

The Life and Teachings of St. Ravachol,



The Violent Christ of Anarchy

This pamphlet collects all of the writings by Ravachol that I have been able to track down, as well as a small number of transcribed interviews. Together with his trial testimony, these writings amount to virtually all we know of Ravachol's thoughts on anarchism and his own deeds. Most were either written or dictated while in prison, awaiting his sentence and execution, and the manuscripts we have access to suggest that all of them probably had to undergo a certain amount of correction. How much mythologizing was also done is hard to establish, but it appears that Ravachol himself embraced some of the attempts to paint him as a representative figure, whose death would have a symbolic character as a martyrdom. Certainly, those around him did not hesitate to play on the symbolic power of the story of this other shepherd boy who grew up to be a symbol of salvation and the Ravachol that we have inherited is probably inextricable from the legend of the "violent Christ of anarchy." The danger for us is probably not in the mythologizing, but in the temptation to forget that the Ravachol myth was probably being constructed even while Ravachol himself was still living, and that he was to some extent complicit in that construction.

This collection is the first part of a larger project documenting the life and myth of Ravachol. Additional material can be found in the archives at libertarian-labyrinth.org.

Working translations by Shawn P. Wilbur

The Memoirs of Ravachol

Memoirs dictated to his guards on the evening of March 30, 1892

The aforementioned, having eaten with a good appetite, spoke to us in these words:

Gentlemen, I am in the habit of engaging in propaganda wherever I find myself. Do you know what Anarchy is?

We answered 'No' to this question.

"That doesn't surprise me," he responded. The working class, which as you know is obliged to work to obtain its bread, doesn't have the time to indulge itself in reading the pamphlets that are made available to it; it is the same for you.

Anarchy is the annihilation of property.

Presently there exist many useless things, many occupations which also useless, such as accounting, for example. With anarchy, there is no more need for money, no need of bookkeeping or of the other professions that derive from it.

There are presently too great a number of citizens who suffer while others bask in opulence, in abundance. That state of things cannot last; we should all not only profit from the surpluses of the wealthy, but like them we should still obtain the necessities. Within the present society it is impossible to achieve that goal. Nothing, not even the tax on income, can change the face of things, and yet the majority of the workers are persuaded that if we acted thus, there would be an improvement. That is an error. If we imposed a tax on the proprietor, he would increase his rent and in this way would arrange to have those who already suffer bear the new burden that we would impose on him. No law, moreover, can touch the proprietors, for being masters of their goods we cannot prevent them from disposing of them as they wish. What then is to be done? Destroy property and, by this act, destroy the monopolists. If that abolition took place, it would also be necessary to abolish money in order to avoid any idea of accumulation which would force the return of the present regime.

It is indeed money that is the motive of all the discords, all the hatreds, all the ambitions. It is, in a word, the creature of property. That metal, in truth, only has a conventional price born of its rarity. If we were no longer obliged to give something in exchange for what we need for our existence, gold would lose its value and no one would seek it, and no one could enrich themselves since nothing that they amassed could serve to procure them a well-being greater than that of others. From that, no need of laws, no need of masters.

As for religions, they would be destroyed since their moral influence would no longer have a place to exist. There would no longer be the absurdity of believing in a God who does not exist, since after death everything is finished. So we must hold onto life, but when I say life, I mean it. It is not [life] to dig the whole day to fatten the bosses and become, while dying of hunger, the authors of their well-being.

There must be no more bosses, none of those people who support their idleness with our labor, everyone must be made useful to society, working according to their abilities and aptitudes. Thus, one will be a baker, the other a teacher, etc. With this principle, labor will diminish, and we will each have an hour or two of work per day. Men, being unable to remain without an occupation, will find entertainment in labor; there will be no more idlers, and if they exist their number will be so negligible that we could leave them alone and let them profit, without grumbling, from the labor of others.

Having no more laws, marriage will be destroyed. We will join together according to our penchants and inclinations, and the family will find itself constituted by the love of the father and mother for their children. If, for example, a woman no longer loved the one she had chosen for her companion, she could separate and make a new association. In short, complete liberty to live with those we love. If, in the case that I have just cited, there were children, society would raise them, those who love the children would take charge of them.

With that free union, no more prostitution. The secret diseases would no longer exist, since they arise only from the abuse of the coming together of the sexes, an abuse that woman is obliged to engage in, that the present conditions force her to make an occupation of, in order to provide for herself. Isn't money necessary to live, no matter the cost?

With my principles, which I can detail for you completely in a very short time, there will be no more reason for the army, since there will be no separate nations, property being destroyed and all the nations being joined into a single one, which will be the Universe.

No more wars, no more quarrels, no more jealousy, no more theft, no more murder, no more magistracy, no more police, no more civil service.

The anarchists have still not entered into the details of their constitution. Only the markers have been laid down. Today the anarchists are numerous enough to overthrow the present order of things, and if this has not taken place it is because it is necessary to complete the education of the members, to inspire in them the energy and the firm will to aid in the realization of their projects. For that, only a push is necessary; let someone put themselves at their head and the revolution will be accomplished.

Those who blew up the houses aimed to exterminate all those who, through their social positions or their actions, are detrimental to anarchy. If they were allowed to openly attack those people without fear of the police, and consequently without fear for their hides, they would not destroy their

habitations with the aid of explosive devices, means that can kill, at the same time as them, the suffering class they have in their service.

Childhood and adolescence

I was born in Saint-Chamond (Loire) October 14, 1859, to Dutch and French parents.

My parents lived apart, I believe, but they had the firm intention getting married, the delay of that union depended only on some unfulfilled formalities (the birth certificate, etc., of my Dutch father).

My father was a laminator, and my mother was a silk throwster. At that moment, they were in a period of ease, for my mother had received a little money from her family, but my father had debts that he had to repay.

I was raised by a wet nurse until the age of three, and according to my mother, I did not have all the care necessary for a young child.

Upon leaving the nursery, I was placed in the [children's] asylum and remained there until I was six or seven years old.

My father beat my mother and questioned me in order to make reports against her—questions which I never answered—and as a result of the discord in the household, he abandoned her with four children, of which the youngest was three months old.

He went to his country, but as he was suffering from a sickness in his chest, he died after a year.

Herdsmen

My mother could not support four children and placed me in the country (La Rivoire near Saint-Chamond) with Mr. Loa, but he could not keep me because I was too small to tie or untie the cows that he had. I returned to my mother, to await the next year.

My mother had to ask the assistance of some well-to-do people and sometimes sent me to seek either money or bread.

One day, I remember, when someone had given my mother the uniform of a student, I would not wear it as it was for fear that the other children would tell me that it was a beggar's outfit, and my mother had to remove all the buttons and everything that could make anyone suspect this gift.

We all lived very unhappily, and the next year I again took the road to the country and returned to the home of a Mr. Loa, who paid me 15 francs for the season.

I was then eight years old, and helped my master, who had only me for a servant, to bundle the hay on the carts, in short, in the work of haymaking.

Sundays, I attended religious services, and, all in all, I followed the principles that my parents had taught me.

That winter, I returned to my family, and I continued to go to school.

The following year I went to the mountains, to La Barbanche, in the home of Liard, where I kept six cows and some goats.

The work seemed more difficult to me, especially when I remained there at the beginning of winter.

This winter struck me for several reasons. The first was the suffering I endured from the cold when I led the goats to graze on the stems of broom. Being poorly shod, my feet were, as it were, in the snow. The second was the loss of one of my sisters, the youngest, and an illness that I had, the pituitous fever.

The next year, I went for the summer to the home of a big farmer, Mr. Bredon, a miller and wood-seller in the commune of Izieux. I had 4 horses, 8 cows and 4 steers, a herd of ewes and some goats. I kept cows and steers. That was in 1870. I was eleven.

I believe it was that winter that I took my first communion with my relatives.

Sometimes while guarding the cows, I cried remembering the little sister that I had lost. I remember that my mother came to see me. She was sick, and I had cried a lot when I saw her go away and leave me in the hands of strangers, and also because I knew she was sick and unhappy.

The following year, I went to the Brouillassière between Val Fleury and Saint-Chamond. My boss, Mr. Paquet, was brutal to animals. He held a farm belonging to the Hospice and was a bit poor. I was not too unhappy there.

Returning to spend the winter at home, I was hired through the intervention of my mother in a workshop making spindles, where I earned 10 cents a day, and when spring came I returned to the country, to Gray in the mountains. I was highly thought of by my employers, whom I liked very much.

