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THE PYRAMID
OF TYRANNY.

BY

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THE PYRAMID OF TYRANNY.

By F. DOMELA NIEUWENHUIS.

The well-known German writer, Michael Flürscheim, says in his work, *Individualism and Socialism*, that the thin crust (consisting of the possessing class) round the red-hot lava of the social world is not more than 2 per cent of the diameter. In other words: out of every hundred persons only two belong to the possessing or capitalist class, while ninety-eight may be reckoned among the working classes.

For the sake of clearness we must first give a definition of the words "worker or laborer" and "capitalist." We call laborers all those who with their hands or with their brain (properly speaking a very strange distinction, as if the work of the hands needs no brain and the work of the brain no hands; but we follow the everyday parlance) must work to gain their livelihood. A professor, a physician, a teacher, an engineer, they all belong to the working class if they subsist on their salary and would be destitute without it. And we call capitalists all those who can live without working. In our opinion the line of separation cannot be better drawn. So two out of every hundred persons are capitalists and lord it over the other ninety-eight. How can this be?

The solution of the riddle is given us in a very nice, almost forgotten old writing of the French author, De la Boétie (a friend of Montaigne's) on *Voluntary Slavery*, dating from the sixteenth century. He says:

"But now I come to a point which is the secret and the source of domination, the support and the foundation of tyranny. Those who think that the halberds of the guard, the existence of the Watchmen protect the tyrants, are very much mistaken in my opinion; I believe that the latter make use of them as a matter of form and for fear rather than that they should trust in them. The archers prevent the coming in of people who have no means of existence, and of those armed men who might perhaps undertake something. It can easily be proved that of the Roman emperors a greater number have been killed by their guard than escaped danger by the assistance of their archers. It is not the horsemen, not the footmen, nor the force of arms that protects the

tyrant; but, though it is scarcely credible at first sight, yet it is true, it is always four or five people who maintain the tyrant, four or five who render the country subject to his orders. It was always five or six men who had the ear of the tyrant, and they came to him or were called by him to be the accomplices of his cruelties, the companions of his amusements, the mates of his voluptuousness and his comrades in plundering. These six do the work so well for their principal, that in the eye of the world he is the evil doer not only of his own wicked deeds, but also of theirs. These six have six hundred, who profit under them, and these six hundred do what the six do for the tyrant. These six hundred are the masters of six thousand, whom they have trained in such a way that they are able to govern the provinces or to manage the financial matters on the understanding that they attend closely to their cupidity and cruelty, and that they put these into practice whenever it will be thought necessary; and that, for the rest, they commit so many wrongs that they cannot remain in office but under the protection of their masters and cannot withdraw from the laws and from punishment but by their assistance. * The consequences are very considerable. And if anyone should like to wind off the thread, he would find out that not the six thousand but the hundreds of thousands, the millions of people cling to the tyrant by means of this thread, helping one another, the same as in Homer, Jupiter boasts of his power to draw all the gods to him by pulling the cord."

In other words, the great tyrant can be a tyrant provided that he makes a few other persons play the tyrant in their turn, and these again, admit others to be tyrants in a narrower circle in such a way that we have a pyramid of tyrants—at the foot of which lie the tyrannised masses and on the top of which stands the chief tyrant.

Thus we have an artificially constructed building of tyranny. It is the only way to explain how it is possible that a small number of capitalists, only two per cent, rules with supreme power over the masses.

The capitalists have made themselves masters of all the means of exercising power. These are of two kinds, *viz.*,

I. The spiritual means of exercising power,

II. The violent means of exercising power.

Each of these may be subdivided again into three:

SPIRITUAL means of exercising power: 1. The SCHOOL; 2. The CHURCH; 3. The PRESS.

VIOLENT means of exercising power: 1. The POLICE; 2. The LAW; 3. The ARMY.

It is our purpose to speak of each of these separately.

I. THE SCHOOL.—Those who ingenuously suppose the school promotes the free intellectual development of the children are sorely mistaken. On the contrary, the teachers—often poor starvelings themselves—unconsciously do service as spiritual means of power in the hands of capitalism to bring up the young people in submission and meekness.

Capitalists are fully aware that: He who is master of the children is master of the future; and, consequently, in all countries the School has been the cause of a fierce contest.

Instruction in the Class-State cannot fail to be Class-instruction. For this reason there is not *one* school, where the children of all the citizens come together to receive instruction, in which case there would be at least one period of life in which they would all feel related as members of the same whole; no, there are separate schools for the poor and indigent, who are put off with a minimum of instruction—the children of the working classes do not want to know more in their station of life!—and schools for the more substantial classes, where the instruction is extended the further, the better the purse of the parents is filled.

The whole school is based on falsehood and hypocrisy. According to the constitution two conditions must be satisfied:

1. That everywhere in the country sufficient public primary instruction shall be given by the government;

2. That the regulation of public instruction shall take place "with deference to everybody's religious principles."

And, responsive to the Constitution, the Elementary Education Act demands that "the teacher shall refrain from teaching, doing or permitting anything that is contrary to the respect due to the religious principles of persons of a different opinion." But at the same time that this is plainly demanded by the above-mentioned Act, it claims also that "the school instruction shall be made conducive to education in all Christian and social virtues."

But how is it possible at the same time to respect a person's religious principles and to educate him in all "Christian" virtues—virtues, therefore, of a particular religion, in this case the Christian religion? What is to be done when the Christian virtues are in conflict with the religious principles? Is not the teaching of Christian virtues taking the side of a particular sort of religious principles?

According to this Act there are Christian *and* social virtues. A teacher is bound to teach the former as well as the latter. But what is he to do when the two sorts are opposed? And this happens repeatedly, as the following instances show:

It is a *Christian* virtue not to swear; for Jesus has taught in the Sermon on the Mount: Swear not at all, but let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay.

It is a *social* virtue to raise the two foremost fingers of the right hand,¹ whenever the men of the law demand it, and to swear—on pain of being committed to prison for not doing so.

