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Ricardo Flores Magón
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1912

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The Political Socialists

Ricardo Flores Magón

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The swindlers speak to you of the “necessity” of the workers having representation in the legislative chambers, and they speak to you precisely in these moments of thriving action, when the campesinos, arms in hand, take possession of the land; when the workers, disillusioned with strikes, unite with rebel forces to conquer their economic freedom; when we ourselves put in the hands of the poor the provisions stored in the great haciendas of the Rio Grande district in the State of Coahuila, and when we invite the inhabitants of this vast region to take possession of the land and instruments of labour, or just as well, to invade the inherited properties of the hacendados of Durango and the great plantations of the slavers in the lakes region; when over the entire extent of the Mexican soil, from sea to sea, and from border to border, one hears the formidable cries: “Down with hunger!”, and also, “Expropriate!”

What a wonderful opportunity taken up by the swindlers of the proletariat to preach to them about political action! Some little newspapers from Mexico City have arrived at our editing desk, having come to light with the pretension of representing the interests of the working class, the strangest thing about this being that these little newspapers don’t say a word about the class war that is be-

ing waged in the Mexican republic. On the contrary, they pretend to ignore it because this suits the particular interests of the editors, who view with terror the path that the Mexican proletariat has chosen, that of using violence as a means to wrest from the claws of the bourgeoisie the social wealth which it holds. These editors are trying to numb the powerful revolutionary energies that exist, and to convert them into an electoral flock.

One of these little newspapers says: "At the moment, our bourgeoisie laughs and makes jokes about our party (the so-called Partido Socialista de México). Just as the German bourgeoisie laughed a few years ago and today they've seen how four million socialist citizens have sent 110 representatives to Parliament, including one from the district in which the Emperor lives. So now they don't laugh, but rather look at one another anxiously. What will happen in the following elections? Perhaps the Social Revolution."

As can be seen, the little newspaper to which I refer regards the German Social Democratic Party as a party which can do nothing less than make the Social Revolution, when in reality this party is recognized in the entire intelligent world as a conservative party like any other bourgeois party, and as so inoffensive to the capitalist class that many of the rich participate in it.

As for the other little newspaper, it has advice like this: "If due to the bad faith of some industrialists and administrators, they (the workers) have had to suspend their work, it is better to complain to their respective chairmen (union chairmen) so that they can deal with these problems with the respective authorities."

One couldn't ask for greater submission or greater degradation! And all of this is said when proletarians have taken up the Red Flag and fight like heroes on the battlefields! It wouldn't be as bad if such things were said in times of peace, but even then we wouldn't allow such a cynical attempt to annihilate one of the major virtues of the Mexican people: its spirit of rebellion.

Workers: you don't need to appoint drones to represent you in the legislative chambers, and still less do you need to have the au-

thorities patronize and represent you in your struggles with Capital. To those who ask for your vote so they can represent you in the legislative chambers, spit in their faces; to those who advise you to put your fate in the hands of Authority, slap them in the face.

In the German Parliament, say those who swindle you, there are 110 socialist deputies. And what benefit has the working class in the German Empire received from this great number of leeches? Misery is becoming more appalling each day, all over the Empire; people are dying of material starvation; and the impoverished neighborhoods of the great cities are real heaps of rags and miserable flesh rotting in its own filth. And while this takes place, the socialist representatives in tranquility receive large salaries, taken in the form of taxes from all this misery, filth, and pain of the proletariat; and [August] Bebel, the Pontifex Maximus of German socialism, lives the good life, consuming his income in the presence of the nakedness and hunger of millions and millions who wait, hoping that a socialist government will put in their hands the land and the means of production. And these poor people will continue to wait until desperation pushes them to pick up a gun to secure their economic, political, and social emancipation via the logical means: violence!

While the worker rejects the gun for the ballot box, he can't be surprised at being a hireling. No more! Enough of your shams, swindlers! All around you the proletarian crowds fight valiantly to conquer Land and Freedom. And it's stupidity when you're in the presence of such an expenditure of energy, such courage, such daring, and such manliness to advise pacifism, to advocate the electoral ballot and that the dispossessed put their fate in the hands of their executioners.