

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)

Anti-Copyright



Alexander Berkman

The Lesson of 11<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1887

Proofread online source RevoltLib.com, retrieved on November 18, 2020.

This manuscript is part of the International Institute for Social History's Alexander Berkman archive and appears in Anarchy Archives with ISSH's permission. We have assembled here today to *honor* the memory \_\_\_\_\_

[usa.anarchistlibraries.net](http://usa.anarchistlibraries.net)

## The Lesson of 11<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1887

Alexander Berkman

But *not merely* to honor their memory. They are dead and the loving one cannot be recalled to life; but the *living* may profit by the *experience* of the past.

And this is the *great curse* of humanity that we seldom, very seldom profit by the experience of the years behind.

And yet, the *lesson* of the past is very simple; if it teaches us anything it is the *persistence* of the idea.

Persecution — the prison and scaffold, and tortures and fire and the cross were used to strangle the idea — in vain; even persecution but goes to nourishing the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. It gathers strength and becomes more powerful than the combined powers of darkness — it prevails and *blesses humanity*.

Had our governors learned this great *lesson*, the Tragedy of 1887 were not impossible.

Again it was the new, the *liberating* idea that was to be strangled. *Anarchy was on Trial*. To be sure, our murdered comrades were charged with this and that and conspiracy. And the public ? ? ?. But did reaction ever have sufficient ? to hold back the hands of progress?

But 2 *decades* have passed; the world has *moved* on and is *opening* its eyes and now we clearly see that there was indeed a *conspiracy*. The old conspiracy of the masters to keep their *slaves* in subjection, the old conspiracy of all *unwritten history*, the struggle of the producers against their exploiters.

But the struggle of 1887 stands out more prominently in recent history, for there the giant war of the classes found its clearest and most self-conscious expression in the struggle for an *8 hour* day.

Indeed the rulers realized the danger of such a movement, the danger of united efforts ? They conspired to strangle the aspirations of labor by ? their most intelligent, devoted and energetic ?. The public previously inflamed; the Haymarket bomb but the excuse to strangle the prophetic voices. There *was* danger, but not from ?, rather from the *class conscious* efforts of *united* labor. *But in vain* — today the voices from the grave speak louder in death than in life, and the aspirations of labor have not been killed.

But the rulers did not learn the lesson again as the ? of labor rose they attempted another tragedy— Haywood. Mayer, and Pettibone. An analogous case — a louder conspiracy.

But this time history did not repeat itself. We have marched along the Road of Progress; labor has learned the power of united effort and they won.

Thus shall

Let the 11<sup>th</sup> Nov. and the more recent Boise case ever be before our eyes reminding us of the *conspiracy* of Capital to crush labor.

And let us truly honor the memory of our great dead and all those mute martyrs of humanity by holding dear the cause of humanity, to win the earth and the futures thereof to those who create all wealth and thus we shall both honor and avenge the memory of our illustrious dead by the final triumph of liberty and humanity.