldn't defend himself. I did not realize it at the time, Aleck, but I know now that I was simply in love with the boy; wildly, madly in love. It came very gradually. For two years I loved him without the least taint of sex desire. It was the purest affection I ever felt in my life. It was all-absorbing, and I would have sacrificed my life for him if he had asked it. But by degrees the psychic stage began to manifest all the expressions of love between the opposite sexes. I remember the first time he kissed me. It was early in the morning; only the rangers were out, and I stole up to his cell to give him a delicacy. He put both hands between the bars, and pressed his lips to mine. Aleck, I tell you, never in my life had I experienced such bliss as at that moment. It's five years ago, but it thrills me every time I think of it. It came suddenly; I didn't expect it. It was entirely spontaneous: our eyes met, and it seemed as if something drew us together. He told me he was very fond of me. From then on we became lovers. I used to neglect my work, and risk great danger to get a chance to kiss and embrace him. I grew terribly jealous, too, though I had no cause. I passed through every phase of a passionate love. With this difference, though—I felt a touch of the old disgust at the thought of actual sex contact. That I didn't do. It seemed to me a desecration of the boy, and of my love for him. But after a while that feeling also wore off, and I desired sexual relation with him. He said he loved me enough to do even that for me, though he had never done it before. He hadn't been in any reformatory, you know. And yet, somehow I couldn't bring myself to do it; I loved the lad too much for it. Perhaps you will smile, Aleck, but it was real, true love. When Floyd was unexpectedly transferred to the other block, I felt that I would be the happiest man if I could only touch his hand again, or get one more kiss. You—you're laughing?" he asks abruptly, a touch of anxiety in his voice.

"No, George. I am grateful for your confidence. I think it is a wonderful thing; and, George—I had felt the same horror and disgust at these things, as you did. But now I think quite differently about them."

"Really, Aleck? I'm glad you say so. Often I was troubled—is it viciousness or what, I wondered; but I could never talk to any one about it. They take everything here in such a filthy sense. Yet I knew in my heart that it was a true, honest emotion."

"George, I think it a very beautiful emotion. Just as beautiful as love for a woman. I had a friend here; his name was Russell; perhaps you remember him.

I felt no physical passion toward him, but I think I loved him with all my heart. His death was a most terrible shock to me. It almost drove me insane.”

Silently George holds out his hand.

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*In Chapters 44 to 48 and in Part Three of the Memoirs, Alec writes of the tuberculosis which is ravaging the prison, of being put, once again, into solitary, and of the new friend he has made in the socialist foreman of the weaving shop. These chapters are filled with hope as Berkman awaits his release from prison. Part Four, the final chapter of the Memoirs, is included here in its entirety.*

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# Part Four: The Resurrection

## I

All night I toss sleeplessly on the cot, and pace the cell in nervous agitation, waiting for the dawn. With restless joy I watch the darkness melt, as the first rays herald the coming of the day. It is the 18th of May—my last day, my very last! A few more hours, and I shall walk through the gates, and drink in the warm sunshine and the balmy air, and be free to go and come as I please, after the nightmare of thirteen years and ten months in jail, penitentiary, and workhouse.

My step quickens with the excitement of the outside, and I try to while away the heavy hours thinking of freedom and of friends. But my brain is in a turmoil; I cannot concentrate my thoughts. Visions of the near future, images of the past, flash before me, and crowd each other in bewildering confusion.

Again and again my mind reverts to the unnecessary cruelty that has kept me in prison three months over and above my time. It was sheer sophistry to consider me a “new” prisoner, entitled only to two months’ commutation. As a matter of fact, I was serving the last year of a twenty-two-year sentence, and therefore I should have received five months time off. The Superintendent had repeatedly promised to inform me of the decision of the Board of Directors, and every day, for weeks and months, I anxiously waited for word from them. None ever came, and I had to serve the full ten months.

Ah, well, it is almost over now! I have passed my last night in the cell, and the morning is here, the precious, blessed morning!

How slowly the minutes creep! I listen intently, and catch the sound of bars being unlocked on the bottom range: it is the Night Captain turning the kitchen men out to prepare breakfast—5 A. M! Two and a half hours yet before I shall be called; two endless hours, and then another thirty long minutes. Will they ever pass? . . . And again I pace the cell.

## II

The gong rings the rising hour. In great agitation I gather up my blankets, tin-cup and spoon, which must be delivered at the office before I am discharged. My heart beats turbulently, as I stand at the door, waiting to be called. But the guard unlocks the range and orders me to “fall in for breakfast.”

The striped line winds down the stairs, past the lynx-eyed Deputy standing in the middle of the hallway, and slowly circles through the centre, where each man

receives his portion of bread for the day and returns to his tier. The turnkey, on his rounds of the range, casts a glance into my cell. "Not workin'," he says mechanically, shutting the door in my face.

"I'm going out," I protest.

"Not till you're called," he retorts, locking me in.

I stand at the door, tense with suspense. I strain my ear for the approach of a guard to call me to the office, but all remains quiet. A vague fear steals over me: perhaps they will not release me to-day; I may be losing time. . . . A feeling of nausea overcomes me, but by a strong effort I throw off the dreadful fancy, and quicken my step. I must not think—not think. . . .

At last! The lever is pulled, my cell unlocked, and with a dozen other men I am marched to the clothesroom, in single file and lockstep. I await my turn impatiently, as several men are undressed and their naked bodies scrutinized for contraband or hidden messages. The overseer flings a small bag at each man, containing the prisoner's civilian garb, shouting boisterously: "Hey, you! Take off them clothes, and put your rags on."

I dress hurriedly. A guard accompanies me to the office, where my belongings are returned to me: some money friends had sent, my watch, and the piece of ivory the penitentiary turnkey had stolen from me, and which I had insisted on getting back before I left Riverside. The officer in charge hands me a railroad ticket to Pittsburgh (the fare costing about thirty cents), and I am conducted to the prison gate.

### III

The sun shines brightly in the yard, the sky is clear, the air fresh and bracing. Now the last gate will be thrown open, and I shall be out of sight of the guard, beyond the bars,—alone! How I have hungered for this hour, how often in the past years have I dreamed of this rapturous moment—to be alone, out in the open, away from the insolent eyes of my keepers! I'll rush away from these walls and kneel on the warm sod, and kiss the soil and embrace the trees, and with a song of joy give thanks to Nature for the blessings of sunshine and air.

The outer door opens before me, and I am confronted by reporters with cameras. Several tall men approach me. One of them touches me on the shoulder, turns back the lapel of his coat, revealing a police officer's star, and says:

"Berkman, you are to leave the city before night, by order of the Chief."

The detectives and reporters trailing me to the nearby railway station attract a curious crowd. I hasten into a car to escape their insistent gaze, feeling glad that I have prevailed upon my friends not to meet me at the prison.

My mind is busy with plans to outwit the detectives, who have entered the same compartment. I have arranged to join the Girl in Detroit. I have no particular reason to mask my movements, but I resent the surveillance. I must get rid of the spies, somehow; I don't want their hateful eyes to desecrate my meeting with the Girl.

I feel dazed. The short ride to Pittsburgh is over before I can collect my thoughts. The din and noise rend my ears; the rushing cars, the clanging bells, bewilder me. I am afraid to cross the street; the flying monsters pursue me on every

side. The crowds jostle me on the sidewalk, and I am constantly running into the passers-by. The turmoil, the ceaseless movement, disconcerts me. A horseless carriage whizzes close by me; I turn to look at the first automobile I have ever seen, but the living current sweeps me helplessly along. A woman passes me, with a child in her arms. The baby looks strangely diminutive, a rosy dimple in the laughing face. I smile back at the little cherub, and my eyes meet the gaze of the detectives. A wild thought to escape, to get away from them, possesses me, and I turn quickly into a side street, and walk blindly, faster and faster. A sudden impulse seizes me at the sight of a passing car, and I dash after it.

"Fare, please!" the conductor sings out, and I almost laugh out aloud at the fleeting sense of the material reality of freedom. Conscious of the strangeness of my action, I produce a dollar bill, and a sense of exhilarating independence comes over me, as the man counts out the silver coins. I watch him closely for a sign of recognition. Does he realize that I am just out of prison? He turns away, and I feel thankful to the dear Chum for having so thoughtfully provided me with a new suit of clothes. It is peculiar, however, that the conductor has failed to notice my closely cropped hair. But the man in the seat opposite seems to be watching me. Perhaps he has recognized me by my picture in the newspapers; or may be it is my straw hat that has attracted his attention. I glance about me. No one wears summer headgear yet; it must be too early in the season. I ought to change it: the detectives could not follow me so easily then. Why, there they are on the back platform!

At the next stop I jump off the car. A hat sign arrests my eye, and I walk into the store, and then slip quietly through a side entrance, a dark derby on my head. I walk quickly, for a long, long time, board several cars, and then walk again, till I find myself on a deserted street. No one is following me now; the detectives must have lost track of me. I feel worn and tired. Where could I rest up, I wonder, when I suddenly recollect that I was to go directly from the prison to the drugstore of Comrade M—. My friends must be worried, and M—is waiting to wire to the Girl about my release.

It is long past noon when I enter the drugstore. M—seems highly wrought up over something; he shakes my hand violently, and plies me with questions, as he leads me into his apartments in the rear of the store. It seems strange to be in a regular room; there is paper on the walls, and it feels so peculiar to the touch, so different from the whitewashed cell. I pass my hand over it caressingly, with a keen sense of pleasure. The chairs, too, look strange, and those quaint things on the table. The bric-a-brac absorbs my attention—the people in the room look hazy, their voices sound distant and confused.

"Why don't you sit down, Aleck?" the tones are musical and tender; a woman's, no doubt.

"Yes," I reply, walking around the table, and picking up a bright toy. It represents Undine, rising from the water, the spray glistening in the sun. . . .

"Are you tired, Aleck?"

"N—no."

"You have just come out?"

"Yes."

It requires an effort to talk. The last year, in the workhouse, I have barely

spoken a dozen words; there was always absolute silence. The voices disturb me. The presence of so many people—there are three or four about me—is oppressive. The room reminds me of the cell, and the desire seizes me to rush out into the open, to breathe the air and see the sky.

“I’m going,” I say, snatching up my hat.

#### IV

The train speeds me to Detroit, and I wonder vaguely how I reached the station. My brain is numb; I cannot think. Field and forest flit by in the gathering dusk, but the surroundings wake no interest in me. “I am rid of the detectives”—the thought persists in my mind, and I feel something relax within me, and leave me cold, without emotion or desire.

With an effort I descend to the platform, and sway from side to side, as I cross the station at Detroit. A man and a girl hasten toward me, and grasp me by the hand. I recognize Carl. The dear boy, he was a most faithful and cheering correspondent all these years since he left the penitentiary. But who is the girl with him, I wonder, when my gaze falls on a woman leaning against a pillar. She looks intently at me. The wave of her hair, the familiar eyes—why, it’s the Girl! How little she has changed! I take a few steps forward, somewhat surprised that she did not rush up to me like the others. I feel pleased at her self-possession: the excited voices, the quick motions, disturb me. I walk slowly toward her, but she does not move. She seems rooted to the spot, her hand grasping the pillar, a look of awe and terror in her face. Suddenly she throws her arms around me. Her lips move, but no sound reaches my ear.

We walk in silence. The Girl presses a bouquet into my hand. My heart is full, but I cannot talk. I hold the flowers to my face, and mechanically bite the petals.

#### V

Detroit, Chicago, and Milwaukee pass before me like a troubled dream. I have a faint recollection of a sea of faces, restless and turbulent, and I in its midst. Confused voices beat like hammers on my head, and then all is very still. I stand in full view of the audience. Eyes are turned on me from every side, and I grow embarrassed. The crowd looks dim and hazy; I feel hot and cold, and a great longing to flee. The perspiration is running down my back; my knees tremble violently, the floor is slipping from under my feet—there is a tumult of hand clapping, loud cheers and bravos.

We return to Carl’s house, and men and women grasp my hand and look at me with eyes of curious awe. I fancy a touch of pity in their tones, and am impatient of their sympathy. A sense of suffocation possesses me within doors, and I dread the presence of people. It is torture to talk; the sound of voices agonizes me. I watch for an opportunity to steal out of the house. It soothes me to lose myself among the crowds, and a sense of quiet pervades me at the thought that I am a stranger to every one about me. I roam the city at night, and seek the outlying country, conscious only of a desire to be alone.

## VI

I am in the Waldheim,\* the Girl at my side. All is quiet in the cemetery, and I feel a great peace. No emotion stirs me at the sight of the monument, save a feeling of quiet sadness. It represents a woman, with one hand placing a wreath on the fallen, with the other grasping a sword. The marble features mirror unutterable grief and proud defiance.

I glance at the Girl. Her face is averted, but the droop of her head speaks of suffering. I hold out my hand to her, and we stand in mute sorrow at the graves of our martyred comrades. . . . I have a vision of Stenka Razin, as I had seen him pictured in my youth, and at his side hang the bodies of the men buried beneath my feet. Why are they dead? I wonder. Why should I live? And a great desire to lie down with them is upon me. I clutch the iron post, to keep from falling.

Steps sound behind me, and I turn to see a girl hastening toward us. She is radiant with young womanhood; her presence breathes life and the joy of it. Her bosom heaves with panting; her face struggles with a solemn look.

"I ran all the way," her voice is soft and low; "I was afraid I might miss you."

The Girl smiles. "Let us go in somewhere to rest up, Alice." Turning to me, she adds, "She ran to see—you."

How peculiar the Girl should conceive such an idea! It is absurd. Why should Alice be anxious to see me? I look old and worn; my step is languid, unsteady. . . . Bitter thoughts fill my mind, as we ride back on the train to Chicago.

"You are sad," the Girl remarks. "Alice is very much taken with you. Aren't you glad?"

"You are mistaken," I reply.

"I'm sure of it," the Girl persists. "Shall I ask her?"

She turns to Alice.

"Oh, I like you so much, Sasha," Alice whispers. I look up timidly at her. She is leaning toward me in the abandon of artless tenderness, and a great joy steals over me, as I read in her eyes frank affection.

## VII

New York looks unexpectedly familiar, though I miss many old landmarks. It is torture to be indoors, and I roam the streets, experiencing a thrill of kinship when I locate one of my old haunts.

I feel little interest in the large meeting arranged to greet me back into the world. Yet I am conscious of some curiosity about the comrades I may meet there. Few of the old guard have remained. Some dropped from the ranks; others died. John Most will not be there. I cherished the hope of meeting him again, but he died a few months before my release. He had been unjust to me; but who is free from moments of weakness? The passage of time has mellowed the bitterness of my resentment, and I think of him, my first teacher of Anarchy, with old-time admiration. His unique personality stands out in strong relief upon the flat background of his time. His life was the tragedy of the ever unpopular pioneer. A social Lear, his whitening years brought only increasing isolation and

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\*The cemetery where the Haymarket martyrs are buried.

greater lack of understanding, even within his own circle. He had struggled and suffered much; he gave his whole life to advance the Cause, only to find at the last that he who crosses the threshold must leave all behind, even friendship, even comradeship.

My old friend, Justus Schwab, is also gone, and Brady, the big Austrian. Few of the comrades of my day have survived. The younger generation seems different, unsatisfactory. The Ghetto I had known has also disappeared. Primitive Orchard Street, the scene of our pioneer meetings, has conformed to business respectability; the historic lecture hall, that rang with the breaking chains of the awakening people, has been turned into a dancing-school; the little cafe "around the corner," the intellectual arena of former years, is now a counting-house. The fervid enthusiasm of the past, the spontaneous comradeship in the common cause, the intoxication of world-liberating zeal—all are gone with the days of my youth. I sense the spirit of cold deliberation in the new set, and a tone of disillusioned wisdom that chills and estranges me.

The Girl has also changed. The little Sailor, my companion of the days that thrilled with the approach of the Social Revolution, has become a woman of the world. Her mind has matured, but her wider interests antagonize my old revolutionary traditions that inspired every day and colored our every act with the direct perception of the momentarily expected great upheaval. I feel an instinctive disapproval of many things, though particular instances are intangible and elude my analysis. I sense a foreign element in the circle she has gathered about her, and feel myself a stranger among them. Her friends and admirers crowd her home, and turn it into a sort of salon. They talk art and literature; discuss science and philosophize over the disharmony of life. But the groans of the dungeon find no gripping echo there. The Girl is the most revolutionary of them all; but even she has been infected by the air of intellectual aloofness, false tolerance and everlasting pessimism. I resent the situation, the more I become conscious of the chasm between the Girl and myself. It seems unbridgeable; we cannot recover the intimate note of our former comradeship. With pain I witness her evident misery. She is untiring in her care and affection; the whole circle lavishes on me sympathy and tenderness. But through it all I feel the commiserating tolerance toward a sick child. I shun the atmosphere of the house, and flee to seek the solitude of the crowded streets and the companionship of the plain, untutored underworld.

In a Bowery resort I come across Dan, my assistant on the range during my last year in the penitentiary.

"Hello, Aleck," he says, taking me aside, "awful glad to see you out of hell. Doing all right?"

"So, so, Dan. And you?"

"Rotten, Aleck, rotten. You know it was my first bit, and I swore I'd never do a crooked job again. Well, they turned me out with a five-spot, after four years' steady work, mind you, and three of them working my head off on a loom. Then they handed me a pair of Kentucky jeans, that any fly-cop could spot a mile off. My friends went back on me—that five-spot was all I had in the world, and it didn't go a long way. Liberty ain't what it looks to a fellow through the bars, Aleck, but it's hell to go back. I don't know what to do."

"How do you happen here, Dan? Could you get no work at home, in Oil City?"

“Home, hell! I wish I had a home and friends, like you, Aleck. Christ, d’you think I’d ever turn another trick? But I got no home and no friends. Mother died before I came out, and I found no home. I got a job in Oil City, but the bulls tipped me off for an ex-con, and I beat my way here. I tried to do the square thing, Aleck, but where’s a fellow to turn? I haven’t a cent and not a friend in the world.”

Poor Dan! I feel powerless to help him, even with advice. Without friends or money, his “liberty” is a hollow mockery, even worse than mine. Five years ago he was a strong, healthy young man. He committed a burglary, and was sent to prison. Now he is out, his body weakened, his spirit broken; he is less capable than ever to survive in the struggle. What is he to do but commit another crime and be returned to prison? Even I, with so many advantages that Dan is lacking, with kind comrades and helpful friends, I can find no place in this world of the outside. I have been torn out, and I seem unable to take root again. Everything looks so different, changed. And yet I feel a great hunger for life. I could enjoy the sunshine, the open, and freedom of action. I could make my life and my prison experience useful to the world. But I am incapacitated for the struggle. I do not fit in any more, not even in the circle of my comrades. And this seething life, the turmoil and the noises of the city, agonize me. Perhaps it would be best for me to retire to the country, and there lead a simple life, close to nature.

## VIII

The summer is fragrant with a thousand perfumes, and a great peace is in the woods. The Hudson River shimmers in the distance, a solitary sail on its broad bosom. The Palisades on the opposite side look immutable, eternal, their undulating tops melting in the grayish-blue horizon.

Puffs of smoke rise from the valley. Here, too, has penetrated the restless spirit. The muffled thunder of blasting breaks in upon the silence. The greedy hand of man is desecrating the Palisades, as it has desecrated the race. But the big river flows quietly, and the sailboat glides serenely on the waters. It skips over the foaming waves, near the spot I stand on, toward the great, busy city. Now it is floating past the high towers, with their forbidding aspect. It is Sing Sing prison. Men groan and suffer there, and are tortured in the dungeon. And I—I am a useless cog, an idler, while others toil; and I keep mute, while others suffer.

My mind dwells in the prison. The silence rings with the cry of pain; the woods echo the agony of the dungeon. I start at the murmur of the leaves; the trees with their outstretched arms bar my way, menacing me like the guards on the prison walls. Their monster shapes follow me in the valley.

At night I wake in cold terror. The agonized cry of Crazy Smithy is in my ears, and again I hear the sickening thud of the riot clubs on the prisoner’s head. The solitude is harrowing with the memory of the prison; it haunts me with the horrors of the basket cell. Away, I must away, to seek relief amidst the people!

Back in the city, I face the problem of support. The sense of dependence gnaws me. The hospitality of my friends is boundless, but I cannot continue as the beneficiary of their generosity. I had declined the money gift presented to me on my release by the comrades: I felt I could not accept even their well-meant offering. The question of earning my living is growing acute. I cannot remain idle. But

what shall I turn to? I am too weak for factory work. I had hoped to secure employment as a compositor, but the linotype has made me superfluous. I might be engaged as a proof-reader. My former membership in the Typographical Union will enable me to join the ranks of labor.

My physical condition, however, precludes the immediate realization of my plans. Meanwhile some comrades suggest the advisability of a short lecture tour: it will bring me in closer contact with the world, and serve to awaken new interest in life. The idea appeals to me. I shall be doing work, useful work. I shall voice the cry of the depths, and perhaps the people will listen, and some may understand!

## IX

With a great effort I persevere on the tour. The strain is exhausting my strength, and I feel weary and discontented. My innate dread of public speaking is aggravated by the necessity of constant association with people. The comrades are sympathetic and attentive, but their very care is a source of annoyance. I long for solitude and quiet. In the midst of people, the old prison instinct of escape possesses me. Once or twice the wild idea of terminating the tour has crossed my mind. The thought is preposterous, impossible. Meetings have already been arranged in various cities, and my appearance widely announced. It would disgrace me, and injure the movement, were I to prove myself so irresponsible. I owe it to the Cause, and to my comrades, to keep my appointments. I must fight off this morbid notion.

My engagement in Pittsburgh aids my determination. Little did I dream in the penitentiary that I should live to see that city again, even to appear in public there! Looking back over the long years of imprisonment, of persecution and torture, I marvel that I have survived. Surely it was not alone physical capacity to suffer—how often had I touched the threshold of death, and trembled on the brink of insanity and self-destruction! Whatever strength and perseverance I possessed, they alone could not have saved my reason in the night of the dungeon, or preserved me in the despair of the solitary. Poor Wingie, Ed Sloane, and “Fighting” Tom; Harry, Russell, Crazy Smithy—how many of my friends have perished there! It was the vision of an ideal, the consciousness that I suffered for a great Cause, that sustained me. The very exaggeration of my self-estimate was a source of strength: I looked upon myself as a representative of a world movement; it was my duty to exemplify the spirit and dignity of the ideas it embodied. I was not a prisoner, merely; I was an Anarchist in the hands of the enemy; as such, it devolved upon me to maintain the manhood and self-respect my ideals signified. The example of the political prisoners in Russia inspired me, and my stay in the penitentiary was a continuous struggle that was the breath of life.

Was it the extreme self-consciousness of the idealist, the power of revolutionary traditions, or simply the persistent will to be? Most likely, it was the fusing of all three, that shaped my attitude in prison and kept me alive. And now, on my way to Pittsburgh, I feel the same spirit within me, at the threat of the local authorities to prevent my appearance in the city. Some friends seek to persuade me to cancel my lecture there, alarmed at the police preparations to arrest me.

Something might happen, they warm me; legally I am still a prisoner out on parole. I am liable to be returned to the penitentiary, without trial, for the period of my commutation time—eight years and two months—if convicted of a felony before the expiration of my full sentence of twenty-two years.

But the menace of the enemy stirs me from apathy, and all my old revolutionary defiance is roused within me. For the first time during the tour, I feel a vital interest in life, and am eager to ascend the platform.

An unfortunate delay on the road brings me into Pittsburgh two hours late for the lecture. Comrade M—is impatiently waiting for me, and we hasten to the meeting. On the way he informs me that the hall is filled with police and prison guards; the audience is in a state of great suspense; the rumor has gone about that the authorities are determined to prevent my appearance.

I sense an air of suppressed excitement, as I enter the hall, and elbow my way through the crowded aisle. Some one grips my arm, and I recognize “Southside” Johnny, the friendly prison runner. “Aleck, take care,” he warns me, “the bulls are layin’ for you.”

## X

The meeting is over, the danger past. I feel worn and tired with the effort of the evening.

My next lecture is to take place in Cleveland, Ohio. The all-night ride in the stuffy smoker aggravates my fatigue, and sets my nerves on edge. I arrive in the city feeling feverish and sick. To engage a room in a hotel would require an extra expense from the proceeds of the tour, which are intended for the movement; moreover, it would be sybaritism, contrary to the traditional practice of Anarchist lecturers. I decide to accept the hospitality of some friend during my stay in the city.

For hours I try to locate the comrade who has charge of arranging the meetings. At his home I am told that he is absent. His parents, pious Jews, look at me askance, and refuse to inform me of their son’s whereabouts. The unfriendly attitude of the old folks drives me into the street again, and I seek out another comrade. His family gathers about me. Their curious gaze is embarrassing; their questions idle. My pulse is feverish, my head heavy. I should like to rest up before the lecture, but a constant stream of comrades flows in on me, and the house rings with their joy of meeting me. The talking wearies me; their ardent interest searches my soul with rude hands. These men and women—they, too, are different from the comrades of my day; their very language echoes the spirit that has so depressed me in the new Ghetto. The abyss in our feeling and thought appals me.

With failing heart I ascend the platform in the evening. It is chilly outdoors, and the large hall, sparsely filled and badly lit, breathes the cold of the grave upon me. The audience is unresponsive. The lecture on Crime and Prisons that so thrilled my Pittsburgh meeting, wakes no vital chord. I feel dispirited. My voice is weak and expressionless; at times it drops to a hoarse whisper. I seem to stand at the mouth of a deep cavern, and everything is dark within. I speak into the blackness; my words strike metallicly against the walls, and are thrown

back at me with mocking emphasis. A sense of weariness and hopelessness possesses me, and I conclude the lecture abruptly.

The comrades surround me, grasp my hand, and ply me with questions about my prison life, the joy of liberty and of work. They are undisguisedly disappointed at my anxiety to retire, but presently it is decided that I should accept the proffered hospitality of a comrade who owns a large house in the suburbs.

The ride is interminable, the comrade apparently living several miles out in the country. On the way he talks incessantly, assuring me repeatedly that he considers it a great privilege to entertain me. I nod sleepily.

Finally we arrive. The place is large, but squalid. The low ceilings press down on my head; the rooms look cheerless and uninhabited. Exhausted by the day's exertion, I fall into heavy sleep.

Awakening in the morning, I am startled to find a stranger in my bed. His coat and hat are on the floor, and he lies snoring at my side, with overshirt and trousers on. He must have fallen into bed very tired, without even detaching the large cuffs, torn and soiled, that rattle on his hands.

The sight fills me with inexpressible disgust. All through the years of my prison life, my nights had been passed in absolute solitude. The presence of another in my bed is unutterably horrifying. I dress hurriedly, and rush out of the house.

A heavy drizzle is falling; the air is close and damp. The country looks cheerless and dreary. But one thought possesses me: to get away from the stranger snoring in my bed, away from the suffocating atmosphere of the house with its low ceilings, out into the open, away from the presence of man. The sight of a human being repels me, the sound of a voice is torture to me. I want to be alone, always alone, to have peace and quiet, to lead a simple life in close communion with nature. Ah, nature! That, too, I have tried, and found more impossible even than the turmoil of the city. The silence of the woods threatened to drive me mad, as did the solitude of the dungeon. A curse upon the thing that has incapacitated me for life, made solitude as hateful as the face of man, made life itself impossible to me! And is it for this I have yearned and suffered, for this spectre that haunts my steps, and turns day into a nightmare—this distortion, Life? Oh, where is the joy of expectation, the tremulous rapture, as I stood at the door of my cell, hailing the blush of the dawn, the day of resurrection! Where the happy moments that lit up the night of misery with the ecstasy of freedom, which was to give me back to work and joy! Where, where is it all? Is liberty sweet only in the anticipation, and life a bitter awakening?

The rain has ceased. The sun peeps through the clouds, and glints its rays upon a shop window. My eye falls on the gleaming barrel of a revolver. I enter the place, and purchase the weapon.

I walk aimlessly, in a daze. It is beginning to rain again, my body is chilled to the bone, and I seek the shelter of a saloon on an obscure street.

In the corner of the dingy back room I notice a girl. She is very young, with an air of gentility about her, that is somewhat marred by her quick, restless look.

We sit in silence, watching the heavy downpour outdoors. The girl is toying with a glass of whiskey.

Angry voices reach us from the street. There is a heavy shuffling of feet, and

a suppressed cry. A woman lurches through the swinging door, and falls against a table.

The girl rushes to the side of the woman, and assists her into a chair. "Are you hurt, Madge?" she asks sympathetically.

The woman looks up at her with bleary eyes. She raises her hand, passes it slowly across her mouth, and spits violently.

"He hit me, the dirty brute," she whimpers, "he hit me. But I sha'n't give him no money; I just won't, Frenchy."

The girl is tenderly wiping her friend's bleeding face. "Sh-sh, Madge, sh—sh!" she warns her, with a glance at the approaching waiter.

"Drunk again, you old bitch," the man growls. "You'd better vamoose now."

"Oh, let her be, Charley, won't you?" the girl coaxes. "And, say, bring me a bitters."

"The dirty loafer! It's money, always gimme money," the woman mumbles; "and I've had such bad luck, Frenchy. You know it's true. Don't you, Frenchy?"

"Yes, yes, dear," the girl soothes her. "Don't talk now. Lean your head on my shoulder, so! You'll be all right in a minute."

The girl sways to and fro, gently patting the woman on the head, and all is still in the room. The woman's breathing grows regular and louder. She snores, and the young girl slowly unwinds her arms and resumes her seat.

I motion to her. "Will you have a drink with me?"

"With pleasure," she smiles. "Poor thing," she nods toward the sleeper, "her fellow beats her and takes all she makes."

"You have a kind heart, Frenchy."

"We girls must be good to each other; no one else will. Some men are so mean, just too mean to live or let others live. But some are nice. Of course, some girls are bad, but we ain't all like that and—" she hesitates.

"And what?"

"Well, some have seen better days. I wasn't always like this," she adds, gulping down her drink.

Her face is pensive; her large black eyes look dreamy. She asks abruptly:

"You like poetry?"

"Ye—es. Why?"

"I write. Oh, you don't believe me, do you? Here's something of mine," and with a preliminary cough, she begins to recite with exaggerated feeling:

Mother dear, the days were young  
When posies in our garden hung.  
Upon your lap my golden head I laid,  
With pure and happy heart I prayed.

"I remember those days," she adds wistfully.

We sit in the dusk, without speaking. The lights are turned on, and my eye falls on a paper lying on the table. The large black print announces an excursion to Buffalo.

"Will you come with me?" I ask the girl, pointing to the advertisement.

"To Buffalo?"

"Yes."

“You’re kidding.”

“No. Will you come?”

“Sure.”

Alone with me in the stateroom, “Frenchy” grows tender and playful. She notices my sadness, and tries to amuse me. But I am thinking of the lecture that is to take place in Cleveland this very hour: the anxiety of my comrades, the disappointment of the audience, my absence, all prey on my mind. But who am I, to presume to teach? I have lost my bearings; there is no place for me in life. My bridges are burned.

The girl is in high spirits, but her jollity angers me. I crave to speak to her, to share my misery and my grief. I hint at the impossibility of life, and my superfluity in the world, but she looks bored, not grasping the significance of my words.

“Don’t talk so foolish, boy,” she scoffs. “What do you care about work or a place? You’ve got money; what more do you want? You better go down now and fetch something to drink.”

Returning to the stateroom, I find “Frenchy” missing. In a sheltered nook on the deck I recognize her in the lap of a stranger. Heart-sore and utterly disgusted, I retire to my berth. In the morning I slip quietly off the boat.

The streets are deserted; the city is asleep. In the fog and rain, the gray buildings resemble the prison walls, the tall factory chimneys standing guard like monster sentinels. I hasten away from the hated sight, and wander along the docks. The mist weaves phantom shapes, and I see a multitude of people and in their midst a boy, pale with large, lustrous eyes. The crowd curses and yells in frenzied passion, and arms are raised, and blows rain down on the lad’s head. The rain beats heavier, and every drop is a blow. The boy totters and falls to the ground. The wistful face, the dreamy eyes—why, it is Czolgosz!

Accursed spot! I cannot die here. I must to New York, to be near my friends in death!

## XI

Loud knocking wakes me.

“Say, Mister,” a voice calls behind the door, “are you all right?”

“Yes.”

“Will you have a bite, or something?”

“No.”

“Well, as you please. But you haven’t left your room going on two days now.”

Two days, and still alive? The road to death is so short, why suffer? An instant, and I shall be no more, and only the memory of me will abide for a little while in this world. *This* world? Is there another? If there is anything in Spiritualism, Carl will learn of it. In the prison we had been interested in the subject, and we had made a compact that he who is the first to die, should appear in spirit to the other. Pretty fancy of foolish man, born of immortal vanity! Hereafter, life after death—children of earth’s misery. The disharmony of life bears dreams of peace and bliss, but there is no harmony save in death. Who knows but that even then the atoms of my lifeless clay will find no rest, tossed about

in space to form new shapes and new thoughts for aeons of human anguish.

And so Carl will not see me after death. Our compact will not be kept, for nothing will remain of my "soul" when I am dead, as nothing remains of the sum when its units are gone. Dear Carl, he will be distraught at my failure to come to Detroit. He had arranged a lecture there, following Cleveland. It is peculiar that I should not have thought of wiring him that I was unable to attend. He might have suspended preparations. But it did not occur to me, and now it is too late.

The Girl, too, will be in despair over my disappearance. I cannot notify her now—I am virtually dead. Yet I crave to see her once more before I depart, even at a distance. But that also is too late. I am almost dead.

I dress mechanically, and step into the street. The brilliant sunshine, the people passing me by, the children playing about, strike on my consciousness with pleasing familiarity. The desire grips me to be one of them, to participate in their life. And yet it seems strange to think of myself as part of this moving, breathing humanity. Am I not dead?

I roam about all day. At dusk I am surprised to find myself near the Girl's home. The fear seizes me that I might be seen and recognized. A sense of guilt steals over me, and I shrink away, only to return again and again to the familiar spot.

I pass the night in the park. An old man, a sailor out of work, huddles close to me, seeking the warmth of my body. But I am cold and cheerless, and all next day I haunt again the neighborhood of the Girl. An irresistible force attracts me to the house. Repeatedly I return to my room and snatch up the weapon, and then rush out again. I am fearful of being seen near the "Den," and I make long detours to the Battery and the Bronx, but again and again I find myself watching the entrance and speculating on the people passing in and out of the house. My mind pictures the Girl, with her friends about her. What are they discussing, I wonder. "Why, myself!" it flits through my mind. The thought appalls me. They must be distraught with anxiety over my disappearance. Perhaps they think me dead!

I hasten to a telegraph office, and quickly pen a message to the Girl: "Come. I am waiting here."

In a flurry of suspense I wait for the return of the messenger. A little girl steps in, and I recognize Tess, and inwardly resent that the Girl did not come herself.

"Aleck," she falters, "Sonya wasn't home when your message came. I'll run to find her."

The old dread of people is upon me, and I rush out of the place, hoping to avoid meeting the Girl. I stumble through the streets, retrace my steps to the telegraph office, and suddenly come face to face with her.

Her appearance startles me. The fear of death is in her face, mute horror in her eyes.

"Sasha!" Her hand grips my arm, and she steadies my faltering step.

## XII

I open my eyes. The room is light and airy; a soothing quiet pervades the place. The portières part noiselessly, and the Girl looks in.

“Awake, Sasha?” She brightens with a happy smile.

“Yes. When did I come here?”

“Several days ago. You’ve been very sick, but you feel better now, don’t you, dear?”

Several days? I try to recollect my trip to Buffalo, the room on the Bowery. Was it all a dream?

“Where was I before I came here?” I ask.

“You—you were—absent,” she stammers, and in her face is visioned the experience of my disappearance.

With tender care the Girl ministers to me. I feel like one recovering from a long illness: very weak, but with a touch of joy in life. No one is permitted to see me, save one or two of the Girl’s nearest friends, who slip in quietly, pat my hand in mute sympathy, and discreetly retire. I sense their understanding, and am grateful that they make no allusion to the events of the past days.

The care of the Girl is unwavering. By degrees I gain strength. The room is bright and cheerful; the silence of the house soothes me. The warm sunshine is streaming through the open window; I can see the blue sky, and the silvery cloudlets. A little bird hops upon the sill, looks steadily at me, and chirps a greeting. It brings back the memory of Dick, my feathered pet, and of my friends in prison. I have done nothing for the agonized men in the dungeon darkness—have I forgotten them? I have the opportunity; why am I idle?

The Girl calls cheerfully: “Sasha, our friend Philo is here. Would you like to see him?”

I welcome the comrade whose gentle manner and deep sympathy have endeared him to me in the days since my return. There is something unutterably tender about him. The circle had christened him “the philosopher,” and his breadth of understanding and non-invasive personality have been a great comfort to me.

His voice is low and caressing, like the soft crooning of a mother rocking her child to sleep. “Life is a problem,” he is saying, “a problem whose solution consists in trying to solve it. Schopenhauer may have been right,” he smiles, with a humorous twinkle in his eyes, “but his love of life was so strong, his need for expression so compelling, he had to write a big book to prove how useless is all effort. But his very sincerity disproves him. Life is its own justification. The disharmony of life is more seeming than real; and what is real of it, is the folly and blindness of man. To struggle against that folly, is to create greater harmony, wider possibilities. Artificial barriers circumscribe and dwarf life, and stifle its manifestations. To break those barriers down, is to find a vent, to expand, to express oneself. And that is life, Aleck: a continuous struggle for expression. It mirrors itself in nature, as in all the phases of man’s existence. Look at the little vine struggling against the fury of the storm, and clinging with all its might to preserve its hold. Then see it stretch toward the sunshine, to absorb the light and the warmth, and then freely give back of itself in multiple form and wealth of color. We call it beautiful then, for it has found expression. That is life, Aleck, and thus it manifests itself through all the gradations we call evolution. The higher the scale, the more varied and complex the manifestations, and, in turn, the greater the need for expression. To suppress or thwart it, means decay, death. And in this,

Aleck, is to be found the main source of suffering and misery. The hunger of life storms at the gates that exclude it from the joy of being, and the individual soul multiplies its expressions by being mirrored in the collective, as the little vine mirrors itself in its many flowers, or as the acorn individualizes itself a thousandfold in the many-leafed oak. But I am tiring you, Aleck.”

“No, no, Philo. Continue; I want to hear more.”

“Well, Aleck, as with nature, so with man. Life is never at a standstill; everywhere and ever it seeks new manifestations, more expansion. In art, in literature, as in the affairs of men, the struggle is continual for higher and more intimate expression. That is progress—the vine reaching for more sunshine and light. Translated into the language of social life, it means the individualization of the mass, the finding of a higher level, the climbing over the fences that shut out life. Everywhere you see this reaching out. The process is individual and social at the same time, for the species lives in the individual as much as the individual persists in the species. The individual comes first; his clarified vision is multiplied in his immediate environment, and gradually permeates through his generation and time, deepening the social consciousness and widening the scope of existence. But perhaps you have not found it so, Aleck, after your many years of absence?”

“No, dear Philo. What you have said appeals to me very deeply. But I have found things so different from what I had pictured them. Our comrades, the movement—it is not what I thought it would be.”

“It is quite natural, Aleck. A change has taken place, but its meaning is apt to be distorted through the dim vision of your long absence. I know well what you miss, dear friend: the old mode of existence, the living on the very threshold of the revolution, so to speak. And everything looks strange to you, and out of joint. But as you stay a little longer with us, you will see that it is merely a change of form; the essence is the same. We are the same as before, Aleck, only made deeper and broader by years and experience. Anarchism has cast off the swaddling bands of the small, intimate circles of former days; it has grown to greater maturity, and become a factor in the larger life of Society. You remember it only as a little mountain spring, around which clustered a few thirsty travelers in the dreariness of the capitalist desert. It has since broadened and spread as a strong current that covers a wide area and forces its way even into the very ocean of life. You see, dear Aleck, the philosophy of Anarchism is beginning to pervade every phase of human endeavor. In science, in art, in literature, everywhere the influence of Anarchist thought is creating new values; its spirit is vitalizing social movements, and finding interpretation in life. Indeed, Aleck, we have not worked in vain. Throughout the world there is a great awakening. Even in this socially most backward country, the seeds sown are beginning to bear fruit. Times have changed, indeed; but encouragingly so, Aleck. The leaven of discontent, ever more conscious and intelligent, is moulding new social thought and new action. To-day our industrial conditions, for instance, present a different aspect from those of twenty years ago. It was then possible for the masters of life to sacrifice to their interests the best friends of the people. But to-day the spontaneous solidarity and awakened consciousness of large strata of labor is guarantee against the repetition of such judicial murders. It is a most significant sign, Aleck, and a great inspiration to renewed effort.”

The Girl enters. "Are you crooning Sasha to sleep, Philo?" she laughs.

"Oh, no!" I protest, "I'm wide awake and much interested in Philo's conversation."

"It is getting late," he rejoins. "I must be off to the meeting."

"What meeting?" I inquire.

"The Czolgosz anniversary commemoration."

"I think—I'd like to come along."

"Better not, Sasha," my friend advises. "You need some light distraction."

"Perhaps you would like to go to the theatre," the Girl suggests. "Stella has tickets. She'd be happy to have you come, Sasha."

\* \* \*

Returning home in the evening, I find the "Den" in great excitement. The assembled comrades look worried, talk in whispers, and seem to avoid my glance. I miss several familiar faces.

"Where are the others?" I ask.

The comrades exchange troubled looks, and are silent.

"Has anything happened? Where are they?" I insist.

"I may as well tell you," Philo replies, "but be calm, Sasha. The police have broken up our meeting. They have clubbed the audience, and arrested a dozen comrades."

"Is it serious, Philo?"

"I am afraid it is. They are going to make a test case. Under the new 'Criminal Anarchy Law' our comrades may get long terms in prison. They have taken our most active friends."

The news electrifies me. I feel myself transported into the past, the days of struggle and persecution. Philo was right! The enemy is challenging, the struggle is going on! . . . I see the graves of Waldheim open, and hear the voices from the tomb.

A deep peace pervades me, and I feel a great joy in my heart.

"Sasha, what is it?" Philo cries in alarm.

"My resurrection, dear friend. I have found work to do."

## **Section 2:** **Two Letters**

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*When in September 1901 a young man, Leon Czolgosz, assassinated President McKinley and Emma was accused of having been the mastermind behind the shooting, Berkman and Goldman again began to discuss the value of terrorist acts and their place in anarchist theory. Neither one was inclined to support assassination attempts with the fervor of their youth, Emma going as far as to say that “Acts of Violence . . . have proven utterly useless.” Their discussion of Czolgosz’s act began while Berkman was in prison (see the Memoirs, “The Shock at Buffalo,” pages 78–84) and continues in the following letters written some 27 years later. I have included them at this point because they reflect on the pivotal event in Alec and Emma’s lives, the attempt on Frick’s life, which is also the core event around which the Memoirs was written.*

---

Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman,  
November 23, 1928, ST. TROPEZ

Dear Sash,

\* \* \*

You are right, my dear, it is very hard to understand human nature and certainly you are doubly right when you say it is hard to find understanding between friends. But since everything is relative in life, one does get at the soul of a friend, if one is observant and has the capacity for love. I don't mean the physical love, I mean a great devotion strong enough to stand the test of time. Such capacity gives one a sixth sense and makes one see things in the friend which he either doesn't see himself or seeing has not the strength to admit.

How can I forget your stand on Czolgosz's act? It was a greater blow to me than anything that happened during that terrible period. It affected me more than [Johann] Most's stand on your act. After all, Most had only talked about violence. You had used it and went to prison for it. You had known the agony of repudiation, condemnation, and isolation. That you could sit down and cold-bloodedly analyze an act of violence nine years after your own, actually implying that your act was more important, was the most terrible thing I had yet experienced. It merely showed me that you had not changed one inch, that you had remained the blind fanatic who could see only one angle of life and one angle of human action. That's why I said the other day that the letter dated December as it appears in the book [*Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*] is historically not correct. You were not capable at the time, 1901, to philosophize as you did in the letter of December 1901, especially the thoughts expressed on page 415. You did not even reason that way when you came out in 1906. I don't mean that you were not intellectually capable, of course not. But you were still so steeped in the old revolutionary traditions and beliefs that you could not possibly have reasoned that way in 1901. And what is more, dear Sash, deep down in your soul you are still the old Adam. Didn't I see it in Russia, where you fought me tooth and nail because I would not swallow everything as justification of the Revolution? How many times did you throw it into my teeth that I had only been a parlor revolutionist? That the end justifies the means, that the individual is of no account, etc., etc.? Believe me, dearest, I do not say this in anger; I am beyond that now, I hope; it is merely to get your reactions in their proper time and place, that's all. As to your stand on Czolgosz, I find it just as absurd now as I did then. Acts of violence, except as demonstrations of a sensitive human soul, have proven utterly useless. From that point of view Czolgosz's act was as futile as yours. It neither left the slightest effect; the price you have paid and that poor boy to me are far beyond the sin. But to say that a political act is less valuable was nonsense to me then and still is. In the McKinley case it is doubly so, because his policy of annexation marked the beginning of American imperialism and all the subsequent reaction. Of course Czolgosz could not foresee all of that. But in 1901 there were already great signs of imperialism, inaugurated by McKinley's regime. You will say he was only a tool. Yes, and so was Frick. He was the mouthpiece of Carnegie; he represented his interest as much as McKinley represented Wall Street. You will say McKinley was an elected person, or at least that is the superstition. True, but then Czolgosz's act was particularly valuable as a means to destroy the myth. But why argue now, dear heart? In the light of our experience we know that acts of violence are inevitable. But as to

removing anything, or even showing up an evil, they are pathetically inadequate. Your act was noble and still more so your fortitude in prison, just as many other such acts and brave souls—let's not take away from their luster by ridiculous utilitarian hairsplitting as to which is more important. It is as futile as the argument about mind and matter, at least to me.

Yes, it was my mistake about your date of my second visit. I first thought you wrote I had been to see you again after the act of Czolgosz.

“Personal example.” Whoever denied that? But what value can it have, when one does things utterly false to oneself, even if approved by comrades? Fess up kid, how much of your private life or acts would our comrades approve, if they knew about them? Or of mine? Yet I can honestly say that I have never committed anything which was false to my ideas, though heaven knows I cannot say that I have not been false to myself. Like you I once thought the cause everything and the comrades capable of appreciating example. I think, if you will search your heart, you will find that you have simply not entirely outgrown your old beliefs. Neither have I, for that matter, only that you cling to them more. Since the action of our comrades in your case, even more so in the case of Czolgosz, and since the petty cruel recriminations against the few, myself included, I no longer consider comrades capable of learning by good example. The choice few are all to me; their opinion everything; their respect and friendship my greatest support. For the rest, I have grown indifferent. The process isn't since yesterday: it began with the attitude of many comrades to your act, made terrific strides in 1901, gained impetus during my work with Ben Reitman,\* and reached the climax since I came out of Russia.

Never mind about Michael [Cohn].† He evidently does not want to have anything to do with my book. I wrote him from Toronto and at my request you wrote him last spring. He has not answered. It is not important. I know that before I left for Europe [in 1895] I approached [S.] Yanofsky [editor of the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*] to raise money for the tunnel [for AB's attempt to escape from prison]. I am not certain whether I told him the purpose or not. I am going to write him; he may remember. I am only sure that I had approached him and that he had promised to do his utmost. I remember how surprised I was then because Yanofsky was a fanatical Mostianer [i.e., follower of Johann Most] and had treated me shabbily when we first met. Later, when more money was needed, you wrote direct to Yanofsky. I was already in Europe then. I don't know whether he ever told you that Eric B. Morton's expenses and [Anthony] Kincella's to come to Pittsburgh and their first months [there working on the tunnel] were paid with \$200 Carl Schmidt [Carl Stone in *Living My Life*, p. 268] had given me toward my European trip. I wrote about the whole thing this week. You can imagine how surprised that Philistine will be when he reads that. He was only interested in EG the woman, he wrote me in Paris, not her ideas or her lovers. . . .

Devotedly,  
E

\*Emma met Reitman in 1908 in Chicago. A passionate romance developed between them, which did not completely end until shortly before her deportation. See Emma's *Living My Life* for an account of their tumultuous relationship [GLF].

†Comrade from the early days [GLF].

**Alexander Berkman to Emma Goldman,  
Monday [late November 1928], ST. CLOUD**

Dear,

Am glad to get your long letter. I cannot say that I agree with some of your points, but what is the use of discussing them? Each will remain with his old opinion, anyhow. I have come to think that views, opinions, etc. are less a matter of thinking than of temperament. So the more useless is discussion.

I hold, however, that what I wrote in the *Memoirs* is entirely correct in every particular, historically and psychologically. As to Leon, I know very well that in my prison letter I told you that I understood the reasons that compelled him to the act, but that the usefulness, socially, of the act is quite another matter. I hold the same opinion now. That is why we do not condemn any such acts, because we understand the reasons. But that does not mean that we cannot form our opinion about its social effects and usefulness. Of course no one can really foresee “usefulness,” but that is already a philosophic consideration, not to the point here. And again, I still hold the opinion, as I did formerly, that a terroristic act should take in consideration the effect on the public mind—not on comrades, as you say. (The same refers to my remark [about the effectiveness] of [personal] example.) There were in Russia those “bezmotivniki,” who believed in terror “without motives,” on general principles. I never had any sympathy with such an attitude, though even that I could not condemn. So I think that my act, not because it was mine, but because it was one easy to understand by most people, was more useful than Leon’s. I still hold that in the U.S., especially, economic acts could be understood by the masses better than political ones. Though I am in general now not in favor of terroristic tactics, except under very exceptional conditions.

You say my opinion was a terrible blow to you. That’s too sentimental for me. It merely means to say that one should not analyze things, not think over them, and have no critical opinion. You’d hardly admit it in this formulation. Yet it is the same. Just what you say in your letter: “That you could sit down and cold-bloodedly analyze such an act nine years after your own.” Nine years is certainly time to think such things over, and prison, away from the impressions of the moment, the best place. That you THEN felt shocked, I can understand. But that even now you are shocked, that is too much.

That acts of violence accomplish nothing, I do not agree at all. The terrorism of the Russian revolutionists aroused the whole world to the despotism of the Czars. [George] Kennan’s book [*Siberia and the Exile System* (1891)] merely culminated the matter. Kennan [the American journalist] could not have written about them had they not committed their acts, been sent to Siberia, etc. As to what you say of comrades and their approval, that is indifferent to me. My attitude always was and still is that anyone preaching an idea, particularly a high ideal, must try to live, so far at least as possible, in consonance with it, for his own sake as well as for the furtherance of his ideal in the minds of those to whom he is preaching it. That is, the people at large. Voltairine\* [De Cleyre]

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\*U.S. anarchist [GLF].

was right in this, except that she went to extremes. The life, works, and death of certain persons have always exerted a much greater effect than their preaching. That is historic.

Not that I mean to say that my own life has always been in consonance with this. Of course not. I am speaking of what I believe in this matter. For the rest, one makes mistakes, of course. But the question here is of the right attitude.

The question of whether the comrades can “appreciate” is neither here nor there. One should act and live according to his OWN attitude in the matter. But what his attitude is, that is important.

By the way, the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* has been publishing excerpts from Yanofsky’s memoirs. In the last two issues, November 16 and the preceeding one, there is the story of the tunnel and Yan’s part of it. When he first published a notice in the first number of the *FAS*, which he then began to edit, he says, he “saved my life,” because I had despaired then. I can’t say that I remember it. He says he received a letter then from me. Further he speaks of meeting Tony [Kincella], who impressed him favorably, and his visits to Pittsburgh, etc. I’ll keep the numbers for you.

I am glad you are doing well with your writing. And maybe Alsberg being with you will be an inspiration. I hope so. Well, enough for today.

Affectionately,  
S

# **PART TWO**

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## **1906–1919**

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**Agitating in the United States:  
*The Blast* and the  
No Conscription League**

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# **Section 1:**

## **The Blast**

# THE BLAST

VOL. I

SAN FRANCISCO, SATURDAY, JANUARY 15, 1916

No. 1



THE GOLDEN RULE

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*The 13 years between Berkman's time in prison for the shooting of Frick and his deportation to Russia in 1919 were devoted to organizing among the working classes in the United States. He threw himself into the task with unextinguishable energy, traveling from one coast to another to tackle the major issues of the day. From 1908 to 1915 Berkman edited Emma Goldman's Mother Earth in New York City. In 1915 he left for California to help defend Matthew Schmidt and David Caplan who had been jailed for their alleged participation in the dynamiting of the Los Angeles Times Building in October 1910 during labor unrest there. With the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, one of the major issues for Berkman became how to stop that war and how to prevent the workers of the United States from fighting in it. While the government urged citizens to "Be Prepared" to enter the war and organized Preparedness Parades, Berkman began the No Conscription League and called on men to refuse to join the war effort.*

*On January 15, 1916, Berkman began his own magazine, The Blast, which was published weekly and later irregularly until June 1917. The Blast agitated against a whole range of injustices. It raged against militarism, censorship and the condition of labor and tried to educate about anarchism. Margaret Sanger, on trial for distributing information about birth control, wrote articles for The Blast on women's rights and family planning. There were also articles about political events in Ireland, Germany, Mexico and, of course, Russia. By simply continuing to exist, despite constant harassment by government authorities, The Blast struck a blow for freedom of speech and freedom of the press.*

*The Blast was instrumental in the international campaign Berkman waged on behalf of Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, both convicted of throwing a bomb into the San Francisco Preparedness Parade on July 22, 1916, which killed eight people. And Berkman was a tireless organizer, mobilizing workers in the United States and abroad to protest in behalf of Mooney, who was sentenced to die, and Billings. This period marks the only time in Alec's life that he had the opportunity to immerse himself in organizing of this type, and he relished doing so. Because of Berkman's agitational skills, groups in Petrograd and Kronstadt demonstrated on Mooney's behalf. President Wilson, informed of the international dimensions of Berkman's campaign, pressured Governor Stephens of California to commute Mooney's sentence. It is rare, at any time, for those in authority to admit the power of people's campaigns, but District Attorney Charles Fickert admitted that Berkman was "the real power behind the defense" and Governor Stephens said "the propaganda in his [Mooney's] behalf following the plan outlined by Berkman has been so effective as to become world-wide."*

*The Blast managed to publish for a year and a half until Berkman was hauled off to prison once again, this time accused of conspiring with Emma to "induce persons not to register." Often strident and didactic, The Blast also breathed urgency, kept its readers informed about all of the most crucial issues of the time, and maintained a commitment to the ideals of anarchism.*

*The articles from The Blast that are included here represent the wide range of issues with which Berkman and those who helped him publish The Blast were concerned. Though there are articles throughout the magazine signed by various contributors, the majority of the pieces are not signed. One can safely assume that most of these unattributed articles were written by Berkman, though M. Eleanor Fitzgerald, Alec's companion at the time, and the artist Robert Minor, who illustrated many of The Blast's covers may well have helped*

*Alec with some of the writing. At times Berkman did personalize an article with his signature but it is impossible to tell if he did so following any specific criteria. The first article in this section, from the first issue of The Blast, introduces the magazine.*

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**WHY THE BLAST?**  
**[Vol. 1, #1, 1/15/1916]**

Do you mean to destroy?

Do you mean to build?

These are questions we have been asked from many quarters, by inquirers sympathetic and otherwise.

Our reply is frank and bold:

We mean both: to destroy *and* to build.

For, socially speaking, Destruction is the beginning of Construction.

Superficial minds speak sneeringly of destruction. O, it is easy to destroy—they say—but to build, to build, that's the important work.

It's nonsense. No structure, social or otherwise, can endure if built on a foundation of lies.

Before the garden can bloom, the weeds must be uprooted. Nothing is therefore more important than to destroy. Nothing more necessary and difficult.

Take a man with an open mind, and you will have no great trouble in convincing him of the falsehood and rottenness of our social structure.

But when one is filled with superstition and prejudice, your strongest arguments will knock in vain against the barred doors of his bigotry and ignorance. For thousand-year-old superstition and tradition is stronger than truth and logic.

To destroy the Old and the False is the most vital work. We emphasize it: to blast the bulwarks of slavery and oppression is of primal necessity. It is the beginning of really lasting construction.

Thus will THE BLAST be destructive.

And THE BLAST will be constructive.

Too long have we been patient under the whip of brutality and degradation. Too long have we conformed to the Dominant, with an ineffective fist hidden in our pocket. Too long have we vented our depth of misery by endless discussion of the distant future. Too long have we been exhausting our efforts and energy by splitting hairs with each other.

It's time to act.

The time is NOW.

The breath of discontent is heavy upon this wide land. It permeates mill and mine, field and factory. Blind rebellion stalks upon highway and byway. To fire it with the spark of Hope, to kindle it with the light of Vision, and turn pale discontent into conscious social action—that is the crying problem of the hour. It is the great work calling to be done.

To work, then, and blasted be every obstacle in the way of the Regeneration.

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*With the outbreak of war in Europe, "Preparedness" became the watchword of the day in the United States as the government organized flag-waving marches and demonstrations designed to fill U.S. youth with patriotic fervor and the desire to go to war. The Blast, naturally, agitated against the war.*

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**PREPAREDNESS**  
**[Vol. 1, #1, 1/15/1916]**

With subtle cunning this word is being dinned into the ears of the American worker.

Prepare to spend millions upon millions for machines and equipment to facilitate the murder of human beings!

Prepare to kill peaceful fellow workmen from some other country who would never think of going to war, were they not—like ourselves—victims of the superstition that there is something sacred in the commands of rulers or governments.

No people in history has ever voted for war, though nations have often voted to pay for the blunders of rulers.

Still, it is not unthinkable that a people might vote so, considering that the means of education are in the hands of those who profit by war.

Every newspaper controlled by Big Business and opposed to Labor is in favor of a large Army and Navy. You will find nearly all of these papers opposed to the income tax, to the inheritance tax, to taxation of automobile oil, to the Seamen's Act, opposed to special taxes on war profits, opposed with might and main even to government manufacture of its own supplies. In short, they want the government to spend money without stint, but let the poor pay and they get the profit.

Preparedness? Yes, they were well prepared in Europe. All of them. And what have they got? The satisfaction that through thorough preparation they have succeeded in making more widows, more orphans, and spread more human corpses to manure the untilled fields than their most brutal and savage ancestors ever dreamed of.

Defend your home! Very well—but first let us get one. Let the Landlord and the Real Estate sharks defend their property. We need not go to foreign countries to grab homes from poor devils there, who at best possess very little. There are plenty of homes here: but those who built them may not use them. In every city-block there are dozens of "For Rent" signs, and homeless people galore.

Prepare, you disinherited, to take possession of the homes right before your nose, and then defend them against any man who demands that you pay him tribute. The worker's enemy is not some one in a foreign land. It is the parasite upon his back right here at home.

Prepare not by making instruments to kill, but by refusing to make them.

Build no battleship, make neither gun nor bayonet; let the grass grow over the fortress, and let the General go to work. Turn no night-stick for the policeman, but give him a guide book instead. Tether the man-eating district attorneys with the cows in a peaceful pasture.

When that is done, open the jails; for then there will be no criminals, except perhaps a few harmless kings to be treated in an asylum.

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*Margaret Sanger (1883–1966) was constantly harassed by the U.S. government for distributing information about birth control. In the following article, she writes about her upcoming trial for distributing “obscene” material.*

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**NOT GUILTY**  
[Vol. 1, #1, 1/15/1916]

There seems to be considerable misapprehension among those who are interested in my coming trial. Many are under the impression that the indictments pending are for circulation of forbidden information. This, of course, is not true. I have been indicted under Section 211 of the Federal criminal code, for alleged obscenity. They were issued against me as editor and publisher of *The Woman Rebel*. My “crime” consists not in giving the information, but solely in the advocacy of birth control. There are three indictments, based on twelve articles, eleven of which are for *printing the words* “prevention of conception.” To the elect of federal officialdom these words themselves are considered lewd, lascivious and obscene. In none of these articles is any information given,—simply discussions of the subject addressed to working women of this country.

Many “radical” advisers have assured me that the wisest course for me to follow in fighting the case would be to plead “guilty” to this “obscenity,” and to throw myself upon the mercy of the court, which would mean, according to those familiar with the administration of “justice,” a light sentence or a small fine.

It is unfortunate that so many radicals and so-called revolutionists have failed to understand that my object in this work has been to remove, or to try to remove, the term “prevention of conception” from this section of the penal code, where it has been labelled by our wise legislators as “filthy, vile and obscene,” and to obtain deserved currency for this valuable idea and practice.

The problem of staying out of jail or getting put into jail is merely incidental in this fight. It is discouraging to find that advanced revolutionists of this country are frantically trying to save agitators from jail sentences and thereby losing sight of the real and crucial issues of the fights. If we could depend upon a strong and consistently revolutionary support in such battles, instead of weakened efforts to effect a compromise with the courts, there would be much greater stimulation for individuals to enter revolutionary activity.

To evade the issue in this case, as I have been advised to do upon the assumption that to keep out of prison were the sole aim and object of my birth control propaganda, would mean to leave matters as they have been since 1872. But it is time for the people of this country to find out if the United States mails are to be available for their use, as they in their adult intelligence desire, or if it is possible for the United States Postoffice to constitute itself an institution for the promulgation of stupidity and ignorance, instead of a mechanical convenience.

The first step in the birth control movement or any other propaganda requiring a free press, is to open the mails to the people of this country, *regardless*

# THE BLAST

LYDIA GIBSON

VOL. 1

SAN FRANCISCO, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1916

No. 5



The Boss's wife can buy information to limit her family.

The Boss can buy your children to supply his factories with cheap labor.

of class. Nothing can be accomplished without the free and open discussion of the subject.

These indictments have had the effect of opening the discussion of birth control in magazines and papers of the most conservative nature, whose editors would have been horrified at the subject—previous to my arrest.

When my case is called in the federal courts, probably next month, I shall enter a plea of “not guilty,” in order to separate the idea of prevention of conception and birth control from the sphere of pornography, from the gutter of slime and filth where the lily-livered legislators have placed it under the direction of the late unlamented Anthony Comstock, and in which the forces of reaction are still attempting to hold it.

—Margaret H. Sanger

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*In the “Young Folks, Part II,” a continuation of a previous article, Berkman continued his discussion of capitalism in a Socratic style that he used again, 13 years later, in his book The ABC of Anarchism.*

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## THE YOUNG FOLKS [Vol. 1, #6, 2/19/1916]

### II

“Well, now, how about my question?” Tom asked when we met again.

“We’ll discuss it now, Tom.”

“Discuss it? What do you mean?”

“We’ll talk it over,” I explained.

“Why, I thought you were to answer my questions.”

“We’ll answer them together. You will help me, Tom.”

“But I don’t know how.”

“Well, let’s see. You said you had asked your father to buy you a new suit—”

“No; a new pair of pants,” Tom corrected me.

“Oh, yes, pants; and your father told you that you couldn’t have them. You wanted to know why, and he wouldn’t tell you.”

“Yes. Now you tell me why he wouldn’t buy them for me.”

“All right. But first tell me, Tom, what is your father’s business?”

“Why, don’t you know? He works in Jones’ factory. They make there the finest furniture in the city.”

“I didn’t see any of it in your house, Tom.”

“Of course not; it’s too expensive.”

“But you say that your father makes it. Why doesn’t he bring some of it home?”

“How you talk! It’s Jones’ factory, and everything made there belongs to him, and he sells it. Father can’t afford to buy such dear furniture.”

“But tell me, Tom, who makes all the furniture that Jones sells?”

“The men in the factory, of course.”

“Does Jones himself make any of it?”

“You make me laugh. Jones is rich; he doesn’t have to work.”

“Let’s look into this, Tom. You say that Jones himself doesn’t make any of the furniture that he sells, so I suppose his workers make it?”

“Yes, of course.”

“All of it?”

“Sure.”

“Then if the men make it all, they can take some of it home when they need it.”

“No, they can’t. It don’t belong to them. It belongs to Jones.”

“How so, Tom?”

“Well, the factory is his, and all the tools and machinery, too.”

“You mean that Jones built the factory, and made the tools and machinery—Jones himself?”

“No, no, he didn’t. I saw some new machines taken into the factory last week. There was a sign on them that said they were made in Pittsburg.”

“Who do you think made those machines in Pittsburg?”

“The machinists, of course.”

“Well, then, if Jones himself didn’t make the machinery, then perhaps he built the factory?”

“No, no, he didn’t. It was workingmen who built the factory.”

“Well, then, Tom, it seems that Jones didn’t help much, so far. He didn’t build the factory, nor the machinery, and he is not working on the furniture, either. Why does it all belong to Jones, then?”

“I—don’t see why.”

“There are many grown-ups can’t see it, either. But it is not really hard to understand. The truth is, Tom, a factory couldn’t belong to only *one* man. Why? Because one man couldn’t build it. It takes many to do it. It takes bricklayers and masons, carpenters and plumbers, ironworkers and locksmiths, and many other workingmen to build a factory or a house. Even a common kitchen chair couldn’t be made by one man working all alone. He would need a hammer and nails, or glue, and even before he could use these, he must get the lumber. He would need an axe and a saw. And somebody would have to give him food while he is making all these things. So you see that he would need the help of many other people even to make a chair. Everything that we have today is made by the work of many people, each doing some part of the work. We all live together, we work together, and the things we have should belong to all people together. That’s why Jones’ factory is not his at all. It really should belong to all the people who helped to build it.”

“But perhaps Jones paid for it,” Tom said.

“Perhaps he did. That means we must find out where Jones got the money. And, by the way, Tom, do you know what money really is?”

“Why, of course; it’s cash.”

“Well, we’d better talk this over next time. It’s late now.”

“But how about the pants that father wouldn’t buy?”

“That belongs to the money question, Tom.”

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The Blast published many letters from its readers. The two below and the article that follows concern the Mexican Revolution, which was often covered by the magazine. Venustiano Carranza (1859–1920) was president of Mexico from 1915 to 1920. He was supported by President Wilson but was opposed by the Mexican revolutionary leaders Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata.

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## WILSON THE LACKEY OF CARRANZA

[Vol. 1, #7, 2/26/1916]

On February 18 agents of the Federal Government forced their way into the office of *Regeneracion*, the revolutionary weekly of the Mexican Liberal Party, published in Los Angeles, and brutally beat up and arrested the editors of the paper, Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magon.

I know Ricardo and Enrique, and I am proud to call them my comrades and friends. They are men of that rare type seldom produced outside of Russia and Mexico: men who have sacrificed social position, comfort and personal safety for the cause of the people. Men big enough to live in direst poverty in order to devote their time, ability and means to further revolution and liberty. Present-day America has failed to evolve such superior types of social consciousness. Indeed, it has not even learned to appreciate them. Their fate is misunderstanding, persecution and prison.

In spite of tremendous obstacles the Magons and their co-workers have for years been carrying on their great work. A double task faced them: to educate and organize the Mexican people into an effective weapon of revolution and, still more important—and more difficult—to enlighten the American people to the real issues involved in the Mexican uprising. It is due to a great extent to the efforts of *Regeneracion* and the Mexican Liberal Party in this country that Roosevelt and his presidential successors did not dare to interfere in Mexico.

No wonder that the activity of the Brothers Magon has proven a thorn in the flesh of the American exploiters and native oppressors of Mexico. The cry of Land and Liberty has been finding a thousand-fold echo in the bleeding hearts of the peons. Now Carranza and his henchmen have determined to stifle this rebel voice.

Repeatedly the bloodsuckers of Mexico have attempted to suppress our brave comrades. Roosevelt, then President of these free United States, used the whole power of the Federal Government to aid Perfidious Diaz in stamping out the revolutionary agitation of the Mexican Liberal Junta. Many of our brave Mexican comrades were railroaded to prison.

And now it is the learned academician in the White House who is hastening to the aid of Carranza and Wall street, to suppress the work of *Regeneracion*. They will again try to send the Magons to the penitentiary. We call on all rebels and fair-minded people not to permit this outrage.

### A LETTER FROM MARIA MAGON.

Los Angeles, February 20, 1916.

Dear Comrade Berkman:

I wired you that Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magon were arrested and Enrique badly beaten. Your most welcome telegram was received after considerable delay. Owing to our somewhat remote location, the messenger failed to find our place yesterday. \*\*\* Your interest in the case of our comrades and your recommendation of bondmen are most welcome and heartily appreciated.

I want to give you some of the details of the events attending the arrest. The

violence spoken of in the papers was, needless to say, started by the bulls, as usual. While in the office the minions of the law became excited by Enrique asking some one to get his hat and coat. They began to abuse and manhandle him, and when he resented their abuse, they pounced upon him and beat him on the head with the butt of their guns, inflicting such serious wounds that it was necessary for him to be taken to the emergency hospital. The office and shop resembled a besieged fort after the fracas started, for the gang had so adroitly set the scenes that while they had watched the place all day, or in fact for several days, we never noticed them until they appeared at the office. Our place is surrounded by trees, and the lackeys made their appearance about 4 o'clock. They very "courteously" served the warrant on Ricardo, who was in the office, and the trouble started a few minutes later when Enrique was called in from the house and assaulted by the bulls.

The lackeys that entered the office were five or six in number and the men in the shop were helpless onlookers while the scuffle went on, as their slightest move was met with a gun pressed to their ribs, no one being able to raise a hand, contrary to what the papers say. Ricardo and Enrique were literally dragged to a waiting auto, a block away, Enrique bleeding profusely from head to foot.

The comrades were called yesterday for preliminary hearing, but not being yet represented by a lawyer, they refused to plead. Their bond originally set at \$3000, has been raised to \$7500 on some flimsy excuse. No one has been able to see them except a lawyer. We expect to engage Harriman to defend them. We received a very encouraging message from Emma also.

Yours for the Cause,  
MARIA MAGON.

P. O. Box 1236, Los Angeles, Cal.

P. S.—I forgot to mention that as soon as the trouble had started, a swarm of armed bulls who had been concealed in the surrounding shrubbery, sprang from every direction, rifles in hand, making threats and ready for any excuse to fire.

M. M.

## VILLA OR WILSON—WHICH IS THE BANDIT?

[Vol. 1, #9, 3/15/1916]

### VILLA

Pancho Villa is the descendant of a long line of peons whose lives were spent in hard toil, cultivating the soil of Mexico and helping to produce foodstuffs for their fellow countrymen and profits for their exploiters.

Villa followed the same calling. His childhood was dark and dreary. The son of a peon, he passed his early youth in hard farm work, helping to support his family. The hand of greed lay heavy upon the people of Mexico. The hardest toil barely sufficed to keep the Villa family alive.

As a young man, Pancho saw an opportunity to improve his condition by securing work in a neighboring town. He took his widowed mother and younger children with him, he the chief support of the family. It was a garrison town, and

one day Pancho learned that his oldest sister, a beautiful girl of 15, was seduced by an army officer. Pancho set out to find the man. He demanded that he make amends. The officer scorned the low peon, and young Villa shot and killed him.