It is a *Christian* virtue not to kill, according to the clear, plain words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

It is a *social* virtue to enter the ranks at 19 years of age, without protest, and to be trained to become one's neighbour's murderer.

It is a *Christian* virtue not to take thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself, and sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

It is a *social* virtue to save money and, in a great many schools the children are taught to put this virtue into practice.

Poor teacher! doomed to teach the children two things at a time which are absolutely antagonistic.

Moreover, how much are the children filled with untruths, only for the purpose of making the school conducive to the interests of the possessing classes. It would lead us too far if we were to show this in detail; but we are bound to furnish proofs of our contention, which, we are aware, must sound bold in the ears of some. Still, we are going to mention a few proofs.

In one of the patriotic songs, the children are taught to sing that they live in freedom and gladness on Holland's beloved ground.

When the child has come to years of discretion and compares the lesson taught him by the practice of life with that taught in this song, what will be his experience? That he has learned three lies in these words; for the laborer, far from being free, is doomed on pain of starvation to bear the yoke of bondage laid upon him by his master; the laborer has no cause to be glad and happy where he, as an outcast of society, is shut out from all that our beautiful earth offers for enjoyment. And, withal, the ground where he was born cannot be loved by him for not an inch of it is his property, and if one bore love to his native soil where he must endure poverty, care

¹ In Holland the oath is taken in this way and by repeating at the same time the words of the magistrate: "So may God truly help me!"

and bondage, he would prove that the last spark of human dignity had been extinguished.

At school we are taught: *Knowledge is power*; and our experience teaches us that the Preacher was right in saying: *Wisdom is good*—WITH AN INHERITANCE. Knowledge, with an independent character, is by no means advantageous; only if it does not decline creeping and crouching it may become a means of making money, but in that case we must be willing tools in the hands of capital.

At school we learn: *Labor ennobles*; but our experience soon makes us understand that actually there is no greater shame than labor. Who are most honored in society: the idlers, who have never worked and yet can spend a lot of money, or the poor toilers, who have done nothing but work from childhood? The patent of nobility, of labor, the horny hand of a worker, is highly praised and commended in assemblies and addresses, but nobody grudges another the pleasure. The blessings of labor, commended so much at school, are made use of to bring boys and girls up to be clever workers, *i.e.* to be sources of wealth for those who do *not* work. Is not the ideal, for which a great many persons drudge, though they do not always succeed, to work so hard for a short time that they have feathered their nests and henceforth can live without working?

At school we are taught: *Honesty is the best policy*. But when the child, in its innocence, asks if those people who dwell in the largest houses are the most honest, and the poor fellows who people the most miserable huts the most dishonest, can the teacher in good faith answer in the affirmative? If not, the words are not true; and so all sorts of sayings and adages are inculcated in the child's mind that the teacher himself knows not to be true.

It would not be a hard task to go on in this way, but we think that these few examples are so striking and so convincing, that nobody can accuse us of not having given sufficient proofs for our contentions.

The children are also taught to respect their betters; and when we consider who these betters are, nobody will dare to say that this word implies the worker ennobled by his labor, the man of science or of art; no, let us be honest and acknowledge that by "our betters" are meant: the people who dispose of a well-filled purse (even though they are anything but respectable in their public conduct), and the temporary authorities (even though they had played fast and loose with their principles in order to rise to high offices). In a society constituted with so little freedom and so much hypocrisy as ours, basing itself so much upon the distinction of classes, it is an impos-

sibility to bring up one's children as truthloving, just, independent thinking men and women; for suppose they are educated at home in that way, the out-door influences tend to neutralize it. Nothing in the world is more taken amiss in a person than "being himself," especially by the large majority who are nobodies. The character is wholly lost, even though knowledge is cultivated; and yet, what does a society signify, the members of which are utterly unprincipled?

The school constituted as it is at present, must be conducive to keeping up appearances as if young people are developed into thinking persons, but it is nothing but show. In reality it serves to teach children so much that the possessors have no trouble with servants, who might injure them by their stupidity. The fault is not the teachers'—though there are, alas! many who act in favour of a system, by which they are oppressed and injured themselves—but it is in the existence of classes in society.

As soon as the children of the possessing class are concerned, we see immediately how much greater care is taken of their education. In a society in which everything is measured by money, we cannot do better than estimate the "love" of the leading persons by the money they wish to give for it. Why, every child attending a common public school—and the children of labourers almost exclusively attend these schools—costs 25 guilders (about £2-1-6); every child attending a secondary school—and these are the children of more substantial people—costs 125 guilders, that is five times as much; and every pupil of universities—the future authorities—costs 630 guilders or more than twenty-five times as much. And so we see that it is nothing but hypocrisy when we are told that at present so much is done and sacrificed and so much interest is taken in the instruction of the rising generation. By casting the minds of the children, when still very young, into a mould, which will make them, when grown-up people, useful tools in the hands of capitalists, the latter have their private interests at heart. And that is the use of the school. That the thing has two handles, and that this minimum of knowledge may become a means of further development, is a fact which they cannot remedy, but which is by no means their intention.

II. THE CHURCH. The second spiritual means of power, which capitalists make use of in order to restrain the people, is the Church. Here, again, they begin with the children, whose minds are to be blunted by all sorts of false notions and untruths. A sort of spiritual chloroform is administered to them to lull their intellectual faculties

to sleep. And afterwards the same method is continued at church, by means of the sermon. Do you ever hear a word of rights there? To hear these sermons would make a man believe that he has nothing but duties! Resignation, submission, contentment is quite common there.¹

They even dare comfort the poor wretches who are toiling during their whole life under the burden of excessive labor, by the thought of a hereafter, a life after this life, in which they will be compensated for all their sufferings, provided that they have behaved quietly and submissively here below. What are the sufferings of the present time compared to the eternal bliss which will be theirs after a short time? And if we express our doubts or if we even ask the clergyman how he knows all this and if it is true, indeed we incur a severe lecture for our unbelief and our heretical dispositions! If people say: "Why, all this may be very good and true, but we should like to be a little more comfortable on earth", then it is an instigation of the Evil One, to which they must not give ear. "Be submissive"—that is the continually repeated sermon, and other things are not heard. Submission to one's parents, submission to the authorities, submission to one's betters!

