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Ricardo Flores Magón

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1905

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The Bourgeois Homeland and the Universal Homeland

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Comrades:

Humanity is in one of the most solemn moments in its history. In the Universe nothing is stable: everything changes, and we are at the moment when a change is about to take place in regard to the way human beings are grouped together with the set of economic, political, social, moral, and religious institutions, which constitute what is called the capitalist system, that is, the system of private or individual property.

The capitalist system dies wounded by itself, and humanity, astonished, witnesses its formidable suicide. It is not the workers who have dragged nations to throw themselves on each other: it is the bourgeoisie itself that has caused the conflict, in its quest to dominate the markets. The German bourgeoisie was making colossal progress in industry and commerce, and the English bourgeoisie was jealous of its rival. That is what is at the bottom of that conflict called European war: jealousy of peddlers, enmities of traffickers, quarrels of adventurers. The honor of a people, a race or a country is not disputed in the fields of Europe, but rather, in that fight

of beasts, the pocket of each person is disputed: they are hungry wolves trying to snatch a prey. It is not about the wounded national honor or the outraged flag, but about a fight for the position of money, the money that first made the people sweat in the fields, in the factories, in the mines, in all places of exploitation. and that now they want that same exploited people to keep it with its life in the pockets of those who stole it.

What sarcasm! What bloody irony! The people are made to work for a piece of crust, the masters keeping the profit, and then the peoples are made to destroy each other so that this profit is not torn from the nails of their executioners. Protecting ourselves, the poor, is fine: that is our duty, that is the obligation that solidarity imposes on us. Protecting each other, helping each other, defending each other, is a need that we must satisfy if we do not want to be annihilated by our masters; but arming ourselves, and throwing ourselves over each other to defend the pocket of our masters, is a crime against class, it is a felony that we must reject outraged. To arms, okay; but against the enemies of our class, against the bourgeoisie, and if our arm is to break off any head, let it be that of the rich man; if our dagger is to reach any heart, let it be that of the bourgeois. But let's not destroy each other poorly.

In the fields of Europe, the poor destroy each other for the benefit of the rich, who make people believe that they are fighting for the benefit of the country. And good; What country does the poor man have? He who only counts on his arms to earn his livelihood, the sustenance he lacks if the accursed master does not want to exploit him, what country does he have? Because the homeland should be something like a good mother who supports all her children equally. What protection do the poor have in their respective homelands? None! The poor are a slave in all countries, they are unhappy in all countries, they are martyrs under all governments. Homelands do not give bread to the hungry, do not console the sad, do not wipe the sweat from the forehead of the fatigued worker, do not stand between the weak and the strong so that the latter

property rights. Why kill yourself for having a government? Why not, rather, sacrifice for not having any, all the more so when the same effort that is made to remove a ruler and put another in his place is the same that is needed to tear the wealth out of the hands of the rich the wealth they hold?

Expropriation: this is the remedy; but it must be expropriation for the benefit of all and not of the few. Expropriation is the golden key that opens the doors of freedom because the possession of wealth gives economic independence. He who does not need to rent his arms to live, that is free.

Go ahead! It is not possible to stop and be mere spectators of the formidable drama. Let each one join his class: the poor with the poor; the rich with the rich, so that each one meets his own and in his position in the final battle: that of the poor against the rich; that of the oppressed against the oppressors; that of the hungry against the fed up, and when the smoke from the last shot has dissipated, and the bourgeois building is not stone on stone, may the sun shine on our ennobled foreheads and the earth will have the pride of feeling stepped on by men and not by herds.

Let us learn something from our brothers, the revolutionary expropriators of Mexico. They have not waited for anyone to rise to the Presidency of the Republic to initiate an era of justice. As men they have destroyed everything that was opposed to their redemptive action. Real revolutionaries, they have smashed the law; the overlapping law of injustice; the bawd law of the powerful. With a strong hand they have smashed the bars of the prisons and with the bars they have bashed the skulls of judges and shysters. They have caressed the bourgeois' neck with the rope of the hanged, and with a heroic gesture, never witnessed for centuries, they have placed their hand on the earth that throbs with emotion at feeling possessed by free men ...

Ahead! May at this solemn moment each one fulfill his duty.

Long live anarchy! Long live the Mexican Liberal Party! Long live Land and Freedom

not want rulers or priests; we do not want rascals who exploit the forces of the workers; We do not want bandits who support these rascals with the law, nor evildoers who in the name of any religion make the poor a lamb that allows itself to be devoured by wolves without resistance and without protest.

Those of you who want to know in depth why the Mexican Liberal Party is fighting, you have nothing to do but read the Manifesto of September 23, 1911, promulgated by the Party's Organizing Board.

Just as the European war is a necessary evil, the Mexican Revolution is a good. There is blood, there are tears, there are sacrifices, it is true; but what great conquest has been obtained between festivals and pleasures? Freedom is the greatest conquest that a dignified breast can desire, and freedom is only obtained by facing death, misery, and jail.

To think that freedom can be conquered in another way is to be sadly mistaken. Our freedom is in the hands of our oppressors: hence we cannot acquire it without struggle and without sacrifice.

Go ahead! If in Europe they are still fighting for the homeland, that is, for the rich, in Mexico they are fighting for "Land and Freedom! Ahead!" The moment is solemn. In Mexico the capitalist system collapses under the blows of the dignified populace, and the cries of the rich and clergy arrive in Washington to upset the brains of that poor toy of the bourgeoisie called Woodrow Wilson, the dwarf president, the civil servant of farce that, by the irony of Destiny, has had to be an actor in a tragedy in which only iron characters should take part.

