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1919

Retrieved on February 11, 2025 from
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This is what this Chamber has done, whose birth had nevertheless aroused the wildest hopes and provoked all optimism.

And now, voter, vote again if you dare.

Voter, listen!

Every time the powers of the Chamber of Deputies expire, there is a unanimous cry: “At last! This infamous Chamber will disappear! The country will be rid of this cursed Parliament!”

This language expressly translates the successive feelings: disappointment, weariness, disgust that have been born in the public mind, during the legislature that is ending, by the incapacity, corruption, incoherence and cowardice of the Parliamentarians.

Why must the thoughtless enthusiasm of the people, their ignorance and their lack of observation push them to hope that the Chamber that is going to be born will be better than the one that is going to die?

It is truly inconceivable that, periodically deceived, constantly abused, the confidence of the electorate survives the disappointments from which he suffers and which he laments; and, for the reasonable and thinking being, it is a stupor to note that the legislatures succeed one another, each leaving behind the same disenchantment, the same reprobation and that, nevertheless, the elector persists in considering it a duty to vote.

The electoral period opens, it is open. It is the crisis that, periodically, convulses the multitude. It officially lasts a few weeks and, if we take into account the effervescence that precedes and the bubbling that follows this crisis, we can say that it lasts three months.

Three months during which, populated by agitators, the country seems struck by madness: candidates, committees and electoral brokers, alternately confident in success or despairing of achieving it, come and go, advance and retreat, shout and remain silent, affirm and deny, implore and threaten, acquiesce and protest, attack and defend themselves.

It is a crazy spectacle: drama, comedy, vaudeville, buffoonery, farce, pantomime, all genres, from the tragic to the burlesque, meet there and meet, associated, confused.

The misfortune is that it is at the expense of the spectator that the farce is played and that, whatever the actors, it is always he who pays, and he pays with his work, his freedom, his blood.

Well! reader, before going to the ticket office to pay for your seat, listen to me.

Or rather listen to what the anarchists tell you; listen carefully and think.

To vote is to accept Servitude

Anarchists have never had a representative sitting in parliamentary assemblies. You have sometimes heard Messrs. Clemenceau, Briand and other parliamentarians called anarchists. They are not; they never have been.

Anarchists have no candidate. Moreover, a candidate who presented himself as an anarchist would not have a single vote, since anarchists abstain from voting.

They refuse to use the ballot paper that the Constitution places in their hands.

Do not suppose that it is to not do like the others, to distinguish themselves. Know that the reasons why anarchists abstain are multiple and serious.

These reasons are briefly set out here.

The anarchist is and wants to remain a free man. It is clear that like all his brothers in humanity, he is compelled to submit to the law; but it is against his will and when he submits to it, it is not because he respects it or considers it fair to bow to it; it is because it is impossible for him to escape it.

However, he accepts neither its origin, nor its character, nor its ends. On the contrary, he proclaims and takes great pains to demonstrate its iniquity.

In his eyes, the law is, at this moment in history that we are living, only the recognition and consecration of a social regime

But here is something that will doubtless seem even more decisive to you.

The Chamber that is leaving included an imposing number of left-wing elements. More than three hundred Radical and Radical Socialist deputies, more than one hundred Socialist deputies. They undoubtedly constituted an overwhelming majority.

What did this Chamber do? What did these four hundred Deputies do?

They cheered the war, they enthusiastically adhered to the abominable deception that was called the “Sacred Union”; they voted for all the war credits; they brought to the so-called “National Defense” Government their close and constant collaboration; they did nothing to shorten the massacre; they took no effective measure against the high cost of living, against hoarding, against speculation, against the scandalous enrichment of the business magnates; they passively accepted the suppression of our meager liberties; they applauded the crushing of the Hungarian revolution; they approved the sending of soldiers, sailors, munitions and billions intended to stifle, by famine and by arms, revolutionary Russia; they cowardly bowed their heads, accepted everything, suffered everything; they wiped the slate clean of all the turpitudes and all the crimes.

They went to the very end of servility, shame and savagery.