But what is the way in which the clerical gentlemen live themselves? As a rule they do not despise the good things of our earth; on the contrary, they are often known to have sweet teeth, to be good wine-tasters, who prefer sitting down at the well-provided tables of the rich, to eating from the humble and indigent dishes of the poor. They know how to propose a compromise, so that they do not tell the truth to the rich, lest they should fall into disgrace, though the teachings of Jesus are anything but pleasant for them; and they advise the poor to submit to the fate which has been laid upon them by God's will.

Do the rich believe in the truths of the Gospel? By no means. For if they did so, how could it be possible for them to remain quietly in their palaces and to enjoy all sorts of things, whilst their poor brothers and sisters are subjected to nameless sufferings and heavy cares? If they really believed, that the poor shall inherit the kingdom of heaven, they would not be so stupid as to enjoy so much during this short earthly life with the expectation of the everlasting tortures of hell.

¹ As a general rule this is still true, but it would be unjust not to give due allowance to the fact that there are in Holland, the same as in England, a few clergymen who advocate their Social Democratic or Christian Anarchist principles even in the pulpit.

The very fact that they can bear with such a state of things, is a decisive proof that they do not believe themselves in what they cause to be preached to others. Does not Professor Buys, a man of learning, say: "Be careful, you and I, let us work on as long as it is day-time, and when at length the moment has come and the night is before us, let us then have a prayer of thankfulness on our lips towards Providence, who placed us in a world where so "great wages are laid up for little labor"; but how it can be that such a man dare say so to people who work 10, 12, 14 hours a day (and longer) to gain wages that do not even enable them to provide themselves with common necessaries, we cannot understand; at any rate it does not show many sparks of feeling in that man.

Suppose a father gave one child everything it wanted and suffered the other child to live in want, what would you call him? A tyrant, would you not? And you would be right! But what else does God do with men, his children, by placing some of them—and at any rate innocent children are not responsible for the circumstances under which they enter the world—from their cradle in the wealthiest condition, so that they have enough of everything and to spare, and by accustoming others from their prime of life to a privation which is a disgrace to mankind? So, when the church teaches submission to such conditions, which are crying to heaven, it is the Church itself that most of all undermines the belief in God, for *there is no God, unless he be good.*

Our countryman Douwes Dekker, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Multatuli" says in his touching and energetic poem: *Prayer of one who does not know:*

The child that fruitlessly invokes the father, does no harm
But cruel is the father to whom his child calls in vain.
And far more beautiful is the belief: there is no father,
Than that he should be deaf to his own child.

But the Church held a tight rein over the masses; it served as a sort of celestial police and in that character exercised a much greater influence than the terrestrial. It worked with reward and punishment, threatened with everlasting tortures and promised an uninterrupted bliss. By these means it was strong, and capital did not grudge the ministers of the Church a life in clover, if the latter only took care that the people should be diverted by the illusions of a future better life from seeking for the causes of this present misery.

It is true the better developed disentangled themselves; as freethinkers they rose above the bulk of the people; but, no sooner did they begin to discover that these free thoughts found their way to the low-

est classes of the people, the laborers, than they retraced their steps. That had not been their intention! Oh, freethought was very good for the upper classes, but the light was too strong for the lower ones: they had better remain in the Church to find comfort and relief there. Why? For this obvious reason: if heaven is taken away from above our heads and hell from beneath our feet, what else do we retain but the earth, on which we live and move? Well, let us for this reason make no longer a hell on earth over the entrance of which it says: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here!" but let us make a heaven of it, and this *can* be done!—When our eyes are opened to this, we shall grow discontented and impatient with conditions, that degrade and dishonour us. And the consequence of it will be that we shall begin to work to put a stop to the oppression and tyranny exercised over us by a handful of people. In his *Ruins* the Frenchman, Volney, gives the following conversation between the priests and the People:

The Priests.—Dear brethren: Much beloved children! God has appointed us to rule over you.

The People.—Show us your heavenly authority.

The Priests.—The only thing that is required for that is faith; reason confounds.

The People.—Do you rule without reason?

The Priests.—God demands peace; religion commands obedience.

The People.—Peace presupposes justice; obedience requires knowledge of the law.

The Priests.—We are on earth only to suffer and to endure.

The People.—Set us a good example.

The Priests.—Would you live without gods and without kings?

The People. We wish to live without tyrants.

The Priests. You want intermediators.

The People.—Mediators between us and the kings! Courtiers and priests, your services are too expensive; henceforward we will serve our affairs ourselves.

Then the small number of priests exclaimed: we are lost, the people are developed. And the people replied; we are saved, and because we are developed, we shall not abuse our strength, we claim nothing but our rights. We feel wronged, but we forget our grievances; we were slaves, we could command now, but we want nothing but to be free. Freedom is nothing but justice.

Indeed, it is so! From the moment the people are developed, they do not want mediators or priests. Relying on ignorance and a certain disposition to mystery, capitalism uses the Church as a tool to

keep the people erring through the night of ignorance and the twilight of mysticism.

III. THE PRESS.—To the powers that be belongs, no doubt, the Press. It exercises a great influence on the people because it speaks to them daily; and the proverb, "*Tell me with whom thou goest, and I will tell thee what thou doest,*" may be applied to the newspapers people read. A man can get accustomed to wholesome food—but, also, to poison; and it is astonishing what a large quantity of the latter he can take without feeling hurt, provided he begins with small doses. "Falsehood is a European Power,"—this winged word of Lassalle's may be called to memory once more; and, seeing that capitalism handles this weapon and at the same time uses the Press, we need not wonder that the people, being so corrupted by lies from day to day, become more so.

In whose hands is the Press?

In those of the great capitalists.