The authorities ordered the arrest of Villa. Pancho knew that he, a despised peon, could expect no justice at the hands of the masters. He fled to the mountains. The government set a price on his head and declared him an outlaw.

But the townspeople knew Villa and the story of his wrongs. They admired him for challenging the right of an officer to violate the daughter of a peon. They aided Pancho and by their help he was able to avoid arrest. He gathered around him a circle of other peons embittered by the injustice and oppression they suffered. From time to time they made excursions to neighboring estates, expropriating rich land sharks and sharing the spoils of victory with the needy peons. He was an outlaw, but the people loved him and blessed his name.

When the Revolution broke out, Villa joined forces with the peons fighting for a chance to live, for a little land and liberty. He has kept up the fight against tremendous odds. Nor has Wall Street been able to corrupt him and buy him off, as they did with Carranza.

### WILSON

Unlike Villa and his hard-working progenitors, Wilson comes from a long line of exploiters. His forefathers did neither spin nor sow. Yet, they always enjoyed the good things of life, parasites on the back of labor. Wilson himself, unlike Villa, has never tilled the ground nor worked in mine or factory. He has not helped in any productive or otherwise useful work. On the contrary, as teacher and college professor, he used every effort to poison the young minds with the dogmas and dominant views that support present institutions and make more secure the bondage of the people. As President, he has proved himself a menace to the welfare and peace of the country, a weather cock constantly swayed by the breezes from Wall Street. A puppet of the money magnates, his attitude on important issues has been dictated by Big Business. Preaching peace and sanity a few months ago, he has suddenly veered into the camp of mad militarism. The compelling hand of the munition and steel trust is dictating his policies. And now he cries loudest for the biggest navy of the world. The priests of Mammon got him, body and soul.

At this very moment Wilson is preparing to invade Mexico—poor, bleeding Mexico, for years torn by inner strife and weakened by the long struggle. He has ordered a “punitive expedition” against Villa. It is no secret that back of this outcry for the punishment of Villa are the American political and commercial pirates eager for the invasion of Mexico in the holy name of greater profits.

Villa killed a Mexican officer to avenge the ruin of his sister. Wilson is preparing to kill thousands of Mexicans on the pretext of avenging the death of some Americans. Which is the greater bandit—Villa or Wilson?

There is only this difference between them: Villa had the courage to do his own vengeance, taking the risks and profiting nothing himself.

Wilson sits safely in the White House and orders others to do the dirty work.

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*The following article continued The Blast's policy of disseminating information about birth control and supporting those active in the campaign to make distributing material on the subject legal. Reb Raney, who wrote the article, worked in the office of Emma's Mother Earth.*

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## A GROUP THAT DOES THINGS

[Vol. 1, #10, 4/1/1916]

In San Francisco there is an Italian group called Gruppo Anarchico. It appears to be made up of young men chiefly, though a few women attend its sessions. It holds forth in a dingy club room at 1602 Stockton street, where its members go to read revolutionary periodicals, hear red-blooded speakers and take active part in work which has intelligent resistance for its base. The work consists in *doing* things instead of talking about them: and that is why this particular circle has more meaning to it than twenty-seven hundred assortments of Socialistic confab.

On the window of the club room is a sign which reads: "GRUPPO ANARCHICO—VOLONTA." It is big, clear, done in red—and not a letter is missing. Worked in between the lines is a sketch of mountain peaks, with the flaming sun rising above them. Inside, the walls speak eloquently, with their picture of Montjuich, a print of the five Haymarket victims, pictures of Giordano Bruno and Francisco Ferrer, a number of revolutionary posters, and such inspiring placards as, "You aspire to liberty? Fools! Have the strength and liberty will come by itself." Numerous revolutionary booklets, newspapers, etc., are fastened on with clothes pins to a railing midway up the wall and are strung out the entire length of the hall, easily accessible to all who care to read them. A home-made desk-bookcase in the rear of the hall seems to be a sort of storehouse for excess literature.

I am told this group has no officers; that its members come and go as they please; that all contributions are voluntary, including the literature; that the door of the hall is *never* locked, notwithstanding the fact that the club room is on the ground floor; that *anybody* is welcome to come in and read to his heart's content; and that, most interesting of all, nobody even knows how many members this circle has. Each member stands responsible for his own acts, but cooperates with other members, all of whom are equally responsible. There isn't anything regular about this aggregation, as far as I can learn. It rests on a foundation of interest, intelligence, spontaneity and courage. Further than that, it just carries out its own wishes and never seems to think of asking leave of any official dignitary.

To illustrate: At the March 10 mass meeting, held in San Francisco to protest against Emma Goldman's arrest, free handbills were given out on which was printed information about preventives. It was simple information, plain enough for any man or woman to read and profit from. One of the Italian boys, interested in this circle, got one of the handbills and took it to his group's meeting place. The idea was instantly recognized as a good one, and one member of the circle forthwith offered to give \$10 toward the printing of 20,000 of these bills in the Italian language, so that every man and woman in that district might *know*

how to regulate the size of their families. More individuals came up with cash, and the result was that 20,000 leaflets were printed and passed out as freely as water. Then this happened:

One of those blue-birds known as policemen called at the club room and asked a member of the circle, Joseph Macario, who happened to be there, the what, how and why of the group's activity along birth control lines. Now Joseph Macario is beautiful to look at. There is nothing of the liar about him. He therefore didn't hedge, but answered in a way that earned for him an invitational command to call at the "Chief's" headquarters. Joseph went, not in the least ashamed for what he had done, but proud of the fact that he had done a good act, a helpful act, boldly, thoroughly and openly. The Chief looked him over, asked "why," and the boy answered this: "You know these things; you use them; why shouldn't I and the rest of us?" The Chief's answer was short and sweet. He used three words. He said to the key turner, "Lock him up." But there are bubbles in Italian blood. When you scratch it you are liable to get an effervescent reaction, which is just what happened in this case. An Italian attorney, Charles Sferlazzo, interested himself straightway, bailed the boy out, and now there promises to be a lively contest over the right of strangers, official or otherwise, to regulate bedroom affairs. The case is to come up this week, and the Italian boy is not going to be alone.

Another light on this case is this: Since the leaflets were printed priests have stopped to read those which were pasted up on the window of the club's quarters. By any chance can it be that the men in black recognized that such effrontery meant less births, less marriages, less funerals and therefore less fees, not to speak of the abatement of respect for mystery mongers, and decided for their own sakes that it would be well to stamp such efforts as "obscene" and thereby put an end to them? Just an idea, of course, but somehow it sticks.

The most important part about the work of these rebels is that they had the courage to stand back of their acts. They signed the name and address of their group on the leaflets they gave out, and they headed the leaflet with this significant announcement:

#### WORKERS! Procreate Only When You Like!

Numerous families increase the misery that is great already among the poor masses of workers. The capitalist vampires, by means of the priest, morally condemn the use of scientific means in order not to have children. This they do by threatening "hell" to those who intelligently refuse to put into the world numerous "unlucky" (unfortunate) ones. And by means of politicians, judges and jailers they make laws, condemn and jail everybody—all those who try to diffuse among the people scientific knowledge. And indeed they tried, a short time ago, Margherita Sanger. They convicted Anderlini in the State of Illinois. A few days ago they arrested Emma Goldman in New York, and they threaten trouble to all those who have the courage to tell you the truth and let you know this practical means to prevent conception.

Joseph Macario stated that the information wasn't given out in the hope of solving the social question, but to protest against authority; "and by this to voice a

stern protest against all limitations of free social development—on the part of consecrated authorities.”

Last evening I went over to the club room of this circle to hear Alexander Berkman speak. We were a number, including Jake Margolis, the Pittsburgh attorney, who is to defend David Caplan in his coming trial. Both Berkman and Margolis talked to the crowd which filled the hall to overflowing. Everyone in the place listened with wrapt attention, including a number of gum-shoe tale bearers who took slurred notes in the rear of the place. I can't begin to outline Berkman's talk here, but it was fine.

He told them intelligent resistance was the key to attainment under the present social system; that what was good for the crowd was good for the man; that anything, everything that served to make people discontented and actively and effectively resistant in their own defense was beneficial; that the man who ties a rope around your neck and accuses you of “disorder” if you attempt to undo the knot, is a bully and a faker and unworthy of the slightest consideration. Margolis, too, dwelt on the absolute necessity of throwing off imposed burdens, no matter in what form they present themselves. And at the finish both were roundly applauded. There were enough red bubbles in that hall to make a pudding that would reach to Mars.

After the meeting I learned that on the night before 6000 preventative leaflets had been placed in the mail boxes of as many citizens by the members of this group. They had confined their distribution to the Italian quarter and, of course, all the handbills were printed in Italian. Ten members had done the work, voluntarily, fearlessly, determinedly. Which only proves what Wendell Phillips said—that a dozen or so *determined* men can commit a revolution over night.

Fine examples are these youth, fiery, conscious, clear sighted. They know what ails them and they are not going to be overdicate in putting an end to the nuisance. Which recalls the American brand of “bravery.” What an invigorating sight it would be could we but see our native drudges take heart and emulate these dark-skinned defiers! Perhaps they will—when they see it is safe. More than one man has finally made his base by walking.

—*Reb Raney*

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*The Blast was frequently suppressed by U.S. authorities. The following two articles by Berkman speak of two issues blocked by the government.*

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**THE BLOODHOUNDS**  
[Vol. 1, #11, 4/15/1916]

The bloodhounds of King Plute are on the trail of THE BLAST. Issue No. 10 has been excluded from the mails by order from Washington. The official objection is against the article, “A Group That Does Things,” treating of Birth Control and mentioning the address of the Group. Orders had also been given to suppress the issue of March 15th (No. 9), though part of that issue had been mailed before the arrival of the governmental ukase.

The real reason for the suppression, however, is the fact that THE BLAST is

“too strong,” as one of the officials told us. “Too strong” for whom? For our readers or for the powers that rule? Have we come to this that any stupid Post Office clerk may decide what is or is not fit for the people to read? Who is this postal authority, anyhow, that presumes to censor our expressions and to dictate our mode of writing? To be sure, our writing may be strong; we write for redblooded men and women, not for the mollycoddles or corruptionists of the Post Office. And if our frank talk about Wilson and his lackeys, and their plutocratic employers, is not to their taste—so much the worse for them. They have the power—the passing power that rests on popular ignorance—to strangle *THE BLAST* and jail its editor. But they cannot put chains on thought, nor hold back the hands of Time. Our will is not to be subdued—in or out of prison we shall continue to voice the feelings and thoughts of the suppressed and down-trodden, all governmental censors notwithstanding.

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Have we, or have we not, free speech and free press in this country? With Emma Goldman facing trial in New York for exercising the right of free speech; with the *REVOLT*, of New York, suppressed by the Post Office, and the Brothers Magon in jail because of their encouragement of the Mexican peons in their great struggle for Land and Liberty—to mention only a few recent cases—it seems to me that only the wilfully blind can persist in the belief that we have free speech or free press in this country.

These things are a myth. In America, as in the European monarchies, we enjoy only that modicum of freedom of speech and press which is palatable to the masters. There is free speech for those only who voice popular ideas—ideas approved of by the powers that be. But free speech has no significance whatever unless it means freedom to express unpopular ideas. The essence of progress consists in giving a hearing to the new and the unpopular. These, when approved and accepted, finally become popular. But before it has the opportunity to prove its worth, every untried idea is necessarily unpopular, because new. That is not saying that everything new is necessarily worthy and useful. But in order that we may separate the chaff from the wheat, every idea must be sure of a hearing. That is the meaning of free speech and free press: absolute freedom of expression.

It is in the interest of the lords of life to allow only as much, and the kind of, expression that does not militate against their power and influence. But where expression begins to undermine the foundations of that power, where it lays hold of the roots of the false ideas supporting our social structure of lies, robbery and murder, there permitted freedom ceases. When seriously threatened, the Beast of Privilege cries, “Halt! So far and no farther!”

But we are determined to ignore the Beast and its rules, its cries of rage and its cries of pain. We urge those who believe in real, unconditional freedom of speech and press to manifest their attitude by helping us in this important fight. Deprivation of postal service has put us to heavy expense. We ask our friends to co-operate with us and thus aid our determination to fight for uncensored freedom of expression.

—*Alexander Berkman*

**MORE SUPPRESSION**  
**[Vol. 1, #15, 7/1/1916]**

Washington, June 6, 1916.

Mr. Alexander Berkman, Publisher  
THE BLAST, Box 661  
San Francisco, California.

Sir:

You are hereby notified that, in accordance with the Act of Congress approved March 3, 1901 (ch. 851, 31 Stat. L., 1107), you will be granted a hearing at the office of the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, Washington, D.C., at 2 p.m., on Tuesday, June 27, 1916, to show cause why the authorization of admission to THE BLAST to the second class of mail matter under the Act of March 3, 1879 (ch. 180, sec. 14, 1 Supp., 246), should not be revoked, upon the following ground:

The publication is not a “newspaper or other periodical publication” within the meaning of the law, Act of March 3, 1879, governing second-class mail matter and, furthermore, it is not regularly issued at stated intervals as a newspaper or other periodical publication within the meaning of the law. Moreover, it is in conflict with the provisions of the law embodied in section 480, Postal Laws and Regulations.

Your appearance at the hearing may be in person or by representative. In any event, your answer must be in writing. It should be submitted on or before June 27, 1916, and will be given the same consideration as though you appeared in person or by representative. Respectfully, A. M. KELLY,  
Third Assistant Postmaster-General.

June 21, 1916.

Third Assistant Postmaster-General:

In reply to your communication of the 6th Inst. (C. D. No. 172,588), I want to inform you that it is impossible for me to be personally present at the hearing at your office on the 27th, nor do I care to have a representative there. I hereby present my reasons why the admission of THE BLAST to the second class of mail matter should not be revoked.

My chief reason is that such revocation would be tantamount to the actual suppression of THE BLAST, and nothing short of a crime against the freedom of the press.

You are an employee of the Federal Government. Your salary is drawn from funds supplied by the taxpayers. You are supposed to *serve* the people in connection with their postal facilities. But the tragedy of your situation—as that of all other employees of the government—is that, instead of being the servant of the public, you—by virtue of your office—automatically become a cog of the

governmental machinery, wherein your integrity as a man, an independent and thinking being, becomes subservient to the ends of government, whatever those ends may happen to be in a given case.

In the present case your communication to me is prompted by the attempt of the government to commit one of the greatest crimes against the people whom you are sworn to serve: The suppression of free press. Personally, you probably realize that all progress depends on the liberty of expression, and that the unpopular voice should be respected. As part of the governmental machinery, however, you yourself, whatever your views and feelings in the matter, are made the very instrument of the suppression of free press, though you are specially paid by the people to *further* the means of their intercommunication.

Concerning the points specified in your form letter of the 6th inst., let me inform you that THE BLAST *is* a newspaper, if by the term is meant a paper publishing news and information in the field of its particular choice. Your statement that THE BLAST "is not regularly issued at stated intervals" is entirely without foundation. Your assumption is probably due to the fact that copies of THE BLAST do not regularly reach the Postoffice. But that is the fault of the Postoffice, not mine, since the postal authorities of San Francisco, on orders from Washington, have refused to accept copies of THE BLAST for transmission. Nevertheless, THE BLAST is published regularly, at stated intervals, and regularly supplied to our agents throughout the country, by express, as you will see from the enclosed issues of the paper.

THE BLAST was first issued as a *weekly* publication on January 15, 1916, and second-class mail matter applied for and granted. Then THE BLAST was changed from a weekly to a semi-monthly publication. Your office was informed accordingly, whereupon you revoked the second-class mail of the *weekly* BLAST and granted second-class mail to the *semi-monthly* BLAST. At all times since its inception, THE BLAST has appeared regularly, at stated intervals, first as a weekly, then as a semi-monthly.

Thus you will see that there is absolutely no reason why the second-class mail of THE BLAST should be revoked. If it is done, nevertheless, it will be because some one in Washington is determined to *suppress* the unpopular voice of THE BLAST. Personally, I do not care what the government will do in this case. I know that government means oppression and tyranny. But for *your* sake, I hope that you will refuse to be a willless cog in this machinery of suppression.

(Signed) ALEXANDER BERKMAN.  
Editor, THE BLAST, San Francisco.

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*The Blast published many short articles on diverse issues. Following are an article about Carl Liebknecht, the German revolutionary who opposed World War I, and another about the longshoremen strike in California. Both articles focus on the need for workers to unite together to protect their interests.*

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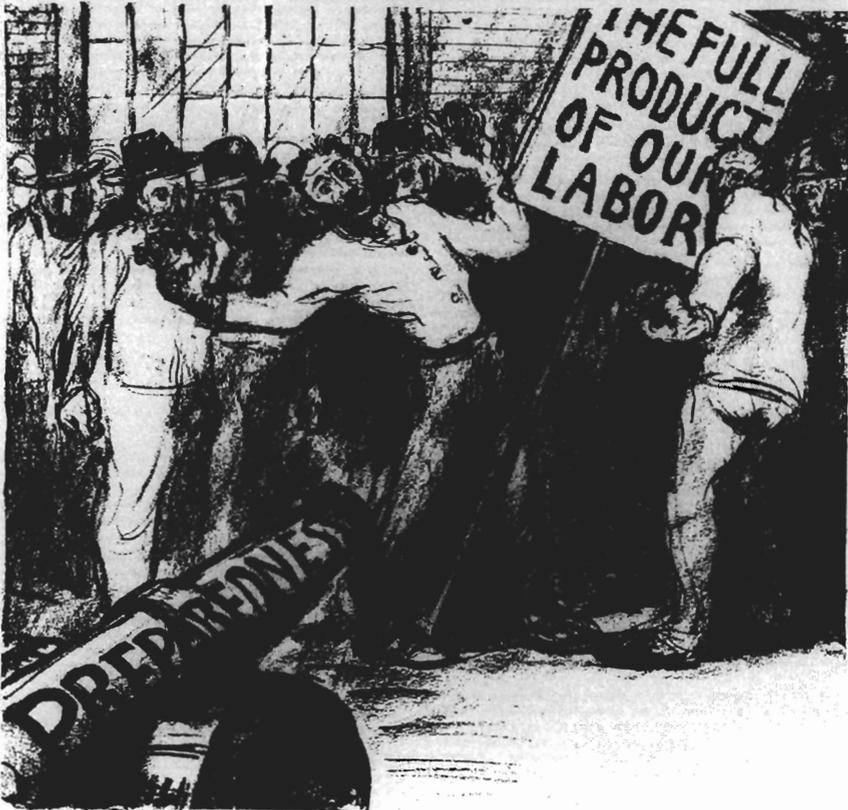
# THE BLAST

LYON GREEN

VOL. 1

SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 15, 1916

No. 16



THE REAL PURPOSE OF PREPAREDNESS

### AN INSPIRING EXAMPLE

[Vol. 1, #17, 8/15/1916]

The stand of Carl Liebknecht, of Germany, against the continuance of the war, is highly significant. An act of physical bravery is ennobling. A deed of moral courage is an inspiration. Liebknecht, daring to be true to his ideals in the face of a powerful government and the still more powerful public warmadness, is a great inspiration. Moreover, back of Liebknecht is an intelligent minority in Germany of which he is merely the emphatic spokesman. In every warring country of Europe there are these intelligent minorities, opposed to the slaughter of their fellow men and courageous enough to act up to their beliefs. If all the revolutionary elements of Europe had the sincerity and courage of Liebknecht, there would have been no war. As it is, in every country there are numerous rebels killed and imprisoned because of their opposition to human slaughter. At this very moment our Comrade Guy A. Aldred, editor of the London *Spur*, his co-workers Henry Sara, Allan McDougall, and numerous others, are tortured in the "black houses" of English prisons because of their loyalty to their ideals. The new English Military Service Act excuses from service men having conscientious objections to murder. In spite of it, our anti-militarist comrades are forced into the army or navy and, if objecting, subjected to imprisonment, degradation and torture.

But the example of these valiant protestants is compelling the respect of thinking men and women, and rousing the people to the true character of militarism and government.

May the workers of this country not fail to learn the lesson. Militarism and conscription are about to be foisted on the people of the United States. This country is to be turned into an armed camp, like England, Russia and Germany. Only the immediate active opposition of the workers can save us from the fate of Europe. On this most fundamental issue all revolutionists, rebels, radicals of every shade can and must immediately get together, and in co-operation with the more intelligent element of Labor, help to crystallize and organize the scattered anti-militarist sentiment of this country and rear an effective barrier against the powers of tyranny and greed.

### THE HOPE OF THE LONGSHOREMEN

[Vol. 1, #17, 8/15/1916]

The strike on the water front is too long drawn out. Strikes, to be successful, must be quick and sharp. The longer such a struggle lasts, the less chance for the workers to win: their funds are exhausted, the enthusiasm of the men wanes, their families begin to feel the pinch of hunger. The men grow pessimistic and are ready to return to work under almost any conditions.

This applies to every strike. Even unions with big treasuries are quickly exhausted. You can't match dollar for dollar with the Steel Trust, the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association, the Cloak Manufacturers, the Standard Oil,

or other similar plutocratic organizations. The whole capitalist class, practically speaking, comes to the rescue of even the unorganized employer involved in a labor struggle; in fact, he is aided by the whole power of government, with its police, courts and soldiery.

But who comes to the aid of a body of workers defending themselves against the greed of the boss? Only their union; often not even their own international organization. That's why Labor generally loses in these skirmishes—for the lack of solidarity.

The striking longshoremen have repeated the serious mistake of many other strikes: they signed up with the bosses who are not members of the Waterfront Employers' Union and permitted part of their men to go back to work. Thus they defeated the very purpose of their strike: to cause a complete tie-up.

Now the Employers' Union demands the unconditional surrender of the strikers. The only reply the workers of the Coast can give to this demand, coupled as it is with the war ultimatum of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, is *immediately to declare a General Strike*.

That alone can save the day and turn the now almost certain defeat of the longshoremen into a decisive victory.

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*Naturally, The Blast contained articles about anarchism.*

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## DOWN WITH THE ANARCHISTS!

[Vol. 1, #17, 8/15/1916]

We must get rid of the Anarchists! They are a menace to society. Does not Hearst say so? Do not the M. & M. and the gentlemen of the Chamber of Commerce, who have also declared war on Labor, assure us that the Anarchists are dangerous and that they are responsible for all our troubles? Does not every skinner of Labor and every grafting politician shout against the Anarchists? Isn't that enough to prove that the Anarchists are dangerous?

But why are all the money bags and their hirelings so unanimous in condemning the Anarchists? Generally they disagree on many questions and they bitterly fight each other in their business and social life. But on TWO questions they are always in accord.

What are those two questions that all the capitalists and profit mongers are always in perfect agreement on? They are these:

Smash the Labor Unions!  
Hang the Anarchists!

WHY? Because the Labor Unions are cutting the bosses' profits by constantly demanding higher wages. And the Anarchists want to abolish the boss altogether.

Now, what is the matter with the Anarchists? What do you really know about them, except the lies and misrepresentations of their enemies—who are also the enemies of the workers and opposed to every advancement of Labor? If you stop to think of it, you really know nothing of the Anarchists and their teachings. Your masters and their press have taken good care that you shouldn't learn the

truth about them. Why? Because as long as they can keep you busy shouting against the Anarchists, they are safe in their saddle on the backs of the people.

That's the whole secret.

What do the Anarchists really want? When you know that, you will be able to decide for yourself whether the Anarchists are your enemies or your friends.

The Anarchists say that it is not necessary to have murder and crime, poverty and corruption in the world. They say that we are cursed with these evils because a handful of people have monopolized the earth and all the wealth of the country. But who produces that wealth? Who builds the railroads, who digs the coal, who works in the fields and factories? You can answer that question for yourself. It is the toilers who do all the work and who produce all that we have in the world.

The Anarchists say: The products of Labor should belong to the producers. The industries should be carried on to minister to the needs of the people instead of for profit, as at present. Abolishing monopoly in land and in the sources of production, and making the opportunity for production accessible to all, would do away with capitalism and introduce free and equal distribution. That, in turn, would do away with laws and government, as there would be no need for them, government serving only to conserve the institutions of today and to protect the masters in their exploitation of the people. It would abolish war and crime, because the incentive to either would be lacking. It would be a society of real freedom, without coercion or violence, based on the voluntary communal arrangement of "To each according to his needs; from each according to his ability."

That is what the Anarchists teach. Suppose they are all wrong. Are you going to prove it by hanging them? If they are wrong, the people will not accept their ideas, and therefore there can be no danger from them. But, if they are right, it would be good for us to find it out. In any case, it is a question of learning what these Anarchists really want. Let the people hear them.

But how about violence? you say. Don't the Anarchists preach and practice violence and murder?

They don't. On the contrary, the Anarchists hold life as the most sacred thing. That's why they want to change the present order of things where everyone's hand is against his brother, and where war, wholesale slaughter in the pursuit of the dollar, bloodshed in the field, factory and workshop is the order of the day. The poverty, misery and bitter industrial warfare, the crimes, suicides and murder committed every day of the year in this country will convince any man of intelligence that in present society we have plenty of Law, but mighty little order or peace.

Anarchism means OPPOSITION to violence, by whomever committed, even if it be by the government. The government has no more right to murder than the individual. Anarchism is therefore opposition to violence as well as to government forcibly imposed on man.

The Anarchists value human life. In fact, no one values it more. Why, then, are the Anarchists always blamed for every act of violence? Because your rulers and exploiters want to keep you prejudiced against the Anarchists, so you will never find out what the Anarchists really want, and the masters will remain safe in their monopoly of life.

Now, what are facts about violence? Crimes of every kind happen every day. Are the Anarchists responsible for them? Or is it not rather misery and desperation that

drive people to commit such acts? Does a millionaire go out on the street and knock you down with a gaspipe to rob you of a few dollars? O, no. He builds a factory and robs his workers in a way that is much safer, more profitable and within the law.

Who, then, commits acts of violence? The desperate man, of course. He to whom no other resort seems open. Violence is committed by all kinds of people. Such violence is mostly for the purpose of theft or robbery. But there are also cases where it is done for social reasons. Such impersonal acts of violence have, from time immemorial, been the reply of goaded and desperate classes, and goaded and desperate individuals, to wrongs from their fellow-men, which they felt to be intolerable. Such acts are the violent RECOIL from violence, whether aggressive or repressive; they are the last desperate struggle of outraged and exasperated human nature for breathing space and life. And their CAUSE LIES NOT IN ANY SPECIAL CONVICTION, BUT IN HUMAN NATURE ITSELF. The whole course of history, political and social, is strewn with evidence of this fact. To go no further, take the Revolutionists of Russia, the Fenians and Sinn Feiners of Ireland, the Republicans of Italy. Were those people Anarchists? No. Did they all hold the same political opinions? No. But all were driven by desperate circumstances into this terrible form of revolt.

Anarchists, as well as others, have sometimes committed acts of violence. Do you hold the Republican Party responsible for every act committed by a Republican? Or the Democratic Party, or the Presbyterian or Methodist Church responsible for acts of individual members? It would be stupid to do so.

Under miserable conditions of life, any vision of the possibility of better things makes the present misery more intolerable, and spurs those who suffer to the most energetic struggles to improve their lot, and if these struggles only immediately result in sharper misery, the outcome is sheer desperation. In our present society, for instance, an exploited wage worker, who catches a glimpse of what work and life might and ought to be, finds the toilsome routine and the squalor of his existence almost intolerable; and even when he has the resolution and courage to continue steadily working his best, and waiting until new ideas have so permeated society as to pave the way for better times, the mere fact that he has such ideas and tries to spread them brings him into difficulties with his employers. How many thousands of rebel workers, of Socialists, of Industrialists and Syndicalists, but above all of Anarchists, have lost work and even the chance of work, solely on the ground of their opinions? It is only the specially gifted craftsman who, if he be a zealous propagandist, can hope to retain permanent employment. And what happens to a man with his brain working actively with a ferment of new ideas, with a vision before his eyes of a new hope dawning for toiling and agonizing men, with the knowledge that his suffering and that of his fellows in misery is not caused by the cruelty of fate, but by the injustice of other human beings—what happens to such a man when he sees those dear to him starving, when he himself is starved? Some natures in such a plight and those by no means the least social or the least sensitive, will become violent, and will even feel that their violence is social and not anti-social, that in striking when and how they can, they are striking, not for themselves, but for human nature, outraged and despoiled in their persons and in those of their fellow sufferers. And are we, who ourselves are not in this horrible predicament, to stand by and coldly condemn

these piteous victims of the Furies and Fates? Are we to decry as miscreants these human beings who act with heroic self-devotion, often sacrificing their lives in protest, where less social and less energetic natures would lie down and grovel in abject submission to injustice and wrong? Are we to join the ignorant and brutal outcry which stigmatizes such men as monsters of wickedness, gratuitously running amuck in a harmonious and innocently peaceful society? NO! We hate murder with a hatred that may seem absurdly exaggerated to apologists for war, industrial slaughter and Ludlow massacres, to callous acquiescers in governmental and plutocratic violence, but we decline in such cases of homicide as those of which we are treating, to be guilty of the cruel injustice of flinging the whole responsibility of the deed upon the immediate perpetrator. The guilt of these homicides lies upon every man and woman who, intentionally or by cold indifference, helps to keep up social conditions that drive human beings to despair. The man who flings his whole life into the attempt, often at the cost of his own life, to protest against the wrongs of his fellow-men, is a saint compared to the active and passive upholders of cruelty and injustice, even if his protest destroy other lives besides his own. Let him who is without sin in society cast the first stone at such a one.

THE BLAST GROUP  
 GROUP FREEDOM  
 ITALIAN ANARCHIST GROUP VOLONTA  
 UNION OF RUSSIAN WORKERS  
 Per { ALEXANDER BERKMAN  
       EMMA GOLDMAN

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*The following two articles are about the case of Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, accused of throwing a bomb during the Preparedness Parade in San Francisco on July 22, 1916.*

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**THE BILLINGS TRIAL**  
**[Vol. 1, #19, 9/15/1916]**

The trial of Warren K. Billings is now on. The case is progressing more quickly than is usual in trials of this character. Five days proved sufficient to select a jury and to submit almost all of the evidence of the prosecution. The defense, it is understood, will also require but little time to present its side. It is very likely that a verdict will be reached within another week.

Seldom has a trial of such grave character consumed so little time. Murder cases usually drag out for months and months. The trial of Mathew Schmidt, for instance, lasted over three months. David Caplan's trial almost as long. But the reason for the celerity with which the present case is carried on is simple. Rarely has an accusation of this character been so preposterous, rarely has the prosecution evidence been so flimsy as in the case of the United Railroads against Billings, Mooney et al.

I say "the case of the United Railroads" advisedly. For as the trial unfolds in the court room, from day to day, it becomes evident even to the most narrow-minded

partisan of the prosecution that it is not the State that is prosecuting Warren K. Billings, as responsible for the Preparedness Parade explosion, nor even the Police Department of San Francisco, but clearly and unmistakably the real prosecutor is the United Railroads, in the person of one Martin Swanson.

And who is this man Swanson?

The daily press has assiduously sought to throw the mantle of mystery over the elusive Swanson. But in reality there is no mystery whatever about him. Swanson is just a plain detective. Very plain. Though a former Pinkerton, he is not of the old type plug-ugly whose very name has become synonymous with irresponsible brutality. Nor yet is Swanson the modern dime-novel sleuth that so delights the hearts of our incipient presidents. No, Swanson is just a common every-day detective. Every detective tries to be an actor off the boards. If he leans to heavy melodrama, he becomes a Pinkerton man; if he inclines to the lighter vaudeville, he joins the Burns staff; if his tendencies are in the line of realism, his ideal is Sherlock Holmes. But Swanson is a bad actor—which is here not meant figuratively but literally. His manner too obviously betrays a conscious, even a self-conscious, imitation of Conan Doyle's super-sleuth. Among that element of the local underworld whose intelligence is below the average, Swanson is considered "clever." I have no doubt he is, by comparison. Nor am I prepared to contradict a friend's statement to the effect that Swanson is "the most intelligent man in the District Attorney's office." It is probably quite true—which is not so much a testimonial to Swanson's intelligence as proof of the lack of it on the part of those that elected and chose the incumbents of the District Attorney's office.

This pen picture of Swanson can be completed by the story of my first meeting with him.

The door bell of THE BLAST office rang, and the editor—who was just then also filling the no less important position of janitor—answered the call. A stockily built man, above average size, his rather heavy face lightened by a pair of not unpleasant blue eyes, entered. I did not expect any visitors, and this man was a total stranger. I glanced at his face, then at his feet, suspiciously large. "What can I do for you?" I asked; "I see you are from the District Attorney's office." The man scowled. It was Swanson.

This "identification" of Swanson is necessary to understand the character of, and the proceedings at, the trial of Billings.

The evidence of the prosecution is now all in, and it is clear that it has entirely failed to establish its case. In fact, it has no case at all. The identification of Billings was the most preposterous ever attempted in a criminal court. A few hysterical women had him dressed in half a dozen different suits, all at the same time. No connection whatever has been shown, much less proven, between the accused and the bomb explosion. It has not even been established whether it was dynamite or nitroglycerine, a bomb or infernal machine, or some other fatal contrivance that caused the deaths on Steuart Street. Indeed, the prosecution failed to prove anything except that an explosion took place on July 22d. And even regarding the circumstances and character of that explosion the District Attorney's witnesses were so hopelessly mixed that an out-of-town visitor in the courtroom might have been led to doubt the very fact of the explosion.

The essential features of the Billings trial may be summarized as follows:

Who shadowed Billings for weeks previous to the bomb explosion?

Swanson.

Who offered Billings a bribe of \$5,000.00 to implicate Tom Mooney in the blowing up of the high-power towers of the United Railroads?

Swanson.

Who offered a similar reward to Israel Weinberg for the same purpose?

Swanson.

Who was the first to suggest that the most active labor men of San Francisco be accused of the bomb explosion?

Swanson.

Who arrested Billings?

Swanson.

Who helped to arrest and search the apartments of the other labor prisoners?

Swanson.

Who helped to raid the offices of THE BLAST?

Swanson.

Who grilled the editor and associate editor of THE BLAST?

Swanson.

Who helped to sweat the arrested labor men?

Swanson.

Who is always at the side of the official prosecutors, Fickert and Brennan?

Swanson.

Who threatened Israel Weinberg to “fix him”, when—a week before the explosion—Weinberg refused to bear false witness in connection with the U. R. tower explosions?

Swanson.

Who made the statement, before the trial, to the effect that Billings is to be railroaded, and that after that it will be easy to convict all the other defendants?

Swanson.

Who stated that he will “get” Alexander Berkman and the rest of THE BLAST staff?

Swanson.

Who is the leading spirit in the specially created Detective Bomb Bureau?

Swanson.

Whose hand is so plainly seen behind the prosecution?

Swanson.

It's Swanson all through, the private detective of the Pacific Gas & Electric Company, who has also done yeoman service for the United Railroads. It is all Swanson, who, according to his own admission, is the “head detective of the Public Utilities Protective Bureau, an organization formed by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company, The Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company, the Sierra and San Francisco Power Company, the Western States Gas and Electric Company, and the Northern Electric Railroad.” The same Swanson who, according to the eleventh hour admission of District Attorney Fickert, is an officer of his staff.

THE BILLINGS VERDICT  
[Vol. 1, #20, 10/15/1916]

There is no justice in heaven or on earth. That is my final conviction. Where *is* that just Providence we hear so much about? Where the sense of justice of the Almighty, or of any one else, when a human being, utterly innocent, can be convicted and doomed to a living death for the rest of his natural life? Where, where is Justice?

Billings has been convicted. Convicted in spite of his proven innocence. For it is literally true that in the Billings trial the prosecution not only failed to make out its case, but the defense actually *proved* the innocence of Billings, proved that, even according to the State's testimony, it was a physical impossibility for Billings to have been at the place of the explosion.

And yet Billings was convicted. Was there ever a more crying injustice? No, not since the days of the Chicago Anarchists foully murdered by blind rage and bitter prejudice. Indeed, the San Francisco case is even more heinous in its cold-blooded bestiality. For history can at least explain, if not palliate, the judicial murders of 1887 by a temporary mental aberration of the people, a virtual insanity of fear and hatred resulting from the bitter class feeling in the tremendous labor struggles of those days.

No such excuse can be given in the Billings case. The people of San Francisco were deeply stirred by the Preparedness parade explosion, but they did not lose their heads. The tragedy filled them with grief, but they scorned the infamy of lynch law suggested by the Hearsts and their vile ilk. They refused to sanction a debauch of blood-drunk vengeance. They would not turn murderers, deeply as they mourned their loss. They waited patiently for the authorities to apprehend the guilty. They wouldn't shed innocent blood.

What little hysteria the yellow press, which thrives on it, was able to arouse or stimulate, had all died out long before the Billings trial began. The city had resumed its normal life, the people followed their accustomed pursuits, and even in the courtroom nothing disturbed the even tenor of the usual legal proceedings, save the occasional Holy Jumper antics of the public prosecutors.

There was nothing in the atmosphere in or out of the courtroom, nor anything beneath the surface of the life of San Francisco, to indicate unusual interest in the trial. The Preparedness parade, nay, its very object, was all but forgotten. The bomb passed into history and the great bulk of the citizenship evinced no particular interest in the trial, because it was generally felt that the police had failed to find a clew to the real perpetrators of the explosion, and that the criminal proceedings against Billings, et al., were a somewhat ungraceful mode of covering up the inefficiency of the District Attorney's office rather than a serious attempt to fasten the crime on the accused. It was therefore generally felt that the arrested labor men were mere police scapegoats, and that there was no case against them. And when the public prosecutor insisted on charging Billings, et al., with a "conspiracy to dynamite people holding different social views" and was sarcastically sat upon by Judge Dunne, who demanded actual evidence instead of "vague charges of a general conspiracy against the whole world," the public was convinced that the District Attorney was merely trying to save his official face.

But when the actual trial of the “bomb plot” began, and the prosecution introduced its witnesses, it quickly became apparent that there was indeed a plot, a deep, sinister plot—not a *bomb* plot, however, but a plot to clear the District Attorney’s office of the charge of inefficiency and at the same time stifle the voices of certain men who had become a thorn in the flesh of the enemies of Labor.

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Like the scenes of some absorbing drama, the “conspiracy” was being unfolded on the stage of the dingy court-room. Within the railing, on reserved seats, sat the main actors of this intense human play: Warren K. Billings, the first of the accused to be tried; District Attorney Chas. Fickert and his assistants, Brennan and Cunha; the attorneys for the defense, McNutt, Lomasney and Lawlor; and on the box-like bench, to the left of Superior Judge Dunne, the twelve men, “good and true,” all retired business men, well known to the District Attorney for their loyal service in similar capacity on numerous previous occasions. The jurors, whose combined age was more than equal to five centuries, listened with varying degrees of attention to the straggling stream of witnesses—witnesses for the prosecution who testified under oath, so help me God, that Billings was in three different places at the same time, dressed in as many different suits of clothes. According to these witnesses, Billings was—between 1:50 to 2 p.m. on the fateful day of July 22d—on the corner of Steuart and Market streets, the place of the explosion, with a heavy suitcase, variously and positively identified as black, yellowish, and as a small grip; Billings was, *at the same time*, on the roof of 721 Market street, over a mile from the scene of explosion, and he was also, *at the very same moment*, talking to Policeman Earle Moore in front of 721 Market street, and also having a long conversation with Estelle Smith in the dental office of her employer.

The prosecution’s identification of Billings was no less positive and sure than the establishment of his whereabouts. Estelle Smith, chief witness for the State, identified him by a “peculiar scar on his forehead,” her certainty remaining unshaken even after it was proven that the only scar or rash Billings ever had was—on his knee. Nor could Miss Smith be swerved from her faithfulness to obligation when it was established that her mother, Mrs. Kidwell, had been promised by the prosecution a pardon for Mr. Kidwell, her husband, serving time in Folsom penitentiary for forgery, and that Miss Smith’s uncle is imprisoned in San Quentin for murder. She protested that the reward of \$17,000 offered for “the conviction of *anyone* for the outrage of July 22d,” had no temptation for her whatever, though her salary as attendant at a dental office was insufficient for her mode of dressing.

Equally protesting and confident was the other star witness of the prosecution, a certain McDonald, a man about town and notorious dope fiend, who, according to his own testimony, “as in a dream saw the suitcase placed on the sidewalk.” Confronted by several witnesses who swore that he boasted of being well paid for his testimony, McDonald admitted that his hotel expenses were being paid by the police to “protect” him against the defense.

Quite as devoid of any hope of reward were a number of other State witnesses, mostly police and detectives, whose testimony impressed every one as told with

the facility bred of practice, and who unanimously agreed that they were incapable of being mistaken or telling a lie.

Subtly woven through the State testimony could be traced the fine handiwork of Private Detective Swanson, confidential representative of the Pacific Gas & Electric Co., the United Railroads, chief detective of the Pacific Utilities Bureau, etc. It was Swanson, looming large in the background of the District Attorney's office; Swanson offering a bribe of \$5,000 to Billings and Weinberg, in turn, *a week before the bomb explosion*, to implicate Mooney in the blowing up of some power towers of the United Railroads corporation; Swanson, through Brennan, promising \$15,000 to one of the attorneys for the defense for double-crossing Billings and Mooney; Swanson threatening friends of the accused labor men with dire punishment for refusing to bear false witness against them. It was always Swanson, the Private Detective, hovering about the court, prompting the District Attorney at the trial, smiling encouragement at the State witnesses, gliding in and out of the court room, and nodding familiarly to the jurors in the corridor during recess.

All this in full view of the big audience attracted by the sensational trial. But unseen by the casual observer, unseen even—unfortunately—by the attorneys for the defense, there loomed behind the scenes a grim figure, silent and commanding, whose invisible presence was yet palpably manifest to every one of social intelligence; a figure whose heavy breath surcharged the atmosphere with an ominous sense of a stealthily waged class war, pregnant with mysterious hints of hidden forces, of whispered threats—“Chamber of Commerce”—“Open Shop”—“Labor and Capital”—“Law and Order Committee.”

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At last came the turn of the defense. Witness after witness exposed the false network of the State's accusation against Billings. Reputable citizens, professional and business men, Grand Army veterans, participants in the Preparedness parade and members of patriotic organizations—total strangers to the accused—completely disproved the testimony of the prosecution. They tore its evidence to shreds. The defense produced the man who had spoken to Officer Moore and whom the latter mistook for Billings. A youth on the roof of 721 Market street, resembling Billings, was proven to have been mistaken for the accused prisoner. It was a patient at the dental office who had held the conversation with Estelle Smith, attributed by her to Billings. Billings had no suitcase on that day, nor had he ever visited the place where Miss Smith was employed. Eye-witnesses, supported by photographic evidence, proved the accused to have been far from the scene of the explosion and in no way connected with it. Billings stood completely exonerated.

The prosecution was shaken to its very foundation. It did not dare ask for the death penalty. It ignored the evidence and wrapped itself in the folds of the flag. “Gentlemen of the Jury,” implored Assistant District Attorney Brennan in his closing speech, “you must convict this boy to wash off the stain put on our flag. We do not ask for his life. We want to give him a chance to tell on the real men back of this conspiracy against our civilization.”

The crowded court room held its breath as the jurors slowly filed in. They had

been out three hours, two of which were spent at luncheon—at an openshop place. The fate of a fellow human was in their hands, but long deliberation—it was felt on every hand—was unnecessary. The case of the defense was too clear for doubt.

“We find the defendant, Warren K. Billings, guilty of murder in the first degree, as charged.”

Dead silence. The voice of the foreman of the jury died away, like a hollow echo, and a pall of darkness seemed to settle over the court room. The audience sat silent, motionless, as if stunned by a sudden blow. Then, as with a common instinct, all eyes turned on Billings. The youth stood with lips twitching, blank astonishment in his eyes, gazing mutely at the jurors.

It was only an instant—and then the Judge recovered himself. The jury was dismissed.

Like shadows, pale and silent, the people faded from the court room.

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MEN and WOMEN of America, children of liberty and justice-loving sires, will you suffer such judicial assassination of innocent men?

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*The Blast reports another case of government suppression of the magazine.*

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### THE DAYLIGHT BURGLARY [Vol. 2, #24, 1/1/1917]

Martin Swanson, private detective for the United Railroads and the Pacific Gas & Electric Company, with Assistant District Attorney Ed. Cunha and Detectives Draper Hand and Mike Burke, raided our office just as we were about to go to the printer with this issue.

The corporation detective rang the door-bell at about 10 o'clock Saturday morning, quickly stepped in and took charge. Cunha assisted Swanson in prying into bureau drawers and reading personal correspondence.

Cunha asked to see our card index file of subscribers. In clearing a place for him at my work table, I picked up a few letters, some of that morning's mail. Cunha asked: “What's that?” I told him they were personal letters and they did not concern the District Attorney's office. He said to his detectives: “Get them!” Immediately Hand and Burke grabbed my hands and the “desperate struggle” took place, as we see by the morning's papers. None of the four well-armed men was hurt. But they took my letters.

Three hours rummaging through the house, prying open bureau drawers, reading personal letters and taking mailing lists, manuscripts and cartoons, resulted in nothing more serious than delaying this issue of the paper.

The real reason of the raid was to introduce some shivery music into the “anarchist” melodrama that District Attorney Fickert is presenting to the public in the newspapers and staging in Judge Griffin's court.

While watching the activities of my visitors, I couldn't help a feeling of pity

# The BLAST

Vol. II.

SAN FRANCISCO, JANUARY 15, 1917

No. 1



*"But this I know, that every Law  
That men have made for Man,  
Since first Man took his brother's life,  
And the sad world began,  
But straws the wheat and saves the chaff  
With a most evil fan."*

*Robertson*

creeping into my heart. I said to Cunha: "How can a man like you engage in such dirty work? As a boy or young man, you must have had a spark of decency in you." To his credit, he blushed. Then stammered: "If I don't do it, someone else will. Life is short; it doesn't matter much after all." "Yes," I said, "life is short, but that's all the more reason why one should be on the side of right and decency."

Just think of Phadraig Pearse, Jim Connelly, Tom Clarke and the other gallant Irish rebels who made the world ring with their brave fight for liberty in the streets of Dublin, last Easter week! Then stand up the Mike Burkes, the Brennans and the Cunhas for comparison. What a pitiful spectacle! "Life is short, and if I don't do it, someone else will."

Dear BLAST, you have had a stormy year—but it has been a glorious one! You must live to carry on the fight for Truth.

—*M. Eleanor Fitzgerald.*

THE BLAST needs funds if it is to have a second birthday. We haven't money enough to pay this week's printing bill. Won't you renew your subscription at once?

Let us hear from all lovers of liberty and justice.

Among the annoyances occasioned by the "daylight burglary" on our office, is the necessity to submit:

An article on the affair of Everett, Washington. (They need and deserve your help.)

An article on the release of Carlo Tresca, Sam Scarlett, Joe Schmidt and others, in the labor struggle in Minnesota. (A compromise was made in which the only concession by Labor was a one-year sentence for each of the three strikers. The "Haymarket" precedent was abandoned.)

The story of the slugging by the police of an investigator for the San Francisco Labor defendants by two uniformed policemen in the city prison. This was done in vengeance for his having turned up the police-kidnapping of a witness.

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*The Russian Revolution was an inspiration to millions all over the world. To Berkman it was the beginning of a new and just world.*

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**MARCH AND MAY**  
**[Vol. 2, #4, 5/1/1917]**

March, the revolutionary month of the proletariat, has again fulfilled its historic mission. A revolution, actually and potentially greater than any of the March days of 1848 and 1871, has been born in the Red Month of 1917.

The Russian Revolution has already accomplished much. It has justified all the sacrifices of the past fifty years. It has honored and hallowed the martyrdom of the numberless heroes and heroines in the fortress of the Petro-pavlovskaya and the Schluesselburg dungeons, in the frozen wilds of Siberia and the unspeakable hells of Katorga.

# The BLAST

Vol. II.

SAN FRANCISCO, MARCH 15, 1917

No. 3



**T**HIS man subjected himself to imprisonment and probably to being shot or hanged under the new Espionage Bill

**T**HE prisoner used language tending to discourage men from enlisting in the United States Army

**I**T is proven and indeed admitted that among his incendiary statements were—

**T**HOU shalt not kill  
and

**P**EACE on earth  
good will to men

Only the first word has yet been spoken in the Dawn of Russia: only one leaf has been turned in the great book of the New Era. The Coming Days are passionate with promise.

After Red March, the bloom of May. The storm has broken and scattered the black clouds. It has purified the atmosphere. On its heels follows the bright sunshine, bringing balm to torn hearts, warming to new life and growth.

The womb of May holds re-birth and rejuvenation. Prophetic was the vision that chose the First of May for the gathering of the forces of the submerged. Its legions rise, stretch their formidable arms and sense their accumulating power in the Springtime of Life.

March, the storm petrel of the revolution! May, the day of new hope and life! That their fruition may blossom in Nineteen Hundred and Seventeen!

The echo of the Russian March storm is resounding through the breadth of Europe. More and more distinct grows the rumbling of universal Discontent. Its voice, though gagged and stifled, is heard above the thunder of contending cannon. The breath of May is in the air. The million-felt urge of Life and Liberty cannot be drowned in the sea of warm human blood. Aye, the red juice of Life has softened the soil; the flesh and bone of a million comrades has manured the earth. The Spirit of March is brooding over it.

The Sun of May is growing nearer, larger. The warm rays penetrate deeper and deeper. They melt the bitterness and hatred of brothers. Hearts are flooded with the joy of Spring and the Youth of Life. Out of the sea of comrades' blood rises the Red International. Out of the fresh graves steps forth the Brotherhood of Man, the Solidarity of the Submerged.

May, life-giver and liberator! Would that the coming of your days fulfill the passionate promise of the Red Month of March.

—*Alexander Berkman*

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*Alec and Emma were among the major agitators against U.S. entry into the war and, through The Blast, Berkman tried to convince young men to refuse to register or to fight.*

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## TO THE YOUTH OF AMERICA

[Vol. 2, #5, 6/1/1917]

Tyranny must be opposed at the start.

Autocracy, once secure in the saddle, is difficult to dislodge.

If you believe that America is entering the war "to make democracy safe," then be a man and volunteer.

But if you know anything at all, then you should know that the cry of democracy is a lie and a snare for the unthinking. You should know that a republic is not synonymous with democracy, and that America has never been a real democracy, but that it is the vilest plutocracy on the face of the globe.

If you can see, hear, feel, and think, you should know that King Dollar rules the United States, and that the workers are robbed and exploited in this country to the heart's content of the masters.

If you are not deaf, dumb, and blind, then you know that the American bourgeois democracy and capitalistic civilization are the worst enemies of labor and progress, and that instead of protecting them, you should help to fight to destroy them.

If you know this, you must also know that the workers of America have no enemy in the toilers of other countries. Indeed, the workers of Germany suffer as much from their exploiters and rulers as do the masses of America.

You should know that the interests of Labor are identical in all countries. Their cause is international.

Then why should they slaughter each other?

The workers of Germany have been misled by their rulers into donning the uniform and turning murderers.

So have the workers of France, of Italy and England been misled.

But why should *you*, men of America, allow yourselves to be misled into murder or into being murdered?

If your blood must be shed, let it be in defense of your own interests, in the war of the workers against their despoilers, in the cause of real liberty and independence.

### REGISTRATION [Vol. 2, #5, 6/1/1917]

Registration is the first step of conscription.

The war shouters and their prostitute press, bet on snaring you into the army, tell you that registration has nothing to do with conscription.

They lie.

Without registration, conscription is impossible.

Conscription is the abdication of your rights as a citizen. Conscription is the cemetery where every vestige of your liberty is to be buried. Registration is its undertaker.

No man with red blood in his veins can be forced to fight against his will.

But you cannot successfully oppose conscription if you approve of, or submit to, registration.

Every beginning is hard. But if the government can induce you to register, it will have little difficulty in putting over conscription.

By registering you wilfully supply the government with the information it needs to make conscription effective.

Registration means placing in the hands of the authorities the despotic power of the machinery of passports which made darkest Russia what it was before the Revolution.

There are thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of young men in this country who have never voted and who have never paid taxes, and who, legally speaking, have no official existence. Their registration means nothing short of suicide, in a majority of cases.

Failure to register is punishable by imprisonment. Refusal to be conscripted may be punishable by death.

To register is to acknowledge the right of the government to conscript.  
The consistent conscientious objector to human slaughter will neither register  
nor be conscripted.

—*Alexander Berkman*

**WAR DICTIONARY**  
**[Vol. 2, #5, 6/1/1917]**

ALLIES—The fairies of Democracy.  
BARBARIANS—The other fellows.  
CONGRESS—The valet of Woodrow the First.  
CENSORSHIP—The rape of Free Speech.  
CONSCRIPTION—Free men fighting against their will.  
CIVILIZATION—In God We Trust.  
DEMOCRACY—The voice of the Gallery Gods.  
FREE SPEECH—Say what you please, but keep your mouth shut.  
HUNS—Loyal patriots from Central Europe.  
HUMANITY—Treason to government.  
JUSTICE—Successful target shooting.  
LOYAL CITIZEN—Deaf, dumb and blind.  
KAISER—A President's ambition.  
LIBERTY LOAN—The bread line of the Unborn.  
LIBERTY BOND—A bone from a bonehead.  
SEDITION—The proof of Tyranny.  
MILITARISM—Christianity in action.  
PATRIOTISM—Hating your neighbor.  
REGISTRATION—Funeral march of Liberty.  
SLACKER—Jesus Christ.  
TRENCHES—Digging your own grave.  
UN-AMERICAN—Independent opinion.  
UN-DEMOCRATIC—Ideals.  
UNIFORM—Government strait-jacket.  
VICTORY—Ten million dead.  
WAR—The propaganda of Democracy.

\* \* \*

Which is the braver? The man who falls in line with the great majority or he that faces the wrath of millions for conscience sake?

Do not confound us with the pacifists. We believe in fighting. Aye, we have been fighting all our lives—fighting injustice, oppression and tyranny. Almost single handed at that.

We are not pacifists. But we want to know what we are fighting for, and we refuse to fight for the enemies and the exploiters of humanity.

—*Alexander Berkman*

## **Section 2:** **The No Conscription League**

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*The No Conscription League was formed by Alec, Emma and a few friends on May 9, 1916. Their manifesto stated, in part, that "The No-Conscription League has been formed for the purpose of encouraging conscientious objectors to affirm their liberty of conscience and to make their objection to human slaughter effective by refusing to participate in the killing of their fellow men. The No Conscription League is to be the voice of protest against the coercion of conscientious objectors to participate in the war. . . . We will resist conscription by every means in our power and we will sustain those who, for similar reasons, refuse to be conscripted."*

*Goldman and Berkman had trouble finding hall owners who would rent to them but, when they finally were able to arrange for League meetings, the halls were packed with thousands of people inside while many times more gathered outside. Berkman writes of one such meeting: "There were fully 35,000 that tried to gain admission. Only two thousand were allowed to enter the hall, but the thousands on the outside took up the applause that reached them from the meeting and filled the air with revolutionary songs."*

*Included in this section is a statement by the No Conscription League, as well as the minutes to a meeting of the League, on June 4, 1917, in which Berkman and Goldman spoke to a packed audience of 5,000 people while at least 15,000 rallied outside the hall. These minutes are included here to convey the excitement, the tension, and the explosiveness that surrounded the activities of Alec and Emma and also to highlight the courage of these two anarchists during the year in which the United States entered World War I. It is a "living document" that reflects a mood difficult to capture in accounts of the event written after the fact.*

*On June 15, as a result of the activities of the No Conscription League, Alec and Emma were arrested for violating the Selective Draft Act and put behind bars to await deportation.*

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## NO CONSCRIPTION! [Statement of the No Conscription League]

Conscription has now become a fact in this country. It took England fully 18 months after she engaged in the war to impose compulsory military service on her people. It was left for “free” America to pass a conscription bill six weeks after she declared war against Germany.

What becomes of the patriotic boast of America to have entered the European war in behalf of the principle of democracy? But that is not all. Every country in Europe has recognized the right of conscientious objectors—of men who refuse to engage in war on the ground that they are opposed to taking life. Yet this democratic country makes no such provision for those who will not commit murder at the behest of the war profiteers. Thus the “land of the free and the home of the brave” is ready to coerce free men into the military yoke.

No one to whom the fundamental principle of liberty and justice is more than an idle phrase, can help realize that the patriotic clap trap now shouted by press, pulpit and the authorities, betrays a desperate effort of the ruling class in this country to throw sand in the eyes of the masses and blind them to the real issue confronting them. That issue is the Prussianizing of America so as to destroy whatever few liberties the people have achieved through an incessant struggle of many years.

Already all labor protective laws have been abrogated, which means that while husbands, fathers and sons are butchered on the battlefield, the women and children will be exploited in our industrial bastilles to the heart’s content of the American patriots for gain and power.

Freedom of speech, of press and assembly is about to be thrown upon the dungheap of political guarantees. But crime of all crimes, the flower of the country is to be forced into murder whether or not they believe in war or in the efficacy of saving democracy in Europe by the destruction of democracy at home.

Liberty of conscience is the most fundamental of all human rights, the pivot of all progress. No man may be deprived of it without losing every vestige of freedom of thought and action. In those days when every principle and conception of democracy and individual liberty is being cast overboard under the pretext of democratizing Germany, it behooves every liberty loving man and woman to insist on his or her right of individual choice in the ordering of his life and actions.

The No Conscription League has been formed for the purpose of encouraging conscientious objectors to affirm their liberty of conscience and to make their objection to human slaughter effective by refusing to participate in the killing of their fellow men. The No Conscription League is to be the voice of protest against the coercion of conscientious objectors to participate in the war. Our platform may be summarized as follows:

We oppose conscription because we are internationalists, anti-militarists, and opposed to all wars waged by capitalistic governments.

We will fight for what we choose to fight for; we will never fight simply because we are ordered to fight.

We believe that the militarization of America is an evil that far outweighs, in its anti-social and anti-libertarian effects, any good that may come from America’s participation in the war.

We will resist conscription by every means in our power, and we will sustain those who, for similar reasons, refuse to be conscripted.

We are not unmindful of the difficulties in our way. But we have resolved to go ahead and spare no effort to make the voice of protest a moral force in the life of this country. The initial efforts of the conscientious objectors in England were fraught with many hardships and danger, but finally the government of Great Britain was forced to give heed to the steadily increasing volume of public protest against the coercion of conscientious objectors. So we, too, in America, will doubtless meet the full severity of the government and the condemnation of the war-mad jingoes, but we are nevertheless determined to go ahead. We feel content in arousing thousands of people who are conscientious objectors to the murder of their fellow men and to whom a principle represents the most vital thing in life.

Resist conscription. Organize meetings. Join our League. Send us money. Help us to give assistance to those who come in conflict with the government. Help us to publish literature against militarism and against conscription.

We consider this campaign of the utmost importance at the present time. Amid hateful, cowardly silence, a powerful voice and an all-embracing love are necessary to make the living dead shiver.

**NO CONSCRIPTION LEAGUE**  
20 East 125th St., New York.

**NO CONSCRIPTION LEAGUE**  
**at HUNTS POINT PALACE in**  
**NEW YORK CITY**  
**Minutes to the June 4, 1917, meeting**

Mr. Alexander Berkman: Comrades, friends and enemies (Great Applause) and everyone who believes in freedom of thought and liberty. We had a demonstration here a moment ago as to who believes in free speech. The militarists, the false patriots and the others have mass meetings tonight. They have mass meetings this evening. They have meetings tomorrow. We did not send our men to disturb their meetings. (Great applause and hurrahs.) And who believe in liberty? Do we believe in liberty or do they? We say to you, and I mean all of you, I mean these detectives, these Federal men, soldiers and sailors, we say to all of you, if you want war, go ahead. We believe in liberty, but you can go ahead. (Applause and cheers.) But we say further to you, if you believe in liberty, if you pretend to fight for liberty and democracy how can you force us to do what we don't want to do? (Great applause and cheering.) I see a few, or rather quite a number of young men in uniform in this audience, and I want to know when they look into their own consciences if they do not think that I am not making a speech, but I am talking common sense. That should appeal to you, if you really have a sense of justice. America says we are going to fight Germany. Why? They say we are going to fight Germany because we want to give them liberty and democracy. If

you believe that you can give a people liberty and democracy from the outside, if you believe you can give a people or a nation liberty at the end of a bayonet or with bullets, go ahead. We don't object. We shall not interfere. But if you are so generous with liberty as to carry it to Germany across the sea, why don't you retail liberty right here in this country. (Applause.)

A Voice: Are you a citizen?

Mr. Berkman: I have the floor just now. If you want the floor later, we believe in free speech and will give it to you. There is no greater boon in the world than liberty. There is nothing greater in the whole universe than freedom of conscience, freedom of opinion and freedom of action, in short, liberty. But it is we who are fighting for liberty, and no one else, not those who oppose us. We have been fighting for liberty for many years, and even for the liberty of those who oppose us. (Great Applause.)

A Voice: You know what Rabbi Wise said?

Other Voices: Shut up, shut up.

(There were many boos and great confusion. Someone threw something at the speaker.)

Mr. Berkman: I want this man to speak out what is in his heart. That is all right. I say this is a solemn moment. Men and women and soldiers and others, do not make light of this. You are the sons of mothers, even if you are in uniform. You want to go to the front. All right. But consider what you are doing and consider whether you have the right to suppress those who do not believe as you do. Consider well, especially if you pretend to fight under the banner of free speech and liberty. Consider that. Take that home with you to your barracks. Think it over. You have never heard patriots talk to us like that. We talk to you like that. We don't throw glasses or bricks at you. We say to you consider, look into your own hearts and do what you think is right. But you can't think it is right to suppress the other fellow because he thinks differently. You can't believe it in your own hearts or you would have less to say in opposition to us, and you would be less, much less than human. We are here to say what we believe, just the same as you are in a hundred and one halls all over the city, in thousands of halls all over the country today to say what you believe. That means liberty of speech, and for liberty I am the first to fight. (Great applause.)

This is a most serious moment. Let me tell you, if you know what is happening in the country today, that you know that this is one of the most tragic moments in the life of this country. Don't make light of it, because it is the most terrible and tragic moment in the life of the country. Conscription in a free country means the cemetery of liberty, and if conscription is the cemetery then registration is the undertaker. (Great applause and cheers and boos, and something thrown at the speaker that looked like a lemon.)

All right, I am talking now: you can talk later. (Some one in the gallery threw something at the speaker and said something the stenographer could not understand.) Those who want to register should certainly register, but those who know what liberty means, and I am sure there are thousands in this country, they will not register. (Many hurrahs and great applause.) There have been many black days, many black Fridays, and black Sundays in the history of this country. Black days for labor when those who feed you were shot down on the streets because they were for better conditions of living. There have been many black days for

labor. But there is going to be a blacker day, not a black Friday, but a black Tuesday. (Great applause.) And I believe that those who realize the full significance of forcing a supposedly free country into an armed camp, those who realize that should put on mourning tomorrow. They should mourn the loss of the country's liberty. It is not a day for rejoicing. You rejoice over something that brings you happiness, joy, freedom. But something that means your further enslavement, something that means the coercion of you to do things against your conscience, against your nature, against the dictates of everything that is fine in you—things like that should be mourned and wept over, and not made a holiday of. It is a tragic moment to me, because I love the American people more than those who want to enslave them towards the profit of Morgan and others. (Applause.)

Neither the soldiers of this country nor the workers have any enemies across the ocean. The soldiers and the workers and all those who really have to work mentally or physically, for their bread and butter, they have no enemies there. They have an enemy right here in this country; (Applause) they have an enemy that makes money, millions and millions of it, out of your blood, out of small children and widows, by putting them in sweat shops, by working them all hours. (Great Applause) (Someone in the gallery threw something at the speaker which broke the glass on the table in front of him and the rest of the remarks to finish the sentence were not heard.) Those are the enemies we have.

A Voice: You are the enemy.

Mr. Berkman: I have no more love for these exploiting American enemies than I have for the German Kaiser. (Some one in the gallery shouted "go back to Europe where you belong. You are not an American citizen anyhow." Also some one threw something that broke one of the electric globes in the footlight row.)

Mr. Berkman: No, no, gracia. Hence, consider a certain country across the ocean. Look at Russia. There are workers and soldiers that know what they are about. (Great applause and confusion. Many voices from the gallery.) You believe in free speech, go and fight for your country. They are soldiers the same as we have in this country. They are workers the same as we have in this country. And let me tell you they know that eight hours is a working day there. (There was considerable confusion in the gallery, and evidently a struggle of some sort went on up there.)

No argument there (Referring to the gallery.) Sit down. Everybody keep their seats. (There was great confusion, People standing up around the hall.) Keep your seats. We know there are men here to break up this meeting.

Emma Goldman: One moment. There are United States soldiers here who are on duty. Soldiers—now, no argument there.

Mr. Kane: Listen to an American citizen.

(Meanwhile there was great confusion throughout the hall.)

Mr. Berkman: I don't believe these soldiers are real Americans. My friends, do you know what is happening in Russia today? Do you know that eight hours work is what the workers want in every country? Do you know what is good for the workers? Do you know what the soldiers of Russia are helping the workers in that country to do? Do you know that after all the cause of the soldiers and workers is the same everywhere. (Great excitement and Miss Goldman assumes charge.)

Miss Emma Goldman: Please be quiet; please be quiet. (Great applause and

cheers.) Friends and fellow workers. Friends, don't you know that the soldiers came here to disturb the meeting? (Many voices yes, yes.) I ask you all to keep quiet, no matter what the soldiers do. I demand of you to keep absolutely quiet. Let them disturb the meeting. We are not going to disturb the meeting. (Applause)

Friends, workers, soldiers, detectives and police. (Laughter and hisses and applause) I am going to speak to you all. I am surprised that the police here don't stop the soldiers from breaking the lights. (Hurrahs and applause. Throughout Emma Goldman's remarks she was so frequently interrupted by applause that reference will not be made to the times.) Friends, please don't applaud, time is too precious. If the police don't stop the soldiers from breaking the law is it because the police are afraid of the soldiers? I hope that they will preserve order. Now, friends, if this meeting would not take place at all, I think you should know that there are twenty thousand people outside waiting to get into this hall, to prove to you more than anything that we can say that the people of New York who think, don't want war and don't want conscription and don't want militarism. At the same time we consider ourselves more consistent than those who believe in war and believe in militarism. We say that those who believe in war, believe in conscription and in militarism and should do their duty and fight. We have no objection against it, but we refuse to be compelled to fight when we don't believe in war and when we don't believe in militarism and when we don't believe in conscription. Now, why don't we believe in war and in militarism? The good papers of this city have told you that because we are pro-Germans we do not believe in war and we do not believe in militarism. That is an unbelievable lie. I am just as much opposed to the German Government as I am to the American Government—and why do I not believe in militarism? I will tell you why. When I was eight years of age my father had a government position, and every year compulsory military registration was required. The highest officials of Russia would come to our place, the heads, the representatives of militarism, and would there compel the youth of our land, the peasant boys to become soldiers. And at that time the mothers and the fathers of the whole community turned out in mourning and considered it a day of sorrow and of tears and of pain when their sons were taken away into the Army. It impressed itself with indelible power upon my mind and upon my conscience. Ten years later, when I came to America, I was told that this was the land of the free, that no man is compelled to be a soldier in America. I actually believed that this was the promised land, the land that rests upon freedom, upon opportunity, upon happiness, upon recognition of the importance and the value of the young generation. But since that day twenty seven years almost have passed, and I have come to the conclusion that when the law for conscription was passed in the United States the Funeral March of 500,000 American youths is going to be celebrated tomorrow, on Registration Day. I am opposed to Militarism because I have seen since my early childhood what it means to sacrifice a young man, who has hope and youth and a life of opportunity before him, on the altar of militarism. I, therefore, promised myself, even as a child, that as long as I lived, and as long as my voice carried, I shall cry out against compulsory militarism, against conscription. My friends, we are told that the people want war. If the people of America want war, if the people of New York City want conscription, how does it happen that this city is going to muster up not only the entire police department, but the National Guard and

a body of parasites known as the Home Guards, who have nothing else to do? Now, my friends, I ask you why do you have to muster up your police, soldiers, Home Guards and National Guard to celebrate your Registration Day? If the people want war, why so much police, why so many soldiers to compel them to become soldiers? If the people want war, why not give them a chance to say that they do? If you want to sacrifice their sons upon the altar of militarism, why not give the people a chance to decide? Those in power knew that they could not put the people to a test: they were afraid to put the American people to a test, and that is why they imposed war upon them, and barely six weeks later imposed conscription upon them. Therefore, I as an Anarchist who became an American out of choice protest. You patriots, you born Americans, you became Americans because you had to. You were dropped on this earth. I had my choice whatever, but I came to America out of free will, and I, as an American out of choice, say that if you force people into militarism, if you force our young men into the Army, please have the decency to say that you will Prussianize America in order to democratize Germany. (Tremendous applause.) You must realize that you will be making a laughing stock out of yourselves. Nobody believes you. Don't you suppose that the fact that you are breaking up meetings and causing disturbances and locking up boys and girls and disturbing and harming people, don't you suppose those things are known abroad? How much the Russian peasants and the workingmen must enjoy themselves when they hear of this wonderful democracy in the United States.

I understand, friends, that a meeting of Russian soldiers was stopped in this city tonight. I am glad of it. The Russian soldiers will go back to the Council of Workmen and Soldiers and they will tell them that when America says she is fighting for democracy she is telling the world a lie. She is not fighting for democracy. I say that those who sit in a glass house have no right to throw stones about them. Now, friends, I am here frankly and openly telling you that I will continue to work against Conscription. We are told that you have stenographers here to take down what we say, this is not the first time we are having stenographers at our meeting. And I have always said things that everybody can hear, and what is more important, I want the police and the soldiers to hear what I have to say. It will do them good. They need education. Now, friends, if I do not tell you tonight not to register, it is not because I am afraid of the soldiers, or because I am afraid of the police. I have only one life to give, and if my life is to be given for an ideal, for the liberation of the people, soldiers, help yourselves. My friends, the only reason that prevents me telling you men of conscriptable age not to register is because I am an Anarchist, and I do not believe in force morally or otherwise to induce you to do anything that is against your conscience, and that is why I tell you to use your own judgment and rely upon your own conscience. It is the best guide in all the world. If that is a crime, if that is treason, I am willing to be shot. It is a wonderful death to die for your ideal, but I impress it upon the minds of the patriots present, I impress it upon the minds of the police present, upon the minds of the soldiers present, that for every idealist they kill thousands will rise and they will not cease to rise until the same thing happens in America that has happened in Russia. Don't you know, friends, that there was a time when Russian soldiers locked up every idealist and sent them to Siberia and to underground prisons and suppressed free speech and assembly

and tortured them to death. Yet today the whole civilized world, including the United States Government, is trembling in its boots before The Council of Workmen and Soldiers who are standing for liberty. And, friends, young men, soldiers, I am not afraid. I am not afraid for all you can do is to take my life—you can never take my ideals. Neither the police nor the soldiers, nor the United States Government nor all the powers on earth will take my ideals. My ideals will live long after I am dead.

