

Autobiography of Adolph Fischer

On the banks of the Weser, in Germany, almost seven miles above the place where its waters lose themselves in the North Sea, lies the old city, Bremen. In the middle ages Bremen was one of the free cities which formed the Hanseatic Union,⁴³ a combination famous because of its constant war against the free-booters and for its wealth and power. These cities monopolized the trade of the world in those days. Bremen is still one of the most important commercial centers of the European continent, and has today a population of about 140,000. This is the place of my birth. It would be of very little interest to the readers of this journal were I to extensively describe the history of my childhood. It is the same as that of the average child. Therefore I may only state that I attended school eight years and a half and that I sailed for the United States when a lad of fifteen. Soon after my arrival on these shores, I entered apprenticeship as compositor in the printing office of my brother, William B. Fischer, at Little Rock, Ark., at which place he published a weekly German journal. Since the termination of my apprenticeship I have been working at my trade in different cities of this country. In the month of June, 1883, destiny landed me in Chicago, where I have

resided with my family hitherto, occupying a situation as compositor in the office of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* until arrested on the 5th of May for alleged participation in the Haymarket affair. I am a member of the German Typographical Union, which organization I joined in 1879 in St. Louis, Mo. At the latter place in 1881, I also entered into matrimonial engagement, the result being three children—one girl and two boys—who are with my wife in this city.

Being familiar with the doctrines of socialism from my earliest youth, I have held it my duty to spread these principles so dear to me whenever and wherever I could. What induced me to become a socialist, you may ask? This I will relate in a few words:

It happened during the last year of my school days that our tutor of historical science one day chanced to refer to socialism, which movement was at that time beginning to flourish in Germany, and which he told us meant "division of property." I am inclined to believe now that it was a general instruction given by the government to the patriotic pedagogues to periodically describe to their elder pupils socialism as a most horrible thing. It is, as is well known, a customary policy on the part of the respective monarchical governments of the old world to prejudice the undeveloped minds of the youth against everything which is disagreeable to the despots through the medium of the school teachers. For instance, I remember quite distinctly that before the outbreak and during the Franco-German war⁴⁴ we were made to believe by our teachers that every Frenchman was at least a scoundrel, if not a criminal. On the other hand, the kings were praised as the representative of God, and obedience and loyalty to them was described as the highest virtues.

Thus the minds of the children are systematically poisoned, and the fruits of this practice are made use of when the little ones become men and women. (Enough at the mentioned occasion our teachers told us that the socialists were a lot of drunkards, swindlers and idlers, who were opposed to work.) "The time draws nigh," that worthy said, placing his forefinger significantly alongside of his roman nose, "when you young men will have to earn your daily bread in the sweat of your brow. Some of you may acquire wealth,

while others will be less fortunate. Now, these socialists—mark you, who are a lazy set of people—intend to forcibly make you divide with them everything you possess at the termination of every year. For instance, if you should call two pairs of boots your own, one of these socialistic scoundrels will kindly relieve you of one pair. How would you like this?” Certainly, we thought we did not like this at all. Neither would I consent to anything of that sort to-day. Most decidedly not. Such an arrangement, I fancied, would be absurd.

Now I knew it to be a fact that my father took part in socialistic meetings very frequently, and I wondered that day why he—whom I thought to be so good—should have intercourse with such a bad class of men, whose object it was to lead a lazy life and to make the sober, industrious working people, at the termination of each year, divide their earnings with them. When I reached home that day I intimated to my father what (according to what my teacher had told us) bad people the socialists must be. Much to my surprise my dear father laughed aloud and embraced me very affectionately. “Dear Adolph,” he said, “if socialism is what your teacher explained it to be, why then the very same institutions which prevail now would be socialistic.” And my father went on to show me how, in fact, there were so many idlers and indolent people under the now existing form of society, who were residing in palatial houses and living luxuriously at the expense of the sober and industrious working people, and that socialism had the mission to abolish such unjust division. After this day I accompanied my father to socialistic gatherings, and soon became convinced of the truth of what he had said. I began to study. Wandering about the streets I often saw groups of hard-fisted men who were working in quarries and other places of toil, and handling heavy picks and clumsy shovels from early morning until late at night. Standing a little aside I would notice an elegantly dressed individual, smoking a Havana, and seemingly interested in the work of the toilers. The hands of the idler were covered with kid gloves, in the bosom of his snow-white shirt glittered a diamond pin, and from his vest dangled a valuable gold watch chain. You can guess, dear reader, who this gentleman was—the “employer.”

The busy toilers, notwithstanding the many hours of strained work, could scarcely earn enough to keep themselves and family from want. I saw they inhabited miserable hovels, and the pleasures and comforts of life were unknown to them. Their children were hollow-eyed and resembled fenceposts—covered with human skin more than human beings.

Following, on one occasion, the fine gentleman whom I had seen standing idly by, and who had commanded the workingmen, I saw him enter a wonderfully beautiful house—a palace. Costly pictures decorated the massive walls of its parlors, precious carpets covered the floors and golden chandeliers were suspended from the ceilings. The safes and pantries were bursting with its tempting contents, and the tables covered with choice wines and delicacies. In short, everything good and agreeable could be enjoyed here in abundance. This contrast between the busy toiler and the idle bystander did not fail to impress itself upon my mind, especially as I observed that these conditions existed everywhere and in all branches of industry. I perceived that the diligent, never resting human working bees, who create all wealth and fill the magazines with provisions, fuel and clothing, enjoy only a minor part of their products and lead a comparatively miserable life, whilst the drones, the idlers, keep the ware-houses locked up and revel in luxury and voluptuousness.

