

## NEED IT BE SO?

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1

Amidst fields there stands, surrounded by a wall, a foundry, with incessantly smoking chimneys, clattering chains, furnaces, a railway siding, and scattered little houses of the managers and labourers. In this foundry and in the mines belonging to it the working people swarm like ants ; some of them, in passages two hundred feet underground, which are dark, narrow, close, damp, and constantly threaten with death, are at work from morning until night, or from night until morning, mining the ore ; others in the darkness, bending over, take this ore or clay to the shaft and take back empty cars, and again fill them, and so work for twelve or fourteen hours a day throughout the week.

Thus they work in the mines. In the foundry itself, some work at the furnace in an oppressive heat, others work at the trough of the melted ore and slag ; others again, the engineers, stokers, smiths, brickmakers, carpenters, are at work in the shops, also from twelve to fourteen hours a day throughout the week.

On Sunday all these men receive their wages, wash themselves, or sometimes even do not wash themselves, go to the inns and saloons which on all sides surround the foundry, and which entice the working people, and early on Monday morning they go back to their work.

Near this same foundry peasants plough somebody else's field with lean, worn-out horses. These peasants got up with the dawn, if they have not passed the night in the pasture, that is, near a swamp, the only place where they can feed their horses ; they get up with the dawn, come home, harness the horses, and, taking with them a slice of bread, go out to plough somebody else's field.

Other peasants are sitting not far away from the foundry, on the highway, and, having made themselves a shield from matting, are breaking rock for the highway.

The legs of these men are bruised, their hands are all calluses, their whole bodies are dirty, and not only their faces, hair, and beards, but even their lungs are permeated with lime dust.

Taking a small unbroken stone from a heap, these men put it between the soles of their feet, which are covered with bast shoes and wrapped in rags, and strike this stone with a heavy mallet, until the stone breaks : when the stone has broken, they take the smaller

parts and strike them until these are broken fine ; and again they take whole stones, and again. – And thus these men work from early summer dawn until night, – fifteen, sixteen hours, resting only for two hours after dinner, and twice, at breakfast and at noon, strengthening themselves with bread and water.

And thus do these men live in the mines and in the foundry, and the ploughmen, and the stone-breakers, from early youth until old age ; and in similar work above their strength live their wives and their mothers, suffering from diseases of the womb ; and thus live their fathers and their children, poorly fed, poorly dressed, doing work which is above their strength and ruins their health, from morning until evening, from childhood until old age.

And past the foundry, past the stone-breakers, past the ploughing peasants, meeting and overtaking ragged men and women with their wallets, who are wandering from place to place and begging in the name of Christ, there races a carriage, with tinkling bells, drawn by four matched chestnut horses of good height, the worst of which is worth the whole farm of any of the peasants who are admiring the four-in-hand. In the carriage are seated two ladies, displaying brightly coloured parasols, ribbons, and hat feathers, each of which costs more than the horse with which a peasant ploughs his field ; in the front seat sits an officer, shining in the sun with lace and buttons, and dressed in a freshly laundered blouse ; on the box sits a ponderous coachman, in blue silk shirtsleeves and velvet sleeveless coat. He came very near crushing some women pilgrims, and almost knocked a peasant, who, dressed in a dirty, ore-soiled shirt, was jolting in his empty cart, into the ditch.

" You see this?" says the coachman, showing the whip to the peasant, who was not quick enough in turning aside, and the peasant with one hand pulls the rein and with the other timidly pulls his cap off his lousy head.

Back of the carriage, glinting in the sun with the nickle-plated parts of their machines, noiselessly race two men and one woman on bicycles, and they laugh merrily, as they overtake and frighten the wandering women, who make the sign of the cross.

On the side-path of the highway pass two riders, – a man on an English cob, and a lady on an ambler. To say nothing of the cost of the horses and the saddles, the one black hat with the lilac veil cost two months' work of the stone-breakers, and for the fashionable English whip as much was paid as in a week will be earned by that young lad, who is happy that he has hired out to work underground in the mine, and who is getting out of the way, while admiring the sleek forms of the horses and riders, and the fat, imported, immense dog in an exyen sive collar, which is running with protruding tongue back of them.

Not far from this company there travel in a cart a dressed-up, smiling maid, with curls, wearing a white apron, and a fat, ruddy man, with well-groomed sidewhiskers, who is whispering something to

the maid. In the cart may be seen a samovar, bundles in napkins, and an ice-cream freezer.

These are the servants of the people who are travelling in the carriage, on horseback, and on bicycles. The present day is nothing out of the ordinary. Thus they live the whole summer, going out for pleasure almost every day, and at times, as now, taking with them tea, beverages, and sweets, in order to eat and drink, not in the same, but in some new place.

These people are three families which are passing the summer in the country. One is the family of a proprietor, the owner of two thousand desyatinas of land, another that of an official, who receives a salary of three thousand roubles, and the third – the wealthiest family – the children of a manufacturer.

All these people are not in the least surprised or touched by the sight of all this poverty and hard labour by which they are surrounded. They think that all this must be so. They are interested in something quite different.