They hardly dared to open their mouths and, when they spoke, it was never to make heard the truths that had to be said, the bloody imprecations and the vengeful curses, which would have opposed the pain of mourning, the suffering of ruins and the horror of battles to the sterility of sacrifices and the hideousness of unleashed Imperialisms.

At the end of its career, this odious Chamber has just ratified a peace treaty that leaves all militarisms standing, more insolent and more warlike than ever, that favors the most atrocious brigandage, that stimulates the most detestable greed, that stirs up hatred between peoples and that carries in its bosom the war of tomorrow.

didacy and, if you want to preserve the character, intelligence and devotion of the ideas which are yours and which he claims to want to defend in the Chamber, refuse him your vote.

To vote is to play the game of Reaction

Voter, one more word; this will be the last.

They will not fail to tell you that not voting is playing into the hands of reaction.

Nothing could be further from the truth. I could point out to you that if the two million workers who belong to the CGT, if the million voters of whom the Socialist Party prides itself, if the million other citizens who, without being affiliated with the Socialist Party or the CGT, are nonetheless adversaries of the capitalist regime: in all, four million voters, openly refused to take part in the vote, this abstention, openly announced and explained throughout the entire electoral period and valiantly practiced on election day, would deal a mortal blow to the prestige and authority of the regime that must be brought down. I could tell you that, faced with the attitude of these four million abstainers, as conscious as they are resolute, the Government would lose all its luster and most of its strength.

I could tell you that, closely united in such categorical disapproval of the current social system, these four million men could organize, in the country, thanks to the ramifications they possess everywhere, a formidable coalition against which nothing could prevail. I could affirm that this coalition, into which all those who would be touched by such powerful propaganda and even a part of the forces at the disposal of the Government would soon enter, would be of a size to dare, to undertake and to realize the vastest designs and the most profound transformation.

What would remain, then, of the specter of your reaction that is waved before you to push you to the polls?…

resulting from past usurpations and spoliations and based on the domination of a caste and the exploitation of a class.

This regime can only live and continue by borrowing its apparent and temporary legitimacy from popular consent.

It is obliged to rely on the voluntary adhesion of those who are its victims: in the political order, the citizens; in the economic order, the workers.

This is why every four years, the people are called upon to designate by their votes the individuals to whom they intend to entrust the mandate to decide on all the questions that raise the very existence of the nation.

These questions are regulated by a set of prescriptions and prohibitions that have the force of law and the law has, against anyone who attempts to act against it and, even more so against anyone who violates it, such a power of repression that any gesture of revolt by which a man protests against the injustice of the law and attempts to evade it is liable to the harshest penalties.

Now Parliament is the assembly of individuals to whom so-called universal suffrage has delegated the power to enact the law and the duty to ensure its application. The deputy and the senator are above all legislators.

Do you understand, now, voter, the accuracy of this statement made by Élisée Reclus: “To vote is to give oneself a master”.

Yes! A master; since to vote is to designate a deputy, it is to entrust to an elected official the mandate to formulate the rule, and to attribute to him the power, worse still, to impose on him the duty to enforce it by force.

A master, since to vote is to renounce one’s own freedom and abdicate it in favor of the elected official.

You who vote, do not object to me that you still retain the right to rebel. Put it well into your head that if you happen to enter into revolt against the Authority, you deny the signature that you have given, you violate the commitment that you have made, you with-

draw from your representative the mandate that you have freely consented to him.

You sent him to Parliament with the precise mission of participating, collaborating in the discussion, the vote, the promulgation of the law and ensuring its scrupulous application.

It is Parliament that is responsible for amending or repealing laws; by your expressed suffrage, you participated in the composition of this parliament; by your vote, you gave it full powers; the party to which you belong has representatives in this assembly; the program that you affirmed by your ballot has spokesmen in the Chamber. It is up to them – you wanted it – to amend, correct or repeal the laws that hinder your political independence and consecrate your economic servitude.

Be angry, protest, be indignant, you have the right to do so. But that is all that you are allowed to do. Do not lose sight of the fact that, by voting, you have renounced, ipso facto, your right to revolt, that you have abdicated in favor of the representatives of your party, that, to put it in a word, you have ceased to be free.