Was I wrong, or was the world wrong? I saw men who manufactured shoes and boots and had helped fill the store-houses with these products ever since their boyhood, and yet they lingered to leave their shanties after rainy weather for fear of getting wet feet, and in many cases the toes of their children's feet peeped speakingly out of the top of the shabby shoes. Bricklayers were busy building houses from sunrise until sunset for several decades, yet as I looked about me, I discovered but very few who called a house their own; they were bound to pay rent for the very same houses which they had built. The clothing stores I knew to be crammed with goods, but it was not a rare spectacle in my native city to see tailors walk about in the streets with pants patched to such an extent, that they

resembled chess-boards. Whilst the journey bakers were half-roasting in the hot bake-house, sixteen out of twenty-four hours a day, their wives in many instances did not know where to get a loaf of bread. My father's neighbor worked in a butcher shop, but his wages were so low that his family could afford the luxury of one pound of meat only once a week—on Sunday. All these circumstances convinced me that "there must be something rotten in the state of Denmark," and it did not even require a profound thinker or a sorcerer to discover that the prevailing social institutions were based upon the extortion of one class by another.

But now, after I had come to this conclusion I wondered whether the workingmen were conscious of their real situation. I found that the overwhelming majority were not. Instead of hating those who enslaved them, they looked upon their masters as their benefactors. Many incidents which I observed proved this to be a fact. For instance, I remember visiting a cousin of mine one Sunday, who worked in a gigantic sugar refinery together with thousands of other men and women, the owner of said factory being a well-known millionaire. My cousin could not help at every occasion to speak in high terms of praise of his "benefactor," as he styled his employer. On this day especially he endeavored to make the generosity of his "benefactor" plausible to me. "Why," my enthusiastic cousin explained, clapping his hands, "besides employing so many people, who would otherwise be compelled to starve, he donates annually an enormous sum of money to charitable purposes, and, furthermore, he was so noble-hearted as to give employment to the widow and children of the two unfortunate working men who lost their lives last month by being crushed by the machinery." But ungrateful as I was I saw nothing noble in this. I had read in novels (secretly, my father having forbidden me such literature) that Schinderhannes (a noted German "outlaw"), and other famous highwaymen, had given part of their booty to the poor, and therefore I saw nothing extraordinary in the "charity" of my cousin's "benefactor." I not only thought so, but I also communicated my thoughts to my esteemed relative, who in return got very angry be-

cause of this comparison, and muttered something which sounded like "that lad is getting too smart."

This is only one example. Thus I found the brains of the toilers to be molded everywhere. Oh, these stupid fools! They were slaves without knowing it. They stood still like innocent sheep while their masters sheared them. Aye, more than that, they looked upon them as their noble benefactors, who employed them for the reason of saving them from starvation.

Years have elapsed since the time of my first inquiries into the causes of social inequalities. I have traveled comparatively a good deal, and have come in contact with people of all classes, and was enabled to study and learn. The whole of life is but a school. That which is commonly called a school is merely an introduction into this practical school of life. A good many of the toilers, like myself, have profited by the lessons of the serious school of experience, they are beginning to discover the real causes of the diseases of society. The reigning classes do not like this a bit. The capitalists and profit-mongers are dependent on social diseases for their harvest. Without them they would be what physicians are without physical diseases. This being the case, they try to prevent the toilers, their slaves, to awake from their mental torpor. And what means do the human drones employ to accomplish their schemes, in other words, to keep the wage-slaves in ignorance?

Let us investigate the matter. From their earliest childhood the working men are being prepared for their destiny like the dancing bears brought up for the profession by his master. In the schools and churches they are told that it is the will of God that there should be rich and poor people. God knows and sees everything and nothing exists without His knowledge. The doings of the Almighty being wise and inscrutable, He has a special purpose in bestowing wealth and riches upon some of His children, whilst others perish in want of the indispensable necessities. Now, some narrow-minded people may think that this is very partial of God; but they are mistaken. For those who are seemingly neglected on this miserable earth, will be given the more recognition in heaven, so that every-

thing will be balanced after all. Humility and meekness are qualities which are highly agreeable to God and therefore highly recommendable to the workingmen. Patience and obedience are also becoming to the toilers. Work and pray; for God Himself has demanded of sinful humanity to eat their daily bread in the sweat of their brow.

These and similar "advisers" do not fail to make an impression upon the susceptible mind of the child, and thus they pass into manhood being obedient, unassuming and ignorant slaves, without being aware of it. Being raised in ignorance they suspect no wrong, but believe that the form of society under which they live is the natural order of things. No wonder, therefore, that the dominating classes call these people "good, honest, law-abiding" workingmen. They have but *too much* reason to thus dominate them, for they are really as obedient as a flock of geese and as gentle as lambs.

But if these blind, ever-dreaming slaves would only glance behind the curtains they would discover that they are infamously duped. They would find that those who yell into their ears, "Work and pray," condescend to pray, indeed, but do not work, and that those who never tire of reminding the toilers of the "demand of God," that they should eat their daily bread in the sweat of their brow, do not apply this adage to themselves. To be sure, these hypocrites sweat some times, but not from work; they do so amid wild orgies and debauchery.