Now, friends, I come to something else far remote from what I have to say tonight, and which is unfortunately always my luck. The newspapers were good enough to say that all of our meetings are paid for by the German Kaiser. Of course, they know better. They know that if the German Kaiser paid for this meeting, we could have the largest hall in town and invite the police. They know perfectly well that we are not paid by the German Kaiser. No, friends, you workingmen and working women, who are here tonight, you have to pay for tonight's meeting, not the German Kaiser. I am going to appeal to you,—because this meeting has to be paid for by your money, and in the second place, to demonstrate to the gentlemen of the press, present here tonight, to the soldiers and to the police, and to the detectives, that the money which you are going to give is hard earned American pennies, the amount of money your masters are good enough to give you in return for the amount of wealth which you are producing every day. And so, friends, I appeal to you tonight to give liberally, to give as much as you can, when the collectors go through to pay the expense of the meeting. We are very fortunate that we don't have to pay for our protection. We get that perfectly free. We are very grateful that the soldiers are present tonight. It is the only time in our life and their lives that they have heard the truth, and I am glad they are here, and so friends, when the collectors pass, please give as generously and as liberally as you can, and give only if you are opposed to war, and if you are opposed to militarism and conscription. I shall then have a word or two to say after the collection is over.

Meanwhile I call the attention of you soldiers to the fact that if you wish to demonstrate that you believe in American Institutions you will behave yourselves like gentlemen, not like ruffians. (There was considerable confusion throughout the hall and up in the gallery.) Now, after the collection, I shall have a few closing remarks to make, and I am going to stand here until you are through with the collection. (Some one asked for three cheers for Emma Goldman, and the response was tremendous. Cheers and applause, mingled with boos and also some cheers for Alexander Berkman.) Friends, don't please make a mistake. Don't shout hurrah for Emma Goldman or Alexander Berkman, because they are mere incidents in the history of the world. It is better to shout hurrah for the principles of liberty. That is better than one Alexander Berkman or one Emma Goldman, or one hundred thousand Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldmans. They will go, but the principle of freedom, the principle of self possession, the principle of self emancipation, the principle of social revolution will live.

Friends, the collectors can go on quietly and continue their work. (There was great confusion throughout the hall at the time and Miss Goldman quieted the audience. Every one became quiet again.) Don't forget friends, that the opposition to conscription only begins, it does not end tonight. Do not forget, also, that the work for Peace, for International Peace only begins. I know, friends,

who are here tonight, that you will be glad to learn from the note just sent up that fully twenty thousand people are outside of the hall. Dear Friends, I congratulate the press of New York. The press of New York. The newspapers of New York have rendered our Anti Conscription work more service than a thousand Emma Goldmans could render. Of course, the press did not desire to have twenty thousand people at such a meeting. What the press wanted was merely to paralyze you into silence, to make you believe that you are going to be imprisoned for this and be shot on the spot. It is too bad that America cannot hang you and quarter you and shoot you all at once, for the press would be in favor of that. These blood curdling articles that appear are only for the purpose of paralyzing you. They don't know, the poor chaps, that if anyone has an idea you can't terrorize him no matter what you do. So I am personally grateful to you—to the press. I am grateful to the police for having sent out so numerous an army, grateful to the young soldiers who really mean no harm. They are innocent boys. They have never yet faced danger. They think it is going to be a picnic; they think they are going to enjoy themselves, poor young gentlemen. I wish you could go to war and have a picnic. I wish you could enjoy yourselves, and I wish you could carry on your war as if it were a frolic, or as if it were a baseball or football game, but you are mistaken, as war means an entirely different thing. We know that war means the annihilation of every fundamental principle of liberty. We know that centralized militarism means nothing else but the carnal brutality of men, blood-shed and conquest, in its most abominable aspect. We tonight of the Anti Conscription League raise our voices to the very sky to tell you that you may fight your battles, if you believe in the trenches, but you are representing a losing cause. You represent the past and we represent the future. The Conscription Law has been the means of awakening the people of America. Before the Conscription Law was passed the American people used to think, why, we have freedom, we can do whatever we please, we can go to war if we want to and stay away if we don't want to. My friends, we are grateful to the Government for having passed the Conscription Bill for it will teach the American people that American Liberty has been buried and is dead and is a corpse, and that only our voice is going to raise it up and revive it again, until the American people and all the people living in America will unite in one great mass and will throw out capitalism and Government by militarism.

It was our intention to have a number of other speakers here tonight. They are all here. I don't want you to think for a moment that anyone backed out, but we are not going to give the satisfaction to the patriots to break up this meeting. Therefore, friends, I want you to close this meeting with the singing of the International and to go out quietly. Your friends on the outside are waiting, and you will all raise one mighty voice that is going to drown militarism and government and capitalism. (At the close of the meeting an old lady was helped to the platform by some one on the platform and distributed some papers, taken from an envelope. The pamphlets were afterward taken up by the soldiers and the old lady was arrested.)

MEETING CLOSED.

# **PART THREE**

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## **1919–1922**

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**In and About Russia:**

*The Bolshevik Myth,*

*The Kronstadt Rebellion,*

*The Russian Tragedy*

**and a Letter from Exile**

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**Section 1:**  
**The Bolshevik Myth**

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*In her autobiography Emma wrote of her deportation, with Alec, from the United States. "It was 4:20 am on the day of our lord, December 21, 1919. . . . I felt dizzy, visioning a transport of politicals doomed to Siberia, the etape of former Russian days. Russia of the past rose before me and I saw the revolutionary martyrs being driven into exile. But no, it was New York, it was America, the land of liberty!" Still, neither Emma nor Alec were despairing. On the contrary they were excited, enthusiastic about returning to their native land, the land of revolution. "My heart trembled with anticipation and fervent hope," wrote Emma, "Soviet Russia! Sacred Ground, magic people! You have come to symbolize humanity's hope." Berkman, for his part, wrote in his diary, "To think that it was given to Russia, enslaved and tyrannized over for centuries, to usher in the New Day! . . . Unreservedly shall the remaining years of my life be consecrated to the service of the wonderful Russian people." In The Blast he wrote, "I have no fear of the Russian Revolution failing. Its success is assured."*

*But Russia was not what they expected. And though both Berkman and Goldman worked enthusiastically, at the beginning, to create a society controlled by the people, they both discovered, all too soon, that Lenin and Trotsky's plans for the country had little to do with anarchism, democracy, socialism or communism. Party officials lived in luxury while the poor starved under a complicated and multi-layered system of food rationing; freedom of speech and press was largely denied, and many who actively opposed Bolshevik policies were imprisoned and shot. Berkman and Goldman did everything they could to dissuade their "comrades" in Russia from pursuing policies of terror. They met with Lenin and tried to meet with Trotsky to convince them that they were steering the country toward disaster. Their efforts were fruitless. Finally, when the Kronstadt sailors, outside Petrograd, were bombarded into submission for demanding that the original ideals of the revolution be fulfilled, Alec and Emma decided to leave Russia. In his diary Berkman wrote, "Days of anguish and cannonading. My heart is numb with despair: something has died within me. The people on the street look bowed with grief, bewildered. No one trusts himself to speak. The thunder of heavy guns rends the air."*

*Berkman's diary, started by him during his deportation and ending on September 30, 1921, the day he decided to leave Russia, was published as The Bolshevik Myth in 1925.*

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# CHAPTER 1

## THE LOG OF THE TRANSPORT "BUFORD"

### ON BOARD THE U.S.T. "BUFORD."

*December 23, 1919.*—We are somewhere near the Azores, already three days at sea. No one seems to know whither we are bound. The captain claims he is sailing under sealed orders. The men are nearly crazy with the uncertainty and worry over the women and children left behind. What if we are to be landed on Denikin\* territory. . . .

\* \* \*

We were kidnapped, literally kidnapped out of bed in the dead of night.

It was late in the evening, December 20, when the prison keepers entered our cell at Ellis Island and ordered us to "get ready at once." I was just undressing; the others were in their bunks, asleep. We were taken completely by surprise. Some of us expected to be deported, but we had been promised several days' notice; while a number were to be released on ball, their cases not having been finally passed upon by the courts.

We were led into a large, bare room in the upper part of the building. Helter-skelter the men crowded in, dragging their things with them, badly packed in the haste and confusion. At four in the morning the order was given to start. In silence we filed into the prison yard, led by the guards and flanked on each side by city and Federal detectives. It was dark and cold; the night air chilled me to the bone. Scattered lights in the distance hinted of the huge city asleep.

Like shadows we passed through the yard toward the ferry, stumbling on the uneven ground. We did not speak; the prison keepers also were quiet. But the detectives laughed boisterously, and swore and sneered at the silent line. "Don't like this country, damn you! Now you'll get out, ye sons of b——."

At last we reached the steamer. I caught sight of three women, our fellow prisoners, being taken aboard. Stealthily, her sirens dumb, the vessel got under way. Within half an hour we boarded the *Buford*, awaiting us in the Bay.

At 6 A. M., Sunday, December 21, we started on our journey. Slowly the big city receded, wrapped in a milky veil. The tall skyscrapers, their outlines dimmed, looked like fairy castles lit by winking stars—and then all was swallowed in the distance.

\* \* \*

*December 24.*—The *Buford* is an old boat built in 1885. She was used as a military transport during the Philippine War, and is not seaworthy any more. We ship sea constantly, and it pours through the hatches. Two inches of water cover the floor; our things are wet, and there is no steam heat.

Our three women companions occupy a separate cabin. The men are cooped up in crowded, ill-smelling steerage quarters. We sleep in bunks built three tiers high. The loose wire netting of the one above me bulges so low with the weight of its occupant, it scratches my face whenever the man moves.

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\*General of the White Army of Russia, which fought the Bolsheviks during the civil war after the revolution [GLF].

We are prisoners. Armed sentinels on deck, in the gangways, and at every door. They are silent and sullen; strict orders not to talk to us. Yesterday I offered one of them an orange—I thought he looked sick. But he refused it.

We caught a radio today about wholesale arrests of the radicals through the United States. Probably in connection with protests against our deportation.

There is much resentment among our men at the brutality that accompanied the deportation, and at the suddenness of the proceedings. They were given no time to get their money or clothing. Some of the boys were arrested at their work-benches, placed in jail, and deported without a chance to collect their pay checks. I am sure that the American people, if informed, would not stand for another boat-load of deportees being set adrift in the Atlantic without enough clothes to keep them warm. I have faith in the American people, but American officialdom is ruthlessly bureaucratic.

Love of native soil, of home, is manifesting itself. I notice it especially among those who spent only a few years in America. More frequently the men of Southern Russia speak the Ukrainian language. All long to get to Russia quickly, to behold the land they had left in the clutches of Tsarism and which is now the freest on earth.

We have organized a committee to take a census. There are 246 of us, besides the three women. Various types and nationalities: Great Russians from New York and Baltimore; Ukrainian miners from Virginia; Letts, Lithuanians, and one Tartar. The majority are members of the Union of Russian Workers, an Anarchist organization with branches throughout the United States and Canada. About eleven belong to the Socialist Party in the United States, while some are non-partisan. There are editors, lecturers, and manual workers of every kind among us. Some are bewhiskered, looking typically Russian; others smooth-shaven, American in appearance. Most of the men are of decided Slavic countenance, with broad face and high cheek bones.

“We’ll work like devils for the Revolution,” Big Samuel, the West Virginia miner, announces to the group gathered around him. He talks Russian.

“You bet we will,” comes from a corner bunk in English. It’s the mascot of our cabin, a red-cheeked youth, a six-footer, whom we have christened the “Baby.”

“Me for Baku,” an older man joins in. “I’m an oil driller. They’ll need *me* all right.”

I ponder over Russia, a country in revolution, a social revolution which has uprooted the very foundations, political, economical, ethical. There are the Allied invasion, the blockade, and internal counter-revolution. All forces must be bent, first of all, to secure the complete victory of the workers. Bourgeois resistance within must be crushed; interference from without defeated. Everything else will come later. To think that it was given to Russia, enslaved and tyrannized over for centuries, to usher in the New Day! It is almost beyond belief, past comprehension. Yesterday the most backward country; today in the vanguard. Nothing short of a miracle.

Unreservedly shall the remaining years of my life be consecrated to the service of the wonderful Russian people.

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*On January 17 Berkman and the other Buford deportees arrived in Finland. From there they traveled, by train, to Russia, arriving there on January 20. They were met by large welcoming committees and were repeatedly asked, "Are American workers starving?" "Is the revolution about to break out [in America]?" An anarchist on the Buford with Berkman warned that anarchists will not permit the Bolsheviks to suppress them in Russia, but Berkman objected: "Socialist or Anarchist . . . we are all revolutionists now." A few days later an enthusiastic Berkman was in Petrograd.*

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### CHAPTER 3 IN PETROGRAD

*January 21, 1920.*—The bright winter sun shines upon the broad white bosom of the Neva. Stately buildings on either side of the river, with the Admiralty rearing its slender peak on high, foppishly graceful. Majestic edifices as far as the eye can reach, the Winter Palace towering in their midst in cold tranquility. The brass rider on the trembling steed is poised on the rough Finnish rock,\* about to leap over the tall spire of the Petropavlovskaya guarding the city of his dream.

Familiar sight of my youth passed in the Tsar's capital. But gone are the gilded glory of the past, the royal splendor, the gay banquets of nobles, and the iron columns of the slavish military marching to the thunder of drums. The hand of Revolution has turned the city of luxurious idleness into the home of labor. The spirit of revolt has changed even the names of the streets. The Nevsky, immortalized by Gogol, Pushkin, and Dostoyevsky, has become the Prospect of October 25th; the square in front of the Winter Palace is now named in honor of Uritsky; the Kamenovstrovsky is called the Red Dawn. At the Duma the heroic bust of Lassale faces the passers-by as the symbol of the New Day; on the Kono-gardeisky Boulevard stands the statue of Volodarsky, arm outstretched, addressing the people.

Almost every street reminds me of the past struggles. There, in front of the Winter Palace, stood the priest Gapon in the midst of the thousands that had come to beg the "Little Father" for mercy and bread. The square ran crimson with the blood of the workers on that fateful January day in 1905. Out of their graves, a year later, rose the first Revolution, and again the cries of the oppressed were drowned by the crack of artillery. A reign of terror followed, and many perished on the scaffold and in the prisons. But again and again rose the specter of revolt, and at last Tsarism gave way, powerless to defend itself, forsaken by all, regretted by none. Then came the great October Revolution and the triumph of the people—and Petrograd ever in the first line of battle.

The city looks deserted. Its population, nearly 3,000,000 in 1917, is now reduced to 500,000. War and pestilence have almost decimated Petrograd. In the fights against Kaledin, Denikin, Koltchak, and other White forces, the workers of the Red City lost heavily. Its best proletarian element died for the Revolution.

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\*Statue of Peter the Great.

The streets are empty; the people are in the factories, at work. On the corner the young woman *militционер*, rifle in hand, walks to and fro, stamping with her booted feet on the ground to keep warm. Now and then a solitary figure passes, all wrapped up and bent, dragging a heavy load on a sleigh.

The stores are closed, their shutters on. The signs still hang in their accustomed places—painted fruit and vegetables advertising the wares no more to be found within. Doors and windows are locked and barred, and everything is silent about.

The famous Apraksin Dvor is no more. All the wealth of the country, bought or stolen, used to be paraded there to tempt the passer-by. High-born *barinya* and chambermaid, good-natured blond peasant and sullen Tartar, absent-minded student and crafty thief, mingled here in the free democracy of the market place. All things were to be had in the Dvor; human bodies were bought and sold, and souls bartered for money.

It is all changed now. At the entrance of the Labor Temple flames the legend: “Who does not work shall not eat.”

In the public *stolovaya* (dining room) vegetable soup and *kasha* (gruel) are served. The diners bring with them their own bread, issued at the distributing points. The large room is unheated, and the people sit with their hats and coats on. They look cold and pale, pitifully emaciated. “If only the blockade were taken off,” my neighbor at the table says, “we might be saved.”

\* \* \*

Some parts of the city bear evidence of the recent Yudenitch campaign. Here and there are remnants of barricades, piles of sand bags, and artillery trained upon the railroad station. The story of that fight is still on everybody’s lips. “It was a superhuman effort,” little Vera enthusiastically related. “The enemy was five times our number and at our very gates—on Krasnaya Gorka—seven miles from the city. Men and women, even children, turned out to build barricades, carry munitions to the fighters, and prepare to defend our homes to the last hand-to-hand struggle.” Vera is only eighteen, fair and delicate as a lily, but she operated a machine gun.

“So sure were the Whites of their victory,” Vera continued, “they had already distributed the ministerial portfolios and appointed the military governor of Petrograd. Yudenitch officials with their staffs were secretly in the city, waiting only for the triumphant entry of their Chief. We were in desperate straits; it seemed that all was lost. Our soldiers, reduced in numbers and exhausted, were disheartened. It was just then that Bill Shatov\* rushed to the scene. He gathered the little army about him, and addressed them in the name of the Revolution. His powerful voice reached the furthest lines; his passionate eloquence lit the embers of revolutionary zeal, inspiring new strength and faith.”

“Forward, boys! For the Revolution!” Shatov thundered, and like desperate furies the workers threw themselves upon the Yudenitch army. The flower of the Petrograd proletariat perished in that struggle, but the Red City and the Revolution were saved.

With justified pride Shatov showed me the order of the Red Banner pinned on his breast. “For Krasnaya Gorka,” he said, with a happy smile.

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\* Comrade from the United States now also in Russia[GLF].

He has remained the jovial good fellow I knew him in America, made riper and more earnest by his experience in the Revolution. He has held many important positions, and has won a reputation as an efficient worker and successful organizer. He has not joined the Communist Party; on many vital points, he says, he disagrees with the Bolsheviks. He has remained an Anarchist, believing in the ultimate abolition of political government as the only sure road to individual liberty and general well-being.

“Just now we are passing through the difficult stage of violent social revolution,” Shatov said. “Several fronts are to be defended, and we need a strong, well-disciplined army. There are counter-revolutionary plots to be guarded against and the Tcheka must keep a watchful eye on the conspirators. Of course, the Bolsheviks have committed many errors; that’s because they are human. We live in the period of transition, of much confusion, constant danger, and anxiety. It is the hour of travail, and men are needed to help in the work of defense and reconstruction. We Anarchists should remain true to our ideals, but we should not criticize at this time. We must work and help to build.”

\* \* \*

The *Buford* deportees are quartered in the Smolny. By Zorin’s invitation I am staying at the Hotel Astoria, now known as the First House of the Soviet. Zorin, who was employed in America as a millman, is now Secretary of the Petrograd Section of the Communist Party, and the editor of the *Krasnaya Gazetta*, the official daily of the Soviet. He impresses me as a most devoted Communist and indefatigable worker. His wife, Liza, also an American emigrant, is the typical I.W.W. Though very feminine in figure, she is rough and ready of speech, and an enthusiastic Bolshevik.

Together we visited the Smolny. Formerly the exclusive home of high-born young ladies, it is now the busy seat of the Petrograd Government. The quarters of the Third International are also located here, and the sanctum of Zinoviev, its secretary, a large chamber sumptuously furnished and decorated with potted flowers and plants. On his desk I noticed a leather portfolio of huge size, the gift of his co-workers.

In the Smolny dining room I met a number of prominent Communists and Soviet officials. Some were in military uniform, others in corduroys and black student shirts belted at the waist, the tails on the outside. All looked pale, with sunken eyes and high cheek bones, the result of systematic undernourishment, overwork, and worry.

The dinner was much superior to the meals served in the public *stolovaya*. “Only the ‘responsible workers,’ Communists holding important positions, dine here,” Zorin remarked. There are several gradations of *pyock* (rations), he explained. Soldiers and sailors receive one and a half pounds of bread per day; also sugar, salt, tobacco, and meat when possible. The factory workers get one pound, while the non-producers—most of them intelligentsia—receive half a pound and even less. There is no discrimination about this system, Zorin believes; it is just division, according to the value of one’s work.

I remember Vera’s remark. “Russia is very poor,” she said; “but whatever there is, all should share alike. That would be justice, and no one could complain.”

\* \* \*

In the evening I attended the anniversary celebration of Alexander Herzen. For the first time I found myself within the walls of the Tsar's Palace, whose very mention had filled me with awe in my childhood. Never had I dreamed then that the forbidden name of Herzen, the feared Nihilist and enemy of the Romanovs, would some day be glorified there.

Red flags and bunting decorated the platform. With interest I read the inscriptions:

“Socialism is the religion of Man;  
A religion not of heaven but of the earth.”

“The reign of the workers and peasants forever.”

A large crimson banner represented a bell (*Kolokol*), the name of the famous paper published by Herzen in exile. On its side was stamped: “1870–1920,” and beneath, the words:

“Not in vain have you died;  
What you have sown will grow.”

After the meeting the audience marched to the home of Herzen, still preserved on the Nevsky. The demonstration through the dark streets, lit only by the torches of the participants, the strains of revolutionary music and song, the enthusiasm of the men and women indifferent to the bitter cold—all impressed me deeply. The moving silhouettes seemed the shades of the past come to life, the martyrs of Tsardom risen to avenge the injustice of the ages.

How true is the Herzen motto:

“Not in vain have you died;  
What you have sown will grow.”

\* \* \*

The assembly hall of the Tauride Palace was filled with Soviet deputies and invited guests. A special session had been called to consider the difficult situation created by the severe winter, and the growing scarcity of food and fuel.

Row above row stretched before me, occupied by men and women in grimy working clothes, their faces pale, their bodies emaciated. Here and there were men in peasant garb. They sat quietly, conversing little, as if exhausted by the day's toil.

The military band struck up the International, and the audience rose to their feet. Then Zinoviev ascended the platform. The winter had caused much suffering, he said; heavy snowfall impedes railroad traffic, and Petrograd is almost isolated. A further reduction of the *pyock* (ration) has unfortunately become necessary. He expressed confidence that the workers of Petrograd—the most revolutionary, the advance-guard of Communism—would understand that the Government is compelled to take this step, and would approve its action.

The measure is temporary, Zinoviev continued. The Revolution is achieving success on all fronts—the glorious Red Army is winning great victories, the White forces will soon be entirely defeated, the country will get on its feet economically, and the workers will reap the fruit of their long martyrdom. The imperialists and capitalists of the whole world are against Russia, but the proletariat everywhere is with the Revolution. Soon the Social Revolution will break out in Europe and America—it cannot be far off now, for capitalism is crumbling to earth everywhere. Then there will be an end to war and fratricidal bloodshed, and Russia will receive help from the workers of other countries.

Radek, recently returned from Germany where he was a prisoner, followed Zinoviev. He gave an interesting account of his experience, lashing the German “social patriots” with biting sarcasm. A pseudo Socialist Party, he said, now in power, but too cowardly to introduce Socialism; traitors to the Revolution they are, those Scheidemanns, Bernsteins, et al., bourgeois reformists, agents of Allied militarism and international capital. The only hope is in the Communist Party of Germany which is growing by leaps and bounds, and is supported by the proletariat of Germany. Soon that country will be swept by revolution—not a make-believe Social Democratic one, but a Communist revolution, such as that of Russia, and then the workers of Germany will come to the aid of their brothers in Russia, and the world will learn what the revolutionary proletariat can accomplish.

Joffe was the next speaker. Of aristocratic appearance, well dressed, his beard neatly trimmed, he seemed strangely out of place in the assembly of ill-clad workers. As Chairman of the Peace Committee he reported on the conditions of the treaty just concluded with Latvia, receiving the applause of the assembly. The people are evidently eager for peace, whatever the conditions.

I had hoped to hear the deputies speak, and to learn the views and sentiments of the masses they represent. But the members of the Soviet took no active part in the proceedings. They listened quietly to the speakers, and voted mechanically on the resolutions presented by the Presidium. There was no discussion; the proceedings lacked vitality.

\* \* \*

Some friction has developed among the *Buford* deportees. The Anarchists complain of discrimination in favor of the Communist members of the group, and I have been repeatedly called to the Smolny to smooth out difficulties.

The boys chafe at the delay in assigning them to work. I have prepared the *anquettes* of the group, classifying the deportees according to trade and ability, to aid in placing them to best advantage. But two weeks have passed, and the men are still haunting the Soviet departments, standing in line by the hour, seeking to be supplied with the necessary *propuski* and documents admitting them to work.

I have pointed out to Zorin what a valuable asset these deportees are to Russia; there are mechanics, miners, printers among them, needed in the present scarcity of skilled labor. Why waste their time and energy? I cited the matter of exchanging American currency. Most of the deportees brought some money with them. Their *pyock* is insufficient, but certain necessaries can be bought: bread,

butter, and tobacco, even meat, are offered on the markets. At least a hundred of our boys have exchanged their American cash for Soviet money. Considering that each one had to find out for himself where the exchange could be made, often being directed wrongly, and the time each had to spend in the Soviet financial departments, it can be safely assumed that on the average each man required three hours for the transaction. If the deportees had a responsible committee, the whole matter could have been managed in less than a day. "Such a committee could attend to all their affairs, and save time," I urged.

Zorin agreed with me. "It ought to be tried," he said.

I proposed to go over to the Smolny, call the men together, explain my proposition to them, and have the committee elected. "It would be well to assign a little room as the Committee's office, with a telephone to transact business," I suggested.

"You are very American," Zorin smiled. "You want it done on the spot. But that isn't the way," he added dryly. "I'll submit your plan to the proper authorities, and then we'll see."

"At any rate," I said, "I hope it can be done soon. And you may always call on me, for I am anxious to help."

"By the way," Zorin remarked, looking at me quizzically, "trading is forbidden. Buying and selling is speculation. Your people should not do such things." He spoke severely.

"You cannot call buying a pound of bread speculation," I replied. "Besides, the difference in the *pyock* encourages trade. The Government still issues money—it is legally in circulation."

"Y-e-s," Zorin said, displeased. "But better tell your friends not to speculate any more. Only *shkumiki*, self-seeking skimmers, do that."

"You are unjust, Zorin. The *Buford* men have donated the greater part of their money, the provisions and medicines they brought, to the children of Petrograd. They have been deprived themselves of necessities, and the little cash they have kept the Government itself has turned into Soviet money for them."

"Better warn the men," Zorin repeated.

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*Berkman traveled to Moscow where he spoke with government officials who were convinced that the Communist Party in the United States was very influential. Alec told them this was not true, but they didn't believe him. Berkman commented on the widespread hunger that he had already seen. He was told that all the problems stem from the Allies' blockade against Russia and that the peasants were poor because they often "refused to contribute." He was also told that sometimes executions are resorted to when Bolshevik rules are defied: "We abolished capital punishment, but in certain cases exceptions have to be made. One mustn't be sentimental." Scarcely in Russia a few days, Berkman was already worried about the true course of the Revolution. In the following two chapters Berkman wrote about his experience at a market in Moscow and the rationing of food.*

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## CHAPTER 7

### THE MARKET

I like the feel of the hard snow singing under my feet. The streets are alive with people—a striking contrast to Petrograd, which gave me the impression of a graveyard. The narrow sidewalks are crooked and slippery, and everybody walks in the middle of the street. Rarely does a street-car pass, though an auto creaks by occasionally. The people are better dressed than in Petrograd and do not look so pale and exhausted. More soldiers are about and persons clad in leather. Tcheka men, I am told. Almost everybody carries a bundle on his back or pulls a little sleigh loaded with a bag of potatoes dripping a blackish fluid. They walk with a preoccupied air and roughly push their way ahead.

Turning the corner into the Miasnitskaya Street, I noticed a large yellow poster on the wall. My eye caught the word *Prikaz* in big red letters. *Prikaz*—order—instinctively the expression associated itself in my mind with the old régime. The poster was couched in the familiar style, “I command,” “I order,” repeating themselves with the frequency usual in the old police proclamations. “I command the citizens of Moscow,” I read. Citizens? I sought the date. It was marked January 15, 1920, and was signed by the Commissar of Militia. The *Prikaz* vividly recalled the gendarmes and the Cossack order of things, and I resented it. The Revolution should find another language, I thought.

I passed the Red Square where the heroes of the Revolution are buried along the Kremlin wall. Thousands of others, as devoted and heroic, lie in unknown graves throughout the country and on the fronts. A new world is not born without pain. Much hunger and misery Russia is suffering still, the heritage of the past which the Revolution has come to abolish forever.

On the wall of the old Duma, near the Iverskaya Gate, I read the legend cut into the stone: “Religion is opium for the people.” But in the chapel nearby services were being held and the place was crowded. The cassocked priest, long hair down his back, was musically reciting the Greek-Catholic litany. The worshipers, mostly women, knelt on the cold floor, continuously crossing themselves. Several men, shabbily dressed and carrying portfolios, came in quietly, bowed low and crossed themselves reverently.

A little further I came upon a market place, the historic Okhotny Ryad, opposite the Hotel National. Rows of little stalls on one side, the more pretentious stores on the other, the sidewalk between them—it has all remained as in the time past. Fish and butter were offered, bread and eggs, meat, candy, and cosmetics—a living page from the life the Revolution has abolished. An old lady with finely chiseled features, in a thread-bare coat, stood quietly holding a Japanese vase. Near her was another woman, younger and intellectual looking, with a basket containing crystal wine glasses of rare workmanship. On the corner little boys and girls were selling cigarettes and *lepyoshki*, a kind of potato pancake, and further I saw a crowd surrounding an old woman busily dishing out *tshtchi* (cabbage soup).

“A fiver, a fiver!” she cried in a hoarse, cracked voice. “Delicious *tshtchi*, only five kopeks!”

The steaming pot breathed an appetizing odor. “Give me a plate,” I said, handing the woman a rouble.

“God be with you, little uncle,” she eyed me suspiciously, “a fiver it costs, five kopeks.”

“Here’s a whole rouble,” I replied.

The crowd laughed good-humoredly. "She means five roubles," someone explained, "a rouble is only a kopeck."

"It ain't worth that, either," a little urchin chimed in.

The hot liquid sent a pleasing warmth through my body, but the taste of *voblia* (fish) was insufferable. I made a motion to return the dish.

"Please permit me," a man at my elbow addressed me. He was of middle age, evidently of the intelligentsia, and spoke in accents of the cultured Russian. His shiny dark eyes lit up features of a sickly pallor. "Your permission," he repeated, indicating the dish.

I handed him the plate. Avidly, like a starved man, he swallowed the hot *tshtchi*, gleaning the last shred of cabbage. Then he thanked me profusely.

I noticed a thick volume under his arm. "Bought it here?" I asked.

"Ah, no, how is it possible! I have been trying to sell it since morning. I'm a civil engineer, and this is one of my last," he patted the book affectionately. "But excuse me, I must hurry to the store before it is too late. They haven't given any bread out for two days. Extremely obliged to you."

I felt a tug at my elbow. "Buy some cigarettes, little uncle,"—a young girl, extremely emaciated, held her hand out to me. Her fingers, stiff with cold, were insecurely clutching the cigarettes lying loose in her palm. She was without hat or coat, an old shawl wrapped tightly about her slender form.

"Buy, *barin*," she pleaded in a thin voice.

"What *barin*," a girl nearby resented. "No more *barin* (master), we're all *tovarishtchi* now. Don't you know," she gently chided.

She was comely, not over seventeen, her red lips strongly contrasting with the paleness of her face. Her voice was soft and musical, her speech pleasing.

For a moment her eyes were full upon me, then she motioned me aside.

"Buy me a little white bread," she said modestly, yet not in the least shamefaced; "for my sick mother."

"You don't work?" I asked.

"Don't work!" she exclaimed, with a touch of resentment. "I'm typing in the *sovmarkhoz*, but we get only one-half pound of bread now, and little of anything else."

"*Oblava!* (raid) *militsioneri!*" There were loud cries and shouts, and I heard the clanking of sabres. The market was surrounded by armed men.

The people were terror-stricken. Some sought to escape, but the military circle was complete; no one was permitted to leave without showing his papers. The soldiers were gruff and imperious, swearing coarse oaths and treating the crowd with roughness.

A *militsioner* had kicked over the *tshtchi* pot, and was dragging the old woman by the arm. "Let me get my pot, little father, my pot," she pleaded.

"We'll show you pots, you cursed speculator," the man threatened, pulling her along.

"Don't maltreat the woman," I protested.

"Who are you? How dare you interfere!" a man in a leather cap shouted at me. "Your papers!"

I produced my identification document. The Tchekist glanced at it, and his eye quickly caught the stamp of the Foreign Office and Tchicherin's signature. His manner changed. "Pardon me," he said. "Pass the foreign *tovarishtch*," he ordered the soldiers.

On the street the *militsioneri* were leading off their prisoners. Front and rear marched the soldiers with bayoneted rifles held horizontally, ready for action. On either flank were Tcheka men, their revolvers pointed at the backs of the prisoners. I caught sight of the tshtchi woman and the tall engineer, the thick volume still under his arm; I saw the aristocratic old lady in the rear, the two girls I had spoken to, and several boys, some of them barefoot.

I turned toward the market. Broken china and torn lace littered the ground; cigarettes and *lepyoshki* lay in the snow, stamped down by dirty boots, and dogs rapaciously fought for the bits of food. Children and women cowered in the doorways on the opposite side, their eyes following the soldiers left on guard at the market. The booty taken from the traders was being piled on a cart by Tchekists.

I looked at the stores. They remained open; they had not been raided.

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In the evening I dined at the Hotel National with several Communist friends who had known me in America. I used the occasion to call their attention to the scene I had witnessed on the market place. Instead of being indignant, as I expected, they chided me for my "sentimentality." No mercy should be shown the speculators, they said. Trade must be rooted out: buying and selling cultivates petty middle-class psychology. It should be suppressed.

"Do you call those barefoot boys and old women—speculators?" I protested.

"The worst kind," replied R., formerly member of the Socialist Labor Party of America. "They live better than we do, eat white bread, and have money hidden away."

"And the stores? Why are they permitted to continue?" I asked.

"We closed most of them," put in K., Commissar of a Soviet House. "Soon there will not be any of them left open."

"Listen, Berkman," said D., an influential leader of the labor unions, in a leather coat, "you don't know those 'poor old men and women,' as you call them. By day they sell *lepyoshki*, but at night they deal in diamonds and valuta. Every time their homes are searched we find valuables and money. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about. I have had charge of such searching parties myself."

He looked severely at me, then continued: "I tell you, those people are inveterate speculators, and there is no way of stopping them. The best thing is to put them to the wall, *razstrelyat*—shoot them," he raised his voice in growing irritation.

"Not seriously?" I protested.

"No? Eh?" he shouted in a rage. "We're doing it every day."

"But capital punishment is abolished."

"It's rarely resorted to now," R. tried to smooth matters, "and that only in the military zone."

The labor Tchekist eyed me with cold, inimical gaze. "Defending speculation is counter-revolutionary," he said, leaving the table.

## CHAPTER 8

### IN THE MOSKKOMMUNE

The Commissar of our *ossobniak*, having to lay in provisions, invited me to accompany him to the *Moskkommune*. It is the great food supply center, a tremendous organization that feeds Moscow and its environs. Its trains have the right of way on all lines and carry food from parts as distant as Siberia and Turkestan. Not a pound of flour can be issued by any of the “stores”—the distributing points scattered throughout the city—without a written order signed and counter-signed by the various bureaus of the *Commune*. From this center each “distributor” receives the amount necessary to supply the demands of the given district, according to the norm allowed on the bread and other cards.

The *Moskkommune* is the most popular and active institution; it is a beehive swarming with thousands of employees, busy determining the different categories of *pyock* and issuing “authorizations.” Besides the bread rations, sugar, tea, etc., given to the citizen by the “store” of his district, he also receives his ration in the institution that employs him. The *pyock* differs according to the “quality” of the citizen and the position he occupies. At present soldiers and sailors receive 2½ lbs. of bread per day; Soviet employees 3 lbs. every two days; those not working—because of age, sickness or disability other than military—receive ¼ lb. There are special categories of “preferred” *pyock*; the academical for old scientists and professors whose merits are recognized by the State, and also for old revolutionists not actively opposed to the Communists. There are “preferred” *pyocks* in important institutions, such as the *Komintern* (the Third International), the *Narkominodel* (Foreign Office), *Narkomput* (Commissariat of Railways), *Sovnarkhoz* (Soviet of Public Economy), and others. Members of the Communist Party have the opportunity of receiving extra rations through their Communist organizations, and preference is given them in the departments issuing clothing. There is also a *Sovnarkom pyock*, the best to be had, for important Communist officials, Commissars, their first assistants, and other high-placed functionaries. The Soviet Houses, where foreign visitors and influential delegates are quartered, such as Karakhan’s *ossobniak* and the Hotel Lux, receive special food supplies. These include fats and starches (butter, cheese, meat, sugar, candy, etc.), of which the average citizen receives very little.

I discussed the matter with our House Commissar, who is a devoted Party man. “The essence of Communism is equality,” I said; “there should be only one kind of *pyock*, so that all will share equally.”

“The *Er-Kah-Peh* (Communist Party) decided the matter long ago, and it is right so,” he replied.

“But how can it be right?” I protested. “One person receives a generous *pyock*, more than enough to live on; another gets less than enough; a third almost nothing. You have endless categories.”

“Well,” he said, “the Red Army men at the front must get more than the city man; they do the hardest fighting. The soldier at home also must be encouraged, as well as the sailor; they are the backbone of the Revolution. Then the responsible officers deserve a little better food. Look how they work, sixteen hours a day and more, giving all their time and energy to the cause. The employees of such

important institutions as *Narkomput* and *Narkominodel* must be shown some preference. Besides, a great deal depends on how well a certain institution is organized. Many of the big ones procure most of their supplies directly from the peasantry, through special representatives and the cooperatives.”

“If anyone is to receive preference, I think it should be the workers,” I replied. “But they get almost the worst *pyock*.”

“What can we do, *tovarishtch!* If it were not for the cursed Allies and the blockade, we’d have food enough for all,” he said sadly. “But it won’t last long now. Did you read in the *Izvestia* that a revolution is to break out soon in Germany and Italy? The proletariat of Europe will then come to our aid.”

“I doubt it, but let’s hope so. In the meantime we can’t be sitting and waiting for revolutions to happen somewhere. We must exert our own efforts to put the country on its feet.”

The Commissar’s turn in line came, and he was called into an inner office. We had been waiting several hours in the corridors of the various bureaus. It seemed that almost every door had to be entered before a sufficient number of *resolutsyi* (endorsements) were secured, and the final “order” for supplies obtained. There was a continuous movement of applicants and clerks from office to office, everyone scolding and pushing toward the head of the line. The waiting men watched closely that no one got ahead of his proper place. Frequently someone would march straight to the office door and try to enter, ignoring the queue.

“Into the line, into the line!” the cry would be raised at once. “The sly one! Here we’ve been standing for hours, and he’s just come and wants to enter already.”

“I’m *vne otcheredi* (not to wait in line),” the man would answer disdainfully.

“Show your authorization!”

One after another came these men and women *vne otcheredi*, with slips of paper securing immediate admission, while “the tail” was steadily growing longer.

“I’m standing three hours already,” an old man complained; “in my bureau people are waiting for me on important business.”

“Learn patience, little father,” a workman replied good-humoredly. “Look at me, I’ve been in line all day yesterday since early morning, and all the time these *vne otcheredi* kept coming, and it was 2 P.M. when I got through the door. But the chief there, he looks at the clock and says to me, says he, ‘No more today; no orders issued after 2 P.M. Come tomorrow.’ ‘Have mercy, dear one,’ I plead. ‘I live seven versts away and I got up at five this morning to come here. Do me the favor, *golubtshik*, just a stroke of your pen and it’s done.’ ‘Go, go now,’ the cruel one says, ‘I haven’t time. Come tomorrow,’ and he pushed me out of the room.”

“True, true,” a woman back of him corroborated, “I was right behind you, and he wouldn’t let me in either, the hard-hearted one.”

The Commissar came out of the office. “Ready?” I asked.

“No, not yet,” he smiled wearily. “But you’d better go home, or you’ll lose your dinner.”

In the Kharitonensky Sergei was waiting for me.

“Berkman,” he said, as I entered, “will you let me share your room with you?”

“What do you mean?”

“I’ve been ordered to vacate. My time’s up, they say. But I have nowhere to go. I’ll look in the morning for another place, but meantime—?”

“You’ll stay with me.”

“But if the House Commissar should object?”

“Are you to be driven into the street in this frost? Remain on my responsibility.”

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*Berkman attended an anarchist conference where the increased persecution of anarchists was the main topic. One speaker said, “We fought side by side with the Bolsheviki on the barricades, thousands of our comrades died for the revolution. Now most of our people are in prison, and we ourselves in constant dread of the Tcheka.” Berkman also attended the first anniversary meeting of the third International and commented, “The audience was official and stiff. . . the proceedings mechanical.” He visited some schools, “clean and warm though I found very few children in them,” but later he was told that the schools he saw were only “for show.”*

*Berkman had wanted to meet Lenin since his arrival in Russia to speak with him about his mounting concerns regarding the course of the revolution. In the following chapter he wrote about his encounter with Lenin.*

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## CHAPTER 13

### LENIN

*March 9.*—Yesterday Lenin sent his auto for me, and I drove to the Kremlin. Times have changed, indeed: the old stronghold of the Romanovs is now the home of “Ilyitch,”\* of Trotsky, Lunatcharsky, and other prominent Communists. The place is guarded as in the days of the Tsar; armed soldiers at the gates, at every building and entrance, scrutinize those entering and carefully examine their “documents.” Externally everything seems as before, yet I felt something different in the atmosphere, something symbolic of the great change that has taken place. I sensed a new spirit in the bearing and looks of the people, a new will and huge energy tumultuously seeking an outlet, yet ineffectively exhausting themselves in a chaotic struggle against multiplying barriers.

Like the living sentinels about me, thoughts crowded my mind as the machine sped toward the quarters of the great man of Russia. In bold relief stood out my experiences in the country of the Revolution: I saw much that was wrong and evil, the dangerous tendency to bureaucracy, the inequality and injustice. But Russia—I am convinced—would outgrow these evils with the return of a more ordered life, if the Allies would cease their interference and lift the blockade. The important thing is, the Revolution has not been merely political, but deeply social and economical. Some private ownership still exists, it is true, but its extent is insignificant. As a system, Capitalism has been uprooted—that is the great achievement of the Revolution. But Russia must learn to work, to apply her energies, to be effective. She should not wait for miraculous aid from beyond, for revolutions in the West: with her own strength she must organize

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\*Popular patronymic of Lenin.

her resources, increase production, and satisfy the fundamental needs of her people. Above all, opportunity to exercise popular initiative and creativeness will be vitally stimulating.

Lenin greeted me warmly. He is below medium height and bald; his narrow blue eyes have a steady look, a sly twinkle in their corners. Typically the Great Russian in appearance, he speaks with a peculiar, almost Jewish, accent.

We talked in Russian, Lenin asserting that he could read but not speak English, though I had heard that he conversed with American delegates without an interpreter. I liked his face—it is open and honest, and there is not the least pose about him. His manner is free and confident; he gave me the impression of a man so convinced of the justice of his cause that doubt can find no place in his reactions. If there is any trace of Hamlet in him, it is reduced to passivity by logic and cold reasoning.

Lenin's strength is intellectual, that of the profound conviction of an unimaginative nature. Trotsky is different. I remember our first meeting in America: it was in New York, in the days of the Kerensky régime. He impressed me as a character strong by nature rather than by conviction, one who could remain unbending even if he felt himself in the wrong.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is vital, Lenin emphasized. It is the *sine qua non* of the revolutionary period, and must be furthered by all and every means. To my contention that popular initiative and active interest are essential to the success of the Revolution, he replied that only the Communist Party could lead Russia out of the chaos of conflicting tendencies and interests. Liberty, he said, is a luxury not to be permitted at the present stage of development. When the Revolution is out of danger, external and domestic, then free speech might be indulged in. The current conception of liberty is a bourgeois prejudice, to say the least. Petty middle-class ideology confuses revolution with liberty; in reality, the Revolution is a matter of securing the supremacy of the proletariat. Its enemies must be crushed, and all power centralized in the Communist State. In this process the Government is often compelled to resort to unpleasant means; but that is the imperative of the situation, from which there can be no shrinking. In the course of time these methods will be abolished, when they have become unnecessary.

"The peasant doesn't like us," Lenin chuckled, as if at some pleasantry. "They are backward and strongly imbued with the sense of private ownership. That spirit must be discouraged and eradicated. Besides, the great majority are illiterate, though we have been making educational progress in the village. They don't understand us. When we shall be able to satisfy their demands for farm implements, salt, nails, and other necessities, then they will be on our side. More work and greater production—that's our pressing need."

Referring to the Resolution of the Moscow Anarchists, Lenin said that the Executive Committee had discussed the matter, and would soon take action upon it. "We do not persecute Anarchists of ideas," he emphasized, "but we will not tolerate armed resistance or agitation of that character."

I suggested the organization of a bureau for the reception, classification, and distribution of political exiles expected from America, and Lenin approved my plan and welcomed my services in the work. Emma Goldman had proposed the founding of a League of Russian Friends of American Freedom to aid the

revolutionary movement in America, and thus repay the debt Russia owed to the American Friends of Russian Freedom, which in years past had given great moral and material support to the Russian revolutionary cause. Lenin said that such a society in Russia should work under the auspices of the Third International.

The total impression I carried away was that of a man of clarity of view and set purpose. Not necessarily a big man, but one of strong mind and unbending will. An unemotional logician, intellectually flexible and courageous enough to mold his methods to the requirements of the moment, but always keeping his final objective in clear sight. “A practical idealist” bent upon the realization of his Communist dream by whatever means, and subordinating to it every ethical and humanitarian consideration. A man sincerely convinced that evil methods may serve a good purpose and be justified by it. A Jesuit of the Revolution who would force mankind to become free in accordance with his interpretation of Marx. In short, a thoroughgoing revolutionist in the sense of Netchayev, one who would sacrifice the greater part of mankind—if need be—to secure the triumph of the Social Revolution.

A fanatic? Most certainly. What is a fanatic but a man whose faith is impregnable to doubt? It is the faith that moves mountains, the faith that accomplishes. Revolutions are not made by Hamlets. The traditional “great” man, the “big personality” of current conception, may give to the world new thoughts, noble vision, inspiration. But the man that “sees every side” cannot lead, cannot control. He is too conscious of the fallibility of all theories, even of thought itself, to be a fighter in any cause.

Lenin is a fighter—revolutionary leaders must be such. In this sense Lenin is great—in his oneness with himself, in his single-mindedness; in his psychic positiveness that is as self-sacrificial as it is ruthless to others, in the full assurance that only his plan can save mankind.

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*Berkman was asked to head a delegation traveling to the Latvian border to welcome an expected 1000 deportees from the United States who, it turns out, were not deportees at all but prisoners of war who spoke no English. While waiting for them, Berkman took an opportunity to speak with a Jewish peasant about life in the Communist state. Their conversation is included in the following segment from Chapter 14, “On The Latvian Border.”*

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## CHAPTER 14 ON THE LATVIAN BORDER

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The red-bearded Jew sat in silence, with gentle motion lulling one of the children to sleep in his lap. The young peasant complained of the *razsvyorstka*, which had taken everything from his village; his last horse was gone. Spring was at the door, and how should he plow or sow with no cattle in the whole place? His three brothers were drafted, and he remained alone, a widower, with two small children to feed. But for the kindness of his neighbor’s wife, the little ones would have

perished long ago. "There's much injustice in the world," he sighed, "and peasants are treated badly. What can they do? They have no control of the village Soviet: the *kombed* (Committee of Poverty organized by the Bolsheviks) carries on with a merciless hand, and the common *muzhik* is afraid to speak his mind, for he'd be reported by some Communist and dragged off to prison."

"Seeing you are not a Communist I can tell you how we suffer," he continued. "The peasants are worse off now than before; they live in constant dread lest a Communist come and take away their last loaf. Tchekists of the *Ossobiy Otdel* enter a house and order the women to put everything on the table, and then they ride away with it. They don't care if the children go hungry. Who would plant under such masters? But the peasant has learned something; he must bury in the ground what he wants to save from the robbers."

Several peasants entered. They looked at Moishe in silence, and he nodded reassuringly. From scraps of their conversation I learned that they supplied the Jew with products, he acting as middleman in the trade. One must be careful not to deal indiscriminately with strangers, Moishe remarked; some of those he saw in the market looked suspicious. But he would supply me with provisions, and he named prices much below those of the Moscow market: herrings, which cost 1,000 roubles in the capital, at 400; a pound of beans or peas at 120; flour, half wheat, at 250; eggs at 60 roubles apiece.

The peasants agreed with Moishe that "the times are worse than under the Tsar." The Communists are just robbers, and there is no justice to be had nowadays. They fear the Commissars more than the old *tchinovniki*. They resented my question whether they would prefer the monarchy. No, they do not want the *pomeshtchiki* (landlords) again, nor the Tsar, but they don't want the Bolsheviks, either.

"We were treated like cattle before," said a flaxen-haired peasant with blue eyes, "and it was in the name of the Little Father. Now they speak to us in the name of the Party and the proletariat, but we are treated like cattle, the same as before."

"Lenin is a good man," one of the peasants put in.

"We say nothing against him," another remarked, "but his Commissars, they are hard and cruel."

"God is high above and Ilytch (Lenin) far away," the blue-eyed peasant said, paraphrasing a popular old saying.

"But the Bolsheviks gave you the land," I remonstrated.

He slowly scratched his head and a sly smile came into his eyes. "No, *gol-ubtchik*," he replied, "the land we took ourselves. Isn't it so, little brothers?" he turned to the others.

"He speaks the truth," they assented.

"Will it go on like this much longer?" they asked, as I was departing. "Maybe something will change?"

Returning to the station I met the members of our train crew straggling up the hill, weighted down with sacks of provisions. The young student of our medical staff carried a squealing hog. "How happy little old mother will be," he said; "this porker will keep the family alive for a long time."

"If they hide it well enough," someone suggested.

A soldier drove by, and we asked for a ride to the station. Without answering

he passed on. Presently another cart overtook us. We repeated our request. "Why not?" the young peasant exclaimed cheerfully, "jump in, all of you." He was jolly and talkative, his "soul ajar," as the student characterized him, and his conversation was entertaining. He liked the Bolsheviks, he said, but he had no use for the Communists. The Bolsheviks were good men, friends of the people: they had demanded the land for the farmer and all the power for the Soviets. But the Communists are bad: they rob and flog the peasants; they have put their own kind into the Soviets, and a non-Communist has no say there. The *kombed* is full of idle good-for-nothings; they are the bosses of the village, and the peasant who refuses to bow down before them is "in hard luck." He had been on the Deniken front and there it was the same thing: the Communists and Commissars had everything their own way and lorded it over the drafted men. It was different when the soldiers could speak their minds and decide everything in their Company Committee: that was liberty and everyone felt himself a part of the Revolution. But now it is all changed. One is afraid to speak honestly—there's always a Communist about, and you are in danger of being denounced. That's why he deserted; yes, deserted twice. He had heard that everything had been taken from his folks on the farm, and he decided to come home to see if it was true. Well, it *was* true; worse than what he had been told. Even his youngest brother, just past sixteen, had been drafted into the Army. No one remained at home but his mother and father, too old to work their piece of land without help, and all the cattle were gone. The Commissars had left almost no horses in his village and only one cow to each family of five persons, and if a peasant had only two little children his last cow was taken away. He decided to stay and help his folks—it was spring, and planting had to be done. But he had a narrow escape. One day the whole village was surrounded by the Commissar and his men. He ran out of his hut and made for the woods. Bad luck, he was still in his soldier uniform, and they shot at him from all sides. He succeeded in reaching the nearest bushes, but he was exhausted and fell, rolling down the hill into a hollow. His pursuers must have thought him dead. Late in the night he stole back to the village, but he did not go to his people; a friendly neighbor hid him in his house. The next day he put on peasant clothes, and all spring and summer he helped his "old man" in the fields. Then he went back to the Army of his own accord: he wanted to serve the Revolution as long as the folks at home did not need him. But he was treated badly, food was scarce in his regiment, and he deserted again. "I would stay in the Army," he concluded, "but I can't see the old people starve to death."

"Are you not afraid to talk so freely?" I warned him.

"Oh, who cares!" he laughed. "Let 'em shoot me. Am I a dog to wear a muzzle on my snout?"

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*Despite the signs that the Russian Revolution was heading toward a future diametrically opposed to the ideals that inspired it, Berkman—on hearing of the "Red Scare" in the United States and the mass arrests of alleged Communists there—wrote "I feel that Russia is still the hearth of the Revolution." But his faith was continually battered by reality. On May Day there was a mass demonstration,*

*but it was completely apathetic, as was a huge march organized by the Petrograd Soviet of Labor Unions for which every factory was "ordered to send a contingent." When the British Labor Museum sent a delegation to Russia, Berkman noted that wherever they went the Tcheka was present and "not a bedraggled workman or filthy beggar was in sight." Bertrand Russell, who accompanied the British delegation, remarked, "I feel like a prisoner, every step watched." Meanwhile, 45 anarchists in prison began a hunger strike protesting prison conditions and the fact that they had not been charged with a crime despite their lengthy stay behind bars. Berkman was asked to help settle the strike, but it ended unsatisfactorily with only 10 of the anarchists released. Berkman was asked by the Bolshevik government to translate Lenin's essay "The Infantile Sickness of Leftism" for the British Museum delegation, but he refused to do so unless allowed to write a preface to it, since the essay was opposed to all the ideals Berkman held dear. From this point on he was given a cold shoulder by Bolshevik officialdom. He and Emma were asked to join the expedition of the Museum of the Revolution to collect historical material about the revolutionary movement, and they agreed to do so since they were not permitted to do more "political" work. The group traveled to the Ukraine. There Berkman saw fear, starvation, and chaos everywhere. Berkman wrote of the Ukrainians, "They dislike the Russians' and resent the domination of Moscow. Antagonism of the Bolsheviks is general, the hatred of the Tcheka universal." He heard stories of shootings and torture by Red and White factions and about the repression of intellectuals. In the following excerpt, from Chapter 22, "First Days in Kharkov," Berkman visited with friends of the anti-Bolshevik revolutionary Maria Spiridonova.*

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## CHAPTER 22

### FIRST DAYS IN KHARKOV

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The door opens and a girl steps in, carrying a bag slung across her shoulders. She is young and attractive, not over twenty, with her face lit up by black, shining eyes.

She stops affrighted as her glance falls upon me. "A friend," I hasten to reassure her, delivering the message entrusted to me in Moscow. She brightens at once, puts the bag on the table, and kisses her mother. "We'll celebrate today, *mamenka*," she announces; "I got my *pyock*." She begins sorting the things, calling out cheerily, "Herrings, two pounds; half a pound of soap; one pound of vegetable butter; a quarter of a pound of tobacco. That's from the *sobezh*" (Department of Social Care), she explains, turning to me. "I am employed there, but the main 'social care' is given to the ration," she says jestingly. "It's better in quality and quantity than I receive at the other two places. You know, some of us have to hold three or even four positions to make ends meet. Mother and I together receive one and three-quarter pounds of bread per day, and with this monthly *pyock* and what I get from my other positions, we manage to live. Isn't it so, *mamenka*?" and she again embraces her mother affectionately.

"It would be sinful to complain, my child," the old lady replies; "other people are worse off."

Nadya has preserved her sense of humor, and her silvery laugh frequently punctuates the conversation. She is much concerned about the fate of her friends in the North, and is overjoyed to get direct news of Marusya, as she affectionately calls Maria Spiridonova. Eagerly she listens to the story of my repeated visits to the famous leader of the Left Social Revolutionists, who is now in hiding in Moscow. "I love and worship her," she declares impetuously; "she has been the heroine of my life. And to think how the Bolsheviki hound her! Here in the South," she continues more calmly, "our Party has been almost entirely liquidated. The persecution has forced the weaker ones to make peace with the Communists; some have even joined them. Those of us who have remained true keep 'underground.' The Red terror is such that activity now is out of the question. With paper, presses, and everything else nationalized, we cannot even print a handbill, as we used to do in the time of the Tsar. Besides, the workers are so cowed, their need so great, they will listen to you only if you can offer them bread. Moreover, their minds have been poisoned against the intelligentsia. The latter are actually dying of starvation. Here in Kharkov, for instance, they receive six to seven thousand roubles per month, while a pound of bread costs two to three thousand. Some wit figured out that the Soviet salary of twenty of the most noted Russian professors equals—according to the present purchasing power of the rouble—the amount allowed by the old régime budget for the support of the watchdog at the government institutions.

By the aid of Nadya I am enabled to get in touch with several "irreconcilables" of the Left Social Revolutionists. The most interesting personality among them is N——, a former *katorzhanin*\* and later instructor in literature in the People's University of Kharkov. Recently he has been discharged because the political commissar, a Communist youth, considered his lectures of an anti-Marxian tendency.

"The Bolsheviki complain that they lack teachers and educators," N—— said, "but in reality they permit no one to work with them unless he be a Communist or ingratiate himself with the Communist 'cell.' It is the latter, the Party unit in every institution, that decides on the 'reliability' and fitness—even of professors and teachers."

"The Bolsheviki have failed," he remarked to me on another occasion, "chiefly because of their total intellectual barbarism. Social life, no less than individual, is impossible without certain ethical and human values. The Bolsheviki have abolished them, and in their place we have only the arbitrary will of the Soviet bureaucracy and irresponsible terror."

N—— voices the sentiments of the Left Social Revolutionary group, his views fully shared by his comrades. The rule of a minority, they agree, is necessarily a despotism based on oppression and violence. Thus 10,000 Spartans governed 300,000 Helots, while in the French Revolution 300,000 Jacobins sought to control the 7,000,000 citizens of France. Now 500,000 Communists have by the same methods enslaved the whole of Russia with its population of more than 100,000,000. Such a régime must become the negation of its original source. Though born of the Revolution, the offspring of the movement for liberation, it must deny and pervert the very ideals and aims that gave it birth. In consequence

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\*A political prisoner condemned to hard labor.

there is crying inequality of the new social groups, instead of the proclaimed equality; the stifling of every popular opinion instead of the promised freedom; violence and terror instead of the expected reign of brotherhood and love.

The present situation, N—— believes, is the inevitable result of Bolshevik dictatorship. The Communists have discredited the ideas and slogans of the Revolution. They have started among the people a counter-revolutionary wave which is bound to destroy the conquests of 1917. The strength of the Bolsheviks is in reality insignificant. They remain in power only because of the weakness of their political opponents and the exhaustion of the masses. “But their Ninth Thermidor\* must soon come,” N—— concluded with conviction, “and no one will rise to their defense.”

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Returning late in the evening to the room assigned me in the home of G——, a former bourgeois, and finding the bell out of order, I knocked long and persistently without receiving a reply. I almost despaired of gaining admittance, when there resounded the clanking of chains, a heavy bar was lifted, someone fumbled with the keys, and at last the door opened before me. I could see no one about, and a feeling of uneasiness possessed me when suddenly a tall, slender figure stepped before me, and I recognized the owner of the apartment.

“I did not see you,” I exclaimed in surprise.

“A simple precaution,” he replied, pointing to the niche between the double doors where he had evidently been hiding.

“One can’t tell these days,” he remarked nervously; “‘they’ have the habit of visiting us unexpectedly. I can slip through,” he added significantly.

I invited him to my room, and we talked until early morning. G——’s story proved a most interesting page from the recent life of Russia. He formerly lived in Petrograd, where he was employed as a mechanical engineer in the Putilov Mills, his brother-in-law serving as his assistant. Neither of them participated in politics, all their time being devoted to their work. One morning Petrograd was stirred by the killing of Uritsky, the head of the Tcheka. G—— and his brother-in-law had never before heard of Kannegisser, who committed the deed, yet both were arrested together with several hundred other bourgeois. His brother-in-law was shot—by mistake, as the Tcheka later admitted, his name resembling that of a distant relative, a former officer in the Tsar’s army. The wife of the executed, G——’s sister, learning of the fate of her husband, committed suicide. G—— himself was released, then rearrested, and sent to forced labor in Vologda as a *bourzhool*.

“It happened so unexpectedly,” he related, “they did not even give us time to take a few things along. It was a windy, cold day, in October, 1918. I was crossing the Nevsky on my way home from work, when all at once I realized that the whole district was surrounded by the military and Tchekists. Every one was detained. Those who could not produce a Communist membership card or a document proving themselves Soviet employees were arrested. The women also, though they were released in the morning. Unfortunately I had left my portfolio at my office,

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\*The fall of Robespierre—July 27, 1794.

with all my papers in it. They would not listen to explanations or give me a chance to communicate with any one. Within forty-eight hours, all the men were transported to Vologda. My family—my dear wife and three children—remained in complete ignorance of my fate.” G—— paused. “Shall we have some tea?” he asked, trying to hide his emotion.

As he continued, I learned that together with several hundred other men, almost all alleged bourgeois, G—— was kept in the Vologda prison for several weeks, being treated as dangerous criminals and finally ordered to the front. There they were divided into working parties of ten, on the principle of collective responsibility: should one member of the party escape, the other nine would forfeit their lives.

The prisoners had to dig trenches, build barracks for the soldiers, and lay roads. Often they were forced to expose themselves to the fire of the English, to save machine guns deserted by the Red Army during the fight. They could be kept, according to Soviet decree, only three months at the front, yet they were forced to remain till the end of the campaign. Exposed to danger, cold, and hunger, without warm clothing in the raw winter of the North, the ranks of the men thinned daily, to be filled by new parties of forced labor collected in a similar manner.

After a few months G—— fell ill. By the aid of a military surgeon, a drafted medical student whom he had known before, he succeeded in being returned home. But when he reached Petrograd, he failed to locate his family. All the bourgeois tenants of his house had been ejected, to make place for workers; he could find no trace of his wife and children. Laid low by fever acquired on the front, G—— was sent to a hospital. The physicians held out little hope of recovery, but the determination to find his family rekindled the dying embers of life, and after four weeks G—— left his sick bed.

He had just started his search again when he received an order mobilizing him, as an engineer, to a machine factory on the Ural. His efforts to secure delay proved fruitless. Friends promised to continue looking for his loved ones, and he departed for the East. There he applied himself conscientiously to the work, making the necessary repairs, so that the factory could presently begin operations. After a while he asked permission to return home, but he was informed that he would go as a prisoner, the political commissar having denounced him for “unfriendly disposition” toward the Bolsheviki. G—— was arrested and sent to Moscow. When he reached the capital, he found a charge of sabotage against him. He succeeded in proving the falsity of the accusation, and after four months of imprisonment he was released. But the experience so affected him that he suffered two successive attacks of “returning” typhus, from which he emerged entirely unfit for work. He secured permission to visit his relatives in Kharkov where he hoped to recuperate. There, to his great joy, quite unexpectedly, he found his family. They had long thought him dead, their inquiries and numerous letters having remained unanswered. Reunited with his wife and children, G—— remained in the city, having received a position in a local institution. He finds life in Kharkov much more bearable, though the Communist campaign against the intellectuals constantly rouses the people against them.

“The Bolsheviki have turned the intelligentsia into a class of hunted animals,” G—— said. “We are looked upon as even worse than the bourgeoisie. As a

matter of fact, we are much worse off than the latter, for they usually have ‘connections’ in influential places, and most of them still possess some of the wealth they had hidden. They can speculate; yes, even grow rich, while we of the professional class have nothing. We are doomed to slow starvation.”

Snatches of song and music reached us from across the street, coming apparently from the house opposite, its windows flooded with light. “One of the Tcheka commissars,” my host answered my questioning look. “By the way, a curious incident happened to me,” he continued, smiling sadly. “The other day I met that Tchekist. Something about him attracted my attention—a peculiar sense of the familiar that I could not account for. Suddenly it dawned on me—that new dark-brown suit he wore, why, it was mine! They took it from me in the last house raid, two weeks ago. ‘For the proletariat,’ they said.”

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*As the Museum expedition continued its travels in the Ukraine, Berkman conversed with peasants and workers. An anarchist, known to Berkman from his days in the United States, told him of being maltreated by Deniken soldiers and “hounded no less by the Bolsheviki.” Alec heard about the famous anarchist, Nestor Makhno, considered a hero in the Ukraine. Makhno, with an army, continued to fight the Bolsheviki as he fought the Whites. Berkman visited a prison, filled with political prisoners, where the inmates were denied gifts of food from friends though food rations for prisoners were meager. In Chapter 28, included here, Berkman heard about the fate of a Jewish community during the civil war; and in Chapter 30, part of which follows Chapter 28, Berkman insisted that at least, under the Bolsheviks, there are no pogroms. He was told in reply, “They also hate the Jew.” They have “quiet pogroms, the systematic destruction of . . . our traditions, customs, and culture.”*

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## CHAPTER 28

### FASTOV THE POGROMED

August 12, 1920.—Our little company slowly trudges along the unpaved, dusty road that runs almost in a straight line to the market place in the center of the city. The place seems deserted. The houses stand vacant, most of them windowless, their doors broken in and ajar—an oppressive sight of destruction and desolation. All is silent about us; we feel as in a graveyard. Approaching the market place our group separates, each of us going his own way to learn for himself.

A woman passes by, hesitates, and stops. She pushes the kerchief back from her forehead, and looks at me with wonderment in her sad old eyes.

“Good morning,” I address her in Jewish.

“You are a stranger here,” she says kindly. “You don’t look like our folks.”

“Yes,” I reply, “I am not long from America.”

“Ah, from Amerikeh,” she sighs wistfully. “I have a son there. And do you know what is happening to us?”

“Not very much, but I’d like to find out.”

“Oh, only the good God knows what we have gone through.” Her voice

breaks. "Excuse me, I can't help it"—she wipes the tears off her wrinkled face. "They killed my husband before my eyes. . . . I had to look on, helpless. . . . I can't talk about it. . . ." She stands dejectedly before me, bent more by grief than age, like a symbol of abject tragedy.

Recovering a little, she says: "Come with me, if you want to learn. Come to Reb Moishe, he can tell you everything."

We are in the market. A double row of open stalls, no more than a dozen in all, dilapidated and forlorn-looking, almost barren of wares. A handful of large-grained, coarse salt, some loaves of black bread thickly dotted with yellow specks of straw, a little loose tobacco—that is all the stock on hand. Almost no money is passing in payment. The few customers are trading by exchange: about ten pounds of bread for a pound of salt, a few pipefuls of tobacco for an onion. At the counters stand oldish men and women, a few girls among them. I see no young men. These, like most of the able-bodied men and women, I am informed, had stealthily left the town long ago, for fear of more pogroms. They went on foot, some to Kiev, others to Kharkov, in the hope of finding safety and a livelihood in the larger city. Most of them never reached their destination. Food was scarce—they had gone without provisions, and most of them died on the way from exposure and starvation.

The old traders surround me. "Khaye," they whisper to the old woman, "who is this?"

"From Amerikeh," she replies, a ray of hopefulness in her voice; "to learn about the pogroms. We are going to Reb Moishe."

"From Amerikeh? Amerikeh?" Amazement, bewilderment is in their tones. "Did he come so far to find us? Will they help us? Oh, good God in Heaven, may it be true!" Several voices speak at once, all astir with the suppressed excitement of sudden hope, of renewed faith. More people crowd about us; business has stopped. I notice similar groups surrounding my friends nearby.

"Shah, shah, good people," my guide admonishes them; "not everybody at once. We are going to see Reb Moishe; he'll tell him everything."

"Oh, one minute, just one minute, respected man," a pale young woman desperately clutches me by the arm. "My husband is there, in Amerikeh. Do you know him? Rabinovitch—Yankel Rabinovitch. He is well known there; surely you must have heard of him. How is he, tell me, please."

"In what city is he?"

"In Nai-York, but I haven't had any letter from him since the war."

"My son-in-law Khayim is in Amerikeh," a woman, her hair all white, interrupts; "maybe you saw him, what?" She is very old and bent, and evidently hard of hearing. She places her hand back of her ear to catch my reply, while her wizened, lemon-like face is turned up to me in anxious expectation.

"Where is your son-in-law?"

"What does he say? I don't understand," she wails.

The bystanders shout in her ear: "He asks where Khayim, your son-in-law, is?"

"In Amerikeh, in Amerikeh," she replies.

"In Amerikeh," a man near me repeats.

"America is a big country. In what city is Khayim?" I inquire.

She looks bewildered, then stammers: "I don't know—I don't recollect just now—I—"

"*Bobeh* (grandmother), you have his letter at home," a small boy shouts in her ear. "He wrote you before the fighting started, don't you remember?"

"Yes, yes! Will you wait, *gutinker* (good one)?" the old woman begs. "I'm going right away to fetch the letter. Maybe you know my *Khayim*."

She moves heavily away. The others ply me with questions about their relatives, friends, brothers, husbands. Almost everyone of them has someone in that far-off America, which is like a fabled land to these simple folk—the land of promise, peace, and wealth, the happy place from which but few return.

"Maybe you will take a letter to my husband?" a pale young woman asks. All at once a dozen persons begin to clamor for permission to write and send their letters through me to their beloved ones, "there in Amerikeh." I promise to take their mail, and the crowd slowly melts away, with a pleading admonition to wait for them. "Only a few words—we'll be right back."

"Let us go to Reb Moishe," my guide reminds me. "They know," she adds, with a wave at the others, "they'll bring their letters there."

As we start on our way a tall man with jet-black beard and burning eyes detains me. "Be so good, one minute." He speaks quietly, but with a strong effort to restrain his emotion. "I have no one in America," he says; "I have no one anywhere. You see this house?" There is a nervous tremor in his voice, but he steadies himself. "There, across the way, with the broken windows, paper-covered, pasted over. My old father, the Almighty bless his memory, and my two young brothers were killed there. Cut to pieces with sabers. The old man had his *peiess* (pious earlocks) cut off, together with his ears, and his belly ripped open. . . . I ran away with my daughter, to save her. Look, there she is, at the third stall on the right." His eyes stream with tears as he points towards a girl standing a few feet away. She is about fifteen, oval faced, with delicate features, pale and fragile as a lily, and with most peculiar eyes. She is looking straight before her, while her hands are mechanically cutting chunks of bread from the big round loaf. There is the same dreadful expression in her eyes that I have recently seen for the first time in the faces of very young girls in pogromed cities. A look of wild terror frozen into a stare that grips at my heart. Yet, not realizing the truth, I whisper to her father, "Blind?"

