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Put Not Your Trust In Princes Or Professors

It is blowing hard tonight, out of a clear, frosty sky. To the overcast to the underfed, to the pampered as to the pauperized, an infernal blow, from which they flinch as if stung by a hot iron. But to the sound in wind and limb and habit a thoroughly healthy blow, pregnant with a vigor at last about to come to birth. How! on, old wind! You have lots to do; pestilential vapors to clear away, rotten timbers to throw down, a world of purifying work.

A tremendous drama has been set before us; we follow it breathlessly, knowing how deeply it concerns ourselves and feeling instinctively that, sooner or later, we have to master it. That is most difficult. The plot runs riot, taking in the whole of national and individual life. The actors are playing their own parts, pursuing their own ends, placing themselves in the best light possible and not at all concerned that we should draw the right conclusions. Take us at our own estimate of ourselves, they cry. Observe how lofty are our sentiments and how noble is our delivery; our scenery and customs are of unprecedented grandeur; we have the wittiest of clowns and never yet were there heroes who strutted as heroes strut; while as for learned fools, long-bearded Polonius' from whose lips drips all the wisdom of the ancients, no show was ever so rich in them. Don't look behind the scenes; don't crack your heads endeavoring to find out what it is all about; take things as they come, pay your money cheerfully get and your money's worth by enjoying the performance.

Here we have a celebrated actor from Mexico, one Venustiano Carranza; a fine, resounding name. Note how noble is his bearing, how grave and dignified his mien, how majestically he towers above the tattered mob of starvelings that surrounds him. Here you have the very newest type of emancipator; the latest miracle-worker, who will suspend the laws of space before your eyes and show you how the rider can still keep his seat while the ridden throws him into the ditch. Mexico has been ridden sorely, ladies and gentlemen, and it has looked as if either the burden or the burden-bearer would have to go. That is a delusion; there are ways of adjusting these seeming contradictions. Henceforth the vested interests of the rich, wherever they may hail from and however they may have been acquired, will be respected, while the poor will be given an equally fair economic show. Kindly note the dexterity with which this distinguished artist manipulates the elusive pea. Ha! Ha! Pedro thought he had it that time. Poor Pedro!

For action you should pass to Ring No. 3, where a highly-trained performer holds the stage. William, "The People's Friend;" lightning-change artist, style of Frederick the Great; pet pupil of the late Otto von Bismarck and direct representative of Almighty God, who guarantees the correctness of his performances. High-class moralist who stands beyond good and evil. Teaches that the "Supper man can do no wrong, and has illustrated his theory by taking possession of several thousand square leagues of settled territory in the West of Europe because, as he maintained, his

kingdom was threatened with invasion from the East. Is by nature somewhat of a monopolist and has a tendency to fancy itself the whole show. That is, of course, an error, for his act depends on those of a large and influential class of artists, trained at great expense and under strange conditions. Let us take a look at the professors.

Here we have a truly remarkable body of men, evolved by special methods for a special part. As they are to educate the workers; they naturally are not allowed to have any experience of actual work. Their business is to manufacture theories; the more novel the better. In former times the clergy did this work, but clumsily; stretching things too far and working the same old gags too constantly. So, abler competitors came into the business and today the church is largely a back number. Naturally, as the clergy were the business rival, their particular creed, Christianity, had to be attacked and its inevitable alternative, Paganism, advocated strenuously. Unhappily Paganism belongs to an even more superstitious past, and those superstitions had one great characteristic, relentless cruelty. Paganism was rooted in slavery, accepted it as the most natural of all conditions, never dreamed of objecting to it. Modern professorship, therefore, is all for slavery; treats human rights as fictions; is always in favor of some form of Statehood, which shall draw the line permanently between governors and governed; upholds in all its essentials the Superman theory by endless homilies on natural selection; has written libraries to prove that the weakest must always be crushed to the wall, and, if any one indignantly protests, refers him blandly to the latest work on ants or spiders.