The capitalistic papers of this country sneered at a certain Indian chief; I think Red Cloud,⁴⁵ who, they reported, had said: "What we (the Indians) want is white men to plant our corn, hoe it, harvest it, and put it in to barns which they will build for us." Now, I cannot comprehend why the capitalistic press considers this utterance of Red Cloud as a peculiar one. Have not the capitalists put this very same idea into practice? Let us investigate. Instead of the words "white men," use the expression "workingmen," and it will read thus: "What we (the capitalists, the privileged class) want is workingmen to plant our corn, hoe it, harvest it, and put it into barns which they will build for us." Well, nevertheless, these condi-

tions exist to-day. The wage-slaves really produce everything, and store their products away into warehouses which they build for their masters; and besides they build for them, also palaces such as Red Cloud never had on his programme. Yes; and the toilers do more than that; they decorate their masters with diamonds, and overburden them with luxuries and riches of which Red Cloud never dreamed. Who can deny this fact?

In order to illustrate the existing social "order," I will draw the following parable:

A long time ago the forests of a tropical land were populated by a happy lot of monkeys. They lived together like a large family and quarreling and discontentedness were qualities totally unknown to them. For a livelihood they searched the surroundings for food for themselves and their young ones in a harmonious way and without grudge. They were happy, indeed. One day some cunning monkeys were overcome by a very smart idea. They erected fences around the best parts of the forests and forbade their fellow-monkeys to hunt for food inside of the hedged regions. They named these pieces of land "property." Now, the propertyless monkeys were in utter despair, for they did not know where to get food for themselves and families. They called upon the property-owners and complained of their impossibility of making a livelihood. The propertied monkeys said unto them: "We may allow you to seek food on our property under the condition that you will give us half of the result of your labor." This offer the poor propertyless monkeys were compelled to accept, as there was no other way of making a living. No other choice was left open to them as either to accept or starve. The propertyless monkeys had to build large warehouses for their "employers," into which to store away their services as was sufficient to keep themselves and families alive. This was called "means." The property-owning monkeys became very wealthy, and were living in luxury and idleness. And why should they not? Did not the poor monkeys work for them, and thus enable them to be idle and yet debauch in abundance?

For a long time the working monkeys did not grumble, but were

very obedient. Generations thus passed, and the monkeys thought that the "social institutions" could not be otherwise and that there had to be rich and poor monkeys, because these were the conditions which existed already when they were born. But the employers grew continually richer whilst the portion of the products of the workers, which they received as a compensation, were reduced to the lowest standard. Consequently the poor working monkeys were living in destitution and misery, notwithstanding the fact that the warehouses were filled with food. Discontentedness among the workers was the natural result of the growing wealth on one side and increasing poverty on the other. In order to keep the grumbling monkeys in subjection and maintain the respect for the existing institutions (which were called "law and order") the propertied classes hired numbers of able-bodied monkeys from the ranks of the propertyless classes. Those men were called police, sheriffs, militia, a. s. f.

Now, the dissatisfied monkeys assembled frequently for the purpose of seeking remedy for the existing evils. As the opinions as to ways and means to secure better conditions were very different, they formed various organizations. Some of the workers aimed at "higher wages" and others wanted to work less time. Still another class of workers held that the "wage-system" should be abolished entirely. They said that the propertied monkeys had accumulated their riches by robbing the workers out of the major part of the results of their labor. Furthermore, they claimed that the wealthy classes had no right to monopolize the natural resources of existence and thereby force their fellow-monkeys into their services, but that the mother-earth and her products belonged to the monkey race in common. The monkeys who confessed the latter ideas were considered very dangerous by the privileged classes. "Law and order is endangered," the wealthy cried. "Those anarchists want to overthrow our glorious institutions and turn everything tippy-topsy. We must do away with those blood-thirsty rascals, who want to take our property and who are undermining our free and glorious institutions." These propertied monkeys were also opposed to that part of the working

monkeys who only demanded a larger compensation for their work; but their hate against those who wanted to abolish their privileges altogether was immeasurable.

The capitalistic press, and even numerous labor journals, define anarchism as murder, plunder, arson and outrage upon society in general. These “learned” journalists, or at least a majority of them thus defining anarchism, misrepresent the objects and aims of this teaching maliciously. Anarchism does not mean plunder and outrage upon society; contrarily, its mission is to outroot the systematic plunder of a vast majority of the people by a comparatively few—the working classes by the capitalists. It aims at the extermination of the outrages committed by the reigning classes upon the wage-slaves, under the name of “law and order.” Murder, plunder, robbery, outrages. “Is an anarchist really the impersonation of all crimes, of everything dastardly and damnable?” The “International Working People’s Association,” the organization of the anarchists, has the following platform, which was agreed upon at the congress at Pittsburgh in October, 1883. Let this platform be the answer to the questions I have raised before:

1. Destruction of the existing class rule, by all means, i.e., by energetic, relentless, revolutionary and international action.
2. Establishment of a free society based upon co-operative organization of production.
3. Free exchange of equivalent products by and between the productive organizations—without commerce and profit-mongery.
4. Organization of education on a secular scientific and equal basis for both sexes.
5. Equal rights for all without distinction to sex or race.
6. Regulation of all public affairs by free contracts between the autonomous (independent) communes and associations, resting on a federalistic basis.

Does this sound like outrages and crime?

In the course of my observations I will dwell more thoroughly on the aims and objects of anarchy.

