

For Our Country!

Enrique Flores Magón

1916

From our cradle to our grave patriotism is cultivated in us with such a careful attention that finally it becomes a second nature of ours by which our best feelings are deformed and our judgement confused to the extent of having us believe that those born in other countries are inferior to ourselves and our natural enemies whom we must see with contempt, distrust and hatred, and whom we must murder in the name of our Country on any slight motive, and to destroy their towns though inhabited by peaceful people, to lay waste their fields, to subjugate their people and to commit all sorts of crimes on them when our Country calls on us for war.

But to those dreadful contests called international wars never go the wealthy people, neither their descendants. We the poor are the only ones sent to the carnage. Our masters remain safely at home to profit by the spoils of war, to take advantage of the sacrifices of the proletarians sent to conquer other countries in the name of our Country.

Of "our" Country ... But, what Country do we, the poor, have in fact? Because we were born in a certain Country does not mean that we own it to be "ours", and that there we be happy, rich and powerful, while in other countries want, poverty and misfortune be our lot.

What Country do we the poor have when in fact we own nothing but our rags, our poverty, our hunger and our sorrows? What Country do we the poor have if wherever we go in this world we ever suffer want, misfortune, sorrows, oppression and exploitation at the hands of our masters who fatten on our sweat and sacrifice?

Wherever we go we always are the beasts of burden, and, therefore, what they call our Country belongs in fact to the rich, because they are the ones who own everything. To the rich belong the land we toil on, the factory and the machinery that we run, the mine within which we labor, the humble shack in which we live; everything, everything belongs to the rich; even our very lives.

We poor have no Country, only the rich.

Consequently, we the poor from all countries should not regard each other with contempt, distrust and hatred, but should recognize each other as brothers since we suffer the same kind of wants and slavery, and should understand, once [and] for all, that the patriotic idea has been imbued in our minds by the rich and their allies, Government and Church, so as to have us taught such false idea to defend their properties and their interests, as well as to keep us, the poor of the world over, eternally divided, for as long as there be disunion amongst us on account of the

patriotic and race prejudices that they have infiltrated in our brains it shall be easier for them to keep us in slavery and exploitation.

Therefore, our class interests demand that we never go to the battlefields to fight for a Country that is not ours but of the rich who are the ones that own everything, and that when circumstances force us to shoulder arms let it be to fight against the present institutions by which the rich and their allies, Authority and Church, keep us in submission, slavery and poverty; let it be to conquer a real Country of ours, that of the producers, within which everything should belong to everybody; that is to say, where all and every one of us have the same right of possession and of use of the land, the machinery, the factories, the houses, the instruments of work and the means of communication and transportation, as explained in the Manifesto of September 23rd, 1911, issued by the Organizing Junta of the Mexican Liberal Party. Once the social wealth becomes common property, everybody shall have assured the means of living and, hence, there shall not be any longer poor and rich, neither exploited and exploiters, oppressed and oppressors, but everybody, regardless of sex, race or color, shall be happy, being as they shall be then free, equal and brothers.

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