

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

THE COMING REVIVAL OF SOCIALISM

By P. KROPOTKIN.

V.

What was the cause of the apathy which suddenly developed in the English Socialist movement about 1890?

Everyone who has lived through these years will probably give the same answer. It was the craving after seats in Parliament which split the Socialists and subdivided them into groups which paralysed each other. It was parliamentary action which sowed amongst the working men distrust towards those whom they had hitherto followed; and the reactionaries took full advantage of those discords and that distrust. Reinforced by all those ex-Radicals of the richer classes who had been frightened by the vision of the slums and hastened now to join the so-called Unionist party, the Black Tories saw that their time had come once more. Rome, with its powerful secret organisations and secret influences, gave them a hearty support.

All of a sudden that mass of middle-class people and intermediates between the middle classes and the working men, upon whom the British working men, hitherto kept in ignorance of Socialism, had unfortunately had to rely for the written and verbal propaganda,—all of a sudden these began to turn a cold shoulder to the movement. The news that all landed properties in Ireland, into which the life insurance companies had invested their moneys, had been depreciated by more than one third of their value, owing to the Home Rule agitation, produced quite a change of mind amongst the rich middle-class people who had hitherto been ardent Home Rulers. In twenty-four hours they became Unionists, this name being a suitable screen for covering Black Toryism.

Their fears, their ambitions which Gladstone had failed to satisfy, and those ambitions which could be stimulated by promises of support at the next elections,—all was set into action in order to break the powers of the Socialists and to drive away from them those of the middle-class people who for one reason or another had joined them. To frighten away some, to lock away the others. As to the enthusiasts, their very enthusiasm was the cause of their defection. As it so often happens with the middle-class supporters of the Labour agitation, they had been attracted to it by the prospects of a revolution being at hand. The grand effects of a revolution had seduced them; and they deserted the cause of the people as soon as they saw that the revolution was not yet coming: that a long, slow, preparatory work was required to make it break out.

What then should be the character of the next coming revival of Socialism in this country?

Many causes are at work at this moment in Europe which can throw all the civilised nations into a series of interminable wars. The partition of Africa is nearly accomplished, but the partition of Asia, both in the Near and the Far East, is only beginning, and nobody can foretell into how many wars the partition will involve the chief military nations of Europe and America. We can foresee these wars, but we cannot discount their possible consequences. Leaving, therefore, this disturbing influence out of our account for the moment, let us see what aspects the coming revival would take in this country, if exterior causes did not disturb the national life for a few years to come.

It is certain, to begin with, that the moment a new agitation begins against the privileged classes, the great, all-dominating Land question will be put in the fore ground. Already in 1886 this was one of the chief and deepest causes of discontent. True, the Marxist Social Democrats, plunged into their metaphysical schemes of economic evolution, did not understand

the importance of this question. But the Socialists as a whole especially those of the Socialist League, fully understood it, and therefore considered that the expropriation of the landowners, in the interest of the people, without compensation—this was especially insisted upon—was the first point to be obtained.

Many reasons have contributed since to give even a still greater importance to the Land question. The “unearned increment” has been growing lately at an enormous, scandalous rate, and every new step in “municipal Socialism” increases it in a still greater proportion. Besides the value of land under an intensive culture, which was exemplified in small portions in many parts of the country (Preston, Worthing, &c., &c.), was brought into prominence, and the facts were made widely known owing to the discussion of the last twenty years and to the Red and Yellow vans propaganda; while the working men in towns have become aware of the growing value of allotment lands, as well as lands bought, or intended to be bought, by both municipalities and co-operative associations. All these have shown to the working masses of Britain of what riches they are robbed by those who own the land, and who in order to maintain their political influence prevent the people of these islands from taking the best advantage of their land.

And then, the very Land law for Ireland, unsatisfactory though it is, renders it unavoidable now that similar claims on the land will be heard on behalf of the people of Great Britain as well. Something must be done, and there is no better ground for a serious agitation than the Land question, which now acquires additional interest in connection with municipal enterprise, municipal dwellings, and municipal gardening for the unemployed.