Is it possible to think up a creed so ridiculous or inhuman that some school of "scientific" professors will not be found eager to lecture on it, write books in its favor, work themselves into notoriety by advocating it? Yet life as a whole is normal, depends on adherence to a few simple facts which are as old as the hills, and cannot be conducted successfully under the guidance of those whose specialty is the abnormal. In the laboratory it is impossible to go far wrong, for there one deals with mathematics and no pedagogic ingenuity can misrepresent the multiplication table. But outside of that, and when one comes to deal with the affairs of men, there is no wildness to which our new scientific hierarchy, which speaks with all the intolerance of the Inquisition, does not commit itself. Think of the long line of spectacled, black-coated pundits that has got up its name by writing libraries on "The Will to Power;" a cave-age doctrine which means, when translated into honest language, that you should get whip-hand over the other fellow and skin him to a finish. Think of the ink wasted at this moment by the imitators of Karl Marx and Engels, who, being anxious to establish their fame as the founders of a new party, evolved the preposterous hypothesis that all history is the record of economic class struggles; although in the endless procession of conflicts in which men have fought and died it is hardly possible to put your finger on a single one and say: "This was a fight for bread and butter."

Skepticism is a fine thing, but as employed by our scientific hacks it is juggler's work, the ex-

pert handling of language to be fog the truth. Point out to a scientist the basic facts respecting Mexico, for example, and the undeniable misery to which landlordism reduced the masses, and he will drown you immediately with elaborate reflections on the development of nations, disquisitions on the "survival of the fittest," dissertations on economic determinism, a torrent of eloquence having as its one object the blinding you to the perfectly obvious fact that landlordism means slavery, that slavery means poverty and misery, and that, if you really want freedom, landlordism must go.

Take again the championship of Government, now almost universal with our scientific hierarchy. Voltaire remarked caustically that the art of Government was to force two-thirds of the people to support the other third, and no one has ever been able to controvert that plain and comprehensive statement of what is probably the most palpable and appalling fact in our collective life. Imagine President Wilson, for instance, dealing with that statement, if it were possible to coax him into debating an issue so vital. Imagine the floods of evasive eloquence he would unloose if you faced him with the demonstration, made so irrefutably by Buckle, Bakunin, Spencer and many other real seekers after truth that special privilege always corrupts and that paternalism will break the spirit and dwarf the genius of the proudest and most gifted nation. I take it that no historical fact is more firmly established by the experience of nations than that just stated. Yet today our professors are almost universally Paternalists, Special Privilege men in some form or other, upholders of what Hilaire Belloc calls the Servile State—that most debasing of all possible systems, under which the governors guarantee support and the governed promise unflinching acquiescence in economic arrangements imposed from above.

I state it as a fact that this servile proposition, which carries us back directly to the slavery systems of the ancients, has the almost unanimous indorsement of the professional, pedagogic class, which is today a hierarchy, as Bakunin prophesied it would be. As such it allies itself with other hierarchies—the national government, which has an immense number of plums in its gift; millionaire—endowed institutions, such as the Rockefeller Foundation; whatever may be the real governing power in that particular location in which the professor means to live. Every denomination has its professors; every "ism," from Christian Science and Theosophy to the Modern School and Revolutionary Anarchism, has its professors; if the district is "dry" the local professors will talk your head off about the evils of intemperance, and if the district is "wet" personal liberty will be the song. In short, it is very charming to make your living by writing books, delivering lectures and posing as an authority on abstruse subjects your neighbors are too busy to investigate; but it is also extremely difficult. There, if anywhere, a man has to find out most accurately on which side his bread is buttered, and the moment that becomes the dominating thought—good-bye to the pursuit of truth.

There is, however, another consideration which is perhaps of even greater force. I do believe that you can turn men and women into library-haunters without getting

them out of the habit of observing and into the utterly pernicious habit of theorizing out of their own inner consciousness or in accordance with what their favorite author teaches. Their favorite author! A man, or woman, who, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, worked up a special line of thought, not because it was true but because it lent itself to novel treatment and was likely to find favor with a novelty-hunting public.

