

To the Soldiers

Ricardo Flores Magón

1914

To be a soldier is to be a machine, and to be a machine is degrading to a human being; to command is bad; to obey is worse.

Soldier of Huerta or soldier of Carranza, these are two machines that really are the same, because the two do the same thing: kill to keep some bandit in power who defends the interests of the capitalist class.

The first duty of a soldier is to obey his superiors. His superiors! An honorable man should prefer to be dead rather than to renounce his dignity by considering another man his superior.

Superior! And why is this doll dressed in a manner that would shame a sensible man superior? Superior! How can a marionette be superior simply because he drags around a sword and adorns himself with shiny ribbons like a circus clown?

No. These presumptuous fools can't be superior. These little officials, these little chieftains aren't superior to the common soldiers. These, the so-called superiors, eat, sleep, etc., like any other mortal. They're flesh and blood like the soldier; they're born, they grow up, and they die, like the soldier. Where does the "superiority" of these ridiculous men come from? Perhaps they know better than the soldier the undignified art of killing; but the soldier, proletarian that he is, knows how to plow the field, sow the grain, gather the harvest, tend the rails for the trains, go to the bottom of the mine for precious metals, weave the cloth, make the clothing, build the houses. In a word, he knows how to do everything, and everything that exists has come from his creative proletarian hands; and that which makes life agreeable or at least less hard is owed to him, to the proletarian, the true master of the Earth.

The soldier shouldn't consider any man his superior. All men are equal, and it's shameful to subordinate oneself to the will of another. The duty of a soldier is to kill — as if dealing with poisonous vermin — all those who consider themselves superior to him.

And so, death to all "superiors"!

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