" No, that is impossible," says the lady on horseback, looking back at the dog, " I cannot see that " and she stops the carriage. All talk together in French and laugh, and they put the dog into the carriage and proceed, covering the stone-breakers and the itinerants with clouds of lime dust.

And the carriage, the riders, the bicyclists, have flashed by like beings from another world ; and the people in the foundry, the stone-breakers, the ploughmen continue their hard, monotonous work for somebody else, which will end with their lives.

"Some people have a fine time!" they think, as they watch the travellers off. And their painful existence appears still more painful to them.

2

What is this ? Have these labouring people done something very criminal that they are punished thus ? Or is this the lot of all men ? And have those who passed by in the carriages and on the bicycles done something particularly useful and important that they are thus rewarded? Not in the least! On the contrary, those who are working with such tension are for the most part moral, continent, modest, industrious people; while those who passed by are for the most part corrupted, lustful, impudent, idle people. This is so, because such a structure of life is considered natural and regular in the world of men who assert that they are professing Christ's law of love of our neighbour, or that they are people of culture, that is, perfected people.

Such a structure exists, not only in that corner of Tula County, which presents itself vividly to me, because I frequently see it, but everywhere, not only in Russia,–

from St. Petersburg to Fatum, – but also in France, – from Paris to Auvergne, – and in Italy, – from Rome to Palermo, – and in Germany, in Spain, in America, in Australia, and even in India and in China. Everywhere two or three people in a thousand live in such a way that, without doing anything for themselves, they in one day consume in food and drink as much as would support hundreds of people for a year; they wear clothes which cost thousands ; live in palaces, where thousands of labouring people could find room ; spend on their whims thousands of roubles and millions of work-days ; others again, getting neither enough sleep nor enough food, work above their strength, ruining their bodily and their spiritual health for these few elect.

For one class of women, when they are about to bear children, they send for a midwife, a doctor, sometimes for two doctors for one lying-in woman, and their layettes contain a hundred baby-shirts and swaddling-clothes with silk ribbons, and they get ready little wagons swinging on springs ; the other class of women, the vast majority, bear children in any chance place and in any chance manner, without aid, swaddle them in rags, put them into bast cradles on straw, and are glad when they die.

The children of one class, while the mother is lying in bed for nine days, are taken care of by the midwife, the nurse, the wet-nurse; the children of the other class are not taken care of, because there is no one to do so, and the mother herself gets up immediately after childbirth, makes the fires in the oven, milks the cow, and sometimes washes the clothes for herself, her husband, and her children. One class of children grows up among toys, amusements, and instructions ; the other children at first crawl with their bared bellies over thresholds, become maimed, are eaten up by pigs, and at five years of age begin to work above their strength. The first are taught all the scientific wisdom which is adapted to their age ; the others learn vulgar curses and the most savage of superstitions. The first fall in love, carry on love-affairs, and then marry, after they have experienced all the pleasures of love ; the others are married off to those whom the parents choose, between the ages of sixteen and twenty years, for the purpose of receiving additional aid. The first eat and drink the best and the most expensive things in the world, feeding their dogs on white bread and beef ; the second eat nothing but bread and kvas, nor do they get enough bread, and what they get is stale, so that they may not eat too much of it. The first change their fine underwear every day, so as not to get soiled ; the second, who are constantly doing work for others, change their coarse, ragged, lousy underwear once in two weeks, or do not change it at all, but wear it until it falls to pieces. The first sleep between clean sheets, on feather beds ; the second sleep on the ground, covering themselves with their tattered caftans.

The first drive out with well-fed horses, for no work, but simply for pleasure ; the second work hard with illfed horses, and walk, if they have any business to attend to. The first wonder what to do, in order to occupy their leisure time ; the second find no time to clean themselves, to wash, to take a rest, to say a word, to visit

their relatives. The first read four languages and every day amuse themselves with the greatest variety of things ; the second do not know how to read at all and know no other amusement than drunkenness. The first know everything and believe in nothing; the second know nothing and believe any nonsense that they are told. When the first get sick, they travel from place to place in search of the best curative air, to say nothing of all kinds of waters, every kind of attention, and every kind of cleanliness and medicine ; the second lie down on the oven in a smoky hut, and with unwashed sores, and with the absence of any food but stale bread, and of all air but such as is infected by ten members of the family, and by the calves and sheep, rot alive and die before their time.

Must it be so ?

If there is a higher reason and a love which guide the world, if there is a God, He cannot have wished to see such division among men, when one class of them do not know what to do with the surplus of their wealth and senselessly squander the fruit of the labours of other men, and the others grow sick and die before their time, or live an agonizing life, working above their strength.

If there is a God, this cannot and must not be. But if there is no God, such a structure of life, in which the majority of men must waste their lives, so that a small number of men may enjoy an abundance, which only corrupts this minority and weighs heavily upon it, is, from the simplest human point of view, insipid, because it is disadvantageous for all men.

3

Why, then, do men live thus ?

It is natural for the rich, who are used to their wealth and who do not see clearly that wealth does not give happiness, to try to maintain their position. But why does the vast majority, in whose hands is every power, assume that there is happiness in wealth, and continue to live in want and submit to the minority ?