"No, not blind;" he cries out. "Wish to God—no, much worse. She has been looking like that ever since the night when I ran away from our house with her. It was a fearful night. Like wild beasts they cut and slashed and raved. I hid with my *Rosele* in the cellar, but we were not safe there, so we ran to the woods nearby. They caught us on the way. They took her from me and left me for dead. Look—" He takes off his hat and I see a long sword cut, only partly healed, scarring the side of his head. "They left me for dead," he repeats. "When the murderers had gone, three days later, she was found in the field and she has been like that . . . with that look in her eyes . . . she hasn't talked since. . . . Oh, my God, why dost Thou punish me so?"

"Dear Reb Sholem, do not blaspheme," my woman guide admonishes him. "Are you the only one to suffer? You know my great loss. We all share the same fate. It has always been the fate of us Jews. We know not the ways of God, blessed be His holy name. But let us go to Reb Moishe," she says, turning to me.

Behind the counter of what was once a grocery store stands Reb Moishe. He is a middle-aged Hebrew, with an intelligent face that now bears only the memory

of a kindly smile. An old resident of the town and elder in the synagogue, he knows every inhabitant and the whole history of the place. He had been one of the well-to-do men of the city, and even now he cannot resist the temptation of hospitality, so traditional with his race. Involuntarily his eyes wander to the shelves entirely bare save for a few empty bottles. The room is dingy and out of repair; the wall paper hangs down in cracked sheets, exposing the plaster, yellow with moisture. On the counter are some loaves of black bread, straw dotted, and a small tray with green onions. Reb Moishe bends over, produces a bottle of soda from under the counter, and offers the treasure to me, with a smile of benign welcome. A look of consternation spreads over the face of his wife, who sits darning silently in the corner, as Reb Moishe shamefacedly declines the proffered payment. "No, no, I cannot do it," he says with simple dignity, but I know it as the height of sacrifice.

Learning the purpose of my visit to Fastov, Reb Moishe invites me to the street. "Come with me," he says; "I'll show you what they did to us. Though there is not much for the eyes"—he looks at me with searching gaze—"only those who lived through it can understand, and maybe"—he pauses a moment—"maybe also those who really feel with us in our great bereavement."

We step out of the store. Across is a large vacant space, its center littered with old boards and broken bricks. "That was our schoolhouse," Reb Moishe comments. "This is all that's left of it. That house on your left, with the shutters closed, it was Zalman's, our school-teacher's. They killed six there—father, mother, and four children. We found them all with their heads broken by the butts of guns. There, around the corner, the whole street—you see, every house pogromed. We have many such streets."

After a while he continues: "In this house, with the green roof, the whole family was wiped out—nine persons. The murderers set fire to it, too—you can see through the broken doors—the inside is all burned and charred. Who did it?" he repeats my question in a tone of hopelessness. "Better ask who did not? Petlura came first, then Denikin, and then the Poles, and just bands of every kind; may the black years know them. There were many of them, and it was always the same curse. We suffered from all of them, every time the town changed hands. But Denikin was the worst of all, worse even than the Poles, who hate us so. The last time the Denikins were here the pogrom lasted four days. "Oh, God!"

He suddenly halts, throwing up his hands. "Oh, you Americans, you who live in safety, do you know what it means, four days! Four long, terrible days, and still more terrible nights, four days and four nights and no let-up in the butchery. The cries, the shrieks, those piercing shrieks of women seeing their babies torn limb from limb before their very eyes. . . . I hear them now. . . . It freezes my blood with horror. . . . It drives me mad. . . . Those sights. . . . The bloody mass of flesh that was once my own child, my lovely Mirele. . . . She was only five years old." He breaks down. Leaning against the wall, his body shakes with sobs.

Soon he recovers himself. "Here we are in the center of the worst pogromed part," he continues. "Forgive my weakness; I can't speak of it with dry eyes. . . . There is the synagogue. We Jews sought safety in it. The Commander told us to. His name? May evil be as strange to me as his dark name. One of Denikin's generals; the Commander, that's what he was called. His men were mad with blood lust when there was nothing more to rob. You know, the

soldiers and peasants think there is gold to be found in every Jewish home. This was once a prosperous city, the rich men that did business with us lived in Kiev and Kharkov. The Jews here were just making a living, with a few of them comfortably off. Well, the many pogroms long ago robbed them of all they had, ruined their business, and despoiled their homes. Still, they lived somehow. You know how it is with the Jew—he is used to mistreatment, he tries to make the best of it. But Denikin's soldiers—oh, it was Gehenna let loose. They went wild when they found nothing to take, and they destroyed what they didn't want. That was the first two days. But with the third began the killing, mostly with swords and bayonets. On the third day the Commander ordered us to take refuge in the synagogue. He promised us safety, and we brought our wives and children there. They put a guard at the door, to protect us, the Commander said. It was a trap. At night the soldiers came; all the hooligans of the town were with them, too. They came and demanded our gold. They would not believe we had none. They searched the Holy Scrolls, they tore them and trampled upon them. Some of us could not look quietly on that awful desecration. We protested. And then began the butchery. The horror, oh, the horror of it. . . . The women beaten, assaulted, the men cut down with sabers. . . . Some of us broke through the guard at the door, and we ran into the streets. Like hounds of hell, they followed us, slashing, killing, and hunting us from house to house. For days afterwards the streets were littered with the killed and maimed. They would not let us approach our dead. They would not permit us to bury them or to help the wounded who were groaning in their misery, begging for death. . . . Not a glass of water could we give them. . . . They shot anyone coming near. . . . The famished dogs of the whole neighborhood came; they smelt prey. I saw them tear off limbs from the dead, from the helpless wounded. . . . They fed on the living . . . on our brothers. . . .”

He broke down again. “The dogs fed on them . . . fed on them . . .” he repeats amid sobs.

Someone approaches us. It is the doctor who had ministered to the sick and wounded after the last pogrom was over. He looks the typical Russian of the intelligentsia, the stamp of the idealist and student engraved upon him. He walks with a heavy limp, and his quick eye catches my unvoiced question. “A memento of those days,” he says, attempting a smile. “It troubles me a good deal and handicaps my work considerably,” he adds. “There are many sick people and I am on my feet all day. There are no conveyances—they took away all the horses and cattle. I am just on my way now to poor Fanya, one of my hopeless patients. No, no, good man, it's no use your visiting her,” he waives aside my request to accompany him. “It is like many others here; a terrible but common case. She was a nurse, taking care of a paralytic young girl. They occupied a room on the second floor of a house nearby. On the first floor soldiers were quartered. When the pogrom began the soldiers kept the paralytic and her nurse prisoners. What happened there no one will ever know. . . . When the soldiers had at last gone we had to use a ladder to get to the girls' room. The brutes had covered the stairs with human excrement—it was impossible to approach. When we got to the two girls, the paralytic was dead in the arms of the nurse, and the latter a raving maniac. No, no; it's no use your seeing her.”

“Doctor,” says Reb Moishe, “why don’t you tell our American friend how you got crippled? He should hear everything.”

“Oh, that is not important, Reb Moishe. We have so many worse things.” Upon my insisting, he continues: “Well, it is not a long story. I was shot as I approached a wounded man lying in the street. It was dark, and as I was passing by I heard someone moan. I had just stepped off the sidewalk when I was shot. It was the night of the synagogue pogrom. But my mishap, man—it’s nothing when you think of the nightmare in the warehouse.”

“The warehouse?” I asked. “What happened there?”

“The worst you can imagine,” the doctor replies. “Those scenes no human power can describe. It wasn’t murder there—only a few were killed in the warehouse. It was the women, the girls, even children. . . . When the soldiers pogromed the synagogue, many of the women succeeded in gaining the street. As if by some instinct they collected afterwards in the warehouse—a big out-house that had not been used for many years. Where else were the women to go? It was too dangerous at home; the mob was searching for the men who had escaped from the synagogue and was slaughtering them on the street, in their homes, wherever found. So the women and girls gathered in the warehouse. It was late at night and the place was dark and still. They feared to breathe, almost, lest their hiding-place be discovered by the hooligans. During the night more of the women folk and some of their men also found their way to the warehouse. There they all lay, huddled on the floor, in dead silence. The cries and shrieks from the street reached them, but they were helpless and every moment they feared discovery. How it happened we don’t know, but some soldiers did find them. There was no pogrom there, in the ordinary sense. There was worse. The Commander himself gave orders that a cordon of soldiers be stationed at the warehouse, that no pogrom was to be made, and that no one be permitted to leave without his permission. At first we did not understand the meaning of it, but the terrible truth soon dawned on us. On the second night several officers arrived, accompanied by a strong detachment, all mounted and carrying lanterns. By their light they peered into the faces of the women. They selected five of the most beautiful girls, dragged them out and rode away with them. They came again and again that night. . . . They came every night, always with their lanterns. First the youngest were taken, girls of fifteen and twelve, even as young as eight. Then they took the older ones and the married women. Only the very old were left. There were over 400 women and girls in the warehouse, and most of them were taken away. Some of them never returned alive; many were later found dead on the roads. Others were abandoned along the route of the withdrawing army . . . they returned days, weeks later . . . sick, tortured, everyone of them infected with terrible diseases.”

The doctor pauses, then takes me aside. “Can an outsider realize the whole depth of our misfortune?” he asks. “How many pogroms we have suffered! The last one, by Denikin, continued eight days. Think of it, eight days! Over ten thousand of our people were slaughtered: three thousand died from exposure and wounds.” Glancing toward Reb Moishe, he adds in a hoarse whisper: “There is not a woman or girl above the age of ten in our city who has not been outraged. Some of them four, five, as high as fourteen times. . . . You said you were about to go to Kiev. In the City Hospital there you will find seven children, girls under

thirteen, that we succeeded in placing there for medical treatment, mostly surgical. Everyone of those girls has been outraged six and more times. Tell America about it—will it still remain silent?”

## CHAPTER 30 IN VARIOUS WALKS

By the aid of R——, the secretary of an important labor union, I have gathered much valuable material for the Expedition. R—— is a Menshevik who has in some unexplained manner escaped the recent “cleaning process.” His known popularity among the workers, he believes, has saved him. “The Bolsheviki are keeping an eye on me, but they have left me alone—so far, he said significantly.

Familiar with the city, its museums, libraries, and archives, R—— has been a great help in my quest for data and documents. Much that is valuable has been lost, and still more has been destroyed by the workers themselves, in the interests of their safety, at the time of German occupation and White Terror. But a considerable part of the labor archives has been preserved, sufficient to reconstruct the history of the heroic struggle of the unions since their inception and throughout the stormy days of revolution and civil war. All through the Mensheviks played the role of the intellectual leaders, with the Bolsheviki and Anarchists as the revolutionary inspiration of the workers.

The headquarters of the Labor Soviet have somehow become the depository of a strange documentary mixture. Police and gendarme records, the minutes of Duma sessions, and financial statistics have found their way there, only to be forgotten. By a curious chance the first *Universal* of Petlura, a rare document containing the original declaration of principles and aims by the Ukrainian national democracy, has been discovered by me in a neglected drawer. A Communist official claims it as his “personal possession,” with which, however, he is willing to part for a consideration. In view of the large price demanded, the matter has now become a subject of correspondence with the Museum.

In Menshevik circles feeling against the Bolsheviki is very bitter. It is the general sentiment among them that the Communists, formerly Social Democrats, have betrayed Marx and discredited Socialism. “Aslatic revolutionists,” R—— calls them. There is no difference between Trotsky and the hangman Stolypin, he asserts; their methods are identical. Indeed, there was more political life under Nicholas II than there is today. The Bolsheviki, alleged Marxists, think by decrees and terror to alter the immutable law of social evolution; to skip several steps at once, as it were, on the ladder of progress. The February Revolution was essentially bourgeois, but Lenin attempted to turn it by the violence of an insignificant minority into a social revolution. The complete debacle of all hopes is the result. The Communists, R—— believes, cannot last much longer. Russia is on the verge of utter economic collapse. The old food reserves are exhausted; production has almost ceased. Militarization of toll has failed. Trotsky’s calculations of the progressive increase of the output on the “labor front” have been exploded like Bolsheviki prophecies of world revolution. The factory is not a

battlefield. Converting the country into a camp of forced labor is not conducive to creative effort. It has divided the people into slaves and slave drivers, and created a powerful class of Soviet bureaucrats. Most significant of all, it has turned even the more advanced workers against the Communists. Now the Bolsheviki can count neither on the peasant nor on the proletariat; the whole country is against them. But for the stupid policy of the Allies, they would have been swept away long ago. The blockade and invasions have played into their hands. The Bolsheviki need war to keep them in power; the present Polish campaign suits them splendidly. But it is the last Communist straw. It will break, and the bloody Bolshevik experiment will come to an end. "History will write them down as the arch-enemies of the Revolution," R—— concluded emphatically.

\* \* \*

*Friday evening.*—On the dining table at the home of Reb Zakhare, the old Zionist, burn three candles orthodoxically blessed by the house-wife. The whole family are gathered for the festive occasion. But the traditional soup and meat are absent: herring and *kasha* are being served, and small chunks of *Khale*, the Sabbath bread, now only partly of wheat. Besides the parents, two daughters and a son of eighteen are present. The oldest boy—"Yankel was his name," Reb Zakhare says with a heavy sigh. "He'd now be twenty-three, his memory be blessed"—was killed in the pogrom the Denikin men had made just before they finally evacuated the city. He sought to defend his sister—the youngest, then only fifteen. Together they were visiting a friend in the Podol when the mob broke into the street, sacking every house, pillaging, and murdering.

The old lady sits in the corner crying quietly. The look of frozen terror, which I have seen often lately, is in the eyes of the girls. The young man steps over to his mother and gently speaks to her. True Zionists, the family converse in Old Hebrew, making an evident concession in addressing me in Yiddish.

"At least you are free from pogroms under the Bolsheviki," I remark.

"In a certain sense," the old man assents; "but it is the Bolsheviki who are responsible for pogroms. Yes, yes, we had them under the Tsar also," he interrupts my protest, "but they were nothing like those we have had since. Hatred against us has increased. To the gentiles a Bolshevik now means a Jew; a commissar is a *Zhid* (opprobrious term for the Jew), and every Hebrew is held responsible for the murders of the Tcheka. I have lived all my life in the ghetto, and I have seen pogroms in the years past, but never such terrible things as since the Bolsheviki got into Moscow."

"But they have made no pogroms," I insist.

"They also hate the Jew. We are always the victims. Under the Communists we have no violent mob pogroms; at least I have not heard of any. But we have the 'quiet pogroms,' the systematic destruction of all that is dearest to us—of our traditions, customs, and culture. They are killing us as a nation. I don't know but what that is the worst pogrom," he adds bitterly.

After a while he takes up the subject again:

"Some foolish Jews are proud that our people are in the government, and that Trotsky is war minister. As if Trotsky and such others are Jews! What good is it all, I ask, when our nation must suffer as before, and more?"

“The Jews have been made the political and social equals of gentiles,” I suggest.

“Equals in what? In misery and corruption. But even there we are not equal. The Jew has more to bear than the others. We are not fit for the factory—we were always business men, traders, and now we have been ruined entirely. They have sown corruption in our youth who now think only of power; or to join the Tcheka for gain. That was never before. They are destroying the dream of Palestine, our true home; they are suppressing every effort to educate our children in the proper Jewish spirit.

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In Kulturliga gather Hebrew writers, poets, and teachers, most of them members of the *Volkspartei* when that political party was represented in the Rada by its Minister of Jewish Affairs. Formerly the League was a powerful organization, with 230 branches throughout the South, doing cultural work among its co-religionists. The institution had much to suffer through the various political changes, the Bolsheviks were tolerant at first, and even financially aided its educational efforts. But gradually the help was withdrawn and obstacles began to be placed in the way of the League. The Communists frowned upon the too nationalistic character of its work. The *Youkom*, Jewish branch of the Party, is particularly antagonistic. The League's teachers and older pupils have been mobilized into State service and the field of its efforts narrowed down. In the provinces most of its branches have been compelled to close entirely, but in Kiev the devotion and persistence of its leading spirits still enables the League to continue.

It is the sole oasis in the city of non-partisan intellectual and social life. Though now limited in its activities, it still enjoys great popularity among the Jewish youth. Its art classes, including drawing, painting and sculpture, are eagerly visited, and the theatrical studio is developing young actors and actresses of much promise. The rehearsals I attended, especially that of “The World's End,” the posthumous work of an unknown dramatist, were unique in artistic conception and powerful in expression.

The younger elements that frequent the Kulturliga dream of Zion, and look to the aid of England in securing to the Jewish nation its traditional home. They are out of touch with the Western world and recent events, but their reliance on the hopes raised by the Jewish Congress is unshaken. Somehow, sometime, probably even in the not distant future, is to happen the great event and Jewry will be reestablished in Palestine. In that ardent faith they drag on their existence from day to day, intellectually vegetating, physically in misery. Their former sources of support are abolished, the government having supplied them with a bread-card of the fourth category. The latter is the Bolshevik label of the *bourzhooi*, the intelligentsia now being denounced as such, though in reality the rich middle class has sought safety at the outbreak of the Revolution. Hatred of the bourgeoisie has been transferred to the intellectuals, official agitation cultivating and intensifying this spirit. They are represented as the enemies of the proletariat, traitors to the Revolution—at best speculators, if not active counter-revolutionists. There is no stemming the fearful tide sweeping against them. Nor is it the spontaneous unfettering of popular sentiment. The flames are fanned by Moscow. Bolshevik agents from the center, sent as chiefs and

“instructors,” systematically rouse the basest instincts. Zinoviev himself severely upbraided the local Communists and his “brother proletarians” for leniency to the bourgeoisie. “They still walk your streets,” he exclaimed at a public meeting “clad in the best finery, while you go about in rags. They live in the luxurious homes, while you grovel in cellars. You must not permit such things any longer.”

Visits of Communist leaders are always followed by renewed “requisitions from the bourgeoisie.” The method is simple. The house porter is instructed to compile a list of holders of cards of the fourth category. In most cases they are intellectual proletarians—teachers, writers, scientists. But the possession of the fourth category card is their doom: they are legitimate victims of requisition. Clothing, underwear, household goods—everything is confiscated as alleged *izlishki* (superfluities).

“The most tragic part of it,” said C——, the well-known Yiddish writer, “is that the *izlishki* rarely reach their proletarian destination. We all know that the really valuable things confiscated get no further than the Tcheka, while the old and almost useless rags are sent to the unions, for distribution among the workers.”

“Often one does not even know who is ‘requisitioning,’” remarked a member of the League; “sometimes it is done by Tchekists on their own account.”

“Is there no redress?” I asked; “does no one protest?”

C—— made a deprecating motion. “We have learned better,” he replied, “from the fate of those who dared.”

“You can’t protest against Bolshevik ‘revolutionary orders,’ as they call it,” said a young woman teacher. “I have tried it. It happened like this. One day, returning to my room, I found a stranger occupying it. On my demanding what he was doing there, he informed me that he had been assigned to it, showing me his document from the Housing Bureau. ‘And what shall I do?’ I asked. ‘You can sleep on the floor,’ he replied, stretching himself on my bed. I protested to the higher authorities, but they refused to consider the matter. ‘The room is big enough for two,’ they insisted, though that was not the case at all. ‘But you put a strange man in my room,’ I pleaded. ‘You’ll soon get acquainted,’ they sneered, ‘we make no distinction of sex.’ I remained with some friends for a while, but they were so crowded I had to look for other quarters. For days I stood in line in the Housing Bureau, but it was impossible to get an order for a room. Meanwhile my chief threatened to report me for neglecting my work, because most of my time was spent in the Soviet offices. Finally I complained to the *Rabkrin*, which is supposed to protect proletarian interests. Their agent invited me to share his room, and I slapped his face. He had me arrested, and I was kept in the Tcheka two months for ‘sabotage.’”

“It might have ended worse,” some one commented.

“When you were released,” I pursued, interested in the woman’s story, “what did you do about your room?”

She smiled sadly. “I learned a lot while sitting in the Tcheka,” she said. “When I was liberated, I sought out a member of the Housing Bureau. Fortunately I had saved a pair of fine French shoes, and I presented them to him. ‘A little gift for your wife,’ I told him, not much caring which one would get it, for he is known to have several. Within twenty-four hours I received a splendid large room, furnished in true bourgeois style.”

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*In the following segment from Chapter 32, "Odessa: Life and Vision," Alec heard about the self-defeating policies of the Bolsheviks. Later he attended a secret meeting of Mensheviks.*

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## CHAPTER 32

### ODESSA: LIFE AND VISION

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Semyon Petrovitch, at whose home I spend considerable time, is an intelligent non-partisan of independent views. An able statistician, he has been permitted by the Bolsheviki to remain in the Department of Economy, where he had served under previous regimes. Semyon is convinced that the Soviet Government will find itself compelled to change its methods and practices. "The ravager cannot long remain in the country he has ravaged"—he likes to repeat the alleged saying of Denikin. But the ire of the gods, he asserts, pursues the Bolsheviki: even their best intentions serve in practice to confound them. "They have closed the stores and abolished private trade," Semyon Petrovitch repeats, "they have nationalized, registered, and taken an invoice of everything under the sun. One would think that complete order should reign. Indeed, you cannot transfer a bed mattress from one apartment into another without special permission of the proper authorities. If you want to ride to the next station, you must get an 'order'; if you need a sheet of paper, you have to fill several sheets with applications. Every detail of our existence has become subject to Bolshevik regulation. In short, you will find the situation in Odessa about the same as in the rest of Russia," Semyon assured me. "But life passes by the Soviet apparatus, because life is incomparably stronger than any attempts at doctrinaire regulation."

As in other Soviet cities, the population is supplied with a bread and products card. But except communists, very few receive enough bread to exist. On the "bourgeois" categories none has been issued for months; in fact, since the Bolsheviki took Odessa in January. Occasionally a little salt, sugar, and matches are rationed out.

"Fortunately the markets are still permitted to exist," Semyon explained. "The government cannot press out enough bread of the farmers to feed the cities. The *pyock* is mostly a vision. That reminds me of a certain commissar in our department, a rare type of Communist, for he has a sense of humor. Once I asked him why the Bolsheviki nationalized everything except the *izvostchiki* (cabmen). His reply was characteristic. 'You see,' he said, 'we found that if you don't feed human beings, they continue to live somehow. But if you don't feed horses, the stupid beasts die. That's why we don't nationalize the cabmen.'"

Life is indeed stronger than decrees; it sprouts through every crevice of the socialist armor. When private trade was forbidden and only the cooperatives

were permitted to continue, all business places suddenly became inspired by feelings of altruism, and every store was decorated with the sign of the *Epo* (cooperative). Later, when the cooperatives were also closed and only *kus-tarnoye* (small scale) production remained legal, all the little stores began manufacturing cigarette lighters and rubber soles from stolen automobile tires. Subsequently new decrees were issued permitting trade only in articles of food. Then in every store window there appeared bread and tea surrogates, while other wares were sold in the rear rooms. Finally all food stores were closed; now the illicit trade is transferred to the storekeeper's home, and business is done on the back stairs.

"The Bolsheviki want to abolish private trade and destroy speculation," Semyon remarked; "they want everyone to live exclusively by his labor. Yet in no place in the world is there so much speculation as in Russia; the whole country is swept by its fever. 'Nationalization of trade means that the whole nation is in trade,' our wits say. The truth is, we have all become speculators," he continued sadly. "Every family now depends more on the sale of its table and bed linen than on the salaries paid by the Soviet Government. The shopkeepers, having lost their shops, still remain traders; and they are now joined by those who formerly were workers, physical as well as intellectual. Necessity is stronger than laws, my dear friend. The real factory proletarians have become declassified: they have ceased to exist, as a class, because most of the factories and mills are not working. The workers flee into the country or become *meshotchniki* (bag-men, traders). The Communist dictatorship has destroyed, but it cannot build up."

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It is a cold, chilly day as I turn my steps toward Sadovaya Street. There, at a secret session, is to take place a Menshevik *costnaya gazetta* (oral newspaper), and I am to meet prominent members of the party.

The "oral newspaper" is the modern Russian surrogate for a free press. Deprived of opportunity to issue their publications, the suppressed Socialist and revolutionary elements resort to this method. In some private dwelling or "conspirative lodgings" they gather, as in the days of the Tsar, but with even greater danger and more dread of the all-pervading presence of the Tcheka. They come to the "lodgings" singly, stealthily, like criminals conscious of guilt, fearful of observation and discovery. Frequently they fall into an ambush: the house may be in the hands of a *zassada*, though no sign of it is perceptible on the outside. No one having entered, however innocently or accidentally, may depart, not even a neighbor's child come to borrow a dish or some water for a sick member of the family. None is permitted to leave, that he may not give warning to possible victims. Such a *zassada* generally lasts for many hours, often even for several days and nights; when it is finally lifted, those caught in the net are turned over to the Tcheka. Lucky if the charge of counter-revolution or banditism be not made, and the prisoners released after several weeks of detention. But the "leaders," the known revolutionists, are kept for months, even for years, without a hearing or charge.

It is dusk. In the unlighted, dingy room it is difficult to recognize the half score of men occupying chairs, smoking and talking in subdued voices. The person

for whom I inquire has not yet arrived, and I find myself a stranger in the place. I notice nervous glances in my direction; the men near me regard me with frank suspicion. One by one they leave their seats; I see them gathering in a corner, casting inimical looks at me. As I approach them, they cease talking and eye me defiantly. Their manner is militant, and presently I am surrounded by the hostile crowd.

“May I see Comrade P——?” I inquire.

“Who may you be?” some one demands ironically.

To allay their suspicions, I ask for *tovarishtch* Astrov, the famous Menshevik leader, with whom I have an appointment. Explanations follow, and at last the men appear satisfied regarding my identity. “You are looking for Astrov?” they ask in surprise. “Don’t you know? Haven’t you heard?”

“What?”

“He’s been arrested this morning.”

Bitter indignation and excitement prevail in labor and revolutionary circles as a result of the arrest. Astrov, a well-known Socialist, is a personality respected throughout Russia. His opposition to the Bolsheviki is purely intellectual, excluding hostile activities against the Government. It is reported, however, that the authorities hold him “morally responsible” for the wave of strikes that has recently swept the city. Astrov’s comrades are distracted at their failure to ascertain the fate of their leader. The Tcheka declines to accept a *peredatcha* (packages of food or clothing), an omen which inspires the worst fears. It indicates strictest isolation—it may even signify that the prisoner has been shot.\*

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More hated even than in Kiev is the Tcheka in Odessa. Ghastly stories are told of its methods and the ruthlessness of the *predsedatel*, a former immigrant from Detroit. The personnel of the institution consists mostly of old gendarme officers and criminals whose lives had been spared “for services to be rendered in fighting counter-revolution and speculation.” The latter is particularly proscribed, the “highest form of punishment”—shooting—being meted out to offenders. Executions take place daily. The doomed are piled into automobile trucks, face downward, and driven to the outskirts of the city. The long line of the death-vehicles is escorted by mounted men riding wildly and firing into the air—a warning to close the windows. At the appointed place the procession halts. The victims are made to undress and to take their places at the edge of the already prepared common grave. Shots resound—the bodies, some lifeless, some merely wounded, fall into the hole and are hastily covered with sod.

But though the “speculation” is forbidden and the possession or exchange of Tsarist money is frequently punished by death, the members of the Tcheka themselves receive part of their salary in *tsarskiye*, whose purchasing power is many times that of Soviet paper. There is considerable circulation of the forbidden currency on the markets, and it is rumored that Tcheka agents themselves are the chief dealers. I refuse to believe the charge till a member of the Expedition informs me that he succeeded in advantageously converting some of the

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\*Astrov later died in prison.

*tsarskiye*, officially given us in Moscow, into Soviet money. "You are taking a great risk in exchanging," I warn him.

"No risk at all," he replied gleefully. "Do you think I am tired of life that I would sell on the open market? I traded it through an old friend, and it was the good man N——himself who did the little business for me."

N—— is a high placed magistrate of the Tcheka.

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*With the end of the civil war in 1921, it seemed that there was no possible justification left for the harsh methods of discipline and the stifling of democracy that had existed in Russia since Berkman's arrival there. In Petrograd, workers went on strike protesting social and economic conditions. The sailors of Kronstadt, near Petrograd, issued a manifesto in support of the Petrograd workers and demanded free soviets truly representative of the people. Lenin and Trotsky charged them with mutiny. The following two chapters, the last ones in The Bolshevik Myth, are included here in their entirety because it was the Kronstadt Rebellion and its suppression by the government that finally convinced Berkman and Goldman to leave Russia.*

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## CHAPTER 38 KRONSTADT

*Petrograd, February, 1921.*—The cold is extreme and there is intense suffering in the city. Snowstorms have isolated us from the provinces; the supply of provisions has almost ceased. Only half a pound of bread is being issued now. Most of the houses are unheated. At dusk old women prowl about the big woodpile near the Hotel Astoria, but the sentry is vigilant. Several factories have been closed for lack of fuel, and the employces put on half rations. They called a meeting to consult about the situation, but the authorities did not permit it to take place.

The Trubotchny millworkers have gone on strike. In the distribution of winter clothing, they complain, the Communists received undue advantage over the non-partisans. The Government refuses to consider the grievances till the men return to work.

Crowds of strikers gathered in the street near the mills, and soldiers were sent to disperse them. They were *kursanti*, Communist youths of the military academy. There was no violence.

Now the strikers have been joined by the men from the Admiralty shops and Galernaya docks. There is much resentment against the arrogant attitude of the Government. A street demonstration was attempted, but mounted troops suppressed it.

*February 27.*—Nervous feeling in the city. The strike situation is growing more serious. The Patronny mills, the Baltiysky and Laferm factories have suspended

operations. The authorities have ordered the strikers to resume work. Martial law in the city. The special Committee of Defense (*Komitet Oboroni*) is vested with exceptional powers, Zinoviev\* at its head.

At the Soviet session last evening a military member of the Defense Committee denounced the strikers as traitors to the Revolution. It was Lashevitch. He looked fat, greasy, and offensively sensuous. He called the dissatisfied workers "leeches attempting extortion" (*shkurniki*), and demanded drastic measures against them. The Soviet passed a resolution *locking out* the men of the Trubotchny mill. It means deprivation of rations—actual starvation.

*February 28.*—Strikers' proclamations have appeared on the streets today. They cite cases of workers found frozen to death in their homes. The main demand is for winter clothing and more regular issue of rations. Some of the circulars protest against the suppression of factory meetings. "The people want to take counsel together to find means of relief," they state. Zinoviev asserts the whole trouble is due to Menshevik and Social Revolutionist plotting.

For the first time a political turn is being given to the strikes. Late in the afternoon a proclamation was posted containing larger demands. "A complete change is necessary in the policies of the Government," it reads. "First of all, the workers and peasants need freedom. They don't want to live by the decrees of the Bolsheviki; they want to control their own destinies. We demand the liberation of all arrested Socialists and non-partisan workingmen; abolition of martial law; freedom of speech, press, and assembly for all who labor; free election of shop and factory committees, of labor union and Soviet representatives."

*March 1.*—Many arrests are taking place. Groups of strikers surrounded by Tchekists, on their way to prison, are a common sight. Much indignation in the city. I hear that several unions have been liquidated and their active members turned over to the Tcheka. But proclamations continue to appear. The arbitrary stand of the authorities is having the effect of rousing reactionary tendencies. The situation is growing tense. Calls for the *Utchredilka* (Constituent Assembly) are being heard. A manifesto is circulating, signed by the "Socialist Workers of the Nevsky District," openly attacking the Communist regime. "We know who is afraid of the Constituent Assembly," it declares. "It is they who will no longer be able to rob us. Instead they will have to answer before the representatives of the people for their deceit, their thefts, and all their crimes."

Zinoviev is alarmed; he has wired to Moscow for troops. The local garrison is said to be in sympathy with the strikers. Military from the provinces has been ordered to the city: special Communist regiments have already arrived. Extraordinary martial law has been declared today.

*March 2.*—Most disquieting reports. Large strikes have broken out in Moscow. In the Astoria I heard today that armed conflicts have taken place near the Kremlin and blood has been shed. The Bolsheviki claim the coincidence of events in the two capitals as proof of a counter-revolutionary conspiracy.

It is said that Kronstadt sailors have come to the city to look into the cause of

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\*Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet [GLF].

trouble. Impossible to tell fact from fiction. The absence of a public press encourages the wildest rumors. The official papers are discredited.

*March 3.*—Kronstadt is disturbed. It disapproves of the Government's drastic methods against the dissatisfied workers. The men of the warship *Petropavlovsk* have passed a resolution of sympathy with the strikers.

It has become known today that on February 28 a committee of sailors was sent to this city to investigate the strike situation. Its report was unfavorable to the authorities. On March 1 the crews of the First and Second Squadrons of the Baltic Fleet called a public meeting at Yakorny Square. The gathering was attended by 16,000 sailors, Red Army men, and workers. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Kronstadt Soviet, the Communist Vassiliev, presided. The audience was addressed by Kalinin, President of the Republic, and by Kuzmin, Commissar of the Baltic Fleet. The attitude of the sailors was entirely friendly to the Soviet Government, and Kalinin was met on his arrival in Kronstadt with military honors, music and banners.

At the meeting the Petrograd situation and the report of the sailors' investigating committee were discussed. The audience was outspoken in its indignation at the means employed by Zinoviev against the workers. President Kalinin and Commissar Kusmin berated the strikers and denounced the Petropavlovsk Resolution as counter-revolutionary. The sailors emphasized their loyalty to the Soviet system, but condemned the Bolshevik bureaucracy. The resolution was passed.

*March 4.*—Great nervous tension in the city. The strikes continue; labor disorders have again taken place in Moscow. A wave of discontent is sweeping the country. Peasant uprisings are reported from Tambov, Siberia, the Ukraina, and Caucasus. The country is on the verge of desperation. It was confidently hoped that with the end of civil war the Communists would mitigate the severe military regime. The Government had announced its intention of economic reconstruction, and the people were eager to cooperate. They looked forward to the lightening of the heavy burdens, the abolition of war-time restrictions, and the introduction of elemental liberties.

The fronts are liquidated, but the old policies continue, and labor militarization is paralyzing industrial revival. It is openly charged that the Communist Party is more interested in entrenching its political power than in saving the Revolution.

An official manifesto appeared today. It is signed by Lenin and Trotsky and declares Kronstadt guilty of mutiny (*myatezh*). The demand of the sailors for free Soviets is denounced as "a counter-revolutionary conspiracy against the proletarian Republic." Members of the Communist Party are ordered into the mills and factories to "rally the workers to the support of the Government against the traitors." Kronstadt is to be suppressed.

The Moscow radio station sent out a message addressed "to all, all, all":

Petrograd is orderly and quiet, and even the few factories where accusations against the Soviet Government were recently voiced now understand that it is the work of provocators. . . . Just at this moment, when in America a new Republican regime is assuming the reins of government and showing inclination to take up business relations with Soviet Russia, the spreading of lying rumors and the organization of disturbances in Kronstadt

have the sole purpose of influencing the American President and changing his policy toward Russia. At the same time the London Conference is holding its sessions, and the spreading of similar rumors must influence also the Turkish delegation and make it more submissive to the demands of the Entente. The rebellion of the *Petropavlovsk* crew is undoubtedly part of a great conspiracy to create trouble within Soviet Russia and to injure our International position. . . . This plan is being carried out within Russia by a Tsarist general and former officers, and their activities are supported by the Mensheviki and Social Revolutionists.

The whole Northern District is under martial law and all gatherings are interdicted. Elaborate precautions have been taken to protect the Government institutions. Machine guns are placed in the Astoria, the living quarters of Zinoviev and other prominent Bolsheviki. These preparations are increasing general nervousness. Official proclamations command the immediate return of the strikers to the factories, prohibit suspension of work, and warn the populace against congregating in the streets.

The Committee of Defense has initiated a "cleaning" of the city. Many workers suspected of sympathizing with Kronstadt have been placed under arrest. All Petrograd sailors and part of the garrison thought to be "untrustworthy" have been ordered to distant points, while the families of Kronstadt sailors living in Petrograd are held as hostages. The Committee of Defense notified Kronstadt that "the prisoners are kept as 'pledges' for the safety of the Commissar of the Baltic Fleet, N. N. Kusmin, the Chairman of the Kronstadt Soviet, T. Vassiliev, and other Communists. If the least harm be suffered by our comrades, the hostages will pay with their lives."

"We want no bloodshed," Kronstadt wired in reply. "Not a single Communist has been harmed by us."

The Petrograd workers are anxiously awaiting developments. They hope that the intercession of the sailors may turn the situation in their favor. The term of office of the Kronstadt Soviet is about to expire, and arrangements are being made for the coming elections.

On March 2 a conference of delegates took place, at which 300 representatives of the ships, the garrison, the labor unions and factories were present, among them also a number of Communists. The Conference approved the Resolution passed by the mass-meeting the previous day. Lenin and Trotsky have declared it counter-revolutionary and proof of a White conspiracy.\*

**RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE CREWS OF THE FIRST AND  
SECOND SQUADRONS OF THE  
BALTIC FLEET**

HELD MARCH 1, 1921

Having heard the report of the representatives sent by the General Meeting of Ship Crews to Petrograd to investigate the situation there, Resolved:

- (1) In view of the fact that the present Soviets do not express the will of the workers

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\*The historic document, suppressed in Russia, is here reproduced in full.

and peasants, immediately to hold new elections by secret ballot, the pre-election campaign to have full freedom of agitation among the workers and peasants;

(2) To establish freedom of speech and press for workers and peasants, for Anarchists and Left Socialist parties;

(3) To secure freedom of assembly for labor unions and peasant organizations;

(4) To call a non-partisan Conference of the workers, Red Army soldiers and sailors of Petrograd, Kronstadt, and of Petrograd Province, no later than March 19, 1921;

(5) To liberate all political prisoners of Socialist parties, as well as all workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors imprisoned in connection with the labor and peasant movements;

(6) To elect a Commission to review the cases of those held in prison and concentration camps;

(7) To abolish all *politodeli* (political bureaus) because no party should be given special privileges in the propagation of its ideas or receive the financial support of the Government for such purposes. Instead there should be established educational and cultural commissions, locally elected and financed by the Government;

(8) To abolish immediately all *zagradytelniye otryadi* (Armed units organized by the Bolsheviks for the purpose of suppressing traffic and confiscating foodstuffs and other products. The irresponsibility and arbitrariness of their methods were proverbial throughout the country).

(9) To equalize the rations of all who work, with the exception of those employed in trades detrimental to health;

(10) To abolish the Communist fighting detachments in all branches of the Army, as well as the Communist guards kept on duty in mills and factories. Should such guards or military detachments be found necessary, they are to be appointed in the Army from the ranks, and in the factories according to the judgment of the workers;

(11) To give the peasants full freedom of action in regard to their land, and also the right to keep cattle, on condition that the peasants manage with their own means; that is, without employing hired labor;

(12) To request all branches of the Army, as well as our comrades, the military *kursanti*, to concur in our resolutions;

(13) To demand for the latter publicity in the press;

(14) To appoint a Traveling Commission of Control;

(15) To permit free *kustarnoye* (individual small scale) production by one's own efforts.

Resolution passed unanimously by Brigade Meeting, two persons refraining from voting.

PETRICHENKO, *Chairman Brigade Meeting.*

PEREPELKIN, *Secretary.*

Resolution passed by an overwhelming majority of the Kronstadt garrison.

VASSILIEV, *Chairman.*

Kalinin and Vassiliev vote against the Resolution.

*March 4.*—Late at night. The extraordinary session of the Petro-Soviet in the Tauride Palace was packed with Communists, mostly youngsters, fanatical and intolerant. Admission by special ticket; a *propusk* (permit) also had to be secured to return home after interdicted hours. Representatives of shops and labor committees were in the galleries, the seats in the main body having been occupied by Communists. Some factory delegates were given the floor, but the moment they attempted to state their case, they were shouted down. Zinoviev repeatedly urged the meeting to give the opposition an opportunity to be heard, but his appeal lacked energy and conviction.

Not a voice was raised in favor of the Constituent Assembly. A millworker pleaded with the Government to consider the complaints of the workers who are cold and hungry. Zinoviev replied that the strikers are enemies of the Soviet regime. Kalinin declared Kronstadt the headquarters of General Kozlovsky's plot. A sailor reminded Zinoviev of the time when he and Lenin were hunted as counter-revolutionists by Kerensky and were saved by the very sailors whom they now denounce as traitors. Kronstadt demands only honest elections, he declared. He was not allowed to proceed. The stentorian voice and impassioned appeal of Yevdakimov, Zinoviev's lieutenant, wrought the Communists up to a high pitch of excitement. His resolution was passed amid a tumult of protest from the non-partisan delegates and labor men. The resolution declared Kronstadt guilty of a counter-revolutionary attempt against the Soviet regime and demands its immediate surrender. It is a declaration of war.

*March 5.*—Many Bolsheviks refuse to believe that the Soviet resolution will be carried out. It were too monstrous a thing to attack by force of arms the "pride and glory of the Russian Revolution," as Trotsky christened the Kronstadt sailors. In the circle of their friends many Communists threaten to resign from the Party should such a bloody deed come to pass.

Trotsky was to address the Petro-Soviet last evening. His failure to appear was interpreted as indicating that the seriousness of the situation has been exaggerated. But during the night he arrived and today he issued an ultimatum to Kronstadt:

The Workers' and Peasants' Government has decreed that Kronstadt and the rebellious ships must immediately submit to the authority of the Soviet Republic. Therefore, I command all who have raised their hand against the Socialist fatherland to lay down their arms at once. The obdurate are to be disarmed and turned over to the Soviet authorities. The arrested Commissars and other representatives of the Government are to be liberated at once. Only those surrendering unconditionally may count on the mercy of the Soviet Republic.

Simultaneously I am issuing orders to prepare to quell the mutiny and subdue the mutineers by force of arms. Responsibility for the harm that may be suffered by the peaceful population will fall entirely upon the heads of the counterrevolutionary mutineers.

This warning is final.

TROTSKY, . . . .  
*Chairman Revolutionary Military  
Soviet of the Republic.*

KAMANEV,  
*Commander-in-Chief.*

The city is on the verge of panic. The factories are closed, and there are rumors of demonstrations and riots. Threats against Jews are becoming audible. Military forces continue to flow into Petrograd and environs. Trotsky has sent another demand to Kronstadt to surrender, the order containing the threat: "I'll shoot you like pheasants." Even some Communists are indignant at the tone assumed by the Government. It is a fatal error, they say, to interpret the workers' plea for bread as opposition. Kronstadt's sympathy with the strikers and

their demand for honest elections have been turned by Zinoviev into a counter-revolutionary plot. I have talked the situation over with several friends, among them a number of Communists. We feel there is yet time to save the situation. A commission in which the sailors and workers would have confidence, could allay the roused passions and find a satisfactory solution of the pressing problems. It is incredible that a comparatively unimportant incident, as the original strike in the Trubotchny mill, should be deliberately provoked into civil war with all the bloodshed it entails.

The Communists with whom I have discussed the suggestion all favor it, but dare not take the initiative. No one believes in the Kozlovsky story. All agree that the sailors are the staunchest supporters of the Soviets; their object is to compel the authorities to grant needed reforms. To a certain degree they have already succeeded. The *zagruditelniye otryadi*, notoriously brutal and arbitrary, have been abolished in the Petrograd province, and certain labor organizations have been given permission to send representatives to the villages for the purchase of food. During the last two days special rations and clothing have also been issued to several factories. The Government fears a general uprising. Petrograd is now in an "extraordinary state of siege"; being out of doors is permitted only till nine in the evening. But the city is quiet. I expect no serious upheaval if the authorities can be prevailed upon to take a more reasonable and just course. In the hope of opening the road to a peaceful solution, I have submitted to Zinoviev a plan of arbitration signed by persons friendly to the Bolsheviki:

To the Petrograd Soviet of Labor and Defense,

CHAIRMAN ZINOVIEV:

To remain silent now is impossible, even criminal. Recent events impel us Anarchists to speak out and to declare our attitude in the present situation.

The spirit of ferment manifest among the workers and sailors is the result of causes that demand our serious attention. Cold and hunger had produced discontent, and the absence of any opportunity for discussion and criticism is forcing the workers and sailors to air their grievances in the open.

White-guardist bands wish and may try to exploit this dissatisfaction in their own class interests. Hiding behind the workers and sailors they throw out slogans of the Constituent Assembly, of free trade and similar demands.

We Anarchists have long exposed the fiction of these slogans, and we declare to the whole world that we will fight with arms against any counter-revolutionary attempt, in cooperation with all friends of the Social Revolution and hand in hand with the Bolsheviki.

Concerning the conflict between the Soviet Government and the workers and sailors, we hold that it must be settled not by force of arms, but by means of comradely agreement. Resorting to bloodshed, on the part of the Soviet Government, will not—in the given situation—intimidate or quieten the workers. On the contrary, it will serve only to aggravate matters and will strengthen the hands of the Entente and of internal counterrevolution.

More important still, the use of force by the Workers' and Peasants' Government against workers and sailors will have a demoralizing effect upon the international revolutionary movement and will result in incalculable harm to the Social Revolution.

Comrades Bolsheviki, bethink yourselves before it is too late! Do not play with fire: you are about to take a most serious and decisive step.

We hereby submit to you the following proposition: Let a Commission be selected to consist of five persons, inclusive of two Anarchists. The Commission is to go to Kronstadt to settle the dispute by peaceful means. In the given situation this is the most radical method. It will be of international revolutionary significance.

ALEXANDER BERKMAN  
EMMA GOLDMAN  
PERKUS  
PETROVSKY

Petrograd, March 5, 1921.

*March 6.*—Today Kronstadt sent out by radio a statement of its position. It reads:

Our cause is just, we stand for the power of Soviets, not parties. We stand for freely elected representatives of the laboring masses. The substitute Soviets manipulated by the Communist Party have always been deaf to our needs and demands; the only reply we have ever received was shooting. . . . Comrades! They deliberately pervert the truth and resort to most despicable defamation. . . . In Kronstadt the whole power is exclusively in the hands of the revolutionary sailors, soldiers and workers—not with counter-revolutionists led by some Kozlovsky, as the lying Moscow radio tries to make you believe. . . . Do not delay, Comrades! Join us, get in touch with us: demand admission to Kronstadt for your delegates. Only they will tell you the whole truth and will expose the fiendish calumny about Finnish bread and Entente offers.

Long live the revolutionary proletariat and the peasantry!  
Long live the power of freely elected Soviets.

*March 7.*—Distant rumbling reaches my ears as I cross the Nevsky. It sounds again, stronger and nearer, as if rolling toward me. All at once I realize that artillery is being fired. It is 6 P. M. Kronstadt has been attacked!

Days of anguish and cannonading. My heart is numb with despair; something has died within me. The people on the streets look bowed with grief, bewildered. No one trusts himself to speak. The thunder of heavy guns rends the air.

*March 17.*—Kronstadt has fallen today.

Thousands of sailors and workers lie dead in its streets. Summary execution of prisoners and hostages continues.

*March 18.*—The victors are celebrating the anniversary of the Commune of 1871. Trotsky and Zinoviev denounce Thiers and Gallifet for the slaughter of the Paris rebels. . . .

## CHAPTER 39

### LAST LINKS IN THE CHAIN

Pensively Pushkin stands on his stone pedestal viewing life flowing by on the square bearing his name. On the boulevard the trees are smiling with budding

green, and promenaders bask in the April sun. Familiar sight of Moscow streets, yet with a strange new atmosphere about the people. The vision of Kronstadt had flashed across the city; its dead embers lie ashen gray on the faces. I sense the disconsolate spirit in the procession of diverse type and attire—workmen in torn footgear, rags wrapped about their legs; students in black shirts belted at the waist, the tails fluttering in the breeze; peasants in *lapti* of woven straw, soldiers in long gray coats, and dark-skinned sons of the Caucasus in brighter colors. Young women mingle with them, in short skirts and bare legs, some wearing men's boots. Most of them are painted, even the little girls. Boldly they gaze at the men, inviting them with their eyes.

Gay music sounds from the garden nearby. At the little tables white-aproned waiters serve food and drinks to the guests. Groups gather at the gate sullenly watching the novel scene. "Bourzhooi! Damned speculators!" they mutter. The *nep\** is at work.

All along the street stores have been opened, their windows washed, freshly painted signs announcing private ownership. Provisions in large quantity and variety are exposed to view. Resentfully men and women crowd on the sidewalk, their eyes devouring the tempting display. "No food for rations!" some one comments sarcastically. "That's what we've been shedding our blood for!" a soldier exclaims with an oath.

On the corner a feminine voice hails me, "Ah, the American *tovarishtch!*" It is Lena, my young acquaintance of the raid of the Okhotny market, over a year ago. She looks very fragile, her paleness accentuated by her crimsoned lips. There is unwonted self-consciousness in her manner, and the pink mounts her face under my gaze. "You see, I didn't manage to get away," she says wearily.

"Get away?" I asked in surprise.

"Don't you remember? It was America or—," she breaks off with a forced smile.

We are in front of a sumptuous delicatessen store. Men in starched shirts and white collars, looking offensively opulent, and elegantly dressed women carry their purchases with free, assured manner. Ragged children besiege them for alms. The passers-by scowl at them angrily. "How many times I was arrested for 'speculation,'" Lena remarks bitterly.

Remembering my visit to her home, I inquire after her family. "Mother, Baby, and Yasha died from typhus," she replies dully. "That's what the certificate said, but I know it was starvation."

"Your cousin?"

"Oh, she is doing well. With some Communist. I'm all alone in the world now."

"Poor Lena," escapes me.

"Oh, I don't want your pity," she cries disconsolately. "Wish I'd died with mother."

Further on the Tverskaya I find "Golos Truda," the Anarchist publishing house, closed, a Tcheka seal on the lock. A man is peering through the window at the havoc wrought within by the raiders. His Red Army cap does not conceal the fresh

\*Popular abbreviation of the "New Economic Policy" reestablishing capitalism. Introduced by the Tenth Congress of Soviets during the Kronstadt days.

scars on his head. With surprise I recognize Stepan, my Petrograd soldier friend. He had been wounded in the Kronstadt campaign, he informs me; the Petrograd hospitals were crowded, and he was sent to Moscow. Now he has been discharged, but he is so weak he is barely able to walk.

"We crossed the Neva at night," he relates; "all in white shrouds like so many ghosts—you couldn't tell us from the snow on the frozen river. Some of the boys didn't want to advance," he looks at me significantly. "The Communist detachment back of us trained machine guns on them—there was no hesitating. The artillery belched from our side; some shots fell short, striking the ice just in front of us. In a flash whole companies disappeared, guns and all, sunk into the deep. It was a frightful night." He pauses a moment; then, bending close to me, he whispers: "In Kronstadt I learned the truth. It's we who were the counter-revolutionists."

The Universalist Club on the Tverskaya is deserted, its active members imprisoned since the Kronstadt events. Anarchists from various parts have been brought to the city, and are now in the Butirki and Taganka jails. In connection with the growing labor discontent severe reprisals are taking place against the revolutionary element and the Communist Labor Opposition which demands industrial democracy.

The situation handicaps the work of the Peter Kropotkin Memorial Committee, in the interests of which I have come to the capital. The Moscow Soviet passed a resolution to aid "Golos Truda" in the publication of the complete works of the great Anarchist thinker, but the Government closed the establishment. The Soviet also donated the house where Kropotkin was born as a home for the Museum, but every attempt to get the place vacated by the Communist organization now occupying it has failed. The official attitude negates all our efforts.

*April 15.*—Unexpected visitors today. I sat in my room (in the apartment of a private family in Leontievsky Alley) when an official entered, accompanied by the house porter and two soldiers. He introduced himself as an agent of the newly organized department "for the improvement of the workers' mode of life," and I could not suppress a smile when he solemnly informed me that the campaign for the benefit of the proletarians is directed by the Tcheka. Better quarters are to be put at the disposal of the toilers, he announced; my room is among those to be "requisitioned" for that purpose. I should have to leave within twenty-four hours.

In entire sympathy with his object, I called the official's attention to the utter impossibility of securing even bed space at such short notice. Permission and "assignments" must first be procured from the Housing Bureau, a procedure which at best takes a week's time; often it requires months. Without deigning a reply the Tchekist stepped into the hallway; opening the first door at hand, he said curtly: "You can stay here in the meantime."

A burst of soapy vapor swept against us. Through the clouds of steam I discerned a bedstead, a little table, and a woman bending over the washtub.

"*Tovarishtch*, here lives—," the house porter remarked timidly.

"It's big enough for two," the official retorted.

"But it's occupied by a woman," I protested.

"You'll manage somehow," he laughed coarsely.

Days spent at the offices of the Housing Bureau bring no results. But a week passes, then another, and no tenants appear to claim my room. The department for the "improvement of the workers' mode of life" is apparently more interested in "requisitioning" occupied lodgings than in putting them at the disposal of the proletarians. Only influence in high places or a generous "gift" secures the favor.\*

Unexpectedly a friendly Communist comes to the rescue. It is arranged that my room be assigned to the Kropotkin Memorial Commission for an office: being the secretary I am permitted to retain it as my living quarters.

*April 30.*—Dark rumors circulate in the city. Three hundred politicals are said to have disappeared from the Butirki prison. Removed by force at night, it is reported; some executed. The Tcheka refuses information.

Several days pass in tortuous uncertainty—many of my friends are among the missing. People living in the neighborhood of the prison tell of frightful cries heard that night and sounds of desperate struggle. The authorities profess complete ignorance.

Gradually the facts begin to leak out. It has become known that the fifteen hundred non-politicals in the Butirki had declared a hunger strike in protest against the unhygienic conditions. The cells were overcrowded and unspeakably filthy, the doors locked even by day, the toilet buckets seldom removed, poisoning the air with fetid smells. The sanitary commission had warned the administration of the imminent danger of an epidemic, but its recommendations were ignored. Then the strike broke out. On the fourth day some of the prisoners became hysterical. Unearthly yells and the rattling of iron doors shook the prison for hours, the uproar rousing the neighborhood in alarm.

The politicals did not participate in the demonstration. Segregated in a separate wing, they had by collective action compelled concessions. Their situation was much more tolerable than that of the "common" prisoners. But their sense of human kinship determined them to intercede. Their expostulations finally induced the Tcheka to declare the demands of the hunger strikers just and to promise immediate relief. Thereupon the "commoners" terminated their protest, and the incident was apparently closed.

But a few days later, on the night of April 25, a detachment of soldiers and Tchekists suddenly appeared in the prison. One by one the cells of the politicals were attacked, the men beaten and the women dragged by their hair into the yard, most of them in their night clothes. Some of the victims, fearing they were being taken to execution, resisted. Butts of guns and revolvers silenced them. Overcome, they were forced into automobiles and taken to the railroad station.

Investigation by the Moscow Soviet has now elicited the information that the kidnapped politicals, comprising Mensheviki, Social Revolutionists of the Right and Left, and Anarchists, have been isolated in rigorous solitary in the most dreaded Tsarist prisons in Ryazan, Orlov, Yaroslavl, and Vladimir.

*June.*—Intensive preparations are being made for the reception of the foreign delegations. The Congress of the *Comintern* (Communist International) and first Conference of the Red Trade Unions are to be held simultaneously.

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\*Several months later the entire Moscow Housing Department, comprising several hundred agents and chief commissars, was arrested on charges of graft.

The city is in holiday attire. Red flags and banners decorate official buildings and the residences of prominent Bolsheviks. The filth of months is carted off the streets; swarms of child hucksters are being arrested; the beggars have disappeared from their customary haunts, and the Tverskaya is cleared of prostitutes. The main thoroughfares are emblazoned with revolutionary mottoes, and colored posters illustrate the “triumph of Communism.”

In the Hotel Luxe, palatial hostelry of the capital, are quartered the influential representatives of the foreign Communist parties. The street in front is lined with automobiles; I recognize the Royce of Karakhan and Zinoviev’s machine from the garages of the Kremlin. Frequent tours are arranged to places of historic interest and Bolshevik meccas, always under the guidance of attendants and interpreters selected by the Tcheka. Within there is an atmosphere of feverish activity. The brilliant banquet hall is crowded. The velvety cushions and bright foliage of the smoking room are restful to the delegates of the Western proletariat.

On the sidewalk opposite the Hotel women and children lurk in the hallways. Furtively they watch the soldiers unloading huge loaves of bread from a truck. A few chunks have fallen to the ground—the urchins dart under the wagon in a mad scramble.

All traffic is suspended on the Theatre Square. Soldiers in new uniforms and polished boots, and mounted troopers form a double chain around the big square, completely shutting off access. Only holders of special cards, provided with photographs and properly attested, are permitted to pass to the Big Theatre. The Congress of the *Comintern* is in session.

*July 4.*—Polyglot speech fills my room far into the small hours of the morning. Delegates from distant lands call to discuss Russia and the Revolution. As in a dream they vision the glory of revelation and are thrilled with admiration for the Bolsheviks. With glowing fervor they dwell on the wondrous achievements of Communism. Like a jagged scalpel their naive faith tears at my heart where bleeding lie my own high hopes, the hopes of my first days in Russia, deflowered and blighted by the ruthless hand of dictatorship.

Most sanguine and confident are the latest arrivals, secluded in the atmosphere of the Luxe and entirely unfamiliar with the life and thought of the people. Fascinated and awed, they marvel at the genius of the Party and its amazing success. Tyranny and oppression in Russia are things of the past, they believe; the masses have become free, for the first time in the annals of man. Ignorance and poverty, the evil heritage of Tsardom and long civil war, will soon be outlived, and plenty shall be the birthright of everyone in the land where the disinherited have become the masters of life.

Occasionally in the discussion a discordant note is sounded by the new economic policy. The seeming deflection from avowed principles is perplexing. Does it not hold the menace of returning capitalism? A smile of benevolent superiority waves the timid questioner aside. The *nep* is ingenious camouflage, he is assured. It is of no particular significance—at most, it is a temporary expedient, an economic Brest-Litovsk in a way, to be swept away at the first blast of revolution in the West.

The more reflective among the delegates are disturbed. Life in revolutionary Russia is too reminiscent of home: some are well-fed and well-clad, others hungry and in rags; the wage system continues, and all things can be bought and sold. Apologetically, almost guiltily, they express the apprehension that legalization of commerce might cultivate the psychology of the trader, which Lenin always insisted must be destroyed. But they are resentfully terrified when a Hindoo visitor suggests that the Tcheka had apparently flogged the peasants into taking the whip into their own hands.

Day by day the problems of the Revolution are discussed with increasing understanding of the causes responsible for the great deviation from the road entered upon in October, 1917. But the pressing need of the present centers the greatest attention. "Though Syndicalists, we have joined the Third International," the Spanish delegate announces; "we believe it the duty of all revolutionists to cooperate with the Bolsheviki at this critical period."

"They won't let us," one of the Russians replies.

"All can help in the economic reconstruction," the Spaniard urges.

"You think so?" the visiting Petrograd worker demands. "You've heard of the great strikes last winter, haven't you? The wood famine was the main cause of the trouble, and the Communists themselves were responsible for it."

"How is that?" a French delegate inquires.

"The usual Bolshevik methods. A man of proven organizing genius was at the head of the Petrograd fuel department. His name? Never mind—he's an old revolutionist who spent ten years in Schlüsselburg under the old regime. He kept the city supplied with wood and coal; he even organized a branch in Moscow for the same purpose. He surrounded himself with a staff of efficient men; many of the American deportees were among them, and they succeeded where the Government had previously failed. But one day Dzerzhinsky got the notion that the fuel manager was permitted too much scope. The Moscow branch was liquidated, and in Petrograd a political commissar was placed over him, handicapping and interfering with his work. The famine was the result."

"But why? Why was it done?" several delegates exclaim.

"He was an Anarchist."

"There must have been some misunderstanding," the Australian suggests.

"The policy of the Communists throughout the country," the Russian says sadly.

"Friends, let us forget past mistakes," the Frenchman appeals. "I'm sure closer contact can be brought about between the Government and the revolutionary elements. I'll speak to Lenin about it. We in France see no reason for this strife. All revolutionists should work together with the Bolsheviki."

"Most of them are in prison," a former sailor remarks bitterly.

"I don't mean those who took up arms against the Republic," the Frenchman retorts. "Counter-revolution, like that of Kronstadt, must be crushed, and—"

"Don't repeat Bolshevik lies," the sailor interrupts vehemently. "Kronstadt fought for free Soviets."

"I know only what I heard from Communist comrades," the Frenchman continues. "But I am convinced that all real revolutionists, like Left S. R.'s, Anarchists, and Syndicalists should work together with the Communist Party."

"Almost all of them in prison," the Petrograd man repeats.

“Impossible!” the Spanish delegate protests. “The Communists have assured me that only bandits and counter-revolutionists are in jail.”

A small, slender woman in a faded jacket hastily enters the room. She is greatly agitated and very pale. “Comrades,” she announces, “the thirteen Anarchists in the Taganka have gone on a hunger strike.” With trembling voice she adds: “It’s to the death.”

*July 9.*—Opposition has developed at the Trade Union Congress against the domination of the *Comintern*. All important matters are first decided by the latter before being submitted to the labor men. The delegates resent the autocratic methods of the Communist chairman; the inequitable distribution of votes is a source of constant friction. The Bolsheviki are charged with “packing” the Congress with delegates from countries having no industrial movement. An atmosphere of disillusionment and bitterness pervades the sessions. The French delegation threatens to bolt.

Some of the Germans, Swedish, and Spanish members are perturbed by the general situation. They have come in contact with the actual conditions; they have sensed the spirit of popular discontent and caught a glimpse of the chasm between Communist claims and the reality. The hunger strikes of the politicals in Moscow, Petrograd, and other cities have become a subject of great concern. The prisoners are undernourished and exhausted; the desperate decision jeopardizes their lives. It were criminal to permit such a tragedy. Moreover, it is felt that their protest is justified. In defiance of the Soviet Constitution, the politicals have been kept in prison for months, some even for years, without charges being brought against them.

The foreign delegates propose to call the subject to the attention of the Congress. They will refuse to cooperate with the Bolsheviki, they assert, while their comrades remain in prison without cause. Fearing a serious rupture, some delegates secured an audience with Lenin. The latter declared that the Government would not tolerate opposition; hunger strikes cannot swerve it from its purpose, though all the politicals chose to starve to death. But he would agree to have the imprisoned Anarchists deported from Russia, he said. The matter is to be immediately submitted to the Central Committee of the Party.

*July 10.*—Eighth day of the Taganka hunger strike. The men very weak; most of them unable to walk; several have developed heart trouble. The young student Sheroshevsky is dying from consumption.

The Central Committee has taken action on Lenin’s suggestion. A joint committee representing the Government and the foreign delegates has been formed to arrange the conditions of release and deportation of the Anarchists. But so far the conferences have brought no results. Dzerzhinsky and Unschlicht, now acting head of the Tcheka, claim there are no real Anarchists in the prisons; just bandits, they declare. They have thrown the burden of proof upon the delegates by demanding that the latter submit a complete list of those to be released. The delegates feel that the matter is being sabotaged to gain time till the Trade Union Congress closes.

*July 13.*—At last we succeeded in holding a session this evening. Trotsky was

absent, his place taken by Lunatcharsky as the representative of the Party. The conference was held in the Kremlin.

Unschlicht, a stocky young man, dark featured and morose, in every gesture expressed his resentment of "foreign interference" in his sphere. He would not speak directly to the delegates, addressing himself only to Lunatcharsky. His frank discourtesy unpleasantly affected the foreigners, and the conference was conducted in a formal, stiff manner. After much wrangling the Committee reached an agreement, as a result of which the following communication was sent to the prisoners:

Comrades in view of the fact that we have come to the conclusion that your hunger strike cannot accomplish your liberation, we hereby advise you to terminate it.

At the same time we inform you that definite proposals have been made to us by Comrade Lunatcharsky, in the name of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. To wit:

1. All Anarchists held in the prisons of Russia, and who are now on a hunger strike, will be permitted to leave for any country they may choose. They will be supplied with passports and funds.

2. Concerning other imprisoned Anarchists or those out of prison, final action will be taken by the Party tomorrow. It is the opinion of Comrade Lunatcharsky that the decision in their case will be similar to the present one.

3. We have received the promise indorsed by Unschlicht, that the families of the comrades to go abroad will be permitted to follow them if they so wish. For conspirative reasons some time will have to elapse before this is done.

4. The comrades going abroad will be permitted two or three days at liberty before their departure, to enable them to arrange their affairs.

5. They will not be allowed to return to Russia without the consent of the Soviet Government.

6. Most of these conditions are contained in the letter received by this delegation from the Central Committee of the Communist Party, signed by Irotsky.

7. The foreign comrades have been authorized to see to it that these conditions are properly carried out.

(Signatures)

ORLANDI } Spain  
LEVAL }

SIROLLE } France  
MICHEL }

A. SHAPIRO—Russia

The above is correct.

(Signed) LUNATCHARSKY.

Kremlin, Moscow, 13/vii/1921.

Alexander Berkman declines to sign because

- a. he is opposed to deportation on principle;
- b. he considers the letter an arbitrary and unjustified curtailment of the original offer of the Central Committee, according to which all the Anarchists were to be permitted to leave Russia;
- c. he demands more time at liberty for those to be released to enable them to recuperate before deportation.

*July 14.*—The hunger protest was terminated last night. The prisoners are momentarily expecting to be freed. Extremely weakened and in highly nervous state after eleven days of striking.

Like a bombshell came Bukharin's attack upon the Anarchists in the closing hour of the Trade Union Congress. Though not a delegate, he secured the platform and in the name of the Communist Party denounced the hunger strikers as counter-revolutionists. The whole Anarchist movement of Russia, he declared, is criminal banditism waging warfare against the Soviet Republic; it is identical with Makhno and his *povstantsi* who are exterminating Communists and fighting against the Revolution.

The session was thrown into an uproar. The majority of delegates resented this breach of faith in view of the tacit agreement to eliminate the matter from the Congress. But the chairman refused to permit a rejoinder, declaring the subject closed. A storm of indignation swept the house.

The insistence of the Congress at last compelled a hearing, and a French delegate took the floor to reply to Bukharin's charges. In the name of the Revolution he solemnly protested against the sinister Machiavelian diplomacy of the Bolsheviks. To attack the opposition at the closing of the Congress, without an opportunity of defense, he declared, was an act of perfidy unworthy of a revolutionary party. Its sole purpose was to prejudice the departing delegates against the revolutionary minority and justify continued political persecution; its obviously desired effect to annul the conciliatory efforts of the Joint Committee.

*August 10.*—Days and weeks are passing; the politicals still remain in prison. The conferences of the Joint Committee have practically ceased—rarely can the representatives of the Government be induced to attend. The promises of Lenin and Lunatcharsky are broken. The Tcheka has made the resolution of the Executive Committee of the Party ineffective.

The Congresses are closed, and most of the delegates have departed.

*September 17.*—At noon today the hunger strikers were released from the Taganka, two months after the Government had pledged their liberation. The men look worn and old, withered by anguish and privation. They have been put under surveillance and forbidden to meet their comrades. It is said weeks will pass before opportunity will be given them to leave the country. They are not permitted to work and they have no means of subsistence.\* The Tcheka declares that no other politicals will be freed. Arrests of revolutionists are taking place throughout the country.

*September 30.*—With bowed heart I seek a familiar bench in the park. Here little Fanya sat at my side. Her face was turned to the sun, her whole being radiant with idealism. Her silvery laughter rang with the joy of youth and life, but I trembled for her safety at every approaching step. "Do not fear," she kept reassuring me, "no one will know me in my peasant disguise."

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\*Not till January, 1922, were the released Taganka Anarchists deported to Germany.

Now she is dead. Executed yesterday by the Tcheka as a “bandit.”\*

Gray are the passing days. One by one the embers of hope have died out. Terror and despotism have crushed the life born in October. The slogans of the Revolution are foresworn, its ideals stifled in the blood of the people. The breath of yesterday is dooming millions to death; the shadow of today hangs like a black pall over the country. Dictatorship is trampling the masses under foot. The Revolution is dead; its spirit cries in the wilderness.

High time the truth about the Bolsheviki were told. The whited sepulcher must be unmasked, the clay feet of the fetish beguiling the international proletariat to fatal will o’ the wisps exposed. The Bolshevik myth must be destroyed.

I have decided to leave Russia.

**THE END**

\*Fanya Baron and Lev Tchorny, Anarchist poet and author, were executed with eight other prisoners by the Moscow Tcheka in September, 1921.

**Section 2:**  
***The Kronstadt Rebellion***  
***and***  
***The Russian Tragedy***

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*In 1922 Berkman, in exile, published two pamphlets: The Kronstadt Rebellion, a detailed account of that event, and The Russian Tragedy, an examination of the Russian Revolution and subsequent events. In contrast to the very personal Memoirs and the Myth, these two pamphlets are analytical and written with the obvious intent of affecting world opinion and action toward the Bolshevik government. The Kronstadt Rebellion is excerpted here so as not to overlap with Berkman's account of it in The Myth. The Russian Tragedy is included here in its entirety.*

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## From *The Kronstadt Rebellion*

### 1 Labour Disturbances in Petrograd

It was early in 1921. Long years of war, revolution, and civil struggle had bled Russia to exhaustion and brought her people to the brink of despair. But at last civil war was at an end; the numerous fronts were liquidated, and Wrangel—the last hope of Entente intervention and Russian counter-revolution—was defeated and his military activities within Russia terminated. The people now confidently looked forward to the mitigation of the severe Bolshevik regime. It was expected that with the end of civil war the Communists would lighten the burdens, abolish war-time restrictions, introduce some fundamental liberties, and begin the organisation of a more normal life. Though far from being popular, the Bolshevik government had the support of the workers in its oft announced plan of taking up the economic reconstruction of the country as soon as military operations should cease. The people were eager to cooperate, to put their initiative and creative efforts to the upbuilding of the ruined land.

Most unfortunately, these expectations were doomed to disappointment. The Communist State showed no intention of loosening the yoke. The same policies continued, with labour militarisation still further enslaving the people, embittering them with added oppression and tyranny, and in consequence paralysing every possibility of industrial revival. The last hope of the proletariat was perishing; the conviction grew that the Communist Party was more interested in retaining political power than in saving the Revolution.

