



REVOLUTIONARY STUDIES

BY

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I.

THE word Revolution is upon all lips and one feels its first vibrations. And, as always, at the approach of great commotions and great changes, all who are dissatisfied with the actual regime—however small may be their discontent—hasten to adopt the title of revolutionaries, hitherto so dangerous, now so simple. They do not cling to the actual regime; they are ready to try a new one; that suffices for them.

This affluence, to the ranks of the revolutionaries, of a mass of malcontents of all shades, creates the force of revolutions and renders them inevitable. A simple conspiracy in the palace, or of Parliament, more or less supported by what is called public opinion suffices to change the men in power, and sometimes the form of government. But a Revolution, to effect any change whatever in economic order, requires the agreement of an immense number of wills. Without the agreement, more or less active of millions, no revolution is possible. It is necessary that everywhere, in each hamlet even, there should be men to act in the destruction of the past; also that other millions remain inactive in the hope of seeing something arise to improve their future condition.

And it is precisely this vague, undecided, discontent, which is very often inconscient, surging in the minds of men at the eve of great events, and that loss of confidence in the existing order, which permits true revolutionists to accomplish their immense task—the Titanic task of reconstructing in a few years institutions venerated for centuries.

But this is also the rock upon which most revolutions split and become exhausted.

When a revolution takes place, overturning the established outlines of daily life; when all good and bad passions flash out freely and are seen on the housetops; when weakness and great devotion are side by side, poltroonery here, heroism there,—shabby antipathies and personal intrigues alongside of great self-sacrifice; when in fact the institutions of the past fall, and new ones are designed with difficulty in the midst of continual changes,—when the immense majority of those who yesterday gloried in the name of revolutionaries hasten to pass into the ranks of the defenders of order: the general commotion, the

instability of struggling institutions, the insecurity of the morrow, fatigues them soon. They fear, on the one hand, that the slight alterations that have been effected should sink in the tempest; and they do not perceive that the smallest change in economic institutions implies already a profound modification in all conceptions of society and that this can only be brought about after much larger changes. And seeing the counter-revolution approach they hasten to conform to it. Popular passions, sometimes coarsely expressed, cause them aversion; still more so the shabby passions of leaders. Soon they have had enough of the revolution and run to join those who call for rest and peace.

Among such the past recruits its most ardent defenders, all the more so if they have sustained slight losses. They hate those who endeavour to go further, and they are so much the more dangerous for being able to seize upon previous revolutionists, and to put them to the service of the past. They *dare* in a manner in which the reaction would not dare without them, and they strike precisely those who sap more deeply the foundations of the ancient institutions and desire to advance afresh towards the future.

These persons become the Robespierres and the Saint Justs who guillotine the "mad ones" under pretext of saving the revolution, but in reality to check it.

Friends of revolution cannot be distinguished from its enemies during a period of struggle. But it is necessary to note that the historians of the past have done their utmost to throw into chaos all ideas of these facts.

To consider only the great French revolution. The ideal of some is Mirabeau, perfectly satisfied holding a portfolio in the constitutional ministry of Louis XVI. Of others it is Danton the patriot with daring against Germans but without a trace of daring in economic questions—the tribune who to resist the invasion, made use of a constitutional king, of peasants serving bourgeois proprietors, and of stock-jobbing under landed proprietors, all wonderfully mixed with revolutionary talk. For others it is Robespierre the just, who guillotined revolutionists, who talked of equality of fortunes and published their atheism, the man who in the summer of 1793, at the moment the people of Paris suffered famine, insisted that jacobins should discuss the advantages of the English constitution! For others, finally, it is Marat who one day demanded the heads of two hundred thousand aristocrats but who had not a single word upon the subject which impassioned two thirds of France namely the question, to whom should belong the land cultivated by the peasants. And for several tricksters, last by all, the ideal is the attorney of the republic who furiously demanded the heads

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of the duchesses and their servants—particularly the servants, because the duchesses were at Coblenz—while black dens of traders pillaged France, starving the workmen and making from what they had stolen from the duchesses the scandalous fortunes which were seen to appear under the “Directoire.”

As for the great number of revolutionists, they unhappily know only of the theatrical side of former revolutions as related with forced effect by historians, and they scarcely suspected the immense work accomplished in France during the years 1789—93 by millions of obscure persons—work which caused France to be in 1793 quite a different nation from what she was four years previously.

It is to assist actual revolutionists in guiding themselves somewhat in this chaos that we undertake these studies. We wish to demonstrate the necessity of distinguishing well beforehand those who call themselves our friends and who will soon be our enemies. We shall try to show to revolutionists the immense task they have to accomplish, to inform them of the troubles which will overtake them if they picture to themselves the next revolution on the model of what historians have told us of past revolutions. We wish finally to show them what display of energy, what boldness of thought, what intensely energetic work the revolution will require from those of its children who desire to give to it from day to day their life and their strength, much more important for its success than the rifle shots exchanged at the critical moment.

II.

BOLDNESS of thought and example to induce the masses to put into execution what they dare think—this is what has been wanting in the actors in past revolutions. It is still what is likely to be wanting in the next.

Who has not asked with grief, when studying the revolutions of the past, “ why such effort, such sublime devotion, so much bloodshed and families in mourning, so much destruction, for such poor results ? ” This question constantly turns up in literature, in conversation and in revolutionary propaganda.

It is partly because we do not make allowance for the immense obstacles experienced in every revolution from blind or conscientious partisans. Their power is overlooked, as is their stubbornness in becoming turn-coats to save their privileges ; we forget their conspiracies and intrigues when we are no longer face to face with them. We forget, in fine, that revolutions are made by minorities.

And we forget also that if the revolutionists have generally exhibited courage and formidable rashness in their acts, they have always

failed in boldness of thought, aim, and conception of the future. They dreamed of that future as assuming the form of that past against which they revolted. The past even held them bound in their enthusiasm for their future.

They dared not strike the decisive blow and kill the ancient regime in that which created its true strength: its religion, its fortune, its obedience to law, its centralisation, its army, its police, its prisons and all that sort of thing. They dared not destroy enough to open the wide gates of a new life, and of that new life their conceptions were so vague and consequently so timid, so narrow, that they dared not, even in their dreams, touch the fetishes which they had adored in their past slavery.

Could we expect great results from a timid brain, even when associated with an heroic heart?

When we reflect upon the events of the great revolution we cannot avoid being struck—as Quinet has so well said—with the rashness of the acts of our grand fathers and the timidity of their *thoughts*. Proceedings, ultra-revolutionary; thoughts, timid and conservative. Prodiges of bravery and energy, supreme conception of life and its joys—and incredible timidity in the conception of the near future. Months and years elapsed before the people dare touch one of the chimeras which they surrounded with respect, before they compel their leaders—the men whom they venerate and obey—to make the sacrifice of a single one of the institutions of the past. This is the distinctive feature of the revolution. It is the image of the soldier who proves courage and invincible rashness in capturing a battery from the enemy without daring to consider beyond the battery, without daring to cast a general glance at the war.