Indeed, why do all those men who are strong in muscles and in artisanship and in the habit of work – the vast majority of men – submit, give in to a handful of feeble people, pampered old men and mainly women, who for the most part are not fit for anything ?

Take a walk before the holidays or during bargain weeks along the business streets, say through the Moscow Passages. Ten or twelve Passages, consisting of solid rows of magnificent shops with immense plate-glass windows, are all filled with all kinds of expensive wares,

– exclusively feminine ones, – stuffs, dresses, laces, gems, foot-gear, house adornments, furs, and so forth. All these things cost millions and millions, all these articles have been manufactured in establishments by working people who frequently ruin their lives over this work, and all these articles are of no use, not only to

the working people, but even to the wealthy men, – they are all amusements and adornments of women. At the entrances porters in galloons stand on both sides, and coachmen in expensive garments sit on the boxes of expensive carriages, which are drawn by trotters that cost into the thousands. Again millions of working days have been wasted on the production of all the luxury of the harnesses : old and young working people, men and women, have devoted all their lives to the production of all these articles. And all these articles are in the power and in the hands of a few hundred women, who in expensive furs and hats of the latest fashion saunter through these shops and purchase all these articles, which are manufactured for them.

A few hundreds of women arbitrarily dispose of the labour of millions of working people, who work to support themselves and their families. On the whims of these women depend the fate, the lives of millions of people.

How did this happen?

Why do all these millions of strong people, who have manufactured these articles, submit to these women ?

Now a lady in a velvet fur coat and a hat of the very latest fashion drives up with a span of trotters. Everything upon her is new and most expensive. A porter hurries to throw back the boot of her sleigh, and respectfully helps her out, by supporting her under her elbow.

She walks down the Passage as though through her kingdom, enters one of the shops, and buys five thousand roubles' worth of material for her drawing-room, and, having given the order to send it up to her house, goes elsewhere.

She is an evil, stupid, and not at all beautiful woman, who does not bear any children and has never done anything in her life for any one else. Why, then, do the porter, and the coachman, and the clerks fawn so servilely before her ? And why has all that over which thousands of workmen have laboured become her property ? Because she has money, and the porter, the coachman, the clerks, and the workmen in the factory need money, with which to support their families. The money is most convenient for them, and frequently can be gained only by serving as a coachman, porter, clerk, workman in a factory.

And why has this woman money ? She has money because people who have been driven off the land and have forgotten how to do any other work are living in her husband's factory, while her husband, giving the workmen as much as they must necessarily have for their support, takes all the profit from the factory, to the amount of several hundred thousands, for himself, and, not knowing what to do with the money, is glad to give it to his wife, for her to spend it on anything she may wish.

And here is another lady, in a still more luxurious carriage and garments, who is buying up all kinds of expensive and useless things in all kinds of shops. Where does she get the money from ? She is

the mistress of a wealthy landowner of twenty thousand desyatinas, which were given to his ancestor by a harlot queen for his debauchery with that old queen. This landowner owns all the land around a colony of peasants, and lets this land to the peasants at seventeen roubles per desyatina. The peasants pay this money, because without the land they would starve. And this money is now in the hands of the mistress, and with this money she buys things which have been made by other peasants, who have been driven off the land.

Here again a third rich woman, with her fiancé and mother, is walking down the Passage. This woman is about to marry, and she is buying bronzes and expensive dishes. She has money given her by her father, a distinguished official, who is receiving a salary of twelve thousand roubles. He gave his daughter a dowry of seven thousand roubles. This money was collected from import revenues and taxes, again from the peasants. These same taxes compelled the porter, who opens the door (he is a Kaluga peasant, – his wife and children are left at home), and the coachman, who brought them up (he is a Tula peasant), and hundreds, and thousands, and millions of men, who work out in houses or in factories, – to leave their homes and to work on articles which are consumed by the ladies, who receive the money, which by the manufacturers, landowners, officials is collected from the profit in the factories, or from the land, or from the taxes.

Thus millions of workmen have submitted to these women, because one man has taken possession of a factory, in which people work, another has taken possession of the land, while a third has seized the taxes, which are collected from the labouring classes. It is this that produced that which I saw about the foundry.

The peasants ploughed somebody else's field, because they have not enough land, and he who owns the land permits them to use his land only on condition that they work for him. The stone-breakers broke rock, because only by means of this work were they able to pay the taxes demanded of them. In the foundry and in the mines the people worked, because the earth from which the ore is extracted and the smelter where it is smelted do not belong to them.

All these working people do hard work, not for themselves, because the rich have taken possession of the land, collect taxes, and own the plants.

4

Why does he who does not work, and not he who works, own the land ? Why do a small number of men make use of the taxes which are collected from all men, and not those who pay them ? Why are the factories owned, not those who built them and work in them, but a small number of men who did not build them and do not work in them ?

To the question as to why non-workers have seized the land of the workers the customary answer is, that that is so, because the land

was given them for their deserts or bought with money earned. To the question as to why one set of men, a small number of men, the non-working managers and their helpers, collect for themselves the greater share of the wealth of all the working people, and use it at will, the customary answer is this, that the men who use the money which is collected from the masses manage the others and defend them and preserve order and decency among them. And to the question as to why rich people of leisure own the products and implements of the labour of the working people, the answer is that these productions and implements of labour were earned by them or by their ancestors.