Another important feature which we see coming in the next revival of Socialism is this. At the beginning of the last Socialist movement in this country, it was to an immense degree under the influence of German Social Democratic teachings. The English Socialists had got their Socialist education from the Germans. The Socialist League had been an attempt at emancipating the English movement from that German influence and of giving it a British character. But the chief spirit of the League, William Morris, never freed himself entirely from the influence of one of his teachers, and after a time returned under that influence once more.

“Will it not be the same in the next revival?” it may be asked. But we think it will not. German Social Democracy has shown so much during the last few years that it is nothing but the left wing of the middle-class Democratic movement, that it never will have again the authority which it had twenty years ago when it claimed to represent a synthesis of Democracy with Socialism. Everyone knows by this time that the 85 Social Democratic representatives in the German Parliament are even less offensive for the noblemen’s and the middle-class monopolies and privileges than an equal number of Liberals at Westminster was under Gladstone’s leadership, and incomparably less offensive than the British trade unions. The Krimmitschau strike, just terminated by a defeat of the weavers, has shown what a nice-looking but weak bubble this Social Democratic parliamentary party is: the labour hours in Germany are eleven, as in Russia, and the protection of the children remains what it was made by a law passed forty years ago, when there were no Social Democrats in Germany! Never was the predominant importance of trade unionism for everything relating to the protection of labour so strikingly demonstrated as it was this year in Germany.

On the other hand, never was the weakness of trade unionism alone so well demonstrated as it was demonstrated this year in this country. And this demonstration, too, will contribute—has contributed already—to explode the Social Democratic bubble.

(Continued on next page).

Freedom

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NOTES.

THE "CONCENTRATION OF CAPITAL" (?)

A propos of Marx's absurd theory of the "concentration of capital," the statement issued by the United States Steel Corporation bears out to the letter Tcherkesov's criticisms on the subject. We quote the following from the *New York Press* :—

The dividend action affects directly 37,237 holders of the common stock, and indirectly about 35,000 holders of the preferred stock, not counting 28,000 employers who purchased the preferred shares under the profit-sharing plan; while the report of earnings and orders excites direct interest among the Corporations 160,000 employes, and indirectly arouse attention among the employes and shareholders numbered by the millions.

After this would it not be advisable for Hyndman, say, to bring out a revised edition of *Capital* with all Marx's ridiculous exaggerations and misconceptions left out? We have had a revised New Testament, why not revise the bible of the Marxians?

THE CROOKED CROOKS.

The honourable Member for Woolwich has distinguished himself in the cause of the workers. Hoisted into his present position by the efforts of the sweated labourers of Woolwich, he took the opportunity of showing his gratitude in the debate on the unemployed. The crooked Crooks came out strong against loafers, so strong that he won the admiration of the bosom friend of Penryhn—Gerald Balfour. Poor Woolwich, betrayed so soon! and perhaps even consoling itself with the thought that the pharisaical claptrap of its representative is true. But let us remind the workers of Woolwich that Crooks, if he has any brains at all, knows well enough that the loafer is a product and a victim of this infamous capitalist system. The loafer is *made* not born; made by the "iron law" of the wage system. But even if it were otherwise, is it for Crooks to spurn the unhappy wrecks of our social system, while the real loafers—the real criminals in this case—of Park Lane and Mayfair are sucking the life-blood from the working classes. They are the real danger to society, but Crooks said nothing of them. That is why Gerald Balfour shook him by the hand. He will never wash that stain off.

THE FRUITS OF IMPERIALISM.

This infamous business of Chinese slave-labour for the mines is the direct outcome of Imperialism, and the Jingo has got his reward. The responsibility for this rests not only on the vampires who own the mines. What they are to-day they always were and always will be. But every Jingo who waved the Union Jack during the war and applauded the froth of Chamberlain and his press, who shouted the abominable choruses of the music halls, has his share in this crime against humanity. He can only make amends now by defeating this scheme of the landlords at all costs. When he has done this, he will perhaps be able to turn his attention to his own affairs at home, and he will then find what a lot of lost ground has to be made up before he can take another step in advance towards any solution of the many social problems that beset him. He will need to be courageous and uncompromising in his struggles against the priest and the politician who are making things so smooth for the capitalist.