He who has understood this elementary truth: the anarchist, does not vote, because he wants to be a free man, because he refuses to chain his conscience, to bind his will, because he intends to keep, at all times and in all circumstances his right to revolt, to insurrection, to revolution.

The State is the enemy!

Listen again. In a representative regime, Parliament is the State.

Theoretically, it is only a part of it; because, in principle, it is only endowed with legislative power. But it is Parliament (the Chamber and Senate combined) that elects the President of the Republic, in whose hands the executive power is centralized; and if, theoretically, it is the Judiciary that holds judicial power, as it is Parliament that makes the laws and the judicial power only has the

a financier, a farmer, an administrator, since he is called upon to formulate his feelings and to pronounce himself by a precise vote on all questions: navy, war, foreign affairs, legislation, public health, education, commerce, industry, finance, agriculture, administration, etc., etc., etc.

If he knows one or two of these questions well — and that would already be a lot — he certainly ignores all the others. The result is that nine times out of ten, he votes blindly, with a wet finger.

Parliament is therefore synonymous with incompetence.

Synonymous also with irresponsibility.

Here, the demonstration is no longer to be made. To say that Parliament is irresponsible is a proposition that has become so obvious that it has ceased to be under discussion.

Synonymous again with impotence; because obliged to confine itself within the narrow limits of a determined political Constitution and economic regime, Parliament is the exact image of a lake surrounded by mountains which can, from time to time, be agitated and even stormy, but which always remains enclosed within the frame that the surrounding heights trace around it.

The boiling anger, the explosions of indignation, the delirious enthusiasms, the solemn oaths, the sacred commitments have just, in Parliament, the value of these periodic agitations of a vast stagnant pond which bring the mud to the surface and stink up the air, but which do not take long to let fall the mud and the stench whose accumulation in the depths the tiny storm has revealed.

Synonymous, finally, with corruption. The proven brigandages and even more, the half-stifled scandals have fixed opinion to such a point that it is commonplace to say of a Parliament that it is rotten!

The best putrefy in such an environment, unless they leave it from time to time and the worst trick one can play on a friend is to send him there.

Also, voter, if you have a good comrade, be careful not to incite him to be a candidate; If he does, be careful not to favour his can-

young wife; this young man to the dazzling promises he has lavished of palms, tobacco shops, places and recommendations; all to more or less shady procedures which have no relation to merit or talent; all, in any case, to the number of votes they have obtained.

And the number has nothing to do with merit, courage, probity, character, intelligence, knowledge, services rendered, brilliant actions. The majority of votes consecrates neither moral value, nor intellectual superiority, nor Justice, nor Reason.

One would be allowed to say that it is rather the opposite.

Let us be fair: a few superior men have, from time to time, strayed into these bad places; but they are the very small number, they have not been long in finding themselves disoriented and ill at ease there and unless they have insensibly condescended to play their part in the clash of cliques, to be inspired by the passions of the parties, to hold their place in the corridor intrigues and to play the game of the government or the opposition, they have been quickly quarantined and reduced to impotence.

Parliamentarism is synonymous with incompetence, irresponsibility, impotence, corruption

Moreover, whatever the man, the incompetence of the parliamentarian is a Fatality.

Given, on the one hand, the complexity of social mechanisms and, on the other hand, the development of human knowledge, there is no one who is able to face the demands of the legislative mandate.

In our time, one can only be competent on condition of specializing. No one can know everything; there is no brain that can embrace everything.

And yet, a deputy should be a sailor, a warrior, a diplomat, a lawyer, a hygienist, an educator, a merchant, an industrialist,

mandate to apply their provisions, we see that, all in all, directly or indirectly, Parliament is, in the final analysis, omnipotent. It is therefore it that is the State.

Now, the State, say the Anarchists, is the seizure of Power by the dominant class, to the detriment of the dominated class. It is, currently, the set of institutions that govern the nation in the hands of the chargés d'affaires of the capitalist class and, more specifically. of high finance, powerful industry, big business and vast landed property.

It is the citadel from which the orders that bend the multitude come; it is the gigantic fortress where the armed force sits: troops, gendarmerie, police, whose function is to persecute, arrest, imprison and, in the event of a collective revolt, to massacre. who rebels.