Many people undoubtedly long to know what the relationship

between anarchism and socialism is, and whether these two doctrines have anything in common with each other. A number of persons claim that an anarchist cannot be a socialist, and a socialist not an anarchist. This is wrong. The philosophy of socialism is a general one, and covers several subordinate teachings. To illustrate, I will cite the word "Christianity." There are Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, and various other religious sects, all of whom call themselves Christians. Although every Catholic is a Christian, it would not be correct to say that every Christian believes in Catholicism.

Webster defines socialism thus: "A more orderly, equitable and harmonious arrangement of social affairs than has hitherto prevailed." Anarchism is aiming at this; anarchism is seeking a more just form of society. Therefore every anarchist is a socialist, but every socialist is not necessarily an anarchist. The anarchists again are divided into two factions; the communistic anarchists and the Proudhon or middle-class anarchists.⁴⁶ The "International Working People's Association" is the representative organization of the communistic anarchists. Politically we are anarchists, and economically, communists or socialists. With regard to political organization the communistic anarchists demand the abolition of political authority, the state, we deny the right of a class or single individual to govern or rule another class or individual. We hold that, as long as one man is under the dictation of another, as long as one man can in any form subjugate his fellow man, and as long as the means of existence can be monopolized by a certain class or certain individuals, there can be no liberty. Concerning the economical form of society, we advocate the communistic or co-operative method of production.

As to the distribution of products, a free exchange between the organizations of productions without profit-mongery would take place. Machinery and the means of production in general would be the common servant, and the products certainly the common property of the whole of the people. The *Proudhon* anarchists, however, although being opposed to the state and political authority, do not

advocate the co-operative system of production, and the common ownership of the means of production, the products and the land.

In what respect do the social-democrats differ from the anarchists? The state socialists do not seek the abolition of the state, but they advocate the centralization of the means of production in the hands of the government, in other words, they want the government to be the controller of industry. Now, a socialist who is not a state-socialist must necessarily be an anarchist. It is utterly ridiculous of men like Dr. Aveling to state that they are neither state-socialists nor anarchists. Dr. Aveling has to be either one or the other.⁴⁷

The term "anarchism" is of Greek origin and means "without government," or, in other words, "without oppression." I only wish that every working man would understand the proper meaning of this word. It is an absurd falsehood if the capitalists and their hired editors say that "anarchism" is identical with disorder and crime. On the contrary, anarchism wants to do away with the now existing social disorder, it aims at the establishment of the real—the natural—order. I think every sensible man ought to conceive, that where ruling is existing on one hand, there must be submission on the other. He who rules is a tyrant, and he who submits is a slave. Logically there can be no other outlet, because submission is the antithesis of rule. Anarchists hold that it is the natural right of every member of the human family to control ourselves. If a centralized power—government—is ruling the mass of people (no matter whether this government "represent the will of the majority of the people" or not) it is enslaving them, and a direct violation of the laws of *nature*.

Where laws are made there must be certain interests which cause their issue. Now every statute law, and consequently every violation thereof—crime—can be traced back to the institution of private property. The state protects the interests of the owners of private property (wealthy class), and therefore does not and *cannot* possibly protect the interests of the non-possessing people (the wage-workers), because the interest of both are of an opposite nature. The capitalists who have taken possession of the means of produc-

tion—factories, machinery, land, etc.—are the masters, and the workingmen who have to apply to the capitalists for the use of the means of production (for which they receive a small compensation) in order to live, are the slaves. The interests of the capitalistic class are backed by the state (militia, sheriffs, and police) while the interests of the non-possessing people are not protected. Anarchists say that there should be no class interests, but that every human being should have *free access* to the means of existence and that the pantries of mother-earth should be accessible to all of her children. One part of the great human family has no right to deprive their brothers and sisters of their legitimate place at the common table, which is set so richly by generous mother-nature for all. Anarchists, as well as all other thinking people, claim, that in the present society, a great number of people are deprived of a decent existence.—*We demand the re-installation of the disinherited!* Is this a crime? Is this an outrage upon society? Are we therefore dangerous criminals, whose lives should be taken in the interests of the common good of society?

Yes, the anarchists demand the re-installation of the disinherited members of the human family. It is, therefore, quite natural that the privileged classes should hate them. Why, do not wrongdoing parties always hate those who disclose the natures of their transactions and open the eyes of their ignorant victims? Certainly they do. The anarchists are very much hated by the extortioners; indeed, they are proud of it. To them, this is a proof that they are on the right road. But the ruling classes very cunningly play the role of the thief, who, when pursued by his discoverers, cried out, "stop the thief," and by this manipulation succeeded in making good his escape.

The anarchists have proven that the existing form of society is based upon the exploitation of one class by another; in plain words, upon legalized robbery. They say that few persons have no right whatever, to monopolize the resources of nature; and they urge the victims, the toilers, to take possession of the means of production, which belong to the people in common, and thus secure the full

benefit of their toil. Anarchists do not want to deprive the capitalists of their existence, but they protest against the capitalists depriving the toilers of their right to a decent existence. Should the communistic form of production prevail, the capitalists of to-day would not starve; they would be situated just as comfortably and would be just as happy (yea, happier than they are now) as the rest of the people. But certainly, they would have to take an active part in the production and be satisfied with their respective share of the results of labor, performed in common with their fellow-men.