I spent the summer and winter there, and with pleasure, for they had a very well-read son, with whom I was happy to talk. If I did not remain there, it was because of the poor salary that they gave me, for I earned too little even to buy clothes.

The very day that I left them to go to Saint-Chamond, I met a road-mender on route, to whom I explained my situation. He told me that he knew a farmer who was looking for a herdsman. He explained that I would undoubtedly find him in Obessa[?], and in fact I did find him there, and was hired for the wage of 80 francs.

I left with him and passed the night at his home. The next day I went home on foot, and learned from my mother that there was a farmer very close to Saint-Chamond who sought a herdsman. Then I yielded to my mother's insistence and went to see the farmer she had told me about, for the one in Fouillouse had not given me a down payment. Otherwise I would have gone with him, especially as, having fewer animals to tend, I would have had less trouble than with the other, and that was the last time I was a herdsman.

I recall one fact without importance, but which demonstrates the avarice of my boss. One day he said to me: "We must hurry and eat. We will eat better at

the house;" to which I replied: "— at the house or here, you say the same thing, for you are always pressing us, and order us to work at mealtime so that we don't have the time to take what we need."

He wanted to hire me for the following year, but I refused, wanting to learn something other than farming.

Arriving home, I went to work for a few days in a coal mine, sorting the stones. I earned 15 cents a day. From there I believe I went to a rope-maker's, to turn the wheel. I did well enough there, earning between $\frac{3}{4}$ and 1 franc. Leaving there, I went to work at a factory that made cast-iron boilers. I heated the rivets and swung the sledge hammer. I earned 1 franc per day. The noise deafened me, so I was obliged to leave.

Apprentice dyer

Then my mother hired me out as an apprentice dyer to the firm of Puteau and Richard, at Saint-Chamond.

I had to fulfill three years of apprenticeship, and an apprenticeship virtually nonexistent, since they hid the secrets of the operation, and in order to learn a few words of it we had to catch the workers while they labored and question the comrades while the foremen were not there.

They did not want the apprentices to get their hands on the mixture. In order to learn they should just watch when they had time, for they didn't want to sacrifice a piece of silk to teach them, and so the apprentices had to produce in some other manner. I recall that we took advantage of the foremen's meal times to practice and improve.

The first year I reached 1,50 F per day, the second 2 F, the third, for six months 2,45 F, and the other six months 2,50 F.

Often we worked, without any increase in pay, for twelve or thirteen hours.

They required us to work beyond our strength, and we were made to lift weights that some grown men handled with difficulty.

Sundays, until the age of sixteen, in the evenings, I went from time to time with friends to the dance, the only entertainment in Saint-Chamond.

I only went to the cafe rarely. Sometimes we met some friends to go for a tour in the country, or we would go to one another's homes to learn to dance.

That was pretty much my life during the last years of apprenticeship. I spent about 15 cents each Sunday.

My mother had returned to work more earnestly when she put my brother children in the *enfants assistés*,¹ keeping only my sister with her, but as my brother complained of the Brothers who looked after him, my mother took him back when I was working. I was then nineteen.

¹ A home for abandoned children.

Worker and militant

For six months I remained a worker in the firm where I had taken my apprenticeship, with a salary of 3,75 F instead of 4 F as the rules of the house indicated, but knowing that I was not experienced in the area I didn't dare leave the firm, they had to fire me for loss of time caused by our chit-chat and laughter among comrades.

From there, I went to the Creux, in the commune of Izieux, to the firm of Journoux, but as I was not a very strong worker, they gave me 3,90 F instead of 4 F. I remained there around ten months, until the strike.

I attended all the meetings of the strikers, who did not win the day; the strike lasted about three weeks.

During that time I lived on my savings; when the strike began I was sacked with all my comrades.

I left for Lyon one night at nine o'clock, on foot, with a comrade, Jouany, who was a native of Saint-Chamond.

At two o'clock in the morning, exhausted from walking, we went to sleep under a tree, but we were wakened about four o'clock in the morning because of the cold and pushed on to Givors, hoping to find a train, but as it was too early. We walked to Grigny. There, in a café, we had a snack while waiting for the train. I was in charge of the expenses. After the meal, we took the first train to Lyon, where we were both hired in a factory (on the rise of the hill [La Croix-Rousse]), dyeing silk in black. We remained for some time, and when the strike of Saint-Chamond had ended, many of our comrades returned there, although they had not won the day.

Not wanting to give in to the will of the bosses, I remained at Lyon and then entered another workshop (the firm of Coron, rue Godefroy, dyer in colors) where I earned 4,50 F, half a franc more, per day.

I didn't remain there long, work having declined, and my comrade having been dismissed before me.

Unemployed

I found myself without work for a month, for only being trained as a worker in black silk, I had difficulty getting hired. Seeing that I found no employment, I returned to my mother's home, for I had no more than thirty francs in my pocket.

I had made the acquaintance of a young woman before leaving Saint-Chamond, whom I liked very much and who wrote to me often during my stay in Lyon, asking me to come back to her, but I always put it off, thinking I would be able to save some money to dress myself decently.

She even came to see me in Lyon, and I had the pleasure of spending a night with her. I had allowed myself, before meeting this girl, some escapades after a dance, but they were only *amours* for a day.

At Saint-Chamond there was little work, so I remained without work for some time more, and consequently the responsibility of my mother.

One day I met a knowledgeable laborer who had worked in a metal-working factory, that of Potin. He invited me to go there with him, and I accepted eagerly.

Arriving at the doorway of the factory, we had to wait for someone to come and choose the men who pleased them.

At that moment, they brought in a cylinder. As the road was steep, they had put men behind the car to hold it in case of an accident; I took the opportunity and joined those who did the chore, and once in the workshop, I presented myself to the foreman or manager, Mr. Pernod, and I was immediately accepted, along with another from the country, but not the one who had suggested the idea of going to that workshop, for he, having remained at the door, had not been hired.

I worked as a laborer at several machines, including the shear, for 3 francs per day.

Scrapper

The fifth day I was there—I believe it was New Year's Day—in a moment of rest, and while I slept, a furnace-boy, just out of the dragoons, came to throw a bucket of water in my face. I heard him, and, immediately, I sat up and I shouted at him. He wanted to box with me, so I gave him a punch in the face until he was satisfied with the delivery, and since my father had made himself famous by the thrashings he had given to several men, including the foreman Humbert, all the workers wanted to see the son of the German, as they called me after the scene that I had just had.

I forgot to say that a similar business had occurred at Saint-Chamond and that I had also made my case. It was from this that I made my reputation as a man to fear in case of a dispute.

On my return to Saint-Chamond, I renewed my acquaintance with the girl of whom I spoke, and I gave her up only with much grief when she informed me that our relations could no longer continue, since she was courted, with an eye to marriage, by the son of her boss.

I had remained in that factory around five months and I left there willingly to hire on with Pichon, a dyer at Saint-Chamond.

I lose faith.

I had begun to read the *Wandering Jew* of Eugène Sue while at Journoux's, when I was eighteen years old.

The reading of that volume had begun to make the conduct of the priests odious to me. I felt bitter sympathy for the two girls and their companion Dagobert.

One day a lecture was made at Saint-Chamond by Mme. Paule Minck, a collectivist.

She discussed religious ideas, combating them, in short she made a anticlerical speech. According to her, no God, no religion, complete materialism. She said that Saint Gabriel was a handsome man who paid court to the one we call the Virgin, and that Saint Joseph was just her husband, pure and simple.

I was very struck by her speech, and already encouraged by the *Wandering Jew* against religion, I no longer had faith, and I have almost completely lost religious ideas.

In a social studies circle

Some time later, Léonie Rouzade, a collectivist, and Chabert, of the same party, that is to say the Workers' Party, held a meeting at Saint-Chamond which I attended.

The woman's subject was anticlerical, and the man dealt with the social question.

All this talk rattled me, and, leaving the meeting, I asked my friend Nautas if there were writings that treated these matters. He responded that, yes, the newspaper *Le Proletariat*, published at Paris, would bring me up to date on all those questions.

Meanwhile, I met another comrade who had had an energetic discussion with the mayor of Saint-Chamond, Mr. [Marius] Chavannes, who had been a deputy.

I found it strange that a worker argued so strongly with a mayor, for these two characters left the meeting with me. The worker was called Père.

I tried to talk with the man who had taken the floor at our dyers' strike. I managed to see him, and he informed me that a social study circle was forming. I asked him if I could take part in it. He responded affirmatively and gave me some explanations. Since then I have been part of it.