Go ahead! The remedy is within our reach. To end the capitalist system, we have nothing to do but lay our hands on the goods that are in the clutches of the rich and declare them the property of all, men and women. Man risks his life to exalt a ruler, who, no matter how much a friend of the poor he claims to be, will never be more so than he is of the rich, since his mission is to ensure that the law is respected, and the law orders to respect individual or private

does not abuse the former; But when the interests of the rich are in danger, then the poor are called to lay down their lives for the homeland, for the homeland of the rich; for a country that is not ours, but of our executioners.

Let's open our eyes, brothers of chain and exploitation; let us open our eyes to the light of reason. The homeland belongs to those who possess it, and the poor possess nothing. The homeland is the loving mother of the rich and the stepmother of the poor. The homeland is the policeman armed with a club, who kicks us into the bottom of a dungeon or puts the string around our necks when we do not want to obey the laws written by the rich for the benefit of the rich themselves. The homeland is not our mother: it is our executioner! and to defend that executioner, our brothers, the proletarians of Europe, tear each other out of existence. Imagine the space that more than 6,000,000 corpses will occupy; a mountain of corpses, rivers of blood and tears, that is what the European war has produced up to now. And those dead are our class brothers, they are flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood. They are workers who from childhood were taught to love the bourgeois homeland, so that, if necessary, they would allow themselves to be killed by it. What did these heroes possess of their homelands? Any! They had nothing but a strong pair of arms to support themselves and their families. Now the widows, the mourners of those workers will have to starve. The women will prostitute themselves to put a piece of bread in their mouths; children will steal to bring something to eat to their elderly parents; the sick will go to the hospital and to the grave. Brothel, prison, hospital, miserable death: this is the prize that the relatives of the heroes who die for their country will receive, while the rich and the rulers squander the gold that has made the people sweat in the factory, in the workshop, in the mine. What a contrast! Sacrifice, pain, tears for those who produce everything, for the self-sacrificing creators of wealth. Pleasures and joys for the lazy that are on our shoulders. Let's shake ourselves off, let's get agitated, let's work so that the parasites that end our

existence fall at our feet. Let us resolutely put our fists on the neck of the enemy. We are stronger than him. A revolutionary told this immense truth: "Tyrants seem great to us because we are on our knees; Let's get up!"

Well: horrible as the senseless butchery that turns the Old-World territory into a slaughterhouse, she has to produce immense goods for humanity, and instead of giving ourselves to sad reflections considering only the pain, the tears, and the blood, let us rejoice, let us rejoice that such a hecatomb has taken place. The global catastrophe that we contemplate is a necessary evil. The peoples, debased by bourgeois civilization, no longer remembered that they had rights, and a formidable shock was essential to awaken them to the reality of things. There are many who need pain to open their brains to reason. Abuse debases the feeble and timid; but in the chest of the man of shame it awakens feelings of dignity and noble pride that make him rebel. Hunger subdues the coward and hands him over to the bourgeois; but it is at the same time an incentive that riles the peoples. Suffering can lead to resignation and patience; but he can also put, in the hands of the brave man, the dagger, the bomb and the revolver. And this will be what happens when this infamous war ends, or what will bring it to an end. The great pitched battles will end with the barricade and mutiny of the rebellious peoples, and the national flags will vanish into thin air, to give rise to the red flag of the world's disinherited.

Then the revolution that was born in Mexico, and that still lives as a scourge and a punishment for those who exploit, those who deceive and those who oppress humanity, will spread its flames of benefit throughout the earth and instead of having the heads of proletarians rolling it will be the heads of the rich, the rulers and the priests the ones that will fall to the ground, and a single cry will rise to the space escaped from the chest of millions and millions of human beings: Long live Land and Liberty!

And for the first time the sun will not be ashamed to send its glorious rays to this withered land, dignified by rebellion, and a

new humanity, more just, wiser, will turn all the homelands into a single homeland, great, beautiful, good: the homeland of human beings; the homeland of man and woman, with a single flag: that of universal brotherhood.

Let us salute, companions of fatigue and ideals, to the Mexican Revolution. Let us salute that sublime epic of the pawn turned a free man by rebellion, and put everything on our side, our money, our talent, our energy, our good will, and if necessary, we will sacrifice our well-being, our freedom and even our lives so that this Revolution does not end with the rise of any man to Power, but rather, following its claiming course, ends with the abolition of the right to private property and the death of the principle of authority; because as long as there are men who possess and men who have nothing, well-being and freedom will be a dream, they will continue to exist only as a beautiful illusion never realized.

The Revolution should not be the means used by the wicked to rise up, but the justice movement that puts to death misery and tyranny, things that do not die by electing rulers, but by ending the so-called right of private property. This right is the cause of all the evils that humanity suffers. It is not necessary to look for the origin of our evils in something else, because for the right of property there is a Government and there are priests. The Government is in charge of seeing that the rich are not dispossessed by the poor, and the priests have no other mission than to instill patience, resignation, and fear of God in the proletarian breasts, so that they never think of rebelling against their tyrants and exploiters.

The Mexican Liberal Party —revolutionary workers' union— understands that freedom and well-being are impossible while Capital, Authority and Clergy exist, and after the death of these three monsters or that three-headed monster. They [Mexican Liberal Party] will tend all their efforts (and to the propaganda and to the action of the members of this Party is due the fact that there is no stable government in Mexico) to avoid that a new tyranny is not being strengthened. We do not want rich, we do