"The Folly of Voting." This Leaflet will prove of great service in the coming General Election, and should be read by all Anarchists, Socialists and workers generally. May be had from J. TURNER, 127, Ossulston Street, London, N.W. Price 1s. 3d. per hundred, or 7s. per thousand, post free.

(Continued from page 9).

"There is no difference," the British working man was told, "between a Tory and a Liberal Government," and under this pretext both the Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party, instead of abstaining from the elections as we did, played into the hands of the Tories. Consciously or not, the fact is that they helped them to get a majority which gave them full powers for all the harm they have done: the destruction of the School Boards, free gifts to the landlords and the clergy and, finally, dagger-thrusts into the very heart of trade unionism by means of the Taff Vale and Denaby Main decisions.

These last have opened the eyes of the workers. They have seen whereto the game which their German-taught leaders had induced them to indulge in was leading them. And one may be sure that henceforward the mass of the British working men will not agree any more to play that game, the stupidity of which was, in our opinion, verging almost on crime.

It is thus evident that when the next revival of Socialism comes it will not be used any more to bring grist to the Tory mill, so as to disgust the working men with Socialism.

* * *

Nor will the British labourers trust—so we hope, at least—to the debilitating theories of the German Social Democrats.

They will not fold their hands in the expectation of a "historic process" which is supposed to destroy some day later on the capitalists. They will see that the number of capitalists and their force grow every day in this country. And they will know that "to keep their powder dry" is better than to trust to all sorts of middle-class professors. Force can only be met by force. Only slaves trust to a goddess that shall bring them freedom, while freemen take it themselves.

They will also see through the sophisms of that "pacific parliamentary revolution." They will understand that the best fighter in Parliament is good only so long as there is the clamour of the crowd in the street to spur him on; that bookish previsions are of little value; and that, as the land is needed by the people now, to-day, it must be taken now, leaving the discussion of "economic periods" to the bookworm tacticians. And they will see that as the movement for the socialisation of various necessities of life has begun already in the cities—not in the Westminster talking boxes—so it must be continued. Gas, water, electricity; schooling; means of communication, motive power; coal mines for getting motive power, have already been municipalised. The municipalisation of all houses, not only of working men's dwellings, must necessarily follow. Not only schooling, but also feeding of all children. If coal mines can be got by towns in order to get motive power—why not for supplying the inhabitants with fuel? Light, why not fuel? If Torquay has municipal dairies, why not municipal kitchen gardens, and no workhouses? If co-operative dairies are such a success all over the world, why not co-operative farming, co-operative horticulture, and so on?

In short, the spell has been broken. From beneath—not from above! From the village, the township—not from Westminster! From individual, local action (insurrectional and constructive)—not from party legislation, pacific and destructive of good! This is the teaching of the last few years, the lesson given to the patient crowd by the Upper Ten burglars.

The coming revival will have to take all these currents into consideration. And it will have to come to that necessary generalisation—*Expropriation*.

But how? Through Acts of Parliament? Through party legislation? No,—through *Local Action*: peaceful, if peaceful it can be; and insurrectional if the nation cannot break otherwise the privileges and the monopolies bequeathed to it by its fathers.

(THE END).

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ELIE RECLUS.

We have just lost one of our best friends, Elie Reclus. He was one or two years older than his brother Elisée, and he succumbed to a bad attack of influenza, on the 11th of February, at Brussels, at the age of seventy-six years.

The influence which Elie Reclus exercised on all who came in contact with him is infinitely deeper than a list of his works would indicate. Gifted with great intelligence and possessing immense learning on everything that concerns the knowledge of humanity, he was at the same time of a goodness and modesty absolutely without limit. He was a true type of the wise of antiquity, to whom he belonged by his whole naturalist and atheist philosophy; and if society had possessed the least conception of real knowledge and real education, he would have been surrounded by disciples whom he would have taught by his conversation and formed into *men*—thinkers and fighters—whilst communicating to them treasures of knowledge on all that concerns anthropology, ethnography, the myths of antiquity, the existence and evolution of myths (the Christian myths included), and antique art. In all these branches Elie Reclus was more than a rich encyclopedia, because his vast knowledge was assimilated.