What had so inspired me to continue the study of social problems was also the first reading of the *Le Proletaire*, which spoke in vindication of the Commune of 1871 and of the victims of Russian nihilism. I read and reread it so much that I knew it nearly by heart. I was then twenty or twenty-one years old. I also read a collectivist daily, *Le Citoyen de Paris*. In the beginning, I had difficulty understanding their ideas, but by persevering I managed to see that they were good.

I become an anarchist

In the circle that I was part of, there often came anarchist speakers who, taking the floor, enlightened me on points I did not understand.

[Toussaint] Bordat and Régis Faure opened another type of ideas for me. At first glance I found their theories impossible, and I would not accept them, but

from reading their collectivist and anarchist pamphlets, and having listened to many meetings, I chose anarchy, without, however, being completely convinced of all their ideas.

It was only two or three years later that I adopted anarchy completely.

First tangles with justice

I remained in the employ of Pichon almost two and a half years. I had been fired from that house because I had been a few minutes late to work in the morning, and I said to the foreman who mentioned it to me that he didn't count the days when I stayed after hours. It is because of these words that he gave me three days to leave.

After that business I went from house to house, because of the lack of work, in the firms of Vindrey, Balme, Cuteau and Richard. I returned to Vindrey three times. I worked in the meantime for Coron at Saint-Étienne, for a month. I remained with Vindrey for the longest time.

I frequented night classes at that time, primary studies and chemistry, and I even asked to be allowed to follow the day courses during the days of unemployment, an authorization refused to me because I was too old.

I learned with difficulty and only understood after someone had explained things to me several times. It is there that I learned a little arithmetic.

At the time I worked for Vindrey, I was anarchist. I began to make explosives, but I could not make proper devices, having only poor materials at hand. I tried to make dynamite. One of my friends, who had bought some sulfuric acid at a sale, could not keep it at his home, for one of his children had almost burned himself with it, he gave it to me.

One day, a girl who had been betrayed by her lover, came to me, knowing that I had vitriol at my disposal, or rather sulfuric acid, and asked me to burn a corn she had. I mistrusted her, and I asked her how she used it. She told me that she took a drop with a straw and put it on the corn, and that this process had already worked. So I gave her a very little bit of it in a large container, but she used it by adding a bit of water to it, to throw it in the face of her lover.

That woman was arrested, and when they asked her where she had got the acid, she said it was me that had given it to her. So I was called before the Police Commissioner; there, the business was explained and I was released after being questioned.

The police had doubtless gone to get some information about me from my boss Mr. Vindrey, for as soon as he learned that I was an anarchist, he fired first my brother and then me, and that immediately. In vain, I asked for explanations; he did not respond to me, but by dint of abuse and insults, I extracted this confession from him: that if he had known me he would have already long since shown me the door.

I couldn't leave my mother to die of hunger...

At that time my sister had just had a child with her lover. My brother and I were without work, and without a cent put away. We only had the bread that the baker was willing to give us. Not finding work anywhere, I was obliged to go in search of food.

I took a pistol and went to the country to hunt chickens, with a basket in hand to put them in. I pretended to pick dandelions. My brother was going to steal some sacks of coal. One day he was almost hurt leaping over a wall with a sack, being pursued. That coal was taken from the trash.

It was painful for me to go steal the poultry of the unfortunate peasants, who perhaps only had that to live on, but I did not know those who were rich and I could not leave my mother, my sister and her child, my brother and myself to die of hunger.

I had tried to work, but they let me go everywhere. My mother and sister didn't know where the poultry that I brought came from. I told them that I had given a hand to some farmer and they had given me a chicken in payment. I had to act this way for almost a month, that is until the month of May, when I left for Saint-Etienne.

Once work was almost assured, my brother was also hired and my mother rejoined me. My brother made a lot more than me, but spending more, he brought almost nothing home.

One day I rebuked him, and several times even, saying: "What would we do at home, if I did as you do? Tomorrow we would only have the table to look at." And I lectured him. He began to cry, feeling the reproach was just, but that did not correct it, whether he earned little or much.

I learned to play the accordion, and on Sundays when I found the opportunity, I went to the dance, which allowed me to have some pennies before me, to provide for my personal expenses, for I put all my pay in the hands of my mother, for whom I had much affection, affection that she lost later because of her chatter and gossip on the subject of a lover that I took thereafter.

Smuggler

After two years at Saint-Etienne, I began to smuggle alcohol, for my work was not enough because of too many days of unemployment.

By means of rubber devices that adapted to the shape of the body, I moved the liquids either by tram or on foot. I carried some vials of scent so that people who approached me smelled the odor of the perfumes instead of the fumes from the alcohol.

That idea had been suggested to me by a comrade, who had provided the money and the necessary instructions.

Some time later I made the acquaintance of a married woman, through the intermediary of my mother. The latter, who went to the meetings of the protestants, spoke to that woman a great deal in my favor, as indeed all mothers do. My mother had done this believing that she spoke to a maiden.

Now, one Sunday she invited me to come to her house. She was in her Sunday best and ready to go out. Seeing that petite brunette with big black eyes, I understood that this was the woman of whom my mother had spoken, and I was gallant with her, as much as my feeble education allowed me. A good impression of our interview remained with both that lady and myself. I learned that she was married to a lace-maker twenty years her elder.

Relations commenced, at first friendly and then intimate. She had two children, a twelve year old boy and another, seven year old, who was crippled.

I understood that this woman was unhappy with her husband, who never talked with her, and whose character, because of the difference in age, was very opposite, he being withdrawn and ill-mannered, she expansive and affectionate.

I conceived the idea of linking my life forever with this woman; I expounded to her these ideas and my theories, that is to say that she was allowed, as I was, to yield, when she wished, to a penchant for love. I even gave her permission to receive in our home those for whom she had a penchant. It would have been the same for me, without that leading to the destruction of our union; only, we should act with respect for one another, with discernment, by keeping secret the foreign relations at home, so that we did not give birth in the heart of either one to jealousy, daughter of the spontaneous pain of the heart.

That woman was named Bénédicté [Labret]. As her situation was very precarious, I gave her as much money as possible. So I was obliged, so to speak, by my affection for her to continue smuggling, in order to help her and have some money for myself. She only learned much later that I was smuggling, for I could not always hide what I did from her, especially as she was often in the room where I took off my devices.

My mother soon learned of that relation, and aroused by the neighbors and knowing that married woman, she did all that she could to break up that union of the heart.

She insulted her lower than the dirt in the middle of the street, and accompanied her words with threats. This disposed me strongly against my mother and, despite all the possible conciliations that I made towards her, she only continued with greater intensity. It is thus that my filial love was changed to hate, and that each day I became more strongly attached to my mistress.

Counterfeiter

Seeing that smuggling no longer produced much and that work did not go well, I resolved to take up counterfeiting, for I recalled that one of my friends had done it and it had been successful; that friend was named Charrère.

I began to make one and two franc pieces, some of five francs, and of one-half franc. I passed just a few of them. I found the manufacture too meticulous and the disposal too difficult.

However, I wanted to bring happiness to my mistress and myself, to shelter us, in the future, from all poverty. The idea of a great theft came to mind. I said

to myself that here below we were all equal and we should have the same means of obtaining happiness for ourselves.

Graverobber

Left with no resources, deprived of everything, and knowing that there were presently enough things produced to satisfy all the needs of everyone, I sought to discover what could provide me with well-being. Now, I saw only money. I only desired to possess enough for my means of existence each day, and not for the pleasure of being in opulence and brimming with gold.

So I went in search of where I could strike, not being able to resign myself to dying of hunger alongside men who had more than they needed.

I learned that at Notre-Dame-de-Grâce there was an old man who lived in solitude and who received many alms. His life was very sober, and naturally he must have amassed a treasure. I left one night to determine the truth of what I had been told, to explore the house and to be ready to present myself in a manner that would not wreck my enterprise.

Before making arrangements, I learned from comrades that a baroness, Mme. de Rochetaillée, had been buried, and that they had to bury her with her jewelry. I had thought that I could easily desecrate her grave and obtain everything of value. So I went to the cemetery of Saint-Jean-Bonnefonds (Loire) where her vault was. Around 11 o'clock at night, I scaled the wall of the cemetery. Going there, I took the opportunity to pass two 2-franc pieces. I could pass one at a wine-merchant and the other at a baker's shop, for I did not want to be without money in my pocket. Once the wall was scaled, I sought the location of the sepulture, which I found easily. The headstone was in front of the mortuary chapel. Using a crowbar taken, I think, from a construction site, I was able with difficulty to raise the stone, and I entered the vault. In the vault there were several cases closed by slabs of marble. I sought one where there was an sign showing me the place where the baroness rested. I sunk my bar in a crack and, shaking it from side to side, I made the marble slab that closed the case tumble. That slab, falling, produced a resounding noise, because there was a lot of echo in the vault. Immediately, I went back up to see if that noise had attracted the attention of anyone.

