

Grave's reaction to the Terminus bombing

Jean Grave

28 February 1894

As we had predicted, a series of explosions is underway, aimed at terrorizing the population and revealing the true methods of anarchists.

It must be clearly understood that whenever an explosion does not target authority, wealth, or capitalist exploitation, it can be attributed to individuals who seek to discredit us and isolate us from humanity. We know very well who are the scoundrels we are talking about.

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<https://www.retronews.fr/journal/la-revolte/25-fevrier-1894/1241/4249983/1>

Following the Café Terminus *attentat*, an indiscriminate bombing carried out by Émile Henry, the journal *La Révolte*, founded by Kropotkin and edited by Jean Grave (once a staunch advocate of propaganda by the deed, but by then considerably more critical), spent time to assess the situation. The attack went unmentioned in the journal for two weeks; then, fourteen days after the bombing, the issue opened with this short statement targeting Henry's action and methods, criticizing the repression his act would allegedly bring down upon the anarchist movement (one could argue that repression at that point was already the highest it had ever been in France, being one of the main motives of the attack in the first place). Grave's position here was deliberately nuanced: while remaining open to the principle or use of propaganda of the deed, he rejected the indiscriminate nature of this particular attack. He spoke from a difficult position, his publication was losing momentum as many anarchists in France viewed him as overly moderate and withdrawn from the struggle (accusations also launched at Kropotkin, who was in exile and safe in London). He had to therefore demonstrate that he did not oppose propaganda of the deed in principle, while still expressing his disgust and condemnation of Henry's specific act. Grave's precarious standing within the movement would soon improve, however, when being targeted during the Trial of the Thirty restored his militant credibility.

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