The strongest bulwark of the capitalistic system is the ignorance of its victims. The average toiler shakes his head like the incredulous Thomas, when one tries to make plausible to him, that he is held in economic bondage. And this is so easily to be seen if one only takes the pains to think a little. Working at my trade alongside my colleagues, whom I tried to convince of my ideas, I used to tell them a story about some foxes: "Several foxes, in speculating about some scheme, which would enable them to live without hunting for food themselves succeeded at last in discovering one. They took possession of all the springs and other water-places. Now, as the other animals came to quench their thirst, the foxes said, unto them: 'The water-places belong unto us; if you want to drink, you must bring us something in return, you must bring us food for compensation.' The other animals were foolish enough to obey, and, in order to drink they had to hunt the whole day for food for the foxes, so that they themselves had to live very meagre." I asked one of my colleagues, who was prominent as a denunciator of socialism, what his opinion was concerning the just-mentioned story. He told that the animals who were thus swindled by the foxes were very foolish in obeying them, and ought to drive the latter away from the water-places. When I directed his attention to the fact that a similar practice was being cultivated in modern society, with the only difference that the role of the foxes was occupied by the capitalists, and the water-places were represented by the means of production, and that he (my colleague) was very inconsistent in condemning the one and defending the other, he owed me the answer. This, for in-

stance, illustrates the ignorance and indifference of the average workingmen. In the case of the foxes, they see no more and no less than robbery in their schemes, whilst in the case of the capitalists they approve of their methods.

Many inconsistent objections to anarchism are being made by its opponents. Some people have the impression that in an anarchistic society, where there is nobody to govern and nobody to be governed, every person would be isolated. This is false. Men have implanted by nature an impulse to associate with their fellow men. In a free society men would form economic as well as social association; but all organizations would be voluntary, not compulsory. As I have asserted before, laws and the violation thereof, crimes, are attributed to the institution of private property, especially to the unequal distribution of the means of existence, to degradation and want. When the institution of private property will be abolished; when economic and social equalities will be established; when misery and want will belong to the past, then crime will be unknown and laws will become superfluous. It is a wrong assertion when people claim that a man is a criminal because of a natural disposition to crime. A man, as a rule, is but the reflex of the conditions which surround him. In a society, which places no obstacle in the road of free development of men, and which gives everybody an equal share to the pursuit of happiness, there will be no cause which will induce men to become bad.

The legalized private property system gives birth to crime and at the same time punishes it because it exists. The mother punishes her own child because it is born. Do away with the systems that produce evils and the latter will vanish. The removal of the cause is synonymous with the removal of the effects; but the social diseases will never be cured if you declare war against the victims and on the other hand defend the causes which produced them. If one has the small-pox it would not cure the disease if one would scratch the scabs off. The disease in this case is system of private-property, and the scabs its evil effects.

How will the anarchists realize their ideas? What means do they

intend to employ to accomplish the realization of a free society? Much has been written and talked on this subject, and, as an avowed anarchist, I will in plain terms give my individual opinion to the readers of this journal. The "anarchism" itself does not indicate force; on the contrary it means peace. But I believe that everybody who has studied the true character of the capitalistic form of society, and who will not deceive himself, will agree with me that now and never will the ruling classes abandon their privileges peaceably.

Anarchism demands a thorough transformation of society, the total abolition of the private-property system. Now, history shows us that even reforms within the frame of the existing society have never been accomplished without the force of arms. Feudalism received its death blow through the great French revolution a century ago, which at the same time gave form to modern capitalism. Capitalism now is speedily attaining its most extreme character, that is, it is developing into monopolism. Wealth concentrates itself more and more in a few hands and the misery and poverty of the great mass of people is consequently enlarging in the same degree. The rich get richer and the poor poorer. Like the ruling classes in the eighteenth century, so the same classes at the eve of the nineteenth century are deaf to the complaints and warnings of the disinherited, and blind to the misery and degradation which surround their luxuriously outfitted palaces. The natural result will be that perhaps before the nineteenth century will wing its last hours the people will arise en masse, expropriate the privileged and proclaim the freedom of the human race. It is wrong if people assert that the anarchists will be responsible for the coming revolution. No, the drones of society are the parties who will have to answer to the charge of being the cause of the prospective uprising of the people; for the rich and mighty have ears and hear not, and eyes and yet see not.

To abolish chattel slavery in this country a long and awful war took place. Notwithstanding the fact that indemnification was offered for their losses, the slaveholders would not bestow freedom upon their slaves.⁴⁸ Now, in my judgment, he who believes that the modern slave-holders—the capitalists—would voluntarily, without

being forced to do so, give up their privileges and set free their wage-slaves, are poor students. Capitalists possess too much egotism to give way to reason. Their egotism is so enormous that they even refuse to grant subordinate and insignificant concessions. Capitalists and syndicates, for instance, rather lose millions of dollars than to accept the eight-hour labor system. Would a peaceable solution of the social question be possible, the anarchists would be the first ones to rejoice over it.

But is it not a fact that on occasion of almost every strike the minions of the institutions of private property—militia, police, deputy sheriffs; yes, even federal troops—are being called to the scenes of conflict between capital and labor, in order to protect the interests of capital? Did it ever happen that the interests of labor were guarded by those forces? What peaceable means should the toilers employ? There is, for example, the strike? If the ruling classes want to enforce the “law” they can have every striker arrested and punished for “intimidation” and conspiracy. A strike can only be successful if the striking workingmen prevent their places being occupied by others. But this prevention is a crime in the eyes of the law. Boycott? In several states the “courts of justice” have decided that the boycott is a violation of the law, and in consequence thereof, a number of boycotts have had the pleasure of examining the inner construction of penitentiaries “for conspiracy” against the interests of capital. “But,” says some apostles of harmony, “there is something left which will help us. There is the ballot.” No doubt many people who say this are honest in their belief.