One cannot keep the war out of any sociological discussion, and one should not try to, for the war is the relentless searchlight that is showing us how far we have wandered from the path of common sense. Is not an unspeakably bright fact that a great, morally-earnest and highly conscientious nation, the German, should have fallen absolutely under the sway of professors, who have proved themselves merely the mouthpieces of that military State on which their livelihood depend? I do not believe that a special class, set apart to devote itself exclusively to study and leading a most unnatural life—as does, for example, one who devotes his whole existence to the deciphering of hieroglyphics—can think straight; can hold true to the fundamental facts on which life is based; can become anything but dangerous cranks, dominated and mentally distorted by the narrow specialities which absorb their thought. I pick up, for example, "Current History" for December and find an article entitled "Shall Germany Hate?" by Rudolf Eucken, whom the heading describes as "the great Jena Professor of Philosophy". This philosopher deprecates the fact that "there is a disagreeable weeping and wailing to the effect that the ties between nations are now broken," and adds that "we Germans have not caused the split, therefore we need make ourselves no excuses because of it." His article starts its second paragraph with the statement: "We Germans have been attacked in a manner unparalleled in the world's history. We were attacked not because of some single point in dispute but in our whole selves, in our national existence; we were attacked not only with the honorable weapons of open combat but with the poisoned weapons of slander. We are particularly angered by the boundless untruthfulness with which we are accused of starting the world conflagration." After which he informs us that "we Germans have the power of attracting what is great in all peoples and thus giving an inner breadth to life which is attained nowhere else and makes us capable of the highest achievement."

Men of the world, accustomed to dealing with real personalities, and not with philosophical abstractions, cannot bring themselves to the writing of such conceited balderdash. Moreover, the heroics about the brutal attack on Germany deceive no one, outside of Germany. Every one nowadays recognizes that the other nations were taken entirely by surprise and were woefully unprepared—Great Britain in particular—while Germany had spent more than forty years in getting ready for her spring. For eighteen months past the world has been trying to find out who "attacked" Germany, and the utmost her apologists have been able to advance has been that Russia mobilized a portion of her troops upon—the Austrian border! Mere mobilization has never been regarded as an act of war, and the Czar expressly disavowed all such intention.

The central fact of the greatest tragedy on record is that German militarism struck as the proverbial thunderbolt falls out of a clear sky, without a word of warning. Another indisputable fact is that all the world has trembled at the spectre of German militarism,

and yet another is that German professorism, the serylle handmaid of the State, devoted itself for generations to praise of that militarism and now lies with unblushing audacity in its support.

H. G. Wells, always a thought-stirring writer, has begun, in "The Saturday Evening Post", a series of articles entitled "What is coming", and I note in particular the following: "The first, most distinctive thing about this conflict is the exceptionally searching way in which it attacks human happiness. No war has ever destroyed happiness so widely. It has not only killed and wounded an unprecedented proportion of the male population of all the combatant nations, but it has also destroyed wealth beyond precedent. It has also destroyed freedom—of movement, of speech, of economic enterprise. Hardly anyone alive has escaped the worry of it and the threat of it. He goes on to say that while nearly all of us want peace, we want it only in an amateurish way; for, unfortunately "there are many more people and there is much more intelligence concentrated upon the manufacture of cigarettes or hairpins than there is upon the establishment of a permanent world peace."

No; as protection against the marauding of the murderous few the bookish people are not worth their salt, and our own so-called revolutionary movement furnishes the final proof, if final proof be needed. In the exceptionally clear case of Mexico, where a whole nation had been rendered homeless, one found shoals of straight-thinking people who understood the situation at a glance; but one did not find them among the "scientific" Socialists, who have enslaved themselves to a pet theory of economic evolution, and still less did one find them among the so-called Anarchists who read, and read, and read, until the brain loses all capacity of thinking for itself and the intellectual stomach, loaded down with theories, is unable to digest the simplest fact.