The unarmed people attack the thick walls and cannon of the Bastille; the women run to Versailles and bring back a prisoner; everywhere, in each little town men armed with the clubs seize the municipalities without caring if they are hanged the next day by the municipality “returned to legality.” A crowd of people over-run the Tuileries and capture the king and crown him with cap of liberty, and two months later, defying the Swiss guard and the national bourgeois guard, they take the Tuileries by assault. Ignoring the convention the obscure people take upon themselves the massacres of September. The republic, without armies, undermined by the royalists at home, resist the allied powers. Danton demands boldness as the supreme means of saving the revolution. The scaffolds of the convention, the drownings in the Vendée, the death-carts even, do not stop these revolutionists in their revolutionary proceedings, yet throughout this grandiose drama it is timidity of thought, not boldness of conception,

which hovers over all. Mediocrity of thought destroys noble efforts, grand passions, and immense devotions.

Then when royalty became nothing more than a memory and was obeyed only by a few Swiss—Danton, Robespierre and even the Cordeliers, feared the republic more than they feared the king. Not until France was invaded by foreigners, managed and commanded in point of fact from the Tuileries, did they dare to think that France could dispense with a crowned sham.

When the clergy covered the whole of France with its vast conspiracy against the new regime, when that conspiracy included two thirds of the population, the revolutionists surrounded the church with their respect; they took it under the protection of the revolution, and shortly they guillotine the "Anarchists" who dare to insult the Catholic worship.

It is evident that in regard to economic questions their timidity is greater still and even more odious. The feudal system had ceased, the lord of the manor, hunted by the peasants, had gone over the frontier; the seignoral forests had been pillaged and the game exterminated; feudal quit-rents were no longer paid. But the leaders of the revolution, even in the convention, struggled to preserve the last wreck of the feudal rule to transmit it to the next century. And when the brilliant Girondins or the austere Robespierre heard the words equality of fortune, they trembled at the simple idea that private property would no longer be respected by the people. Because—(they had owned some in the past)—the state is based upon private ownership of property.

The leaders it is true are more backward than the people. The people are ahead of them in respect of emancipation from the past—they see further than the leaders. But their vision is so vague, so obscure, so wavering! In the heart of the people, even, ideas are so divided that this vagueness and hesitation spreads to the chiefs of the revolution. The butcher Legendre who led the people in the attack upon the Tuileries on 20 June dare not even dream of dethroning the king—however tightly the people might hold the king under their pikes they dare not push the point a little further and have done with royalty.

And later when the Babœuf conspiracy was discovered the Montagnards are taken by surprise. They have heard of vague popular aspirations towards Socialist equality, but they are quite thunderstruck at finding a program. Their thought had never dared go so far. But the people, none the more, did not know how to put their hopes into form.

The same happens in 1848.

After all the Socialist propaganda of 15 years, after Fourier and Cabet, after all that was said at a thousand meetings and printed in hundreds of pamphlets in favour of Communism—of the right to life

and happiness—the revolutionists, that is to say those who believed themselves to be and passed for such, and even the most advanced of these, are ready to shoot anyone who should speak of Communism. All they dare think is Republican Democracy, that is association upheld by the State; and they leave to a Bonaparte exploiter the vague aspirations of the people, from which he makes himself a throne.

Repetition of the scene in 1871. These revolutionary heroes who are not stopped in their revolt by a hundred thousand men have not *one single revolutionary thought*. They know nothing but previous revolutions—they believe only in turning against the old government the same weapons which it had used against its adversaries. But they could not bring forth any true Revolutionary Idea. They did not even know how to dispense with the policemen of the empire, its courts martial, and its tinsel. They dreamed of the Commune, reproducing in miniature the State which they overthrew; and while ideas of equality worked confusedly in the minds of the people they only dreamed of equality in submitting to their dictation. Had not Marat dreamed, before them, and Marx the modern God of the Socialists, had he not also preached popular dictation!

In short, no new idea, none of the thoughts which revolutionise the old world, sprang up in these minds, so revolutionary in their acts, so timid in their ideas, kneaded as they are into the models of the past, against which they declared war.

Are we better placed to-day, at the eve of the next revolution! Have we the boldness of thought and the force of the initiative which make revolutions? In face of this past against which we rebel, in face of its submissiveness, of its authoritative organisation, its hypocrisy, its lies, have we the revolutionary thought which will know how to disown this past, not alone in its entirety, but in all its daily manifestations. Shall we know how to take the axe, not only to actual institutions but to the ideas even which preside in their development? Are we Revolutionists in word, in our thoughts as much as in our methods and our acts? Will our revolutionary energy come to the service of a revolutionary idea?

We will enquire into this in the next article.

III.

ARE we prepared to face the Revolution which approaches? Shall we have the audacity of thought which our fathers lacked, to frankly decide the immense economic, politic, and moral problems in face of which history has placed us?—These were the questions which we put at the close of the preceding article.

It is certain that many things contribute to give to the men of our century a boldness of thought which was wanting in our grandfathers.

The great discoveries of natural science in which our generation has assisted or taken part is a fact to give thought a daring without precedent. Entire sciences created but yesterday have just opened to us immense horizons which our fathers could not perceive. The unity of physical force explaining the whole of the phenomena of nature including the physical life of animals and man, is a fact to permit us to have bold conceptions of the whole of natural phenomena.

The criticism of religions is made with a depth and sometimes a boldness hitherto unknown and impossible. All the scaffolding of venerated prejudices concerning the divine origin of human institutions and the so-called laws of providence which served to explain and to perpetuate slavery—all that scaffolding has fallen, under the criticism of science. And that criticism has already penetrated to the depths of the masses.

Man has been able to understand his place in nature. He has been able to perceive that he, himself, has made *his* institutions and that he alone can re-make them.

Besides which, the idea of stability which was hitherto attached to everything which man saw in nature, is broken down, destroyed and put to naught! Everything changes in nature, everything is incessantly modified: systems, wages, planets, climates, varieties of plants and animals, the human species.—Why should human institutions perpetuate themselves?

Nothing remains, everything modifies itself, from the rock which appears to us immovable and the continent which we call “terra firma,” to the inhabitants, their manners, their customs, their ideas.

What we see around us is only a passing phenomenon which *ought* to modify itself, because immobility would be death. These are the conceptions to which modern science accustoms us.

But this conception dates almost from yesterday. Arago is almost our contemporary. And yet when he spoke one day of continents which sometimes arose out of the seas and were sometimes submerged by the waves, a learned friend made this remark “But your continents spring up then like mushrooms,” so much was the idea of immobility, of stability in nature, rooted in the mind at this epoch, to-day continual change, evolution, is one of the most popular terms.

And we now begin to understand, however vaguely, that revolution is only an essential part of evolution, that no evolution is accomplished in nature without revolutions. Periods of very slow changes are succeeded by periods of violent changes. Revolutions are as necessary

for evolution as the slow changes which prepare them and succeed them.

Life is a continual development, and the plant, the animal, the individual, the society which sticks fast, and remains in the same state, will perish and die. This is the mother-idea of modern philosophy, and we may judge from it how much encouragement we have for daring sufficient to change everything.