And all these men – the landowners, the servants of the government, the merchants, the manufacturers – are sincerely convinced that their possession is quite just, – that they have the right to such a possession.

However, neither the possession of the land, nor the collection of the taxes and use of them, nor the possession of the products and implements of labour by people of leisure, has any justification. The possession of land by those who do not work upon it has no justification, because the land, like the water, the air, the sunbeams, forms an indispensable condition of the life of every man and so cannot be the exclusive possession of one person. If the land, and not the water, the air, and the sunbeams, has become an object of possession, this is not due to the fact that the land is not just as indispensable and appropriable a condition for the existence of any man, but only because it has been impossible to deprive people of water, air, and sun, while it has been possible to deprive them of the land.

The ownership of land, having originated in violence (through conquest people appropriated the land, and then gave it away and sold it), has remained, in spite of every effort at turning it into a right, nothing but an act of violence of the strong and armed against the weak and unarmed.

Let a man, who is working the land, violate this imaginary right, let him plough the land which is considered to be the property of another, and there will soon appear that on which this supposed right is based, – at first in the form of policemen, and then in the form of a military force, – of soldiers, – who will stab and shoot those who are trying to make use of their real right to support themselves by means of work on the land. Thus, what is called the right to the ownership of land is nothing but violence exerted against all those who may have need of this land. The right to the land is like the right to a road which robbers have seized and over which they do not permit people to travel without a ransom.

A still lesser semblance of justification can be found for the right of the government to a forcible levy of the taxes. It is asserted that the taxes are used for the defence of the government against foreign enemies, for the establishment and support of domestic order, and for the execution of necessary public works.

But, in the first place, foreign enemies have long ago ceased to exist, even according to the declarations of the governments themselves : they all assure their nations that they wish for nothing but peace. The Emperor of Germany wants peace, the French republic wants peace, England wants peace, and Kussia wants the same. Still more urgently do the Transvaalers and the Chinese want peace. So against whom are we to defend ourselves ?

In the second place, in order to give up the money for the establishment of domestic order and public works, it is necessary to be sure that the men who establish order will do so, and, besides, that this order will be good and that the public works to be executed will actually be needed by society. But if, as is always and everywhere repeated, those who pay the taxes are not convinced of the fitness, or even of the honesty of those who establish order, and, besides, consider the order itself to be bad and the public works about to be executed not such as the taxpayers need, it is evident that there is no right to collect taxes, but only violence.

I remember the utterance of a Russian peasant, who was religious and, therefore, truly liberal. Like Thoreau, he did not consider it just to pay taxes for things which his conscience did not approve of, and when he was asked to pay his share of the taxes, he asked what the taxes which he would pay would be used for, saying, " If the taxes shall be used for a good thing, I will at once give you not only what you demand, but even more ; but if they shall be used for something bad, I cannot and will not give a kopek of my own free will." Of course, they lost no time with him, but broke down his closed gate, carried off his cow, and sold it for the taxes. Thus in reality there is but one true and real cause of taxes, – the power which collects them, – the possibility of robbing those who do not give the taxes willingly, and even of beating them for a refusal, of putting them in prison, and of punishing them – as is actually done.

The fact that in England, in France, in America, and in general in constitutional governments, the taxes are determined by the parliament, that is, by the supposed representatives of the people gathered together, does not change the matter, because the elections are so arranged that the members of the parliament do not represent the people, but are politicians, and if they were not to start with, they become such as soon as they get into parliament, and are busy with their personal ambition and the interests of the warring parties.

Just as groundless are the justifications of the supposed right of ownership, which the leisure people claim in respect to the products of the labour of other people.

This right of ownership, which is even called a sacred right, is generally justified on the ground that property is the result of continence and of an industrious activity, which is useful to men. But we need only analyze the origin of great fortunes, to be convinced of the contrary.

Fortunes always originate, either in violence, – this is most common, – or in nastiness, or in rascality on a large scale, or in chronic cheating, like what is practised by merchants. The more a man is moral, the more certain he is to be deprived of the fortune which he has, and the more he is immoral, the more certain he is to gain and retain a fortune. Popular wisdom says that one cannot earn stone palaces with righteous labour, – that labour gives one stooping shoulders, and not wealth. Thus it was, indeed, of old, and it is still more true of the present, when the distribution of wealth has long ago taken place in a most irregular manner. Though we may admit that in primitive society a more abstemious and industrious man will gain more than an incontinent man, who does not work much, nothing of the kind is true for our present society. No matter how abstemious and industrious a man, a labourer, may be, who is working on somebody else's land, who purchases at a price established for him such articles as he may need, and who works with other people's implements of labour, he will never acquire any wealth. But the most incontinent and idle of men, – as we see in the case of thousands of individuals, – who stands in with the government or with rich men, who busies himself with usury, with a manufactory, a house of prostitution, a bank, the sale of liquor, will easily acquire a fortune.