Is this assertion contested? By nobody. We know, indeed, that the bankers have made themselves masters of the press, to use it in their own interest. That is the reason why the post of editor of a capitalist newspaper really is one of the vilest situations in the world. He is the mouth through which capitalism speaks; he is the pen with which it writes; he is the tool that, on pain of dismissal, must dance to the capitalists' piping. A mental prostitute, sold to the money-bag, he is more abject than the poor prostitute who sells her body to the first comer, hoping to get something to eat by doing so. And woe to him who will judge and act independently! Very soon he is informed of the necessity to submit or be dismissed. Intelligence concerning the Theatres, Exchange, Art, all this is ordered work and, at sufficient prices, criticisms may be bought to suit your purpose. Woe to those who rely on the information in the press—which differs from day to day, just as capital requires! War reports are invented to cause a rise or fall on 'Change, and to take advantage of it. Mr. Capitalist sends word to his paid knight of the press ordering him to launch some report in the world. By and by, we read that in some country menacing events have taken place which render war unavoidable. And the consequences are obvious: there is a fall in stocks. Mr. Capitalist, who knows better, has agents in different places who buy up all the stocks which have fallen in consequence of that report. After this, he makes the same newspapers report that, owing to the dexterity and adroitness of some diplomatist,

the menacing danger of war has disappeared; the stocks are much in demand, they rise, and our honest speculator sells them again. He fills his pockets with the difference between the rise and the fall in price, caused intentionally by a falsehood; and he is praised into the bargain when he hands over a trifling sum to the poor and destitute while retaining an immense treasure for himself.

In this way the lower classes are bereft of what belongs to them in order to enrich the great capitalists with their hard-earned money. And in these editors they have meek and submissive tools, who do everything according to the orders they get. Very great is the influence of the Press; and Capital, well aware of it, would be inexcusably stupid if it did not avail itself of this precious means. In every scandal—and all sorts of scandals follow one another so rapidly in our days that we can hardly keep our eyes on them—the Press is interested, and we read of large sums of money laid out in bribing the Press. The simple, soft, easy people are still silly enough not to perceive all this; and that is the reason why they are continually led by the nose.

The would-be popular newspapers are for the greater part capitalistic enterprises, and so the people suffer the capitalistic knights of the Press to lead them for the greater glory and enrichment of their oppressors.

If this were not the case, what could be the cause of the hostile tendency in everything regarding the working-class movement. What else could be the cause of the praise of manufacturers and capitalists? Every trifle is blazoned forth and spread abroad on the wings of fame. Insignificant information about princes and highly-placed personages fill up the columns of the papers, which might be used in the general interest. Ever and anon the people are set against those who are helping the workers to free themselves from the bonds of capitalism. Is it not capital and learning that, in newspapers and other writings, go faithfully hand in hand to keep the people submissive. Learning says: Capital is the greatest blessing for mankind, you live by it, and your family and thousands with you. Blessed, thrice blessed capital, without which the world would go back to the period of barbarism! Such is the hymn in praise of Capital sung by the whole of the Press and by the official, paid scientists. And Capital says: Do listen to the voice of Science; these clever men will instruct and advise you for your own good! Thus the paid scientist defends Capitalism, and capitalists protect Science. Here the well-known proverb is applicable: it is diamond cuts diamond. They both enjoy privileges, and neither of them think the world is

so bad. Woe to him who incurs the displeasure of these powers; he is first undone and ruined materially so that spiritually he is compelled to keep quiet. And to those not willing to submit the following words, used in one of our most influential papers, are applied: "They raise a rebellious cry, ominous for every country appreciating its safety and order." As if the very safety of the possessing classes was not the chief cause of the great insecurity of the masses. And Order!—who dares speak of order in a world where the greatest disorder exists? Matters are systematically represented inversely by the Press, and that is why it is so difficult to have a counterpoise against those means of power; for these people have much influence.

The Press in the hands of capitalism is worse than any plague; for, instead of enlightening, its task is to tell lies. It poisons every source, and whatever is touched by its capitalistic breath is corrupted and spreads contagion on all sides.

Suppose for a moment that all the paid scientists (who dispose of an undeniably great quantity of knowledge), that all the ecclesiastics of every religion, that all the knights of the Press set to work together to prepare a better future—and such a one must come; for there is nobody but acknowledges that our society is sick to death—what progress could be made! Things must be very bad indeed, when one sees how a man of capital, the banker A. C. Wertheim, without being contradicted, brought the following accusations against society a few years ago at a meeting of the *Society for the Promotion of the General Good*, consisting for the greater part of contented bourgeois: "Labor is *excessive*, wages are *insufficient*, food is *bad*, the surroundings *depressing*, education *neglected*, knowledge *defective*, the material wants of living together, dwelling and arrangement *disregarded*. We yearn for fresh air both in the material and moral sense of the expression." In other words, hardly anything is sufficient in this world. And yet the preservation of this society is represented as being in the *interest of all men!* And yet we hear its praise sounded as if everything was for the best, in the best of worlds! And yet it is the very men of science and learning, who are contented with the trifles thrown to them by capital, it is the men of the Press who praise the capitalistic system day by day!

You shall know the tree by its fruit. Well, what is the fruit of the tree? is it really such that one may conscientiously praise it? By no means. And therefore they are advocates of a bad cause: they render services to the oppressors against the oppressed; they abuse their knowledge, the faculties of their minds, to defend capitalism with sophistries. But their cause is hopeless; for "though the

people's *brain* may be spoiled for a long time, it is not so easy to put their *stomachs* in irons." Well, these very stomachs begin to itch, and though our learned and scientific men scratch all the white paper black to prove that this condition cannot possibly be improved, and that capitalists—from mere love of the people—do their utmost to put a stop to the worst inequalities and the most awful contrasts: in the long run they will not be able to keep the people dull. The movement is growing beyond them and will, undoubtedly, drag along many and various things which, owing to the stubbornness of the possessors and the false information of the knights of the Press, now will be destroyed, but which might have been saved and spared if the lawful claims of the people had been complied with in good time.

So we see that this means of power, too, is of the utmost importance. Capitalists perceived, and they were quite right from *their* point of view, that the very Press (under the pretence of developing) might be useful to them to confound and stupefy the minds of the people gradually and daily.