And beside all this, consider the rapidity of the conquests of the human mind during this century, behold in it-Boldness !

“DARE !” Such is the order of the day in modern mechanical art. Dare to conceive an arch of 650 yards span, thrown across an arm of the sea at a height of 110 yards—and you will succeed, as they have succeeded on the Firth of Forth. Dare to conceive a tower 325 yards high and you will have it. Dare to cut through Suez or Panama, to unite France and England by a tunnel, to bore the Alps. Dare to start a “cockle-shell” of 200 tons with a wide expanse of sail and you will cross the Atlantic in a fortnight by no other force than the wind. Dare to compress steam fourfold, dare to put an explosive under the piston of your motor ; fear nothing. Dare to throw the human voice from Paris to London and you will transmit the feeble vibrations of the human voice across the twenty miles of the Channel.

All the history of modern mechanism is only a series of variations of the words of Danton : “ *De l'audace et encore de l'audace !* ” (Dare and always dare.)

And this daring has already invaded literature, art, the drama and music. Dare to speak, to write, to paint, to compose, as the heart bids you ; and if you have thought knowledge and talent, you will be listened to and understood, whatever be the novelty of style.

All this gives to our century and its revolution immense advantages. All this stimulates audacity of thought in the revolutionist.

But unfortunately the same daring has failed, up to now, in the domain of politics and social economy. Here, in ideas as in application, timidity reigns supreme.

It is true that in all the course of the century, political history has had to record defeats only. Victories, gained here and there, have even all the character of defeats.

When one remembers all the heroism displayed before 1848 by Italian, Hungarian, Polish and Irish patriots to acquire national independence, and that it is proved that it all ended in defeat—one finds nothing of encouragement.

When one sees how the independence of Italy and Hungary was finally acquired one blushes for the patriots for concessions to im

perialism, shameless speculation, and retrograde movements by which their ideal was realised.

Hecatombs of victims in June 1848 and in May 1871, Militarism in Germany, Reaction in France under the Empire, fruitless efforts of the Russian youth—all these are not facts to arouse and sustain audacity.

The century does not count one single fact like the Independence of the United States, which gave to the French revolutionist the example of a revolution crowned with success, and increased by distance.

And when we dream of the grandiose promises made by the International at its commencement, of the hopes which it aroused in the hearts of the workers—and that it resulted in the debasement of the *Partis Ouvriers* (Labor parties) who are proud of being its successors—we can understand the despair that reaches the workman's heart that he loses faith in the future, that he ends by demanding some trifling ameliorations instead of taking his freedom.

And yet, nothing is more erroneous than that manner of view spread and maintained by those disgusted by politics. For as soon as we think of the causes of the want of success and the defeats of our century we perceive at once that what has led to defeat is that no one dared advance; they always had their eyes turned backwards.

Even at the time the revolutionary fever seized the people. They did not seek their ideal in the future. They sought it in the past.

Instead of dreaming of a *new* revolution they sighed for those of the past. In 1793 they dreamed of establishing a Rome or an ancient Sparta. In 1848 they wished to re-commence at 1792. In 1848 they admired in secret the Jacobins of 1793. The German revolutionist of our days dreams of reproducing 1848, and the executive committee of Petersburg take Blanqui and Barbès for their ideal.

Even in constructing an Utopia of future life, none dare break through the laws of antiquity. Ancient Rome presses with all its weight on our century.

While the engineer, the scholar and the artist boldly throw the past overboard—the politician and the economist seek their inspirations in the past.

Where, in fact, would be the engineer's art if he sought his elements in ancient art. Should we have surpassed the bridges and aqueducts of the Romans if engineers had not availed themselves of new forces and new materials placed at their service to arrive at new conceptions. Without availing themselves of new forces the engineers of the Forth bridge would only have conceived a Cyclopean masonry to block up an arm of the sea and to produce an arch which would have surpassed the Roman arches only in its dimensions. Without daring they would

not have opened a new era of architecture by devising to throw across an arm of the sea two Eiffel towers, 300 metres each, laid horizontally, each fixed at its base and joining at their summits.

And what would the science of the evolution of plants and animals have done if Wallace and Darwin had not insisted on overturning the facts and ideas of old books. These pioneers understood that a new science required new observations, and they went to Nature to question her and draw out her secrets; they went to find new bases for new deductions.

Now, this is not what is done in the domain of politics and economics; it is this which explains the timidity of conceptions and consequently the defeats of our century.

We shall not construct a new society by looking backwards. We shall only do so by studying, as Proudhon has already advised, the *tendencies* of society to-day and so forecasting the society of tomorrow.

The only basis upon which it is possible to construct the society of the future is the *new* conceptions which germinate in men's minds. And these alone can give the revolutionist, aided by his revolutionary fire, the boldness of thought necessary for the success of the Revolution.

IV.

WHEN we glance at the mass of Revolutionists, Marxists, Possibilists, Blanquist, or even bourgeois—because everyone partakes in the revolution which is now growing; when we see that the same parties (who answer, each, to certain manners of thinking, and not to personal differences, as is sometimes said) are found in each nation, under other names, but with the same distinctive characteristics; and when we analyse their principles, their aims and their methods—we find with dismay that they are all looking backward; that none dare face the future, and that each of these parties has but one idea:—to reproduce Louis Blanc or Blanqui, Robespierre or Marat; they are all strong on the question of government, but equally powerless to bring forth a single idea capable of revolutionising the world.

All dream of dictatorship: the dictatorship of the Proletariat, said Marx,—that is to say “of Tribunes, of ourselves,” say the majority of the Blanquists and Possibilists, which comes to the same thing.

All dream of the revolution as the legal massacre of their enemies; of the revolutionary tribunal, the public prosecutor, the guillotine, and their own employees—the hangman and the jailor.

All dream of acquiring power in an omnipotent, omniscient State, treating the nation as its subjects, governing the subjects, by thousands and millions of functionaries who have received the authority of the

State. Louis the sixteenth and Robespierre, Napoieon and Gambetta dreamed of nothing more than Government. .

All dream of representative government as "crowning the edifice" which is to succeed the revolution after a period of dictatorship.

All preach obedience to the law made by dictators.

All have only one dream, that of Robespierre: to massacre whosoever dare think otherwise than the chiefs of power. The Anarchist-revolutionist and the reactionary would have to perish if he dare think and act contrary to their wishes.

All wish, under one form or another the maintenance of property, whether private or administered by the State, and the right of using and abusing it; of payment by results; of charity organised by the State. All dream, in fine, of killing all initiative of individuals and the people. "To think," they say, "is a science, an art which is not made for the people." If, at a later stage, it should be permitted for the people to express themselves and try solutions which have not been discussed by our high priests. Marx and Blanqui have thought enough for our century as Rousseau did for the eighteenth, and that which has not been foreseen by a schoolmaster will not have any reason to exist.

This is the dream of 99 per cent of those who usurp the name of revolutionists. The Jacobin tradition stifles them, as the monarchial tradition stifled the Jacobins of 1793.