Germany at least was not a hypocrite. Boldly and openly she massed her strength and created the most powerful military machine on record. Boldly and openly her Kaiser avowed his trust in the sword, and after the Kaiser all her leading spokesmen patterned. Boldly and openly they declared their intention of conquering a larger "place in the sun", and proclaimed, as they still proclaimed, that Germany's destiny is to be "over all." Boldly and openly they scoffed at solemn treaties as mere scrapes of paper, and announced that to military expediency all else must bend. It was all contrary to every principle of freedom; it represented in the most pronounced form everything that all revolutionists were supposed to hate and execrate; and it found its staunchest champions among those who stood pledged to war against it to the very death. History registers no more shameless Judas act, and it is high time that this charnel-house of lies be swept of its pestilential vapors by a good, healthy gale. Meanwhile one calms oneself with the reflection that although the mills of the Gods grind slowly they grind exceeding small. Also I have my private reasons for thinking that the long-threatening sword Damocles is now about to fall and sweep a number of foul heads into the basket that has been waiting for them these many years.

WM. C. OWEN.

Such Is Life

Schmidt's conviction, on the first ballot, closes another chapter in the tragedy opened by the blowing up of the "Los Angeles Times," in which twenty-one workers, supposed to be opposed to union labor, were killed. Put-

ting aside the question of ethics—although, in the opinion of the writer, that is the most important of all—and looking at this case merely as one of the innumerable skirmishes in the war between capital and labor, it should be evident to the most dull-witted and most fanatically partisan, that war cannot be waged successfully along such lines as these. This section represents, it must be understood, only the editor's individual opinions, which assuredly are far from being infallible. I repeat, however, the opinion I expressed repeatedly in revolutionary journals more than twenty years ago, viz. that no solution of our social problems can be reached by the closed shop route. The arguments in favor of the closed shop are, in my judgment, Jesuitical lies, and a movement founded on lies is headed straight for total wreck. That will be the end of this entire agitation, and the end is all-ready well in sight.

I speak of "the war between capital and labor." That is not the real war, and until we understand what the real war is we shall go on floundering indefinitely in a bottomless bog of everlasting failure. The real war is not against capital but against monopoly, against special privilege, against social arrangements that clothe the few with almost unlimited power by rendering the enormous majority helpless. We do not want to abolish capital—the very idea is the acme of insanity. What we do want is to overthrow the entire system of privilege, by virtue of which, as surely as the ebbing and flowing of the tides, capital gravitates into the pockets of the few. With the means of production and distribution free—and distribution is only the final step in the process of production—labor would be and could be the only title to reward; the only way by which any human being could sustain himself. Men should get all they earn. Men should not get a cent they do not earn. Under freedom, which necessarily implies the rooting out of every form of special privilege, that will become possible, and become so automatically. Under restriction there will always be, there must always be, some who are restricted and robbed for the enrichment of some band of privileged robbers.

Either that analysis—which is the analysis made years and years ago by careful thinkers—is true or it is false. If it is true, how idiotic is the supposition that labor can be emancipated by the formation of an aristocracy of labor, or even by forming itself into a separate class. We do not want any separate class, even though it be dignified with the high-sounding name of Labor. We want to stop the robbery which any one class, according to the measure of its power, always inflicts on other classes, according to the measure of their helplessness. We want to abolish classes, and the only way conceivable of doing that is to establish a regime of equal rights for all.

Like many others I have stood for these principles quite a number of years, and certainly it is not today that I see even the scintilla of a reason for changing my attitude. For what? That one might help out of the hole into which they have dragged themselves and millions of unthinking followers as corrupt a set of so-called "practical" agitators as ever twisted the truth to make a snare for fools? Practical! Good God! In this particular case their "practical" methods have resulted in what? In making Otis a powerful national figure; in making the "Los Angeles Times" one of the most influential papers in the world; in crowning their foes with laurels and in covering themselves with deep and indelible dishonor. It is dishonorable to lie, and never have I known anything to equal the lying there has been in connection with this "Times" case. It is dishonorable to be a dupe, and never have I watched so palpable a confidence game as that which has been played, and still is being played, upon the mentally indolent workers; the unconquerable suckers who, having neither the energy nor the courage to do their own thinking, trust their very lives to and shove all the responsibility upon the aggressive few who constitute themselves their leaders. It is useless to complain, for the world is what it is; but surely it is timely

to remark that until labor itself to do its own thinking, its cause is worse than hopeless.