But scarcely did the workingmen participate in the elections as a class, many representatives of “law and order” advocate a limitation (in many instances even the total abolition) of the right of the proletarians to vote. People who read the *Chicago Tribune* and *Times* and other representative capitalistic organs, will confirm my statement. The propaganda among capitalists in favor of limiting the right to vote to taxpayers—property owners—only, is increasing constantly, and will be realized whenever the political movement of the workingmen becomes really dangerous to the interests of

capital. The "Law and Order League" of capitalists recently organized all over the country to defeat the demands of organized labor, has declared that the workingmen must not be allowed to *obtain power over the ballot box*. They have so resolved everywhere.

The anarchists are not blind. They see the development of things and predict that a collision between the plebeians and patricians is *inevitable*. Therefore, in time for the coming struggle—*to arms!* If threatening clouds are visible on the horizon, I advise my fellowman to carry an umbrella with him, so he will not get wet. Am I then the cause of the rain? No. So let me say plainly that, in my opinion, only by the force of arms can the wage slaves make their way out of capitalistic bondage.

The Haymarket meeting and its consequences.

I have mentioned in the course of this article before, that again and again, when conflicts between capital and labor occurred, militia, police sheriffs and Pinkertons have thrust their weight into the scale in the interest of capital. These interferences have in many cases resulted in most unprovoked slaughterings of workingmen and women, yes, even innocent children; and the capitalistic newspapers have in a beastly manner applauded these massacres of the "canaille." No single instance is known to me where the perpetrators have been punished for such dastardly and cowardly crimes. I need only to point to the atrocious actions of deputy sheriffs in East St. Louis last spring in killing seven or eight men, women and children without the slightest provocation; the perpetrators were not even indicted, much less tried. How the militia raved in Lemont, Illinois, some time ago, the widows and orphans of the slain can tell; the murderers were not prosecuted for their crime, but highly praised for their "bravery."⁴⁹ Without any pretense whatever, militia men inaugurated a scene of horror in Belleville, Illinois, a few years ago; no punishment followed the outrage. In the various coal regions of this country hundreds of widows and orphans mourn over their husbands and fathers who have been slaughtered by the minions of capital. Would I name and give a description of all crimes

thus committed in the name of "law and order," I would have to write a book as large as the bible. Chicago herself can sing a sad song about the outrages of her police. Scores of her citizens, who were mere spectators, had their skulls broken at the time of the last strike of the street-car employes, and several persons have lost their reason as a consequence of the merciless clubbing.⁵⁰ As a reward the leader of the clubbing hordes was advanced from a mere captain to inspector of police. Hundreds of other "American sovereigns" have had their ribs broken and are crippled every year without any provocation; by drunken and brutal despots of "law and order," and the grave-yards harbor the dead bodies of not a few workingmen, who were killed by the police, while endeavoring to secure a higher compensation for their toil.

On all these occasions the "International Working People's Association" has never failed to raise a protest against the outrages and to demand a conviction of the guilty parties. Now, the McCormick affair on the 3rd day of May led to the meeting on the Haymarket. In a meeting on the evening of the 3rd of May, in 54 West Lake street, of which Waller (who testified during the trial on behalf of the state) was chairman,⁵¹ the meeting of the following night was arranged on the suggestion of Waller himself for the purpose of protesting against the brutal behavior of the police. The presiding officer (Waller) appointed me as a committee to look after the printing of hand-bills and the invitation of speakers, which duty I performed. On Tuesday the 4th of May, I had the hand-bills printed and distributed.

The meeting took place and was a very quiet and orderly one. Even several witnesses for the state testified that the speeches were of a more conservative character than those made by the speakers on previous occasions. I was present and listened to the speeches until about ten minutes past ten o'clock at which time dark clouds moved up, indicating a rain-storm. Fielden was speaking at this time, but Parsons interrupted him, making the remark that the people present had better adjourn to Zepf's hall, which was near by, on account of the threatening rain. Fielden, taking up his speech again,

urged the audience to have patience for a few minutes yet, as he would have finished his speech in a short while, and then the listeners all could go home. I, however, in the company of a friend proceeded to Zepf's saloon, where a few moments later, Parsons put in an appearance also. I had been in the saloon scarcely four or five minutes, when we all heard the sound of an explosion, and simultaneous volleys of shots. Before I could realize what had happened, people came rushing into the saloon, apparently to seek shelter from the bullets, some of which whistled even through the saloon. Now, I comprehended the situation; but I had at first supposed that the police or the militia had attacked the meeting with a gatling gun, so tremendous was the report of the explosion. At once the doors of the saloon were locked, and thus I was compelled to remain in the building perhaps ten or fifteen minutes, before I succeeded in gaining the sidewalk and making my way home.

The first details of the real character of the occurrence at the Haymarket, I learned the following morning, when I bought a morning paper on a Milwaukee avenue car on my way down town. On the same morning, about half past ten o'clock, I was arrested in the office of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, 107 Fifth avenue, together with all other compositors of that paper, and I have breathed prison air ever since.