Likewise, if you attend a meeting of workmen who have received a so-called revolutionary education, but who have no idea of Anarchist propaganda, and if you ask them "What is to be done during the revolution?"—How many replies will you receive some what as follows: "To take possession of the houses of the wealthy; to burn the waste paper of the banks, the ministers and the counting houses of the bourgeois; to destroy the prisons; to distribute food and to hand over a spade to every policeman and banker, and so forth."

How many so-called revolutionists dare publish these ideas without first referring to their leaders? There will be only one thing upon which all will speak [at the first onset. This will be the massacre of the "enemies of the revolution" and he who promises to massacre most will be acknowledged on the spot as a true revolutionist none the less for being as timid as a babe in speaking of the smallest measures which make revolutions. Food for powder yesterday, food for powder to-morrow—the people need not go beyond this, all the rest will be thought out in high places.

We have previously said that when a people avenge themselves upon those who have oppressed them so long no one has the right to intervene and say what they should do. *He alone, who himself has suffered*

ALL that the people have suffered has the right to intercede with them on such an occasion.

He alone who has heard his children cry from hunger and seen them die of starvation, he who has slept under bridges and submitted to all the pangs, all the humiliation of misery, who has tramped the roads without lodgings or food or rambled hungry in the snow during a Bourbaki retreat, while gentlemen slept in hotels—such a one, alone, has the right of pitying popular vengeance and interceding therein,—he, the outcast of yesterday,—in favour with his oppressors—and then!

Have not the people been taught vengeance for thousands of years? Has it not been made a sacred right, blessed by religion, and imposed by law—a goddess who in mutilating the body of the malefactor “re-establishes justice by outraging him.” Has not everyone approved vengeance by legal assassination, and paid the hangman and the jailor.

Again, he alone would have full right to speak who has the courage, under the present system, to smash the head of the executioner and the judge in broad daylight on the scene of execution. More who have not done so have simply to keep silence, it is as much do they ought to dare to speak of pity. Because in their fearful days—like the days of September, those days of massacre—it is *their* education which speaks, it is *their* principle of legal vengeance which is but in practice, it is their contempt of human life that bears fruit.

It is a thousand years of Christian and Roman teaching, a thousand years of misery—the whole period of history—which speaks in these days. The rebel against all history has alone the right to protest against these terrible days.

But quite otherwise is the terror which denies its vindictive character, which sets itself up as a State principle strutting in revolutionary garments. It is that done which is dear to the Jacobin. Because he knows that popular fury will subside with the first victims and soon gives place to pity. He also requires pity to fill the gap of revolutionary thought, legal terror, as incarnation of the revolution.

To massacre the bourgeois is always easier said than done.

Because, alas, they are the majority of the nation—without offence to the boobys who expect to see such a concentration of capital that, according to their opinion, it will belong to none other than the proletarian masses governed by half a dozen bourgeois. How many are there in France, bourgeois and wage receivers?

In counting all the wage receivers including the salaried functionaries and lackeys, the salaried swells of the large warehouses and banks, the uniformed swells of the railways—all the clique in fact of salaried persons, more Bourgeois than the most arrant bourgeois—the census of 1881 only finds, all told, seven millions out of 37 millions of inhabitants. With their families they make less than 10 millions. And the remainder, perhaps 17 millions, are bourgeois with their families, those who possess, those who live by the work of others. If we deduct five millions of peasant proprietors, there will still remain *twelve millions of bourgeois* without counting their valets who live upon the labour of others.

Twelve millions in France, about fifteen millions in England*—do the Jacobins intend to massacre the lot?

Marat demanded two hundred thousands aristocrat's heads; later it appears he spoke of half a million. But he was then only taking account of the past, he did not wish to strike at more than the aristocrats. How many heads do the modern Jacobins demand? And yet Thiers who set himself up for the massacre of the masses on principle only succeeded in destroying 30,000 Parisians!

Thus it is seen Jacobinism reduces itself to absurdity.

“But we need not kill all the bourgeois,” it is customary to reply. “A few hundred thousand will suffice to reduce the others to inactivity. Terror will drive them into the earth.”

Well, this reasoning proves one thing, it is that, thanks to the fables set up by the Jacobins, the people have learned nothing of their own history.

In the first place, it is when the Jacobin revolution was already dead for want of daring to go further, then, when it drove the people, that the reign of Terror was inaugurated, and it was precisely under the Terror that the disappointed little dandies took up the methods of brute force to proclaim the counter revolution which has already established in three fourths of France.

Edgar Quinet has explained it. It was because democracy did not wish to work by Terror. In order to learn how to use Terror with such results as the Catholic church and kings have obtained, democracy would have to learn from Louis the Ninth, John the Terrible and the Czars of Russia. Democracy thought this a trifle too much; the people

* We know little of France, but in England at least the working classes according to the census of 1881 number about four fifths of the population. We don't believe in massacring the bourgeois, it is not necessary, but there is no need to exaggerate their numbers. **Ed.**

remained harmless even while they danced the Carmagnole round heads fixed upon pikes.

Kings and Czars do not in the least think it too much. They strike a blow and make others tremble for fear of worse. They do not promenade their victims in the street; they stifle them in prisons. Alexander the third, when ascending the throne, chose five victims, one a woman, and had them hanged. And then he regretted having had them hanged in a public place, which has enabled Vereschaguine to immortalise them under a curtain. The remainder are imprisoned at Schlüsselbourg and so well imprisoned that for ten years no word or sign of life has come from them. He knows that the terror of the unknown acts more strongly upon minds than death in broad day-light in a public place.

Well, Quinet is a thousand times right when he says the people will never know how to manage such terror as this. It disgusts the people. And yet it is asserted that the people terrorise!—They have pity on the victims, they are too sincere not to become soon disgusted. The public prosecutor, the death-cart filled with victims, the guillotine, soon inspire disgust. It is soon perceived that this terror prepares what it should prepare—Dictatorship—and the guillotine is abandoned.

The people do not reign by terror. Invented to forge chains, terror covered by legality forges chains for the people.

The Jacobin programme reduces itself to this:—Extermination in possible, uselessness of legal terror.

In order to conquer, something more than guillotines are required. It is the revolutionary *idea*, the truly wide revolutionary conception, which reduces its enemies to impotence by paralysing all the instruments by which they have governed hitherto.

Very sad would be the future of the revolution if it could only triumph by terror. Happily it has other means otherwise powerful, and we will state them.

V.

WE have already said that the massacre of the bourgeois as a means to secure the triumph of the Revolution is a senseless dream. Their number even is opposed to it; because, over and above the millions who ought to disappear according to the hypothesis of modern Marats, there would still be millions of half-bourgeois workmen who would fain succeed them. In effect these only ask to be allowed to become capitalists in their turn, and would aim to become such if class interests were attacked in their results and not in their causes. And as for

organised and legalised Terror, it serves no other end, we have said, than to forge chains for the people. It kills individual initiative, which is the soul of revolutions; it perpetuates the idea of obedience to a strong government. It prepares the dictatorship which throttles the revolutionary tribunal and knows how to manage it with craft and prudence, in its own interest.