The laws which are supposed to protect property are laws which only protect property which has been stolen, which is already in the hands of the rich, and they not only fail to protect the labourers, who have no property, except their labour, but even aid in robbing them of this labour.

We see an endless number of administrators, – the Tsar, his brothers, uncles, ministers, judges, the clergy, – who receive enormous salaries, collected from the people, and who do not even attend to those easy duties which they have undertaken to attend to for this remuneration. And so, it would seem, these people steal the salary collected from the masses, that is, the property of the masses, but it does not even occur to any one to condemn them.

But let a labourer make use of even a part of the money received by these people, or of the objects bought with this money, and it will be said that he has violated the sacred ownership, and for this sum which he has made use of he is sentenced, imprisoned, and deported.

A manufacturer, who is a millionaire, promises to pay the labouring man a wage which for him, the manufacturer, represents one ten-millionth part of his fortune, that is, almost nothing ; but the labourer puts himself under obligation, in consequence of his want, in the course of the year to furnish, with the exception of the holidays, his daily work of twelve hours, which is dangerous and harmful for his health, that is, he puts himself under obligation to give the manufacturer the greater part of his life, perhaps his whole life ; and the government protects alike either kind of ownership.

With this the manufacturer, as is well known, year in and year out robs the labourer of the greater share of his earnings, and appropriates it to himself. It would seem to be obvious that the manufacturer robs the labourer of the greater half of his property, and so ought to be made responsible for it ; but the government considers the manufacturer's property thus gained to be sacred, and punishes the labourer who under his coat carries off two pounds of copper, which forms one-billionth part of the manufacturer's property.

Let the labourer try, as happens during the anti-dewish riots, to take away from the rich ever so small a part of what was lawfully taken from the labourers : let a starving man, as lately occurred in Milan, appropriate a loaf, which, taking advantage of the famine, the rich are selling at a high price to the labourers ; or let a labourer by means of a strike endeavour to get back a small part of what was taken from him,— he violates the sacred right of property, and the government immediately comes with its army to the succour of the landowner, the manufacturer, the merchant, against the labourer. Thus the right on which the rich base their ownership of the land, the right to levy taxes and possess the products of labour of other people, has nothing in common with justice, and all of it is based on nothing but violence, which is produced by the army.

5

Let a farmer try to plough the field which he needs for his support ; let him endeavour to refuse to pay the taxes, — either direct or indirect ; let him try to take provisions of corn which he has not earned, or implements of labour, without which he cannot work, — and the army will appear and will use force to keep him from doing so.

Thus the alienation from the land, the levy of taxes, the power of the capitalists, form, not the cause, but the result of the wretched condition of the labourers. The fundamental cause why millions of labourers live and work at the will of the minority does not lie in this, that the minority has seized upon the land, and upon the implements of production, and receives the taxes, but in this, that it can do so, — that there is violence, an army, which is in the hands of the minority and is ready to kill those who do not wish to do the will of this minority.

When the peasants want to take possession of the land which is considered to be the property of a man of leisure, or when a man does not want to pay the taxes, or when the strikers want to keep other labourers from taking their places, there appear the same peasants, whose land has been taken away, the payers of taxes and the labourers, except that they wear uniforms and bear arms, and they compel their brothers — who are not in uniforms — to go away from the land, to pay taxes, and to stop the strike.

When a man comes to understand this at first, he can hardly believe it, it seems so strange.

The working people want to free themselves, and the working people themselves compel themselves to submit and to remain in slavery.

Why do they do so ?

Because the working people, drafted or hired into the army, are subjected to an artificial process of stupefaction and corruption, after which they cannot help but obey their superiors blindly, no matter what they may compel them to do.

This is done in the following manner : a boy is born in the country or in the city. In all the Continental countries, as soon as the boy reaches the age when his strength, agility, and flexibility have reached the highest point, while his spiritual forces are in a most dim and indeterminate state (about twenty years), he is taken into the army, is examined like a beast of burden, and when he is found to be able-bodied, he is attached to some particular part of the army, and is made solemnly to swear that he will slavishly obey his superiors ; then he is removed from all the former conditions of his life, is filled up with whiskey or beer, is dressed up in motley garments, and is with other lads like him locked up in barracks, where he is in absolute idleness (that is, doing no useful or rational work), is taught the most insipid military rules and names of objects, and the use of the implements of murder, – the sword, the bayonet, the rifle, the cannon, – and, above all, is taught, not only blind, but even mechanically reflex obedience to the superiors put over him.

Thus it is done in the countries where there is military service ; where it does not exist, men specially appointed for the purpose look up for the most part dissipated, but strong men, who have fallen from the right way and either do not wish, or are unable to live by honest labour, fill them with liquor, bribe them, and enlist them in the army, and similarly shut them up in barracks and subject them to the same discipline. The chief problem of the superiors consists in bringing these men to the state of the frog which, when touched, uncontrollably jerks its leg. A good soldier is he who, like this frog, in response to certain shouts of his superior, unconsciously makes the motion demanded.

