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Fear

Albert Libertad

May 17, 1906

The bourgeois were frightened!!!

The bourgeois felt pass over them the wind of riot, the breath of revolt, and they feared the hurricane, the storm that would unleash those with unsatisfied appetites on their too well garished tables.

The bourgeois were frightened!!!

The bourgeois, fat and tranquil, blissful and peaceful, heard the horrifying grumble of the painful and poor digestion of the thin, the rachitic, the unsatisfied. The bellies heard the rumblings of the arms, who refused to bring them their daily pittance.

The bourgeois were frightened!!!

The bourgeois gathered together their piles of money, their titles; they hid them in holes from the claws of the destroyers; the bourgeois stored their movable property, and they then looked around to see where to hide themselves. The big city wasn't very safe with all those threats in the air. And the countryside wasn't either... when the evening came chateaus were being burned down there.

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<https://www.marxists.org/archive/libertad/1906/fear.htm>

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The bourgeois were frightened! A fear that gripped their bellies, their stomachs, their throats, without any means of attenuating it presenting itself.

And so the bourgeois put up barricades of steel and blood in front of the of the workers, cemented with blood and flesh. . They tried to rejoice at seeing the little infantrymen and the heavy dragoons parade before their windows. They swooned before the handsome Republican Guards and the fine cavalrymen. And still, fear invaded their being. They were frightened.

That fear seemed to have something of remorse in it. One could believe that the bourgeois felt the logic of the acts that included everyone and everything that they alone had possessed up till then.

The bourgeois were afraid that suddenly, in a great movement, the two sides of the scale that had always inclined in the direction of their desires would suddenly be leveled. They believed the moment for disgorgement had finally come. Since their lives were made of the deaths of other men, they believed that on this day the lives of others would be made of their deaths.

O anguished dream! The bourgeois were frightened, really frightened!!

But the hurricane passed over their heads and the bellies and didn't kill. The lightning rods of sabers and rifles sufficed for the few gusts that blew forgotten over society.

The worker again took up his labor. He again bent his back over the daily task. Today like yesterday, the slave prepares his master's will.

The hurricane has passed...the bourgeois have little by little raised their heads. They looked upon their faces convulsed with fear... and they laughed. But their laugh was a snigger; their laugh was a bark.

Since he didn't know how to do his work himself, the hyenas and jackals were going to fall on the lion, caught in the trap of his ignorance and confidence.

The females who, in 1871, poked out the eyes of communards with their parasols, have had children. These children are now in the magistracy, in the administration, in the army. They wear the kepi or the robe, they kill with the Code, regulations, or the sword, but they kill without pity.

The bourgeois were frightened.

They are taking revenge for having been frightened!!! Like a club, the jackhammer of justice is descending on the vanquished. The Magnauds and the Bulots, the S,r, de Rivišres and the Bridoisons, all of them are in agreement in harshly striking the troublemakers.

Never have those who do not labor been overcome by such respect for those who labor. Hindrances put to the freedom to work have been struck with months and month of prison. Men have been condemned until the healing of their wounds, children to reform schools, and adolescents to the penal brigades. Those who reason must be put down.

The bourgeois were frightened!!!

But those who must be struck the hardest are the enemies of all the bourgeois, the reactionary bourgeois and the socialist bourgeois: the anarchists.

Other men are defeated by the weight of their own ignorance; it will still be quite a while before they free themselves from their foolishness. But the anarchists are defeated by the ignorance and passivity of others, so they work every day to educate them, to make rebels of them. It is thus they who are the danger; it is they who must be struck.

The bourgeois want to avenge themselves, but they are cowards and so it is the bystanders they strike. They fear the might of anarchist logic and they know that the sophistry of their reasoning will burst like soap bubbles in the sun. They can crush us with the dead weight of the brutal force of number, but they know that we will always defeat them in reason's combat.

“That man had an anarchist paper in his pocket! – That one had pamphlets on sociology. – That one had needles on him.”

And they strike even harder whoever dares read anything but *La Croix*, *La Petite R, publique*, or *Le Petit Journal*.

Why don't you strike the authors, the publishers of these publications? Are they untouchable, above all laws, or are you afraid of finding yourselves confronting the truth, viscous Berengers of politics?

Bourgeois, you were frightened!!!

And it was nothing but a shadow that passed across the heaven of you beatitude. But be on your guard: you will only see the storm that will swallow you up when it's imminent. It won't be announced by tiny lightning bolts. It will surge around you and you will be no more.

Bourgeois, you experience the frisson of fear, and you are savoring the joy of revenge... But don't be in such a hurry to celebrate. Don't exaggerate too greatly the reprisals of your victory, for the upcoming revolt could very well not leave you the time to be frightened...

The bourgeois were frightened!!!