It is the monster that, insatiably, feeds on the blood and bones of all those who, through their work, feed a budget that swells disproportionately.

The State is the enemy against which one must fight, fight again, fight always, until it is definitively defeated.

In a democracy, the State flatters itself that it is the emanation of the sovereign People. The supporters of the representative system affirm that, in a democracy, it is the people who, through their representatives, govern; they declare that, delegating his powers to the men of his choice, it is his aspirations, his needs and his interests that he affirms through his representatives.

These Gentlemen lie and they know it well; but they tirelessly repeat this imposture, in the hope – alas! too well-founded – that a lie repeated daily ends up acquiring the force of an indisputable truth.

Between the mendacious assertion of these theorists of democracy, an assertion that is denied by the simple observation of realities, and the assertions of the anarchists, assertions that are justified by history and experience, I hope, elector, that it is not difficult for you to make your choice.

It is not only of the State in ancient civilizations, of the State in the Middle Ages, of the State embodying absolute personal Power, but of the State without exception and, consequently of the democratic State as of the others that Mr. Clemenceau, who knows about it, said, in the Senate, only a few years ago:

"Gentlemen, we know the State; we know what it is and what it is worth. The history of the State is all blood and mud!"

It is therefore not a question of seizing the State, but of annihilating it.

To introduce representatives of one's party into the Legislative Assemblies is to slip into them a fraction of oneself, it is to bring to these Assemblies the support of one's party; it is to infuse them with new blood; it is to consolidate the credit of its Assemblies, it is to strengthen their power; it is – since Parliament and the State are one – to serve the cause of the State instead of fighting it; it is therefore to turn one's back on the goal to be achieved; it is to paralyze the revolutionary effort; it is to delay liberation.

The State is the guardian of acquired fortunes; it is the defender of usurped privileges; it is the bulwark that stands between the governing minority and the governed crowd; it is the high and wide dike that shelters a handful of millionaires from the assaults delivered to it by the tumultuous flood of the dispossessed.

From then on, it is natural, logical and inevitable that the holders of privileges and fortune vote with enthusiasm and conviction, that they push with ardor to the polls, that they proclaim that to vote is to fulfill a sacred duty.

But disconcerting and insane would be the attitude of those who, proclaiming themselves in favour of a social upheaval which implies the disappearance of the State, would make use of the ballot paper, the consequence of which would be, whether we like it or not, to legitimize the origins of the State, to confirm its powers, to strengthen its strength and, by ricochet, to become an accomplice in its crimes.

Who is the Chamber composed of?

Voter, would you be so naive as to believe that Parliament brings together the elite of the nation? Do you think that the Chamber brings together the glories of Science and Art, the illustrations of Thought, the skills of Industry, Commerce and Agriculture, the probities (?) of Finance? Do you believe that the formidable power of governing a people of forty million inhabitants is vested in the most honest and the most deserving?

If so, think again. Take a look at the aisles of the Chamber and see what kind of people occupy them: lawyers without cause, doctors without clientele, dubious traders, industrialists without special knowledge, journalists without talent, financiers without scruples, idlers and rich people without defined occupations.

All these people intrigue, gossip, trade, speculate, do business, hustle, jostle and run in search of pleasures, wealth and well-paid sinecures.

Does this surprise you, candid voter? A minute's reflection will dispel your surprise. Ask yourself how it is that X, Y or Z are deputies.

Is their seat the reward for manifest merits, brilliant actions, good deeds, services rendered, which have recommended them to public esteem and confidence?

Is it the fair salary for the special knowledge they have acquired, for the higher studies whose brilliant cycle they have gone through, for the experience that a life of hard work has earned them?

Have they been required, like professors, pharmacists, engineers, to pass exams, diplomas, admission to certain schools, the regulatory internship?

Look, this one owes his mandate to money; this one to the intrigue this third to the official candidacy; this fourth to the support of a newspaper whose coffers he has fattened; this other to the wine, cider, beer or alcohol with which he has filled the throats of his constituents; this old man to the complacent coquetries of his