Terror, the arm of government serves, above all, the governing classes; it prepares the ground for the less scrupulous of them.

The Terror of Robespierre necessarily ended in that of Tallien, and this in the dictatorship of Bonaparte. Robespierre hatched Napoleon.

To overcome the bourgeoisie something totally different from brute force is required, other elements than those which it has so well learned to manage. This is why it is necessary first to see what creates its force, and to oppose to it a superior force.

What is it that has allowed the middle classes, in effect, to juggle all the revolutions since the fifteenth century to profit by them to enslave and enlarge their domination on a solid bases other than the respect for religious superstition or of the rights of birth of the aristocracy?

—It is the State. It is the continual growth and enlargement of the functions of the State, based upon that foundation much more solid than religion and birth-right—the Law. And so long as the state lasts, so long as the law remains sacred in the eyes of the people, so long as future revolutions work for the maintenance and enlargement of the functions of the state and the law—the bourgeois will be sure to conserve power and dominate the masses.

Lawyers make the State omnipotent, it is the origin of the middle classes, and further, it is the omnipotent State which constitutes the actual strength of the bourgeoisie. By the Law and the State they have become possessed of Capital, and have constituted their authority. By the Law and the State they maintain it. By the Law and the State they even promise to cure the evils which make society blush.

In fact, so long as the affairs of the country are entrusted to a few persons, and these affairs have the inextricable complexity which they have to-day—the bourgeois can sleep in peace. It is they who, adopting the Roman tradition of the omnipotent state, have created, constituted and elaborated this mechanism: it is they who were its support throughout history. They study it in their colleges and universities; they maintain it in their courts of law, they teach it at school, they propagate and inculcate it by speech and pen.

Their minds are so much accustomed to State tradition that they never give it up in their dreams of the future. Their utopias even bear its seal. They cannot conceive anything beyond the principles of Ro-

man law concerning the State and property; and if they meet with institutions developed beyond these conceptions, whether in the life of French peasants or elsewhere, they destroy them rather than acknowledge them. Thus the Jacobins continued Turgot's work of destruction concerning the popular institutions of France. Turgot abolished village councils finding them too tumultuous and "disorderly," the Jacobins abolished communities of families—the "compound families" which had escaped the Roman axe—they gave the death blow to communal possession of the land; they made Draconian laws against coalitions of workmen and their strikes; they preferred to drown the Vendéens by thousands rather than give themselves the trouble to understand their popular institutions. And the modern Jacobins, on finding the commune and federation of tribes among the Kabyles, preferred to destroy these institutions by their tribunals rather than forfeit their conceptions of property and Roman hierarchy.

The English bourgeois have done the same in India.

Also from the day when the great Revolution of the last century embraced in its turn the Roman doctrine of the omnipotent State, sentimentalised by Rousseau and represented by him with the label of Roman-catholic Equality and Fraternity, from the day when it took for its base of Social organisation, property and electoral government,—it was to the grandsons of the lawyers of the 17th century, to the middle classes, that the task fell of organising and governing France according to its principles. The people had nothing to do with it, creative force was in quite another direction.

And if, unhappily, at the time of the next revolution, the people once more, do not understand that its historic mission is to break up the State, created by the codes of Justinian and the edict of the Pope; if they allow themselves once more to be dazzled by conceptions of Roman law, of state and property (that for which the State-Socialists labour so hard)—then they may again abandon the care of that organisation to those who are its true historical representatives—the bourgeois.

If people do not understand that the true work of a popular revolution is to destroy the State, which is necessarily hierarchical, to endeavour to replace it by the free understanding of individuals and of groups in free and temporary federation (always with a determined aim), if they do not understand the necessity of abolishing property and the right to acquire property, to sweep away elected government which has substituted itself for the free consent of all; if the people renounce the traditions of the liberty of the individual, of voluntary groupment and of voluntary rules of conduct; if they remain passive if not consenting to the abandonment of these traditions which have been the

essence of all preceding popular movements and of all the institutions of popular creation ; if they give up all these traditions and adopt that of imperial and universal Rome, then they will do no more for the Revolution ; they should leave everything to the middle classes, ending by asking for a few concessions. Because the conception of a State is absolutely foreign to revolution ; happily revolution understands nothing of state-craft, it does not know how to use it. It remains the people ; it remains imbued with conceptions of what is called the common right—conceptions based upon ideas of reciprocal justice between individuals, upon real facts, while the right of the State is based sometimes upon metaphysics, sometimes on fictions, sometimes on interpretation of words created at Rome and at Byzantium during a period of decomposition, to justify the exploitation and suppression of popular rights.

The people have tried at different times to become an influence in the State, to control it, to be served by it. They have never succeeded.

It always ended in the abandonment of this mechanism of hierarchy and laws to others than the people : to the sovereign after the revolutions of the sixteenth century ; to the bourgeois after those of the seventeenth in England and eighteenth in France.

The middle classes, on the contrary, are absolutely identified with the right of States. It is the State that gives it its power. It is the State that gives it that unity of thought which strikes us at every moment.

In practice, a Ferry may detest a Clemenceau ; a Floquet a Freycinet, a Ferry may meditate schemes to snatch the presidency from Grévy or Carnot ; the pope and his clergy may hate the whole set and cut the ground from under their feet ; the Boulangist may include in his hatreds the clergy, the pope, Ferry and Clemenceau. All this may be, and is. But something superior to these enmities unites all, from the rattle-brain of the Boulevards to the honeyed Carnot, from the minister to the last teacher in secular or religious school. This is the worship of authority.

They cannot conceive society without a strong and acknowledged government. Without centralisation, without a hierarchy radiating from Paris or from Berlin as far as the most remote game-keeper, and ruling the most distant hamlet by orders from the capital, they would think everything was dropping to pieces. Without a code—the creation alike of the Montagnards of the Convention and of the princes of the Empire—they can see nothing but assassins, incendiaries, cut-throats in the streets. Without property guaranteed by the code they see nothing but deserted fields and ruined cities. Without an army, brutalised, to the point of blindly obeying its officers, they imagine the country the prey of invaders ; and without judges, surrounded with

the respect of the *corpus dei*, the stay of the middle ages, they perceive only the war of each against all. The minister and the pope, the game-keeper and school-master are absolutely agreed on these points, and it is this which makes their common power.

They do not in the least ignore the perpetual robbery of civil and military officials. But it matters little, they say, these are only personal accidents, and so long as ministers exist, the stock-exchange and the country will not be in danger. They know that elections are managed with money, glasses of beer, and free festivities, and that in Parliament votes are bought by places and concessions of plunder. What matters?—The law passed by the chosen of the people will be treated by them as sacred. They will elude it, they will violate it if it galls them, but they will make impassioned speeches on its “divine character.”

The chief of the executive power and the chief of the opposition can mutually insult each other in Parliament, but, the battle of words over they surround each other with respect; they are two chiefs, two necessary functionaries in the State.—And if the public prosecutor and the advocate insult each other in the presence of the accused, and in moderate language, treat each other as liars and cheats—when the speeches are over they shake hands and compliment each other on their exciting perorations. This is not hypocrisy, it is business.

