

# WHAT USE IS THE VOTE?

## AN APPEAL TO WORKING WOMEN.

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To-day you are demonstrating in your thousands, many of you after having made long journeys to this so-called great Metropolis. You will no doubt gaze with astonishment on the wealth and luxury of the West End; perhaps you will see with shame some of the poverty, misery, and degradation with which this "great city" is overflowing. However that may be, you will in all likelihood be filled with enthusiasm for the cause that has brought you here, and many of you are doubtless prepared to do more than demonstrate—are prepared to suffer contempt and imprisonment for the cause you are now agitating for—the right to vote.

Some of you have already shown that courage, and now that your organisation is becoming strong, the hypocritical Press begins to applaud you, after insulting you, and the Government begins to fear you, after putting you in gaol.

Your leaders will tell you that victory is in sight, and perhaps they are right. But when the victory is won, what will you have gained?

You answer: "The right to vote, which men already possess." Yes, the "right to vote"; but what does that mean, and what will it lead to?

Now we as Anarchists ask you to consider without prejudice the few words we have to say. We as well as you are fighting for freedom. But we want freedom that is needed by all and can never again be lost. Anarchism alone ensures that. Hence it is that the ruling classes denounce us to you. The vote will no more gain liberty for you than it has gained it for men. The reason why is plain enough.

You are working women most of you, who even if you do not have to slave for a wage yourselves, at least know what the struggle for existence means through the experience of your fathers, your brothers, or your husbands. That struggle falls as heavily upon you as upon them through the cares and worries of domestic life. And in times of unemployment, of lock-outs and strikes—all brought about through the greed of the masters—the suffering you have to face, with the children crying for food, is more cruel and bitter than the burden that falls on men.

Is it not plain that after all the question you need to consider

most seriously is how to secure for those who produce the wealth a fair share in its enjoyment? For you must remember that those of you who toil in the factories, in the mills and elsewhere are those who are helping to create the great wealth of this great country, and are getting in return a miserable wage that always keeps you poor, and in the case of adversity soon leaves you at the mercy of "charity" or the workhouse.

Do you imagine for one moment that the vote is going to alter all this, or even make life endurable under a capitalist system that makes slaves of us all to-day? If you think so, just ask yourselves this question: Why is it that working men, many of whom have the vote, and even have their "representatives" in Parliament,—why is it they are still at the mercy of their masters? Why is it they are still overworked on railways, in mines, in factories? Why is it that the little they have gained in better conditions, higher wages or shorter hours has always been gained by their Unions, and never through Parliament? There is only one answer to all these questions—

### **THE VOTE IS USELESS TO THE WORKING CLASSES!**

It is only useful to the middle classes, who rule the workers and control the Parliamentary machine.

Of course, it will be said that when the workers know how to vote they in their turn will control the machine. But this is the greatest delusion of the present day. They will never control Parliament sufficiently to achieve their aims without a revolution—a terrible revolution that would cost more lives than would the taking over of the land, the factories, and the railways, to begin a Socialist society.

And this is the question you working women need to study: "How shall we emancipate ourselves from the control of the masters?" not "How shall we vote?"

You need to hold and enjoy the wealth you create.

You do not need to put over yourselves ambitious women of the upper classes to make more laws.

Help your fellow-workers of both sexes everywhere to learn the truths of Anarchist Communism, which means free co-operation amongst all workers for the use and enjoyment of the wealth they create, without submission to laws and governments which crush us to-day. That alone will bring freedom and well-being for all.

## **Read "Freedom," Id. Monthly.**

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