The most revolutionary elements of Russia, the workers of Petrograd, were the first to speak out. They charged that, aside from other causes, Bolshevik centralisation, bureaucracy, and autocratic attitude toward the peasants and workers were directly responsible for much of the misery and suffering of the people. Many factories and mills of Petrograd had been closed, and the workers were literally starving. They called meetings to consider the situation. The meetings were suppressed by the government. The Petrograd proletariat, who had borne the brunt of the revolutionary struggles and whose great sacrifices and heroism alone had saved the city from Yudenitch, resented the action of the government. Feeling against the methods employed by the Bolsheviks continued to grow. More meetings were called with the same result. The Communists would make no concessions to the proletariat, while at the same time they were offering to compromise with the capitalists of Europe and America. The workers were indignant—they became aroused. To compel the government to listen to their demands, strikes were called in the Patronny munition works, the Trubotchny and Baltiyski mills, and in the Laferm factory. Instead of talking matters over with the dissatisfied workers, the 'Workers' and Peasants' Government' created a war-time *Komitet Oborony* (Committee of Defence) with Zinoviev, the most hated man in Petrograd, as Chairman. The avowed purpose of that Committee was to suppress the strike movement.

It was on February 24th that the strikes were declared. The same day the Bolsheviks sent the *kursanti*, the Communist students of the military academy (training officers for the Army and Navy), to disperse the workers who had gathered on Vassilevsky Ostrov, the labour district of Petrograd. The next day, February 25th, the indignant strikers of Vassilevsky Ostrov visited the Admiralty

shops and the Galernaya docks, and induced the workers there to join their protest against the autocratic attitude of the Government. The attempted street demonstration of the strikers was dispersed by armed soldiery.

On February 26th the Petrograd Soviet held a session at which the prominent Communist Lashevitch, member of the Committee of Defence and of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic, denounced the strike movement in sharpest terms. He charged the workers of the Trubotchny factory with inciting dissatisfaction, accused them of being 'self-seeking labour skinners (*shkurniki*) and counter-revolutionists', and proposed that the Trubotchny factory be closed. The Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet (Zinoviev, Chairman) accepted the suggestion. The Trubotchny strikers were locked out and thus automatically deprived of their rations.

These methods of the Bolshevik Government served still further to embitter and antagonise the workers.

Strikers' proclamations now began to appear on the streets of Petrograd. Some of them assumed a distinctly political character, the most significant of them, posted on the walls of the city February 27, reading;

A complete change is necessary in the policies of the Government. First of all, the workers and peasants need freedom. They don't want to live by the decrees of the Bolsheviks; they want to control their own destinies.

Comrades, preserve revolutionary order! Determinedly and in an organised manner demand—

Liberation of all arrested socialists and non-partisan workingmen.

Abolition of martial law; freedom of speech, press and assembly for all who labour.

Free election of shop and factory committees (*zahvkom*), of labour, union and soviet representatives.

Call meetings, pass resolutions, send your delegates to the authorities and work for the realisation of your demands.

The government replied to the demands of the strikers by making numerous arrests and suppressing several labour organisations. The action resulted in popular temper growing more anti-Bolshevik; reactionary slogans began to be heard. Thus on February 28 there appeared a proclamation of the 'Socialist Workers of the Nevsky District', which concluded with a call for the Constituent Assembly;

We know who is afraid of the Constituent Assembly. It is they who will no longer be able to rob the people. Instead they will have to answer before the representatives of the people for their deceit, their robberies, and all their crimes.

Down with the hated Communists!

Down with the Soviet Government!

Long live the Constituent Assembly!

Meanwhile the Bolsheviks concentrated in Petrograd large military forces from the provinces and also ordered to the city its most trusted Communist regiments from the front. Petrograd was put under 'extraordinary martial law'. The strikers were overawed, and the labour unrest crushed with an iron hand.

### 3 Bolshevik Conspiracy Against Kronstadt

Petrograd was in a state of high nervous tension. New strikes had broken out and there were persistent rumours of labour disorders in Moscow, of peasant uprisings in the East and in Siberia. For lack of a reliable public press the people gave credence to the most exaggerated and even to obviously false reports. All eyes were on Kronstadt in expectation of momentous developments.

The Bolsheviks lost no time in organising their attack against Kronstadt. Already on March 2 the Government issued a *prikaz* (order) signed by Lenin and Trotsky, which denounced the Kronstadt movement as a *myatezh*, a mutiny against the Communist authorities. In that document the sailors were charged with being 'the tools of former Tsarist generals who together with Socialist Revolutionary traitors staged a counter-revolutionary conspiracy against the proletarian Republic'. The Kronstadt movement for free Soviets was characterised by Lenin and Trotsky as 'the work of Entente interventionists and French spies'. 'On February 28', the *prikaz* read, 'there were passed by the men of the *Petropavlovsk* resolutions breathing the spirit of the Black Hundreds. Then there appeared on the scene the group of the former general, Kozlovsky. He and three of his officers, whose names we have not yet ascertained, have openly assumed the role of rebellion. Thus the meaning of recent events has become evident. Behind the Socialist Revolutionists again stands a Tsarist general. In view of all this the Council of Labour and Defence orders -

- 1) To declare the former general Kozlovsky and his aides outlawed;
- 2) To put the City of Petrograd and the Petrograd Province under martial law;
- 3) To place supreme power over the whole Petrograd District into the hands of the Petrograd Defence Committee'.

There was indeed a former general, Kozlovsky, in Kronstadt. It was Trotsky who had placed him there as an artillery specialist. He played no role whatever in the Kronstadt events, but the Bolsheviks cleverly exploited his name to denounce the sailors as enemies of the Soviet Republic and their movement as counter-revolutionary. The official Bolshevik press now began its campaign of calumny and defamation of Kronstadt as a hotbed of 'White conspiracy headed by General Kozlovsky', and Communist agitators were sent among the workers in the mills and factories of Petrograd and Moscow to call upon the proletariat 'to rally to the support and defence of the Workers' and Peasants' Government against the counter-revolutionary uprising in Kronstadt'.

Far from having anything to do with generals and counter-revolutionists, the Kronstadt sailors refused to accept aid even from the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Its leader, Victor Chernov, then in Reval, attempted to influence the sailors in favour of his Party and its demands, but received no encouragement from the Provisional Revolutionary Committee. Chernov sent to Kronstadt the following radio\* -

The Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, Victor Chernov, sends his fraternal greetings to the heroic comrades-sailors, the Red Army men and workers, who for the third time since 1905 are throwing off the yoke of tyranny. He offers to aid with men

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\*Published in *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* (Socialist Revolutionist Journal), Number 8, May 1921. See also *Moscow Izvestia* (Communist), Number 154, July 13, 1922.

and to provision Kronstadt through the Russian co-operatives abroad. Inform what and how much is needed. Am prepared to come in person and give my energies and authority to the service of the people's revolution. I have faith in the final victory of the labouring masses. . . . Hail to the first to raise the banner of the people's liberation! Down with despotism from the left and right!

At the same time the Socialist Revolutionary Party sent the following message to Kronstadt;

The Socialist Revolutionist delegation abroad. . . . now that the cup of the people's wrath is overflowing, offers to help with all means in its power in the struggle for liberty and popular government. Inform in what ways help is desired. Long live the people's revolution! Long live free Soviets and the Constituent Assembly!

The Kronstadt Revolutionary Committee declined the Socialist Revolutionist offers. It sent the following reply to Victor Chernov;

The Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Kronstadt expresses to all our brothers abroad its deep gratitude and sympathy. The Provisional Revolutionary Committee is thankful for the offer of comrade Chernov, but it refrains for the present; that is, till further developments become clarified. Meantime, everything will be taken into consideration.

Petrichenko  
Chairman Provisional Revolutionary Committee

Moscow, however, continued its campaign of misrepresentation. On March 3 the Bolshevik radio sent out the following message to the world (certain parts undecipherable owing to interference from another station);

. . . . That the armed uprising of the former general Kozlovsky has been organised by the spies of the Entente, like many similar previous plots, is evident from the bourgeois French newspaper *Matin*, which two weeks prior to the Kozlovsky rebellion published the following telegram from Helsingfors; 'As a result of the recent Kronstadt uprising the Bolshevik military authorities have taken steps to isolate Kronstadt and to prevent the sailors and soldiers of Kronstadt from entering Petrograd'. . . . It is clear that the Kronstadt uprising was made in Paris and organised by the French secret service. . . . The Socialist Revolutionists, also controlled and directed from Paris, have been preparing rebellions against the Soviet Government, and no sooner were their preparations made than there appeared the real master, the Tsarist general.

The character of the numerous other messages sent by Moscow can be judged by the following radio;

Petrograd is orderly and quiet, and even the few factories where accusations against the Soviet Government were recently voiced now understand that it is the work of provocateurs. They realise where the agents of the Entente and of counter-revolution are leading them to.

. . . Just at this moment, when in America a new republican regime is assuming the reins of government and showing inclination to take up business relations with Soviet Russia, the spreading of lying rumours and the organisation of disturbances in Kronstadt have the sole purpose of influencing the new American President and changing his policy toward Russia. At the same time the London Conference is holding its sessions, and the spreading of similar rumours must influence also the Turkish delegation

and make it more submissive to the demands of the Entente. The rebellion of the *Petropavlovsk* crew is undoubtedly part of a great conspiracy to create trouble within Soviet Russia and to injure our international position. . . . This plan is being carried out within Russia by a Tsarist general and former officers, and their activities are supported by the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionists.

The Petrograd Committee of Defence, directed by Zinoviev, its Chairman, assumed full control of the City and Province of Petrograd. The whole Northern District was put under martial law and all meetings prohibited. Extraordinary precautions were taken to protect the Government institutions and machine guns were placed in the Astoria, the hotel occupied by Zinoviev and other high Bolshevik functionaries. The proclamations pasted on the street bulletin boards ordered the immediate return of all strikers to the factories, prohibited suspension of work, and warned the people against congregating on the streets. 'In such cases', the order read, 'the soldiery will resort to arms. In case of resistance, shooting on the spot'.

The Committee of Defence took up the systematic 'cleaning of the city'. Numerous workers, soldiers and sailors, suspected of sympathising with Kronstadt, were placed under arrest. All Petrograd sailors and several Army regiments thought to be 'politically untrustworthy' were ordered to distant points, while the families of Kronstadt sailors living in Petrograd were taken into custody as **hostages**. The Committee of Defence notified Kronstadt of its action by a proclamation scattered over the city from an aeroplane on March 4, which stated;

The Committee of Defence declares that the arrested are held as hostages for the Commissar of the Baltic Fleet, N. N. Kuzmin, the Chairman of the Kronstadt Soviet, T. Vassiliev, and other Communists. If the least harm be suffered by our detained comrades, the hostages will pay with their lives.

'We do not want bloodshed. Not a single Communist has been shot by us', was Kronstadt's reply.

#### 4 The Aims of Kronstadt

Kronstadt revived with new life. Revolutionary enthusiasm rose to the level of the October days when the heroism and devotion of the sailors played such a decisive role. Now, for the first time since the Communist Party assumed exclusive control of the Revolution and the fate of Russia, Kronstadt felt itself free. A new spirit of solidarity and brotherhood brought the sailors, the soldiers of the garrison, the factory workers, and the non-partisan elements together in united effort for their common cause. Even Communists were infected by the fraternisation of the whole city and joined in the work preparatory to the approaching elections to the Kronstadt Soviet.

Among the first steps taken by the Provisional Revolutionary Committee was the preservation of revolutionary order in Kronstadt and the publication of the Committee's official organ, the daily *Izvestia*. Its first appeal to the people of Kronstadt (issue number 1, March 3, 1921) was thoroughly characteristic of the attitude and temper of the sailors. 'The Revolutionary Committee', it read, 'is most concerned that no blood be shed. It has exerted its best efforts to organise revolutionary order in the city, the fortress and the forts. Comrades and citizens, do

not suspend work! Workers, remain at your machines; sailors and soldiers, be on your posts. All Soviet employees and institutions should continue their labours. The Provisional Revolutionary Committee calls upon you all, comrades and citizens, to give it your support and aid. Its mission is to organise, in fraternal co-operation with you, the conditions necessary for honest and just elections to the new Soviet'.

The pages of the *Izvestia* bear abundant witness to the deep faith of the Revolutionary Committee in the people of Kronstadt and their aspirations towards free Soviets as the true road of liberation from the oppression of Communist bureaucracy. In its daily organ and radio messages the Revolutionary Committee indignantly resented the Bolshevik campaign of calumny and repeatedly appealed to the proletariat of Russia and of the world for understanding, sympathy, and help. The radio of March 6 sounds the keynote of Kronstadt's call;

Our cause is just: we stand for the power of Soviets, not parties. We stand for freely elected representatives of the labouring masses. The substitute Soviets manipulated by the Communist Party have always been deaf to our needs and demands; the only reply we have ever received was shooting. . . . Comrades! They not only deceive you: they deliberately pervert the truth and resort to most despicable defamation. . . . In Kronstadt the whole power is exclusively in the hands of the revolutionary sailors, soldiers and workers—not with counter-revolutionists led by some Kozlovsky, as the lying Moscow radio tries to make you believe. . . . Do not delay, comrades! Join us, get in touch with us: demand admission to Kronstadt for your delegates. Only they will tell you the whole truth and will expose the fiendish calumny about Finnish bread and Entente offers.

Long live the revolutionary proletariat and the peasantry!

Long live the power of freely elected Soviets!

The Provisional Revolutionary Committee first had its headquarters on the flagship *Petropavlovsk*, but within a few days it removed to the 'People's Home', in the centre of Kronstadt, in order to be, as the *Izvestia* states, 'in closer touch with the people and make access to the Committee easier than on the ship'. Although the Communist press continued its virulent denunciation of Kronstadt as 'the counter-revolutionary rebellion of General Kozlovsky', the truth of the matter was that the Revolutionary Committee was exclusively proletarian, consisting for the most part of workers of known revolutionary record. The Committee comprised the following 15 members:

- 1) Petrichenko, senior clerk, flagship *Petropavlovsk*
- 2) Yakovenko, telephone operator, Kronstadt District
- 3) Ossossov, machinist, *Sevastopol*
- 4) Arkhipov, engineer
- 5) Perepelkin, mechanic, *Sevastopol*
- 6) Patrushev, head mechanic, *Petropavlovsk*
- 7) Kupolov, senior medical assistant
- 8) Vershinin, sailor, *Sevastopol*
- 9) Tugin, electrical mechanic
- 10) Romanenko, caretaker of aviation docks
- 11) Oreshin, manager of the Third Industrial School
- 12) Valk, lumber mill worker
- 13) Pavlov, naval mining worker

14) Baikov, carter

15) Kilgast, deep sea sailor.

Not without a sense of humour did the Kronstadt *Izvestia* remark in this connection; 'These are our generals, Messrs. Trotsky and Zinoviev, while the Brussilovs, the Kamenevs, the Tukhachevskis, and the other celebrities of the Tsarist regime are on your side'.

The Provisional Revolutionary Committee enjoyed the confidence of the whole population of Kronstadt. It won general respect by establishing and firmly adhering to the principle of 'equal rights for all, privileges to none'. The *payok* (food ration) was equalised. The sailors, who under Bolshevik rule always received rations far in excess of those allotted to the workers, themselves voted to accept no more than the average citizen and toiler. Special rations and delicacies were given only to hospitals and children's homes.

The just and generous attitude of the Revolutionary Committee toward the Kronstadt members of the Communist Party—few of whom had been arrested in spite of Bolshevik repressions and the holding of the sailors' families as hostages—won the respect even of the Communists. The pages of the *Izvestia* contain numerous communications from Communist groups and organisations of Kronstadt, condemning the attitude of the Central Government and endorsing the stand and measures of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee. Many Kronstadt Communists publicly announced their withdrawal from the Party as a protest against its despotism and bureaucratic corruption. In various issues of the *Izvestia* there are to be found hundreds of names of Communists whose conscience made it impossible for them to 'remain in the Party of the executioner Trotsky', as some of them expressed it. Resignations from the Communist Party soon became so numerous as to resemble a general exodus.

\* \* \*

Kronstadt was inspired by passionate love of a Free Russia and unbounded faith in true Soviets. It was confident of gaining the support of the whole of Russia, of Petrograd in particular, thus bringing about the final liberation of the country. The Kronstadt *Izvestia* reiterates this hope and attitude, and in numerous articles and appeals it seeks to clarify its position toward the Bolsheviks and its aspiration to lay the foundation of a new, free life for itself and the rest of Russia. This great aspiration, the purity of its motives and its fervent hope of liberation stand out in striking relief on the pages of the official organ of the Kronstadt Provisional Revolutionary Committee and thoroughly express the spirit of the soldiers, sailors and workers. The virulent attacks of the Bolshevik press, the infamous lies sent broadcast by the Moscow radio station accusing Kronstadt of counter-revolution and White conspiracy, the Revolutionary Committee replied to in a dignified manner. It often reproduced in its organ the Moscow proclamations in order to show to the people of Kronstadt to what depths the Bolsheviks had sunk. Occasionally the Communist methods were exposed and characterised by the *Izvestia* with just indignation, as in its issue of March 8, (number 6), under the heading 'We and They';

Not knowing how to retain the power that is falling from their hands, the Communists resort to the vilest provocative means. Their contemptible press has mobilised

all its forces to incite the masses and put the Kronstadt movement in the light of a Whiteguard conspiracy. Now a clique of shameless villains has sent word to the world that 'Kronstadt has sold itself to Finland'. Their newspapers spit fire and poison, and because they have failed to persuade the proletariat that Kronstadt is in the hands of counter-revolutionists, they are now trying to play on the nationalistic feelings.

The whole world already knows from our radios what the Kronstadt garrison and workers are fighting for. But the Communists are striving to pervert the meaning of events and thus mislead our Petrograd brothers.

Petrograd is surrounded by the bayonets of the *kursanti* and the Party 'guards', and Maliuta Skuratov—Trotsky—does not permit the delegates of the non-partisan workers and soldiers to go to Kronstadt. He fears they would learn the whole truth there, and that truth would immediately sweep the Communists away and the thus enlightened labouring masses would take the power into their own horny hands.

That is the reason that the *Petro-Soviet* (Soviet of Petrograd) did not reply to our radio-telegram in which we asked that really impartial comrades be sent to Kronstadt.

Fearing for their own skins, the leaders of the Communists suppress the truth and disseminate the lie that White guardists are active in Kronstadt, that the Kronstadt proletariat has sold itself to Finland and to French spies, that the Finns have already organised an army in order to attack Petrograd with the aid of Kronstadt *myatezhniki* (mutineers), and so forth.

To all this we can reply only this: All power to the Soviets! Keep your hands off them, the hands that are red with the blood of the martyrs of liberty who have died fighting against the White guardists, the landlords, and the bourgeoisie!

In simple and frank speech Kronstadt sought to express the will of the people yearning for freedom and for the opportunity to shape their own destinies. It felt itself the advance guard, so to speak, of the proletariat of Russia about to rise in defence of the great aspirations for which the people had fought and suffered in the October Revolution. The faith of Kronstadt in the Soviet system was deep and firm; its all-inclusive slogan, All power to the Soviets, not to parties! That was its programme; it did not have time to develop it or to theorise. It strove for the emancipation of the people from the Communist yoke. That yoke, no longer bearable, made a new revolution, the **Third Revolution**, necessary. The road to liberty and peace lay in freely elected Soviets, 'the cornerstone of the new revolution'. The pages of the *Izvestia* bear rich testimony to the unspoiled directness and single-mindedness of the Kronstadt sailors and workers, and the touching faith they had in their mission as the initiators of the **Third Revolution**. These aspirations and hopes are clearly set forth in number 6 of the *Izvestia*, March 8, in the leading editorial entitled 'What We Are Fighting For';

With the October Revolution the working class had hoped to achieve its emancipation. But there resulted an even greater enslavement of human personality.

The power of the police and gendarme monarchy fell into the hands of usurpers—the Communists—who, instead of giving the people liberty, have instilled in them only the constant fear of the Cheka, which by its horrors surpasses even the gendarme regime of Tsarism. . . . Worse and most criminal of all is the spiritual cabal of the Communists: they have laid their hand also on the internal world of the labouring masses, compelling everyone to think according to Communist prescription.

. . . . Russia of the toilers, the first to raise the red banner of labour's emancipation, is drenched with the blood of those martyred for the greater glory of Communist dominion. In that sea of blood the Communists are drowning all the bright promises and possibilities of the workers' revolution. It has now become clear that the Russian

Communist Party is not the defender of the labouring masses, as it pretends to be. The interests of the working people are foreign to it. Having gained power it is now fearful only of losing it, and therefore it considers all means permissible: defamation, deceit, violence, murder, and vengeance upon the families of the rebels.

There is an end to long-suffering patience. Here and there the land is lit up by the fires of rebellion in a struggle against oppression and violence. Strikes of workers have multiplied, but the Bolshevik police regime has taken every precaution against the outbreak of the inevitable Third Revolution.

But in spite of it all it has come, and it is made by the hands of the labouring masses. The Generals of Communism see clearly that it is the people who have risen, the people who have become convinced that the Communists have betrayed the ideas of Socialism. Fearing for their safety and knowing that there is no place they can hide in from the wrath of the workers, the Communists still try to terrorise the rebels with prison, shooting, and other barbarities. But life under the Communist dictatorship is more terrible than death . . .

There is no middle road. To conquer or to die! The example is being set by Kronstadt, the terror of counter-revolution from the right and from the left. Here has taken place the great revolutionary deed. Here is raised the banner of rebellion against the three year old tyranny and oppression of Communist autocracy, which has put in the shade the three hundred year old despotism of monarchism. Here, in Kronstadt, has been laid the cornerstone of the Third Revolution which is to break the last chains of the worker and open the new, broad road to Socialist creativeness.

This new Revolution will rouse the masses of the East and the West, and it will serve as an example of new Socialist constructiveness, in contradistinction to the governmental, cut and dried Communist 'construction'. The labouring masses will learn that what has been done till now in the name of the workers and peasants was not Socialism.

Without firing a single shot, without shedding a drop of blood, the first step has been taken. Those who labour need no blood. They will shed it only in self-defence. . . . The workers and peasants march on: they are leaving behind them the *utchrediika* (Constituent Assembly) with its bourgeois regime and the Communist Party dictatorship with its Cheka and State capitalism, which have put the noose around the neck of the workers and threaten to strangle them to death.

The present change offers the labouring masses the opportunity of securing, at last, freely elected Soviets which will function without fear of the Party whip; they can now re-organise the governmentalised labour unions into voluntary associations of workers, peasants, and the working intelligentsia. At last is broken the police club of Communist autocracy.

That was the programme, those the immediate demands, for which the Bolshevik government began the attack of Kronstadt at 6 - 45 p.m., March 7, 1921.

\* \* \*

## 6 The First Shot

Kronstadt, heroic and generous, was dreaming of liberating Russia by the Third Revolution which it felt proud to have initiated. It formulated no definite programme. Liberty and universal brotherhood were its slogans. It thought of the Third Revolution as a gradual process of emancipation, the first step in that

direction being the free election of independent Soviets, uncontrolled by any political party and expressive of the will and interests of the people. The whole-hearted, unsophisticated sailors were proclaiming to the workers of the world their great Ideal, and calling upon the proletariat to join forces in the common fight, confident that their Cause would find enthusiastic support and that the workers of Petrograd, first and foremost, would hasten to their aid.

Meanwhile Trotsky had collected his forces. The most trusted divisions from the fronts, *kursanti* regiments, Cheka detachments, and military units consisting exclusively of Communists were now gathered in the forts of Sestroretsk, Lissy Noss, Krasnaia Gorka, and neighbouring fortified places. The greatest Russian military experts were rushed to the scene to form plans for the blockade and attack of Kronstadt, and the notorious Tukhachevski was appointed Commander-in-Chief in the siege of Kronstadt.

On March 7, at 6.45 in the evening, the Communist batteries of Sestroretsk and Lissy Noss fired the first shots against Kronstadt.

It was the anniversary of the Women Workers' Day. Kronstadt, besieged and attacked, did not forget the great holiday. Under fire of numerous batteries, the brave sailors sent a radio greeting to the working-women of the world, an act most characteristic of the psychology of the Rebel City. The radio read;

Today is a universal holiday—Women Workers' Day. We of Kronstadt send, amid the thunder of cannon, our fraternal greetings to the working-women of the world. . . . May you soon accomplish your liberation from every form of violence and oppression. . . . Long live the free revolutionary working-women! Long live the Social Revolution throughout the world!

No less characteristic was the heart-rending cry of Kronstadt, 'Let The Whole World Know', published after the first shot had been fired, in number 6 of the *Izvestia*, March 8;

The first shot has been fired. . . . Standing up to his knees in the blood of the workers, Marshal Trotsky was the first to open fire against revolutionary Kronstadt which has risen against the autocracy of the Communists to establish the true power of the Soviets.

Without shedding a drop of blood we, Red Army men, sailors, and workers of Kronstadt have freed ourselves from the yoke of the Communists and have even preserved their lives. By the threat of artillery they want now to subject us again to their tyranny.

Not wishing bloodshed, we asked that non-partisan delegates of the Petrograd proletariat be sent to us, that they may learn that Kronstadt is fighting for the Power of the Soviets. But the Communists have kept our demand from the workers of Petrograd and now they have opened fire—the usual reply of the pseudo Workers' and Peasants' Government to the demands of the labouring masses.

Let the workers of the whole world know that we, the defenders of Soviet Power, are guarding the conquests of the Social Revolution.

We will win or perish beneath the ruins of Kronstadt, fighting for the just cause of the labouring masses.

The workers of the world will be our judges. The blood of the innocent will fall upon the heads of the Communist fanatics drunk with authority.

Long live the Power of the Soviets!

## 7 The Defeat of Kronstadt

The artillery bombardment of Kronstadt, which began on the evening of March 7, was followed by the attempt to take the fortress by storm. The attack was made from the north and the south by picked Communist troops clad in white shrouds, the colour of which protectively blended with the snow lying thick on the frozen Gulf of Finland. These first terrible attempts to take the fortress by storm, at the reckless sacrifice of life, are mourned by the sailors in touching commiseration for their brothers in arms, duped into believing Kronstadt counter-revolutionary. Under date of March 8 the Kronstadt *Izvestia* wrote;

We did not want to shed the blood of our brothers, and we did not fire a single shot until compelled to do so. We had to defend the just cause of the labouring people and to shoot—to shoot at our own brothers sent to certain death by Communists who have grown fat at the expense of the people.

. . . . To your misfortune there broke a terrific snowstorm and black night shrouded everything in darkness. Nevertheless, the Communist executioners, counting no cost, drove you along the ice, threatening you in the rear with their machine guns operated by Communist detachments.

Many of you perished that night on the icy vastness of the Gulf of Finland. And when day broke and the storm quieted down, only pitiful remnants of you, worn and hungry, hardly able to move, came to us clad in your white shrouds.

Early in the morning there were already about a thousand of you and later in the day a countless number. Dearly you have paid with your blood for this adventure, and after your failure Trotsky rushed back to Petrograd to drive new martyrs to slaughter—for cheaply he gets our workers' and peasants' blood! . . . .

Kronstadt lived in deep faith that the proletariat of Petrograd would come to its aid. But the workers there were terrorised, and Kronstadt effectively blockaded and isolated, so that in reality no assistance could be expected from anywhere.

The Kronstadt garrison consisted of less than 14,000 men, 10,000 of them being sailors. The garrison had to defend a widespread front, many forts and batteries scattered over the vast area of the Gulf. The repeated attacks of the Bolsheviks, whom the Central Government continuously supplied with fresh troops; the lack of provisions in the besieged city; the long sleepless nights spent on guard in the cold—all were sapping the vitality of Kronstadt. Yet the sailors heroically persevered, confident to the last that their great example of liberation would be followed throughout the country and thus bring them relief and aid.

In its 'Appeal to Comrades Workers and Peasants' the Provisional Revolutionary Committee says (*Izvestia* number 9, March 11);

Comrades Workers, Kronstadt is fighting for you, for the hungry, the cold, the naked . . . . Kronstadt has raised the banner of rebellion and it is confident that tens of millions of workers and peasants will respond to its call. It cannot be that the day-break which has begun in Kronstadt should not become sunshine for the whole of Russia. It cannot be that the Kronstadt explosion should fail to arouse the whole of Russia and first of all, Petrograd.

But no help was coming, and with every successive day Kronstadt was growing more exhausted. The Bolsheviks continued massing fresh troops against the besieged fortress and weakening it by constant attacks. Moreover, every advantage

was on the side of the Communists, including numbers, supplies, and position. Kronstadt had not been built to sustain an assault from the rear. The rumour spread by the Bolsheviks that the sailors meant to bombard Petrograd was false on the face of it. The famous fortress had been planned with the sole view of serving as a defence of Petrograd against foreign enemies approaching from the sea. Moreover, in case the city should fall into the hands of an external enemy, the coast batteries and forts of Krasnaia Gorka had been calculated for a fight against Kronstadt. Foreseeing such a possibility, the builders had purposely failed to strengthen the rear of Kronstadt.

Almost nightly the Bolsheviks continued their attacks. All through March 10 Communist artillery fired incessantly from the southern and northern coasts. On the night of 12–13 the Communists attacked from the south, again resorting to the white shrouds and sacrificing many hundreds of the *kursanti*. Kronstadt fought back desperately, in spite of many sleepless nights, lack of food and men. It fought most heroically against simultaneous assaults from the north, east and south, while the Kronstadt batteries were capable of defending the fortress only from its western side. The sailors lacked even an icecutter to make the approach of the Communist forces impossible.

On March 16 the Bolsheviks made a concentrated attack from three sides at once—from north, south and east. ‘The plan of attack’, later explained Dibenko, formerly Bolshevik naval Commissar and later dictator of defeated Kronstadt, ‘was worked out in minutes detail according to the directions of Commander-in-Chief Tukhachevsky and the field staff of the Southern Corps. . . . At dark we began the attack on the forts. The white shrouds and the courage of the *kursanti* made it possible for us to advance in columns’.

On the morning of March 17 a number of forts had been taken. Through the weakest spot of Kronstadt—the Petrograd Gates—the Bolsheviks broke into the city, and then there began most brutal slaughter. The Communists spared by the sailors now betrayed them, attacking from the rear. Commissar of the Baltic Fleet Kuzmin and Chairman of the Kronstadt Soviet Vassiliev, liberated by the Communists from jail, now participated in the hand to hand street fighting in fratricidal bloodshed. Till late in the night continued the desperate struggle of the Kronstadt sailors and soldiers against overwhelming odds. The city which for 15 days had not harmed a single Communist, now ran red with the blood of Kronstadt men, women and even children.

Dibenko, appointed Commissar of Kronstadt, was vested with absolute powers to ‘clean the mutinous city’. An orgy of revenge followed, with the Cheka claiming numerous victims for its nightly wholesale *razstrel* (shooting).

On March 18 the Bolshevik Government and the Communist Party of Russia publicly commemorated the Paris Commune of 1871, drowned in the blood of the French workers by Gallifet and Thiers. At the same time they celebrated the ‘victory’ over Kronstadt.

For several weeks the Petrograd jails were filled with hundreds of Kronstadt prisoners. Every night small groups of them were taken out by order of the Cheka and disappeared—to be seen among the living no more. Among the last to be shot was Perepelkin, member of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Kronstadt.

The prisons and concentration camps in the frozen district of Archangel and

the dungeons of far Turkestan are slowly doing to death the Kronstadt men who rose against Bolshevik bureaucracy and proclaimed in March, 1921, the slogan of the Revolution of October, 1917; 'All Power to the Soviets!'

## Author's Afterword

### Lessons and Significance of Kronstadt

The Kronstadt movement was spontaneous, unprepared, and peaceful. That it became an armed conflict, ending in bloody tragedy, was entirely due to the Tatar despotism of the Communist dictatorship.

Though realising the general character of the Bolsheviks, Kronstadt still had faith in the possibility of an amicable solution. It believed the Communist Government amenable to reason; it credited it with some sense of justice and liberty.

The Kronstadt experience proves once more that government, the State—whatever its name or form—is ever the mortal enemy of liberty and popular self-determination. The State has no soul, no principles. It has but one aim—to secure power and to hold it, at any cost. That is the political lesson of Kronstadt.

There is another, a strategic, lesson taught by every rebellion.

The success of an uprising is conditioned in its resoluteness, energy, and aggressiveness. The rebels have on their side the sentiment of the masses. That sentiment quickens with the rising tide of rebellion. It must not be allowed to subside, to pale by a return to the drabness of everyday life.

On the other hand, every uprising has against it the powerful machinery of the State. The Government is able to concentrate in its hands the sources of supply and the means of communication. No time must be given the Government to make use of its powers. Rebellion should be vigorous, striking unexpectedly and determinedly. It must not remain localised, for that means stagnation. It must broaden and develop. A rebellion that localises itself, plays the waiting policy, or puts itself on the defensive, is inevitably doomed to defeat.

In this regard, especially, Kronstadt repeated the fatal strategic errors of the Paris Communards. The latter did not follow the advice of those who favoured an immediate attack on Versailles while the Government of Thiers was disorganised. They did not carry the revolution into the country. Neither the Paris workers of 1871 nor the Kronstadt sailors aimed to abolish the Government. The Communards wanted merely certain Republican liberties, and when the Government attempted to disarm them, they drove the Ministers of Thiers from Paris, established their liberties and prepared to defend them—nothing more. Thus also Kronstadt demanded only free elections to the Soviets. Having arrested a few Commissars, the sailors prepared to defend themselves against attack. Kronstadt refused to act on the advice of the military experts immediately to take Oranienbaum. The latter was of utmost military value, besides having over 800,000 tonnes of wheat belonging to Kronstadt. A landing in Oranienbaum was feasible, the Bolsheviks having been taken by surprise and having had no time to bring up reinforcements. But the sailors did not want to take the offensive, and thus the psychologic moment was lost. A few days afterward, when the declarations and acts

of the Bolshevik Government convinced Kronstadt that they were involved in a struggle for life, it was too late to make good the error.\*

The same happened to the Paris Commune. When the logic of the fight forced upon them demonstrated the necessity of abolishing the Thiers regime not only in their own city but in the whole country, it was too late. In the Paris Commune as in the Kronstadt uprising the **tendency toward passive, defensive tactics proved fatal.**

Kronstadt fell. The Kronstadt movement for free Soviets was stifled in blood, while at the same time the Bolshevik Government was making compromises with European capitalists, signing the Riga peace, according to which a population of 12 millions was turned over to the mercies of Poland, and helping Turkish imperialism to suppress the republics of the Caucasus.

But the 'triumph' of the Bolsheviks over Kronstadt held within itself the defeat of Bolshevism. It exposed the true character of the Communist dictatorship. The Communists proved themselves willing to sacrifice Communism, to make almost any compromise with international capitalism, yet refused the just demands of their own people—demands that voiced the October slogans of the Bolsheviks themselves; Soviets elected by direct and secret ballot, according to the Constitution of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic; and freedom of speech and press for the revolutionary parties.

The 10th All-Russian Congress of the Communist Party was in session in Moscow at the time of the Kronstadt uprising. At that Congress the whole Bolshevik economic policy was changed as a result of the Kronstadt events and the similarly threatening attitude of the people in various other parts of Russia and Siberia. The Bolsheviks preferred to reverse their basic policies, to abolish the *razverstka* (forcible requisition), introduce freedom of trade, give concessions to capitalists and give up Communism itself—the Communism for which the October Revolution was fought, seas of blood shed, and Russia brought to ruin and despair—but not to permit freely chosen Soviets.

Can anyone still question what the true purpose of the Bolsheviks was? Did they pursue Communist Ideals or Government Power?

Kronstadt is of great historic significance. It sounded the death knell of Bolshevism with its Party dictatorship, mad centralisation, Cheka terrorism and bureaucratic castes. It struck into the very heart of Communist autocracy. At the same time it shocked the intelligent and honest minds of Europe and America into a critical examination of Bolshevik theories and practices. It exploded the Bolshevik myth of the Communist State being the 'Workers' and Peasants' Government'. It proved that the Communist Party dictatorship and the Russian Revolution are opposites, contradictory and mutually exclusive. It demonstrated that the Bolshevik regime is unmitigated tyranny and reaction, and that the Communist State is itself the most potent and dangerous counterrevolution.

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\*The failure of Kronstadt to take Oranienbaum gave the Government an opportunity to strengthen the fortress with its trusted regiments, eliminate the 'infected' parts of the garrison, and execute the leaders of the aerial squadron which was about to join the Kronstadt rebels. Later the Bolsheviks used the fortress as a vantage point of attack against Kronstadt.

Among those executed in Oranienbaum were; Kolossov, division chief of the Red Navy airmen and chairman of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee just organised in Oranienbaum; Balabanov, secretary of the Committee, and Committee members Romanov, Vladimirov, etc. [AB].

Kronstadt fell. But it fell victorious in its idealism and moral purity, its generosity and higher humanity. Kronstadt was superb. It justly prided itself on not having shed the blood of its enemies, the Communists within its midst. It had no executions. The untutored, unpolished sailors, rough in manner and speech, were too noble to follow the Bolshevik example of vengeance; they would not shoot even the hated Commissars. Kronstadt personified the generous, all-forgiving spirit of the Slavic soul and the century-old emancipation movement of Russia.

Kronstadt was the **first** popular and entirely independent attempt at liberation from the yoke of State Socialism—an attempt made directly by the people, by the workers, soldiers and sailors themselves. It was the first step toward the Third Revolution which is inevitable and which, let us hope, may bring to long-suffering Russia lasting freedom and peace.

### *The Russian Tragedy*

#### 1

It is most surprising how little is known, outside of Russia, about the actual situation and the conditions prevailing in that country. Even intelligent persons, especially among the workers, have the most confused ideas about the character of the Russian Revolution, its development, and its present political, economic and social status. Understanding of Russia and of what has been happening there since 1917 is most inadequate, to say the least. Though the great majority of people side either with or against the Revolution, speak for or against the Bolsheviks, yet almost nowhere is there concrete knowledge and clarity in regard to the vital subjects involved. Generally speaking, the views expressed—friendly or otherwise—are based on very incomplete and unreliable, frequently entirely false, information about the Russian Revolution, its history and the present phase of the Bolshevik regime. But not are the opinions entertained founded, as a rule, on insufficient or wrong data; too often they are deeply coloured—properly speaking, distorted—by partisan feeling, personal prejudice, and class interests. On the whole, it is sheer ignorance, in one form or another, which characterises the attitude of the great majority of people towards Russia and Russian events.

And yet, understanding of the Russian situation is most vital to the future progress and well-being of the world. On the correct estimation of the Russian Revolution, the role played in it by the Bolsheviks and by other political parties and movements, and the causes that have brought about the present situation,—in short, on a thorough conception of the whole problem depends what lessons we shall draw from the great historic events of 1917. Those lessons will, for good or evil, affect the opinions and the activities of great masses of mankind. In other words, coming social changes—and the labour and revolutionary efforts preceding and accompanying them—will be profoundly, essentially influenced by the popular understanding of what has really happened in Russia.

It is generally admitted that the Russian Revolution is the most important historic event since the Great French Revolution. I am even inclined to think that,

in point of its potential consequences, the Revolution of 1917 is the most significant fact in the whole known history of mankind. It is the only Revolution which aimed *de facto*, at social world-revolution; it is the only one which actually abolished the capitalist system on a country-wide scale, and fundamentally altered all social relationships existing till then. An event of such human and historic magnitude must not be judged from the narrow viewpoint of partisanship. No subjective feeling or preconception should be consciously permitted to colour one's attitude. Above all, every phase of the Revolution must be carefully studied, without bias or prejudice, and all the facts dispassionately considered, to enable us to form a just and adequate opinion. I believe—I am firmly convinced—that only **the whole truth** about Russia, irrespective of any considerations whatever, can be of ultimate benefit.

Unfortunately, such has not been the case so far, as a general rule. It was natural, of course, for the Russian Revolution to arouse bitterest antagonism, on the one hand, and most passionate defence, on the other. But partisanship, of whatever camp, is not an objective judge. To speak plainly, the most atrocious lies, as well as ridiculous fairy tales, have been spread about Russia, and are continuing to be spread, even at this late day. Naturally it is not to be wondered at that the enemies of the Russian Revolution, the enemies of revolution as such, the reactionaries and their tools, should have flooded the world with most venomous misrepresentation of events transpiring in Russia. About them and their 'information' I need not waste any further words: in the eyes of honest, intelligent people they are discredited long ago.

But, sad to state, it is the would-be friends of Russia and of the Russian Revolution who have done the greatest harm to the Revolution, to the Russian people, and to the best interests of the working masses of the world, by their exercise of zeal untempered by truth. Some unconsciously, but most of them consciously and intentionally, have been lying, persistently and cheerfully, in defiance of all facts, in the mistaken notion that they are 'helping the Revolution'. Reasons of 'political expediency', of 'Bolshevik diplomacy', of the alleged 'necessity of the hour', and frequently motives of less unselfish considerations, have actuated them. The sole decent consideration of decent men, of real friends of the Russian Revolution and of man's emancipation—as well as of reliable history,—consideration for truth, they have entirely ignored.

There have been honourable exceptions, unfortunately too few: their voice has almost been lost in the wilderness of misrepresentation, falsehood, and overstatement. But most of those who visited Russia simply lied about the conditions in that country,—I repeat it deliberately. Some lied because they did not know any better: they had had neither the time nor the opportunity to study the situation, to learn the facts. They made 'flying trips', spending ten days or a few weeks in Petrograd or Moscow, unfamiliar with the language, never for a moment coming in direct touch with the real life of the people, hearing and seeing only what was told or shown them by the interested officials accompanying them at every step. In many cases these 'students of the Revolution' were veritable innocents abroad, naive to the point of the ludicrous. So unfamiliar were they with the environment, that in most cases they had not even the faintest suspicion that their affable 'interpreter', so eager to 'show and explain everything', was in reality a member of the 'trusted men', specially assigned to 'guide'

important visitors. Many such visitors have since spoken and written voluminously about the Russian Revolution, with little knowledge and less understanding.

Others there were who had the time and the opportunity, and some of them really tried to study the situation seriously, not merely for the purpose of journalistic 'copy'. During my two years' stay in Russia I had occasion to come in personal contact with almost every foreign visitor, with the Labour missions, and with practically every delegate from Europe, Asia, America and Australia, who gathered in Moscow to attend the International Communist Congress held there last year (1921). Most of them could see and understand what was happening in the country. But it was a rare exception, indeed, that had vision and courage enough to realise that only the whole truth could serve the best interests of the situation.

As a general rule, however, the various visitors to Russia were extremely careless of the truth, systematically so, the moment they began 'enlightening' the world. Their assertions frequently bordered on criminal idiocy. Think, for instance, of George Lansbury (publisher of the London *Daily Herald*) stating that the ideas of brotherhood, equality, and love preached by Jesus the Nazarene were being realised in Russia—and that at the very time when Lenin was deploring the 'necessity of military communism forced upon us by Allied intervention and blockade'. Consider the 'equality' that divided the population of Russia into 36 categories, according to the ration and wages received. Another Englishman, a noted writer, emphatically claimed that everything would be well in Russia, were it not for outside interference—while whole districts in the East, the South, and in Siberia, some of them larger in area than France, were in armed rebellion against the Bolsheviks and their agrarian policy. Other literati were extolling the 'free Soviet system' of Russia, while 18,000 of her sons lay dead at Kronstadt in the struggle to achieve free Soviets.

But why enlarge upon this literary prostitution? The reader will easily recall to mind the legion of Ananiases who have been strenuously denying the very existence of the things that Lenin tried to explain as inevitable. I know that many delegates and others believed that the real Russian situation, if known abroad, might strengthen the hand of the reactionists and interventionists. Such a belief, however, did not necessitate the painting of Russia as a veritable labour Eldorado. But the time when it might have been considered inadvisable to speak fully of the Russian situation is long past. That period has been terminated, relegated into the archives of history, by the introduction of the 'new economic policy'. Now the time has come when we must learn the full lesson of the Revolution and the causes of its debacle. That we may avoid the mistakes it made (Lenin frankly says they were many), that we be enabled to adopt its best features, we must know the whole truth about Russia.

It is therefore that I consider the activities of certain labour men as positively criminal and a betrayal of the true interests of the workers of the world. I refer to the men and women, some of them delegates to the Congresses held in Moscow in 1921, that still continue to propagate the 'friendly' lies about Russia, delude the masses with roseate pictures of labour conditions in that country, and even seek to induce workers of other lands to migrate in large numbers to Russia. They are strengthening the appalling confusion already existing in the

popular mind, deceive the proletariat by false statements of the present and vain promises for the near future. They are perpetuating the dangerous delusion that the Revolution is alive and continuously active in Russia. It is most despicable tactics. Of course, it is easy for an American labour leader, playing to the radical element, to write glowing reports about the condition of the Russian workingmen, while he is being entertained at State expense at the Luxe, the most lucrative hotel in Russia. Indeed, he may insist that 'no money is needed', for does he not receive everything his heart desires, free of charge? Or why should the President of an American needleworkers' union not state the Russian workers enjoy full liberty of speech? He is careful not to mention that only Communists and 'trusties' were permitted within speaking distance while the distinguished visitor was 'investigating' conditions in the factories.

May history be merciful to them.

## 2

That the reader may form a just estimate of what I shall say further, I think it necessary to sketch briefly my mental attitude at the time of my arrival in Russia.

It was two years ago. A democratic government, 'the freest on earth', had deported me—together with 248 other politicals—from the country I had lived in over 30 years. I had protested emphatically against the moral wrong perpetrated by an alleged democracy in resorting to methods it had so vehemently condemned on the part of the Tsarist autocracy. I branded deportation of politicals as an outrage on the most fundamental rights of man, and I fought it as a matter of principle.

But my heart was glad. Already at the outbreak of the February Revolution I had yearned to go to Russia. But the Mooney case had detained me: I was loath to desert the fight. Then I myself was taken prisoner by the United States, and penalised for my opposition to world slaughter. During 2 years the enforced hospitality of the Federal penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia, prevented my departure. Deportation followed.

My heart was glad, did I say? Weak word to express the passion of joy that filled me at the certainty of visiting Russia. Russia! I was going to the country that had swept Tsardom off the map, I was to behold the land of the Social Revolution! Could there be greater joy to one who in his very childhood had been a rebel against tyranny, whose youth's unformed dreams had visioned human brotherhood and happiness, whose entire life was devoted to the Social Revolution?!

The journey was an inspiration. Though we were prisoners, treated with military severity, and the *Buford* a leaky old tub repeatedly endangering our lives during the month's Odyssey, yet the thought that we were on the way to the land of revolutionary promise kept the whole company of deportees in high spirits, atremble with expectation of the great Day soon to come. Long, long was the voyage, shameful the conditions we were forced to endure: crowded below deck, living in constant wetness and foul air, fed on the poorest rations. Our patience was nigh exhausted, yet our courage unflagging, and at last we reached our destination.

It was the 19th of January, 1920, when we touched the soil of Soviet Russia. A feeling of solemnity, of awe, almost overwhelmed me. Thus must have felt my

pious old forefathers on first entering the Holy of Holies. A strong desire was on me to kneel down and kiss the ground—the ground consecrated by the life-blood of generations of suffering and martyrdom, consecrated anew by the triumphant revolutionists of my own day. Never before, not even when released from the horrible nightmare of 14 years prison, had I been stirred so profoundly,—longing to embrace humanity, to lay my heart at its feet, to give my life a 1,000 times, were it but possible, to the service of the Social Revolution. It was the most sublime day of my life.

We were received with open arms. The revolutionary hymn, played by the military Red Band, greeted us enthusiastically as we crossed the Russian frontier. The hurrahs of the red-capped defenders of the Revolution echoed through the woods, rolling into the distance like threats of thunder. With bowed head I stood in the presence of the visible symbols of the Revolution Triumphant. With bowed head and bowed heart. My spirit was proud, yet meek with the consciousness of actual Social Revolution. What depths, what grandeur lay therein, what incalculable possibilities stretched in its vistas!

I heard the still voice of my soul: ‘May your past life have contributed, if ever so little, to the realisation of the great human ideal, to this, its successful beginning’. And I became conscious of the great happiness it offered me; to do, to work, to help with every fibre of my being the complete revolutionary expression of this wonderful people. They had fought and won. They proclaimed the Social Revolution. It meant that oppression had ceased, that submission and slavery, man’s twin curses, were abolished. The hope of generations, of ages, has at last been realised; justice has been established on the earth—at least on that part of it that was Soviet Russia, and nevermore shall the precious heritage be lost.

But years of war and revolution have exhausted the country. There is suffering and hunger, and much need of stout hearts and willing hands to do and help. My heart sang for joy. Aye, I will give myself fully, completely, to the service of the people; I shall be rejuvenated and grow young again in ever greater effort, in the hardest toil, for the furtherance of the common weal. My very life will I consecrate to the realisation of the world’s greatest hope, the Social Revolution.

At the first Russian army outpost a mass meeting was held to welcome us. The large hall crowded with soldiers and sailors, the nun-dressed women on the speaker’s platform, their speeches, the whole atmosphere palpitating with Revolution in action,—all made a deep impression on me. Urged to say something, I thanked the Russian comrades for their warm welcome of the American deportees, congratulated them on their heroic struggle, and expressed my great joy at being in their midst. And then my whole thought and feeling fused in one sentence. ‘Dear Comrades’, I said, ‘we came not to teach but to learn; to learn and to help’.

Thus I entered Russia. Thus felt my fellow-deportees.

I remained two years. What I learned, I learned gradually, day by day, in various parts of the country. I had exceptional opportunities for observation and study. I stood close to the leaders of the Communist Party, associated much with the most active men and women, participated in their work, and travelled extensively through the country under conditions most favourable to personal contact with the life of the workers and peasants. At first I could not believe that what

I saw was real. I would not believe my eyes, my ears, my judgement. As those trick mirrors that make you appear dreadfully monstrous, so Russia seemed to reflect the Revolution as a frightful perversion. It was an appalling caricature of the new life, the world's hope. I shall not go into detailed description of my first impressions, my investigations, and the long process that resulted in my final conviction. I fought relentlessly, bitterly, against myself. For two years I fought. It is hardest to convince him who does not want to be convinced. And, I admit, I did not want to admit that the Revolution in Russia had become a mirage, a dangerous deception. Long and hard I struggled against this conviction. Yet proofs were accumulating, and each day brought more damning testimony. Against my will, against my hopes, against the holy fire of admiration and enthusiasm for Russia which burned within me, I was convinced—convinced that the Russian Revolution had been done to death.

How and by whom?

### 3

It has been asserted by some writers that Bolshevik accession to power in Russia was due to a *coup de main*, and doubt has been expressed regarding the social nature of the October change.

Nothing could be further from the truth. As a matter of historic fact, the great event known as the October Revolution was in the profoundest sense a social revolution. It was characterised by all the essentials of such a fundamental change. It was accomplished not by any political party, but by the people themselves, in a manner that radically transformed all the heretofore existing economic, political and social relations. But it did not take place in October. That month witnessed only the formal 'legal sanction' of the revolutionary events that had preceded it. For weeks and months prior to it the actual Revolution had been going on all over Russia; the city proletariat was taking possession of the shops and factories, while the peasants expropriated the big estates and turned the land to their own use. At the same time workers' committees, peasant committees and Soviets sprang up all over the country, and there began the gradual transfer of power from the provisional government to the Soviets. That took place, first in Petrograd, then in Moscow, and quickly spread to the Volga region, the Ural district, and to Siberia. The popular will found expression in the slogan, 'All power to the Soviets', and it went sweeping through the length and breadth of the land. The people had risen, the actual Revolution was on. The keynote of the situation was struck by the Congress of the Soviets of the North, proclaiming, 'The provisional government of Kerensky must go; the Soviets are the sole power!'

That was on October 10th. Practically all the real power was already with the Soviets. In July the Petrograd rising against Kerensky was crushed, but in August the influence of the revolutionary workers and of the garrison was strong enough to enable them to prevent the attack planned by Korniloff. The Petrograd Soviet gained strength from day to day. On October 16th it organised its own Revolutionary Military Committee, an act of defiance of and open challenge to the government. The Soviet, through its Revolutionary Military Committee, prepared to defend Petrograd against the coalition government of Kerensky and the

possible attack of General Kaledin and his counter-revolutionary cossacks. On October 22nd the whole proletarian population of Petrograd, solidarily\* supported by the garrison, demonstrated throughout the city against the government and in favour of 'All power to the Soviets'.

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets was to open October 25th. The provisional government, knowing its very existence in imminent peril, resorted to drastic action. On October 23rd the Petrograd Soviet ordered the Kerensky cabinet to withdraw within 48 hours. Driven to desperation, Kerensky undertook—on October 24th—to suppress the revolutionary press, arrest the most prominent revolutionists of Petrograd, and remove the active Commissars of the Soviet. The government relied on the 'faithful' troops and in the young *junkers* of the military student schools. But it was too late; the attempt to sustain the government failed. During the night of October 24th-25th (November 6th-7th) the Kerensky government was dissolved—peacefully, without bloodshed—and the exclusive supremacy of the Soviets was established. The Communist Party stepped into power. It was the political culmination of the Russian Revolution.

## 4

Various factors contributed to the success of the Revolution. To begin with, it met with almost no active opposition; the Russian bourgeoisie was unorganised, weak, and not of a militant disposition. But the main reasons lay in the all-absorbing enthusiasm with which the revolutionary slogans had fired the whole people. 'Down with the war!', 'Immediate peace!', 'The land to the peasant, the factory to the workers!', 'All power to the Soviets!'—these were expressive of the passionate soul cry and deepest needs of the great masses. No power could withstand their miraculous effect.

Another very potent factor was the unity of the various revolutionary elements in their opposition to the Kerensky government. Bolsheviks, Anarchists, the left faction of the Social-Revolutionary party, the numerous politicals freed from prison and Siberian exile, and the hundreds of returned revolutionary emigrants, had all worked during the February—October months toward a common goal.

But if 'it was easy to begin' the Revolution, as Lenin had said in one of his speeches, to develop it, to carry it to its logical conclusion was another and more difficult matter. Two conditions were essential to such a consumation; continued unity of all the revolutionary forces, and the application of the country's good-will, initiative and best energies to the important work of the new social construction. It must always be remembered—and remembered well—that revolution does not mean destruction only. It means destruction plus construction, with the greatest emphasis on the plus. Most unfortunately, Bolshevik principles and methods were soon fated to prove a handicap, a drawback upon the creative activities of the masses.

The Bolsheviks are Marxists. Though in the October days they had accepted and proclaimed anarchist watchwords (direct action by the people, expropriation, free Soviets, and so forth), it was not their social philosophy that dictated this attitude. They had felt the popular pulse—the rising waves of the Revolution had

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\*Berkman is coining a term here, intending, perhaps, some combination of "solidly" and "in solidarity" [GLF].

carried them far beyond their theories. But they remained Marxists. At heart they had no faith in the people and their creative initiative. As social democrats they distrusted the peasantry, counting rather upon the support of the small revolutionary minority among the industrial element. They had advocated the Constituent Assembly, and only when they were convinced that they would not have a majority there, and therefore not be able to take State power into their own hands, they suddenly decided upon the dissolution of the Assembly, though the step was a refutation and a denial of fundamental Marxist principles. (Incidentally, it was an Anarchist, Anatoly Zheleznyakov, in charge of the palace guard, who took the initiative in the matter). As Marxists, the Bolsheviks insisted on the nationalisation of the land; ownership, distribution and control to be in the hands of the State. They were in principle opposed to socialisation, and only the pressure of the left faction of the Social Revolutionists (the Spiridonova-Kamkov wing) whose influence among the peasantry was traditional, forced the Bolsheviks to 'swallow the agrarian programme of the Social Revolutionists whole', as Lenin afterwards put it.

From the first days of their accession to political power the Marxist tendencies of the Bolsheviks began to manifest themselves, to the detriment of the Revolution. Social Democratic distrust of the peasantry influenced their methods and measures. At the All-Russian Conferences the peasants did not receive equal representation with the industrial workers. Not only the village speculator and exploiter, but the agrarian population as a whole was branded by the Bolsheviks as 'petty bosses' and 'bourgeois', 'unable to keep step with the proletariat on the road to socialism'. The Bolshevik government discriminated against the peasant representatives in the Soviets and at the National Conferences, sought to handicap their independent efforts, and systematically narrowed the scope and activities of the Land Commissariat, then by far the most vital factor in the reconstruction of Russia. (The Commissariat was then presided over by a Left Social Revolutionist.) Inevitably this attitude led to much dissatisfaction on the part of the great peasant masses. The Russian *muzhik* is simple and naive, but with the instinct of the primitive man he quickly senses a wrong; no fine dialectics can budge his once settled conviction. The very cornerstone of the Marxist credo, the dictatorship of the proletariat, served as an affront and an injury to the peasantry. They demanded an equal share in the organisation and administration of the country. Had they not been enslaved, oppressed and ignored long enough? The dictatorship of the proletariat the peasant resented as discrimination against himself. 'If dictatorship must be', he argued, 'why not of all who labour, of the town worker and of the peasant, together?'

Then came the Brest-Litovsk peace. In its far-reaching results it proved the death blow to the Revolution. Two months previously, in December, 1917, Trotsky had refused, with a fine gesture of noble indignation, the peace offered by Germany on conditions much more favourable to Russia. 'We wage no war, we sign no peace!', he had said, and revolutionary Russia applauded him. 'No compromise with German imperialism, no concessions', echoed through the length and breadth of the country, and the people stood ready to defend their Revolution to the very death. But now Lenin demanded the ratification of a peace that meant the most mean-spirited betrayal of the greater part of Russia. Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, White Russia, Bessarabia—all were to be turned

over to the oppression and exploitation of the German invader and of their own bourgeoisie. It was a monstrous thing—the sacrifice at once of the principles of the Revolution and of its interests as well.

Lenin insisted on ratification, on the ground that the Revolution needed a ‘breathing spell’, that Russia was exhausted, and that peace would enable the ‘revolutionary oasis’ to gather strength for new effort. Radek denounced acceptance of Brest-Litovsk conditions as betrayal of the October Revolution. Trotsky disagreed with Lenin. The revolutionary forces split. The Left Social Revolutionists, most of the Anarchists and many of the non-partisan revolutionary elements were bitterly opposed to making peace with imperialism, especially on the terms dictated then by Germany. They declared that such a peace would be fatal to the Revolution; that the principle of ‘peace without annexations’ must not be sacrificed; that the German conditions involved the basest treachery to the workers and peasants of the provinces demanded by the Prussians; that the peace would subject the whole of Russia to economic and political dependence upon German Imperialism, that the invaders would possess themselves of the Ukrainian bread and the Don coal, and drive Russia to industrial ruin.

But Lenin’s influence was potent. He prevailed. The Brest-Litovsk treaty was ratified by the 4th Soviet Congress.

It was Trotsky who first asserted, in refusing the German peace terms offered in December, 1917, that the workers and peasants, inspired and armed by the Revolution, could by guerilla warfare overcome any army of invasion. The Left Social Revolutionists now called for peasant uprisings to oppose the Germans, confident that no army could conquer the revolutionary ardour of a people fighting for the fruits of their great Revolution. Workers and peasants, responding to this call, formed military detachments and rushed to the aid of Ukraina and White Russia, then valiantly struggling against the German invaders. Trotsky ordered the Russian army to pursue and suppress these partisan units.

The killing of Mirbach followed. It was the protest of the Left Social Revolutionist Party against, and the defiance of, Prussian imperialism within Russia. The Bolshevik government initiated repressive measures; it now felt itself, as it were, under obligations to Germany. Dzerzhinsky, head of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, demanded the delivery of the terrorist. It was a situation unique in revolutionary annals; a revolutionary party in power demanding of another revolutionary party, with which it had till then cooperated, the arrest and punishment of a revolutionist for executing the representative of an imperialist government! The Brest-Litovsk peace had put the Bolsheviks in the anomalous position of a gendarme for the Kaiser. The Left Social Revolutionists responded to Dzerzhinsky’s demand by arresting the latter. This act, and the armed skirmishes that followed it (though insignificant in themselves) were thoroughly exploited by the Bolsheviks politically. They declared that it was an attempt of the Left Social Revolutionist Party to seize the reins of government. They announced that party outlawed, and their extermination began.

These Bolshevik methods and tactics were not accidental. Soon it became evident that it is the settled policy of the Communist State to crush every form of expression not in accord with the government. After the ratification of the Brest-Litovsk peace the Left Social Revolutionist Party withdrew its representative in the Soviet of People’s Commissars. The Bolsheviks thus remained in

exclusive control of the government. Under one pretext and another there followed most arbitrary and cruel suppression of all the other political parties and movements. The Mensheviks and Right Social Revolutionists had been 'liquidated' long before, together with the Russian bourgeoisie. Now it was the turn of the revolutionary elements—the Left Social Revolutionists, the Anarchists, the non-partisan revolutionists.

But the 'liquidation' of these involved much more than the suppression of small political groups. These revolutionary elements had strong followings, the Left Social Revolutionists among the peasantry, the Anarchists mainly among the city proletariat. The new Bolshevik tactics encompassed systematic eradication of every sign of dissatisfaction, stifling all criticism and crushing independent opinion or effort. With this phase the Bolsheviks enter upon the dictatorship over the proletariat, as it is popularly characterised in Russia. The government's attitude to the peasantry is now that of open hostility. More increasingly is violence resorted to. Labour unions are dissolved, frequently by force, when their loyalty to the Communist Party is suspected. The cooperatives are attacked. This great organisation, the fraternal bond between city and country, whose economic functions were so vital to the interests of Russia and of the Revolution, is hindered in its important work of production, exchange and distribution of the necessaries of life, is disorganised, and finally completely abolished.

Arrests, night searches, *zassada* (house blockade), executions, are the order of the day. The Extraordinary Commissions (Cheka), originally organised to fight counter-revolution and speculation, is becoming the terror of every worker and peasant. Its secret agents are everywhere, always unearthing 'plots', signifying the *razstrel* (shooting) of hundreds without hearing, trial or appeal. From the intended defence of the Revolution the Cheka becomes the most dreaded organisation, whose injustice and cruelty spread terror over the whole country. All-powerful, owing no one responsibility, the Cheka is a law unto itself, possesses its own army, assumes police, judicial, administrative and executive powers, and makes its own laws that supercede those of the official State. The prisons and concentration camps are filled with alleged counterrevolutionists and speculators, 95 per cent of whom are starved workers, simple peasants, and even children of 10 to 14 years of age. (See reports of prison investigations, Petrograd *Krasnaya Gazetta* and *Pravda*; Moscow *Pravda*, May, June, July, 1920). Communism becomes synonymous in the popular mind with Chekism, the latter the epitome of all that is vile and brutal. The seed of counter-revolutionary feeling is sown broadcast.

The other policies of the 'revolutionary government' keep step with these developments. Mechanical centralisation, run mad, is paralysing the industrial and economic activities of the country. Initiative is frowned upon, free effort systematically discouraged. The great masses are deprived of the opportunity to shape the policies of the Revolution, or take part in the administration of the affairs of the country. The government is monopolising every avenue of life; the Revolution is divorced from the people. A bureaucratic machine is created that is appalling in its parasitism, inefficiency and corruption. In Moscow alone this new class of *sovburgs* (Soviet bureaucrats) exceeds, in 1920, the total of office holders throughout the whole of Russia under the Tsar in 1914. (See official report of investigation by Committee of Moscow Soviet, 1921). The Bolshevik

economic policies, effectively aided by this bureaucracy, completely disorganise the already crippled industrial life of the country. Lenin, Zinoviev, and other Communist leaders thunder philippics against the new Soviet bourgeoisie,—and issue ever new decrees that strengthen and augment its numbers and influence.

The system of *yedinolitchiye* is introduced; management by one person. Lenin himself is its originator and chief advocate. Henceforth the shop and factory committees are to be abolished, stripped of all power. Every mill, mine, and factory, the railroads and all the other industries are to be managed by a single head, a 'specialist',—and the old Tsarist bourgeoisie is invited to step in. The former bankers, bourse operators, mill owners and factory bosses become the managers, in full control of the industries, with absolute power over the workers. They are vested with authority to hire, employ and discharge the 'hands', to give or deprive them of the *payok* (food ration), even to punish them and turn them over to the Cheka. The workers, who had fought and bled for the Revolution and were willing to suffer, freeze and starve in its defence, resent this unheard of imposition. They regard it as the worse betrayal. They refuse to be dominated by the very owners and foremen whom they had driven, in the days of the Revolution, out of the factories and who had been so lordly and brutal to them. They have no interest in such a reconstruction. The 'new system', heralded by Lenin as the saviour of the industries, results in the complete paralysis of the economic life of Russia, drives the workers *en masse* from the factories, and fills them with bitterness and hatred of everything 'socialistic'. The principles and tactics of Marxian mechanisation of the Revolution are sealing its doom.

The fanatical delusion that a little conspirative group, as it were, could achieve a fundamental social transformation proved the Frankenstein of the Bolsheviks. It led them to incredible depths of infamy and barbarism. The methods of such a theory, its inevitable means, are two-fold; decrees and terror. Neither of these did the Bolsheviks spare. As Bukharin, the foremost ideologue of the militant Communists, taught, terrorism is the method by which capitalistic human nature is to be transformed into fit Bolshevik citizenship. Freedom is 'a bourgeois prejudice' (Lenin's favourite expression), liberty of speech and of the press unnecessary, harmful. The central government is the depositary of all knowledge and wisdom. It will do everything. The sole duty of the citizen is obedience. The will of the State is supreme.

Stripped of fine phrases, intended mostly for Western consumption, this was and is the practical attitude of the Bolshevik government. This government, the real and only actual government of Russia, consists of five persons, members of the inner circle of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Russia. These 'Big Five' are omnipotent. This group, in its true essence conspiratory, has been controlling the fortunes of Russia and of the Revolution since the Brest-Litovsk peace. What has happened in Russia since, has been in strict accord with the Bolshevik interpretation of Marxism. That Marxism, reflected through the Communist inner circle's megalomania of omniscience and omnipotence, has achieved the present debacle of Russia.

In consonance with their theory, the social fundamentals of the October Revolution have been deliberately destroyed. The ultimate object being a powerfully centralised State, with the Communist Party in absolute control, the

popular initiative and the revolutionary creative forces of the masses had to be eliminated. The elective system was abolished, first in the army and navy, then in the industries. The Soviets of peasants and workers were castrated and turned into obedient Communist committees, with the dreaded sword of the Cheka ever hanging over them. The labour unions governmentalised, their proper activities suppressed, they were turned into mere transmitters of the orders of the State. Universal military service, coupled with the death penalty for conscientious objectors; enforced labour, with a vast officialdom for the apprehension and punishment of 'deserters'; agrarian and industrial conscription of the peasantry; military Communism in the cities and the system of requisitioning in the country, characterised by Radek as simply **grain plundering** (*International Press Correspondence*, English edition, volume 1, number 17); the suppression of workers' protests by the military; the crushing of peasant dissatisfaction with an iron hand, even to the extent of whipping the peasants and razing their villages with artillery—(in the Ural, Volga and Kuban districts, in Siberia and the Ukraina)—this characterised the attitude of the Communist State towards the people, this comprised the 'constructive social and economic policies' of the Bolsheviks.

Still the Russian peasants and workers, prizing the Revolution for which they had suffered so much, kept bravely fighting on numerous military fronts. They were defending the Revolution, as they thought. They starved, froze, and died by the thousands, in the fond hope that the terrible things the Communists did would soon cease. The Bolshevik horrors were, somehow—the simple Russian thought—the inevitable result of the powerful enemies 'from abroad' attacking their beloved country. But when the wars will at last be over—the people naively echoed the official press—the Bolsheviks will surely return to the revolutionary path they entered in October, 1917, the path the wars had forced them temporarily to forsake.

The masses hoped and—endured. And then, at last, the wars were ended. Russia drew an almost audible sigh of relief, relief palpitating with deep hope. It was the crucial moment; the great test had come. The soul of a nation was aquiver. To be or not to be? And then full realisation came. The people stood aghast. Repressions continued, even grew worse. The piratical *razvyorstka*, the punitive expeditions against the peasants, did not abate their murderous work. The Cheka were unearthing more 'conspiracies', executions were taking place as before. Terrorism was rampant. The new Bolshevik bourgeoisie lorded it over the workers and the peasants, official corruption was vast and open, huge food supplies were rotting through Bolshevik inefficiency and centralised State monopoly,—and the people were starving.

The Petrograd workers, always in the forefront of revolutionary effort, were the first to voice their dissatisfaction and protest. The Kronstadt sailors, upon investigation of the demands of the Petrograd proletariat, declared themselves solidaric with the workers. In their turn they announced their stand for free Soviets, Soviets free from Communist coercion, Soviets that should in reality represent the revolutionary masses and voice their needs. In the middle provinces of Russia, in the Ukraina, on the Caucasus, in Siberia, everywhere the people made known their wants, voiced their grievances, informed the government of their demands. The Bolshevik State replied with its usual argument; the Kronstadt

sailors were decimated, the 'bandits' of Ukraina massacred, the 'rebels' of the East laid low with machine guns.

This done, Lenin announced at the 10th Congress of the Communist Party of Russia (March, 1921) that his former policies were all wrong. The *razvyorstka*, the requisition of food, was pure robbery. Military violence against the peasantry a 'serious mistake'. The workers must receive some consideration. The Soviet bureaucracy is corrupt and criminal, a huge parasite. 'The methods we have been using have failed'. The people, especially the rural population, are not yet up to the level of Communist principles. Private ownership must be re-introduced, free trade established. Henceforth the best Communist is he who can drive the best bargain. (Lenin's expression).

## 5

Back to capitalism!

The present situation in Russia is most anomalous. Economically it is a combination of State and private capitalism. Politically it remains the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' or, more correctly, the dictatorship of the inner circle of the Communist Party.

The peasantry has forced the Bolsheviks to make concessions to it. Forcible requisitioning is abolished. Its place has taken the tax in kind, a certain percentage of the peasant produce going to the government. Free trade has been legalised, and the farmer may now exchange or sell his surplus to the government, to the re-established co-operatives or on the open market. The new economic policy opens wide the door of exploitation. It sanctions the right of enrichment and of wealth accumulation. The farmer may now profit by his successful crops, rent more land, and exploit the labour of those peasants who have little land and no horses to work it with. The shortage of cattle and bad harvests in some parts of the country have created a new class of 'farm hands' who hire themselves out to the well to do peasant. The poor people migrate from those regions which are suffering from famine and swell the ranks of this class. The village capitalist is in the making.

The city worker in Russia today, under the new economic policy, is in exactly the same position as in any other capitalistic country. Free food distribution is abolished, except in a few industries operated by the government. The worker is paid wages, and must pay for his necessities—as in any country. Most of the industries, in so far as they are active, have been let or leased to private persons. The small capitalist now has a free hand. He has a large field for his activities. The farmer's surplus, the product of the industries, of the peasant trades, and of all the enterprises of private ownership, are subject to the ordinary processes of business, can be bought and sold. Competition within the retail trade leads to incorporation and to the accumulation of fortunes in the hands of individuals.

Developing city capitalism and village capitalism cannot long coexist with 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. The unnatural alliance between the latter and foreign capitalism will in the near future prove another vital factor in the fate of Russia.