Seeing that I had nothing to fear, I descended again into the vault and with great difficulty I removed the coffin from its case—which was the second and placed 1,20 meters high—but not being able to hold the coffin, I let it fall. A thud, louder than the first, was heard. I went up again, like the first time, to determine the effect produced. Seeing that I could continue my work peacefully, I went back down and started to break the bands that surrounded the casket, always with the aid of my bar. I managed to break open the cover, but I then encountered a second casket of lead that I did not have too much trouble smashing open. I had a muted lantern with me, which went out before the end of the operation.

I went up again to find some dried flowers and withered wreaths that I set afire in the vault to light my work.

The corpse was beginning to decompose, and I couldn't find the arms, so I tried to get the cadaver out of the way and I found on the stomach a quantity of little packets that I removed and threw on the ground. There were some on all sides, and that work done, I examined the hands, arms and neck, but I didn't see any jewels. Finding nothing, and beginning to be asphyxiated by the fumes that the flowers and wreaths produced in burning, I left the vault and went out by the door of the cemetery, which only opened from the inside.

I took the road to Saint-Etienne, and I put on a false beard. On the way I met a man who asked me, from some distance, the way to the station. I had a revolver on me. That man, not understanding well what I said to him, approached me and remarked that I had a false beard, a reflection which made me smile. I arrived at Saint-Étienne around two o'clock in the morning.

Burglar

Having been unsuccessful, I tried to find something else, and I learned that in a little town called "La Côte" there was an uninhabited house belonging to some rich people. I thought that there would be money there; I went three times to explore the places so as to work surely.

One night I went and tried to break in. as I did not succeed, I left and returned the following day taking a brace and a very broad English drill bit. I scaled the wall and I leaped into the garden, went toward the back door and set myself to opening it. When the hole was big enough to pass my arm through, I pushed it in, raised the bar and opened the catch. I even had to use my bar in order to force the bolt from its plate. I visited the cellar where there was wine, liqueurs, etc., and where, consequently, I refreshed myself, for I had a lot of trouble opening the door to the cellar. Then I visited all the rooms up to the attic. I found four or five francs, in the pocket of a dress.

I took mattresses, blankets and some effects, clocks, wine, spirits, eau-de-vie, a telescope, some binoculars, etc.

I returned for about three weeks, each time taking twenty liters of wine in a smuggling device and some packets of fine liqueurs. Having smuggled them, I peddled the spirits easily. After that I continued, resources exhausted, to live completely by smuggling or by manufacturing false money, until the affair of the Hermitage. For this took place in March, and the business with the hermit was in June.

Assassin

Pushed to the limit, finding no job anywhere, I saw only one way to end my woes: go to Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and strip the hermit of his treasure.

Before finally making this decision, I had tried to find a job, as difficult as it was, in the mines of Saint-Étienne. There, as among my old bosses, it was impossible to find work. Even those who were in the trade couldn't get rehired.

So, hopeless, I left alone one morning for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. I took the train around 7 o'clock at Saint-Etienne for Saint-Victor-sur-Loire, changing trains at Firminy.

Having investigated the dwelling of the hermit only by night, I had some hesitation finding my way, so I asked the stationmaster, on descending from the train, the shortest route to Notre-Dame. En route, at Chambles, I met a little girl of whom I asked the name of the hamlet that I saw up there on the mountain, and if there was not a hermit who lived there. The response having been explanatory—since she gave me the name of the hamlet, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, and she showed me the place where the hermit lived—I gave her a penny.

Climbing the mountain, I stopped midway to have a snack. At that moment I was hailed by a priest who remarked to me that I was wrong to stop beside a bush, that the mountain was infested with reptiles. That priest must have been, in my opinion, the vicar of Chambles. He descended the mountain and I continued to climb.

Arriving at the hamlet, I had an instant of hesitation, not remembering my way very well. So I started trying to get my bearings and to pull the wool over the eyes of the locals who might have noticed my presence. I even amused myself on the way by visiting some ruins that I found.

At noon, I presented myself at the front door of the hermit's habitation. I knocked several times in order to determine if anyone was there, and in order to have a means of introduction into the house, but it was in vain, as I received no response. So I went around to the back, climbed the wall of the garden, and entered the house by the cellar door, which I found ajar. Seeing a staircase in the cellar, I entered. That staircase was closed by a trapdoor. I raised it, and found myself all at once in a room where the hermit lay sleeping on his bed.

Awakened by my footsteps, the hermit sat up in his bed and asked me: "Who is there?" At that questioning, I responded: "I came to find you, to have you say some masses for one of my relatives who has died. Here is a fifty franc note; take twenty francs and give me the change."

I had borrowed that fifty-franc note from one of my comrades before leaving Saint-Étienne. I thought that by forcing him to make change for a bill, I would see the place from which the change came, and that in this way he would serve me, without any doubt, as a guide to the famous hiding-place of his treasure.

He responded to me, with a suspicious air, with these broken words: "No... no!"

Seeing this, I started to examine the room closely. The hermit wanted to rise, but I said to him: "Stay in the bed, my good fellow; stay in bed."

He tried to get up anyway, so I immediately approached the bed, and, putting my hand over his mouth, I said to me: "Stay on the bed, goddammit!"

Despite that urgent order, he still wanted to rise. So I pressed down more forcefully on his mouth, using both my hands. As he struggled, I grabbed the bolster, pressed it over his mouth and leaped on the bed. Then by the weight of my body, the pressure of my knee on his chest, and that of my two hands pressing down hard on the bolster, I was able to get him under control.

But these means were not rapid enough to obtain a suffocation capable of placing the man *hors de combat* and preventing him from harming me. So I took my own handkerchief, and I jammed it down as deeply in his throat as possible. He soon began to stretch his limbs with nervous movements, even soiling himself while I held him, and was not slow to maintain a most complete state of immobility. When I saw that he no longer moved, I pulled out my handkerchief, put it back in my pocket, and jumped off the bed.

Then I took off my shoes, so as not to make a sound, and after setting my revolver close by the bed, I calmly explored all the furniture, the wardrobe, etc. I found coins everywhere. I even broke into three or four locked dressers with a shovel that I found at hand.

I went into the attic, and found coins everywhere, along the walls, on the beams, in pots; I descended to the cellar, and it was the same scene, money, always money. "Never," I said to myself, "you could never take it all."

I took the hermit's handkerchiefs, making them into a sort of sack by tying them up, and carried with me as much money as possible.

In the course of my searching, while descending the stairs from the attic, I heard a knock at the front door. I leaped for my revolver, which I put in my pocket, and I listened for a moment. Understanding that someone had turned around, I resumed my work. I asked myself, however, who could have come. I soon thought that it could only be the neighbor's wife, whose steps and voice I had heard through the partition. She came to see if the hermit needed anything, for doubtless the a who was still found in his bed at noon must be indisposed.

Around five o'clock in the evening I left by the same road by which I had come, taking with me a load of silver and gold of at least twenty kilos. I went straightaway to the Saint-Victor station.

The train was very late. This delay allowed me to indulge in reflection. I understood that it was not prudent to continue on with my burden, especially as the stationmaster seemed to be watching me. So I left for a village situated a kilometer or two away, and on the way, having found a culvert that crossed it, I quickly put my loot in it.

In the village, I supped heartily. The patroness of the establishment tried to strike up a conversation with me, and asked me where I was going and where I came from. I replied: "Madame, I do not like to be interrogated. It is not proper to ask such questions of people, without knowing if this behavior will please them." After supper, having settled my account, I returned to Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

There, I returned five or six times to the hermit's dwelling, using the same methods as the first time. On each trip, I carried in my handkerchiefs some

money which I hid twenty minutes from there, in the wheat fields, always taking care to protect the heads of the wheat, in order to leave no trace of my passage.

In the morning I went down to take the first train to Saint-Victor, taking with me a parcel filled with pieces of silver and gold, a packet that I dropped off in my rooms on arriving at Saint-Étienne. That was Friday. During the day, I saw my mistress and asked her if she wanted to come with me to make an excursion in the night, to the mountain. I told her right off to demand no explanation on the subject of that nocturnal promenade. She agreed.