Our ranch is somewhat isolated, but, one way and another, I get into touch with a good many men, a few of them old revolutionists and what these labor leaders call sneeringly "idealists" but most of them sturdy individualists who try to form their own opinions. I find them invariably sore to the bone; sick of the fakers who have been padding up and down this coast peddling, whoring, cutting a large and shameful capers, but also attending strictly to the business of extracting money on the part that they were men of action, mere talkers, fighters actual "doing" something. It is no something but a great many somebodies whom they have been doing. One of them recently paid us the doubtful honor of a visit, and being one of the chief managers of the Schmidt defense, he plunged into that subject immediately. He told me it was as easy case to beat, if only they had money. Of course he lied, and I suppose, from habit, for he must have known I knew he lied. But he did only what Darwin did, what Hartman did, what all the high-fed lawyers, all the publicity agents, all the amateur detectives and the thousand and one collectors and other hangers-on who made their little piece out of this "Times" case, have been doing consistently and wilfully for years. Do you think there was no method in that madness? No, there was. The gentlemen's question. Dollars they got.

I lived in Los Angeles for more than twenty years, and I doubt if there has had many men who follow me more carefully than I did, or with better opportunities of getting at the facts. For years the Typographical Union maintained a bureau of home-bred men well-versed in special business; it was reported periodically that they had the "Times" on the run. An absurd lie to any one who knew the facts.

Prior to the "Times" explosion came the building strike, and again we were flooded with lying statements to the effect that the Building Trades had the situation well in hand and were sweeping to triumph. A most preposterous lie, for at that very time, as shown irrefutably by the official records, Los Angeles was enjoying such a building boom as it never had known. What sense is there in all this? Only the sense of professional liars with a good nose for money.

According to the newspaper accounts Olaf Tveitmo, as soon as the Schmidt verdict was delivered, exclaimed dramatically: "Send word to Lincoln! Send them the Golden Rule is off. They will be a ten-years war in Los Angeles. They shall pay for this!" What an ass! I heard Tveitmo lecture in Los Angeles, at Labor Temple, when latest in the McNamara trial was at its very highest, and union men left hundreds while he was talking, the hall being nearly empty at the close of his address. Lots of men can give you very good reasons for having no confidence in Tveitmo, just as lots of good men are asking why Emma Goldman and her notoriety-hunting gang thought it advisable to poke their noses into business which certainly was no affair of theirs.

When you write as I am writing in instant retort is that a dreamer is worth listening to. But these are not dreams. These are intensely practical and unarguably facts. Thousands of men have given their lives to the attempt, at least of making a movement that should be real benefit to the workers; thousands have gone to jail, and usually through the stupidity of allowing themselves to be used as tools by scheming rascals; thousands have found themselves blacklisted or cast. The price paid has been appalling, heavy and we do not intend, if we can help it, that all this sacrifices shall be in vain; shall endure only to the enrichment of a lot of professional scallywags of whom I say bluntly that they are as brutally selfish a set as ever clambered to the workers' backs with the fixed intention of slaying him to the bone. We cannot hope that campaigns of lies will ever be successful. We cannot expect to attack the abuses of power while we uphold similar abuses in our own ranks. We are fools to imagine that we can overthrow special privilege until we have stamped the life out of it in our own movement. If the revolutionary movement in this country is ever to amount to anything it must start by sweeping out its own Augean stable, regardless of what has accumulated. Above all, regardless of sentiment.

WM. C. OWEN.