These spiritual means of power are much stronger than all the rest; at least it is our opinion that they exercise the greatest influence. But they are not the only ones, they go hand in hand with the second kind, which we are now going to speak about in detail. We mean:

THE VIOLENT MEANS OF EXERCISING POWER.

These, too, may be divided into three sorts, which we shall treat of separately.

1. THE LAW.—In a State of classes, as ours is, every institution bears the imprint of it. So that it is quite natural that we have a class law. This is proved both by the persons appointed to administer it and by the sentences pronounced.

Who are our judges?

Persons, of course, belonging to the possessing classes; for only these are able to send their sons to the university, and if a few among them are of lower descent we shall soon perceive that these were clever and intelligent boys, educated at the expense of wealthy men who expected them to become willing tools working with heart and soul for their class interests. And how can we expect them to do otherwise than defend the class to which they belong?

For example: if several members of some tribunal are passionate sportsmen, as a matter of course, these judges consider every offence against the game law as a capital crime and, consequently, are sure to punish all so-called poachers severely when they are caught. But,

as a rule, they will be treated more gently when they appear before judges who are no lovers of sport themselves and who consider a game law as a sort of mediæval institution of which we ought to be ashamed in an age claiming to be known as "civilised." Involuntarily the judge will be disposed in favor of or against an accused person according to his personal opinion. You may be sure of finding a man severe toward all working men—who are known to be leaders in strikes or who are bold enough to oppose their masters—when the judge is the son of a factory owner. The atmosphere in which he has been brought up is so corrupted, that he is anything but the right man to give an impartial legal decision in disputes between masters and working people. The reverse would be the case as well. Suppose that the tribunals consisted of laborers in such disputes, which of us would not be convinced that the sentences in most cases would be pronounced in such a way that either acquittal or at least a much less rigorous sentence would be the consequence. It cannot be otherwise, and one moment's reflection will make it clear to us that justice must necessarily bear this character. The persons cannot help it themselves; in most cases it will never be borne upon their minds that they are unfair and unjust by their class point of view; but it does not alter the fact that it is so.

And the saddest thing for the workers is that, in most cases, they do not fall into the clutches of the best, the most intelligent of that class, but into those of the least intelligent and most stupid.

For, who are the persons who choose the office of a judge? By no means the most learned and clever lawyers. And why not? Because they can earn more money as counsel. So all who fail as barristers who feel that they will not get on either by want of sagacity and smartness or by want of the necessary eloquence, all these try to get situations in the legal profession. And so we are satisfied that at every turn we fall into the hands of the least intelligent and least clever.

There is not the least security for the honesty and impartiality of the judges; in support of which we need only to be reminded of the revelations in 1885 in our Second Chamber (the House of Commons in Holland) concerning members of different tribunals by experts, men who had belonged to them for years. One of them, Mr. de Vos van Heenwyb, informed us that neither ability nor fitness turn the scale of appointment, but friendship, political calculation, family relationship, etc. Another, Mr. du Tour van Bellinchave, then Minister of Justice, assured us that in most cases no information was given about ability and zeal. And a third, who had been himself a member of different tribunals for twenty years, told how it sometimes hap-

pens that one is sitting on the same tribunal with persons who are not only totally incapable, but even with men who are brain-sick, a euphemistic expression for madmen.

And the sentences themselves furnish irrefutable proofs of how much a legal decision is influenced by class judgment. How unjustly are laborers locked up for the least offence, nay, when there is only an appearance of offence, whilst rich rascals have "accidentally" an opportunity to make their escape! How great is the difference in the way in which gentlemen and laborers are treated! How little allowance is made for the circumstances under which the deed was done that is taken to be an offence! How sharp and severe are the sentences for offences against the "holy right of property," compared those against persons! Poverty, far from being regarded as with an extenuating circumstance, in many cases is considered to be an aggravating one.

It would lead us too far if we were to mention a large number of proofs of mercilessness in small offences, which under the same circumstances, would have been committed by us as well. But on these tribunals we see gowned gentlemen paid by capital to see that the working classes are frightened in order that they will suffer themselves to be employed and ground by the possessing classes.

Enemies to the human race—as such the Christians were regarded in the beginning of our era, because they objected to the social order of that time, based as it was upon injustice. By that same name all those are called who will not submit to the order brought about by capitalists and maintained and supported by means of violence. In a legal way persons are tried and sentenced to the greater glory of the social order, which is nothing but the greatest disorder.

The mother who kills her child—and this is always a deed of the greatest despair; for what must she not have felt before having recourse to such a crime—is condemned to the severest punishment, and the judge who made her a mother and who, after this, abandoned her and the child, the result of their intercourse, remains the "honored" man in the world, who, though he knows very well himself that he is the true culprit, shrouds himself under the article of the law which prohibits inquiry as to who is the father. And the other judges, his colleagues, even though they know this, will remain with him on the same tribunal without expelling him as an unworthy member or going away themselves as they would be in honor bound to do—at least, if they were not devoid of honor.

The wrong-doers are permitted to walk about unpunished, whilst those who unmask evil and call it by its true name are sentenced for

contempt! Did we not see it when some people were publicly accused of ill-using and permitting the ill-usage of poor lunatics (e.g. in the asylum at the Hague). They were not punished; and the guardians, morally compelled to resign, yet kept their places and walk about as honored and respected citizens, some of them even as members of the town council? Was not the "orphan tyrant," Job van Linderhout, of Neerbosch, retained notwithstanding very aggravating things had been brought to light and he had been condemned by a committee of inquiry? Was not the violator of children, Baron van Keeckeren, released from prison because his health would suffer too much; and is he respected the less for it?

No wonder that justice does not stand in high esteem, and that the expression has become popular that one has to pay for one's right. Hence all sorts of proverbial sayings: "Little thieves are hanged and big ones may walk about," "Money rules the roost," "It is money makes the mare to go," "rich men's spots are covered with money," "one man may steal a horse, when another may not look over the hedge." These are all proofs that the people feel it is not easy for laborers to receive justice, a consequence of the indefinite consciousness that justice serves and must serve as an accomplice of the possessing classes.