What caused the police to attack the meeting? Certainly not the attitude of the assembled people; for it was proven during the trial that the meeting had been an orderly one, and that there was no indication that trouble would arise from the gathering. Even Mayor Harrison, who was present, testified to that fact.⁵²

A few months ago the Chicago *Times* compared the anarchists and socialists with the murdering and plundering bands of Apaches, and especially the "convicted" anarchists with Chief Geronimo and his staff. I, in return, ask of an unprejudiced public, whether this omen cannot with more justice be applied to the police, or at least to the commanders of the same. I think such a comparison would be more accurate. So be it then. The police-Apaches had spilled workingmen's blood already on Monday afternoon and at intervals

on Tuesday; but they thirsted for more. On the night of the memorable 4th of May they lay crouching in their wigwams on Desplaines street. They would have rather surprised the meeting at the beginning; but Mayor Harrison was there and they did not wish the mayor to be an eye-witness of the intended Bartholomew night. With impatient strides chief Geronimo Bonfield measured his wigwam and said: "The trouble with these d - - - socialists is that they always have their wives and children with them. I wish I could have three or four thousand of them in a bunch, without their families, and then I would make short work of them."

(It was testified by a trustworthy person, during the trial, that Bonfield used words to this effect.) Mayor Harrison had left the meeting at last and had gone home, but not until he had told Bonfield not to undertake an attack upon the gathering, because it was orderly and peaceable. But hark! hasty steps approach the wigwam! Who is it? Scouts (detectives). "Mighty chief," they exclaim, "if you want to make an attack, now is the time for you, for the meeting will soon adjourn. Fielden said just now that he would be through with his speech, and if you linger any longer the socialists will be on their way home!" (The police-station is only a block distance from the Haymarket). The eyes of the chief sparkle in delight, and he gives to his warriors the signal to march. Rapidly they approach the meeting. The braves, with one hand clenching their clubs, with the other their pistols, were just ready to commence their bloody work, when the deathly bomb came through the air with a known awful result. Who threw the missile? I do not know; I was not in the meeting at that time. But still I am sentenced to death!

There remains but little for me to relate, for I assume that the readers of this journal are familiar with the farce in Judge Gary's court room. I do not believe that there is a trial on record in this country which equals this trial with regard to unfairness and the use of all possible corrupt means, including perjury and bribery, in order to procure a conviction. The prosecution knew that I was in Zepf's saloon at the time of the explosion of the bomb, and five unimpeached and trustworthy witnesses, against whose character

not a word could be said, testified to this fact. But Gilmer ascends the witness box and swears (for cash) with the dryest air in the world that he saw me in the alley together with Spies, who, he claimed, lit a match the moment the missile was thrown. Furthermore, this hired tool of Grinnell swore that Schnaubelt, whom he claimed to be the bomb thrower, was five feet eight inches tall, so that he (Gilmer) could look over his head.⁵³ Now, everybody who knows Schnaubelt will confirm that he is a man of more than medium height 6 feet and 2 inches tall! In this style the whole trial was managed. The defense had witnesses in the witness-box (not “ignorant, lying foreigners,” as the state’s attorney pleased to express himself, but “law-abiding and intelligent American-born citizens”) to whom officials of the Desplaines street station had said on the evening of the trouble, that they better had stay away from the meeting, because blood would flow in the streets that night. But the court rejected their testimony as “not admissible.”

Notwithstanding the false testimony which was manufactured by the state by the bushel, the court admitted in pronouncing the sentence, that “it was not proven that any one of the defendants was directly connected with the throwing of the bomb at the Haymarket, and also not, who threw the missile; but that defendants had for years advocated violence, which agitation had induced the perpetrator to commit the act at the Haymarket.” Did you, unprejudiced reader, ever hear any similar words uttered by a court of justice? It is astonishing. If Judge Gary admits that it is not known who threw the bomb, what law authorizes him to put us to death, because he supposes that the unknown perpetrator was encouraged to commit the act by our teachings!

But, alas! I forgot one fact: Seven policemen have died and, therefore, seven somebodies must pay the penalty. Now, as the anarchists are hated by a great many people—on the one hand by the aristocrats and on the other by a number of foolish workingmen—the agents of the ruling class thought it the easiest way to capture the ones of their number who seemed to be the most “dangerous” to society, place a noose around their necks and let them hang until

they are dead. Well, it remains to be seen whether the people of this country are so degraded as to permit the commission of a seven-fold judicial murder.

There is one factor which played a damnable part before, during and after the trial: *the capitalistic press*. I dare say that even the newspapers in despotic Russia and Germany are not so unfair, lying and hypocritical as the press of "the land of the free and the home of the brave." It would consume too much space were I to nail all the lies which have been manufactured and published by the press against us. But I will take this opportunity to show that I do not exaggerate when I speak of the hypocrisy of the capitalistic lying sheets. I will quote a few sentences from an article which appeared in a Chicago morning paper a few weeks after the Haymarket affair. This article was published as a rebuke of an order given by Mayor Harrison to all city officials, that reporters should be excluded from police stations and other centres when news items were to be had: "Carter's Big Scheme.—An Order that is a Boomerang and that may lead to Sensational Developments."