The Bolshevik government still strives to uphold the dangerous delusion that the 'revolution is progressing', that Russia is 'ruled by proletarian soviets', that

the Communist Party and its State are identical with the people. It is still speaking in the name of the 'proletariat'. It is seeking to dupe the people with a new chimera. After a while—the Bolsheviks now pretend—when Russia shall have become industrially resurrected, through the achievements of our fast growing capitalism, the 'proletarian dictatorship' will also have grown strong, and we will return to nationalisation. The State will then systematically curtail and supplant the private industries and thus break the power of the meanwhile developed bourgeoisie.

'After a period of partial denationalisation a stronger nationalisation begins', says Preobrazhensky, Finance Commissar, in his recent article, 'The Perspectives of the New Economic Policy'. Then will 'Socialism be victorious on the entire front' (*ibid*). Radek is less diplomatic. 'We certainly do not mean', he assures us in his political analysis of the Russian situation, entitled 'Is the Russian Revolution a Bourgeois Revolution?' (*International Press Correspondence*, 16th December, 1921) 'that at the end of a year we shall again confiscate the newly accumulated goods. Our economic policy is based upon a longer period of time. . . . We are consciously preparing ourselves for cooperating with the bourgeoisie; this is undoubtedly dangerous to the existence of the Soviet government, because the latter loses the monopoly on industrial production as against the peasantry. Does not this signify the decisive victory of capitalism? May we not then speak of our revolution as having lost its revolutionary character? . . .'

To these very timely and significant questions Radek cheerfully answers with a categorical No! It is true, of course, as Marx taught, he admits, that economic relations determine the political ones, and that economic concessions to the bourgeoisie must lead also to political concessions. He remembers that when the powerful landowning class of Russia began making economic concessions to the bourgeoisie, those concessions were soon followed by political ones and finally by the capitulation of the landowning class. But he insists that the Bolsheviks will retain their power even under the conditions of the restoration of capitalism. 'The bourgeoisie is a historically deteriorating, dying class. . . . That is why the working class (?) of Russia can refuse to make political concessions to the bourgeoisie; since it is justified in hoping that its power will grow on a national and international scale more quickly than will the power of the Russian bourgeoisie'.

Meanwhile, though authoritatively assured that his 'power is to grow on a national and international scale', the Russian worker is in a bad plight. The new economic policy has made the proletarian 'dictator' a common, everyday wage slave, like his brother in countries unblest with Socialist dictatorship. The curtailment of the government's national monopoly has resulted in the throwing of hundreds of thousands of men and women out of work. Many Soviet institutions have been closed; the remaining ones have discharged from 50 to 75 per cent of their employees. The large influx to the cities of peasants and villagers ruined by the *razvyorstka*, and those fleeing from the famine districts, has produced an unemployment problem of threatening scope. The revival of the industrial life through private capital is a very slow process, due to the general lack of confidence in the Bolshevik State and its promises.

But when the industries will again begin to function more or less systematically, Russia will face a very difficult and complex labour situation. Labour

organisations, trade unions, do not exist in Russia, so far as the legitimate activities of such bodies are concerned. The Bolsheviks abolished them long ago. With developing production and capitalism, governmental as well as private, Russia will see the rise of a new proletariat whose interests must naturally come into conflict with those of the employing class. A bitter struggle is imminent. A struggle of a two-fold nature; against the private capitalist, and against the State as an employer of labour. It is even probable that the situation may develop still another phase; antagonism of the workers employed in the State-owned industries toward the better-paid workers of private concerns. What will be the attitude of the Bolshevik government? The object of the new economic policy is to encourage, in every way possible, the development of private enterprise and to accelerate the growth of industrialism. Shops, mines, factories and mills have already been leased to capitalists. Labour demands have a tendency to curtail profits; they interfere with the 'orderly processes' of business. And as for strikes, they handicap production, paralyse industry. Shall not the interests of Capital and Labour be declared solidaric in Bolshevik Russia?

The industrial and agrarian exploitation of Russia, under the new economic policy, must inevitably lead to the growth of a powerful labour movement. The workers' organisations will unite and solidify the city proletariat with the agrarian poor, in the common demand for better living conditions. From the present temper of the Russian worker, now enriched by his 4 years experience of the Bolshevik regime, it may be assumed with considerable degree of probability that the coming labour movement of Russia will develop along syndicalist lines. This sentiment is strong among the Russian workers. The principles and methods of revolutionary syndicalism are not unfamiliar to them. The effective work of the factory and shop committees, the first to initiate the industrial expropriation of the bourgeoisie in 1917, is an inspiring memory still fresh in the minds of the proletariat. Even in the Communist Party itself, among its labour elements, the syndicalist idea is popular. The famous Labour Opposition, led by Shliapnikov and Madame Kolontal within the party, is essentially syndicalistic.

What attitude will the Bolshevik government take to the labour movement about to develop in Russia, be it wholly or even only partly syndicalistic? Till now the State has been the mortal enemy of labour syndicalism within Russia, though encouraging it in other countries. At the 10th Congress of the Russian Communist Party (March, 1921) Lenin declared merciless warfare against the faintest symptom of syndicalist tendencies, and even the discussion of syndicalist theories was forbidden the Communists, on pain of exclusion from the Party. (See official report, 10th Congress). A number of the Labour Opposition were arrested and imprisoned. It is not to be lightly assumed that the Communist dictatorship could satisfactorily solve the difficult problems arising out of a real labour movement under Bolshevik autocracy. They involve principles of Marxian centralisation, the functioning of trade or industrial unions independent of the omnipotent government, and active opposition to private capitalism. But not only the big and small capitalist will the workers of Russia soon have to fight. They will presently come to grips with State capitalism itself.

To correctly understand the spirit and character of the present Bolshevik phase, it is necessary to realise that the so-called 'new economic policy' is neither new nor economic, properly considered. It is old political Marxism, the

exclusive fountainhead of Bolshevik wisdom. As social democrats they have remained faithful to their bible. Only a country where capitalism is most highly developed can have a social revolution—that is the acme of Marxist faith. The Bolsheviks are about to apply it to Russia. True, in the October days of the Revolution they repeatedly deviated from the straight and narrow path of Marx. Not because they doubted the prophet. By no means. Rather that Lenin and his group, political opportunists, had been forced by irresistible popular aspiration to steer a truly revolutionary course. But all the time they hung onto the skirts of Marx, and sought every opportunity to direct the Revolution into Marxian channels. As Radek naively reminds us, ‘already in April, 1918, in a speech by comrade Lenin, the Soviet government attempted to define our next tasks and to point out the way which we now designate as the new economic policy’. (*International Press Correspondence*, volume 1, number 17).

Significant admission! In truth, present Bolshevik policies are the continuation of the good orthodox Bolshevik Marxism of 1918. Bolshevik leaders now admit that the Revolution, in its post-October developments, was only political, not social. The mechanical centralisation of the Communist State—it must be emphasised—proved fatal to the economic and social life of the country. Violent party dictatorship destroyed the unity of the workers and the peasants, and created a perverted, bureaucratic attitude to revolutionary reconstruction. The complete denial of free speech and criticism, not only to the masses but even to the rank and file of the Communist Party itself, resulted in its undoing, **through its own mistakes**.

And now? Bolshevik Marxism is continuing in poor Russia. But it is monstrously criminal to prolong this bloody Comedy of Errors. Communist construction is not possible alongside of a sickly capitalism, artificially developed. That capitalism can never be destroyed—as Lenin and company pretend to believe—by the regular processes of the Bolshevik State grown economically strong. The ‘new’ policies are therefore a delusion and a snare, fundamentally reactionary. These policies themselves create the necessity for another revolution.

Must tortured humanity ever tread the same vicious circle?

Or will the workers at last learn the great lesson of the Russian Revolution that every government, whatever its fine name and nice promises, is by its inherent nature, as a government, destructive of the very purposes of the social revolution? It is the mission of government to govern, to subject, to strengthen and perpetuate itself. It is high time the workers learn that only their own organised, creative efforts, free from political and State interference, can make their age-long struggle for emancipation a lasting success.

**Section 3:**  
**A Letter from Exile**

Alexander Berkman to Michael Cohn,  
*June 6, 1930, PARIS*

My dear Mac,

Well, I am back in Paris! After more than a month's effort upon the part of EG and of all our numerous connections in France, we succeeded in getting permission for me to stay—but just three months in France. We hope that upon the expiration of that time a prolongation can be secured.

Now I have my hands full: 1) must secure my *carte d'identité*, just as if it is the first time I am coming to France—even more difficult, because my dossier shows that I had been expelled; 2) must have a new passport—also not an easy thing for one in my position; 3) most important of all, must get the order for my deportation or expulsion ANNULLED.

The last is the most difficult thing to accomplish in France. Generally an expulsion order remains in force thirty years. In EG's recent case, the order proved to be twenty-nine years old and issued by an administration long since politically and even physically dead. Even at that it took a lot of time, money, and effort to annul it. Now, in my case it is much worse, because it was issued by the PRESENT administration and of course it does not care to reverse itself. It may take a very long time to annul it, if at all. Maybe a year or more. Meanwhile I live in constant anxiety lest a new bolshevik denunciation should result in a second expulsion. And THAT would mean forever, because two expulsions from France mean that.

Well, all this involves constant work in that direction.

My stay in Belgium and particularly my return were a veritable odyssey, full of exciting moments. After the Ministry here gave permission for me to remain three months in France, I needed a French visa to return here. But the consul (French) in Brussels refused to give me a visa. At first the authorization from France failed to arrive and then the consul told me that even when it does arrive, he will not give it to me.

There was a situation for you! Permission to BE in France, but no chance to get there! On the French border they would not let me pass without a visa and I could not get that visa. What to do? Well, I got acquainted with some diamond people in Antwerp, got friendly etc., and finally managed to get over the border with their help. One Holland Jew [M. Polak], a rich man, proved himself a corker. Took me on his own responsibility etc. And I a perfect stranger to him! It has increased my faith in humanity, I can tell you.

Well, as I am writing this, my dear Mac, I keep wondering and in frankness I must tell you: I am wondering whether I am not boring you with all these matters, vital as they are to ME. Why do I have such thoughts? Because not a line had reached me from you since I informed you that I had been expelled and that I found myself in an illegal condition in Belgium, without money, friends or any passport and visa there. I wrote to you from Antwerp on May 2, the day I arrived there. And till yesterday there was not a single word from you about the matter. I must say it did not impress me as if the thing worried you much. Moreover, you knew in what danger I was all the time in Belgium, because I was forced to get there without a visa, which is punishable by imprisonment and return to Russia, in my case. You know—because I had written you—that I was taken out of bed at 6 A.M., on May 1 and without any warning or time to prepare I was rushed out of the country on the SAME day. You knew that I was without money and that

I had no friends in Belgium, except one address of a man I had met just for a few minutes in Paris once. In short, I was really in a very terrible condition, and—when I say TERRIBLE, then it is even worse than it sounds, because I have been in tight places before and I am not given to complaining or exaggerating a dangerous situation.

Well, in spite of all that, not a line from you and not a cent. You have been my friend and comrade for years, dear Michael, and you have always been generous with your aid to me—and THEREFORE I cannot understand the reason for such apparent indifference on your part. I am speaking frankly, and I hope you will pardon me. You have often told me to call on you when in need, and this time I did and there was no answer. I admit I am fearfully disappointed, even shocked.

Of course there may have been good reasons for your silence, and therefore I am going to reserve a final opinion on the matter till I hear from you again.

Now the situation is this: it seems that Moscow is back of the whole trouble. I am accused of “political” work because I am the treasurer of the Relief Fund for Russia! I am going to see a certain person—the one who unmasked Azev—I don’t want to mention his name\*—he is here in Paris and I will ask him to unearth the real forces back of my expulsion. For certainly France has NO cause whatever to expel me, since I have never participated in any political activities in this country.

Yesterday EG received the letter you wrote to me and the check for \$100 that you sent. I want to thank you for it. The letter was written by you on May 28 and check bears the date of May 29!

I don’t know a thing about the [[Joseph] Cohen-[Rudolf] Rocker controversy. I could not get the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* in Belgium, nor did I care to receive there any radical literature. All my mail has accumulated here in Paris, and as soon as I get a bit of time I shall read it all. Meanwhile I am busy running after the bureaucrats for a carte d’identité (my old one is confiscated) and for—a passport. I simply MUST secure a passport, for in case I am expelled again I must at least have something on which I can go to some other country. At present I have nothing, all my papers either confiscated or no good.

Too bad you did not send me a letter to your friend in Antwerp. Even if he was absent, the letter might have helped me to get at some other diamond people. They have a lot of influence there.

Well, enough now. I have an “engagement” with the Préfecture. I wish you and all yours well,

[AB]

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\*In 1908 the well-known Social Revolutionist Burtsev brought charges of treachery against Azev, the leader of his party’s battle organization. A Jury of Honor, on which Peter Kropotkin and two other distinguished revolutionaries served, considered the evidence in Paris that October and ultimately established that Azev was a double agent who had successfully plotted the assassination of a number of high Russian officials while simultaneously acting as an informer for the Czar’s secret police. Berkman was thus going to see Burtsev, in all probability, for it was he who had “unmasked” the spy. He could assume that Cohn, a long-time anarchist, would know immediately whom he meant.



# **PART FOUR**

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**1928–1935**

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**Four Letters**

**and**

***The ABC of Anarchism***

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The ABC of Anarchism was published in 1929. In it Berkman explains the belief around which his entire life was centered. It is published here in its entirety.

While writing the ABC, Alec struggled with many major tenets of anarchism, especially those dealing with violence. His letters to Emma during this period speak of his doubts, doubts that are nowhere to be found in the finished manuscript. Alec even confesses to Emma, "There are moments when the revolution cannot work on anarchist principles." She reminds him, in a letter written from St. Tropez, "I once said . . . if the revolution cannot solve the need for violence and terror, then . . . I am against revolution. . . . If we can undergo changes in every other method of dealing with social issues, we can also learn to change the methods of revolution."

I have included here, as an introduction to this section, four letters that illuminate Berkman's thinking during the period in which he wrote The ABC of Anarchism.

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# **Section 1:**

## **Four Letters**

Alexander Berkman to Emma Goldman  
June 25, 1928, PARIS

Dearest Em,

It is early in the morning and the first thing I want to do is to send you a greeting to the 27th.

But I have a feeling that you will not enjoy your birthday very much, because your book weighs on your mind. So does mine. Yet I think we are both wrong. We take things too seriously. But of course that is in our natures and we can't help it. But we take our *work* also entirely too seriously and that embitters many an hour for us.

At times we realize how little it all matters. How little life itself matters and how empty it is. But enough—this is no mood for a birthday. But I think a little of this is necessary when worrying about one's work—it may help to get over the hard places. . . .

I don't know why you have such difficulty in starting your work. Maybe you can't concentrate because of too many distractions and visitors. We had talked the first part over and came to the conclusion that you begin with your childhood. In any case, you have a lot to write about your childhood and it should be done in a full, reminiscent way.

Or you begin with Rochester and your coming to New York and then review your early impressions as a strong influence in your development.

I want to hear how matters are going.

At this side, I have come to problems that cannot be solved satisfactorily. For instance:

(1) Has the revolution a right to defend itself? Then what is to be done to active enemies and counter-revolutionists? It leads logically to prison or [concentration] camp.

(2) If there is some trouble somewhere—a murderer or raper, etc., has been caught by the crowd—will you let the mob spirit prevail? Or is it not better to create opportunity for a hearing for the accused? That means tribunes and courts and police. And what should the courts do? It is no use having them if they cannot restrain the further activities of the guilty man. It means again prison.

(3) Given an example—what is likely to happen: People starting to make a pogrom in Russia; or whites trying to lynch a Negro in America (this during the revolutionary epoch)—shall we let it go at that? Is not active interference necessary? By whom? By “the people”? But suppose those present are afraid to interfere. It means again that armed force is necessary in such cases, even against the mob. And the leaders of the mob who persist in exciting race or other hatred—should they be permitted to go on?

I fear there is *no* answer to these questions, except the organization of house and street guards etc.—in fact, of police, under whatever name they might be known. But that again brings us to courts and prisons, for you can't allow the police to settle matters. If anyone is arrested, he must have a chance of a hearing. But if there is a court, when and what are its powers? Can it restrain the offender and how? It comes to prison again.

But once we begin with prisons, there is no end to it.

Yet how avoid it? If I write the second part of my book *logically*, as it should be written, then it won't square with anarchistic views. To avoid these questions

is impossible. That means then a *transitory period* with punishments, prisons, etc., which is sure to develop the bolshevik ways and methods.

Da ist der "trouble." Everyone avoids these problems. But then what is the use of writing my second part? I have been thinking hard about these matters; there are moments when I feel that the revolution cannot work on anarchist principles. But once the old methods are followed, they'll never lead to anarchism. That is the choice we have to make.

Let me know what you think about this. . . .

I'll take a quiet drink alone Wednesday in memory of the 27th.

Affectionately,  
S

**Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman**  
**June 29, 1928, ST. TROPEZ**

My dearest,

Although I worked until one last night and read until two, I woke up very early this morning. I was awakened by the sound of hay cutting. A friend of Mussiers' came about five to cut his wine [or vines] and flowers, the faded ones of course. It was a peculiar sensation to hear the scythe go on monotonously; it made one drowsy, yet unable to sleep. Anyhow I got up, had my coffee, cut flowers for the day. And now I want to talk to you.

Since I began writing at 9 P.M. Tuesday, I have written six thousand words. I have no idea whether the damned thing is good or rotten, whether it hangs together, sounds plausible, or whether it is chaotic or unreal. I will be able to judge better when the stuff is typewritten. This afternoon we begin with the job. I will dictate to Demie [Emily Holmes Coleman] on the machine. You know how difficult my writing is, especially when written in haste and excitement. Besides I can go on correcting and changing as I dictate. It will probably take us two afternoons to do the job, as I must go slow with Demie. . . .

I have made up my mind not to let you see a line until you have finished your book. I simply won't let anything take much of your time or interfere with your writing. There is really no need. Sufficient unto the day for you to tell me the stuff is no good. . . .

A little break in my work won't do any harm. Anyway I hope to hear from Fitzie and you today when she is starting. Funny life is, here we have been worrying who should meet Fitzie, then that crazy Djuna [Barnes] kidnaps her. Damned fool. Why did she not let you know she is going to Havre, or take you along? Really, the Lesbians are a crazy lot. Their antagonism to the male is almost a disease with them. I simply can't bear such narrowness.

What looked to be a dreary and lonesome birthday turned out to be a gay affair. All thanks to my thoughtful secretary. She had quite a conspiracy, invited the Gershoyes, Saxe [Commins'] friends, bought three bottles of champagne and some delicious cakes, and marched everything up to our terrace, ice and all. I had suspected that Demie is up to something; she is a poor conspirator. But I did not expect champagne. Well, we drank until eleven and then went down to

the village to dance. We came back at two in the morning. I got up a bit tired yesterday, but I wrote all afternoon. So you see the champagne must have been good, it had no after effects. I enjoyed the party immensely but even more so Demie's fine spirit, her thoughtfulness. . . .

Now to your letter of the 25th. You are certainly right when you say we take our work too seriously. But we would not be ourselves, if we approached our work in any other way. After all, it is not whether what we do matters to others but how much it matters to ourselves. To do our work lightly, or to be haunted by the thought that it does not matter because life itself does not matter, would mean that we could do no work at all, writing or otherwise. And without the work we care about, life itself would be impossible. It certainly would to me and I am inclined [to think] it would be the same with you.

Your problems are of course tremendous. If they were not, there would have been no object in writing your book. It is because you want to give something new, answer some of the problems in a new way, that your book is important. But on the other hand you are trying to do the impossible, you are trying to solve all problems in one work. Not only is this impossible but no one human being can solve all problems, nor are they solvable in a theoretic way. The most anyone can do is to solve fundamental problems from which to build further. The rest must be solved by the need of the hour or moment—in fact, by life itself.

However, a few of the questions puzzling you I think could and should be answered. First, "Has the revolution a right to defend itself?" Certainly, if you believe that no fundamental change can take place without a revolution, you must also believe in its right of defense. It is only Tolstoy's or Gandhi's position which would make it inconsistent to take up arms in defense of the revolution. I wish I could take their position. Emotionally I really do, I feel violence in whatever form never has and probably never will bring constructive results. But my mind and my knowledge of life tell me that changes will always be violent. At least I want to eliminate as much as possible the need for violence. I want the revolution to be understood as a process of reconstruction rather than what we believed it to be until now, a process of destruction. But no matter how much we will try, the change is bound to be violent and [we] will need to be ready for defense. The question is, defense against what and of what? This brings me to your second question, "active enemies?" What do you mean by "active": opposition by means of opinion, theoretic activities, writing, speaking? If you mean that, then I insist that you must come out unreservedly for the unlimited right of free speech, press, and assembly. Anything else will create all the evils you want the revolution to fight. Surely we have learned enough of the effect of suppression in America, then in Russia, to continue to believe for one moment that the revolution can ever gain anything by gagging people. All it succeeds in doing is to drive thought into secret channels which means the utmost danger to the revolution. Fact is, very few people who can express themselves through the word make good conspirators. I know that from myself. And if you will look up the lives of nearly every one of the terrorists of the past, you will find invariably that they either never had a chance to speak out, or that they were not ready [or capable] of expression by means of the word. After all the dominant motive of any act or word is the need to express oneself and what one feels deepest. I say, therefore, that unlimited free speech

even in the revolutionary period is a thousand times less harmful than thoughts driven to secrecy. If however you mean by active opposition, armed attack on the revolution, then I say the defense must be armed. Naturally if you are attacked by a robber and you have a weapon, you will use it. I see no inconsistency in that at all. But while armed defense is inevitable and justifiable, prisons are not, whatever the offense. Granted that rape or robbery may happen, they are after all isolated cases. I do not think they need to happen even in the most critical period of the revolution, so long as everyone is given a chance to participate in the rebuilding of society, so long as each can be made to feel a personal interest in the process of building. Why should there be robbery? Why should the meaning even be used? If a man holds up someone now, it is considered robbery—how can it be that when no one has more wealth than another, when he receives out of the common stock as much as anyone else, or rather as much as there is to go around? You can't begin to solve problems that have changed their very nature and meaning. . . . That seems ridiculous.

Rape is another matter, I grant you, that may happen since sexual hunger or aberrations will continue for all times. But because of an occasional rape, should society set aside special places and a special class, a complete and expensive machinery to restrain an occasional rapist, when we know from centuries of experience that prisons do not restrain, or even lynchings, or capital punishment of any sort? I therefore say that you must set your face sternly against the very idea of prisons: the whole revolution would be utterly futile, if such terrible institutions as prisons, institutions which have proven a failure in the system we want to get rid of, are again established.

“Mob treatment”: No certainly not. Anyone caught in a violent act against his fellow should be given all the chances to be heard in his own defense. He should have the feeling that he is not being tried, [but] that he is being heard to get at the cause or motive of his act. That if he cannot explain it himself, he should be studied by eminent men to whom the human soul is not a means to wealth, station, and prestige, but a terribly vital and interesting phenomenon that needs careful treatment and care. I can only say what I have so often said in reply to the very question you find difficult to answer. What we need is to revalue our conception of human acts. For instance, no one suggests that we should lock up a tubercular person; why then should he be locked up for something conditioned in his being for which he is even less responsible than tuberculosis? I think the sympathetic treatment of such an offender in a sane society would act as a better cure, stronger deterrent, than prison or punishment of any sort.

Pogroms, lynchings, any mob action is of the same nature as armed attack on the revolution: one has the right to fight it back with arms, to defend oneself or the person attacked. But one cannot. . . .

[Here the letter breaks off, with the remainder missing or destroyed. Luckily Emma returned immediately to the discussion in the letter which follows.]

Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman  
*July 3, 1928, ST. TROPEZ*

My dearest,

. . . When I wrote you I had solved some questions while in Canada I did not mean that I had given thought to every breath of a community during a revolutionary period. I had in mind a few fundamental issues from which all else springs. Now I insist that a transvaluation of the very nature and function of revolution is bound to have a profound effect on some of the questions now troubling you and for which I am certain there is no solution separate and distinct from the nature of revolution itself. I repeat what I have told you in the first talks we had and have written in my last long letter, unless we set our face against the old attitude to revolution as a violent eruption destroying everything of what had been built up over centuries of painful and painstaking effort, not by the bourgeoisie as we used to maintain, but by the combined effort of humanity, we must become bolsheviks, accept terror and all it implies, or become Tolstoyans. There is no other way.

On the other hand, if we agree that revolution must essentially be a process of reconstruction, destroying as little as possible—nothing at all in fact except such industries that make for war and disease—if we can realize and boldly declare that the only purpose of revolution must be transformation, then terror must go with the rest and prisons and other evil things of today must go with the rest. I will grant you that it is not enough to declare that revolution must become a process of transformation. But how is it to become that? This brings me to the second conclusion I have come to while in Canada and which we discussed so many times. Namely the nature of expropriation. In the past we believed and many of our comrades still do that the purpose of the revolution is to expropriate everybody, whether large or small owner of his place of work, that they must be divested of everything and that it must become the property of the workers; in other words, everything must be taken away from one class and given to another. The layers are to be changed [but] the thing which holds it [i.e., the class structure] in its place remains. Now we have seen in Russia that this has been fatal. The expropriation of handicrafts without an industry that can produce the needs of the country has led to the chaos from which the Moscow regime is now desperately trying to extricate itself. . . . Once we transvalue the value of indiscriminate expropriation to the expropriation of powerful combines [and] of large land holding and once we declare that the expropriated wealth is not merely to change hands from one class to another, but from the few for the common use of the entire community . . . 99% of the evils which necessitated the terror in Russia will die a natural death. Where then does theft come in, or robbery? Or even much counter-revolution? You know as well as I that most of the supposed revolutionary plots were concocted in the Cheka. And that after the old nature and application of revolution [i.e., after application of old theories of revolution]. The new conception leaves very little cause for counter-revolution. Should it occur nevertheless and should it assert itself in an armed attack, the community which now has a share in the revolution because of the interest given has the right to defend the revolution against such attack. But I am inclined to think that where most of the community

is involved, armed attack is sure to be reduced to the utmost minimum and for such a minimum you cannot continue the very thing revolution aims to undermine, prisons, police, Cheka. This holds good as regards rape, which is rare enough even under our present regime. It used to be punished by death in the past. Man has progressed somewhat, since rape is no longer considered on a par with murder. In fact, if you were acquainted with the vast amount of works on modern criminology (I read about ten while in Canada), you'd see that even today rape is being studied as part of other sexual manifestations and not as crime; you would also find that quite a different kind of treatment is being suggested by psychologists (who do not even claim radicalism) than prison. In short, it seems to me that instead of concentrating on fundamentals, you have wandered off to detailed manifestations inherent in fundamentals. You have run into a Sackgasse [blind alley], Sasha dear. If you continue, you will never finish your book. For there is no end to the intricacies of life which may arise as a result of abnormal conditions.

There is one passage in your letter on page five which made me jump. It is the third paragraph and gives your conclusion after the various doubts you express as to what revolution can or should do, prisons, punishment, etc. And it reads "in other words: can a revolution solve this problem? I am beginning to think that it cannot." My dearest Sasha, when in the first days of our Russian life, still believing in the old form of revolution, I once said—I remember the wording very distinctly: "If revolution cannot solve the need of violence and terror, then . . . I am against revolution." You flew at me in rage, said I had never been a real revolutionist and a lot more. Well, you now seem to come to the same conclusion, our difference now being that you are loath to let go the thought of revolution in terms of destruction and terror. And that I am done with for all times. I insist if we can undergo changes in every other method of dealing with social issues, we will also learn to change in the methods of revolution. I think it can be done. If not, I shall relinquish my belief in revolution. That not only because of so much waste of human lives, but also because it is all so futile, an endless repetition of the same old refrain, "The French Revolution Was That Way. All Revolutions Must Be That Way." History dictates the course. History has become the new superstition like the will of god. I for one no longer believe in that, dear Sash.

It's of course difficult to discuss these questions on paper. But I merely want to throw out a few hints as matters now appear to me. For the rest, I know as well as you, old man, that no one can solve the problems of another. . . .

I hope you are getting on with your book, dear heart. And that your teeth will soon be in order. Greet Emmy\* for me. Much love,

[EG]

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\*Berkman's "companion" during his exile. They had a stormy relationship; she did not have any strong political commitments and was very jealous—especially of Emma Goldman. See Drinnon's *Rebel In Paradise* [GLF].

Alexander Berkman to Pauline Turkel  
*March 21, 1935, NICE*

My dear Pauline,

I am sorry I could not reply to your last (of February 11th) before this. Life is one damned thing after another, and there is little time for correspondence. However, I really meant to write you before, for there are some things in your letter that need attention. . . .

You say that you have “a sneaky suspicion” that I “have doubted anarchism once in a while.” I don’t know, my dear Pauline, what has given you such an impression. No, I have never doubted it. I mean, I have never doubted that there is no way out for mankind except anarchism. I am as sure today as I ever was that neither war nor capitalism will ever be abolished, nor any of the evils that those things represent, until society will become sensible enough to introduce international cooperation and individual liberty on the basis of a free communism.

That, in my estimation, is the *ONLY* solution to our troubles. The human mind has so far not thought out a better way. And I am just as convinced today as I ever was that neither socialism nor bolshevism will bring relief to man.

But maybe you referred to the *TIME* when anarchism will become a reality. Well, in that regard the present trend of events is certainly not encouraging. There was a time, in the youth of the revolutionary movement in the U.S., when we all thought that the social revolution was not very far off, and revolution then meant to us practically anarchism. Now we know that the social revolution is not in the offing yet, and even when it comes it will only be the first step on the road *toward* anarchist communism. Yes, that may take a long time, and maybe mankind will destroy itself before then. But when I say that I have no doubts about anarchism as an ideal, I mean that *IF* mankind continues to live—as I think it will in spite of everything—then the progress of mechanics and science on the one hand, the growing unbearableness of conditions on the other, plus the idealism that I consider inherent in human nature—will necessarily lead to anarchism, or to some social system resembling it in its essential features.

Maybe you are surprised that I say idealism is inherent in human nature. It may sound rather strange in the face of present tendencies. And yet what I say is true. The people are indeed deluded by all kinds of fakes, and yet beneath it all is the hunger of the people for an ideal. Look at Russia, or even at Germany. The *LEADERS* seek power and glory and personal emoluments. But the great *MASSES* actually believe they are working for an ideal. They have been *MADE* to believe it, and their ideal is counterfeit, but that does not alter the fact that they *BELIEVE* they are struggling for an ideal.

It is in *THIS* that I find hope for mankind. And it has been the same all through human history. Did not the American *MASSES* believe during the last war that they were fighting to abolish war and to make “the world safe for democracy?” And if you go back to older days, it was the same. Do you think that those millions that gave their lives in the Crusades did so for any other reason than that they were moved by a great *FAITH*? They wanted to save the Holy Sepulchre from the barbarians. You probably remember from your history that there were even entire armies consisting exclusively of children of tender age. Millions of them were slaughtered in the Crusades. Did those youngsters fight for anything

but the faith that was in them?

The communists in Russia—not the leaders but the rank and file—have been going hungry and suffering and working hard in the enthusiasm of their great ideal. And the millions of nazis in Germany who believe in Hitler—by what are they motivated? By the ideal of a regenerated Germany!

The tragedy is that those ideals are false, but yet it all proves that men DO long and fight for ideals. And in THAT is the great hope of humanity. Some day people will find the REAL ideal—and they will fight for it and realize it.

In closing—for I must get back to my work—one must not limit his view of such BIG questions to the momentary situation. That is why I never turn pessimist. You say “we cannot stop fascism.” Well, suppose we cannot; what of it? The world has often gone through mass aberrations. History is replete with such examples—there have been the Crusades, you know, which were similar aberrations that lasted *several centuries*. And the Hundred Years’ War, and the Thirty Years’ War, etc., etc. But out of all that mankind came out ALIVE, and progress continued for all that and all that. And though mankind is still very much deluded by false ideas and still very stupid, yet the average man today is FAR above the type of the Middle Ages and even of the man of fifty years ago. Whoever believed that war should be abolished fifty years ago? Today every government talks of it. Pretense, you say. All right, but they are FORCED to MAKE that pretense and why? Because the POPULAR SENTIMENT has changed.

So, in spite of all pessimists, there HAS BEEN a change in the attitude of men. And that change goes on all the time, even if it is so slow that some people do not see it. And so it will go on, and neither fascism, Hitler, Mussolini, nor the Popes and other gods can change that inherent fact of human nature. Fascism and nationalism are nothing new. Under different names they existed in old Rome and Greece and in the feudal times. They PASSED and so will the modern fascism pass—and that is why I do not doubt my anarchism.

Well, enough of it. So, cheer up, dear girl. The skies are black just now, but the sun always breaks out again. I may not see much of it in my time, but idealism to me does not mean the hope of realizing one’s dream in one’s own lifetime. Idealism means, at least to me, FAITH in one’s ideal. And that I have.

Things here pretty low. We see only Nellie [Harris] occasionally. No one else we know in the city. By the way, we are giving up our apartment the end of this month. Write me to St. Tropez. EG expects to be back the first week of May. Love to you, dear girl, from Emmy and

[AB]



**Section 2:**  
***The ABC of Anarchism***



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## I: Introduction

I want to tell you about anarchism.

I want to tell you what anarchism is, because I think it is well you should know it. Also because so little is known about it, and what is known is generally hearsay and mostly false.

I want to tell you about it, because I believe that anarchism is the finest and biggest thing man has ever thought of; the only thing that can give you liberty and well-being, and bring peace and joy to the world.

I want to tell you about it in such plain and simple language that there will be no misunderstanding it. Big words and high-sounding phrases serve only to confuse. Straight thinking means plain speaking.

But before I tell you what anarchism is, I want to tell you what it *is not*.

That is necessary because so much falsehood has been spread about anarchism. Even intelligent persons often have entirely wrong notions about it. Some people talk about anarchism without knowing a thing about it. And some lie about anarchism, because they don't want *you* to know the truth about it.

Anarchism has many enemies; they won't tell you the truth about it. Why anarchism has enemies and who they are, you will see later, in the course of this story. Just now I can tell you that neither your political boss nor your employer, neither the capitalist nor the policeman will speak to you honestly about anarchism. Most of them know nothing about it, and all of them hate it. Their newspapers and publications—the capitalistic press—are also against it.

Even most socialists and Bolsheviks misrepresent anarchism. True, the majority of them don't know any better. But those who do know better also often lie about anarchism and speak of it as “disorder and chaos.” You can see for yourself how dishonest they are in this: the greatest teachers of socialism—Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels—had taught that anarchism would come from Socialism. They said that we must first have socialism, but that after socialism there will be anarchism, and that it would be a freer and more beautiful condition of society to live in than socialism. Yet the socialists, who swear by Marx and Engels, insist on calling anarchism “chaos and disorder,” which shows you how ignorant or dishonest they are.

The Bolsheviks do the same, although their greatest teacher, Lenin, had said that anarchism would follow Bolshevism, and that then it will be better and freer to live.

Therefore I must tell you, first of all, what anarchism is *not*.

It is *not* bombs, disorder, or chaos.

It is *not* robbery and murder.

It is *not* a war of each against all.

It is *not* a return to barbarism or to the wild state of man.

*Anarchism is the very opposite of all that.*

Anarchism means that you should be free; that no one should enslave you, boss you, rob you, or impose upon you.

It means that you should be free to do the things you want to do; and that you should not be compelled to do what you don't want to do.

It means that you should have a chance to choose the kind of a life you want to live, and live it without anybody interfering.

It means that the next fellow should have the same freedom as you, that every one should have the same rights and liberties.

It means that all men are brothers, and that they should live like brothers, in peace and harmony.

That is to say, that there should be no war, no violence used by one set of men against another, no monopoly, and no poverty, no oppression, no taking advantage of your fellow-man.

In short, anarchism means a condition of society where all men and women are free, and where all enjoy equally the benefits of an ordered and sensible life.

“Can that be?” you ask; “and how?”

“Not before we all become angels,” your friend remarks.

Well, let us talk it over. Maybe I can show you that we can be decent and live as decent folks even without growing wings.

## 2: Is Anarchism Violence?

You have heard that anarchists throw bombs, that they believe in violence, and that anarchy means disorder and chaos.

It is not surprising that you should think so. The press, the pulpit, and every one in authority constantly din it into your ears. But most of them know better, even if they have a reason for not telling you the truth. It is time you should hear it.

I mean to speak to you honestly and frankly, and you can take my word for it, because it happens that I am just one of those anarchists who are pointed out as men of violence and destruction. I ought to know, and I have nothing to hide.

“Now does anarchism really mean disorder and violence?” you wonder.

No, my friend, it is capitalism and government which stand for disorder and violence. Anarchism is the very reverse of it; it means order without government and peace without violence.

“But is that possible?” you ask.

That is just what we are going to talk over now. But first your friend demands to know whether anarchists have never thrown bombs or ever used violence.

Yes, anarchists have thrown bombs and have sometimes resorted to violence.

“There you are!” your friend exclaims. “I thought so.”

But do not let us be hasty. If anarchists have sometimes employed violence, does it necessarily mean that anarchism means violence?

Ask yourself this question and try to answer it honestly.

When a citizen puts on a soldier’s uniform, he may have to throw bombs and use violence. Will you say, then, that citizenship stands for bombs and violence?

You will indignantly resent the imputation. It simply means, you will reply, that *under certain conditions* a man may have to resort to violence. That man may happen to be a democrat, a monarchist, a socialist, Bolshevik, or anarchist.

You will find that this applies to all men and to all times.

Brutus killed Caesar because he feared his friend meant to betray the republic and become king. Not that Brutus “loved Caesar less but that he loved Rome more.” Brutus was *not* an anarchist. He was a loyal republican.

William Tell, as folklore tells us, shot to death the tyrant in order to rid his country of oppression. Tell had never heard of anarchism.

I mention these instances to illustrate the fact that from time immemorial despots met their fate at the hands of outraged lovers of liberty. Such men were rebels against tyranny. They were generally patriots, democrats or republicans, occasionally socialists or anarchists. Their acts were cases of individual rebellion against wrong and injustice. Anarchism had nothing to do with it.

There was a time in ancient Greece when killing a despot was considered the highest virtue. Modern law condemns such acts, but human feeling seems to have remained the same in this matter as in the old days. The conscience of the world does not feel outraged by tyrannicide. Even if publicly not approved, the heart of mankind condones and often very secretly rejoices in such acts. Were there not thousands of patriotic youths in America willing to assassinate the German Kaiser whom they held responsible for starting the World War? Did not a French court recently acquit the man who killed Petlura to avenge the thousands of men, women and children murdered in the Petlura pogroms against the Jews of South Russia?

In every land, in all ages, there have been tyrannicides; that is, men and women who loved their country well enough to sacrifice even their own lives for it. Usually they were persons of no political party or idea, but simply haters of tyranny. Occasionally they were religious fanatics, like the devout Catholic Kullman, who tried to assassinate Bismark,\* or the misguided enthusiast Charlotte Corday who killed Marat during the French Revolution.

In the United States three Presidents were killed by individual acts. Lincoln was shot in 1865, by John Wilkes Booth, who was a Southern Democrat; Garfield in 1888, by Charles Jules Guiteau, a Republican; and McKinley, in 1901, by Leon Czolgosz. Out of the three only one was an anarchist.

The country that has the worst oppressors produces also the greatest numbers of tyrannicides, which is natural. Take Russia, for instance. With complete suppression of speech and press under the Czars, there was no way of mitigating the despotic regime than by "putting the fear of God" into the tyrant's heart.

Those avengers were mostly sons and daughters of the highest nobility, idealistic youths who loved liberty and the people. With all other avenues closed, they felt themselves compelled to resort to the pistol and dynamite in the hope of alleviating the miserable conditions of their country. They were known as nihilists and terrorists. They were not anarchists.

In modern times individual acts of political violence have been even more frequent than in the past. The women suffragettes in England, for example, frequently resorted to it to propagate and carry out their demands for equal rights. In Germany, since the war, men of the most conservative political views have used such methods in the hope of re-establishing the kingdom. It was a monarchist who killed Karl Erzberger, the Prussian Minister of Finance; and Walter Rathenau, Minister of Foreign Affairs was also laid low by a man of the same political party.

Why, the original cause of, or at least excuse for, the Great War itself was the killing of the Austrian heir to the throne by a Serbian patriot who had never heard of anarchism. In Germany, Hungary, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and

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\*July 13th, 1874

in every other European country men of the most varied political views had resorted to acts of violence, not to speak of the wholesale political terror, practised by organised bodies such as the Fascists in Italy, the Ku Klux Klan in America, or the Catholic Church in Mexico.

You see, then, that anarchists have no monopoly of political violence. The number of such acts by anarchists is infinitesimal as compared with those committed by persons of other political persuasions.

The truth is that in every country, in every social movement violence has been a part of the struggle from time immemorial. Even the Nazarene, who came to preach the gospel of peace, resorted to violence to drive the money changers out of the temple.

As I have said, anarchists have no monopoly on violence. On the contrary, the teachings of anarchism are those of peace and harmony, of non-invasion, of the sacredness of life and liberty. But anarchists are human, like the rest of mankind, and perhaps more so. They are more sensitive to wrong and injustice, quicker to resent oppression, and therefore not exempt from occasionally voicing their protest by an act of violence. But such acts are an expression of individual temperament, not of any particular theory.

You might ask whether the holding of revolutionary ideas would not naturally influence a person towards deeds of violence. I do not think so, because we have seen that violent methods are also employed by people of the most conservative opinions. If persons of directly opposite political views commit similar acts, it is hardly reasonable to say that their ideas are responsible for such acts.

Like results have a like cause, but that cause is not to be found in political convictions; rather in individual temperament and the general feeling about violence.

“You may be right about temperament,” you say. “I can see that revolutionary ideas are not the cause of political acts of violence, else every revolutionist would be committing such acts. But do not such views to some extent justify those who commit such acts?”

It may seem so at first sight. But if you think it over you will find that it is an entirely wrong idea. The best proof of it is that anarchists who hold exactly the same views about government and the necessity of abolishing it, often disagree entirely on the question of violence. Thus Tolstoyan anarchists and most Individualist anarchists condemn political violence, while other anarchists approve of or at least justify it.

Moreover, many anarchists who at one time believed in violence as a means of propaganda have changed their opinion about it and do not favour such methods any more. There was a time, for instance, when anarchists advocated individual acts of violence, known as “propaganda by deed.” They did not expect to change government and capitalism into anarchism by such acts, nor did they think that the taking off of a despot would abolish despotism. No, terrorism was considered a means of avenging a popular wrong, inspiring fear in the enemy, and also calling attention to the evil against which the act of terror was directed. But most anarchists today do not believe any more in “propaganda by deed” and do not favour acts of that nature.

Experience has taught them that though such methods may have been justified and useful in the past, modern conditions of life make them unnecessary and even harmful to the spread of their ideas. But their ideas remain the same,

which means that it was not anarchism which shaped their attitude to violence. It proves that it is not certain ideas or “isms” that lead to violence, but that some other causes bring it about.

We must therefore look somewhere else to find the right explanation.

As we have seen, acts of political violence have been committed not only by anarchists, socialists, and revolutionists of all kinds, but also by patriots and nationalists, by Democrats and Republicans, by suffragettes, by conservatives and reactionaries, by monarchists and royalists, and even by religionists and devout Christians.

We know now that it could not have been any particular idea or “ism” that influenced their acts, because the most varied ideas and “isms” produced similar deeds. I have given as the reason individual temperament and the general feeling about violence.

Here is the crux of the matter. What is this general feeling about violence? If we can answer this question correctly, the whole matter will be clear to us.

If we speak honestly, we must admit that every one believes in violence, and practises it, however he may condemn it in others. In fact, all of the institutions we support and the entire life of present society are based on violence.

What is the thing we call government? Is it anything else but organised violence? The law orders you to do this or not to do that, and if you fail to obey, it will compel you by force. We are not discussing just now whether it is right or wrong, whether it should or should not be so. Just now we are interested in the fact that *it is* so—that all government, all law and authority finally rest on force and violence, on punishment or fear of punishment.

Why, even spiritual authority, the authority of the church and of God rests on force and violence, because it is the fear of divine wrath and vengeance that wields power over you, compels you to obey, and even to believe against your own reason.

Wherever you turn you will find that our entire life is built on violence or the fear of it. From earliest childhood you are subjected to the violence of parents or elders. At home, in school, at the office, factory, field, or shop, it is always someone’s *authority* which keeps you obedient and compels you to do his will.

The right to compel you is called authority. Fear of punishment has been made into duty and is called obedience.

In this atmosphere of force and violence, of authority and obedience, of duty, fear and punishment we all grow up; we breathe it through our lives. We are so steeped in the spirit of violence that we never stop to ask whether violence is right or wrong. We only ask if it is legal, whether the law permits it.

You don’t question the right of the government to kill, to confiscate and imprison. If a private person should be guilty of the things the government is doing all the time, you’d brand him a murderer, thief and scoundrel. But as long as the violence committed is “lawful,” you approve of it and submit to it. So it is not really violence that you object to, but people using violence “unlawfully.”

This lawful violence and the fear of it dominate our whole existence, individual and collective. Authority controls our lives from the cradle to the grave—authority parental, priestly and divine, political, economic, social, and moral. But whatever the character of that authority, it is always the same

executioner wielding power over you through your fear of punishment in one form or another. You are afraid of God and the devil, of the priest and the neighbour, of your employer and boss, of the politician and policeman, of the judge and the jailer, of the law and the government. All your life is a long chain of fears—which bruise your body and lacerate your soul. On those fears is based the authority of God, of the church, of parents, of capitalist and ruler.

Look into your heart and see if what I say is not true. Why, even among children the ten-year-old Johnny bosses his younger brother or sister by the authority of his greater physical strength, just as Johnny's father bosses him by his superior strength, and by Johnny's dependence on his support. You stand for the authority of priest and preacher because you think they can "call down the wrath of God upon your head." You submit to the domination of boss, judge, and government because of their power to deprive you of work, to ruin your business, to put you in prison—a power, by the way, that you yourself have given into their hands.

So authority rules your whole life, the authority of the past and the present, of the dead and the living, and your existence is a continuous invasion and violation of yourself, a constant subjection to the thoughts and the will of someone else.

And as you are invaded and violated so you subconsciously revenge yourself by invading and violating others over whom you have authority or can exercise compulsion, physical or moral. In this way all life has become a crazy quilt of authority, of domination and submission, of command and obedience, of coercion, and subjection, of rulers and ruled, of violence and force in a thousand and one forms.

Can you wonder that even idealists are still held in the meshes of this spirit of authority and violence, and are often impelled by their feelings and environment to invasive acts entirely at variance with their ideas?

We are all still barbarians who resort to force and violence to settle our debts, difficulties, and troubles. Violence is the method of ignorance, the weapon of the weak. The strong of heart and brain need no violence, for they are irresistible in their consciousness of being right. The further we get away from primitive man and the hatchet age, the less recourse we shall have to force and violence. The more enlightened man will become, the less he will employ compulsion and coercion. He will rise from the dust and stand erect: he will how to no tsar in heaven or on earth. He will become fully human when he will scorn to rule and refuse to be ruled. He will be truly free only when there shall be no more masters.

Anarchism is the ideal of such a condition; of a society without force and compulsion, where all men shall be equals; and live in freedom, peace and harmony.

The word anarchy comes from the Greek, meaning without force, without violence or government, because government is the very fountainhead of violence, constraint and coercion.

Anarchy,\* therefore, does not mean disorder and chaos, as you thought before. On the contrary, it is the very reverse of it; it means no government, which is freedom and liberty. Disorder is the child of authority and compulsion. Liberty is the mother of order.

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\*Anarchy refers to the condition. Anarchism is the theory or teaching about it.

“A beautiful ideal,” you say; “but only angels are fit for it.”

Let us see, then, if we can grow the wings we need for that ideal state of society.

### 3: What is Anarchism?

“Can you tell us briefly,” your friend asks, “what anarchism really is?”

I shall try. In the fewest words, anarchism teaches that we can live in a society where there is no compulsion of any kind.

A life without compulsion naturally means liberty, it means freedom from being forced or coerced, a chance to lead the life that suits you best.

You cannot lead such a life unless you do away with the institutions that curtail your liberty and interfere with your life, the condition that compels you to act differently from the way you really would like to.

What are those institutions and conditions? Let us see what we have to do away with in order to secure a free and harmonious life. Once we know what has to be abolished and what must take its place, we shall also find the way to do it.

What must be abolished, then, to secure liberty?

First of all, of course, the thing that invades you most, that handicaps or prevents your free activity; the thing that interferes with your liberty and compels you to live differently from what would be your own choice.

That thing is government.

Take a good look at it and you will see that government is the greatest invader; more than that, the worst criminal man has ever known of. It fills the world with violence, with fraud and deceit, with oppression and misery. As a great thinker once said, “its breath is poison.” It corrupts everything it touches.

“Yes, government means violence and it is evil,” you admit; “but can we do without it?”

“That is just what we want to talk over. Now, if I should ask you whether *you* need government, I’m sure you would answer that you don’t, but that it is for the others that it is needed.

But if you should ask any one of those “others,” he would reply as you do: he would say that he does not need it, but that it is necessary “for the others.”

Why does everyone think that he can be decent enough without the policeman, but that the club is needed for “the others?”

“People would rob and murder each other if there were no government and no law,” you say.

If they really would, *why* would they? Would they do it just for the pleasure of it or because of certain reasons. Maybe if we examine their reasons, we’d discover the cure for them.

Suppose you and I and a score of others had suffered shipwreck and found ourselves on an island rich with fruit of every kind. Of course, we’d get to work to gather the food. But suppose one of our number should declare that it all belongs to him, and that no one shall have a single morsel unless he first pays him tribute for it. We would be indignant, wouldn’t we? We’d laugh at his pretensions. If he’d try to make trouble about it, we might throw him into the sea, and it would serve him right, would it not?

Suppose, further, that we ourselves and our forefathers had cultivated the island and stocked it with everything needed for life and comfort, and that someone should arrive and claim it all as his. What would we say? We'd ignore him, wouldn't we? We might tell him that he could share with us and join us in our work. But suppose that he insists on his ownership and that he produces a slip of paper and says that it proves that everything belongs to him? We'd tell him he's crazy and we'd go about our business. But if he should have a government back of him, he would appeal to it for the protection of "his rights," and the government would send police and soldiers who would evict us and put the "lawful owner in possession."

That is the function of government; that is what government exists for and what it is doing all the time.

Now, do you still think that without this thing called government we should rob and murder each other.

Is it not rather true that *with* government we rob and murder? Because government does not secure us in our rightful possessions, but on the contrary takes them away for the benefit of those who have no right to them, as we have seen in previous chapters.

If you should wake up tomorrow morning and learn that there is no government any more, would your first thought be to rush into the street, and kill some one? No, you know that is nonsense. We speak of sane, normal men. The insane man belongs to the care of physicians and alienists; they should be placed in hospitals to be treated for their malady.

The chances are that if you or Johnson should awaken to find that there is no government you would get busy arranging your life under the new conditions.

It is very likely, of course, that if you should then see people gorge themselves while you go hungry, you would demand a chance to eat, and you would be perfectly right in that. And so would every one else, which means that people would not stand for any one hogging all the good things of life, they would want to share in them. It means further that the poor would refuse to stay poor while others wallow in luxury. It means that the worker will decline to give up his product to the boss who claims to "own" the factory and everything that is made there. It means that the farmer will not permit thousands of acres to lie idle while he has not enough soil to support himself and family. It means that no one will be permitted to monopolise the land or the machinery of production. It means that the private ownership of the *sources of life* will not be tolerated any more. It will be considered the greatest crime for some to own more than they can use in a dozen lifetimes, while their neighbours have not enough bread for their children. It means that all men will share in the social wealth, and that all will help to produce that wealth.

It means, in short, that for the first time in history right, justice and equality would triumph instead of law.

You see therefore that doing away with government also signifies the abolition of monopoly and of personal ownership of the means of production and distribution.

It follows that when government is abolished, wage slavery and capitalism must also go with it, because they cannot exist without the support and protection of government. Just as the man who would claim monopoly of the

island, of which I spoke before, could not put through his crazy claim without the help of government.

Such a condition of things where there would be liberty instead of government would be *Anarchy*. And where equality of use would take the place of private ownership, would be *Communism*.

It would be *Communist Anarchism*.

“Oh, Communism,” your friend exclaims, “but you said you were not a Bolshevik!”

No, I am not a Bolshevik, because the Bolsheviks want a powerful government or state, while anarchism means doing away with the state or government altogether.

“But are not the Bolsheviks Communists?” you demand.

Yes, the Bolsheviks are Communists, but they want their dictatorship, their government, to compel people to live in Communism. Anarchist communism, on the contrary, means voluntary communism, communism from free choice.

“I see the difference. It would be fine, of course,” your friend admits. “But do you really think it possible?”

#### 4: Is Anarchy Possible?

“It might be possible,” you say, “if we could do without government. But can we?”

Perhaps we can best answer your question by examining your own life.

What role does the government play in your existence? Does it help you live? Does it feed, clothe, and shelter you? Do you need it to help you work or play? If you are ill, do you call the physician or the policeman? Can the government give you greater ability than nature endowed you with? Can it save you from sickness, old age, or death?

Consider your daily life and you will find that in reality the government is no factor in it at all except when it begins to interfere with your affairs, when it compels you to do certain things or prohibits you from doing others. It forces you, for instance, to pay taxes and support it, whether you want to or not. It makes you don a uniform and join the army. It invades your personal life, orders you about, coerces you, prescribes your behaviour, and generally treats you as it pleases. It tells you even what you must believe and punishes you for thinking and acting otherwise. It directs you what to eat and drink, and imprisons or shoots you for disobeying. It commands you and dominates every step of your life. It treats you as a bad boy, as an *irresponsible* child who needs the strong hand of a guardian, but if you disobey it holds you *responsible*, nevertheless.

We shall consider later the details of life under anarchy and see what conditions and institutions will exist in that form of society, how they will function, and what effect they are likely to have upon man.

For the present we want to make sure first that such a condition is possible, that anarchy is practicable.

What is the existence of the average man today? Almost all your time is given to earning your livelihood. You are so busy making a living that you hardly

have time left to live, to enjoy life. Neither the time nor the money. You are lucky if you have some source of support, some job. Now and then comes slack-time: there is unemployment and thousands are thrown out of work, every year, in every country.

That time means no income, no wages. It results in worry and privation, in disease, desperation, and suicide. It spells poverty and crime. To alleviate that poverty we build homes of charity, poorhouses, free hospitals, all of which you support with your taxes. To prevent crime and to punish criminals it is again you who have to support police, detectives, State forces, judges, lawyers, prisons, keepers. Can you imagine anything more senseless and impractical? The legislatures pass laws, the judges interpret them, the various officials execute them, the police track and arrest the criminal, and finally the prison warden gets him into custody. Numerous persons and institutions are busy keeping the jobless man from stealing and punish him if he tries to. Then he is provided with the means of existence, the lack of which had made him break the law in the first place. After a shorter or longer term he is turned loose. If he falls to get work he begins the same round of theft, arrest, trial, and imprisonment all over again.

This is a rough but typical illustration of the stupid character of our system; stupid and inefficient. Law and government support that system.

Is it not peculiar that most people imagine we could not do without government, when in fact our real life has no connection with it whatever, no need of it, and is only interfered with where law and government step in?

“But security and public order,” you object, “could we have that without law and government? Who will protect us against the criminal?”

The truth is what is called “law and order” is really the worst disorder, as we have seen in previous chapters. What little order and peace we do have is due to the good commonsense of the joint efforts of the people, mostly in spite of the government. Do you need government to tell you not to step in front of a moving automobile? Do you need it to order you not to jump off the Brooklyn Bridge or from the Eiffel Tower?

Man is a social being; he cannot exist alone; he lives in communities or societies. Mutual need and common interests result in certain arrangements to afford us security and comfort. Such co-working is free, voluntary; it needs no compulsion by any government. You join a sporting club or a singing society because your inclinations lie that way, and you co-operate with the other members without any one coercing you. The man of science, the writer, the artist, and the inventor seek their own kind for inspiration and mutual work. Their impulses and needs are their best urge: the interference of any government or authority can only hinder their efforts.

All through life you will find that the needs and inclinations of people make for association, for mutual protection and help. That is the difference between managing things and governing men; between doing something from free choice and being compelled. It is the difference between liberty and constraint, between anarchism and government, because anarchism means voluntary cooperation instead of forced participation. It means harmony and order in place of interference and disorder.

“But who will protect us against crime and criminals?” you demand.

Rather ask yourself whether government really protects us against them. Does not government itself create and uphold conditions which make for crime? Does not the invasion and violence upon which all governments rest cultivate the spirit of intolerance and persecution, of hatred and more violence? Does not crime increase with the growth of poverty and injustice fostered by government? Is not government itself the greatest injustice and crime?

Crime is the result of economic conditions, of social inequality, of wrongs and evils of which government and monopoly are the parents. Government and law can only punish the criminal. They neither cure nor prevent crime. The only real cure for crime is to abolish its causes, and this the government can never do because it is there to preserve those very causes. Crime can be eliminated only by doing away with the conditions that create it. Government cannot do it.

Anarchism means to do away with those conditions. Crimes resulting from government, from its oppression and injustice, from inequality and poverty, will disappear under anarchy. These constitute by far the greatest percentage of crime.

Certain other crimes will persist for some time, such as those resulting from jealousy, passion, and from the spirit of coercion and violence which dominates the world today. But these, the offspring of authority and possession, will also gradually disappear under wholesome conditions with the passing away of the atmosphere that cultivated them.

Anarchy will therefore neither breed crime nor offer any soil for its thriving. Occasional anti-social acts will be looked upon as survivals of former diseased conditions and attitudes, and will be treated as an unhealthy state of mind rather than of crime.

Anarchy would begin by feeding the "criminal" and securing him work instead of first watching him, arresting, trying and imprisoning him, and finally ending by feeding him and the many others who have to watch and feed him. Surely even this example shows how much more sensible and simpler life would be under anarchism than now.

The truth is, present life is impractical, complex and confused, and not satisfactory from any point of view. That is why there is so much misery and discontent. The worker is not satisfied; nor is the master happy in his constant anxiety over "bad times" involving loss of property and power. The spectre of fear for tomorrow dogs the steps of poor and rich alike.

Certainly the worker has nothing to lose by a change from government and capitalism to a condition of no government, of anarchy.

The middle classes are almost as uncertain of their existence as the workers. They are dependent upon the goodwill of the manufacturer and wholesaler, of the large combines of industry and capital, and they are always in danger of bankruptcy and ruin.

Even the big capitalist has little to lose by the changing of the present-day system to one of anarchy, for under the latter every one would be assured of his living and comfort; the fear of competition would be eliminated with the abolition of private ownership. Every one would have full and unhindered opportunity to live and enjoy his life to the utmost of his capacity.

Add to this the consciousness of peace and harmony; the feeling that comes with freedom from financial or material worries; the realisation that you are in

a friendly world with no envy or business rivalry to disturb your mind; in a world of brothers; in an atmosphere of liberty and general welfare.

It is almost impossible to conceive of the wonderful opportunities which would open up to man in a society of communist anarchism. The scientist could fully devote himself to his beloved pursuits, without being harassed about his daily bread. The inventor would find every facility at his disposal to benefit humanity by his discoveries and inventions. The writer, the poet, the artist—all would rise on the wings of liberty and social harmony to greater heights of attainment.

Only then would justice and right come into their own. Do not underestimate the role of these sentiments in the life of man or nation. We do not live by bread alone. True, existence is not possible without opportunity to satisfy our physical needs. But the gratification of these by no means constitutes all of life. Our present system of civilisation has, by disinheriting millions, made the belly the centre of the universe, so to speak. But in a sensible society, with plenty for all, the matter of mere existence, the security of a livelihood would be considered self-evident and free as the air is for all. The feelings of human sympathy, of justice and right would have a chance to develop, to be satisfied, to broaden and grow. Even today the sense of justice and fair play is still alive in the heart of man, in spite of centuries of repression and perversion. It has not been exterminated, it cannot be exterminated because it is inborn, innate in man, an instinct as strong as that of self-preservation, and just as vital to our happiness. For not all the misery we have in the world today comes from the lack of material welfare. Man can better stand starvation than the consciousness of injustice. The consciousness that you are treated unjustly will rouse you to protest and rebellion just as quickly as hunger, perhaps even quicker. Hunger may be the immediate cause of every rebellion or uprising, but beneath it is the slumbering antagonism and hatred of the masses against those at whose hands they are suffering injustice and wrong. The truth is that right and justice play a far more important role in our lives than most people are aware of. Those who would deny this know as little of human nature as of history. In every-day life you constantly see people grow indignant at what they consider to be an injustice. "That isn't right," is the instinctive protest of man when he feels wrong done. Of course, every one's conception of wrong and right depends on his tradition, environment and bringing up. But whatever his conception, his natural impulse is to resent what he thinks wrong and unjust.

Historically the same holds true. More rebellions and wars have been fought for ideas of right and wrong than because of material reasons. Marxists may object that our views of right and wrong are themselves formed by economic conditions, but that in no way alters the fact that the sense of justice and light has at all times inspired people to heroism and self-sacrifice on behalf of ideals.

The Christs and the Buddhas of all ages were not prompted by material considerations but by their devotion to justice and right. The pioneers in every human endeavour have suffered calumny, persecution, even death, not for motives of personal aggrandisement but because of their faith in the justice of their cause. The John Husses, the Luthers, Brunos, Savonarolas, Galileos and numerous other religious and social idealists fought and died championing the cause of right as they saw it. Similarly in paths of science, philosophy, art, poetry, and

education men from the time of Socrates to modern days have devoted their lives to the service of truth and justice. In the field of political and social advancement, beginning with Moses and Spartacus, the noblest of humanity have consecrated themselves to ideals of liberty and equality. Nor is this compelling power of idealism limited only to exceptional individuals. The masses have always been inspired by it. The American War of Independence, for instance, began with popular resentment in the Colonies against the injustice of taxation without representation. The Crusades continued for two hundred years in an effort to secure the Holy Land for the Christians. This religious ideal inspired six millions of men, even armies of children, to face untold hardships, pestilence, and death in the name of right and justice. Even the late World War, capitalistic as it was in cause and result, was fought by millions of men in the fond belief that it was being waged for a just cause, for democracy and the termination of all wars.

So all through history, past and modern, the sense of right and justice has inspired man, individually and collectively, to deeds of self-sacrifice and devotion and raised him far above the mean drabness of his every-day existence. It is tragic, of course, that this idealism expressed itself in acts of persecution, violence, and slaughter. It was the viciousness and self-seeking of king, priest, and master, ignorance and fanaticism which determined these forms. But the spirit that filled them was that of right and justice. All past experience proves that this spirit is ever alive and that it is a powerful and dominant factor in the whole scale of human life.

The conditions of our present-day existence weaken and vitiate this noblest trait of man, pervert its manifestation, and turn it into channels of intolerance, persecution, hatred, and strife. But once man is freed from the corrupting influences of material interests, lifted out of ignorance and class antagonism, his innate spirit of right and justice would find new forms of expression, forms that would tend toward greater brotherhood and goodwill, toward individual peace and social harmony.

Only under anarchy could this spirit come into its full development. Liberated from the degrading and brutalising struggle for our daily bread, all sharing in labour and well-being, the best qualities of man's heart and mind would have opportunity for growth and beneficial application. Man would indeed become the noble work of nature that he has till now visioned himself only in his dreams.

It is for these reasons that anarchy is the ideal not only of some particular element or class, but of all humanity, because it would benefit, in the larger sense, all of us. For anarchism is the formulation of a universal and perennial desire of mankind.

Every man and woman, therefore, should be vitally interested in helping to bring anarchy about. They would surely do so if they but understood the beauty and justice of such a new life. Every human being who is not devoid of feeling and common sense is inclined to anarchism. Every one who suffers from wrong and injustice, from the evil, corruption, and filth of our present-day life, is instinctively sympathetic to anarchy. Every one whose heart is not dead to kindness, compassion, and fellow-sympathy must be interested in furthering it. Every one who has to endure poverty and misery, tyranny and oppression should welcome the coming of anarchy. Every liberty and justice-loving man and woman should help realise it.

And foremost and most vitally of all, the subjected and submerged of the world must be interested in it. Those who build palaces and live in hovels; who set the table of life but are not permitted to partake of the repast; who create the wealth of the world and are disinherited; who fill life with joy and sunshine, and themselves remain scorned in the depths of darkness; the Samson of life shorn of his strength by the hand of fear and ignorance; the helpless Giant of labour, the proletariat of brain and brawn, the industrial and agrarian masses—these should most gladly embrace anarchy.

It is to them that anarchism makes the strongest appeal; it is they who, first and foremost, must work for the new day that is to give them back their inheritance and bring liberty and well-being, joy and sunshine to the whole of mankind.

“A splendid thing,” you remark; “but will it work? And how shall we attain it?”

### 5: Will Communist Anarchism Work?

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, no life can be free and secure, harmonious and satisfactory unless it is built on principles of justice and fair play. The first requirement of justice is equal liberty and opportunity.

Under government and exploitation there can be neither equal liberty nor equal opportunity—hence all the evils and troubles of present-day society.

Communist anarchism is based on the understanding of this incontrovertible truth. It is founded on the principle of non-invasiveness and non-coercion; in other words, on liberty and opportunity.

Life on such a basis fully satisfies the demands of justice. You are to be entirely free, and everybody else is to enjoy equal liberty, which means that no one has a right to compel or force another, for coercion of any kind is interference with your liberty.

Similarly equal opportunity is the heritage of all. Monopoly and the private ownership of the means of existence are therefore eliminated as an abridgement of the equal opportunity of all.

If we keep in mind this simple principle of equal liberty and opportunity, we shall be able to solve the questions involved in building a society of communist anarchism.

Politically, then, man will recognise no authority which can force or coerce him. Government will be abolished.

Economically he will permit no exclusive possession of the sources of life in order to preserve his opportunity of free access.

Monopoly of land, private ownership of the machinery of production, distribution, and communication can therefore not be tolerated under anarchy. Opportunity to use what every one needs in order to live must be free to all.

In a nutshell, then, the meaning of communist anarchism is this: the abolition of government, of coercive authority and all its agencies, and joint ownership—which means free and equal participation in the general work and welfare.

“You said that anarchy will secure economic equality,” remarks your friend. “Does that mean equal pay for all?” It does. Or what amounts to the

same, equal participation in the public welfare. Because, as we already know, labour is social. No man can create anything all by himself, by his own efforts. Now, then, if labour is social, it stands to reason that the results of it, the wealth produced, must also be social, belong to the collectivity. No person can therefore justly lay claim to the exclusive ownership of the social wealth. It is to be enjoyed by all alike.

“But why not give each according to the value of his work?” you ask.

Because there is no way by which value can be measured. That is the difference between value and price. Value is what a thing is worth, while price is what it can be sold or bought for in the market. What a thing is worth no one really can tell. Political economists generally claim that the value of a commodity is the amount of labour required to produce it, of “socially necessary labour,” as Marx says. But evidently it is not a just standard of measurement. Suppose the carpenter worked three hours to make a kitchen chair, while the surgeon took only half an hour to perform an operation that saved your life. If the amount of labour used determines value, then the chair is worth more than your life. Obvious nonsense, of course. Even if you should count in the years of study and practice the surgeon needed to make him capable of performing the operation, how are you going to decide what “an hour of operating” is worth? The carpenter and mason also had to be trained before they could do their work properly, but you don’t figure in those years of apprenticeship when you contract for some work with them. Besides, there is also to be considered the particular ability and aptitude that every worker, writer, artist or physician must exercise in his labours. That is a purely individual personal factor. How are you going to estimate its value?

That is why value cannot be determined. The same thing may be worth a lot to one person while it is worth nothing or very little to another. It may be worth much or little even to the same person, at different times. A diamond, a painting, a book may be worth a great deal to one man and very little to another. A loaf of bread will be worth a great deal to you when you are hungry, and much less when you are not. Therefore the real value of a thing cannot be ascertained if it is an unknown quantity.

But the price is easily found out. If there are five loaves of bread to be had and ten persons want to get a loaf each, the price of bread will rise. If there are ten loaves and only five buyers, then it will fall. Price depends on supply and demand.

The exchange of commodities by means of prices leads to profit making, to taking advantage and exploitation; in short, to some form of capitalism. If you do away with profits, you cannot have any price system, nor any system of wages or payment. That means that exchange must be according to value. But as value is uncertain or not ascertainable, exchange must consequently be free, without “equal” value, since such does not exist. In other words, labour and its products must be exchanged without price, without profit, freely according to necessity. This logically leads to ownership in common and to joint use. Which is a sensible, just, and equitable system, and is known as communism.

“But is it just that all should share alike?” you demand.

“The man of brains and the dullard, the efficient and the inefficient, all the same? Should there be no distinction, no special recognition for those of ability?”

Let me in turn ask you, my friend, shall we punish the man whom nature has not endowed as generously as his stronger and more talented neighbour? Shall

we add injustice to the handicap nature has put upon him? All we can reasonably expect from any man is that he do his best—can any one do more? And if John's best is not as good as his brother Jim's, it is his misfortune, but in no case a fault to be punished.

There is nothing more dangerous than discrimination. The moment you begin discriminating against the less capable, you establish conditions that breed dissatisfaction and resentment: you invite envy, discord, and strife. You would think it brutal to withhold from the less capable the air or water they need. Should not the same principle apply to the other wants of man? After all, the matter of food, clothing, and shelter is the smallest item in the world's economy.

The surest way to get one to do his best is not by discriminating against him, but by treating him on an equal footing with others. That is the most effective encouragement and stimulus. It is just and human.

"But what will you do with the lazy man, the man who does not want to work?" inquires your friend.

That is an interesting question, and you will probably be very much surprised when I say that there is really no such thing as laziness. What we call a lazy man is generally a square peg in a round hole. That is, the right man in the wrong place. And you will always find that when a fellow is in the wrong place, he will be inefficient or shiftless. For so-called laziness and a good deal of inefficiency are merely unfitness, misplacement. If you are compelled to do the thing you are unfitted for by your inclinations or temperament, you will be inefficient at it; if you are forced to do work you are not interested in, you will be lazy at it.

Every one who has managed affairs in which large numbers of men were employed can substantiate this. Life in prison is a particularly convincing proof of the truth of it—and, after all, present-day existence for most people is but that of a larger jail. Every prison warder will tell you that inmates put to tasks for which they have no ability or interest are always lazy and subject to continuous punishment. But as soon as these "refractory convicts" are assigned to work that appeals to their leanings, they become "model men," as the jailers term them.