In the bottom of his heart the prosecutor admires the advocate; they see in each other something superior to their personalities: two functionaries, two representatives of Justice, of Government, of the State. All their education has prepared them for these views which permit the stifling of their humane sentiments under legal formulas. The people will never reach this perfection, and it were better they should never wish to try.

A common adoration, a common worship unites all the middle classes, all the exploiters. The chief of the State and the leader of the opposition, the pope and the bourgeois atheist adore equally the same god, and this god of authority resides in the inmost recesses of their brain. This is why they remain united in spite of their differences. The head of the State does not separate himself from the leader of the opposition, nor the prosecutor from the counsel until the one puts into doubt the institution of parliament or the other treats the tribunal as a true Nihilist would, that is to say, to deny its right of existence. Then, but then only they are implacable. And if the bourgeois throughout Europe have so cordially hated the workmen of the Commune of Paris—it is because they believed they saw in them true revolutionists ready to throw overboard the State, property, and representative government.

It is easy to understand what a power this common worship of government gives to the bourgeoisie. Although it may be decayed in three quarters of its representatives, yet it has a good quarter of persons who hold firmly the flag of State. Second only to business, they address themselves to the task, as well by their religion as by desire for power, and work without ceasing to affirm and propagate this worship. Quite an immense literature, all the schools without exception, all the press, are at their service and in their youth above all they work without relapse to combat all attempts to break up the conception of State Legality. And when trouble arises—all, the feeble as well as the strong, rally to this flag. They know that they will reign so long as that flag waves. They understand also how absurd it would be to place the revolution under this flag, to try to lead the people against all tradition to accept this same principle, which is that of domination and exploitation. Authority is *their* flag, and so long as the people have not another flag which shall be the expression of *its* tendencies to Anarchist Communism, opposed to laws and State-craft,—anti Imperial in a word,—we shall be compelled to allow ourselves to be led and dominated by others.

It is here above all that the revolutionist should have boldness of thought. He ought to have audacity to break entirely from the universal imperial tradition, he needs the courage to tell himself that the People must elaborate all organisation of communities upon bases of real justice, such as the comprehension of common popular rights.

VI.

THE abolition of the State is, we say, the task imposed upon the revolutionist—to him, at least, who has boldness of thought, without which no revolution can be made. In this task he has opposed to him, all the traditions of the middle classes. But he has with him all the evolution of humanity which imposes upon us at the historic moment the business of setting ourselves free from a form of association rendered, perhaps, necessary by the ignorance of times past but become hostile henceforth to all ulterior progress.

Yet, the abolition of the State would remain a vain expression if the causes which to-day tend to produce misery continue to operate; these causes are, the wealth of powerful persons, the capital of exploitation. The State is created by the impoverishment of the masses. It has always been necessary that one part of society should fall into misery in consequence of migrations, invasions, plagues, or famines, so that others may become rich and acquire authority which henceforth increases and renders the means of existence of the masses more and more precarious.

Political domination cannot therefore be abolished without abolishing the causes of the impoverishment and misery of the masses.

For this—we have many times said—we see only one means.

It is, in the first place, to assure the existence and even the comfort of all, and to organise a method of producing which will insure comfort. With our present means of production it is more than possible, it is easy. It is to accept what results from all modern economic evolution; that is to say to conceive our entire society as a whole which produces wealth without it being possible to determine the proportion which accrues to each in that production. It is to organise a communistic society—not for the consideration of absolute justice, but because it has become impossible to determine the share of the individual in that which is no longer an individual work.

Thus we see that the problem which presents itself before the revolutionist is immense. It will not be worked out by simple negations, the abolition of serfdom for example or renouncing the supremacy of the pope. It requires the opening of a new page of universal history, the elaboration of an entirely new order of things—based no longer on the solidarity of the tribe or of the village community or the city but on the solidarity and equality of all. The attempts of limited solidarity whether by the ties of parentage or by territorial limitations having failed we are led to work at the building up of a society widely different from that which served to maintain the societies of the middle ages and of antiquity.

The problem to be resolved has certainly not the simplicity under which it has so often been presented. To change the men in power and for each man to return to his workshop to resume the work of yesterday, to put into circulation manufactures and to exchange them against other manufactures—that would not suffice; it would not be final, since the present system of production is quite as false in the aims which it pursues, as in the means which it employs.

Created to maintain poverty it would not know how to assure plenty—and it is Plenty that the masses demand since they have understood their productive power. Elaborated with intent to hold the masses in a state bordering on misery, with the spectre of hunger always ready to compel man to sell his strength to the holders of land, capital and power—how could the present organisation of production give well-being?

Constructed with the view of enslaving the workers, made to exploit the peasant for the benefit of the factory employee, the miner for the profit of the engineer, the artisan for the profit of the artist and so forth, while the civilised countries exploit the countries backward in

civilisation—how could agriculture and industry such as they are to-day assure equality ?

The whole character of agriculture, industry, and work need to be entirely changed when society shall have arrived at the conclusion that the land, the machine and the warehouse should be the fields of application of work having for its object the well-being of all. Before returning to the daily routine it would be necessary to know if the factory were necessary, to know if the field ought to be sub-divided or not, if its cultivation ought to be done as by barbarians fifteen hundred years ago or if it ought to be done with view of obtaining the greatest quantity of produce necessary for man !

This is quite a period of transformations to traverse; a revolution to extend to the warehouse, the field, the cottage, the town house; to small tools as to fixed machinery; in the groupment of cultivators as in the groupment of workers in manufactures and the economic produce among all who work.

And it is necessary that everyone should live during this period of transformation, that everyone should feel more at ease than in the past.

When the inhabitants of the communes of the twelfth century undertook to found, in the revolted cities, a new society, free from the lord of the manor, they began by entering into a pact of solidarity extending to all the inhabitants. The rebels of the communes swore mutual support; they made what were called agreements of the communes.

It is by a pact of the same kind that the social revolution should commence. A pact for life in common—not for death. A pact of solidarity to consider all the inheritance of the past as a common possession, a pact to divide according to principles of equality all that could serve to get over the crisis; food—stores—habitations, tools, machines, knowledge and power—a pact of solidarity for the consumption of products, as well as for the use of the means of production.

Strong in their conjurations, the bourgeois of the twelfth century set themselves to organise their societies of crafts-guilds and succeeded in guaranteeing a certain well-being to the citizens. Strong in this pact of solidarity which will have bound the entire society to get over happy times—or difficult—to share in victories or defeats, the revolution could then undertake in full assurance the immense work of the re-organisation of production which it would have before it. But it would have to conclude this pact if it meant to live.

And in its new work, which ought to be a constructive work, the masses of the people ought to depend first of all on their own strength,

on their initiative and their genius, because all the education of the classes is done in the absolutely opposite way.

The problem is immense; but it is not in seeking to lessen it in advance that the people will find the necessary strength to settle it. It is on the contrary, by regarding it in all its greatness, it is carrying one's inspiration to the difficulties of the situation that one will find the genius necessary to conquer.