The following fable may illustrate this:

A pack of wolves had surprised a flock of sheep. A great many lambs were devoured by the gluttonous and bloodthirsty animals. Among the lambs there was much lamenting, and one ram especially cried out vehemently against the wolves and urged the flock to defend themselves against these beasts of prey. One day he was dragged before the court of justice charged with insulting the wolves. Lambs as well as wolves were summoned as witnesses. All the lambs declared that the ram had been right and had spoken the truth; and a horse, which had seen everything, joined its evidence to that of the lambs. But the wolves that had attacked the flock pretended, and confirmed by oath, that on the contrary they had been attacked by the lambs and, therefore, were compelled to defend themselves against that attack.

And what did the court do? It rejected the evidence of all the lambs as well as that of the horse, and believed the wolves. The sentence ran as follows: "In the name of King Lion, one of the ram's legs shall be beaten off for insulting the wolves." There was a general grumbling in the animal world at this sentence, and every animal was indignant at it. An old fox, however, hearing all this, with the coolest cheek addressed the lambs thus: "Are you aston-

ished at this sentence? Why, I am astonished that you have got off so well and that you have not all been devoured. For just think who were the judges. THEY WERE WOLVES THEMSELVES!!!"

Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear!

II. THE POLICE.—Besides the wiggled and ermined gentlemen of the courts of justice who do the delicate work, there are also persons for the dirty work, and this task is reserved for the police. And yet those who have got to do that job—which is so mean that generally the persons themselves are disgusted with it, and are ready to part with it as soon as they can get some other work for the same wages—those persons do not belong to the possessing, but to the working classes. They, having no property themselves, are to protect the property of others. They, belonging to the class who are robbed, maintain the robbers in possession! In professional zeal, in the hope of reward and advancement, they very often act impudently and mercilessly against their own brothers and class-fellows.

The despotism of the police is law nowadays, and the bourgeoisie has declined so much that it is fain cling to the police. And the latter, well aware of this, is continually increasing its demands. The favorite, the hero of the bourgeoisie, is the helmeted policeman, upon whom it relies to restrain the people and support itself. The police is the sleuth-hound whose duty it is to catch the poor wretches who, in order to satisfy the hunger of their wives and children, are compelled to take something from the provisions produced by their labor—and that they have been robbed of previously.

For the same reason that the poor see in the police their enemies, the rich look upon them as their friends. A strong proof that it is a class institution, a result of the class state. How insolently do they act against the laborers! How they dare to ill-use them, knowing well enough that it will not be taken amiss—in them! And how they toady and cringe to the well-to-do!

Yet, the police have not much reason to be contented. For are not they, too, sent home with wretched wages? Are not they composed of proletarians, slaves, upon whom the same yoke has been laid as upon all the other laborers? Is not this the very reason why they are often mercenary, in such a way that (for a tip) they are willing, if not to commit a murder, at least to be blind to it when it is committed?

So the police is the accomplice of prostitution, as is proved by the revelations about the trade in girls and women, which is international under the high protection of the police.

So it is the constant support of the manufacturers in every strike; for, without any inquiry which of the two parties is right, the police always takes the side of the master instantly against the worker.

So it is the hope and comfort of the rich, who rely on it to protect their properties.

Always on the side of the possessors and against the laborers.

Who are the first to act against the worker, to find fault with him at the least effort to render his burden less oppressive?

The police, mounted and unmounted.

Who treat the workers to cudgel and sabre strokes whenever they attempt to throw off their yoke of bondage?

Again, the police, mounted and unmounted.

That they obey the orders of higher-placed persons, doesn't matter. If we are surprised on the road by a footpad, do we ask him in that case whether he does so of his own free will or by order of other people?

No, we do not.

There is no difference whatever to you between being beaten to death, kicked and ill-treated by order of other persons or by somebody's own free will.

Some people say: It is not the fault of these men, they are sent; they too are the result of the social disorder.

That's all very well; but if they are the result of the social disorder by thrashing us, we are so by not suffering them to thrash us.

Properly speaking, the murderer who murders by order of others is much more despicable; for he is a professional murderer, he sometimes does not even know why he is murdering, while the man who murders of his own accord at any rate has his reasons for doing so.

"But there are, also, respectable policemen," we often hear.

Nonsense! Among gangs of robbers there are also "respectable" people. Among the greatest robbers, we have Gould, Vanderbilt, Rothschild, etc. Are not these all "respectable" men who are admitted and feted in all circles? To the victim it amounts to the same thing, whether he is slain by a "respectable" or any other ruffian.

In one of our great newspapers we read a short time ago: "Just as there is a spirit of popery and a bourgeois spirit, so there is a police spirit. . . . Every person who enters the police station to get a place there will be influenced by that spirit, even if he were quite free from it before." What is this police spirit? Its characteristic point is: HATRED AGAINST THE POOR. Indeed, the police has been established only to take care that the rich can sleep quietly. Its principal aim in social life is to protect the possessing classes and to

prevent the non-possessors from taking anything from those who possess all. The police man must see his natural enemy in the poor man.

The poor man must be a criminal, at any rate he is one *in embryo* and is at all times liable to develop into one. It does not protect the poor man in earning his daily bread honestly. It watches him as a criminal in liberty, and takes him into custody as soon as he shows the least proof of weakness. Nor has the police the least interest in stamping out crime. The existence of criminals is the only excuse for its own existence. Instinctively it nurses crime—for the sake of self-preservation.

And yet, although the possessing classes spend more and more for the police, it cannot possibly satisfy the increasing demands in the long run. Moreover, the highest bidder wins the prize; so that on the very day that the possessing classes are subdued, the whole police will go over to the new governing power. Not caring a bit who is its master, the police will cry with as much pleasure on one day: "Long live the king! Long live the emperor!" as on the next day: "The Republic for ever!" Fawners are always on the side of the triumphant party.

As the possessing classes are a power, allied internationally, we cannot be surprised at their having organised the police internationally in order to counteract in that way the laboring classes who are organising themselves internationally.