This is obtained by making these unfortunate men, who are dressed in the same motley uniform, for weeks, months, and years, at the sound of the drum and of music, walk, twist around, jump, and do it all together, in a body, and by command. Every failure to obey is punished with the most cruel punishments, even with death. With this, drunkenness, debauchery, idleness, vulgarity, murder are not only not prohibited, but even established: the soldiers are given whiskey, houses of prostitution are arranged for them, they are taught obscene songs, and instructed in murder. (Murder is in this circle of men considered to such an extent a good and praiseworthy matter that under certain conditions the superiors, the officers, are demanded to kill a friend, which is called a duel.) And so a meek and peaceable fellow, after having passed in such a school about a year (before that time the soldier is not yet ready, that is, he has still some human qualities left in him), is turned into

what he is wanted to be, – a senseless, cruel, mighty, and terrible instrument of violence in the hands of his superiors.

Whenever I in the winter walk in Moscow past the palace, and near the booth see a young lad, the sentinel, who in his heavy sheepskin fur coat is standing or walking, plashing his enormous overshoes on the sidewalk, supporting on his shoulder a rifle of the latest fashion, with its bayonet sharpened, I always look into his eyes, and every time he turns his glance away from me, and every time I think : a year or two years ago he was a merry village lad, natural, good-natured, who would cheerfully have talked to me in his good Russian, telling me, with the consciousness of his peasant dignity, his whole ; now he looks maliciously and gloomily at me, and to all my questions knows only how to say, " Yes, sir," and, " Can't know, sir." If I should enter through the door at which he is standing, – I always feel like doing so, – or should put my hand on his gun, he would without a minute's hesitation stick the bayonet through my abdomen, would pull the bayonet out of the wound, would wipe it off, and would continue to walk, plashing with his overshoes on the asphaltum, until the arrival of the relief with the corporal, who would whisper the watchword into his ear. And he is not the only one. In Moscow alone, I think, there are thousands of such lads, almost children, who are turned into machines and are armed with guns. There are millions of them in the whole of Russia and in the whole world. These unthinking, but strong and agile lads are picked up, corrupted, and bribed, and, thanks to them, the world is held in subjection. All that is terrible. What is terrible is this, that bad, idle people, thanks to these deceived men, are in possession of all those palaces and all that criminally acquired wealth, that is, of the labour of all the masses. But most terrible is this, that, to do so, they have to bestialize these simple, good fellows, and in this they have partly succeeded.

Let those who own wealth defend it themselves. That would not be so disgusting. But what is terrible is this, that, to rob the people and defend what has been stolen, they use those very people whom they rob, and for this purpose corrupt their souls.

Thus the soldiers, taken from the labouring classes, use violence against their own brother labourers, because there exists a means for making of people an unconscious instrument of murder, and the governments, in drafting or enlisting soldiers, make use of that means in regard to them.

6

But if that is so, there involuntarily appears the question as to why people become soldiers. Why do their fathers let them become soldiers ?

They could become soldiers and be subject to discipline so long as they did not see the consequences of it. But, having once come to

see what results from it, why do they continue to subject themselves to this deception ?

This is due to the fact that they consider military service not only useful, but unquestionably honourable and good. And they consider it such, because they have been impressed with it by that doctrine to which they are subjected from their childhood and in which they are maintained in their adult age.

And so the existence of the army is also no fundamental cause, but only an effect. The fundamental cause is to be found in that doctrine which is inculcated upon people, that military service, which has for its purpose the killing of men, is not only sinless, but also good, virtuous, and praiseworthy. Thus the cause of the wretched condition of the men lies still farther away than it seems to at first.

At first it seems that the whole matter lies in this, that the landowners have seized the land, the capitalists have taken possession of the implements of labour, while the government takes forcibly the taxes ; but when one asks himself why the land belongs to the rich and the working people cannot make use of it, and why not the working people, but the capitalists, are in possession of the implements of production, one sees that this is due to the fact that there is an army which secures the land to the rich, collects the taxes from the labourers for the use of the rich, and secures the factories and the expensive machines to the rich. If one asks oneself how it is that the working people, who form the army and from whom everything is taken which they need, attack themselves, their fathers and brothers, one sees that the cause of it is this, that the drafted or enlisted soldiers are, by means of methods specially adapted for the purpose, instructed in such a way that they lose everything human and are turned into unconscious instruments of murder, ever submissive to their superiors. When, finally, one asks oneself why people, seeing such deception, continue to enter the army or to pay taxes to hire an army, one sees that the cause of it lies in the doctrine, which is inculcated, not only upon those who are taken into the army, but also upon all men alike, – a doctrine according to which military service is a good and praiseworthy cause, and murder in war is innocent.

Thus the fundamental cause of everything is the doctrine which is inculcated upon the people.

From this come poverty, and debauchery, and hatred, and punishments, and murder.

What is this doctrine ?

This doctrine is called Christian, and consists in the following: there is a God, who six thousand years ago created the world and the man Adam. Adam sinned, and God for this punished all men, and then sent His son, just such a God as the Father, down upon earth, to have Him hanged there This very hanging serves to men as a means of

redemption from their punishment for Adam's sin.