All the really great progress of humanity, all the truly great actions of the people are done in this way, and it is in the conception of all the grandeur of its task that the revolution will use its strength.

Is it not then imperative that the revolutionist should be alive to the task which confronts him? Should he shut his eyes to its difficulties. Should he not seek to confront them?

VII.

It was by making a compact against all masters, a compact to guarantee liberty to all and a certain well-being, that the revolted citizens commenced in the twelfth century. It will also be by a compact to guarantee food and liberty to all that the Social Revolution should begin. Because *all*, without any exception, seeking how to gain the revolution, will give their first thoughts to providing food, shelter, and clothing for the inhabitants of the city or the open country,—and in this single fact of general solidarity, the Revolution will find forces which have been wanting in preceding revolutions.

But for this end it is necessary to renounce the errors of the old political economy of the bourgeois. It will be necessary to be rid forever of wages under all possible forms and to regard society as a grand total, organised to produce the greatest possible result of well-being, with the smallest loss of human strength. It will be necessary to accustom oneself to consider personal remuneration of services as an impossibility, as an attempt which failed in the past, as an encumbrance in the future, if it should continue to exist.

And it will be necessary to be rid of the principle of authority, of the concentration of functions which are the essence of the present society, and this not only in principle but even in the smallest application.

Such being the problem it will be very unfortunate if the revolted workmen have illusions as to its simplicity or if they do not seek forthwith to take account of the methods by which they intend to resolve it.

The "upper classes" are a force not only because they possess wealth but above all because they have profited by the leisure which gives them opportunity to instruct themselves in the art of governing and to elaborate a science which serves to justify domination. They know what they want, they know what is necessary to maintain their ideal of society; and so long as the workman himself does not know what he should know and does not understand how to gain this knowledge, it is likely that he will remain the slave of such as *know*.

It would certainly be absurd to wish to elaborate, in imagination, a society such as would result from a revolution. It would be Bysantinism to wrangle about the means of providing for the needs of future society, or to organise certain details of public life. The novels which are produced concerning the future are only destined to direct ideas somewhat, to demonstrate the possibility of a society without masters, to ascertain if the ideal *can* be applied without striking against insurmountable obstacles. Fiction remains fiction. But there are always certain great principles upon which it is necessary to come to agreement before constructing anything whatever.

The bourgeois of 1789 knew perfectly well how vain it would be to discuss the details of the parliamentary government of which they dreamed; but they dreamed of a government, and this government necessarily became representative. More than that, it necessarily became very much centralised, having for its organs in the provinces a hierarchy of functionaries equally with quite a series of little governments in the municipalities, also elected. They knew perfectly well that in their idea of society private property would of necessity be beyond discussion, and that the so-called liberty of contract would be proclaimed as a fundamental principle of organisation. And what is more, the better disposed of them believed in fact that this principle would really result in a regeneration of society and become a source of betterment for all.

They were the more accomodating as to details, as to be firm upon essential principles, that they could in one or two years totally reorganise France according to their ideal and give her a civil code (usurped later by Napoleon), a code which was afterwards copied everywhere by the European middle classes when they came to power.

They worked at this with a marvellous unanimity. And if afterwards terrible struggles arose in the Convention it was because the people, seeing themselves deceived in their aspirations, came with fresh demands which their leaders did not even understand, or sought in vain to reconcile with the middle class revolution.

The middle classes knew what they wanted; they had contemplated it for a long time past. For long years they had fostered an ideal of

government, and when the people protested they caused them to work out the realisation of their ideal in conceding several secondary considerations upon certain points, such as the abolition of feudal rights and equality before the law.

Without confusing themselves with details, the bourgeois had established, long before the revolution the principal lines of the future. Can we say as much of the workers?

Unfortunately no. In all modern Socialism, and above all in its moderate section, we see a pronounced tendency not to search into the principles of society which they desire to redeem from the revolution. This explains itself. For "moderates" to speak of revolution is to compromise themselves, and they foresee that if they trace for workmen a simple plan of reforms they will lose their most ardent partisans. Also they prefer to treat with scorn those who speak of a future society or seek to define the work of the revolution. This will be seen hereafter, they will choose the best men and these will do everything for the best! This is their reply.

And as for the Anarchists, the fear of seeing themselves divided upon questions of future society, and of paralysing the revolutionary enthusiasm, operates in a similar way; they prefer generally, among workers, to defer to some future time discussions which they wrongly call theoretical, and forget that perhaps in one or two years they may be called upon to give their advice upon all questions of organisation of society, from the working of baker's ovens, to those of the schools in which the defence of territory is considered,—and of which they have not even the knowledge of the ancient models which inspired the bourgeois revolutionists of the last century.

We are asked to consider revolution as a great holiday in which everything will arrange itself for the best. But in reality the day when the ancient institutions crash, the day in which all that immense machine—which, for good or evil, supplies all the daily wants of such great numbers—shall cease to act, it will be most necessary that the people themselves charge themselves with reorganising the broken-down machine. It will be different from 1848, when the Republican leaders in Paris had "Nothing more to do than issue orders, copies of the old republican stereotyped orders, known by heart for years—Lamartine and Ledru Rollin working 24 hours with the pen."

But what say these orders?—They only repeat sonorous phrases invented in the time of the republican clubs, and they do not all treat

of the essence of the daily life of the nation. Since the provisional government of 1848 touched neither property, wages, nor exploitation, it could very well end with sounding phrases, giving orders to do, in a word, what had been done in the state departments. It need only change the phraseology. And yet nothing but such work, almost mechanical, absorbed all the strength of the new-comers.

For us, revolutionists, who understand that the people will have to eat and to sustain their children first of all, the task will be entirely different and otherwise difficult one.—Is there enough flour! Will it come to the baker's ovens! And how shall we secure the due arrival of meat and vegetables? Has everyone a lodging? Does clothing fail—and so on. This is what will preoccupy us.

But all this requires immense work—ferocious work, that is the word—for those who have the success of the revolution at heart.—“Others have had the fever a week, or six weeks,” said an old Conventioneer in his memoirs.—“We have had it for four years without interruption.” And it is undermined by this fever, in the midst of hostility and trouble—for there will be these also—that the revolutionist will have to work. He will have to act. But how shall he act if he knows not from long time past what idea shall guide him, what great principles of organisation, according with him, answer to the requirements of the people, its vague desires, its undecided will?

And will they still dare to say that there is no need of all this, that everything will arrange itself left alone! More intelligent than this, the bourgeois already study the means of managing the revolution, of juggling it, of turning it into a direction in which it will miscarry.

The Revolution will not be a holiday, then will be work for the enfranchisement of all; but in order to accomplish that enfranchisement the revolutionist will have to employ a boldness of thought, an energy of action, an eagerness for work of which people have given no proof in previous revolutions, but of which the forerunners began to be delineated in the last days of the Commune of Paris and in the first days of the Great Strike at the London Docks.

VIII.

BUT where shall we take this boldness of thought, this energy in work of organisation when the people have it not? Dou you not admit yourselves—they will say to us—that if the force of attack does not fail the people, boldness of thought and eagerness for reconstruction have too often failed them?