Conjointly with his goodness, his Socratic simplicity and slightly mocking spirit, no man in Europe has known and understood primitive man so well as Elie Reclus. For that reason his two books, *Les Primitifs* and *Le Primitif d'Australie* (which are only two chapters from immense ethnographical manuscripts, which have remained unpublished), are the best works from which to understand primitive man.

With regard to his *Origine des Religions*, it may be said without exaggeration that it is the best work of its kind, though unfinished. Several chapters of it have been published in *La Société Nouvelle* and *L'humanité Nouvelle*.

Elie Reclus, since the year 1840, was an ardent Fourierist. After the June days of 1848, and the rise of the adventurer Napoleon III., he was obliged to emigrate to England. Returning after the amnesty, shortly before 1870, he began to publish a Fourierist paper, which had a great success among workers.

When the Commune was proclaimed he became its partisan. Accepting the post of director of the National Library and of the Louvre Museum, it is largely to his love of science and art, and to his practical forethought, that humanity owes the preservation of these treasures during the bombardment and fire.

He placed in the cellars of the Louvre, protected against the shells of the bourgeoisie, the masterpieces of Greek and Roman art, and took all measures to save the National Library in the conflagration of Paris; whilst his courageous wife, with his little boy in her arms, organised the distribution of food among the unemployed workers.

Only by accident he escaped being shot by the defenders of order, who condemned him, however, to deportation. Again he went into exile . . . in Switzerland and England until the amnesty.

Even this period of exile was not the last. After Vaillant's bomb, the police, looking for his son Paul, searched the house of Elie Reclus. Not finding Paul, they took revenge on his father. He was dragged to the police station, stripped and measured according to the anthropometry of the brute Bertillon, when, having had enough of it, he left France.

In Brussels, at the Free University, he gave his course on the history of religions, and in exile he expired.

From *Les Temps Nouveaux*.

ART AND FREEDOM.

There are two articles in the February number of the *Fortnightly Review* which are interesting as expressing, from different points of view, the profound dissatisfaction which thoughtful people are pretty generally feeling in England about the condition of our artistic life.

Mr. Courtenay heads an imposing list of names with a plea for a State-supported theatre; while Mr. Wm. Watson once more says of his country (too apt to disregard the warning), "Let her drink deep of discontent," and considers how lamentably letters are discouraged by a Government which seems to have strewed knighthoods among actors and artists but left Mr. Watson plain Mr. The complaint thus expressed seems trivial; but there is a great deal of truth underlying the grievance. Why is it, then, that the stage does not flourish, in spite of its knighthoods; nor poetry, without them? Why is this, and what must we do?

Mr. Courtenay suggests that the State ought, as it does in almost all European countries, to subvent the theatre: Mr. Watson thinks the State discourages, whereas it ought to encourage, literature.

Now, it is absolutely and deplorably true that there is something seriously at fault in the system which compels the artist of whatever kind to consider, not how to express what he feels to be true, and therefore beautiful, but what will please the public, often a poor enough judge of either, and so enable him to make his bread. The essential nature of all art demands that every artist shall express, not what he is asked to express, or paid to express, or what other people are accustomed to, and therefore like, but the truth as it shows itself to his individual vision. Art consists in the expression of some individual thought, emotion or experience, with such force and beauty as to convey its truth to others. For "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." And for this true and vivid transmission one thing is vital: the individuality of the artist. In so far as he is individual, and in so far as his view differs from that of others, he adds something to the treasure house of the world. A régime which demands from him not the expression of the truth that has revealed itself to his individual eyes as beauty, but the reiteration of what most people are used to think beauty, is fatal to artistic excellence.

The disease, then, is admitted. Mr. Courtenay and his friends and Mr. Watson find the remedy in the interference of a protecting State. But it seems extraordinarily unlikely that any State authority is really capable of fostering and assisting original genius, for just in so far as it is original, and therefore precious, the State, as we know, is apt to find it bad,

subversive and immoral, and certain to misunderstand it. *Omne ignotum pro terribile* is too apt to be true of the point of view of any body of men when judging for others. Our State may support Shakespeare, Goethe and Molière—and so far, so good; but that is not the real difficulty. The State cannot help the new ideals and ideas to their adequate diffusion. No, that is only to be attained in any measure when there is at once individual freedom and complete social interaction.