In the long run, the police will not be able, however, to oppose the worker; for the property of every possessor would want a policeman to protect it and that will not do. What a spectacle would the world then offer! Next to every poor fellow, pale with hunger, there would be a rich man, pale with fear, and between the two the policeman, armed to the teeth, ready to strike the former down on the very first suspected movement.

As a rule, the police and the judiciary go hand in hand, being both servants of the same master: Capitalism. And if the police goes too far and acts too stupidly, then it may be true that the judiciary deserts her partner to save appearances; as soon as the case is a critical one they will go together and they are not to be trusted. Though there are many complaints against the police and a great many persons urge the necessity of a reorganisation, it will be of no use. Just try to improve a prison, you will never be able to make a good prison; for *prison* and *good* are two ideas of which the one excludes the other. So it is with the police; you will never succeed in getting

a good police; for that which in itself is bad can never become good, be it arranged as it may.

But capitalism uses every means to retain its power. Spying, inciting people against one another, sowing distrust amongst those who should combine to free themselves, dividing in order to rule—those are the means that are actually used from day to day. It despises the traitor, but avails itself of treachery; it despises the liar, but uses lies.

The police is therefore one of the violent means of power, used by the possessing classes to be the masters and to be able to keep up that position. By means of the sting of hunger it provides part of the working class with weapons in order to keep the other and greater part in obedience, which is the easier as this part is unarmed. If you ask: what is the power of the police, by which it is able to keep the masses under restraint? the answer must be, that it is not so much the stick and the sword as the certainty of being permitted to beat—nay, even to kill—while the workers know that for every blow applied to the sacred person of a policeman they will be committed to prison for weeks, months, nay for years. Secure in that impunity the police is strong against the unarmed masses.

III. THE ARMY.—The last stronghold of capitalism is the army, with its cannon and guns and its severe organisation. If you ask the governments (which are nothing but the agents of the possessors) what is the use of the armies, they will all tell you that they are necessary to defend the independence of the country against other nations. But this is not true. It only seems to be so. In reality, the armies are used against the workers in order to secure the power of the possessing classes.

Do we not see the army used whenever it is considered necessary to secure order(!) and peace(!)? A strike has scarcely broken out somewhere, before soldiers are sent there to be always on the side of the masters and to protect their lives and property against the workers. When taxes are to be squeezed out of the people, is it not by means of soldiers—who are ordered to assist the police in keeping the people down? When the people try to defend their rights by meetings and demonstrations in the streets, immediately the troops are ordered to be ready in the barracks to march against the people at the first signal.

In all displays of power by the governing classes, the army is made use of. What is a common saying with the bourgeoisie at the most

trifling rebellion? "Send the soldiers up and let them shoot down the rebels without ceremony!"

Is not this also shrewdly arranged? Part of the people are compelled at a certain age to bid farewell to home and parents, work and friends, to be clothed in fool's dress with red or yellow ornaments, and to be taught the trade of slaughter.¹ By dividing them an effort is made to form a separate class which, when incited against the citizens, is willing to destroy them. It is called an honor to wear the soldier's coat; notions of rank are cultivated to incite soldiers and citizens against one another, in order to be the better able to use the former against the latter. And yet, who are our soldiers? Sons of workers, whose interests have not changed because they have temporarily been dressed in other clothes, but remain the same as those of their fellow workers in their working clothes or blouses.

So when soldiers are ordered to go to a strike, we see workers in uniform standing opposite to workers in civilian dress, and when the command to "Fire!" is given these soldier-workers are ordered to shoot their fathers and mothers, their brothers and sisters. They serve to cause a civil war at the pleasure of capitalism, which is sure of its power as long as it is able to practice the ancient doctrine of "Divide and rule" on the masses.

Recruited *from* the people, paid *by* the people, the army, if necessary, is used *against* the people. That is the lesson we can learn from all this—if we are willing to see and to hear what the actual circumstances show so clearly and distinctly.

So it is not the possessors themselves who defend their property, they seem to be too cowardly and too effeminate for that; but they transfer this task to the non-possessors. If they had a sense of honor, they would not do so, to be sure; if they possessed courage, they would not even confide this task to others.

Now they have succeeded in arranging it so shrewdly that they use one part to keep the other down without incurring any risk themselves. But this very militarism, with its all-devouring mouth, will prove to be one of the means by which capitalism will ruin itself. Indeed, it continually demands new and ever increasing sacrifices which involve it in a fatal circle. In order to oppose Socialism militarism is hailed; and, in its turn militarism causes discontent, which throws many people into the arms of Socialism. So the means of opposing

¹ In Holland, the same as in the other countries on the Continent of Europe, we have the Napoleonic conscription; only a very small number of soldiers are volunteers.

Socialism becomes a nursery of new Socialists. In the long run, militarism must lead to State-bankruptcy; for it is insatiable in its demands, and if you give it one finger it seizes the hand, arm, everything. Its demands are boundless, for it requires everything or nothing.

So it is a double-edged weapon which may be turned at the decisive moment against him who uses it. The iron discipline, the strong organisation must keep all together, and if once the soldiers are arrayed in files, they must listen to the orders of their superiors upon pain of death. But who can prevent them from firing in the air over the people's heads? It will also be necessary to take care that they do not enter the ranks, and he who is able to cause the greatest confusion possible will prevent the soldiers from forming an army. It should be borne in mind that nothing is so much hated among the working classes as being soldiers, and this dislike will prove a great ally. Development of the mind will be the best means, as Frederick of Prussia justly said: "If my soldiers think, none of them will remain in the ranks." So he teaches us that knowledge is the greatest enemy to militarism. Of course, thinking men will not suffer themselves to be used as tools in the hands of others. By means of knowledge the best trenches are dug to undermine the whole stronghold of militarism. It is true what Tolstoi says: "How is it possible with a view to their personal safety that men even suffer that heavy, cruel and murderous power which represents every organised government relying on the army? The most bloodthirsty gang of highwaymen is not so much to be feared. The captain of a gang of robbers is, indeed, limited by the fact that the members of his gang at least enjoy some liberty and are able to protest against committing deeds which are against their consciences. On the other hand, the men forming part of an organised government are not limited by any obstacle—owing to the support of the army. There is no crime which the men belonging to the government or to the army are not ready to commit at the command of him whom chance has placed at their head."

