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Down With the Law!

Albert Libertad

February 15, 1906

“The anarchists find M. de La Rochefoucauld and all those who protest without worrying about legality to be logically consistent *with themselves*,” Anna Mah, tells us.

This is obviously not exact, as I am going to show.

All that is needed is one word to travesty the meaning of a phrase, and so the two words underlined suffice to entirely change the meaning of the one I quote.

If Anna Mah, was the leader of a great newspaper she would hasten to accuse the typographers or the proofreader for the blunder and everything would be for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

Or else she would think it wise to stand by an idea that isn't a manifestation of her reasoning, but rather the act of her pen running away with itself.

But on the contrary, she thinks that it is necessary, especially in these lead articles that are viewed as anarchist, to make the fewest errors possible and for us to point them out ourselves when we take note of them.

It is to me that this falls today.

Albert Libertad
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<https://www.marxists.org/archive/libertad/1906/down-with-law.htm>

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The Catholics, the socialists, all those who accept at a given moment the voting system, are not logically consistent with themselves when they rebel against the consequences of a law, when they demonstrate against its agents, its representatives.

Only the anarchists are authorized, are logically consistent *with themselves* when they act against the law.

When a man deposits his ballot in the urn he is not using a means of persuasion that comes from free examination or experience. He is executing the mechanical operation of counting those who are ready to choose the same delegates as he, to consequently make the same laws, to establish the same regulations that all men must submit to. In casting his vote he says: "I trust in chance. The name that will come from this urn will be that of my legislator. I could be on the side of the majority, but I have the chance of being on the side of the minority. Whatever happens, happens."

After having come to agreement with other men, having decided that they will all defer to the mechanical judgment of number, there is, on the part of those who are the minority, when they don't accept the laws and regulations of the majority, a feeling of being fooled similar to that of a bad gambler, who wants very much to win, but who doesn't want to lose.

Those Catholics who decided for the laws of exception of 1893-4 through the means of a majority are in no position to rebel when, by means of the same majority, the laws for the separation of church and state are decided.

Those socialists who want to decide by means of the majority in favor of the laws on workers' retirements are in no position to rebel against the same majority when it decides on some law that goes against their interests.

All parties who accept suffrage, however universal it might be, as the basis for their means of action cannot revolt as long as they are left the means of asserting themselves by the ballot.

Catholics, in general, are in this situation. The gentlemen in question in the late battles were "great electors," able to vote in Senato-

rial elections, some were even parliamentarians. Not only had some voted and sought to be the majority in the Chambers that prepare the laws, but the others had elaborated that law, had discussed its terms and articles.

Thus being parliamentarists, believers in the vote, the Catholics weren't logically consistent with themselves during their revolt.

The socialists are no more so. They speak constantly of social revolution, and they spend all their time in puerile voting gestures in the perpetual search for a legal majority.

To accept the tutelage of the law yesterday, to reject it today and take it up again tomorrow, this is the way Catholics, socialists, parliamentarists in general act. It is illogical.

None of their acts has a logical relation with that of the day before, no more than that of tomorrow will have one with that of today.

Either we accept the law of majorities or we don't accept it. Those who inscribe it in their program and seek to obtain the majority are illogical when they rebel against it.

This is how it is. But when Catholics or socialists revolt we don't seek the acts of yesterday; we don't worry about those that will be carried out tomorrow, we peacefully look on as the law is broken by its manufacturers.

It will be up to us to see to it that these days have no tomorrows. So the anarchists alone are logical in revolt.

The anarchists don't vote. They don't want to be the majority that commands; they don't accept being the minority that obeys.

When they rebel they have no need to break any contract: they never accept tying their individuality to any government of any kind.

They alone, then, are rebels held back by no ties, and each of their violent gestures is in relation to their ideas, is logically consistent with their reasoning.

By demonstration, by observation, by experience or, lacking these, by force, by violence, these are the means by which the

anarchists want to impose themselves. By majority, by the law,
never!