M. A. A.

[There is no branch of art whose growth and vitality would not be marred and distorted by any State aid; we need only freedom. Spinoza saw the truth of this when he wrote "Governments should never found academies, for they serve more to oppress than to encourage genius. The unique method of making the arts and sciences flourish is to allow every individual to teach what he thinks at his own risk and peril.—Ed.]

EDUCATIONAL.

Our Spanish comrades always carry educational work side by side with their propaganda work. They publish already an excellent periodical, the *Modern School*, and they have published an excellent short universal history for youths (quite good enough for full-grown people as well) by Dr. Clemencio Jacquinet. The same comrades have started just now a very nice *Review of Pedagogy, Physiological and Experimental*, and they intend, moreover, to start a series of lectures on sociological geography, for which they would like to have some photographs. "We should like," they write, "to show by the side of the sumptuous buildings of the great cities, also the slums reserved for the working men," and Dr. Jacquinet asks us if we know some amateur photographer who could help them by sending them such photographs.

We support that appeal most cordially. If any one of the comrades can send such photographs of any of the great Scotch, Irish and English cities—of the working men quarters, or scenes of factory life, and so on—let him send them to Sophie Kropotkin, Bromley, Kent. They will be received with great gratitude, and will be forwarded to our Spanish comrades.

P. K.

AMERICAN NOTES.

According to *Freiheit*, which gives the latest news, we hear the case of Comrade Turner has been postponed until October. If this is so it will mean that the appeal will have to be dropped, as he must return to London by Easter to resume his duties as organiser of the Shop Assistants' Union, which were interrupted when he went to America. He has sent me some papers from Ellis Island since the announcement appeared in *Freiheit*, but says nothing of this, so comment is postponed until next month.

In connection with the above it will be interesting to English readers to learn that a spasm of virtue has seized the House of Representatives—probably due to the elections in November—and they are investigating what is known in the American vernacular as "carriage graft," or in other words the money spent or stolen by our worthy governors under the heading of carriage expenses. A report was made to the House on February 4th, and among other interesting items we find that Secretary Cortelyou, of the Department of Commerce and Labour, admitted that he uses eight horses, ten carriages and one automobile, for which the people pay. Over 2,800 dols. a year is spent in drivers' salaries alone, and the total cost of this gentleman's stable to the State is about 10,000 dols. Rather tired, some might think, for a Secretary of Labour. Not at all, "Corte" is a hustler and there, are no flies on the ex-private secretary to the strenuous "Teddy." Keir Hardie, Will Crooks and others who are crying for a Minister of Commerce and Labour might take this lesson to heart; but we are afraid they will not, for things are so different here, you know.

The post-office has found discretion the better part of valour, and *Lucifer* has been restored to the second-class mail privileges, which means that they can mail the paper in the United States and Canada for a halfpenny a pound—about twenty copies—instead of a halfpenny each. Congratulations!

Hard on the top of this comes the news that the *Truthseeker* of New York is proscribed by the Canadian post-office, and in consequence the United States post-office refuses to accept the paper for Canada. It is a trick, of course, of the United States officials, as the *Truthseeker* is very outspoken; and as they have supported Turner's case strenuously, this is probably done for revenge. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," and we hope and trust our comrades will rally to the *Truthseeker's* assistance. Meanwhile brother Macdonald of that paper seems pretty wide awake.

The influence of Mr. Commercial Asset Rhodes seems to have permeated the "Great Republic," for the Appellate Division Court of New York has decided that a law of that State prohibiting the use of the American flag for the purpose of trade advertisement is unconstitutional, and further adds, "is an unwarranted interference with personal liberty." What a relief it is to think that under free Communism trade advertisements will be unnecessary and the red flag will not be soiled by them. The mock heroics of these "liberty-loving gentlemen" fill one with amused contempt.

H. M. K.

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THEORY AND PRACTICE.

The following letter was sent by the French executioner, Deibler, to the editor of the French paper *L'Action*, in reply to two articles published by Gustave Téry, in which approval was expressed of an appeal to the Lyon's comrades inviting their friends to break the guillotine on Deibler's shoulders on his next arrival at Lyons. This is the executioners letter:—

Sir,—I received two numbers of *L'Action* (8th and 12th December), in which M. Gustave Téry insults me and my two aids. Speaking of Potin's execution he writes: "One cannot understand how three such brutes could be found in the twentieth century as willing to adopt the trade of cut-throats."

