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# Two Lectures on the Bonnot Affair

Victor Serge

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January 28, 1912

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the unlucky, bourgeois souls  
the clumsy, unemployed

and the refractory

draft dodgers, deserters, thieves  
because un-adapted to slavery

Are distinguished by daring

Resolution

As much as I despise the former  
That's how much I love the latter.

4) Along with us, they are the only men who dare demand life.

## The Individual Against Society

- 1) It's rather the contrary that should be said.
- 2) *Society is the enemy of any individuality*

An association is not a simple adding up of individuals;  
it has its own psychology and vitality. It thus wants to  
last, to live.

- 3) In order to live a society necessarily conform itself to two laws

A – Law of social preservation; society preserves what  
created it

= traditional

= enemy of movement

B – law of social conformism. It wants all individuals  
to act in consideration of this goal – be in conformity  
with a type – which it forges by force. Ex. The subject  
of monarchies, the citizen of democracies

thus=enemy of originality

individual independence.

- 4) In order to be (originally free)  
The individual must thus struggle against society.

A. Against imposed social obligations.

Ex: military service

Wage labor

Respect of laws

Morality and respect of conventions.

B. and what is most difficult:

against the deformations produced in him by the social

milieu  
ex: hypocrisy  
proprietary instinct (including sexual)  
passivity  
servility  
authoritarianism, etc...  
imposed solidarity  
(Le Dantec's book "L'Hypocrisie indispensable")

5) This was, this is. Will it always be?

Alas, yes.  
The laws that preside over the lives of societies are natural laws.  
Let us imagine a communist paradise:  
– Where there will not be a state of society; the end of all industry, complete and perpetual war against individuals.  
– Where there will be collective religiosity

- Morality
- economy

– Where in this the original will be at the very least frowned upon.  
Moral constraint

6) Where then does social progress reside?

In a displacement of the field of struggle  
We will perhaps no longer fight for bread  
Constraint will no longer be physically violent  
Even so!

7) But what is the utility of these conclusions?

A – We should have no illusions about the social future

B – we should be sociable without being the dupes of sociability; no spirit of the coterie.

## Bandits

1) Current events offer us this subject

It's a fact; criminality is on the rise.  
People kill, steal, engage in fraud  
Let us profit from this occasion to say what we think of this.

2) What do we think of this?

We think this is logical  
ineluctable  
necessary

The social organization produces crime<  
Everything is sold, everything is stolen  
See how institutions and crimes are coordinated  
Property – theft  
Authority – rebellion  
Law – fraud

Poverty – banditry  
Repression-reprisals

On one hand society, on the other a few individuals

3) Among the criminals we distinguish