Here are a few quotations:

"The force has paled it exceedingly fine on the press and the public," said a gentleman long identified with police matters yesterday. "The department has never had any love for the papers, but it would not do for the mayor to show his hand while the surprised people were busy swelling the cash testimonials to the police. I say the 'surprised people' deliberately, because that was the sentiment which actuated the men who made the contributions and bought bundles of tickets for the benefits. The papers made heroes of the police, and for a while it was fashionable to idolize them. For what? Simply because they did not run. What they did was well enough done, but that was what they were paid for. They did nothing but their duty, and in their grateful surprise that they did that the people showered money upon them, *dragooned as they were by the papers, which gave up columns to their praise. But a good many things about the riots remain to be*

told, and now that the boys have been shut out the stories may come to the surface. The policemen were not all as brave as lions by any means, and they were nearer being stampeded in Haymarket than any of them will now admit. Would you believe me if I were to tell you that when the race began after a bomb exploded a flying newspaper man dashed into a house near-by and *discovered a dozen officers frantically trying to barricade themselves in? Well, now, that is said to be the cold fact, and the reporter who is responsible for the statement can break into one of the big papers with it any morning.* That is by no means the only instance, I believe, and now that the season of heroics is past, the suppressed truth would not be unpalatable. It would be interesting to know, for instance, how many of the wounded policemen were shot by their panic-stricken comrades in the ranks. The hospital authorities have not been particular to tell just what sort of bullet wounds were made in the bodies of the officers, and I would not be surprised if it could be easily ascertained that bullets taken from the wounds would fit the regulation revolvers. When that kind of ammunition begins to be used by the reporters it may be that the old man will realize that his order is a boomerang.”

I quote these extracts in order to show that the capitalistic press and the authorities know the real facts about the Haymarket affair, but are keeping them from the public. In thus threatening the police with sensational developments, the capitalistic newspaper “lets the cat out of the bag.” It is an open secret that most of the policemen who were wounded from bullets, received them from their fellow-officers. The newspapers and police know this; but when a physician testified to this fact on the witness stand, they raised a howl. During the trial as well as ever since, the press gathers up all possible and impossible stories and lies which, could in any way harm us; but they keep their columns closed against any appeal for justice and fairness. Pharisees!

As the court as well as the states-attorney have plainly hinted, the verdict of death was rendered for the purpose of crushing the

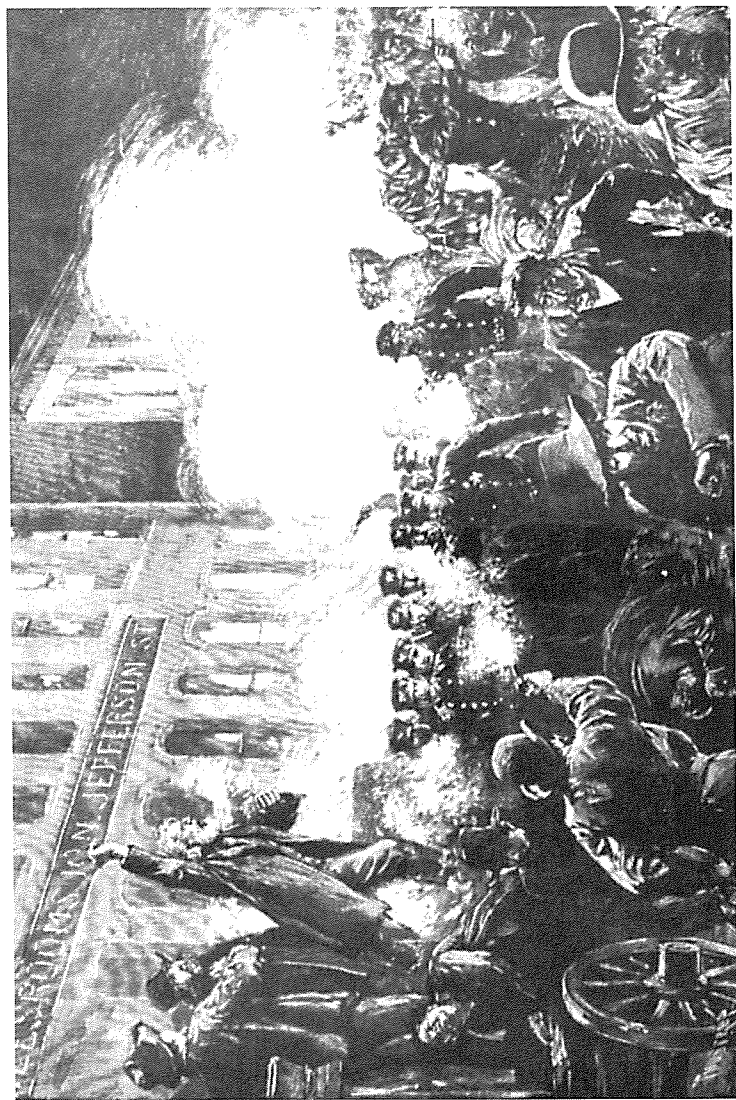
anarchistic and the socialistic movement. But I am satisfied that just the contrary has been accomplished by this barbarous measure. Thousands of workingmen have been led by our "conviction" to study anarchism, and if we are executed, we can ascend the scaffold with the satisfaction that by our death, we have advanced our noble cause more than we could have possibly done had we grown as old as Methusalah.

When I left my native country, my dear father (who died since) advised me to always utter fearlessly whatever I might hold to be the truth, and I have followed his advice faithfully.

I have given my honest opinions to the readers of the KNIGHTS OF LABOR, regardless of all possible consequences just as I have done when yet among the people, and until death closes my eyes and shuts my mouth forever, I shall continue to preach that which I think is right. I cannot do otherwise.

I know that it is impossible to convince professional liars, such as the hired editors of the capitalistic press, who are paid for crushing the truth. But I beg all the editors of labor journals as well as all honest, intelligent workingmen, not to ape the ridiculous attitude of the capitalistic press towards the doctrines of anarchism, as this has been the case hitherto, but to make anarchism an object of thorough study.

Adolph Fischer.



Artist's conception of scene at Haymarket.