So I hired a carriage for the whole night.

Departing, I told the coachman to take the road to Saint-Just-sur-Loire, giving him no other directions.

Arriving not far from my hiding place, I had him stop and requested that he wait for me, leaving my mistress in the carriage.

On leaving Saint-Étienne I had brought with me a handbag and a suitcase. I took these two items with me and I went quickly to seek the packets of money that I had hidden. On my return, I dropped my burdens on the road, made the coach advance in order to avoid a greater journey, and deposited them inside the vehicle. The coachman, noticing that I had difficulty lifting these three objects, remarked to me that if it was money that I carried, there would be a considerable sum there. We took the road back to Saint-Étienne right away. All that had required a great deal of time, so much more because I had been to visit the surroundings of the house where the crime took place to see if there was anything abnormal there.

The day began to break.

En route the coachman said to me: "Excise station ahead!" — I responded: "I have nothing to fear. I have nothing with me subject to the duties." At the tollhouse, an employee asked me if I had anything to declare. I responded, "No." "What's more," I added: "Look." He made me open the valise, and I did so immediately; he only saw parcels made with handkerchiefs, felt them and seemed to feel a hard mass. As he demanded explanations, I told him it was some metal. We continued along our route.

The carriage passed through a part of Saint-Étienne, took me to the hamlet called Le Haut Villebeuf, right to the door of my habitation, where we arrived around four o'clock in the morning. I paid for the carriage and gave a tip of ten francs to the coachman, without, however, making any other remarks to him.

I carried my loot up to my rooms, and my mistress left me very quickly, in order to return to her own home as quickly as possible.

On Saturday night, I returned to Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. I took the train to come and go as far as Saint-Rambert, and made the rest of the journey on foot. I had a sack with me. I reentered the hermit's house by the same means, and brought it back stuffed with money.

In the afternoon of the next day, which was Sunday, I learned from persons that the crime was known, and that it was the hermit's wigmaker who, going to shave him, had discovered the business. I was happy to be gone, for I was ready

to return that night to Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and misfortune would have caught with me there, for I would obviously have been taken in the act.

Hunted

I bought the papers right away and learned that thanks to some of the duty officers it was known that a carriage had passed during the night, that someone had declared some scrap, that it was supposed that it was this that contained the proceeds of the theft, and that at present the driver of that carriage was sought.

Understanding that they would not be slow to find him, I rented a room right away, and carried there all the valuables that I had in the one that I occupied, taking, however, part of the money to the home of my mistress, when her husband was absent, and the other to my residence.

I resolved to go see the coachman, in order to eliminate him in the event that he would not enter the path of confession, for with him dead, the trail of the police would be lost. Going to see him, I met him on the road with his carriage, heading towards Firminy. I hailed him and asked him if he would take me to that locality. I thought that he could not recognize me, having changed my outfit. He accepted.

Once in the carriage, I entered into conversation, and brought it around to the news of the day, I mean, of the crime. "Do you know the story of the hermit everyone is talking about?" He pretended to know nothing; then I asked him if he could take me to Saint-Just-sur-Loire. I asked him the same question as when I had hired him in the night, in order to see if he recognized me by the voice, or else if he would admit something. He responded in the negative, but that his boss would take me there. Then I said to him: "It's not worth troubling yourself for that, I don't absolutely have to go down there right away, I prefer to go immediately to Saint-Étienne to settle my business."

At one point, he pretended to have forgotten something, begged me to get out, and retraced him path, saying: "I'm going to look for a note I have forgotten."

No sooner was I out than I understood that I had been recognized, and I started the follow the carriage, which was soon lost to view. In my haste and my doubts about the exact place of his residence, I passed his home by a long distance, but, perceiving my error, I soon had his exactly address from the inhabitants of the region, especially as I knew his name. I waited for him for a moment and, not seeing him leave his house, where I stood watch, I realized that the best course to take was to return home, while keeping on my toes. I returned there on foot, my hands on the two revolvers that I carried, and at the least noise, I put myself on the defensive.

Everything seemed to loom threateningly and I did not want to return to the station, fearing being taken, although I had a return ticket for Saint-Etienne on my person. Reflecting more and more on the conversation with the coachman

and on his actions, I understood that he had already long since disclosed all that he knew.

My plan was to return no more to the room where he had taken me.

Arrested

A few days later, I met my mistress, who asked me: When are we going to sleep together?" — "Tonight," I said, "I you want." — "But where," she asked me, "in your old room or the new one?" — Instinctively I responded, "the old room," wishing to inspect it, and destroy everything which could relate to the crime of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. That response caused my misfortune. It was by returning to my room that I was arrested, and even recognized by one of the civil agents, the one named Nicolas who shouted when I was arrested: "Hold on, it's Koenigstein."

The landlord of that room had closed it with his key, me, I had installed another lock there, the only one I used, not concerning myself with the keys, nor with that of the landlord. I reentered by the back of the house without being seen. Nearing my room, it being impossible to open its door, the noise that I made revealed my presence, and, as I was preparing to turn around, I saw the landlord's door open, and a man came out. At the time, I took that man to be the landlord, who came to account for the noise that he had heard, and, and thinking to myself that he could assume the presence of a thief, I didn't want to flee. On the contrary, I stopped to speak with him and make myself known. That man immediately jumped on me, and others who were hidden in the proprietor's room also came to seize me. It happened that for the first time since the business with the hermit, I had no weapon on me, else I would perhaps have wounded some of them, and I would have been able to take flight.

They drew me into the owner's room. There I struggled as violently as possible, and I even pretended to call some comrades to me, in order to terrorize them and take advantage of their anxiety in order to escape. They then searched me and found on me a little bone box, a candy box from the hermitage. It was difficult to open. As the captain who took it attempted to open it, I said to him: "Watch out, it's going to explode!" At this, a police agent shouted at me in these words: "Jesus Christ, he still has the audacity to f... with us!" There, they put me in handcuffs and one went up to my room where they observed only the clock, five quilts and a quantity of objects from some of the thefts at La Côte. They tried to make me confess and give them explanations, but I responded that I would only speak at the inquiry.

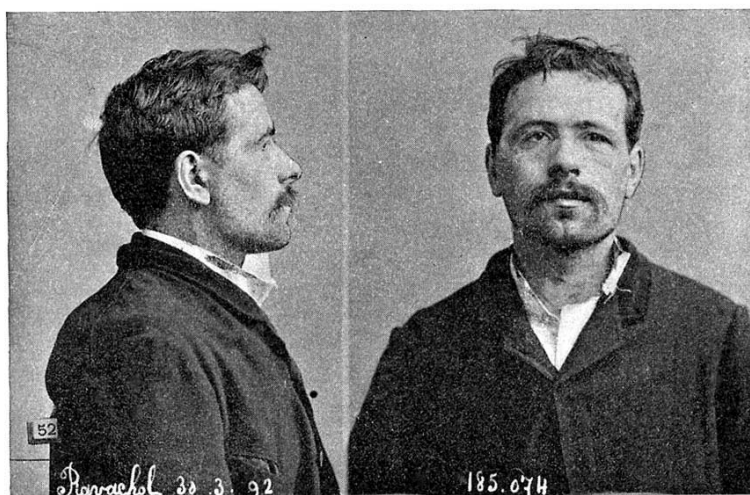
Escapee

We then set out, and talked on the way. Arriving at about three hundred meters from the house, near a curving road, we encountered a man carrying I think, a parcel. The agents stopped him. The opportunity to flee seemed good to

me, and I acted like I knew the man, calling to him with some "pssts." The incoherent words that I let drop made the agents suppose that this individual was my accomplice and abandon me in order to rush at him. I immediately took flight, retracing my steps. They realized it right away, but I had gained some ground, and despite their pursuit that could not reach me. They attempted, nonetheless, to intimidate me by firing a revolver at me, but they didn't hit me, and I was able to continue on my way. This happened around one in the morning.