Russia has also signally demonstrated the verity of it. It has shown how little we know of human potentialities and of the effect of environment upon them—how we mistake wrong conditions for bad conduct. Russian refugees leading a miserable and insignificant life in foreign lands, on returning home and finding in the Revolution a proper field for their activities, have accomplished most wonderful work in their right sphere, have developed into brilliant organisers, builders of railroads and creators of industry. Among the Russian names best known abroad today are those of men considered shiftless and inefficient under conditions where their ability and energies could not find proper application.

That is human nature: efficiency in a certain direction means inclination and capability for it; industry and application signify interest. That is why there is so much inefficiency and laziness in the world today. For who indeed is nowadays in his right place? Who works at what he really likes and is interested in?

Under present conditions there is little choice given the average man to devote himself to the tasks that appeal to his leanings and preferences. The accident of your birth and social station generally predetermines your trade or profession. The son of the financier does not, as a rule, become a wood-chopper, though he may be more fit to handle logs than bank accounts. The middle classes send

their children to colleges which turn them into doctors, lawyers, or engineers. But if your parents were workers who could not afford to let you study, the chances are that you will take any job which is offered you, or enter some trade that happens to afford you an apprenticeship. Your particular situation will decide your work or profession, not your natural preferences, inclinations, or abilities. Is it any wonder, then, that most people, the overwhelming majority, in fact, are misplaced? Ask the first hundred men you meet whether they would have selected the work they are doing, or whether they would continue in it, if they were free to choose, and ninety-nine of them will admit that they would prefer some other occupation. Necessity and material advantages, or the hope of them, keep most people in the wrong place.

It stands to reason that a person can give the best of himself only when his interest is in his work, when he feels a natural attraction to it, when he likes it. Then he will be industrious and efficient. The things the craftsman produced in the days before modern capitalism were objects of joy and beauty, because the artisan loved his work. Can you expect the modern drudge in the modern factory to make beautiful things? He is part of the machine, a cog in the soulless industry, his labour mechanical, forced. Add to this his feeling that he is not working for himself but for the benefit of someone else, and that he hates his job or at best has no interest in it except that it secures his weekly wage. The result is shirking, inefficiency, laziness.

The need of activity is one of the most fundamental urges of man. Watch the child and see how strong is his instinct for action, for movement, for doing something. Strong and continuous. It is the same with the healthy man. His energy and vitality demand expression. Permit him to do the work of his choice, the thing he loves, and his application will know neither weariness nor shirking. You can observe this in the factory worker when he is lucky enough to own a garden or a patch of ground to raise some flowers or vegetables on. Tired from his toil as he is, he enjoys the hardest labour for his own benefit, done from free choice.

Under anarchism each will have the opportunity for following whatever occupation will appeal to his natural inclinations and aptitude. Work will become a pleasure instead of the deadening drudgery it is today. Laziness will be unknown, and the things created by interest and love will be objects of beauty and joy.

“But can labour ever become a pleasure?” you demand.

Labour is toil today, unpleasant, exhausting, and wearisome. But usually it is not the work that is so hard: it is the conditions under which you are compelled to labour that make it so. Particularly the long hours, insanitary workshops, bad treatment, insufficient pay, and so on. Yet the most unpleasant work could be made lighter by improving the environment. Take gutter cleaning, for instance. It is dirty work and poorly paid for. But suppose, for example, that you should get 20 dollars a day instead of 5 dollars for such work. You will immediately find your job much lighter and pleasanter. The number of applicants for the work would increase at once. Which means that men are not lazy, not afraid of hard and unpleasant labour if it is properly rewarded. But such work is considered menial and is looked down upon. Why is it considered menial? Is it not most useful and absolutely necessary? Would not epidemics sweep our city but for the street and gutter cleaners? Surely, the men who keep our town clean and sanitary are real benefactors, more vital to our health and welfare than the

family physician. From the viewpoint of social usefulness the street cleaner is the professional colleague of the doctor: the latter treats us when we are ill, but the former helps us to keep well. Yet the physician is looked up to and respected, while the street cleaner is slighted. Why? Is it because the street cleaner's work is dirty? But the surgeon often has much "dirtier" jobs to perform. Then why is the street cleaner scorned? Because he *earns little*.

In our perverse civilisation things are valued according to money standards. Persons doing the most useful work are lowest in the social scale when their employment is ill paid. Should something happen, however, that would cause the street cleaner to get 100 dollars a day, while the physician earns 50, the "dirty" street cleaner would immediately rise in estimation and social station, and from the "filthy labourer" he would become the much-sought man of good income.

You see that it is pay, remuneration, *the wage scale*, not worth or merit, that today—under our system of profit—determines the value of work as well as the "worth" of a man.

A sensible society—under anarchist conditions—would have entirely different standards of judging such matters. People will then be appreciated according to their *willingness to be socially useful*.

Can you perceive what great changes such a new attitude would produce? Every one yearns for the respect and admiration of his fellow men: it is a tonic we cannot live without. Even in prison I have seen how the clever pickpocket or safe blower longs for the appreciation of his friends and how hard he tries to earn their good estimate of him. The opinions of our circle rule our behaviour. The social atmosphere to a profound degree determines our values and our attitude. Your personal experience will tell you how true this is. And therefore you will not be surprised when I say that, in an anarchist society it will be the most useful and difficult toll that men will seek rather than the lighter job. If you consider this, you will have no more fear of laziness or shirking.

But the hardest and most onerous task could be made easier and cleaner than is the case today. The capitalist employer does not care to spend money, if he can help it, to make the toil of his employees pleasanter and brighter. He will introduce improvements only when he hopes to gain larger profits thereby, but he will not go to extra expense out of purely humanitarian reasons. Though here I must remind you that the more intelligent employers are beginning to see that it pays to improve their factories, make them more sanitary and hygienic, and generally better the conditions of labour. They realise it is a good investment: it results in the increased contentment and consequent greater efficiency of their workers. The principle is sound. Today, of course, it is being exploited for the sole purpose of bigger profits. But under anarchism it would be applied not for the sake of personal gain, but in the interest of the workers' health, for the lightening of labour. Our progress in mechanics is so great and continually advancing that most of the hard toll could be eliminated by the use of modern machinery and labour-saving devices. In many industries, as in coal mining, for instance, new safety and sanitary appliances are not introduced because of the masters' indifference to the welfare of their employees and on account of the expenditure involved. But in a non-profit system technical science would work exclusively with the aim of making labour safer, healthier, lighter, and more pleasant.

“But however light you’ll make work, eight hours a day of it is no pleasure,” objects your friend.

You are perfectly right. But did you ever stop to consider why we have to work eight hours a day? Do you know that not so long ago people used to slave twelve to fourteen hours and that it is still the case in backward countries like China and India?

It can be statistically proved that three hours’ work a day, at most, is sufficient to feed, shelter, and clothe the world and supply it not only with necessities but also with all modern comforts of life. The point is that not one man in five is today doing any productive work. The entire world is supported by a small minority of toilers.

First of all, consider the amount of work done in present-day society that would become unnecessary under anarchist conditions. Take the armies and navies of the world, and think how many millions of men would be released for useful and productive effort once war is abolished, as would of course be the case under anarchy.

In every country today labour supports the millions who contribute nothing to the welfare of the country, who create nothing, and perform no useful work whatever. Those millions are only consumers, without being producers. In the United States, for instance, out of a population of 120 millions there are less than 30 million workers, farmers included. A similar situation is the rule in every land.

Is it any wonder that labour has to toil long hours, since there are only 30 workers to every 120 persons? The large business classes with their clerks, assistants, agents, and commercial travellers; the courts with their judges, record keepers, bailiffs, etc.; the legion of attorneys with their staffs: the militia and police forces; the churches and monasteries: the charity institutions and poorhouses; the prisons with their wardens, officers, and the non-productive convict population; the army of advertisers and their helpers, whose business it is to persuade you to buy what you don’t want or need, not to speak of the numerous elements that live luxuriously in entire idleness. All these mount into the millions in every country.

Now, if all these millions would apply themselves to useful labour, would the worker have to drudge eight hours a day? If 30 men have to put in eight hours to perform a certain task, how much less time would it take 120 men to accomplish the same thing? I don’t want to burden you with statistics, but there are enough data to prove that less than 3 hours of daily physical effort would be sufficient to do the world’s work.

Can you doubt that even the hardest toll would become a pleasure instead of the cursed slavery it is at present, if only three hours a day were required, and that under the most sanitary and hygienic conditions, in an atmosphere of brotherhood and respect for labour?

But it is not difficult to foresee the day when even those short hours would be still further reduced. For we are constantly improving our technical methods, and new labour-saving machinery is being invented all the time. Mechanical progress means less work and greater comforts, as you can see by comparing life in the United States with that in China or India. In the latter countries they toil long hours to secure the barest necessities of existence, while in America

even the average labourer enjoys a much higher standard of living with fewer hours of work. The advance of science and invention signifies more leisure for the pursuits we love.

I have sketched in large, broad outline the possibilities of life under a sensible system where profit is abolished. It is not necessary to go into the minute details of such a social condition: sufficient has been said to show that communist anarchism means the greatest material welfare with a life of liberty for each and all.

We can visualise the time when labour will have become a pleasant exercise, a joyous application of physical effort to the needs of the world. Man will then look back at our present day and wonder that work could ever have been slavery, and question the sanity of a generation that suffered less than one-fifth of its population to earn the bread for the rest by the sweat of their brow while those others idled and wasted their time, their health, and the people's wealth. They will wonder that the freest satisfaction of man's needs could have even been considered as anything but self-evident, or that people naturally seeking the same objects insisted on making life hard and miserable by mutual strife. They will refuse to believe that the whole existence of man was a continuous struggle for food in a world rich with luxuries, a struggle that left the great majority neither time nor strength for the higher quest of the heart and mind.

"But will not life under anarchy, in economic and social equality, mean general levelling?" you ask.

No, my dear friend, quite the contrary. Because equality does not mean an equal amount but equal *opportunity*. It does not mean, for instance, that if Smith needs five meals a day, Johnson also must have as many. If Johnson wants only three meals while Smith requires five, the quantity each consumes may be unequal, but both men are perfectly equal in the opportunity each has to consume as much as he needs, as much as his particular nature demands.

Do not make the mistake of identifying equality in liberty with the forced equality of the convict camp. True anarchist equality implies freedom, not quantity. It does not mean that every one must eat, drink, or wear the same things, do the same work, or live in the same manner. Far from it: the very reverse, in fact.

Individual needs and tastes differ, as appetites differ. It is *equal opportunity* to satisfy them that constitutes true equality.

Far from levelling, such equality opens the door for the greatest possible variety of activity and development. For human character is diverse, and only the repression of this diversity results in levelling, in uniformity and sameness. Free opportunity of expressing and acting out your individuality means development of natural dissimilarities and variations.

It is said that no two blades of grass are alike. Much less so are human beings. In the whole wide world no two persons are exactly similar even in physical appearance; still more dissimilar are they in their physiological, mental, and physical make-up. Yet in spite of this diversity and of a thousand and one differentiations of character we compel people to be alike today. Our lives and habits, our behaviour and manners, even our thoughts and feelings are pressed into a uniform mould and fashioned into sameness. The spirit of authority, law, written and unwritten, tradition and custom force us into a common groove and make a man a will-less automaton without independence or individuality. This

moral and intellectual bondage is more compelling than any physical coercion, more devastating to our manhood and development. All of us are its victims, and only the exceptionally strong succeed in breaking its chains, and that only partly.

The authority of the past and of the present dictates not only our behaviour but dominates our very minds and souls, and is continually at work to stifle every symptom of nonconformity, of independent attitude and unorthodox opinion. The whole weight of social condemnation comes down upon the head of the man or woman who dares defy conventional codes. Ruthless vengeance is wreaked upon the protestant who refuses to follow the beaten track, or upon the heretic who disbelieves in the accepted formulas. In science and art, in literature, poetry, and in painting this spirit compels adaptation and adjustment, resulting in imitation of the established and approved, in uniformity and sameness, in stereotyped expression. But more terrible still is punished nonconformity in actual life, in our every-day relationships and behaviour. The painter and writer may occasionally be forgiven for defiance of custom and precedence, because, after all, their rebellion is limited to paper or canvas; it affects only a comparatively small circle. They may be disregarded or labelled cranks who can do little harm, but not so with the man of action who carries his challenge of accepted standards into social life. Not harmless he. He is dangerous by the power of example, by his very presence. His infraction of social canons can be neither ignored nor forgiven. He will be denounced as an enemy of society.

It is for this reason that revolutionary feeling or thought in exotic poetry or marked in high-brow philosophical dissertations may be condoned, may pass the official and unofficial censor, because it is neither accessible to nor understood by the public at large. But give voice to the same dissenting attitude in a popular manner and immediately you will face the frothing denunciation of all the forces that stand for the preservation of the established.

More vicious and deadening is compulsory compliance than the most virulent poison. Throughout the ages it has been the greatest impediment to man's advance, hedging him in with a thousand prohibitions and taboos, weighing his mind and heart down with outlived canons and codes, thwarting his will with imperatives of thought and feeling, with "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" of behaviour and action. Life, the art of living, has become a dull formula, flat and inert.

Yet so strong is the innate diversity of man's nature that centuries of this stultification have not succeeded in entirely eradicating his originality and uniqueness. True, the great majority have fallen into ruts so deepened by countless feet that they cannot get back to the broad spaces. But some do break away from the beaten track and find the open road where new vistas of beauty and inspiration beckon to heart and spirit. These the world condemns, but little by little it follows their example and lead, and finally it comes up abreast of them. In the meantime those pathfinders have gone much further or died, and then we build monuments to them and glorify the men we have vilified and crucified as we go on crucifying their brothers in spirit, the pioneers of our own day.

Beneath this spirit of intolerance and persecution is the habit of authority: coercion to conform to dominant standards, compulsion—moral and legal—to be and act as others, according to precedent and rule.

But the general view that conformity is a natural trait is entirely false. On the

contrary, given the least chance, unimpeded by the mental habits instilled from the very cradle, man evidences uniqueness and originality. Observe children, for instance, and you will see most varied differentiation in manner and attitude, in mental and psychic expression. You will discover an instinctive tendency to individuality and independence, to non-conformity, manifested in open and secret defiance of the will imposed from the outside in rebellion against the authority of parent and teacher. The whole training and "education" of the child is a continuous process of stifling and crushing this tendency, the eradication of his distinctive characteristics, of his unlikeness to others, of his personality and originality. Yet even in spite of year-long repression, suppression, and moulding, some originality persists in the child when it reaches maturity, which shows how deep are the springs of individuality. Take any two persons, for example, who have witnessed some tragedy, a big fire, let us say, at the same time and place. Each will tell the story in a different manner, each will be original in his way of relating it and in the impression he will produce, because of his naturally different psychology. But talk to the same two persons on some fundamental social matter, about life and government, for instance, and immediately you hear expressed an exactly similar attitude, the accepted view, the dominant mentality.

Why? Because where man is left free to think and feel for himself, unhindered by precept and rule, and not restrained by the fear of being "different" and unorthodox, with the unpleasant consequences it involves, he will be independent and free. But the moment the conversation touches matters within the sphere of our social imperatives, one is in the clutches of the taboos and becomes a copy and a parrot.

Life in freedom, in anarchy, will do more than liberate man merely from his present political and economic bondage. That will be only the first step, the preliminary to a truly human existence. Far greater and more significant will be the *results* of such liberty, its effects upon man's mind, upon his personality. The abolition of the coercive external will, and with it of the fear of authority, will loosen the bonds of moral compulsion no less than of economic and physical. Man's spirit will breathe freely, and that mental emancipation will be the birth of a new culture, of a new humanity. Imperatives and taboos will disappear, and man will begin to be himself, to develop and express his individual tendencies and uniqueness. Instead of "thou shalt not," the public conscience will say "thou mayest, taking full responsibility." That will be a training in human dignity and self-reliance, beginning at home and in school, which will produce a new race with a new attitude to life.

The man of the coming day will see and feel existence on an entirely different plane. Living to him will be an art and a joy. He will cease to consider it as a race where every one must try to become as good a runner as the fastest. He will regard leisure as more important than work, and work will fall into its proper, subordinate place as the means to leisure, to the enjoyment of life.

Life will mean the striving for finer cultural values, the penetration of nature's mysteries, the attainment of higher truth. Free to exercise the limitless possibilities of his mind, to pursue his love of knowledge, to apply his inventive genius, to create, and to soar on the wings of imagination, man will reach his full stature and become man indeed. He will grow and develop according to his nature. He will scorn uniformity, and human diversity will give him increased

interest in, and a more satisfying sense of, the richness of being. Life to him will not consist of functioning but in living, and he will attain the greatest kind of freedom man is capable of, freedom in joy.

“That day lies far in the future,” you say; “how shall we bring it about?”

Far in the future, maybe; yet perhaps not so far—one cannot tell. At any rate we should always hold our ultimate object in view if we are to remain on the right road. The change I have described will not come overnight; nothing ever does. It will be a gradual development, as everything in nature and social life is. But a logical, necessary, and, I dare say, an inevitable development. Inevitable, because the whole trend of man’s growth has been in that direction; even if in zigzags, often losing its way, yet always returning to the right path.

How, then, might it be brought about?

## 6: Non-Communist Anarchists

Before we proceed let me make a short explanation. I owe it to those anarchists who are not communists.

Because you should know that not all anarchists are communists: not all of them believe that communism—social ownership and sharing according to need—would be the best and justest economic arrangement.

I have first explained to you communist anarchism because it is, in my estimation, the most desirable and practical form of society. The communist anarchists hold that only under communist conditions could anarchy prosper, and equal liberty, justice and well-being be assured to every one without discrimination.

But there are anarchists who do not believe in communism. They can be generally classed as Individualists and Mutualists.\*

All anarchists agree on this fundamental position: that government means injustice and oppression, that it is invasive, enslaving, and the greatest hindrance to man’s development and growth. They all believe that freedom can exist only in a society where there is no compulsion of any kind. All anarchists are therefore at one on the basic principle of abolishing government.

They disagree mostly on the following points:

First: the manner in which anarchy will come about. The communist anarchists say that only a social revolution can abolish government and establish anarchy, while Individualist anarchists and Mutualists do not believe in revolution. They think that present society will gradually develop out of government into a non-governmental condition.

Second: Individualist anarchists and Mutualists believe in individual ownership as against the communist anarchists who see in the institution of private property one of the main sources of injustice and inequality, of poverty and misery. The Individualists and Mutualists maintain that liberty means “the right of every one to the product of his toil”; which is true, of course. Liberty does mean that. But the question is not whether one has a right to his product,

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\*The Mutualists, though not calling themselves anarchists (probably because the name is so misunderstood), are nevertheless thoroughgoing anarchists, since they disbelieve in government and political authority of any kind.

but whether there is such a thing as an individual product. I have pointed out in preceding chapters that there is no such thing in modern history; all labour and the products of labour are social. The argument, therefore, about the right of the individual to his product has no practical merit.

I have also shown that exchange of products or commodities cannot be individual or private, unless the profit system is employed. Since the value of a commodity cannot be adequately determined, no barter is equitable. This fact leads, in my opinion, to social ownership and use; that is, to communism, as the most practical and just economic system.

But, as stated, Individualist anarchists and Mutualists disagree with the communist anarchist on this point. They assert that the source of economic inequality is monopoly, and they argue that monopoly will disappear with the abolition of government, because it is special privilege—given and protected by government—which makes monopoly possible. Free competition, they claim, would do away with monopoly and its evils.

Individualist anarchists, followers of Stirner and Tucker, as well as Tolstoyan anarchists who believe in non-resistance, have no very clear plan of economic life under anarchy. The Mutualists, on the other hand, propose a definite new economic system. They believe with their teacher, the French philosopher Proudhon, that mutual banking and credit without interest would be the best economic form of a non-government society. According to their theory, free credit, affording every one opportunity to borrow money without interest, would tend to equalise incomes and reduce profits to a minimum, and would thus eliminate riches as well as poverty. Free credit and competition in the open market, they say, would result in economic equality, while the abolition of government would secure equal freedom. The social life of the Mutualist community, as well as of the Individualist society, would be based on the sanctity of voluntary agreement, of free contract.

I have given here but the briefest outline of the attitude of Individualist anarchists and Mutualists. It is not the purpose of this work to treat in detail those anarchist ideas which the author thinks erroneous and impracticable. Being a communist anarchist I am interested in submitting to the reader the views that I consider best and soundest. I thought it fair, however, not to leave you in ignorance about the existence of other, non-communist anarchist theories.

## 7: Why Revolution?

Let us return to your question, “How will anarchy come? Can we help bring it about?”

This is a most important point, because in every problem there are two vital things: first, to know clearly just what you want; second, how to attain it.

We already know what we want. We want social conditions wherein all will be free and where each shall have the fullest opportunity to satisfy his needs and aspirations, on the basis of equal liberty for all. In other words, we are striving for the free co-operative commonwealth of communist anarchism.

How will it come about?

We are not prophets, and no one can tell just how a thing will happen. But the world does not exist since yesterday; and man, as a reasonable being, must benefit by the experience of the past.

Now, what is that experience? If you glance over history you will see that the whole life of man has been a struggle for existence. In his primitive state man fought single-handed the wild beasts of the forest, and helplessly he faced hunger, cold, darkness and storm. Because of his ignorance all the forces of nature were his enemies: they worked evil and destruction to him, and he, alone, was powerless to combat them. But little by little man learned to come together with others of his kind; together they sought safety and security. By joint effort they presently began to turn the energies of nature to their service. Mutual help and co-operation gradually multiplied man's strength and ability till he has succeeded in conquering nature, in applying her forces to his use, in chaining the lightning, bridging oceans, and mastering even the air.

Similarly the primitive man's ignorance and fear made life a continuous struggle of man against man, of family against family, of tribe against tribe, until men realised that by getting together, by joint effort and mutual aid, they could accomplish more than by strife and enmity. Modern science shows that even animals had learned that much in the struggle for existence. Certain kinds survived because they quit fighting each other and lived in herds, and in that way were better able to protect themselves against other beasts. In proportion as men substituted joint effort and co-operation in place of mutual struggle, they advanced, grew out of barbarism and became civilised. Families which had formerly fought each other to the death combined and formed one common group; groups joined and became tribes, and tribes federated into nations. The nations will stupidly keep on fighting each other, but gradually they are also learning the same lesson, and now they are beginning to look for a way to stop the international slaughter known as war.

Unfortunately in our social life we are yet in a condition of barbarism, destructive and fratricidal: group still combats group, class fights against class. But here also men are beginning to see that it is a senseless and ruinous warfare, that the world is big and rich enough to be enjoyed by all, like the sunshine, and that a united mankind would accomplish more than one divided against itself.

What is called progress is just the realisation of this, a step in that direction.

The whole advance of man consists in striving for greater safety and peace, for more security and welfare. Man's natural impulse is towards mutual help and joint effort, his most instinctive longing is for liberty and joy. These tendencies seek to express and assert themselves in spite of all obstacles and difficulties. The lesson of the entire history of man is that neither hostile natural forces nor human opposition can hold back his onward march. If I were asked to define civilization in a single phrase I should say that it is the triumph of man over the powers of darkness, natural and human. The inimical forces of nature we have conquered, but we still have to fight the dark powers of men.

History fails to show a single important social improvement made without meeting the opposition of the dominant powers—the church, government, and capital. Not a step forward but was achieved by breaking down the resistance of the masters. Every advance has cost a bitter struggle. It took many long fights to destroy slavery; it required revolts and uprisings to secure the most

fundamental rights for the people, it necessitated rebellions and revolutions to abolish feudalism and serfdom. It needed civil warfare to do away with the absolute power of kings and establish democracies, to conquer more freedom and well being for the masses. There is not a country on earth, not an epoch in history, where any great social evil was eliminated without a bitter struggle with the powers that be. In recent days it again took revolutions to get rid of Tsardom in Russia, of the Kaiser in Germany, the Sultan in Turkey, the monarchy in China, and so on, in various lands.

There is no record of any government or authority, of any group or class in power having given up its mastery voluntarily. In every instance it required the use of force, or at least the threat of it.

Is it reasonable to assume that authority and wealth will experience a sudden change of heart, and that they will behave differently in the future than they had in the past?

Your common sense will tell you that it is a vain and foolish hope. Government and capital will *fight* to retain power. They do it even today at the least menace to their privileges. They will fight to the death for their existence.

That is why it is no prophecy to foresee that some day it must come to a decisive struggle between the masters of life and the dispossessed classes.

As a matter of fact, that struggle is going on all the time. There is a continuous warfare between capital and labour. That warfare generally proceeds within so-called legal forms. But even these erupt now and then in violence, as during strikes and lockouts, because the armed fist of government is always at the service of the masters, and that fist gets into action the moment capital feels its profits threatened: then it drops the mask of "mutual interests" and "partnership" with labour and resorts to the final argument of every master, to coercion and force.

It is therefore certain that government and capital will not allow themselves to be quietly abolished if they can help it; nor will they miraculously "disappear" of themselves, as some people pretend to believe. It will require a revolution to get rid of them.

There are those who smile incredulously at the mention of revolution. "Impossible!" they say confidently. So did Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette of France think only a few weeks before they lost their throne together with their heads. So did the nobility at the court of Tsar Nicholas II believe on the very eve of the upheaval that swept them away. "It doesn't look like revolution," the superficial observer argues. But revolutions have a way of breaking out when it "doesn't look like it." The more far-seeing modern capitalists, however, do not seem willing to take any chances. They know that uprisings and revolutions are possible at any time. That is why the great corporations and big employers of labour, particularly in America, are beginning to introduce new methods calculated to serve as lightning rods against popular disaffection and revolt. They initiate bonuses for their employees, profit sharing, and similar methods designed to make the worker more satisfied and financially interested in the prosperity of his industry. These means may temporarily blind the proletarian to his true interests, but do not believe that the worker will forever remain content with his wage slavery even if his cage be slightly gilded from time to time. Improving material conditions is no insurance against revolution. On the contrary, the satisfaction of our wants creates new needs, gives birth to new desires and aspirations. That is

human nature, and that's what makes improvement and progress possible. Labour's discontent is not to be choked down with an extra piece of bread, even if it be buttered. That is why there is more conscious and active revolt in the industrial centres of better-situated Europe than in backward Asia and Africa. The spirit of man forever yearns for greater comfort and freedom, and it is the masses who are the truest bearers of this incentive to further advancement. The hope of modern plutocracy to forestall revolution by throwing a fatter bone to the toiler now and then is illusory and baseless. The new policies of capital may seem to appease labour for a while, but its onward march cannot be stopped by such makeshifts. The abolition of capitalism is inevitable, in spite of all schemes and resistance, and it will be accomplished only by revolution.

Can the individual worker accomplish anything against the big corporation? Can a small labour union compel the large employer to grant its demands? The capitalist class is organised to fight against labour. It stands to reason that a revolution can be fought successfully only when the workers are united, when they are organised throughout the land; when the proletariat of all countries will make a joint effort, for capital is international and the masters always combine against labour in every big issue. That is why, for instance, the plutocracy of the whole world turned against the Russian Revolution. As long as the people of Russia meant only to abolish the Tsar, international capital did not interfere; it did not care what political form Russia would have, as long as the government would be bourgeois and capitalistic. But as soon as the Revolution attempted to do away with the system of capitalism, the governments and the bourgeoisie of every land combined to crush it. They saw in it a menace to the continuance of their own mastery.

Keep that well in mind, my friend. Because there are revolutions and revolutions. Some revolutions change only the governmental form by putting in a new set of rulers in place of the old. These are political revolutions, and as such they often meet with little resistance. But a revolution that aims to abolish the entire system of wage slavery must also do away with the power of one class to oppress another. That is, it is not any more a mere change of rulers, of government, not a political revolution, but one that seeks to alter the whole character of society. That would be a *social* revolution. As such it would have to fight not only government and capitalism, but it would also meet with the opposition of popular ignorance and prejudice, of those who believe in government and capitalism.

How is it then to come about?

## 8: The Idea is the Thing

Did you ever ask yourself how it happens that government and capitalism continue to exist in spite of all the evil and trouble they are causing in the world?

If you did, then your answer must have been that it is because the people support those institutions, and that they support them because they *believe* in them.

That is the crux of the whole matter: present-day society rests on the belief of the people that it is good and useful. It is founded on the idea of authority and

private ownership. It is ideas that maintain conditions. Government and capitalism are the forms in which the popular ideas express themselves. Ideas are the foundation; the institutions are the house built upon it.

A new social structure must have a new foundation, new ideas at its base. However you may change the form of an institution, its character and meaning will remain the same as the foundation on which it is built. Look closely at life and you will perceive the truth of this. There are all kinds and forms of government in the world, but their real nature is the same everywhere, as their effects are the same: it always means authority and obedience.

Now, what makes governments exist? The armies and navies? Yes, but only apparently so. What supports the armies and navies? It is the belief of the people, of the masses, that government is necessary; it is the generally accepted idea of the *need* of government. That is its real and solid foundation. Take that idea or belief away, and no government could last another day.

The same applies to private ownership. The idea that it is right and necessary is the pillar that supports it and gives it security.

Not a single institution exists today but is founded on the popular belief that it is good and beneficial.

Let us take an illustration: the United States, for instance. Ask yourself why revolutionary propaganda has been of so little effect in that country in spite of fifty years of socialist and anarchist effort. Is the American worker not exploited more intensely than labour in other countries? Is political corruption as rampant in any other land? Is the capitalist class in America not the most arbitrary and despotic in the world? True, the worker in the United States is better situated materially than in Europe, but is he not at the same time treated with the utmost brutality and terrorism the moment he shows the least dissatisfaction? Yet the American worker remains loyal to the government and is the first to defend it against criticism. He is still the most devoted champion of the "grand and noble institutions of the greatest country on earth." Why? Because he believes that they are his institutions, that *he*, as sovereign and free citizen, is running them and that he could change them if he so wished. It is his *faith* in the existing order that constitutes its greatest security against revolution. His faith is stupid and unjustified, and some day it will break down and with it American capitalism and despotism. But as long as that faith persists, American plutocracy is safe against revolution.

As men's minds broaden and develop, as they advance to new ideas and lose faith in their former beliefs, institutions begin to change and are ultimately done away with. The people grow to understand that their former views were false, that they were not truth but prejudice and superstition.

In this way many ideas, once held to be true, have come to be regarded as wrong and evil. Thus the idea of the divine right of kings, of slavery and serfdom. There was a time when the whole world believed those institutions to be right, just, and unchangeable. In the measure that these superstitions and false beliefs were fought by advanced thinkers, they became discredited and lost their hold upon the people, and finally the institutions that incorporated those ideas were abolished. Highbrows will tell you that they had "outlived their usefulness" and that therefore they "died." But how did they "outlive their usefulness"? To whom were they useful, and how did they "die"?

We know already that they were useful only to the master class, and that they were done away with by popular uprisings and revolutions.

Why did not old and effete institutions “disappear” and die off in a peaceful manner?

For two reasons: first, because some people think faster than others. So that it happens that a minority in a given place advance in their views quicker than the rest. The more that minority will become imbued with the new ideas, the more convinced of their truth, and the stronger they will feel themselves, the sooner they will try to realise their ideas; and that is usually before the majority have come to see the new light. So that the minority have to struggle against the majority who still cling to the old views and conditions.

Second, the resistance of those who hold power. It makes no difference whether it is the church, the king, or kaiser, a democratic government or a dictatorship, a republic or an autocracy—those in authority will fight desperately to retain it as long as they can hope for the least chance of success. And the more aid they get from the slower-thinking majority the better the fight they can put up. Hence the fury of revolt and revolution.

The desperation of the masses, their hatred of those responsible for their misery, and the determination of the lords of life to hold on to their privileges and rule combine to produce the violence of popular uprisings and rebellions.

But blind rebellion without definite object and purpose is not revolution. Revolution is rebellion become conscious of its aims. Revolution is *social* when it strives for a *fundamental* change. As the foundation of life is economics, the social revolution means the re-organisation of the industrial, economic life of the country and consequently also of the entire structure of society.

But we have seen that the social structure rests on the basis of *ideas*, which implies that changing of the structure presupposes changed ideas. In other words, social ideas must change *first* before a new social structure can be built.

The social revolution, therefore, is not an accident, not a sudden happening. There is nothing sudden about it, for ideas don't change suddenly. They grow slowly, gradually, like the plant or flower. Hence the social revolution is a result, a development, which means that it is revolutionary. It develops to the point when considerable numbers of people have embraced the new ideas and are determined to put them into practice. When they attempt to do so and meet with opposition, then the slow, quiet and peaceful social evolution becomes quick, militant, and violent. Evolution becomes revolution.

Bear in mind, then, that evolution and revolution are *not* two separate and distinct things. Still less are they opposites as some people wrongly believe. Revolution is merely the boiling point of evolution.

Because revolution is evolution at its boiling point you cannot “make” a real revolution any more than you can hasten the boiling of a tea kettle. It is the fire underneath that makes it boil: how quickly it will come to the boiling point will depend on how strong the fire is.

The economic and political conditions of a country are the fire under the evolutionary pot. The worse the oppression, the greater the dissatisfaction of the people, the stronger the flame. This explains why the fires of social revolution swept Russia, the most tyrannous and backward country, instead of America, where industrial development has almost reached its highest point—

and that in spite of all the learned demonstration of Karl Marx to the contrary.

We see, then, that revolutions, though they cannot be made, can be hastened by certain factors: namely, by pressure from above; by more intense political and economical oppression: and by pressure from below: by greater enlightenment and agitation. These spread the ideas; they further the evolution and thereby also the coming of revolution.

But pressure from above, though hastening revolution, may also cause its failure, because such revolution is apt to break out before the evolutionary process has been sufficiently advanced. Coming prematurely, as it were, it will fizzle out in mere rebelling; that is, without clear, conscious aim and purpose. At best, rebellion can secure only some temporary alleviation; the real causes of the strife, however, remain intact and continue to operate to the same effect, to cause further dissatisfaction and rebellion.

Summing up what I have said about revolution, we must come to the conclusion that:

- (1) a social revolution is one that entirely changes the foundation of society, its political, economic, and social character;
- (2) such a change must *first* take place in the ideas and opinions of the people, in the minds of men;
- (3) oppression and misery may hasten revolution, but may *thereby* also turn it into failure, because lack of evolutionary preparation will make real accomplishment impossible;
- (4) only that revolution can be fundamental, social, and successful which will be the expression of a basic change of ideas and opinions.

From this it obviously follows that the social revolution must be prepared. Prepared in the sense of furthering the evolutionary process, of enlightening the people about the evils of present-day society and convincing them of the desirability and possibility, of the justice and practicability of a social life based on liberty; prepared, moreover, by making the masses realise very clearly just what they need and how to bring it about.

Such preparation is not only an absolutely necessary preliminary step. Therein lies also the safety of the revolution, the only guarantee of its accomplishing its objects.

It has been the fate of most revolutions—as a result of lack of preparation—to be side-tracked from their main purpose, to be misused and led into blind alleys. Russia is the best recent illustration of it. The February Revolution, which sought to do away with autocracy, was entirely successful. The people knew exactly what they wanted; namely, the abolition of Tsardom. All the machinations of politicians, all the oratory and schemes of the Lvovs and Miliukovs—the “liberal” leaders of those days—could not save the Romanov regime in the face of the intelligent and conscious will of the people. It was this clear understanding of its aims which made the February Revolution a complete success, with, mind you, almost no bloodshed.

Furthermore, neither appeals nor threats by the Provisional Government could avail against the determination of the people to end the war. The armies left the fronts and thus terminated the matter by their own direct action. The will of a people conscious of their objects always conquers.

It was the will of the people again, their resolute aim to get hold of the soil,

which secured for the peasant the land he needed. Similarly the city workers, as repeatedly mentioned before, possessed themselves of the factories and the machinery of production.

So far the Russian Revolution was a complete success. But at the point where the masses lacked the consciousness of definite purpose, defeat began. That is always the moment when politicians and political parties step in to exploit the revolution for their own uses or to experiment their theories upon it. This happened in the Russian as in many previous revolutions. The people fought the good fight—the political parties fought over the spoils to the detriment of the revolution and to the ruin of the people.

This is, then, what took place in Russia. The peasant, having secured the land, did not have the tools and machinery he needed. The worker, having taken possession of the machinery and factories, did not know how to handle them to accomplish his aim. In other words, he did not have the experience necessary to organise production and he could not manage the distribution of the things he was producing.

His own efforts—the worker's, the peasant's, the soldier's—had done away with Tsardom, paralyzed the Government, stopped the war, and abolished private ownership of land and machinery. For *that* he was prepared by years of revolutionary education and agitation. But for no more than that. And because he was prepared for no more, where his knowledge ceased and definite purpose was lacking, there stepped in the political party and took affairs out of the hands of the masses who had made the revolution. Politics replaced economic reconstruction and thereby sounded the death knell of the social revolution; for people live by bread, by economics, not by politics.

Food and supplies are not created by decree of party or government. Legislative edicts don't till the soil; laws can't turn the wheels of industry. Dissatisfaction, strife, and famine came upon the heels of government coercion and dictatorship. Again, as always, politics and authority proved the swamp in which the revolutionary fires became extinguished.

Let us learn this most vital lesson: thorough understanding by the masses of the true aim of revolution means success. Carrying out their conscious will by their own efforts guarantees the right development of the new life. On the other hand lack of this understanding and of preparation means certain defeat, either at the hands of reaction or by the experimental theories of would-be political party friends.

Let us prepare, then.

What and how?

## 9: Preparation

“Prepare for revolution!” exclaims your friend; “is that possible?”

Yes. Not only is it possible but absolutely necessary.

“Do you refer to secret preparations, armed bands, and men to lead the fight?” you ask.

No, my friend, not that at all.

If the social revolution meant only street battles and barricades, then the preparations you have in mind would be the thing. But revolution does not signify that; at least the fighting phase of it is the smallest and least important part.

The truth is, in modern times revolution does not mean barricades any more. These belong to the past. The social revolution is a far different and more essential matter: it involves the reorganisation of the entire life of society. You will agree that this is certainly not to be accomplished by mere fighting.

Of course, the obstacles in the path of social reconstruction have to be removed. That is to say, the means of that reconstruction must be secured by the masses. Those means are at present in the hands of government and capitalism, and these will resist every effort to deprive them of their power and possessions. That resistance will involve a fight. But remember that the fight is not the main thing, is not the object, nor the revolution. It is only the preface, the preliminary to it.

It is very necessary that you get this straight. Most people have very confused notions about revolution. To them it means just fighting, smashing things, destroying. It is the same as if rolling up your sleeves for work should be considered as the work itself that you have to do. The fighting part of revolution is merely the rolling up of your sleeves. The real, actual task is ahead.

What is that task?

“The destruction of the existing conditions,” you reply.

True. But *conditions* are not destroyed breaking and smashing things. You can’t destroy wage slavery by wrecking the machinery in the mills and factories, can you? You won’t destroy government by setting fire to the White House.

To think of revolution in terms of violence and destruction is to misinterpret and falsify the whole idea of it. In practical application such a conception is bound to lead to disastrous results.

When a great thinker, like the famous anarchist Bakunin, speaks of revolution as destruction, he has in mind the idea of authority and obedience which are to be destroyed. It is for this reason that he said that destruction means construction, for to destroy a false belief is indeed most constructive work.

But the average man, and too often even the revolutionist, thoughtlessly talks of revolution as being exclusively destructive in the physical sense of the word. That is a wrong and dangerous view. The sooner we get rid of it the better.

Revolution, and particularly the social revolution, is *not destruction but construction*. This cannot be sufficiently emphasised, and unless we clearly realise it, revolution will remain only destructive and thereby always a failure. Naturally revolution is accompanied by violence, but you might as well say that building a new house in place of an old one is destructive because you have first to tear down the old one. Revolution is the culminating point of a certain evolutionary process. It begins with a violent upheaval. It is the rolling up of your sleeves preparatory to *starting the actual work*.

Indeed, consider what the social revolution is to do, what it is to accomplish, and you will perceive that it comes not to destroy but to build.

What, really is there to destroy?

The wealth of the rich? Nay, that is something we want the whole of society to enjoy.

The land, the fields, the coal mines, the railroads, factories, mills, and shops. These we want not to destroy but to make useful to the entire people.

The telegraphs, telephones, the means of communication and distribution—do we want to destroy them? No, we want them to serve the needs of all.

What, then, is the social revolution to destroy? It is to *take over* things for the general benefit, not to destroy them. It is to reorganise conditions for the public welfare.

Not to destroy is the aim of the revolution, but to reconstruct and rebuild.

It is for this that preparation is needed, because the social revolutionary is not the Biblical Messiah who is to accomplish his mission by simple edict or order. Revolution works with the hands and brains of men. And these have to understand the objects of the revolution so as to be able to carry them out. They will have to know what they want and how to achieve it. The way to achieve it will be pointed out by the objects to be attained. For the end determines the means, just as you have to sow a particular seed to grow the thing you need.

What, then, must the preparation for the social revolution be?

If your object is to secure liberty, you must learn to do without authority and compulsion. If you intend to live in peace and harmony with your fellow-men, you and they should cultivate brotherhood and respect for each other. If you want to work together with them for your mutual benefit, you must practise co-operation. The social revolution means much more than the reorganisation of conditions only: it means the establishment of new human values and social relationships, a changed attitude of man to man, as of one free and independent to his equal; it means a different spirit in individual and collective life, and that spirit cannot be born overnight. It is a spirit to be cultivated, to be nurtured and reared, as the most delicate flower is, for indeed it is the flower of a new and beautiful existence.

Do not dupe yourself with the silly notion that “things will arrange themselves.” Nothing ever arranges itself, least of all in human relations. It is men who do the arranging, and they do it according to their attitude and understanding of things.

New situations and changed conditions make us feel, think, and act in a different manner. But the new conditions themselves come about only as a result of new feelings and ideas. The social revolution is such a new condition. We must learn to think differently before the revolution can come. That alone can bring the revolution.

We must learn to think differently about government and authority, for as long as we think and act as we do today, there will be intolerance, persecution, and oppression, even when organised government is abolished. We must learn to respect the humanity of our fellow man, not to invade him or coerce him, to consider his liberty as sacred as our own; to respect his freedom and his personality, to foreswear compulsion in any form: to understand that the cure for the evils of liberty is more liberty, that liberty is the mother of order.

And furthermore we must learn that equality means equal opportunity, that monopoly is the denial of it, and that only brotherhood secures equality. We can learn this only by freeing ourselves from the false idea of capitalism and of property, of mine and thine, of the narrow conception of ownership.

By learning this we shall grow into the spirit of true liberty and solidarity, and know that free association is the soul of every achievement. We shall then

realise that the social revolution is the work of co-operation, of solidaric purpose, of mutual effort.

Maybe you think this too slow a process, a work that will take too long. Yes, I admit that it is a difficult task. But ask yourself if it is better to build your new house quickly and badly and have it break down over your head, rather than do it efficiently, even if it requires longer and harder work.

Remember that the social revolution represent the liberty and welfare of the whole of mankind, that the complete and final emancipation of labour depends upon it. Consider also that if the work is badly done, all the effort and suffering involved in it will be for nothing and perhaps even worse than for nothing, because making a botch job of revolution means putting a new tyranny in place of the old, and new tyrannies, because they are new, have a new lease of life. It means forging new chains which are stronger than the old.

Consider also that the social revolution we have in mind is to accomplish the work that many generations of men have been labouring to achieve, for the whole history of man has been a struggle of liberty against servitude, of social well-being against poverty and wretchedness, of justice against iniquity. What we call progress has been a painful but continuous march in the direction of limited authority and the power of government and increasing the rights and liberties of the individual, of the masses. It has been a struggle that has taken thousands of years. The reason that it took such a long time—and is not ended yet—is because people did not know what the real trouble was: they fought against this and for that, they changed kings and formed new governments, they put out one ruler only to set up another, they drove away a “foreign” oppressor only to suffer the yoke of a native one, they abolished one form of tyranny, such as the Tsar’s, and submitted to that of a party dictatorship, and always and ever they shed their blood and heroically sacrificed their lives in the hope of securing liberty and welfare.

But they secured only new masters, because however desperately and nobly they fought, they never touched the *real source* of trouble, the *principle of authority and government*. They did not know that *that was* the fountain-head of enslavement and oppression, and therefore they never succeeded in gaining liberty.

But now we understand that true liberty is not a matter of changing kings or rulers. We know that the whole system of master and slave must go, that the entire social scheme is wrong, that government and compulsion must be abolished, that the very foundations of authority and monopoly must be uprooted. Do you still think any kind of preparation for such a great task can be too difficult?

Let us, then, fully realise how important it is to prepare for the social revolution, and to prepare for it in the right way.

“But what is the right way?” you demand. “And who is to prepare?”

Who is to prepare? First of all, you and I—those who are interested in the success of the revolution, those who want to help bring it about. And you and I means every man and woman; at least every decent man and woman, everyone who hates oppression and loves liberty, everyone who cannot endure the misery and injustice which fill the world today.

And above all it is those who suffer most from existing conditions, from wage slavery, subjection, and indignity.

“The workers, of course,” you say.

Yes, the workers. As the worst victims of present institutions it is to their own interest to abolish them. It has been truly said that “the emancipation of the workers must be accomplished by the workers themselves,” for no other social class will do it for them. Yet labour’s emancipation means at the same time the redemption of the whole of society and that is why some people speak of labour’s “historic mission” to bring about the better day.

But “mission” is the wrong word. It suggests a duty or task imposed on one from the outside, by some external power. It is a false and misleading conception, essentially a religious, metaphysical sentiment. Indeed, if the emancipation of labour is a “historic mission,” then history will see to it that it is carried out no matter what we may think, feel, or do about it. The attitude makes human effort unnecessary, superfluous; because “what must be will be.” Such a fantastic notion is destructive to all initiative and the exercise of one’s mind and will.

It is a dangerous and harmful idea. There is no power outside of man which can free him, none which can charge him with any “mission.” Neither heaven nor history can do it. History is the story of what has happened. It can teach a lesson but not impose a task. It is not the “mission” but the *interest* of the proletariat to emancipate itself from bondage. If labour does not consciously and actively strive for it, it will never “happen.” It is necessary to free ourselves from the stupid and false notion of “historic missions.” It is only by growing to true realisation of their present position, by visualising their possibilities and powers, by learning unity and co-operation, and practising them, that the masses can attain freedom. In achieving that they will also have liberated the rest of mankind.

Because of this the proletarian struggle is the concern of everyone, and all sincere men and women should therefore be at the service of labour in its great task. Indeed, though only the toilers can accomplish the work of emancipation, they need the aid of other social groups. For you must remember that the revolution faces the difficult problem of reorganising the world and building a new civilisation—a work that will require the greatest revolutionary integrity and the intelligent co-operation of all well-meaning and liberty-loving elements. We already know that the social revolution is not a matter of abolishing capitalism only. We might turn out capitalism as feudalism was got rid of, and still remain slaves as before. Instead of being, as now, the bondmen of private monopoly we might become the servants of State capitalism, as has happened to the people in Russia, for instance, and as conditions are developing in Italy and other lands.

The social revolution, it must never be forgotten, is not to alter one form of subjection for another, but is to do away with everything that can enslave and oppress you.

A political revolution may be carried to a successful issue by a conspirative monopoly, putting one ruling faction in place of another. But the social revolution is not a mere political change: it is a fundamental economic, ethical, and cultural transformation. A conspirative minority or political party undertaking such a work must meet with the active and passive opposition of the great majority and therefore degenerate into a system of dictatorship and terror.

In the face of a hostile majority the social revolution is doomed to failure from its very beginning. It means, then, that the first preparatory work of the

revolution consists in winning over the masses at large in favour of the revolution and its objects, winning them over, at least, to the extent of neutralising them, of turning them from active enemies to passive sympathisers, so that they may not fight against the revolution even if they do not fight for it.

The actual, positive work of the social revolution must, of course, be carried on by the toilers themselves, by the labouring people. And here let us bear in mind that it is not only the factory hand who belongs to labour but the farm worker as well. Some radicals are inclined to lay too much stress on the industrial proletariat, almost ignoring the existence of the agricultural toiler. Yet what could the factory worker accomplish without the farmer? Agriculture is the primal source of life, and the city would starve but for the country. It is idle to compare the industrial worker with the farm labourer or discuss their relative value. Neither can do without the other; both are equally important in the scheme of life and equally so in the revolution and the building of a new society.

It is true that revolution first breaks out in industrial localities rather than in agricultural. This is natural, since there are greater centres of labouring population and therefore also of popular dissatisfaction. But if the industrial proletariat is the advance-guard of revolution, then the farm labourer is its backbone. If the latter is weak or broken, the advance-guard, the revolution itself, is lost.

Therefore, the work of the social revolution lies in the hands of *both* the industrial worker and the farm labourer. Unfortunately it must be admitted that there is too little understanding and almost no friendship or direct co-operation between the two. Worse than that—and no doubt the result of it—there is a certain dislike and antagonism between the proletarians of field and factory. The city man has too little appreciation of the hard and exhausting toil of the farmer. The latter instinctively resents it: moreover, unfamiliar with the strenuous and often dangerous labour of the factory, the farmer is apt to look upon the city worker as an idler. A closer approach and better understanding between the two is absolutely vital. Capitalism thrives not so much on division of work as on division of the workers. It seeks to incite race against race, the factory hand against the farmer, the labourer against the skilled man, the workers of one country against those of another. The strength of the exploiting class lies in dis-united, divided labour. But the social revolution requires the *unity* of toiling masses, and first of all the co-operation of the factory proletarian with his brother in the field.

A nearer approach between the two is an important step in preparation for the social revolution. Actual contact between them is of prime necessity. Joint councils, exchange of delegates, a system of co-operatives, and other similar methods, would tend to form a closer bond and better understanding between the worker and farmer.

But it is not only the co-operation of the factory proletarian with the farm labourer which is necessary for the revolution. There is another element absolutely needed in its constructive work. It is the trained mind of the professional man.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that the world has been built with hands only. It has also required brains. Similarly does the revolution need *both* the man of brawn and the man of brain. Many people imagine that the manual worker alone can do the entire work of society. It is a false idea, a very grave

error that can bring no end of harm. In fact, this conception has worked great evil on previous occasions, and there is good reason to fear that it may defeat the best efforts of the revolution.

The working class consists of the industrial wage earners and the agricultural toilers. But the workers require the services of the professional elements, of the industrial organiser, the electrical and mechanical engineer, the technical specialist, the scientist, inventor, chemist, the educator, doctor and surgeon. In short, the proletariat absolutely needs the aid of certain professional elements without whose co-operation no productive labour is possible.

Most of those professional men in reality also belong to the proletariat. They are the intellectual proletariat, the proletariat of brain. It is clear that it makes no difference whether one earns his living with his hands or with his head. As a matter of fact, no work is done *only* with the hands or only with the brain. The application of both is required in every kind of effort. The carpenter, for instance, must estimate, measure, and figure in the course of his task; he must use both hand and brain. Similarly the architect must think out his plan before it can be drawn on paper and put to practical use.

“But only labour can produce,” your friend objects; “brain work is not productive.”

Wrong, my friend. Neither manual labour nor brain work can produce anything *alone*. It requires both, working together, to create something. The bricklayer and mason cannot build the factory without the architect’s plans, nor can the architect erect a bridge without iron and steel. Neither can produce alone. But both together can accomplish wonders.

Furthermore, do not fall into the error of believing that only productive labour counts. There is much work that is not directly productive, but which is useful, and even absolutely necessary to our existence and comfort, and therefore just as important as productive labour.

Take the railroad engineer and conductor, for instance. They are not producers, but they are essential factors in the system of production. Without the railroads and other means of transport and communication we could manage neither production nor distribution.

Production and distribution are the two points of the same life pole. The labour required for the one is as important as that needed for the other.

What I said above applies to numerous phases of human effort which, though themselves not directly productive, play a vital part in the manifold processes of our economic and social life. The man of science, the educator, the physician and surgeon are not productive in the industrial sense of the word. But their work is absolutely necessary to our life and welfare. Civilised society could not exist without them.

It is therefore evident that useful work is equally important whether it be that of brain or of brawn, manual or mental. Nor does it matter whether it is a salary or wages which one receives, whether he is paid much or little, or what his political or other opinions might be.

All the elements that can contribute useful work to the general welfare are needed in the revolution for the building of new life. No revolution can succeed without their solidaric co-operation, and the sooner we understand this the better. The reconstruction of society involves the re-organisation of industry, the

proper functioning of production, the management of distribution, and numerous other social, educational, and cultural efforts to transform present-day wage slavery and servitude into a life of liberty and well-being. Only by working hand in hand will the proletariat of brawn be able to solve those problems.

It is most regrettable that there exists a spirit of unfriendliness, even of enmity, between the manual and intellectual workers. That feeling is rooted in lack of understanding, in prejudice and narrow-mindedness on both sides. It is sad to admit that there is a tendency in certain labour circles, even among some socialists and anarchists, to antagonise the workers against the members of the intellectual proletariat. Such an attitude is stupid and criminal, because it can only work evil to the growth and development of the social revolution. It was one of the fatal mistakes of the Bolsheviks during the first phases of the Russian Revolution that they deliberately set the wage earners against the professional classes, to such an extent indeed that friendly co-operation became impossible. A direct result of that policy was the breaking down of industry for lack of intelligent direction, as well as the almost total suspension of railroad communication because there was no trained management. Seeing Russia facing economic shipwreck Lenin decided that the factory worker and farmer alone could not carry on the industrial and agricultural life of the country, and that the aid of the professional elements was necessary. He introduced a new system to induce the technical men to help in the work of reconstruction. But almost too late came the change, for the years of mutual hating and hounding had created such a gulf between the manual worker and his intellectual brother that common understanding and co-operation were made exceptionally difficult. It has taken Russia years of heroic effort to undo, to some extent, the effects of that fratricidal war.

Let us learn this valuable lesson from the Russian experiment.

“But professional men belong to the middle classes,” you object, “and they are bourgeois-minded.”

True, men of the professions generally have a bourgeois attitude towards things; but are not most working men also bourgeois-minded? It merely means that both are steeped in authoritarian and capitalistic prejudices. It is just these that must be eradicated by enlightening and educating the people, be they manual or brain workers. That is the first step in preparation for the social revolution.

But it is not true that professional men, as such, necessarily belong to the middle classes.

The real interests of the so-called intellectuals are with the workers rather than with the masters. To be sure, most of them do not realise that. But no more does the comparatively highly-paid railroad conductor or locomotive engineer feel himself a member of the working class. By his income and attitude he also belongs to the bourgeoisie. But it is not income or feeling that determines to what social class a person belongs. If the street beggar should fancy himself a millionaire, would he thereby be one? What one imagines himself to be does not alter his actual situation. And the actual situation is that whoever has to sell his labour is an employee, a salaried dependent, a wage earner, and as such his true interests are those of employees and he belongs to the working class.

As a matter of fact, the intellectual proletariat is even more subject to his capitalistic master than the man with pick and shovel. The latter can easily

change his place of employment. If he does not care to work for a certain boss he can look for another. The intellectual proletarian, on the other hand, is much more dependent on his particular job. His sphere of exertion is more limited. Not skilled in any trade and physically incapable of serving as a day labourer, he is (as a rule) confined to the comparatively narrow field of architecture, engineering, journalism, or similar work. This puts him more at the mercy of his employer and therefore also inclines him to side with the latter as against his more independent fellow-worker at the bench.

But whatever the attitude of the salaried and dependent intellectual, he belongs to the proletarian class. Yet it is entirely false to maintain that the intellectuals always side with the masters as against the workers. "Generally they do," I hear some radical fanatic interject. And the workers? Do *they* not, generally, support the masters and the system of capitalism? Could that system continue but for their support? It would be wrong to argue from that, however, that the workers consciously join hands with their exploiters. No more is it true of the intellectuals. If the majority of the latter stand by the ruling class it is because of social ignorance, because they do not understand their own best interests, for all their "intellectuality." Just so the great masses of labour, similarly unaware of their true interests, aid the masters against their fellow-workers, sometimes even in the same trade and factory not to speak of their lack of national and international solidarity. It merely proves that the one as the other, the manual worker no less than the brain proletarian, needs enlightenment.

In justice to the intellectuals let us not forget that their best representatives have always sided with the oppressed. They have advocated liberty and emancipation, and often they were the first to voice the deepest aspirations of the toiling masses. In the struggle for freedom they have frequently fought on the barricades shoulder to shoulder with the workers and died championing their cause.

We need not look far for proof of this. It is a familiar fact that every progressive, radical, and revolutionary movement within the past hundred years has been inspired, mentally and spiritually, by the efforts of the finest elements of the intellectual classes. The initiators and organisers of the revolutionary movement in Russia, for instance, dating back a century, were intellectuals, men and women of nonproletarian origin and station. Nor was their love of freedom merely theoretical. Literally thousands of them consecrated their knowledge and experience, and dedicated their lives, to the service of the masses. Not a land exists but where such noble men and women have testified to their solidarity with the disinherited by exposing themselves to the wrath and persecution of their own class by joining hands with the downtrodden. Recent history, as well as the past, is full of such examples. Who were the Garibaldis, the Kossuths, the Liebknechts, Rosa Luxemburgs, the Landauers, the Lenins, and Trotskys but intellectuals of the middle class who gave themselves to the proletariat? The history of every country and of every revolution shines with their unselfish devotion to liberty and labour.

Let us bear these facts in mind and not be blinded by fanatical prejudice and baseless antagonism. The intellectual has done labour great service in the past. It will depend on the attitude of the workers towards him as to what share he will be able and willing to contribute to the preparation and realisation of the social revolution.

## 10: Organisation of Labour for the Social Revolution

Proper preparation, as suggested in the preceding pages, will greatly lighten the task of the social revolution and assure its healthy development and functioning.

Now, what will be the main functions of the revolution?

Every country has its specific conditions, its own psychology, habits, and traditions, and the process of revolution will naturally reflect the peculiarities of every land and its people. But fundamentally all countries are alike in their social (rather anti-social) character: whatever the political forms of economic conditions, they are all built on invasive authority, on monopoly, on the exploitation of labour. The main task of the social revolution is therefore essentially the same everywhere: the abolition of government and of economic inequality, and the socialisation of the means of production and distribution.

Production, distribution, and communication are the basic sources of existence; upon them rests the power of coercive authority and capital. Deprived of that power, governors and rulers become just ordinary men, like you and me, common citizens among millions of others. To accomplish that is consequently the primal and most vital function of the social revolution.

We know that revolution begins with street disturbances and outbreaks; it is the initial phase which involves force and violence. But that is merely the spectacular prologue of the real revolution. The age long misery and indignity suffered by the masses burst into disorder and tumult, the humiliation and injustice meekly borne for decades find vent in acts of fury and destruction. That is inevitable, and it is solely the master class which is responsible for this preliminary character of revolution. For it is even more true socially than individually that "whoever sows the wind will reap the whirlwind;" the greater the oppression and wretchedness to which the masses had been made to submit, the fiercer will rage the social storm. All history proves it, but the lords of life have never hardened to its warning voice.

This phase of the revolution is of short duration. It is usually followed by the more conscious, yet still spontaneous, destruction of the citadels of authority, the visible symbols of organised violence and brutality; jails, police stations, and other government buildings are attacked, the prisoners liberated, legal documents destroyed. It is the manifestation of instinctive popular justice. Thus one of the first gestures of the French Revolution was the demolition of the Bastille. Similarly in Russia prisons were stormed and the prisoners released at the very outset of the Revolution. The wholesome intuition of the people justly sees in prisoners social unfortunates, victims of conditions, and sympathises with them as such. The masses regard the courts and their records as instruments of class injustice and these are destroyed at the beginning of the revolution, and quite properly so.

But this stage passes quickly: the people's ire is soon spent. Simultaneously the revolution begins its constructive work.

"Do you really think that reconstruction could start so soon?" you ask.

My friend, it must begin immediately. In fact, the more enlightened the masses have become, the clearer the workers realise their aims, and the better

they are prepared to carry them out, the less destructive the revolution will be, and the quicker and more effectively will begin the work of reconstruction.

“Are you not too hopeful?”

No, I don't think so. I am convinced that the social revolution will not “just happen.” It will have to be prepared, organised. Yes, indeed, organised—just as a strike is organised. In truth, it will be a strike, the strike of the united workers of an entire country—a *general strike*.

Let us pause and consider this.

How do you imagine a revolution could be fought in these days of armoured tanks, poison gas, and military planes? Do you believe that the unarmed masses and their barricades could withstand high-power artillery and bombs thrown upon them from flying machines? Could labour fight the military forces of government and capital?

It's ridiculous on the face of it, isn't it? And no less ridiculous is the suggestion that the workers should form their own regiments, “shock troops,” or a “red front,” as the communist parties advise you to do. Will such proletarian bodies ever be able to stand up against the trained armies of the government and the private troops of capital? Will they have the least chance?

Such a proposition needs only to be stated to be seen in all its impossible folly. It would simply mean sending thousands of workers to certain death.

It is time to have done with this obsolete idea of revolution. Nowadays government and capital are too well organised in a military way for the workers ever to be able to cope with them. It would be criminal to attempt it, insanity even to think of it.

The strength of labour is not on the field of battle. It is in the shop, in the mine and factory. There lies its power that no army in the world can defeat, no human agency conquer.

In other words, the social revolution can take place only by means of the *General Strike*. The General Strike, rightly understood and thoroughly carried out, is the social revolution. Of this the British Government became aware much quicker than the workers when the General Strike was declared in England in May, 1926. “It means revolution,” the Government said, in effect, to the strike leaders. With all their armies and navies the authorities were powerless in the face of the situation. You can shoot people to death, but you can't shoot them to work. The labour leaders themselves were frightened at the thought that the General Strike actually implied revolution.

British capital and government won the strike—not by the strength of arms, but because of the lack of intelligence and courage on the part of the labour leaders and because the English workers were not prepared for the consequences of the General Strike. As a matter of fact, the idea was quite new to them. They had never before been interested in it, never studied its significance and potentialities. It is safe to say that a similar situation in France would have developed quite differently, because in that country the toilers have for years been familiar with the General Strike as a revolutionary proletarian weapon.

It is most important that we realise that the General Strike is the only possibility of social revolution. In the past the General Strike has been propagated in various countries without sufficient emphasis that its real meaning is revolution, that it is the only practical way to it. It is time for us to learn this, and when

we do so the social revolution will cease to be a vague, unknown quantity. It will become an actuality, a definite method and aim, a programme whose first step is the taking over of the industries by organised labour.

"I understand now why you said that the social revolution means construction rather than destruction," your friend remarks.

I am glad you do. And if you have followed me so far, you will agree that the matter of taking over the industries is not something that can be left to chance, nor can it be carried out in a haphazard manner. It can be accomplished only in a well-planned, systematic, and organised way. You alone can't do it, nor I, nor any other man, be he worker, Ford, or the Pope of Rome. There is no man nor any body of men that can manage it except the *workers themselves*, for it takes the workers to operate the industries. But even the workers can't do it unless they are organised and *organised just for such an undertaking*.

"But I thought you were an anarchist," interrupts your friend. "I've heard that anarchists don't believe in organisation."

I imagine you have, but that's an old argument. Any one who tells you that anarchists don't believe in organisation is talking nonsense. Organisation is everything and everything is organisation. The whole of life is organisation conscious or unconscious. Every nation, every family, why, even every individual is an organisation or organism. Every part of every living thing is organised in such a manner that the whole works in harmony. Otherwise the different organs could not function properly and life could not exist.

But there is organisation and organisation. Capitalist society is so badly organised that its various members suffer: just as when you have pain in some part of you, your whole body aches and you are ill.

There is organisation that is painful because it is ill, and organisation that is joyous because it means health and strength. An organisation is ill or evil when it neglects or suppresses any of its organs or members. In the healthy organism all parts are equally valuable and none is discriminated against. The organisation built on compulsion, which coerces and forces, is bad and unhealthy. The libertarian organisation, formed voluntarily and in which every member is free and equal, is a sound body and can work well. Such an organisation is a free union of equal parts. It is the kind of organisation the anarchists believe in.

Such must be the organisation of the workers if labour is to have a healthy body, one that can operate effectively.

It means, first of all, that not a single member of the organisation or union may with impunity be discriminated against, suppressed or ignored. To do so would be the same as to ignore an aching tooth: you would be sick all over.

In other words, the labour union must be built on the principle of the equal liberty of all its members.

Only when each is a free and independent unit, co-operating with the others from his own choice because of mutual interests, can the whole work successfully and become powerful.

This equality means that it makes no difference what or who the particular worker is: whether he is skilled or unskilled, whether he is mason, carpenter, engineer or day labourer, whether he earn much or little. The interests of *all* are the same; all belong together, and only by standing together can they accomplish their purpose.

It means that the workers in the factory, mill or mine must be organised as one body; for it is not a question of what particular jobs they hold, what craft or trade they follow, but what their interests are. And their interests are identical, as against the employer and the system of exploitation.

Consider yourself how foolish and inefficient is the present form of labour organisation in which one trade or craft may be on strike while the other branches of the same industry continue to work. Is it not ridiculous that when the street car workers of New York, for instance, quit work, the employees of the subway, the cab and omnibus drivers remain on the job? The main purpose of a strike is to bring about a situation that will compel the employer to give in to the demands of labour. Such a situation can be created only by a complete tie-up of the industry in question, so that a partial strike is merely a waste of labour's time and energy, not to speak of the harmful moral effect of the inevitable defeat.

Think over the strikes in which you yourself have taken part and of others you know of. Did your union ever win a fight unless it was able to compel the employer to give in? But *when* was it able to do so? Only when the boss knew that the workers meant business, that there was no dissent among them, that there was no hesitation or dallying, that they were determined to win, at whatever cost. But particularly when the employer felt himself at the mercy of the union, when he could not operate his factory or mine in the face of the workers' resolute stand, when he could not get scabs or strikebreakers, and when he saw that his interests would suffer more by defying his employees than by granting their demands.

It is clear, then, that you can compel compliance only when you are determined, when your union is strong, when you are well organised, when you are united in such a manner that the boss cannot run his factory against your will. But the employer is usually some big manufacturer or a company that has mills or mines in various places. Suppose it is a coal combine. If it cannot operate its mines in Pennsylvania because of a strike, it will try to make good its losses by continuing mining in Virginia or Colorado and increasing production there. Now, if the miners in those States keep on working while you in Pennsylvania are on strike, the company loses nothing. It may even welcome the strike in order to raise the price of coal on the ground that the supply is short because of your strike. In that way the company not only breaks the strike, but it also influences public opinion against you, because the people foolishly believe that the higher price of coal is really the result of your strike, while in fact it is due to the greed of the mine owners. You will lose your strike, and for some time to come you and the workers everywhere will have to pay more for coal, and not only for coal but for all the other necessities of life, because together with the price of coal the general cost of living will go up.

Reflect, then, how stupid is the present union policy to permit the other mines to operate while your mine is on strike. The others remain at work and give financial support to your strike, but don't you see that their aid only helps to break your strike, because they have to keep on working, really scabbing on you, in order to contribute to your strike fund? Can anything be more senseless and criminal?

This holds true of every industry and every strike. Can you wonder that most strikes are lost? That is the case in America as well as in other countries. I have before me the Blue Book just published in England under the title of *Labour*

*Statistics.* The data proves that strikes do not lead to labour victories. The figures for the last eight years are as follows:

				<i>Results in favour of Working people.</i>	<i>Results in favour of Employers.</i>
1920	..	..	..	390	507
1921	..	..	..	152	315
1922	..	..	..	111	222
1923	..	..	..	187	183
1924	..	..	..	163	235
1925	..	..	..	154	189
1926	..	..	..	67	126
1927	..	..	..	61	118

Actually, then, almost 60 per cent of the strikes were lost. Incidentally, consider also the loss of working days resulting from strikes, which means no wages. The total number of workdays lost by English labour in 1912 was 40,890,000, which is almost equal to the lives of 2,000 men, allotting to each 60 years. In 1919 the number of workdays lost was 34,969,000, in 1920, 26,568,000; in 1921, 85,872,000; in 1926, as a result of the general strike, 162,233,000 days. These figures do not include time and wages lost through unemployment.

It doesn't take much arithmetic to see that strikes as at present conducted don't pay, that the labour unions are not the winners in industrial disputes.

This does not mean, however, that strikes serve no purpose. On the contrary, they are of great value: they teach the worker the vital need of co-operation, of standing shoulder to shoulder with his fellows and unitedly fighting in the common cause. Strikes train him in the class struggle and develop his spirit of joint effort, of resistance to the masters, of solidarity and responsibility. In this sense even an unsuccessful strike is not a complete loss. Through it the toilers learn that "an injury to one is the concern of all," the practical wisdom that embodies the deepest meaning of the proletarian struggle. This does not relate only to the daily battle for material betterment, but equally so to everything pertaining to the worker and his existence, and particularly to matters where justice and liberty are involved.

It is one of the most inspiring things to see the masses roused on behalf of social justice, whomever the case at issue may concern. For, indeed, it is the concern of all of us, in the truest and deepest sense. The more labour becomes enlightened and aware of its larger interests, the broader and more universal grow its sympathies, the more world-wide its defence of justice and liberty. It was a manifestation of this understanding when the workers in every country protested against the judicial murder of Sacco and Vanzetti in Massachusetts. Instinctively and consciously the masses throughout the world felt, as did all decent men and women, that it is *their* concern when such a crime is being perpetrated. Unfortunately that protest, as many similar ones, contented itself with mere resolutions. Had organised labour resorted to action, such as a general strike, its demands would not have been ignored, and two of the workers' best friends and noblest of men would not have been sacrificed to the forces of reaction.

Equally important, it would have served as a valuable demonstration of the tremendous power of the proletariat, the power that always conquers when it is unified and resolute. This has been proven on numerous occasions in the past when the determined stand of labour prevented planned legal outrages, as in the case of Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone, officials of the Western Federation of Miners, whom the coal barons of the State of Idaho had conspired to send to the gallows during the miners' strike of 1905. Again, in 1917, it was the solidarity of the toilers which thwarted the execution of Tom Mooney in California. The sympathetic attitude of organised labour in America towards Mexico has also till now been an obstacle to the military occupation of that country by the United States Government on behalf of the American oil interests. Similarly in Europe united action by the workers has been successful in repeatedly forcing the authorities to grant amnesty to political prisoners. The Government of England so feared the expressed sympathy of British labour for the Russian Revolution that it was compelled to pretend neutrality. It did not dare openly to aid the counter-revolution in Russia. When the dock workers refused to load food and ammunition intended for the White armies, the English Government resorted to deception. It solemnly assured the workers that the shipments were intended for France. In the course of my work collecting historic material in Russia, in 1920 and 1921, I came into possession of official British documents proving that the shipments had been immediately forwarded from France, by direct orders of the British Government, to the counter-revolutionary generals in the North of Russia who had established there the so-called Tchaikovsky-Miller Government. This incident—one of many—demonstrates the wholesome fear the powers that be have of the awakening class-consciousness and solidarity of the international proletariat.

