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EDITORIAL

THE JAPANESE CONVICTIONS.

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TO the difficulty that distance—a sufficient source of difficulty in the understanding of events—throws around the prosecution in Tokio of the twelve Japanese charged with “conspiring against the life of the Crown Prince” and with intent “to overthrow the government,” there is, in this instance, the added difficulty of language. When, to the exceptional difficulties that surround this particular case, is added the regulation difficulty of the regulation recklessness of phraseology used by the international bourgeois press, accuracy of information concerning the case of the twelve Japanese prisoners becomes well-nigh hopeless.

And yet from the confusing mass of “testimony” certain facts leap out with sufficient clearness.

On all hands it is agreed that the foremost prisoner of the twelve is Dr. Denjiro Kotoku; and on all hands it is admitted that Dr. Kotoku is a man of character and great knowledge. The report that, upon sentence of death being pronounced upon him and his wife, the Doctor cried out: “Long live Anarchy!” is at fisticuffs with the man’s admitted intelligence.

No more than the bourgeoisie of Japan did that Nation’s revolutionary movement begin at the “bottom of the ladder.” The same breath of Western Civilization that saved the bourgeois of Japan the trouble of painfully raising itself into the saddle, and that enabled it, within one generation, to bound abreast of the foremost of its Western compeers,—that same breath filled the lungs of the men who drew themselves up against Class Rule, in other words, for the Social Revolution. In the formative days of Krapotkin’s mind there was the opportunity for the confusion that could crystallize into Anarchy. There was none such in the formative days of Dr. Kotoku. Not unless the mental training of the Doctor’s was of the most defective (and the man’s conduct does not justify the conclusion) could any

feature distinctly Anarchic find lodgment in his mind.

The first of the three leading principles of Anarchy is the principle of small communities in order to avoid the evils of representative government.—Dr. Kotoku's trained mind could not succumb to the alternative delusion of either expecting the truly resurrectionally beneficent results of broad co-operation from petty communities, or imagining that society would sacrifice the tremendous advantages of broad co-operation to the petty advantages and positive ills that small communities are plagued with.

The second leading principle of Anarchy is, as its own deliberately chosen name expressly states, the rejection of headship.—Dr. Kotoku's well stored mind, improved, moreover, by the study of Marx, certainly resisted the fascination of "anti-governmental" declamation. Deep in the Doctor's mind must have sunk the pregnant Marxian observation that a single violinist is his own conductor, but an orchestra requires a separate one.

Finally, it can not be supposed that Dr. Kotoku's well balanced mind could be unhinged by the third of the leading Anarch principles—the principle that fatedly flows from the other two and that, with equal fatality, leads to individual acts of violence with their long train of slummery—the principle, expressed or implied, that physical force is a creative power.

It is hardly imaginable that the man Dr. Kotoku is said to be greeted his sentence, in his own and his associates' name, with the cry "Long live Anarchy!"

From the jumble of confusing information the conclusion is justified that the Class, or Political, State of Japan is about to perform the regulation pagan and bloody ceremony of sacrificing human life upon the altars of the Gog-and-Magog of Class Rule. The conclusion is justified that the Ruling Class of Japan, blinded with its own class-stupidity, looks upon the Socialist Movement as a cockatrice that can be disposed of in advance, in the embryo. The cockatrice may be nipped in the egg. The egg a Social Revolution is heated to speedier hatching only by attempts to nip the life that pulsates within its shell.

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