I. — Observations anthropométriques.

taille 1 ^m 66.6	tête. long. large. oreille dr. long. large.	long 18.8	piet g. 27.9 médius g. 12.0 auric ^g g. 9.9 coudée g. 46.8	n° de cl. 3 aur ^g 2.02 m pér ^g and f. verd part ^g	Agé de 32
voûte		large 16.0			né le 11 Octobre 18 59
enverg. 1 ^m 76		long 6.6			à St Chamond
buste 0 ^m 87.2		large 3.5			dép ^g Loire
					age app ^g



II. — Renseignements descriptifs.

front. Arc ^{sup} Inclin ^g Haut ^g Large ^g part ^g	nez. Haut ^g Saillie Large ^g part ^g	(Racine (prof) des car base Haut ^g Saillie Large ^g part ^g	oreille droite bord. O. lob. c. a trg. i. pli. t. part ^g	S. — P. — o. a. — m. — D. p. — r. — D. s. — f. — e.	barbe none chvx d. Car ^g L ^g i ^g traits caract ^g sig ^g dressé par M. Delray	Pig ^g Sang ^g Ceint ^g

The Declaration of Ravachol at his Trial

1892

If I take the stand, it is not to defend myself for the acts of which I am accused, for society, which by its organization pits men in constant struggle against one another, is alone responsible. In fact, don't we see today, in all classes and all professions, people who desire, I would not say the death, because that sounds bad to the ear, but the misfortune of their fellows, if that can procure advantages for them. Example: Doesn't a boss wish to see a competitor disappear? Don't all the shopkeepers in general wish, mutually, to be alone in enjoying the advantages that that sort of occupation can bring? Doesn't the unemployed worker hope, in order to obtain work, that for some reason the one who is occupied should be released from the workshop? Well, in a society where such facts appear, we cannot be surprised by acts of the sort for which I am blamed, which are only the logical consequence of the struggle for existence among men who, in order to live, are forced to use every sort of means. And, since everyone is for themselves, isn't the one in need reduced to thinking:

Well, since it is this way, I must not hesitate, when I am hungry, to use the means at my disposal, at the risk of making victims! When the bosses sack some workers, do they worry that they will die of hunger? Do all those who have more than they need concern themselves with the people who lack necessities?

There are certainly some of them who give aid, but they are powerless to relieve all those who are in need and who die prematurely from privations of all sorts, or willingly from suicides of all sorts, in order to put an end to a miserable existence and not have to endure the rigors of hunger, the innumerable shames and humiliations, without hope of seeing them end. Thus they have the Hayem family and Madame Souhain who have given death to their children in order to no longer see them suffer, and all the women who, in fear of not being able to feed a child, did not hesitate to compromise their health and life by destroying the fruit of their *amours* in the womb. And all these things occur in the midst of the abundance of all sorts of products! We would understand if that had taken place in a country where products are scarce, or there is famine.

But in France, where abundance reigns, where the butcher's shops are packed with meat and the bakeries packed with bread, where clothing and shoes are piled in the shops, where there are unoccupied lodgings!

How can we accept that all is well in society, when the contrary is so clearly seen?

There are many people who pity all these victims, but will say that they can do nothing.

Let each get by as they can!

What can those who lack necessities while working do if they become unemployed? They can only let themselves die of hunger. They will cast some words of pity on their corpse. I wanted to leave that to others. I preferred to become a smuggler, counterfeiter, thief, murderer and assassin. I could not beg: it is degrading and cowardly, and it is even punished by our laws, which make a crime of poverty. If all the needy, instead of waiting, took, wherever and by any means, the self-satisfied would perhaps understand more quickly that there is a danger in wanting to sanction the current social state, where the uncertainty is permanent and life is threatened at every instant.

We will doubtless soon end by understanding that the anarchists are right when they say that, in order to have moral and physical tranquility, we must destroy then causes that give rise to crimes and criminals: that is not by eliminating those who, rather than die a slow death from the privations that they have and would have to bear, without hope of seeing them end, prefer, if they have any energy at all, to violently take whatever can assure them well-being, even at the risk of their death, which can only put an end to their sufferings. That is why I have committed the acts for which I am blamed and that are only the logical consequence of the barbaric state of a society that only increases the number of its victims by the strictness of its laws, which strike at the effects without ever touching the causes. We say that one must be cruel to kill his fellows, but those who speak that way do not see that they resolve to do it only to avoid death themselves.

Just so, you gentlemen of the jury, who, without doubt, will condemn me to the death penalty, because you believe that it is a necessity and that my disappearance will be satisfying for you, who have a horror of seeing human blood spill, but who, when you believe that it would be useful to spill it in order to insure the security of your existence, will not hesitate any more than me to do it, with the difference that you do it without courting any danger, while, on the contrary, I acted at risk and peril to my life and liberty.

Well, gentlemen, there are no longer criminals to judge, but the causes of crime to destroy. In creating the articles of the Code, the legislators have forgotten that they do not attack the causes but simply the effects, and they will in no way destroy crime; in truth, as long as the causes exist, the effects will always follow. There will always be criminals, for today you destroy one of them and tomorrow ten will be born. So what must be done? Destroy poverty, this seed of crime, assuring the satisfaction of all their need! And how easy that is to accomplish! It will suffice to establish society on new bases, where all would be in common, and where each, producing according to their aptitudes and strengths, could consume according to their needs.

Thus we will no longer see people like the hermit of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and others beg for a metal of which they become the slaves and victims! We will no longer see women yield their charms, like a common merchandise, in exchange for that same metal that very often prevents us from recognizing if the affection is truly sincere. We will no longer see men like Pranzini, Prado,

Berland, Anastay and others who, always in order to have that metal, were led to kill! This demonstrates clearly that the cause of all these crimes is always the same and that we must be truly mad not to see it.

Yes, I repeat it: it is society that makes criminals, and you jurors, instead of striking them, should use your intelligence and strength to transform society. As a result, you would eliminate all the crimes; and your work, by attacking the causes, would be greater and more fertile than your justice, which is limited to punishing the effects.

I am only a worker without instruction; but because I lived the life of the destitute, I feel much better than a rich bourgeois the iniquity of your repressive laws. Where do you get the right to kill or imprison a man who, put on this earth with the need to live, finds himself with the need to take what he lacked in order to feed himself? I have worked to live and to provide a living for my loved ones; so long as neither I nor mine suffered too much, I remained what you call honest. Then work has been lacking, and with unemployment comes hunger. It is thus that the great law of nature, that imperious voice that allows no reply, the instinct of self-preservation, drove me to commit certain crimes and misdemeanors for which you reproach me and of which I acknowledge being the author.

Judge me, gentlemen of the jury, but if you have understood me, in judging me judge all the wretches that poverty, combined with natural pride, has made criminals, and that wealth, even comfort would have made honest folks! An intelligent society would have made them people like any others!

Ravachol.



My Ideas on the Army.

(*L'Insurgé*, September 16, 1893)

Since some have criticized my disobedience of the law on recruitment, I will explain my conduct here. If I refused to bear arms, it is because according to my principles I do not recognize border. For me, there is no foreigner. All the nations are sisters and I reckon that their children should love one another a bit more than they have thus far, thanks to the universal propaganda spread to prevent them from it. Whether we are born under the beautiful skies of Italy, in the cold lands of Germany, in the frozen regions of Russia, under the thick fogs of England or on the soil of the French Republic, it seems to me that we are all brothers, whatever laws are imposed on us, even whatever our rank is in society. As men, we all only have one truly homeland: the universe. The divisions in humanity, that is war!

To tolerate one is to sanction the other, and all of you who lean, at every opportunity, in your individual interest, on the words of the Jewish socialist, you should remind yourself more often and when it is appropriate what that Jew said to men and not to beasts: "love one another." Don't speak to me of national interests, nor of the fear inspired in you by Germany or some other such power. First, I must say to you that in Germany, in Italy in England, in Russia, as in France, everywhere, the people hate war. Despite the urgings of the press, instrument of all hatreds, of people against people, it is always only with regret that soldiers of different nationalities march against one another, and slaughter each other like implacable enemies, and don't invoke that false spirit of patriotism which makes some intelligent men, some men with heart venerate flags of different colors. That spirit of patriotism is only artificial, it is not the work of the masses who die in the terrible games of war, but the work of governments. If the peoples could understand each other, hear one another, discuss their interests, if they only had the liberty to act freely, if they were not all at the mercy of a tyrannical will, that spirit of patriotism would not exist, and wars would be no more.

It is at school, under the influence of a governmental education, that one contracts this unfortunate jingoism, which in all ages, the press then awakens in heart to arouse them one against each other, all against themselves, against humanity. In Germany, in England, everywhere finally, it is the sheets friendly to power who in the parceled out homeland (I speak here of the universal homeland, divided by borders), light the firebrand of discord, and wave the flag of war. The press does not represent public opinion as we generally believe, but it shapes and organizes it. In general, the workers only desire peace and bread; and speaking of political ideas, it is difficult to say it, they ordinarily adopt those of the newspaper they read. If the French press insults England or Italy, they

immediately say, either in Berlin, or on the other side of the Alps: France, there is the enemy!