We admit it entirely. But we do not forget the part of the men of initiative that we shall now speak in closing our studies.

Initiative, free individual initiative, and the possibility of each making use of that force at the time of popular uprisings, that is what has always made the irresistible power of revolutions. It is this power which has made their grandeur, which has enabled them to march to the front, and which historians, always supporting authority, have taken great care to misrepresent. And upon this force we still count to undertake and accomplish the immense work of the social revolution.

If revolutions have accomplished something in the past, *it is entirely due to men and women of initiative, to the obscure persons springing out of the crowd not fearing to assume, face to face with their brethren and the future, the responsibility of acts considered madly rash by the timid.*

The great mass decides with difficulty to undertake anything which has not had a precedent in the past. We see this every day. If routine encrusts us with its mould at every step, it is because men fail to break with the traditions of the past and to boldly advance into the unknown. But if an idea start in some brain, although vague, confused, yet incapable of translating itself into reality, and if a man of initiative arises and sets himself resolutely to work, he is immediately followed if his work responds to these vague aspirations. And even when worn out by fatigue, he retires, his work, understood and approved is continued by thousands of imitators of whom he dared not even suppose the existence. This is the history of all the life of humanity—which everyone can prove for himself by his own experiences. And it is only those who have acted in opposition to the wishes and needs of humanity who have found themselves despised and abandoned by their contemporaries. Unhappily the men of initiative are rare in every day-life. But they arise in numbers at revolutionary epochs and it is they, in reality, who do the enduring work of revolutions. In these are our hope and confidence in the next revolution. If only they have a just and therefore wide conception of the future, if they have audacity of thought, and do not seek to revive a dead past, if a sublime ideal inspires them they will be followed. Never, at any epoch of its existence, has humanity felt the need of a grand inspiration so much as at this moment after having experienced a century of bourgeois corruption.

In these conditions, there is no need to fear for their work from enemies paralysed by the decomposition which surrounds them.

But the envy of the oppressed themselves? Has it not often been remarked, and rightly, that envy is the stumbling block of democracies? That if the worker submits patiently to the arrogance of a masters in a frock coat, he regards with an envious eye the personal influence of a fellow workman.—We do not deny the fact; nor do we shirk the conclusion of the argument, otherwise very correct, that envy always born in the conscience of a fellow workman, once having acquired influence, he will employ it to betray his fellow-workmen of yesterday, and that the sole means of paralysing envy and treachery would be to forbid a comrade, as a bourgeois, the possibility of increasing the authority so as to become masters.

All that is right; but there is more. We all, with our authoritative education, when we see an influence arise, we only think of reducing it by annihilating it, and we forget that there are other means, infinitely more efficacious of paralysing influences which are harmful or tend to become so. It is that of *finding a better way of acting*.

In a servile society this course is impossible and, children of a servile society, we do not even think of it. A king becomes unbearable; what means have we of getting rid of him if not by killing him? A minister who oppresses us, what is to be done, if not to seek a candidate to replace him and when a "chosen of the people" disgusts us we seek another to compete against him. This goes thus; but should it always be so?

What could the Conventionist do in the presence of king who disputed their power if not guillotine him, and what could the representatives of "La Montagne" do in the presence of other representatives invested with equal power, if it was not to send them in their turn to the executioner.

Well, this situation of the past remains with us still, while the only truly efficacious means of paralysing a harmful initiative is *to take, oneself, the initiative of acting in a better direction*.

Thus when we hear revolutionists concur with the idea of stabbing or shooting the governors who could take authority during the revolution we are seized with terror in thinking that the forces of true revolutionists could waste themselves in struggles which would be, in effect, only struggles for or against the individuals who assumed authority. To make war upon them is to recognise the necessity of having other men possessing the same authority.

In 1871 one sees already in Paris a vague presentiment of a better means of agitating. The revolutionists amongst the people appeared to understand that the Council of the Commune ought to be considered a useless show, a tribute paid to the traditions of the past; that the people not only should not disarm, but that they should maintain

concurrently with the Council, their intimate organisation, their federated groups, and that from these groups and not from the *Hotel de Ville* should spring the necessary measures for the triumph of the revolution.

Unhappily a certain modesty of the popular revolutionists supported by authoritative prejudices, still very much persisted in at this period, prevented these federated groups from totally ignoring the Council and acting as if it had not existed at all.

We shall not be able to prevent the return of these attempts at revolutionary government at the time of the next revolution. Let us understand, at least, that the most efficacious method of annulling their authority is not to plot "Coups d'Etat" which would only bring back power under another form ending in dictatorship, but to constitute in the people themselves a force powerful in its action and in the revolutionary deeds which it will have accomplished, *ignoring* power, under whatever name, and increasing always by its revolutionary initiative its revolutionary ardour, and its work of demolition and of reorganisation.

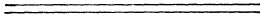
A people who know how to organise the accumulation of wealth and its reproduction in the interest of the whole of society, no longer need to be governed. A people who will itself be the armed force of the country, and who will know how to give to armed citizens the necessary cohesion and unity of action will no longer need to be commanded. A people who will organise their railways, their commerce, their schools, can no longer be administered. Finally a people who know how to organise arbitrators to settle little disputes and of which each individual will consider it his duty to prevent a schemer from oppressing a weak citizen without waiting for the providential interference of the policeman will have no need for galley-sergeants, nor judges, nor jailors.

In the revolutions of the past the people took upon themselves the work of demolition ; as for that of reorganisation, they left it to the bourgeois.—"Better versed than we in the art of governing, come sirs, organise us, order our work, so that we do not die of hunger, prevent us from devouring each other, punish and pardon according to the laws which you have made for us poor spirited persons."—And the middle classes knew how to profit by the invitation.

Well, the task which will present itself at the next uprising of the people will be to seize upon this function which has formerly been abandoned to the bourgeois. It will be to destroy, to organise at the same time as to destroy. To accomplish this task we shall need all the initiative power of all men of courage ; of all their audacity of thought freed from the nightmares of the past, of all their energy ; and we will take care not to paralyse the initiative of the most resolute

among us—we will simply redouble initiative if that of others fails, if it becomes dull, if it takes a wrong direction. Boldness of thought a distinct and wide conception of all that is desired, constructive force arising from the people in proportion as the negation of authority dawns ; and finally the initiative of all in the work of reconstruction—this will give to the revolution the power required to conquer.

It is precisely these forces which the active propaganda of Anarchists as well as the philosophy of Anarchy tend to develop. Against discipline—that anchor of the safety of authority they oppose the full initiative of one and all. Against the weak conceptions of little reforms, extolled by the bourgeois they oppose the large and grand conception of revolution which alone can give the necessary inspiration. And to those who would like to see the people end in the policy of a pack of hounds attacking the government of the day, but always held back at times by the whip, we say : The part of the people in the revolution ought to be *positive* at the same time that it is *destructive*. Because this alone can succeed in organising society on the bases of *equality* and *liberty* for all. To remit this care to others would be to betray the cause of the Revolution.—



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