The stronger the workers grow in this spirit the more effective will be their struggle for emancipation. Class-consciousness and solidarity must assume national and international proportions before labour can attain its full strength. Wherever there is injustice, wherever persecution and suppression—be it the subjugation of the Philippines, the invasion of Nicaragua, the enslavement of the toilers in the Congo by Belgian exploiters, the oppression of the masses in Egypt, China, Morocco, or India—it is the business of the workers everywhere to raise their voice against all such outrages and demonstrate their solidarity in the common cause of the despoiled and disinherited throughout the world.

Labour is slowly advancing to this social consciousness: strikes and other sympathetic expressions are a valuable manifestation of this spirit. If the greater number of strikes are lost at present, it is because the proletariat is not yet fully aware of its national and international interests, is not organised on the right principles, and does not sufficiently realise the need of world-wide cooperation.

Your daily struggles for better conditions would quickly assume a different character if you were organised in such a manner that when your factory or mine goes on strike, the whole industry should quit work; not gradually but at once, all at the same time. Then the employer would be at your mercy, for what could he do when not a wheel turns in the whole industry? He can get enough strike-breakers for one or a few mills, but an entire industry cannot be supplied with them, nor would he consider it safe or advisable. Moreover, suspension of work in any one industry would immediately affect a large number of others,

because modern industry is interwoven. The situation would become the direct concern of the whole country, the public would be aroused and demand a settlement. (At present, when your single factory strikes, no one cares and you may starve as long as you remain quiet). That settlement would again depend on yourself, on the strength of your organisation. When the bosses would see that you know your power and that you are determined, they'd give in quickly enough or seek a compromise. They would be losing millions every day. The strikers might even sabotage the works and machinery, and the employers would be only too anxious to "settle," while in a strike of one factory or district they usually welcome the situation, knowing as they do that the chances are all against you.

Reflect, therefore, how important it is in what manner, *on what principles your union is built*, and how vital labour solidarity and co-operation are in your every-day struggle for better conditions. In unity is your strength, but that unity is non-existent and impossible as long as you are organised on craft lines instead of by industries.

There is nothing more important and urgent than that you and your fellow workers see to it immediately that you change the form of your organisation.

But it is not only the form that must be changed. Your union must become clear about its aims and purposes. The worker should most earnestly consider what he really wants, how he means to achieve it, by what methods. He must learn what his union should be, how it should function, and what it should try to accomplish.

Now, what is the union to accomplish. What should be the aims of a real labour union?

First of all, the purpose of the union is to serve the interests of its members. That is its primary duty. There is no quarrel about that: every working-man understands it. If some refuse to join a labour body it is because they are too ignorant to appreciate its great value, in which case they must be enlightened. But generally they decline to belong to the union because they have no faith or are disappointed in it. Most of those who remain away from the union do so because they hear so much boasting about the strength of organised labour while they know, often from bitter experience, that it is defeated in almost every important struggle. "Oh, the union," they say scornfully, "it don't amount to anything." To speak quite truthfully, to a certain extent they are right. They see organised capital proclaim the open shop policy and defeat the unions; they see labour leaders sell out strikes and betray the workers; they see the membership, the rank and file, helpless in the political machinations in and out of the union. To be sure, they don't understand why it is so; but they do see the facts, and they turn against the union.

Some again refuse to have anything to do with the union because they had at one time belonged to it, and they know what an insignificant role the individual member, the average worker, plays in the affairs of the organisation. The local leaders, the district and central bodies, the national and international officers, and the chiefs of the American Federation of Labour, in the United States, "run the whole show," they will tell you; "you have nothing to do but vote, and if you object you'll fly out."

Unfortunately they are right. You know how the Union is managed. The rank

and file have little to say. They have delegated the whole power to the leaders, and these have become the boss, just as in the larger life of society the people are made to submit to the orders of those who were originally meant to serve them—the government and its agents. Once you do that, the power you have delegated will be used against you and your own interests every time. And then you complain that your leaders “misuse their power.” No, my friend, they don’t misuse it; they only use it, for it is the *use* of power which is itself the worst misuse.

All this has to be changed if you really want to achieve results. In society it has to be changed by taking political power away from your governors, abolishing it altogether. I have shown that political power means authority, oppression, and tyranny, and that it is not political government that we need but rational management of our collective affairs.

Just so in your union you need sensible administration of your business. We know what tremendous power labour has as the creator of all wealth and the supporter of the world. If properly organised and united, the workers could control the situation, be the masters of it. But the strength of the worker is not in the union meeting-hall; it is in the shop and factory, in the mill and mine. It is *there* that he must organise; there, on the job. There he knows what he wants, what his needs are, and it is there that he must concentrate his efforts and his will. Every shop and factory should have its special committee to attend to the wants and requirements of the men: not leaders, but members of the rank and file, from the bench and furnace, to look after the demands and complaints of their fellow employees. Such a committee, being on the spot, and constantly under the direction and supervision of the workers, wields no power: it merely carries out instructions. Its members are recalled at will and others selected in their place, according to the need of the moment and the ability required for the task in hand. It is the workers who decide the matters at issue and carry their decisions out through the shop committees.

That is the character and form of organisation that labour needs. Only this form can express its real purpose and will be its adequate spokesman, and serve its true interests. These shop and factory committees, combined with similar bodies in other mills and mines, associated locally, regionally and nationally, would constitute a new type of labour organisation which would be the virile voice of toil and its effective agency. It would have the whole weight and energy of the united workers at the back of it and would represent a power tremendous in its scope and potentialities.

In the daily struggle of the proletariat such an organisation would be able to achieve victories about which the conservative union, as at present built, cannot even dream. It would enjoy the respect and confidence of the masses, would attract the unorganised and unite the labour forces on the basis of the equality of all workers and their joint interests and aims. It would face the masters with the whole might of the working class back of it, in a new attitude of consciousness and strength. Only then would labour acquire dignity and the expression of it assume real significance.

Such a union would soon become something more than a mere defender and protector of the worker. It would gain a vital realisation of the meaning of unity and consequent power, of labour solidarity. The factory and shop would serve as a training camp to develop the worker’s understanding of his

proper role in life, to cultivate his self-reliance and independence, teach him mutual help and co-operation, and make him conscious of his responsibility. He will learn to decide and act on his own judgment, not leaving it to leaders or politicians to attend to his affairs and look out for his welfare. It will be he who will determine, together with his fellows at the bench, what they want and what methods will best serve their aims, and his committee on the spot would merely carry out instructions. The shop and factory would become the worker's school and college. There he will learn his place in society, his function in industry, and his purpose in life. He will mature as a working-man and as a man, and the giant of labour will attain his full stature. He will know and be strong thereby.

Not long will he then be satisfied to remain a wage slave, an employee and dependent on the good will of his master whom his toil supports. He will grow to understand that present economic and social arrangements are wrong and criminal, and he will determine to change them. The shop committee and union will become the field of preparation for a new economic system, for a new social life.

You see, then, how necessary it is that you and I, and every man and woman who has the interests of labour at heart, work toward these objects.

And right here I want to emphasise that it is particularly urgent that the more advanced proletarian, the radical and the revolutionary, reflect upon this more earnestly, for to most of them, even to some anarchists, this is only a pious wish, a distant hope. They fail to realise the transcending importance of efforts in that direction. Yet it is no mere dream. Large numbers of progressive working-men are coming to this understanding: the Industrial Workers of the World and the revolutionary anarchist-sindicalists in every country are devoting themselves to this end. It is the most pressing need of the present. It cannot be stressed too much that *only the right organisation of the workers* can accomplish what we are striving for. In it lies the salvation of labour and of the future. Organisation from the bottom up, beginning with the shop and factory, on the foundation of the joint interests of the workers everywhere, irrespective of trade, race, or country, by means of mutual effort and united will, alone can solve the labour question and serve the true emancipation of man.

"You were speaking of the workers taking over the industries," your friend reminds you. "How are they going to do it?"

Yes, I was on the subject when you made that remark about organisation. But it is well that the matter was discussed, because there is nothing more vital in the problems we are examining.

To return to the taking over of the industries. It means not only taking them over, but the running of them by labour. As concerns the taking over, you must consider that the workers are actually now *in* the industries. The taking over consists in the workers *remaining* where they are, yet remaining not as employees but as the rightful collective possessors.

Grasp this point, my friend. The expropriation of the capitalist class during the social revolution—the taking over of the industries—requires tactics directly the reverse of those you now use in a strike. In the latter you quit work and leave the boss in full possession of the mill, factory, or mine. It is an idiotic proceeding, of course, for you give the master the entire advantage: he can put scabs in your place, and you remain out in the cold.

In expropriating, on the contrary, you *stay* on the job and you put the boss out. He may remain only on equal terms with the rest: a worker among workers.

The labour organisations of a given place take charge of the public utilities, of the means of communication, of production and distribution in their particular locality. That is, the telegraphers, the telephone and electrical workers, the railroad men, and so on, take possession (by means of their revolutionary shop committees) of the workshop, factory, or other establishment. The capitalistic foremen, overseers, and managers are removed from the premises if they resist the change and refuse to co-operate. If willing to participate, they are made to understand that henceforth they are neither masters nor owners: that the factory becomes public property in charge of the union of workers engaged in the industry, all equal partners in the general undertaking.

It is to be expected that the higher officials of large industrial and manufacturing concerns will refuse to co-operate. Thus they eliminate themselves. Their place must be taken by workers previously prepared for the job. That is why I have emphasised the utmost importance of industrial preparation. This is a primal necessity in a situation that will inevitably develop and on it will depend, more than on any other factor, the success of the social revolution. Industrial preparation is the most essential point, for without it the revolution is doomed to collapse.

The engineers and other technical specialists are more likely to join hands with labour when the social revolution comes, particularly if a closer bond and better understanding have in the meantime been established between the manual and mental workers.

Should they refuse and should the workers have failed to prepare themselves industrially and technically, then production would depend on *compelling* the wilfully obstinate to co-operate—an experiment tried in the Russian Revolution and proved a complete failure.

The grave mistake of the Bolsheviks in this connection was their hostile treatment of the whole class of the intelligentsia on account of the opposition of some members of it. It was the spirit of intolerance, inherent in fanatical dogma, which caused them to persecute an entire social group because of the fault of a few. This manifested itself in the policy of wholesale vengeance upon the professional elements, the technical specialists, the co-operative organisations, and all cultured persons in general. Most of them, at first friendly to the Revolution, some even enthusiastic in its favour, were alienated by these Bolshevik tactics, and their co-operation was made impossible. As a result of their dictatorial attitude, the communists were led to resort to increased oppression and tyranny till they finally introduced purely martial methods in the industrial life of the country. It was the era of compulsory labour, the militarisation of factory and mill, which unavoidably ended in disaster, because forced labour is, by the very nature of coercion, bad and inefficient: moreover, those so compelled react upon the situation by wilful sabotage, by systematic delay and spoilage of work, which an intelligent enemy can practice in a way that cannot be detected in due time and which results in greater harm to machinery and produce than direct refusal to work. In spite of the most drastic measures against this kind of sabotage, in spite even of the death penalty, the government was powerless to overcome the evil. The placing of a Bolshevik, of a political commissar, over every technician in the

more responsible positions did not help matters. It merely created a legion of parasitic officials who, ignorant of industrial matters, only interfered with the work of those friendly to the Revolution and willing to aid, while their unfamiliarity with the task in no way prevented continued sabotage. The system of forced labour finally developed in what practically became economic counter-revolution, and no efforts of the dictatorship could alter the situation. It was this that caused the Bolsheviks to change from compulsory labour to a policy of winning over the specialists and technicians by returning them to authority in the industries and rewarding them with high pay and special emoluments.

It would be stupid and criminal to try again the methods which have so signally failed in the Russian Revolution and which, by their very character, are bound to fail every time, both industrially and morally.

The only solution of this problem is the already suggested preparation and training of the workers in the art of organising and managing industry, as well as closer contact between the manual and technical men. Every factory, mine, and mill should have its special workers' council, separate from and independent of the shop committee, for the purpose of familiarising the workers with the various phases of their particular industry, including the sources of raw material, the consecutive processes of manufacture, by-products, and manner of distribution. This industrial council should be permanent, but its membership must rotate in such a manner as to take in practically all the employees of a given factory or mill. To illustrate: suppose the industrial council in a certain establishment consists of five members or of twenty-five, as the case may be, according to the complexity of the industry and the size of the particular factory. The members of the council, after having thoroughly acquainted themselves with their industry, publish what they had learned for the information of their fellow-workers, and new council members are chosen to continue the industrial studies. In this manner the whole factory or mill can consecutively acquire the necessary knowledge about the organisation and management of their trade and keep step with its development. These councils would serve as industrial colleges where the workers would become familiar with the technique of their industry in all its phases.

At the same time the larger organisation, the union, must use every effort to compel capital to permit greater labour participation in the actual management. But this, even at best, can benefit only a small minority of the workers. The plan suggested above, on the other hand, opens the possibility of industrial training to practically every worker in shop, mill, and factory.

It is true, of course, that there are certain kinds of work—such as engineering: civil, electrical, mechanical—which the industrial councils will not be able to acquire by actual practice. But what they will learn of the general processes of industry will be of inestimable value as preparation. For the rest, the closer bond of friendship and co-operation between worker and technician is a paramount necessity.

The taking over of the industries is therefore the first great object of the social revolution. It is to be accomplished by the proletariat, by the part of it organised and prepared for the task. Considerable numbers of workers are already beginning to realise the importance of this and to understand the task before them. But understanding what is necessary to be done is not sufficient. Learning

how to do it is the next step. It is up to the organised working class to enter at once upon this preparatory work.

## 11: Principles and Practice

The main purpose of the social revolution must be the *immediate* betterment of conditions for the masses. The success of the revolution fundamentally depends on it. This can be achieved only by organising consumption and production so as to be of real benefit to the populace. In that lies the greatest—in fact, the only—security of the social revolution. It was not the Red army which conquered counter-revolution in Russia: it was the peasants holding on for dear life to the land they had taken during the upheaval. The social revolution must be of material gain to the masses if it is to live and grow. The people at large must be sure of actual advantage from their efforts, or at least entertain the hope of such advantage in the near future. The revolution is doomed if it relies for its existence and defence on *mechanical* means, such as war and armies. The real safety of the revolution is *organic*; that is, it lies in industry and production.

The object of revolution is to secure greater freedom, to increase the material welfare of the people. The aim of the social revolution, in particular, is to enable the masses *by their own efforts* to bring about conditions of material and social well-being, to rise to higher moral and spiritual levels.

In other words, it is liberty which is to be established by the social revolution. For true liberty is based on economic opportunity. Without it all liberty is a sham and lie, a mask for exploitation and oppression. In the profoundest sense liberty is the daughter of economic equality.

The main aim of the social revolution is therefore to establish equal liberty on the basis of equal opportunity. The revolutionary re-organisation of life must immediately proceed to secure the equality of all, economically, politically, and socially.

That re-organisation will depend, first and foremost, on the thorough familiarity of labour with the economic situation of the country: on a complete inventory of the supply, on exact knowledge of the sources of raw material, and on the proper organisation of the labour forces for efficient management.

It means that statistics and intelligent workers' associations are vital needs of the revolution, on the day after the upheaval. The entire problem of production and distribution—the life of the revolution—is based on it. It is obvious, as pointed out before, that this knowledge must be acquired by the workers *before* the revolution if the latter is to accomplish its purposes.

That is why the shop and factory committee, dealt with in the previous chapter, are so important and will play such a decisive role in the revolutionary re-construction.

For a new society is not born suddenly, any more than a child is. New social life gestates in the body of the old just as new individual life does in the mother's womb. Time and certain processes are required to develop it till it becomes a complete organism capable of functioning. When that stage has been reached birth takes place in agony and pain, socially as individually. Revolution, to use

a trite but expressive saying, is the midwife of the new social being. That is true in the most literal sense. Capitalism is the parent of the new society; the shop and factory committee, the union of class-conscious labour and revolutionary aims, is the germ of the new life. In that shop committee and union the worker must acquire the knowledge of how to manage his affairs: in the process he will grow to the perception that social life is a matter of proper organisation, of united effort, of solidarity. He will come to understand that it is not the bossing and ruling of men but free association and harmonious working together which accomplish things; that it is not government and laws which produce and create, make the wheat grow and the wheels turn, but concord and co-operation. Experience will teach him to substitute the management of things in place of the government of men. In the daily life and struggles of his shop-committee the worker must learn how to conduct the revolution.

Shop and factory committees, organised locally, by district, region, and State, and federated nationally, will be the bodies best suited to carry on revolutionary production.

Local and State labour councils, federated nationally, will be the form of organisation most adapted to manage distribution by means of the people's cooperatives.

These committees, elected by the workers on the job, connect their shop and factory with other shops and factories of the same industry. The Joint Council of an entire industry links that industry with other industries, and thus is formed a federation of labour councils for the entire country.

Co-operative associations are the mediums of exchange between the country and city. The farmers, organised locally and federated regionally and nationally, supply the needs of the cities by means of the co-operatives and receive through the latter in exchange the products of the city industries.

Every revolution is accompanied by a great outburst of popular enthusiasm full of hope and aspiration. It is the spring-board of revolution. The high tide, spontaneous and powerful, opens up the human sources of initiative and activity. The sense of equality liberates the best there is in man and makes him consciously creative. These are the great motors of the social revolution, its moving forces. Their free and unhindered expression signifies the development and deepening of the revolution. Their suppression means decay and death. The revolution is safe, it grows and becomes strong, as long as the masses feel that they are direct participants in it, that they are fashioning their own lives, that *they* are making the revolution, that they *are* the revolution. But the moment their activities are usurped by a political party or are centred in some special organisation, revolutionary effort becomes limited to a comparatively small circle from which the large masses are practically excluded. The natural result of that popular enthusiasm is dampened, interest gradually weakens, initiative languishes, creativeness wanes, and the revolution becomes the monopoly of a clique which presently turns dictator.

This is fatal to the revolution. The sole prevention of such a catastrophe lies in the continued active interest of the workers through their everyday participation in all matters pertaining to the revolution. The source of this interest and activity is the shop and the union.

The interest of the masses and their loyalty to the revolution depend furthermore

on their feeling that the revolution represents justice and fair play. This explains why revolutions have the power of rousing the people to acts of great heroism and devotion. As already pointed out, the masses instinctively see in revolution the enemy of wrong and iniquity and the harbinger of justice. In this sense revolution is a highly ethical factor and an inspiration. Fundamentally it is only great moral principles which can fire the masses and lift them to spiritual heights.

All popular upheavals have shown this to be true; particularly so the Russian Revolution. It was because of that spirit that the Russian masses so strikingly triumphed over all obstacles in the days of February and October. No opposition could conquer their devotion inspired by a great and noble cause. But the Revolution began to decline when it had become emasculated of its high moral values, when it was denuded of its elements of justice, equality, and liberty. Their loss was the doom of the Revolution.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly how essential spiritual values are to the social revolution. These and the consciousness of the masses that the revolution also means material betterment are dynamic influences in the life and growth of the new society. Of the two factors the spiritual values are foremost. The history of previous revolutions proves that the masses were very willing to suffer and to sacrifice material well-being for the sake of greater liberty and justice. Thus in Russia neither cold nor starvation could induce the peasants and workers to aid counter-revolution. All privation and misery notwithstanding, they served heroically the interests of the great cause. It was only when they saw the Revolution monopolised by a political party, the new-won liberties curtailed, a dictatorship established and injustice and inequality dominant again that they became indifferent to the Revolution, declined to participate in the sham, refused to co-operate and even turned against it.

To forget ethical values, to introduce practices and methods inconsistent with or opposed to the high moral purposes of the revolution means to invite counter-revolution and disaster.

It is therefore clear that the success of the social revolution primarily depends on liberty and equality. Any deviation from them can only be harmful; indeed, is sure to prove destructive. It follows that *all* the activities of the revolution must be based on freedom and equal rights. This applies to small things as to great. Any acts or methods tending to limit liberty, to create inequality and injustice, can result only in a popular attitude inimical to the revolution and its best interests.

It is from this angle that all the problems of the revolutionary period must be considered and solved. Among those problems the most important are consumption and housing, production and exchange.

## 12: Consumption and Exchange

Let us take up the organisation of consumption first, because people have to eat before they can work and produce.

“What do you mean by the organisation of consumption?” your friend asks.

“He means rationing, I suppose,” you remark.

I do. Of course, when the social revolution has become thoroughly organised and production is functioning normally there will be enough for everybody. But in the first stages of the revolution, during the process of re-construction, we must take care to supply the people as best we can, and equally, which means rationing.

“The Bolsheviks did not have equal rationing,” your friend interrupts; “they had different kinds of rations for different people.”

They did, and that was one of the greatest mistakes they made. It was resented by the people as a wrong and it provoked irritation and discontent. The Bolsheviks had one kind of ration for the sailor, another of lower quality and quantity for the soldier, a third for the skilled worker, a fourth for the unskilled one; another ration again for the average citizen, and yet another for the bourgeois. The best rations were for the Bolsheviks, the members of the Party, and special rations for the Communist officials and commissars. At one time they had as many as fourteen different food rations. Your own common sense will tell you that it was all wrong. Was it fair to discriminate against people because they happened to be labourers, mechanics, or intellectuals rather than soldiers or sailors? Such methods were unjust and vicious: they immediately created material inequality and opened the door to misuse of position and opportunity to speculation, graft, and swindle. They also stimulated counter-revolution for those indifferent or unfriendly to the Revolution were embittered by the discrimination and therefore became an easy prey to counter-revolutionary influences.

This initial discrimination and the many others which followed were not dictated by the needs of the situation but solely by political party considerations. Having usurped the reins of government and fearing the opposition of the people, the Bolsheviks sought to strengthen themselves in the government seat by currying favour with the sailors, soldiers and workers. By these means they succeeded only in creating indignation and antagonising the masses, for the injustice of the system was too crying and obvious. Furthermore, even the “favoured class,” the proletariat, felt discriminated against because the soldiers were given better rations. Was the worker not as good as the soldier? Could the soldier fight for the Revolution—the factory man argued—if the worker would not supply him with ammunition? The soldier, in his turn, protested against the sailor getting more. Was he not as valuable as the sailor? And all condemned the special rations and privileges bestowed on the Bolshevik members of the Party, and particularly the comforts and even luxuries enjoyed by the higher officials and commissars, while the masses suffered privation.

Popular resentment of such practices was strikingly expressed by the Kronstadt sailors. It was in the midst of an extremely severe and hungry winter, in March, 1921, that a public mass-meeting of the sailors unanimously resolved voluntarily to give up their extra rations on behalf of the less favoured population of Kronstadt, and to equalise the rations of the entire city. This truly ethical revolutionary action voiced the general feeling against discrimination and favouritism, and gave convincing proof of the deep sense of justice inherent in the masses.

All experience teaches that the just and square thing is at the same time also the most sensible and practical in the long run. This holds equally true of the

individual as of collective life. Discrimination and injustice are particularly destructive to revolution, because the very spirit of revolution is born of the hunger for equity and justice.

I have already mentioned that when the social revolution attains the stage where it can produce sufficient for all, then is adopted the anarchist principle of “to each according to his needs.” In the more industrially developed and efficient countries, that stage would naturally be reached sooner than in backward lands. But until it is reached, the system of equal sharing, equal distribution per capita is imperative as the only just method. It goes without saying, of course, that special consideration must be given to the sick and to the old, to children, and to women during and after pregnancy, as was also the practice in the Russian Revolution.

“Let me get this straight,” you remark. “There is to be equal sharing, you say. Then you won’t be able to buy anything?”

No, there will be no buying or selling. The revolution abolishes private ownership of the means of production and distribution, and with it goes capitalistic business. Personal possession remains only in the things you use. Thus, your watch is your own, but the watch factory belongs to the people, land, machinery, and all other public utilities will be collective property, neither to be bought nor sold. Actual use will be considered the only title—not to ownership but to possession. The organisation of the coal miners, for example, will be in charge of the coal mines, not as owners but as the operating agency. Similarly will the railroad brotherhoods run the railroads, and so on. Collective possession, co-operatively managed in the interests of the community, will take the place of personal ownership privately conducted for profit.

“But if you can’t buy anything, then what’s the use of money?” you ask.

None whatever; money becomes useless. You can’t get anything for it. When the sources of supply, the land, factories, and products become public property, socialised, you neither buy nor sell. As money is only a medium for such transactions, it loses its usefulness.

“But how will you exchange things?”

Exchange will be free. The coal miners, for instance, will deliver the coal they mined to the public yards for the use of the community. In their turn the miners will receive from the community’s warehouses the machinery, tools, and the other commodities they need. That means free exchange without the medium of money and without profit, on the basis of requirement and the supply on hand.

“But if there is no machinery or food to be given to the miners?”

If there is none, money will not help matters. The miners couldn’t feed on banknotes. Consider how such things are managed today. You trade coal for money, and for the money you get food. The free community we are speaking of will exchange the coal for the food directly, without the medium of money.

“But on what basis? Today you know what a dollar is worth, more or less, but how much coal will you give for a sack of flour?”

You mean, how will value or price be determined. But we have seen already in preceding chapters that there is no real measure of value, and that price depends on supply and demand and varies accordingly. The price of coal rises if there is a scarcity of it; it becomes cheaper if the supply is greater than the demand. To make bigger profits the coal owners artificially limit the output, and the same

methods obtain throughout the capitalistic system. With the abolition of capitalism no one will be interested in raising the price of coal or limiting its supply. As much coal will be mined as will be necessary to satisfy the need. Similarly will as much food be raised as the country needs. It will be the *requirements* of the community and the supply obtaining which will determine the amount it is to receive. This applies to coal and food as to all other needs of the people.

“But suppose there is not enough of a certain product to go around. What will you do then?”

Then we'll do what is done in capitalistic society in time of war and scarcity: the people are rationed, with the difference that in the free community rationing will be managed on principles of equality.

“But suppose the farmer refuses to supply the city with his products unless he gets money?”

The farmer, like any one else, wants money only if he can buy with it the things he needs. He will quickly see that money is useless to him. In Russia during the Revolution you could not get a peasant to sell you a pound of flour for a bagful of money. But he was eager to give you a barrel of the finest grain for an old pair of boots. It is ploughs, spades, rakes, agricultural machinery and clothing which the farmer wants, not money. For these he will let you have his wheat, barley, and corn. In other words, the city will exchange with the farm the products each require, on the basis of need.

It has been suggested by some that exchange during the period of revolutionary re-construction should be based on some definite standard. It is proposed, for example, that every community issue its own money, as is often done in time of revolution; or that a day's work should be considered the unit of value and so-called labour notes serve as medium of exchange. But neither of these proposals is of practical help. Money issued by communities in revolution would quickly depreciate to the point of no value, since such money would have no secure guarantees behind it, without which money is worth nothing. Similarly labour notes would not represent any definite and measurable value as a means of exchange. What would, for instance, an hour's work of the coal miner be worth? Or fifteen minutes' consultation with the physician? Even if all effort should be considered equal in value and an hour's labour be made the unit, could the house painter's hour of work or the surgeon's operation be equitably measured in terms of wheat?

Common sense will solve this problem on the basis of human equality and the right of everyone to life.

“Such a system might work among decent people,” your friend objects, “but how among shirkers? Were not the Bolsheviks right in establishing the principle that ‘whoever doesn't work, doesn't eat?’”

No, my friend, you are mistaken. At first sight it may appear as if that was a just and sensible idea. But in reality it proved impractical, not to speak of the injustice and harm it worked all round.

“How so?”

It was impractical because it required an army of officials to keep tab on the people who worked or didn't work. It led to incrimination and recrimination and endless disputes about official decisions. So that within a short time the number of those who didn't work was doubled and even trebled by the effort

to force people to work and to guard against their dodging or doing bad work. It was the system of compulsory labour which soon proved such a failure that the Bolsheviks were compelled to give it up.

Moreover, the system caused even greater evils in other directions. Its injustice lay in the fact that you cannot break into a person's heart or mind and decide what peculiar physical or mental condition makes it temporarily impossible for him to work. Consider further the precedent you establish by introducing a false principle and thereby rousing the opposition of those who feel it wrong and oppressive and therefore refuse co-operation.

A rational community will find it more practical and beneficial to treat all alike, whether one happens to work at the time or not, rather than create more non-workers to watch those already on hand, or to build prisons for their punishment and support. For if you refuse to feed a man, for whatever cause, you drive him to theft and other crimes—and thus you yourself create the necessity for courts, lawyers, judges, jails, and warders, the upkeep of whom is far more burdensome than to feed the offenders. And these you have to feed, anyhow, even if you put them in prison.

The revolutionary community will depend more on awakening the social consciousness and solidarity of its delinquents than on punishment. It will rely on the example set by its working members, and it will be right in doing so. For the natural attitude of the industrious man to the shirker is such that the latter will find the social atmosphere so unpleasant that he will prefer to work and enjoy the respect and goodwill of his fellows rather than to be despised in idleness.

Bear in mind that it is more important, and in the end more practical and useful, to do the square thing rather than to gain a seeming immediate advantage. That is, to do justice is more vital than to punish. For punishment is never just and always harmful to both sides, the punished and the punisher; harmful even more spiritually than physically, and there is no greater harm than that for it hardens and corrupts you. This is unqualifiedly true of your individual life and with the same force it applies to the collective social existence.

On the foundations of liberty, justice and equality, as also on understanding and sympathy, must be built every phase of life in the social revolution. Only so it can endure. This applies to the problems of shelter, food, and the security of your district or city, as well as to the defence of the revolution.

As regards housing and local safety Russia has shown the way in the first months of the October Revolution. House committees, chosen by the tenants, and city federations of such committees take the problem in hand. They gather statistics of the facilities of a given district and of the number of applicants requiring quarters. The latter are assigned according to personal or family need on the basis of equal rights.

Similar house and district committees have charge of the provisioning of the city. Individual application for rations at the distributing centres is a stupendous waste of time and energy. Equally false is the system, practised in Russia in the first years of the Revolution, of issuing rations in the institutions of one's employment, in shops, factories, and offices. The better and more efficient way, which at the same time insures more equitable distribution and closes the door to favouritism and misuse, is rationing by houses or streets. The authorised house or street committee procures at the local distributing centre the

provisions, clothing, etc., apportioned to the number of tenants, represented by the committee. Equal rationing has the added advantage of eradicating food speculation, the vicious practice which grew to enormous proportions in Russia because of the system of inequality and privilege. Party members or persons with a political pull could freely bring to the cities carloads of flour while some old peasant woman was severely punished for selling a loaf of bread. No wonder speculation flourished, and to such an extent, indeed, that the Bolsheviks had to form special regiments to cope with the evil. The prisons were filled with offenders; capital punishment was resorted to; but even the most drastic measures of the government failed to stop speculation, for the latter was the direct consequence of the system of discrimination and favouritism. Only equality and freedom of exchange can obviate such evils or at least reduce them to a minimum.

Taking care of the sanitary and kindred needs of street and district by voluntary committees of house and locality affords the best results, since such bodies, themselves tenants of the given district, are personally interested in the health and safety of their families and friends. This system worked much better in Russia than the subsequently established regular police force. The latter consisting mostly of the worst city elements, proved corrupt, brutal and oppressive.

The hope of material betterment is, as already mentioned, a powerful factor in the forward movement of humanity. But that incentive alone is not sufficient to inspire the masses, to give them the vision of a new and better world, and cause them to face danger and privation for its sake. For that an ideal is needed, an ideal which appeals not only to the stomach but even more to the heart and imagination, which rouses our dormant longing for what is fine and beautiful, for the spiritual and cultural values of life. An ideal, in short, which wakens the inherent social instincts of man, feeds his sympathies and fellow-feeling, fires his love of liberty and justice, and imbues even the lowest with nobility of thought and deed, as we frequently witness in the catastrophic events of life. Let a great tragedy happen anywhere—an earthquake, flood, or railroad accident—and the compassion of the whole world goes out to the sufferers. Acts of heroic self-sacrifice, of brave rescue and of unstinted aid demonstrate the real nature of man and his deep-felt brotherhood and unity.

This is true of mankind in all times, climes, and social strata. The story of Amundsen is a striking illustration of it. After decades of arduous and dangerous work the famous Norwegian explorer resolves to enjoy his remaining years in peaceful literary pursuits. He is announcing his decision at a banquet given in his honour, and almost at the same moment comes the news that the Nobile expedition to the North Pole had met with disaster. On the instant Amundsen renounces all his plans of a quiet life and prepares to fly to the aid of the lost aviators, fully aware of the peril of such an undertaking. Human sympathy and the compelling impulse to help those in distress overcome all considerations of personal safety, and Amundsen sacrifices his life in an attempt to rescue the Nobile party.

Deep in all of us lives the spirit of Amundsen. How many men of science have given up their lives in seeking knowledge by which to benefit their fellowmen—how many physicians and nurses have perished in the work of ministering to people stricken with contagious diseases—how many men and women have voluntarily faced certain death in the effort to check an epidemic

which was decimating their country or even some foreign land—how many men, common working men, miners, sailors, railroad employees—unknown to fame and unsung—have given themselves in the spirit of Amundsen? Their name is legion.

It is *this* human nature, this idealism, which must be roused by the social revolution. Without it the revolution cannot be, without it, it cannot live. Without it man is forever doomed to remain a slave and a weakling.

It is the work of the anarchist, of the revolutionist, of the intelligent, class-conscious proletarian to exemplify and cultivate this spirit and instil it in others. It alone can conquer the powers of evil and darkness, and build a new world of humanity, liberty and justice.

### 13: Production

“What about production?” you ask; “how is it to be managed?”

We have already seen what principles must underlie the activities of the revolution if it is to be social and accomplish its aims. The same principles of freedom and voluntary co-operation must also direct there-organisation of the industries.

The first effect of the revolution is reduced production. The general strike, which I have forecast as the starting point of the social revolution, itself constitutes a suspension of industry. The workers lay down their tools, demonstrate in the streets, and thus temporarily stop production.

But life goes on. The essential needs of the people must be satisfied. In that stage the revolution lives on the supplies already on hand. But to exhaust those supplies would be disastrous. The situation rests in the hands of labour: the immediate resumption of industry is imperative. The organised agricultural and industrial proletariat takes possession of the land, factories, shops, mines and mills. Most energetic application is now the order of the day.

It should be clearly understood that the *social revolution necessitates more intensive production* than under capitalism in order to supply the needs of the large masses who till then had lived in penury. This greater production can be achieved only by the workers having previously prepared themselves for the new situation. Familiarity with the processes of industry, knowledge of the sources of supply, and determination to succeed will accomplish the task. The enthusiasm generated by the revolution, the energies liberated, and the inventiveness stimulated by it must be given full freedom and scope to find creative channels. Revolution always awakens a high degree of responsibility. Together with the new atmosphere of liberty and brotherhood it creates the realisation that hard work and severe self-discipline are necessary to bring production up to the requirements of consumption.

On the other hand, the new situation will greatly simplify the present very complex problems of industry. For you must consider that capitalism, because of its competitive character and contradictory financial and commercial interest, involves many intricate and perplexing issues which would be entirely eliminated by the abolition of the conditions of today. Questions of wage scales and selling

prices; the requirements of the existing markets and the hunt for new ones; the scarcity of capital for large operations and the heavy interest to be paid on it; new investments, the effect of speculation and monopoly, and a score of related problems which worry the capitalist and make industry such a difficult and cumbersome network today would all disappear. At present these require diverse departments of study and highly trained men to keep unravelling the tangled skein of plutocratic cross purposes, many specialists to calculate the actualities and possibilities of profit and loss, and a large force of aids to help steer the industrial ship between the perilous rocks which beset the chaotic course of capitalist competition, national and international.

All this would be automatically done away with by the socialisation of industry and the termination of the competitive system; and thereby the problems of production will be immensely lightened. The knotted complexity of capitalist industry need therefore inspire no undue fear for the future. Those who talk of labour not being equal to manage “modern” industry fail to take into account the factors referred to above. The industrial labyrinth will turn out to be far less formidable on the day of the social reconstruction.

In passing it may be mentioned that all the other phases of life would also be very much simplified as a result of the indicated changes: various present-day habits, customs, compulsory and unwholesome modes of living will naturally fall into disuse.

Furthermore it must be considered that the task of increased production would be enormously facilitated by the addition to the ranks of labour of vast numbers whom the altered economic conditions will liberate for work.

Recent statistics show that in 1920 there were in the United States over 41 million persons of both sexes engaged in gainful occupations out of a total population of over 105 millions. Out of those 41 millions only 26 millions were actually employed in the industries, including transportation and agriculture, the balance of 15 millions consisting mostly of persons engaged in trade, of commercial travellers advertisers, and various other middlemen of the present system. In other words, 15 million persons would be released for useful work by a revolution in the United States. A similar situation, proportionate to population, would develop in other countries.

The greater production necessitated by the social revolution would therefore have an additional army of many million persons at its disposal. The systematic incorporation of those millions into industry and agriculture, aided by modern scientific methods of organisation and production, will go a long way toward helping to solve the problems of supply.

Capitalist production is for profit; more labour is used today to sell things than to produce them. The social revolution re-organises the industries on the basis of the *needs* of the populace. Essential needs come first, naturally. Food, clothing, shelter—these are the primal requirements of man. The first step in this direction is the ascertaining of the available supply of provisions and other commodities. The labour associations in every city and community take this work in hand for the purpose of equitable distribution. Workers’ committees in every street and district assume charge, co-operating with similar committees in the city and state, and federating their efforts throughout the country by means of general councils of producers and consumers.

Great events and upheavals bring to the fore the most active and energetic elements. The social revolution will crystalise the class-conscious labour ranks. By whatever name they will be known—as industrial unions, revolutionary syndicalist bodies, co-operative associations, leagues of producers and consumers—they will represent the most enlightened and advanced part of labour, the organised workers aware of their aims and how to attain them. It is they who will be the moving spirit of the revolution.

With the aid of industrial machinery and by scientific cultivation of the land freed from monopoly, the revolution must first of all supply the elemental wants of society. In farming and gardening intensive cultivation and modern methods have made us practically independent of natural soil quality and climate. To a very considerable extent man now makes his own soil and his own climate, thanks to the achievements of chemistry. Exotic fruits can be raised in the north to be supplied to the warm south, as is being done in France. Science is the wizard who enables man to master all difficulties and overcome all obstacles. The future, liberated from the incubus of the profit system and enriched by the work of the millions of non-producers of today, holds the greatest welfare for society. That future must be the objective point of the social revolution; its motto: bread and well-being for all. First bread, then well-being and luxury. Even luxury, for luxury is a deep-felt need of man, a need of his physical as of his spiritual being.

Intense application to this purpose must be the continuous effort of the revolution: not something to be postponed for a distant day but of immediate practice. The revolution must strive to enable every community to sustain itself, to become materially independent. No country should have to rely on outside help to exploit colonies for its support. That is the way of capitalism. The aim of anarchism, on the contrary, is material independence, not only for the individual, but for every community.

This means gradual decentralisation instead of centralisation.

Even under capitalism we see the decentralisation tendency manifest itself in spite of the essentially centralistic character of the present day industrial system. Countries which were before entirely dependent on foreign manufactures, as Germany in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, later Italy and Japan, and now Hungary, Czechoslovakia, etc., are gradually emancipating themselves industrially, working their own natural resources, building their own factories and mills, and attaining economic independence from other lands. International finance does not welcome this development and tries its utmost to retard its progress, because it is more profitable for the Morgans and Rockefellers to keep such countries as Mexico, China, India, Ireland, or Egypt industrially backward, in order to exploit their natural resources, and at the same time be assured of foreign markets for “over-production” at home. The governments of the great financiers and lords of industry help them to secure those foreign natural resources and markets, even at the point of the bayonet. Thus Great Britain by force of arms compels China to permit English opium to poison the Chinese, at a good profit, and exploits every means to dispose in that country of the greater part of its textile products. For the same reason Egypt, India, Ireland, and other dependencies and colonies are not permitted to develop their home industries.

In short, capitalism seeks centralisation. But a free country needs decentralisation, independence not only political but also industrial and economic.

Russia strikingly illustrates how imperative economic independence is, particularly to the social revolution. For years following the October upheaval the Bolshevik Government concentrated its efforts on currying favour with bourgeois governments for "recognition" and inviting foreign capitalists to help exploit the resources of Russia. But capital, afraid to make large investments under the insecure conditions of the dictatorship, failed to respond with any degree of enthusiasm. Meanwhile Russia was approaching economic breakdown. The situation finally compelled the Bolsheviks to understand that the country must depend on her own efforts for maintenance. Russia began to look around for means to help herself; and thereby she acquired greater confidence in her own abilities, learned to exercise self-reliance and initiative, and started to develop her own industries; a slow and painful process, but a wholesome necessity which will ultimately make Russia economically self-supporting and independent.

The social revolution in any given country must from the very first determine to make itself self-supporting. *It must help itself*. This principle of self-help is not to be understood as a lack of solidarity with other lands. On the contrary, mutual aid and cooperation between countries, as among individuals, can exist only on the basis of equality, among equals. *Dependence* is the very reverse of it.

Should the social revolution take place in several countries at the same time—in France and Germany, for instance—then joint effort would be a matter of course and would make the task of revolutionary re-organisation much easier.

Fortunately the workers are learning to understand that their cause is international: the organisation of labour is now developing beyond national boundaries. It is to be hoped that the time is not far away when the entire proletariat of Europe may combine in a general strike, which is to be the prelude to the social revolution. That is emphatically a consummation to be striven for with the greatest earnestness. But at the same time the probability is not to be discounted that the revolution may break out in one country sooner than in another—let us say in France earlier than in Germany—and in such a case it would become imperative for France not to wait for possible aid from outside, but immediately to exert all her energies to help herself, to supply the most essential needs of her people by her own efforts.

Every country in revolution must seek to achieve agricultural independence no less than political, industrial self-help no less than agricultural. This process is going on to a certain extent even under capitalism. It should be one of the main objects of the social revolution. Modern methods make it possible. The manufacture of watches and clocks, for example, which was formerly a monopoly of Switzerland, is now carried on in every country. Production of silk, previously limited to France, is among the great industries of various countries today. Italy, without sources of coal or iron, constructs steel-clad ships. Switzerland, no richer, also makes them.

Decentralisation will cure society of many evils of the centralised principle. Politically decentralisation means freedom; industrially, material independence; socially, it implies security and well-being for the small communities; individually it results in manhood and liberty.

Equally important to the social revolution as independence from foreign lands is decentralisation within the country itself. Internal decentralisation means making the larger regions, even every community, as far as possible, self-supporting. In his very illuminating and suggestive work, *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, Peter Kropotkin has convincingly shown how a city like Paris even, now almost exclusively commercial, could raise enough food in its own environs to support its population abundantly. By using modern agricultural machinery and intensive cultivation London and New York could subsist upon the products raised in their own immediate vicinity. It is a fact that "our means of obtaining from the soil whatever we want under *any* climate and upon *any* soil, have lately been improved at such a rate that we cannot foresee yet what is the limit of productivity of a few acres of land. The limit vanishes in proportion to our better study of the subject, and every year makes it vanish further and further from our sight."

When the social revolution begins in any land, its foreign commerce stops: the importation of raw materials and finished products is suspended. The country may even be blockaded by the bourgeois governments, as was the case with Russia. Thus the revolution is *compelled* to become self-supporting and provide for its own wants. Even various parts of the same country may have to face such an eventuality. They would have to produce what they need within their own area, by their own efforts. Only decentralisation could solve this problem. The country would have to re-organise its activities in such a manner as to be able to feed itself. It would have to resort to production on a small scale, to home industry, and to intensive agriculture and horticulture. Man's initiative freed by the revolution and his wits sharpened by necessity will rise to the situation.

It must therefore be clearly understood that it would be disastrous to the interests of the revolution to suppress or interfere with the small scale industries which are even now practised to such a great extent in various European countries. Numerous articles of everyday use are produced by the peasants of Continental Europe during their leisure winter hours. These home manufactures total up tremendous figures to fill a great need. It would be most harmful to the revolution to destroy them, as Russia so foolishly did in her mad Bolshevik passion for centralisation. When a country in revolution is attacked by foreign governments, when it is blockaded and deprived of imports, when its large-scale industries threaten to break down or the railways actually do break down, then it is just the small home industries which become the vital nerve of economic life; they alone can feed and save the revolution.

Moreover, such home industries are not only a potent economic factor; they are also of the greatest social value. They serve to cultivate friendly intercourse between the farm and the city, bringing the two into closer and more solidaric contact. In fact, the home industries are themselves an expression of a most wholesome social spirit which from earliest times has manifested itself in village gatherings, in communal efforts, in folk dance and song. This normal and healthy tendency, in its various aspects, should be encouraged and stimulated by the revolution for the greater weal of the community.

The role of industrial decentralisation in the revolution is unfortunately too little appreciated. Even in progressive labour ranks there is a dangerous tendency

to ignore or minimise its importance. Most people are still in the thralldom of the Marxian dogma that centralisation is “more efficient and economical.” They close their eyes to the fact that the alleged “economy” is achieved at the cost of the worker’s limb and life, that the “efficiency” degrades him to a mere industrial cog, deadens his soul, and kills his body. Furthermore, in a system of centralisation the administration of industry becomes constantly merged in fewer hands, producing a powerful bureaucracy of industrial overlords. It would indeed be the sheerest irony if the revolution were to aim at such a result. It would mean the creation of a new master class.

The revolution can accomplish the emancipation of labour only by gradual decentralisation, by developing the individual worker into a more conscious and determining factor in the process of industry, by making him the impulse whence proceeds all industrial and social activity. The deep significance of the social revolution lies in the abolition of the mastery of man over man, putting in its place the management of things. Only thus can be achieved industrial and social freedom.

“Are you sure it would work?” you demand.

I am sure of this: if that will not work, nothing else will. The plan I have outlined is a free communism, a life of voluntary co-operation and equal sharing. There is no other way of securing economic equality, which alone is liberty. Any other system must lead to capitalism.

It is likely, of course, that a country in social revolution may try various economic experiments. A limited capitalism might be introduced in one part of the land or collectivism in another. But collectivism is only another form of the wage system and it would speedily tend to become the capitalism of the present day. For collectivism begins by abolishing private ownership of the means of production and immediately reverses itself by returning to the system of remuneration according to work performed; which means the re-introduction of inequality.

Man learns by doing. The social revolution in different countries and regions will probably try out various methods, and by practical experience learn the best way. The revolution is at the same time the opportunity and justification for it. I am not attempting to prophesy what this or that country is going to do, what particular course it will follow. Nor do I presume to dictate to the future, to prescribe its mode of conduct. My purpose is to suggest, in broad outline, the principles which must animate the revolution, the general lines of action it should follow if it is to accomplish its aim—the reconstruction of society on a foundation of freedom and equality.

We know that previous revolutions for the most part failed of their objects, they degenerated into dictatorship and despotism, and thus re-established the old institutions of oppression and exploitation. We know it from past and recent history. We therefore draw the conclusion that the old way will not do. A new way must be tried in the coming social revolution. What new way? The only one so far known to man; the way of liberty and equality, the way of free communism, of anarchy.

## 14: Defence of the Revolution

“Suppose your system is tried, would you have any means of defending the revolution?” you ask.

Certainly.

“Even by armed force?”

Yes, if necessary.

“But armed force is organised violence. Didn’t you say anarchism was against it?”

Anarchism is opposed to any interference with your liberty, be it by force and violence or by any other means. It is against all invasion and compulsion. But if any one attacks *you*, then it is *he* who is invading you, he who is employing violence against you. You have a right to defend yourself. More than that, it is your duty, as an anarchist, to protect your liberty, to resist coercion and compulsion. Otherwise you are a slave, not a free man. In other words, the social revolution will attack no one, but it will defend itself against invasion from any quarter.

Besides, you must not confuse the social revolution with anarchy. Revolution, in some of its stages, is a violent upheaval; anarchy is a social condition of freedom and peace. The revolution is the *means* of bringing anarchy about but it is not anarchy itself. It is to pave the road for anarchy, to establish conditions which will make a life of liberty possible.

But to achieve its purpose the revolution must be imbued with and directed by the anarchist spirit and ideas. The end shapes the means, just as the tool you use must be fit to do the work you want to accomplish. That is to say, the social revolution must be anarchist in method as in aim.

Revolutionary defence must be in consonance with this spirit. Self-defence excludes all acts of coercion, of persecution or revenge. It is concerned only with repelling attack and depriving the enemy of opportunity to invade you.

“How would you repel foreign invasion?”

By the strength of the revolution. In what does that strength consist? First and foremost, in the support of the people, in the devotion of the industrial and agricultural masses. If they feel that they themselves are making the revolution, that they have become the masters of their lives, that they have gained freedom and are building up their welfare, then in that very sentiment you have the greatest strength of the revolution. The masses fight today for king, capitalist, or president because they believe them worth fighting for. Let them believe in the revolution, and they will defend it to the death.

They will fight for the revolution with heart and soul, as the half-starved men, women, and even children of Petrograd defended their city, almost with bare hands, against the White army of General Yudenitch. Take that faith away, deprive the people of power by setting up some authority over them, be it a political party or military organisation, and you have dealt a fatal blow to the revolution. You will have robbed it of its main source of strength, the masses. You will have made it defenceless.

The armed workers and peasants are the only effective defence of the revolution. By means of their unions and syndicates they must always be on guard

against counter-revolutionary attack. The worker in factory and mill, in mine and field, is the soldier of the revolution. He is at his bench and plough or on the battlefield, according to need. But in his factory as in his regiment he is the soul of the revolution, and it is *his* will that decides its fate. In industry the shop committees, in the barracks the soldiers' committees—these are the fountain-head of all revolutionary strength and activity.

It was the volunteer Red Guard, made up of toilers, that successfully defended the Russian Revolution in its most critical initial stages. Later on it was again volunteer peasant regiments who defeated the White armies. The regular Red army, organised later, was powerless without the volunteer workers' and peasants' divisions. Siberia was freed from Kolchak and his hordes by such peasant volunteers. In the North of Russia it was also workers' and peasants' detachments that drove out the foreign armies which came to impose the yoke of native reactionaries upon the people. In the Ukraine the volunteer peasant armies—known as *povstantsi*—saved the Revolution from numerous counter-revolutionary generals and particularly from Denikin when the latter was already at the very gates of Moscow. It was the revolutionary *povstantsi* who freed Southern Russia from the invading armies of Germany, France, Italy, and Greece, and subsequently also routed the White forces of General Wrangel.

The military defence of the revolution may demand a supreme command, co-ordination of activities, discipline, and obedience to orders. But these must proceed from the devotion of the workers and peasants, and must be based on their voluntary co-operation through their own local, regional, and federal organisations. In the matter of defence against foreign attack, as in all other problems of the social revolution, the active interest of the masses, their autonomy and self-determination are the best guarantee of success.

Understand well that the only really effective defence of the revolution lies in the attitude of the people. Popular discontent is the worst enemy of the revolution and its greatest danger. We must always bear in mind that the strength of the social revolution is organic, not mechanistic: not in mechanical, military measures lies its strength, but in its industry, in its ability to reconstruct life, to establish liberty and justice. Let the people feel that it is indeed their own cause which is at stake, and the last man of them will fight like a lion on its behalf.

The same applies to internal as to external defence. What chance would any White general or counter-revolutionist have if he could not exploit oppression and injustice to incite the people against the revolution? Counter-revolution can feed only on popular discontent. Where the masses are conscious that the revolution and all its activities are in their own hands, that they themselves are managing things and are free to change their methods when they consider it necessary, counter-revolution can find no support and is harmless.

“But would you let counter-revolutionists incite the people if they tried to?”

By all means. Let them talk as they like. To restrain them would only serve to create a persecuted class and thereby enlist popular sympathy for them and their cause. To suppress speech and press is not only a theoretic offence against liberty: it is a direct blow at the very foundations of the revolution. It would, first of all, raise problems where none had existed before. It would introduce methods which must lead to discontent and opposition, to bitterness and strife,

to prison, Tcheka, and civil war. It would generate fear and distrust, would hatch conspiracies, and culminate in a reign of terror which has always killed revolution in the past.

The social revolution must from the very start be based on entirely different principles, on a new conception and attitude. Full freedom is the very breath of its existence; and be it never forgotten that the cure for evil and disorder is *more* liberty, not suppression. Suppression leads only to violence and destruction.

“Will you not defend the revolution then?” your friend demands.

Certainly we will. But not against mere talk, not against an expression of opinion. The revolution must be big enough to welcome even the severest criticism, and profit by it if it is justified. The revolution will defend itself most determinedly against real counter-revolution, against all active enemies, against any attempt to defeat or sabotage it by forcible invasion or violence. That is the right of the revolution and its duty. But it will not persecute the conquered foe, nor wreak vengeance upon an entire social class because of the fault of individual members of it. The sins of the fathers shall not be visited upon their children.

“What will you do with counter-revolutionists?”

Actual combat and armed resistance involve human sacrifices, and the counter-revolutionists who lose their lives under such circumstances suffer the unavoidable consequences of their deeds. But the revolutionary people are not savages. The wounded are not slaughtered nor those taken prisoners executed. Neither is practised the barbarous system of shooting hostages, as the Bolsheviks did.

“How will you treat counter-revolutionists taken prisoners during an engagement?”

The revolution must find new ways, some sensible method of dealing with them. The old method is to imprison them, support them in idleness, and employ numerous men to guard and punish them. And while the culprit remains in prison, incarceration and brutal treatment still further embitter him against the revolution, strengthen his opposition, and nurse thoughts of vengeance and new conspiracies. The revolution will regard such methods as stupid and detrimental to its best interests. It will try instead by humane treatment to convince the defeated enemy of the error and uselessness of his resistance. It will apply liberty instead of revenge. It will take into consideration that most of the counter-revolutionists are dupes rather than enemies, deluded victims of some individuals seeking power and authority. It will know that they need enlightenment rather than punishment, and that the former will accomplish more than the latter. Even today this perception is gaining ground. The Bolsheviks defeated the Allied armies in Russia more effectively by revolutionary propaganda among the enemy soldiers than by the strength of their artillery. These new methods have been recognised as practical even by the United States Government which is making use of them now in its Nicaraguan campaign. American aeroplanes scatter proclamations and appeals to the Nicaraguan people to persuade them to desert Sandino and his cause, and the American army chiefs expect the best results from these tactics. But the Sandino patriots are fighting for home and country against foreign invaders, while counter-revolutionists wage war against their own people. The work of their enlightenment is much simpler and promises better results.

“Do you think that would really be the best way to deal with counter-revolution?”

By all means. Humane treatment and kindness are more effective than cruelty and vengeance. The new attitude in this regard would suggest also a number of other methods of similar character. Various modes of dealing with conspirators and active enemies of the revolution would develop as soon as you begin to practice the new policy. The plan might be adopted, for instance, of scattering them individually or in small groups over districts removed from their counter-revolutionary influences, among communists of revolutionary spirit and consciousness. Consider also that counter-revolutionists must eat; which means that they would find themselves in a situation that would claim their thoughts and time for other things than the hatching of conspiracies. The defeated counter-revolutionist, left at liberty instead of being imprisoned, would have to seek means of existence. He would not be denied his livelihood, of course, since the revolution would be generous enough to feed even its enemies. But the man in question would have to join some community, secure lodgings, and so forth, in order to enjoy the hospitality of the distributing centre. In other words, the counter-revolutionary “prisoners in freedom” would depend on the community and the goodwill of its members for their means of existence. They would live in its atmosphere and be influenced by its revolutionary environment. Surely they will be safer and more contented than in prison, and presently they would cease to be a danger to the revolution. We have repeatedly seen such examples in Russia, in cases where counter-revolutionists had escaped the Tcheka and settled down in some village or city, where as a result of considerate and decent treatment they became useful members of the community, often more zealous in behalf of the public welfare than the average citizen, while hundreds of their fellow-conspirators, who had not been lucky enough to avoid arrest, were busy in prison with thoughts of revenge and new plots.

Various plans of treating such “prisoners in freedom” will no doubt be tried by the revolutionary people. But whatever the methods, they will be more satisfactory than the present system of revenge and punishment, the complete failure of which has been demonstrated throughout human experience. Among the new ways might also be tried that of free colonisation. The revolution will offer its enemies an opportunity to settle in some part of the country and there establish the form of social life that will suit them best. It is no vain speculation to foresee that it would not be long before most of them would prefer the brotherhood and liberty of the revolutionary community to the reactionary regime of their colony. But even if they did not, nothing would be lost. On the contrary, the revolution would itself be the greatest gainer, spiritually by forsaking methods of revenge and persecution and practising humanity and magnanimity. Revolutionary self-defence, inspired by such methods will be the more effective because of the very freedom it will guarantee even to its enemies. Its appeal to the masses and to the world at large will thereby be the more irresistible and universal. In its justice and humanity lies the invincible strength of the social revolution.

No revolution has yet tried the true way of liberty. None has had sufficient faith in it. Force and suppression, persecution, revenge, and terror have characterised

all revolutions in the past and have thereby defeated their original aims. The time has come to try new methods, new ways. The social revolution is to achieve the emancipation of man through liberty, but if we have no faith in the latter, revolution becomes a denial and betrayal of itself. Let us then have the courage of freedom: let us replace suppression and terror. Let liberty become our faith and our *deed* and we shall grow strong therein.

Only liberty can make the social revolution effective and wholesome. It alone can pave the way to greater heights and prepare a society where well-being and joy shall be the heritage of all. Then will dawn the day when man shall for the first time have full opportunity to grow and expand in the free and generous sunshine of anarchy.



# **PART FIVE**

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## **The Last Letters**

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*In 1936 Berkman underwent two unsuccessful prostate operations. He was constantly in pain and dependent on Emmy, his companion for the last 14 years of his life, and others for help. On June 28, 1936, he shot himself. He died 16 hours later.*

*I have included here, in this short section, three letters. The first two, from Emma to Alec, speak of their lifetime of comradeship together. The third, from Alec to Emma, was to be "mailed only in the case of my death."*

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Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman,  
May 2, 1927, TORONTO

My own Sash,

I left my writing glasses at the home of one of our comrades last night, so I must write you by hand. Besides, it is more intimate for a birthday letter. Isn't it?

Dearest chum, what am I to tell you on this your 21st anniversary since you came to life again? \* It is unnecessary to tell you how rotten I feel that I will not be with you this year. My one consolation is that you will have a few very devoted friends with you on the 18th. That you have Emmy—that this year at any rate you will not be so lonely as I am here.

What the 18th of May has meant to me all these years you know only too well. You know also that whatever may have come between us, or whosoever, you have been, you are, and you always will be part of myself, part of all I have hoped for, believed in, strived to achieve, my own beloved Dush, friend and co-fighter. You may not have been aware of it, Sash dearest, but you have been the greatest force in my life—your welfare, your aims and your dreams, as far as you let me share them with you—my deepest concern.

All sorts of people have been in my life, but your coming into it August 15th, 1889, at Sachs's restaurant, has marked the beginning of a friendship—the stirrings of an affection which has only deepened and strengthened with the years. It is as abiding today—in fact more so—as it was years ago and until the end of my life you will remain the great and inspiring force, urging the best in me toward the light. But you know all this yourself, why tell you it again?

Dearest boy, this is the first time in many years that I am too poor to send you a birthday gift. It hurts like hell, but it cannot be helped. You will get my loving and cheering greetings through Emmy, but I had hoped to send you something that you could spend for yourself. Well, the will is strong but my capital is weak. I know you will not mind. . . .

About myself there is not much to say. Moe [Morris Goldman] goes back to New York today and I shall feel more destitute than ever. I am not looking forward to a joyous summer. I have met a few pleasant people, but they are not the kind one can feel intimate with outside of the work I am doing. Our own comrades are friendly enough but so very narrow in their outlook on life. I do not know of a thing I have in common with them except propaganda. I am sure that they see no other phase in my character except what I can give to what they consider “the movement.” The one person I have grown to care about a great deal and who might have helped to give cheer and color to my life here this summer is very ill at present and not within reach. It is our old friend Leon Malmed. He has had a complete breakdown from his ridiculous business transactions. Just how serious his condition is I will only know when Moe gets to Albany and sees Leon's physician. He stops off on his way to New York. So you see, dear heart, that I have no luck with my love affairs—such is one of the ironies in my life. . . .

Dearest, have a good time on the 18th and drink a silent glass to our friendship, which is unlike anything in the world, in this material world. The poets used to sing about such abiding love and devotion as ours. Is it that such friendships no longer exist? Is that why no one writes about them?

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\*Since his release from prison, as recounted in the *Memoirs*.

I embrace you tenderly. I will be with you on the 18th—in thought anyway.  
 Much much love, your old sailor,

E

**Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman,  
 November 19, 1935, LONDON**

My dear, old Dush,

As a greeting to your sixty-fifth birthday it is fitting that I should tell you the secret of my life. It is that the one treasure I have rescued from my long and bitter struggle is my friendship for you. Believe it or not, dear Sash. But I know of no other value, whether in people or achievements, than your presence in my life and the love and affection you have roused. True, I loved other men. I love Frank [Heiner] with a silly, but nonetheless intense emotion. But it is not an exaggeration when I say that no one ever was so rooted in my being, so ingrained in every fiber, as you have been and are to this day. Men have come and gone in my long life. But you, my dearest, will remain forever. I do not know why this should be so. Our common struggle and all it has brought us in travail and disappointment hardly explain what I feel for you. Indeed, I know that the only loss that would matter would be to lose you or your friendship.

Such an abiding feeling could be better explained if you had always been all kindness or understanding. But you were not that. On the contrary, you were and are still often harsh and lacking in comprehension of the inner motivations of my acts. But all that is as nothing [compared] with the force you have been from the moment I first heard your voice and met you in Sachs's café and all through the forty-five years of our comradeship. I seem to have been born then as woman, mother, comrade, and friend. Yes, I believe my strongest and most compelling feeling for you is that of the mother. You have often resented that, saying you are no mollycoddle. Of course, you failed to understand that it was not my desire to impose my mother authority on you. It was the ever-present concern in your welfare and the equally present fear that something might befall you that would tear you away from me. Terribly selfish feeling, isn't it, dear heart? Or is it that you had bound me by a thousand threads? I don't know and don't care. I only know that I always wanted to give you more than I expected from you. Indeed, I know that there is nothing I can think of that I would not joyfully give out of the fullness of my being to enrich your life.

Feeling as I do for you, it was bitter hard to go away before your birthday. I wanted so much to remain and celebrate it with you and Emmy. But I feared my presence might interject some discord. Not that any one of us would do so deliberately. On the contrary, we'd try hard to avoid it. And because we would be careful, it perhaps would have happened. However, what difference does the physical presence make? I feel bound to you spiritually. And it is this which keeps you ever present and real to me even when we are separated by thousands of miles. So it is all right my being away from you on your birthday. I will be with you in my thoughts and with my heart. Strangely enough, I will be lecturing

Thursday. I wish it were on a subject that had some bearing on your life and work. For I always wanted the whole world to know about you. But I am speaking on the international munitions clique, the traders in death. Still that won't prevent me from thinking of your birthday and feeling you real close to me. . . .

Goodby, my dear, dear Tolstogub. With all my heart I wish you a grand birthday, very much improved health, and some interesting and vital work that would relieve you of economic stress and anxiety. My love to Emmy. I embrace you tenderly,

Emma

**Alexander Berkman to Emma Goldman,  
March 23, 1936, HOSPITAL PASTEUR, NICE**

Dearest sailor mine, staunchest chum of a lifetime—

I know how understanding you are—and so you'll forgive me for the wire I had Emmy send you today. It said, "NO OPERATION AT PRESENT," but I am to have my second operation tomorrow morning.

I did not want to worry you, dearest Em. What purpose would it serve? You are about to leave for South Wales to lecture and the news of my operation would worry you fearfully. So, you understand, dear, and forgive.

They have just finished the last tests—day before yesterday for the blood, urine, etc., and now the heart and all is well. I feel comfortable, strong, and everything will be OK.

I could not wait with the operation as I had planned. Dr. Tourtou examined me and said it must be done now.

Well, dearest, I think everything will be OK and I don't feel anxious at all. But there is never any telling and so, in case anything happens, don't grieve too much, dearest. I have lived my life and I am really of the opinion that when one has neither health nor means and cannot work for his ideas, it is time to clear out.

But it is not of this I want to speak now. I just want you to know that my thoughts are with you and I consider our life of work and comradeship and friendship, covering a period of about forty-five years, one of the most beautiful and dearest things in the world.

In this spirit I greet you now, dear immutable sailor girl, and may your work continue to bring light and understanding in this topsy-turvy world of ours. I embrace you with all my heart, you bravest, strongest, and truest woman and comrade I have known in my life. Your old chum, friend, and comrade,

Sasha

P.S. It is understood of course, that anything you want of my things is yours. And my notebooks, mss., etc. I leave to you to do with according to your own judgment.

S

P.S.S. I am happy that you and Emmy have grown to understand each other better. She has been wonderful to me and her devotion limitless. I hope that you will both prove a solace to each other.

S

Send our dear friends Fitzie, Pauline [Turkel], Stella, Mods [Modest Stein],

Minna Lowensohn, the [Jeanne and Jay] Leveys, Ben Capes and family, Harry Kelly, Ann Lord, and all others my last thoughts of them.

S

Tell our comrades I send them all my fraternal greetings. May they keep up energetically the work for a brighter and better day and a future of liberty, sanity, and human cooperation.

S

# Brief Chronology

**November 21, 1870**—Born in Vilnius, Lithuania.

**1883**—Alec punished by school officials for writing an essay entitled “There Is No God.”

**February 1888**—Arrives in the United States. Works as cigar maker and cloak operator.

**August 15, 1889**—Meets Emma Goldman at Sachs Restaurant in NYC.

**July 6, 1892**—Eleven workers killed at the Homestead Plant in Pittsburgh.

**July 23, 1892**—Berkman shoots Henry Frick, who runs the Homestead plant for Andrew Carnegie. He is arrested on the spot.

**September 19, 1892**—Berkman sentenced to 22 years in prison. He spends many years in solitary. While there he organizes prisoners, publishes an underground newspaper, and attempts to escape.

**May 18, 1906**—Berkman released from prison. Over the next nine years he engages in a whole range of political activity. He edits Emma Goldman’s *Mother Earth*; becomes one of the founders of the Francisco Ferrer Association for Libertarian Education and teaches there; leads demonstrations against Rockefeller after the Ludlow Massacre in 1913.

**1912**—*Prison Memoirs of An Anarchist* published by Mother Earth Publishing Association.

**1914**—World War I breaks out in Europe.

**January 15, 1916**—First issue of *The Blast* is published in San Francisco.

**July 22, 1916**—Bomb thrown into Preparedness Parade in San Francisco. Thomas Mooney and Warren Billings are later framed for the resulting deaths.

**April 1917**—The United States enters World War I.

**May 1917**—No Conscription League founded by Berkman, Goldman, and friends in New York City.

**June 15, 1917**—Alec and Emma arrested in New York City. They are sentenced to two years in prison, with deportation upon release, and fined \$10,000. Berkman is also indicted for complicity in the Preparedness Parade bombing in San Francisco. He spends two years in the Atlanta Penitentiary, seven months of it in solitary.

**October 25, 1917**—Russian Revolution.

**December 21, 1919**—Alec and Emma deported. They arrive in Finland on January 17, and in Russia the following day.

**February 24, 1921**—Kronstadt sailors rebel and demand free soviets.

**September 1921**—Berkman decides to leave Russia. He begins 14 years of exile as a stateless person, “expelled again and again” with “nowhere to go.”

**1922**—*The Kronstadt Rebellion* and *The Russian Tragedy* are published.

**1925**—*The Bolshevik Myth* is published.

**1929**—*What Is Communist Anarchism* is published.

**June 28, 1936**—Berkman commits suicide after suffering two unsuccessful prostate operations.

# Suggested Reading

The following list of material is by no means exhaustive but is limited to basic works by and about Alexander Berkman.

## *Works by Alexander Berkman*

*The Blast*. New York: Greenwood Reprint Corp., 1968.

*The Bolshevik Myth*. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1925.

*Prison Memoirs Of An Anarchist*. New York: Schocken Books, 1970. (Originally published in 1912 by Mother Earth Publishing Assoc.)

*The Russian Tragedy*. London: Phoenix Press, 1968. (This edition also includes *The Kronstadt Rebellion* and *The Russian Revolution and the Communist Party*, the latter pamphlet written by four Moscow anarchists and translated by Berkman. The three pamphlets were all originally published in 1922.)

## *Related Material*

Drinnon, Richard. *Rebel In Paradise*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Drinnon, Richard and Anna Maria. *Nowhere At Home*. New York: Schocken Books, 1975.

Goldman, Emma. *Living My Life*, Vols. 1 and 2. New York: Dover Publications, 1970. (Originally published in New York in 1931 by Alfred Knopf, Inc.)

Supreme Court of the United States, October Term 1917, No. 702: Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, plaintiffs-in-error, vs. the United States: in error to the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

**“Includes everything an aspiring revolutionary could want.”**

*Los Angeles Reader*

**“Alexander Berkman immersed himself in the political passions of his time, and this rich collection of his writings revives his witness.”**

*Publishers Weekly*

## **Alexander Berkman was a twentieth-century American revolutionary.**

Like the abolitionist John Brown before him, Berkman was hugely idealistic, ready to go to the furthest extreme of self-sacrifice and violence on behalf of justice and civil rights. He decided to assassinate industrialist Henry Clay Frick after reading in the newspaper that Pinkertons hired by Frick had opened fire on the Homestead strikers, killing men, women, and children. Berkman's bungled attempt cost him fifteen years in a federal penitentiary. Upon his release, he became an effective agitator against conscription and was again imprisoned and eventually deported to Russia, where he saw firsthand the early days of Bolshevism. Berkman's writings remain a lasting and impassioned record of intense political transformation.

Featuring a new foreword by Howard Zinn, *Life of an Anarchist* contains *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*, Berkman's account of his years in prison; *The Bolshevik Myth*, his eyewitness account of the early days of the Russian Revolution; and *The ABC of Anarchism*, the classic text on the nature of anarchism in the twentieth century. Also included are a selection of letters between Berkman and his lifelong companion Emma Goldman, and a generous sampling from Berkman's other publications.

**GENE FELLNER** is a New York City-born artist. During the Nicaragua revolution he lived in the country and produced murals with Sandinista artists. He is the author and illustrator of the *GLF Occasional*, booklets of art and text. Recent work can be seen at [www.genefellnerart.com](http://www.genefellnerart.com).

Renowned historian **Howard Zinn** is the author of the classic *A People's History of the United States* and most recently the co-editor of *Voices of a People's History of the United States*.

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