France has always had some peaceful ideas, but it is enough that the government, or the press which is devoted to it, nourish some bellicose ideas for France to be responsible for doddering journalists or arrogant ambassadors. There follows a controversy between the press of the nations, in conflict from then on. A polemic which has no other aim but to arouse the national pride of the workers who wish for peace. On both sides, thanks to the press, we are right and the foreigner is wrong. One fine day, there is a declaration of war; thanks to the press, again, it is conceded that it was inevitable. Inevitable, the nations would have avoided it, under governmental auspices, the newspapers have prepared it; after which the rulers have declared it when they wished. And sovereigns and generals, governments of all sorts, who though they could, in the struggle, satisfy an ambition or an interest, close their eyes to the victims, recruited en masse from the working class, closing their eyes to the blood of their brothers, throw themselves into the fray. At the end of the carnage — do we count the mother, the fathers, the widows, the orphans in tears? No, but we have seen schemers weigh their purses, madmen savor that smoke, which in their delirium, they call glory. Who will pay? — the laurels of the victors, the ransom of the vanquished, the burnt powder, the cannons, the rifles, the murderous salvos?

The countryside has been ravaged, the villages burned, the cities themselves have been delivered to flames and devastation, who will pay for all these damages? Old folks without shoes, fathers and mothers from whom the field of battles has taken a son, the widows, the children of the martyrs. Those who have already paid the price in blood, perhaps by the sacrifice of their dearest affections, bleeding themselves to pay the tax.

I know there are some who find admirable this devotion, this self-sacrifice of the working class, but doubtless they have not seen, even in thought, a battlefield where one finds only arms and legs cut by shrapnel, chests pierced by bullets, young men stretched on the ground, inert and bloody, will perhaps be crushed by the cavalry, ground under the feet of the horses, perhaps they will not cry for a son who rests on the border of an eternal sleep.

An Unexpected Interview

Conversation with the untraceable anarchist

A reporter who has long followed the socialist and anarchist meetings came last night to tell us that, in a café near one of our great stations, he had encountered the elusive Ravachol, after whom all the bloodhounds of the prefecture of police have been sent.

After we made inquiries about his identity, we thought we could welcome, at least on the grounds of curiosity, the details you are about to read:

— There are many reasons why they won't pinch Ravachol any time soon: first, that name is not his own; second, the description that has been given of him is inexact; and third, it would be difficult to recognize in his new get-up the correct gentleman who went to deposit the little bomb [marmite] at 136 Boulevard Saint-Germain.

“So, comrade Ravachol did not appear the least bit worried about the result of the searches by the agents of Mr. Lozé, and it is while solemnly sipping an absinthe and sugar that he had the following interview with me:

— For one condemned to death, you don't seem to be very worried.

— First, I am not condemned to death, and with the description they have given of me I do not risk being taken, unless I am sold out. And if, by some extraordinary chance, the police get their hands on me, it may perhaps cook them, for I have long since sacrificed my life to defend and propagate my ideas.

— Are you really the perpetrator of the explosion in the Boulevard Saint-Germain?

— It was either me or it wasn't. If it was me, I have not hidden myself because of it; if it was not me, while they mistakenly suspect me and look for me, the real culprit has time to reach safety and, in that case, I do not see the use in correcting these gentlemen.

— What do you think of the attack this morning, in the Rue de Clichy?

— It was very merry (*sic*). It is only regrettable that M. Bulot, the prosecutor, that the *compagnon* should especially aim for, was just the one who suffered least. No matter, since we will attain our goal all the same, which is to terrorize the judicial authorities. For long enough the judges have condemned for vagabondage poor devils who have committed the crime of not being millionaires; we want, in our turn, to reduce them to that state. There is a stock of dynamite distributed sufficient that each house giving shelter to a magistrate can have its turn.

“if the proprietors want to avoid damages, they will be forced to evict that category of tenants. Unless they sleep under the stars, these latter should join together to buy one or more houses where they will lodge together, and guard themselves in a very strict fashion, if they do not want the anarchists to seize this fortuitous occasion to blow them all up together.

— And he explosions in front of the Hotel de Sagan and the Labau barracks?
 — That was kids' stuff; the hands of the anarchists were certainly strangers to it. Anyway, whatever motive was obeyed by the person who inspired them, they have served their purpose. The noise made about them has opened eyes and demonstrated to us the excellence of the propaganda of the deed. It is on this side that the *compagnons* will now carry all their efforts.

— Doesn't the way in which the explosion in the Boulevard Saint-Germain and that of the Rue de Clichy were carried out suggest to you some criticisms of the blunders of the perpetrators?

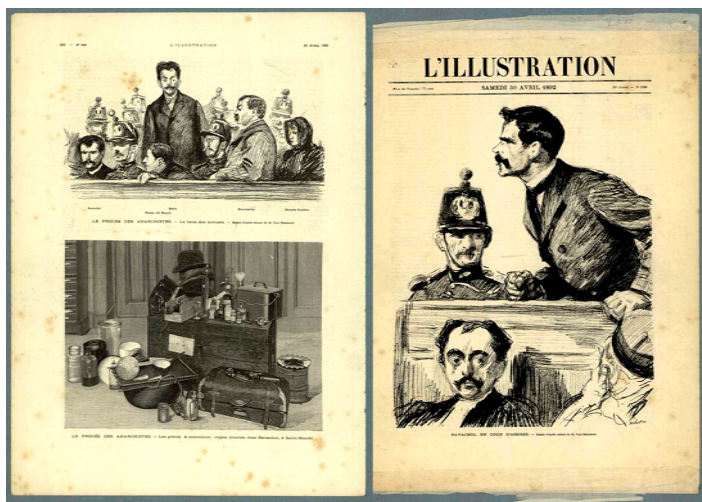
— My God! one does what one can. It is certain that, if the cartridges had been place in a room, instead of in the stairwell, the damage would have been more considerable; but, at heart, we are better lads (*sic*) than you think. You could even say that we do not want the death of the sinner, but his conversion; that is why, although we have enormous quantities of explosives at our disposal, we only use small amounts.

— So this will continue, then?

— It must. They hunt us; we avenge the innocents who have been unjustly condemned since the business at Montceau-les-Mines and the trial of Lyon, and the victims of the *agents provocateurs* that have been sent among us. It is the police who taught us to make use of explosives.

"During this whole conversation, Ravachol did not show the least emotion. Remorse is unknown to these fanatics of crime, and it is with a smile on his face that, after leaving me, he went to ask one of the policemen who were pacing up and down on the sidewalk, the shortest way to get to Pere-Lachaise!!!"

Source: *La Gaulois*, March 28, 1892, 1.



THE ANARCHISTS:

INTERVIEW OF THE TWO BROTHERS

Henri Kœnigstein and Ravachol. — In the visiting room of the Conciergerie. — Attitude of the accused. — Ravachol sentimental. — Martyr for his faith. — An arrest at Lyon.

Henri Kœnigstein, brother of Ravachol, accompanied by Mr. Lagasse, presented himself yesterday afternoon at the office of the public prosecutor to solicit authorization of an interview with his brother. Mr. Quesnay de Beaurepaire having at first objected that it was necessary for Ravachol to communicate beforehand, in writing, his desire to see his brother. Mr. Lagasse carried proofs of the desire of his client.

Henri Kœnigstein was invited to produce some documents establishing his kinship with the accused.

He showed his birth certificated and various letters previously written by Ravachol.

The public prosecutor then decided to grant the authorization requested and, at half past three, the two brothers, Henri and François Kœnigstein, known as Ravachol, had a long conversation.

The two brothers

M. Henri Kœningstein was led to the Conciergerie and placed in the visiting room, that is, in a room where there is a double grill through which the relatives admitted to visit the detainees can speak with them. Soon, from the other side of the grill, escorted by a jailer and two bourgeois police agents, Ravachol appeared. Properly dressed in a beige suit, black necktie and well groomed, the prisoner looked good.

— Well, he said, seeing his brother, there you are!

— But you knew well that I was going to come.

— I didn't expect you today. Mr. Lagasse had warned me of your visit, but I thought that it would be later.

And as Mr. Henri Kœningstein had tears in his eyes, Ravachol continued: "You mustn't cry. Each of us is responsible for their actions: I have no regrets, and I am happy. I know the fate that awaits me, but you see, to live in misery or suffering, or to live without my liberty, I would rather die. At least, now, he added with a smile, I am sure of not dying of hunger or sickness. I will die a violent death, which suits me.