I will not trouble to correct M. Téry or to teach this professor that he ought to attack institutions rather than men. Had he not begun by insulting me, I should have had the pleasure of informing him that I am no partisan of capital punishment. But we must live—must we not?

Unfortunately, M. Gustave Téry has forgotten I have a right to the respect due to all functionaries. Attacked in my professional honour, I warn you that I have the right to such respect.

(Signed)

DEIBLER.

Is not this letter an example of the hypocrisy characteristic to such an extent of our own times? The executioner is opposed to capital punishment, but cuts throats for money! And claims, and gets, due protection from his dear comrades, the host of other functionaries of the State.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Russia.

There was an idea among some that on the outbreak of hostilities between this country and Japan, those between revolutionists and absolutism would necessarily cease *pro tem*. A wave of patriotism, it was thought, would sweep across the country, obliterating for the time being all revolutionary propaganda. So far from being the case, there does not even seem a split in the Socialist camp as there was among English Socialists on the question of the Transvaal war. Only, of course, there is a masculine spirit and backbone in Russian revolutionary Socialism which is utterly unknown to English Socialism, whether of the Hyndman or Fabian school. Whatever the cause, the Russian revolutionists, not only in Russia proper but in Poland, Georgia, the Caucasus, openly condemn the war, and applaud the Japanese for their courage in defying the despotism that they alone of the world have not feared to face. The distribution of revolutionary literature goes on apace; popular demonstrations are met by counter demonstrations; the Tsar no longer shows himself at his palace window; in Poland, where the first Anarchist paper in Polish appears this month, the discontent is so great that the Governors of the provinces have been ordered to impose no new restrictions on the people for fear of exciting a rising. These and many other signs are eloquent of the ceaseless unrest that is eating out the heart of the *ancien régime* in this unwieldy empire. When the last morsel is stamped underfoot of the Revolutionists, then, indeed, "Advance, Russia!" But meanwhile, Sakhalien receives its martyrs—that mouth always gapes open. One of the last notable ones, now on her journey thither, is Mlle. Froumkine, condemned by ten judges in as many minutes to eleven years' penal servitude for striking at Novitsky, head of the political police at Kief, with a knife. As she said: "It was when lying in prison that I determined to act. Novitsky is known throughout Russia by his wholesale arrests; hundreds of young lives have been ruined by him—thus, when he was about to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of his career in Kief, I desired to make him remember it." Let us hope that fate will be kind to this spirited woman and assist later in her escape, as has been the case with the student Spiridon; the latter, condemned to death, has contrived to get out of his prison dressed as a woman.

South America.

A General Strike on a gigantic scale has commenced in Buenos Ayres. The last took place a year ago, when the authorities expected to have killed the germ by a rapid expulsion of foreign workers. The city was placed in a state of siege, and the population handed over to the police and troops, who, acting on orders, broke up hundreds of homes by expelling the breadwinners from the Republic at a moment's notice. The present strike is to show sympathy with the cabinet makers, a capitalist employer having thought fit to bully his restive factory hands by a demand for soldiers to awe them into submission. They at once proclaimed a strike, and other trades came out in sympathy. Fifty-six thousand men have already quit work. Remembering the recent expulsions, they have issued a circular declaring that if the like is attempted on the present occasion every vessel leaving for foreign ports will be dynamited.

Spain.

Arrests still continue in relation to the Alcala del Valle affair of last August. The trial of some of the workers by a military tribunal has just been concluded. Two of the accused are sentenced to imprisonment for life in chains, five to twenty years' penal servitude, seven to ten years, five to one year. Teresa Claramunt, the fearless speaker, is sentenced to a year's imprisonment.

According to report, all the prisoners prior to condemnation were ill-treated Montjuich fashion, in order to extort incriminating evidence against themselves and comrades. Soler, secretary of one of the workers' federations, has been condemned to eight years' penal servitude for having inserted a translation of a French report on the General Strike and anti-militarism in the federation's bulletin. The Spanish and French groups are combining to bring this fresh indication of Spanish military ferocity and legal injustice before the public.

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