If people believe in this, they will be forgiven Adam's sin ; if they do not, they will be punished cruelly. The proof of all this being true is found in the fact that all this was revealed to men by that same God, about whose existence we have learned from those same men who preach all that. To say nothing of the different variations in this fundamental doctrine, in accordance with the different denominations, the general practical deduction from it in all the denominations is the same, namely, that men must believe in what is preached to them and must obey the existing authorities.

It is this doctrine that forms the fundamental cause of the deception, according to which people, considering military service to be useful and good, enter the army, and, being turned into machines without a will, oppress themselves. If there are unbelievers among the deceived, these unbelievers do not believe in anything else, and, in consequence, since they have no point of support, submit, like the believers, to the general current, although they see the deception.

And so, to destroy the evil from which men suffer, we need, not the liberation of the land, nor the abolition of the taxes, nor the nationalization of the implements of production, nor even the overthrow of the existing government, but the destruction of that false doctrine, called Christian, in which the men of our time are brought up.

7

At first it seems strange to people who know the Gospel how it was possible for Christianity, which preaches the sonhood to God, spiritual freedom, the brotherhood of men, the abolition of all violence, and the love of our neighbours, to have degenerated into this strange doctrine, called Christian, which preaches blind obedience to the authorities, and murder, whenever the authorities demand it. But when one stops to think of the process by means of which Christianity has entered into the world, one sees that it could not have been otherwise.

When the pagan sovereigns, Constantine, Charlemagne, Vladimir, accepted Christianity, which was swaddled in pagan forms, and baptized their nations into it, it did not even occur to them that the teaching which they accepted disrupted their regal power, and the army, and the state itself ; that is, all that without which life could not be imagined by all those who were the first to accept and introduce Christianity. The destructive force of Christianity at first was not at all perceptible to men ; on the contrary, they thought that Christianity supported their power. But the longer the Christian nations existed, the clearer and clearer became the essence of Christianity, and the more obvious became the danger with which Christianity threatened the pagan order. The more this danger became obvious, the more carefully did the ruling classes try to subdue and, if possible, to put out the fire, which they

unconsciously brought into the world together with Christianity. They used every possible means for this, – the prohibition to translate and read the gospels, the slaying of all those who pointed out the true meaning of the Christian teaching, the hypnotization of the masses by means of the solemnity and splendour of surroundings, and, above all, shrewd and refined interpretations of the Christian tenets. In proportion as these means were used, Christianity changed more and more, and finally became a doctrine which had in itself nothing dangerous for the pagan order of things, and even justified the pagan order from an apparently Christian point of view. There appeared even Christian rulers, and a Christ-loving army, and Christian wealth, and Christian courts, and Christian punishments.

The ruling classes did the same in relation to Christianity that physicians do in relation to infectious diseases.

They worked out a culture of harmless Christianity, which, when inoculated, makes the real Christianity innocuous. This ecclesiastic Christianity is such that it inevitably either repels sensible people, presenting itself to them as a terrible insipidity, or, being adopted by men, to such an extent removes them from true Christianity that through it they no longer see its real significance and even look upon its true significance with hostility and fury.

It is this innocuous, false Christianity, which from a sense of self-preservation has been worked out through the ages among the ruling classes, and with which the masses are inoculated, which forms the doctrine in consequence of which men calmly commit acts that are harmful to themselves and to their neighbours, and that are even directly immoral and incompatible with the demands of conscience, the most important of which, from its practical consequences, is the entrance into the army, that is, the readiness to commit murder.

The harm of this innocuous, false Christianity consists chiefly in this, that it prescribes nothing and forbids nothing. All the ancient teachings – like the law of Moses and the law of Manu – give rules which demand or forbid certain acts; such also are the Buddhist and the Mohammedan religions; but the ecclesiastic faith gives no rules whatever, except a verbal confession, the recognition of dogmas, fasts, holy sacrament, prayers (and for these even excuses have been invented for the rich), but only lies, and permits everything, even what is contrary to the lowest demands of morality. According to this ecclesiastic faith everything is allowed: it is allowed to own slaves (in Europe and in America the church has been the defender of slavery); it is allowed to acquire wealth, which is got through the labour of our oppressed brothers; it is not only allowed to be rich amidst bazaar uses who crawl under the tables of the feasting, but it is even good and laudable to do so, if one-thousandth is contributed for churches and hospitals. The church gives its blessing to the forcible defence of our wealth against the needy, to the imprisonment of men in solitary cells, to chaining them up, to fastening them to wheelbarrows, and to executing them;

it is allowed to commit debauchery during one's whole youth, and then to call one such debauchery marriage and get the church's permission for it ; it is allowed to get a divorce and again be married ; it is possible, above all, to kill, not only in one's own defence, but also in defence of one's apples, and as a punishment (punishment means instruction, – to kill as an instruction ! ), and, above all else, it is right and laudable to kill in war, by command of the authorities – the church not only permits, but even commands it.

Thus the root of all is in the false doctrine.

Let the false doctrine be destroyed, and there will be no army ; and if there is no army, there will naturally be destroyed all the acts of violence, the oppression, the corruption, which now are practised on the nations. But so long as men shall be brought up in the pseudo-Christian teaching, which permits everything, including murder, the army will be in the hands of the minority ; and this minority will always make use of this army for the purpose of depriving the masses of the products of their labour and, what is still worse, for the corruption of the masses, because without the corruption of the masses it could not take away from them the products of their labours.