There is only one thing that I regret, and it is to see that our party lacks comrades like me. Today, they say that I'm a criminal; but I maintain that I die for my ideas; Well, I have written my memoirs all my life, and you will see if I have pursued anything but the triumph of my party.

— All the same, I never would have thought you would commit the crime of Chambles.

— Well, it's because you do not know me thoroughly. You see, I had had enough of no longer being able to find work, since I needed money for mother, and for my mistress.

—Ah? Yes, your mistress!

The crime of Chambles

— I loved that woman; then I also needed it for the party; I had given it a great deal. There is only one thing that annoys me about that crime of Chambles; it is that Fachard and the others were condemned. They had nothing to do with it; but I had left my umbrella at their house; that was enough to compromise them and condemn them.

— Well, are you okay here?

— Here, I am very happy; everyone is very kind to me, and leave me all possible freedom. They spoil me. You see, I have a tie. Well, that is a great favor. Here no one has a right to wear a tie. But they are sure of me. They know well that I don't want to kill myself. I will wait tranquilly. I have no fear of death, nor of the sort of death. Certainly, I would have preferred to die on the field of battle when they arrested me, but I was able to.

“Ah! The agents have given me a selection. They have done well, for, if I could, I would never be without them; only, what I have found cowardly, is that they have still given me some blows with their fists when I was trussed up like a sausage.

— What do you do here?

— I am in good company here, you see, said Ravachol, indicating the police agents. I make anarchist propaganda and they listen. Along with that, I write and I eat with a good appetite.

— And do you think?

— Yes, but what can you do? Each of us has their destiny. Tell mother not to fret, that I regret nothing, and that I am glad, very glad to die for that. You know, later, they will know that I died *as a martyr to my faith*. Hug my little one well for me, and my sister Joséphine. You, don't concern yourself for me. I am happy to have seen you, but I would not have made you can. You do not have my ideas; continue to live with your wife and child.

All that was delivered in a calm tone, without boastfulness, and with a smile on his face.

The interview lasted three quarters of an hour, after which Mr. Henri Kœnigstein said goodbye to his brother. He left the Conciergerie at four o'clock.

Mr. Henri Kœnigstein will leave Paris today to return to Givors.

La Lanterne, April 18, 1892

RAVACHOL'S EXPERIMENT.

He Felt the Revolutionary Pulse and Found It Does Not Beat.

Paris, April 17. — In an interview with his brother today Ravachol said: "I am neither a visionary nor a firebrand. I wished to feel the pulse of the revolutionary movement. To be candid, I find it does not beat. If it did, my example would be followed by others. Instead of this, they call me a criminal. I have written my memoirs covering my whole life. Let me be judged by these." The persons on the jury list likely to be empanelled for the Ravachol case are panic-stricken and seeking to avoid serving.

An infernal machine, filled with powder, eighty Gayelot cartridges and a quantity of scrap-iron, with a burning fuse attached, was found in the electric lighting abed of the Compagnie du Nord, at Lille, today.

A Jailhouse Fragment

Conciergerie, Cell 1, April 13, 1892

Individual interest, the source of all of men's wrongs, must, if we wish to establish harmony in humanity, be replaced by the common interest.

Koningstein

Conciergerie Cell 1 April 13, 92

*L'intérêt individuelle source
de toutes les mauvaises actions
des hommes doit se lever pour
établir l'harmonie dans
l'humanité le remplacer par
l'intérêt commun*

Koningstein

A Song by Ravachol

As a bonus, a verse of a song from the pen of Ravachol.

Liberté—Egalité—Fraternité

Pourquoi faut-il ici sur cette terre
S'entr'haïr, tandis que nous devrions
Nous aimer tous, puisque nous sommes
tous frères !
Les maîtres seuls fond la désunion.
Bannissons donc ces tyrans
prolétaires,
Qui ne sont bons que pour nous faire
égorger,
Jurons leur fin, supprimons les
frontières
Fondons l'empire de la fraternité !

REFRAIN

Enfants de la Grande Patrie,
Entendez-vous la voix qui crie :
Aux armes la démocratie !
Combattons tous pour la liberté,
Combattons pour l'indépendance,
Nous vaincrons avec assurance,
Car nos efforts ont la puissance
Pour établir l'égalité
Mais pour cela il faut, mes frères,
Réduire les bourgeois en
poussière
Alors, au lieu d'avoir la guerre,
Nous aurons la fraternité.

Liberty—Equality—Fraternity

Why must it be that on this earth
We hate, when we should all
Love, since we are all brothers!
The masters alone create the disunity.
So let us banish these tyrants,
proletarians,
Who are only good to cut our throats,
Let us vow their end; let us break down
the borders.
Let us found the empire of fraternity!

REFRAIN

Children of the Great Homeland,
Listen to the voice that cries:
To arms, democracy!
Let us all fight for liberty,
Let us fight for independence,
We will win with assurance,
For our efforts have the power
To establish equality
But for that, my brothers, we
must,
Reduce the bourgeois to dust
Then, instead of having war,
We will have brotherhood.

Ravachol, « Une chanson de Ravachol, » *Le Stéphanois*, July 13, 1892

A HANDWRITTEN MANUSCRIPT BY RAVACHOL

Since his condemnation to death, Ravachol was written a great deal in prison. Here is a long handwritten text that we have been able to obtain, not without great difficulties. We have confided the reproduction of this interesting document to the house of Sédard in Lyon. It is written on two pages, and in it Ravachol explains his theories.

[The manuscript combines bad spelling, horrible penmanship, rotten grammar and nonexistent punctuation. Decoding it has been a long process. But here is a rough translation.]

Society can only be improved by a complete transformation of its organization. The most advanced political reforms, such as a tax on revenue and pensions for old age, all sound good to the ears of a great number of people. They don't understand that if they were imposed the proprietor would fall back on his tenants for the pension fund. The government is obliged to impose new taxes, but since we complain that it cannot be enough to provide for our necessities, we run the risk of dying before we have the pension because of the privations that we have to bear, which can only shorten life. There are men who believe that if we put a high tax on fine wines we could decrease the cost of table wines. [It is an] error. The one who drinks fine wines is not a worker. It cannot be the one who makes nothing who pays. It will thus always be the one who works who pays the taxes, in whatever ever form they present themselves. Now the reduction of the workday to eight hours is an increase of wages. Eight hours of labor would be enough to satisfy the men who reflect. Indeed, what effort is necessary in order to obtain them! And if we succeed, what would we gain, exchanging for a greater number put to work temporarily? A little more time to rest and reflect, which is always good. But with the perfection of tools the number of idle workers will soon be as considerable as before. Thus, monthly demands to obtain the same result, an illusory increase in wages. For if the bosses consent to increased wages they can augment their products, so that that by earning more we will pay more dearly. So there is nothing to gain by this reform, which always leaves us to die of hunger in the midst of abundance and indeed products we lack, necessary things. And those [who starve are] the same who have produced by their labor that surplus production. Isn't the world upside down to be deprived of things of all sorts, because there is more than enough of them to put an end to a state of things that is only disorder. We want to substitute an anarchic organization, which is the putting-in-common of all the world's goods, whatever they may be. There will be no more proprietors and bosses. No more money. Everyone will work except the children, the infirm and the elderly. And we will have no need to produce useless and harmful things, such as forts, armor, cannons, rifles, or anything made with the intention of killing men. No need to falsify silk ... which is burned when it suffers all [the dyer's] operations and which is no longer silk, but a dangerous product, because

of the poisons that have been attached to it. While one can dye the silk without charging it and with inoffensive products [but] that will be done when men no longer have to speculate on men. [Then] I would not seek to falsify the things that I am charged to make by hand, since it would get me nothing in return, since there will be no more money and since I have all the things that are useful to me. I need shoes and clothing. I only have to ask for them to take them. No more need, as today, to create demand by printing advertisements, which are then distributed. No more useless things to make. Everyone is interested in making fine things, of the first quality. No more need of the locksmith... No more fear of the thief, who could never make a profit on things that could not be found there. No more need of the strongbox, lock ... or coin-purse. No more need of the rural police, the gendarmes, the sergeant, ... the snitch, all the prison guards, the lawyers, the jurors, the sub-prefect, the deputies, the senator, the presidents of all sorts. Women will no longer have to prostitute themselves to live. No more need of the *caisse d'emploi*, of excise, regulations, bailiffs, notaries, or bankers. No more need of soldier, cannons, rifles, sabers, torpedo boats, armor, or forts. Everyone being concerned with conserving things, they will just surround and protect them better.

Konigstein-Ravachol

