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The Little Ravachols Will Grow Up

Gustave Mathieu

July 3, 1892

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After all the misadventures of the policemen trailing me and the reporters pursuing me, and in memory of the interest they've always shown me, I perhaps owe them an update.

This is an occasion for me to offer my fraternal hand to the friend that I haven't forgotten.

If I'm writing these lines it's not to try to defend Ravachol as a martyr: in the cause for which we fight — sincere, convinced, and without pause — there are no martyrs. Rather than wasting away in a capitalist prison camp, sweating, toiling in order to enrich the exploiters, succumbing to privations and poorly-paid work, isn't it better to act as a revolutionary?

Can it be said that Ravachol wasn't called upon to know this sad existence? On the contrary, from an early age he had to work to bring a meager mouthful to his brothers and sisters, brought up in poverty by a mother who had remained a widow.

Of a sickly temperament, and seeing that despite working like a slave his family's poverty only got worse, he reflected...and he said to himself that rather than suffer like

a resigned slave it would be better to take their stolen riches from the exploiters.

He often said: No luxury, only what is necessary. Enough of this life of flabbiness and moral degradation. Dignity, courage and, at the risk of our own lives, let us kill all the exploiters of the world.

Alas, the results of individual propaganda are paid for in a terrible way.

Which is what happened to my friend.

Ravachol bore his head high in front of the lackeys of the magistracy, taking responsibility for his acts, declaring that in our sad society the life of the workers is a hell.

How ironic it is to give all your strength when you're young and to see yourself everywhere rejected when you're old!

You have no right to call yourself an anarchist. You're nothing but a murderer, the cloaked ones answered.

And what are you, you who judge?

The fences of bandits who starve the poor, and of the Lavasiés of all the *Comptoirs d'escompte*; repulsive beings who approve the idleness of rich playboys and the shooting down of workers, like those of Fourmies, beggars who disturb your digestion. This is what you call order. So be it. You are playing your role, you have force behind you, and, taking advantage of this, you condemned Ravachol to death.

Perhaps you think that, like in the Anstay case, we're going to call for an autopsy of our friend in order to prove that he wasn't responsible for his acts. Not at all! Ravachol had a healthy mind and a proud heart when he took wherever he found it the money he needed to live, money useful for propaganda: the hermit of Chambles made possible the rue de Clichy. Ravachol's entire existence followed the logic of the rebel.

And you can kill him, but you'll never be able to stifle the voice of the rebels: the little Ravachols will grow up. You can do what you want, but they'll be more skillful and terrible than their predecessor.

Furthermore, the execution will be a challenge thrown at the anarchists, a challenge that will fall into good hands. The bourgeois press can slander as much as it wants, invent incredible lies, like the kidnapping of the bourgeois Deibler. Let it beware that reality not one day go beyond its predictions.

The squealer Véry, who was so carefully guarded, better even than Deibler now is, nevertheless paid for his denunciation.

If Deibler hasn't yet thought about retiring, I think for his own safety it would be prudent to impose it on him.