8

The root of all the wretchedness of the masses lies in that false doctrine which is taught to them under guise of Christianity.

And so it would seem to be obvious that the duty of every man who has freed himself from the religious deception and who wishes to serve the masses is in words and deeds to help the deceived men to free themselves from that deception, which forms the cause of their wretched condition. It would seem that, besides the general duty of every moral man to arraign the lies and profess the truth which he knows, every one who wishes to serve the masses cannot help but wish out of sympathy to free his brothers from the deception which causes them all kinds of unhappiness and in which they abide. And yet these same people, who are free from the deception, are independent, and have been educated at the expense of the workin" classes, and for this reason alone are obliged to serve them, but fail to see this.

" The religious teaching is not important," say these people. " It is a matter for each man's conscience. What is important and necessary is the political, social, economic structure of society, and to this should be directed all the efforts of men who wish to serve the masses. But the religious teachings are all of them of no importance, and, like all superstitions, they will disappear in their time." Thus speak the cultured people, and, wishing to serve the masses, some of them enter the service of the government,– the army, the clergy, the parliament,– and try, without arraigning the religious deception in which the masses are, by their participation in the governmental activity to improve the external forms of the life of the deceived masses ; others, the revolutionists, who just

as little touch upon the beliefs of the masses, enter into a struggle with the governments, trying to take possession of the power by the same means of deception and violence that are practised by the governments; others again, the socialists, establish labour-unions, societies, strikes, assuming that the condition of the masses, in spite of their remaining in the same error of superstition and ignorance which is produced by the false doctrine, can be ameliorated. But none of them hinder the dissemination of the false religion, on which all the evil is based, and when the necessity for it arises, they even perform the religious rites, which they consider to be false, – they themselves take the oath, take part in divine services and solemnities which stultify the masses, and do not interfere with the instruction given to their own children and to those of others in what is called religion, that very lie on which the enslavement of the masses is based. This failure to comprehend in what lies the main cause of the evil (and the cultured people could and should more than any others help destroy this false doctrine), and to what all their efforts ought more particularly to be directed, and the deviation of the efforts upon false paths, form one of the chief causes why the existing structure of life, which is obviously false and pernicious for people, is persistently maintained, in spite of its well-recognized incompatibility.

All the calamities of our world are due to this, that the true Christian teaching, which corresponds to the demands of our time, is concealed from men, and that in its place a false doctrine is preached.

If the men who want to serve God and their neighbours only comprehended that humanity is not moved by animal demands, but by spiritual forces, that the chief spiritual force which moves humanity is religion, that is, the determination of the meaning of life, and, in consequence of this meaning, the distinction between good and evil, and between what is important and unimportant. If men only understood that, they would see at once that the fundamental cause of the calamities of humanity at present does not lie in external material causes, – not in political, nor in economic conditions, but in the distortion of the Christian religion : in the substitution for the truths needed by humanity and corresponding to its present age, of a collection of senseless, immoral insipidities and blasphemies, called the ecclesiastic faith, by means of which what is not good is considered good, and what is unimportant is considered important, and vice versa, – what is good is considered bad, and what is important – unimportant.

If only the best, the independent people, who sincerely wish to serve the masses, understood that it is impossible by any external measures to improve the condition of a man who considers it bad to eat meat on Friday and good to punish a guilty man with death, and important to show proper respect for an image or for the emperor, and unimportant to swear to do the will of other people and to learn to commit murder ; if men only understood that no parliaments, strikes, unions, consumers' and producers' leagues, inventions,

schools, universities, and academies, no revolutions, can be of any essential value to people with a false religious world-conception, all the forces of the best people would naturally be directed upon the cause, and not upon the effect,— not upon the state activity, upon revolutions, upon socialism, but upon the arraignment of the false religious doctrine and the establishment of the true teaching.

If men would only act thus, all the political, economical, and social questions would solve themselves naturally, as they ought to be solved, and not as we foretell or prescribe.

All these questions will, naturally, not be solved at once and according to our wish, as we are accustomed to arrange the lives of other people, caring only for this, that externally these lives should resemble what we want them to be (precisely what all the governments are doing); but these questions will certainly be solved, if only the religious world-conception of the people shall be changed, and they will be solved the more quickly, the more we shall apply our forces, not to the effects, but to the causes of phenomena.

But the arraignment of the false religion and the assertion of the true religion are a very distant and slow means, we are told. Whether it be distant or slow, it is the only means, or, at least, such that without it all other means will be ineffective.

As I look at the structure of human life, which is contrary to reason and to feeling, I ask myself : " Need it be so ? " And the answer at which I arrive is, that it need not be so.

It need not be, it must not be, and it will not be.

But it will not be, not when men shall in one way or another reconstruct their relations, but only when men shall stop believing in the lie in which they are brought up, and shall believe in the highest truth, which was revealed nineteen hundred years ago, and which is clear, simple, and accessible to their reason.

Ydsnaya Polyana, October 11, 1900.