Militarism is a cancer gnawing at the welfare of the nations, and yet it is kept in existence for the sake of the money-bag: which yields and rules and spends all, while the people, good enough to do the work from which everything is born, are permitted to see others enjoy—being destitute of all that ennobles and civilises life and makes it agreeable. And all this for the sake of great Capital, which absorbs everything and which uses kings and emperors, ministers and statesmen, like puppets to do what the really powerful and mighty of our time (the misers or bankers and financiers) require. Everything is submitted to them; and so they are the monarchs and

rulers of the world who, with millions of invisible threads, hold the fate of millions of people in their hands.

We have examined the means of power which enable a handful of men to rule over everything and all, the spiritual means as well as the violent ones, and although there remains much to be said, we think we have explained sufficiently how they have succeeded. An artful net of tyranny has been made in which every little tyrant has a small dominion of his own, ruling over it on condition that he obeys a greater one, who in his turn finds room for his tyranny, until we arrive at the top of the pyramid where capital has its throne. All this is artfully constructed. All these things are like the links of a chain. And if you ask, by what means this edifice is kept together, we mention with Tolstoi the following four means:

1. *Intimidation*, so that people fear every change, which is represented to them as a bugbear.
2. *Bribery*, so that the people are sucked out to fatten some few, who assist one another and use the artless workers for their sport.
3. *Hypnotism*, by which the masses are drugged, for which everything must serve, religion as well as patriotism, the school as well as the church, the material means of brutalisation—tobacco and alcohol—as well as the amusements in theatres and public performances, the spiritual prostitution of the press and of science as well as that of the body.
4. *The power of the army*, which closes the circle of violence.

What are the means to deliver us from all this?

By opposing tyranny, by loosening every authority, each in his own manner and wherever he is able to do so. If some one should say that such protests are of no avail if they are not practised on a large scale, we should answer: "How will you succeed in doing it on a large scale if you do not begin on a small scale?" We believe that every refusal of military service, that every opposition to the great and small tyrants helps to undermine the whole edifice of authority. Don't forget that the example of the brave who venture to do this work will be contagious; for such protests are scarcely spoken of when they are imitated here and there and everywhere. What else would be the reason that such a deed is kept secret as much as possible.

No doubt much influence, a mysterious but strong influence is exercised by the men and women who have strength enough, even

with great sacrifices on their part, to break the bonds in which they were kept. Let us never forget this truth: A people is what it deserves to be. If a people is in bondage, it is because it deserves no better fate, because it consists of slaves. Not the tyrant makes the slaves; but a servile people makes it easy and possible for the tyrant to reach his aim. How could it be possible to rule as a tyrant only for one week over a people who are really and truly free? It would not support tyranny for one day. But the people begin to make tyrants, and, if these act as such, the people utter complaints of their own work and are cowardly enough to yield to circumstances.

Does not Multatuli justly say, in his *Essay on Millions*:

"Tyrants; to be sure, they exist; but who render their existence possible? Their surroundings, the people. All the tyrants mentioned in history could not have existed if the people, the surroundings in which these monsters lived, had not enabled them to play their tyrant's parts from age to age. They, the people, the surroundings—the chaff, as they are called—crouched, fawned, dissembled, applauded every arbitrary deed, every despotic action of the tyrants—where an ox grazes there must be grass, and the people have always been *willing* to be the grass which the two-legged oxen—beasts of prey—nibbled and trod. A people, therefore, deserves the fate it has. No tyrants, no bloodsuckers could exist if the people would not suffer them, would have nothing to do with them. The people have always remained the same. When Nero set Rome on fire, the people shouted. It was the people who cried: "Crucify Jesus; set Barrabas free!" Leaders, preachers of new ideas have ever been abused and thrown at with filth by the Schmoels and Judases among the people."

Before all other things it is necessary to become aware of our condition. First, we must feel the bondage in which we are kept; for no means are sought to get out of it before that is the case. That is the reason why we have, in the first place, to revolutionise the heads, so that the people understand it will not be so difficult for the ninety-eight to get rid of the two who cling to the others in order to suck up the best vital fluids and who cause the tree to pine.

Hypocrisy is a great obstacle in the way, and it puts on such an attractive mask to draw the masses on the wrong track. "So much is done for the people,"—that is the common saying, which becomes a pretext to lull oneself asleep. But without taking into consideration that all this is philanthropy—and this always demoralises the giver as well as the receiver (being nothing but wholesale stealing to give back in detail) and afterwards being praised as a

benefactor of the human race—as soon as we begin to analyse it, it is rather insignificant while the greater part give from their abundance without denying themselves anything.

Tolstoi saw through the game, and therefore wrote: "Temperance is made much of, but in such a way that it cannot diminish drunkenness; education is made much of, but in such a way that, far from annihilating ignorance, it is increased; liberty and the constitution are made much of, but in such a way that despotism is not prevented; the fate of the working classes, but in such a way that they are not protected against slavery; Christianity, but only the official Christian faith which supports the governments instead of overthrowing them."

That is the reason why we also preach a crusade against hypocrisy—which has been called a homage to virtue, but which makes it difficult to discover the enemy in the right place. Hypocrisy has wound itself about humanity, like the climbing plant about the oak, to draw the best sap in its embrace and to thrive at its cost.

As soon as the feeling of self-respect awakes and grows, we will no longer suffer everything; we shall begin to be men in our own circle, men who distinguish themselves by thinking for themselves. We make ourselves free and involuntarily we shall rouse others by our deeds to endeavour with us to abolish some more tyrants.

To rule means to exercise violence, to do what he on whom the violence is practised does not like and what he who uses the violence would surely not suffer himself.

To submit means to bear, to suffer that which you do not like.

Let us therefore shout: "Down with Tyranny!" It is better not to live than to throw oneself away and be nothing in order that other people may be all. Repudiate all the tyrants of to-day, high and low.

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