

THE CRIMINAL IS THE VOTER!

Albert Libertad

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It is you who are the criminal, O People, since you are the Sovereign. You are, it is true, the unconscious and naïve criminal. You vote and you do not see that you are your own victim.

Have you not yet experienced enough that the deputies who promise to defend you, like all the governments of the present and past world, are liars and powerless?

You know it and you complain! You know it and you elect them! Rulers, whoever they may be, have worked, work and will work for their own interests, for those of their castes and their cliques.

Where has it ever been otherwise, and how could it be otherwise? The governed are subordinates and exploited: do you know any who are not?

As long as you have not understood that it is yours alone to produce and to live as you please; as long as you endure — out of fear — and yourselves manufacture — out of belief in necessary authority — chiefs and directors, know this well also: your delegates and your masters will live off your labour and your foolishness. You complain of everything! But are you not yourself the author of the thousand sores that devour you?

You complain of the police, the army, justice, barracks, prisons, administrations, laws, ministers, the government, financiers, speculators, civil servants, bosses, priests, landlords, wages, unemployment, parliament, taxes, customs officers, rentiers, the high cost of food, farm rents and house rents, the long days in workshop and factory, the meagre pittance, the numberless privations and the infinite mass of social iniquities.

You complain; yet you want the maintenance of the system in which you vegetate. You revolt sometimes, but only to begin again. It is you who produce everything, who plough and sow, who forge and weave, who knead and transform, who build and manufacture, who feed and fecundate!

Why then do you not consume your fill? Why are you the poorly clothed, the poorly fed, the poorly housed? Yes, why the one without bread, without shoes, without a dwelling? Why are you not your own master? Why do you bow, obey, serve? Why are you the inferior, the humiliated, the offended, the servant, the slave?

You elaborate everything and you possess nothing. Everything is through you and you are nothing.

I am mistaken. You are the voter, the voting animal, the one who accepts what is; the one who, by the ballot paper, sanctions all his miseries; the one who, by voting, consecrates all his servitudes.

You are the voluntary valet, the amiable domestic, the lackey, the flunkey, the dog licking the whip, crawling before the master's fist. You are the cop, the jailer and the informer. You are the good soldier, the model doorkeeper, the benevolent tenant. You are the faithful employee, the devoted servant, the sober peasant, the resigned worker of your own slavery. You are yourself your own

executioner. Of what do you complain?

You are a danger to us, free men, to us anarchists. You are a danger equal to the tyrants, to the masters you give yourselves, whom you name, whom you support, whom you nourish, whom you protect with your bayonets, whom you defend with your brute force, whom you exalt with your ignorance, whom you legalise with your ballot papers — and whom you impose upon us by your imbecility.

It is indeed you who are the Sovereign, whom they flatter and whom they dupe. Speeches incense you. Posters hook you; you love nonsense and courtier flattery: be satisfied, while waiting to be shot in the colonies, to be massacred at the frontiers, in the shadow of your flag.

If interested tongues lick your royal excrement, O Sovereign! If candidates hungry for command and stuffed with platitudes brush the spine and the rump of your paper autocracy; If you intoxicate yourself with the incense and the promises poured out by those who have always betrayed you, who deceive you and will sell you tomorrow: it is because you yourself resemble them. It is because you are no better than the horde of your famished adulators. It is because, never having been able to raise yourself to the consciousness of your individuality and your independence, you are incapable of freeing yourself by your own means. You do not want to be free, therefore you cannot be free.

Come, vote well! Have confidence in your representatives, believe in your elected ones.

But stop complaining. The yokes you endure, it is you yourself who impose them. The crimes from which you suffer, it is you who commit them. You are the master, you are the criminal, and, irony of ironies, you are the slave, you are the victim.

We others, weary of the oppression of the masters you give us, weary of enduring their arrogance, weary of enduring your passivity, come to call you to reflection, to action.

Come, a good movement: throw off the narrow garment of legislation, scrub your body roughly, so that the parasites and the vermin that devour you may burst. Only then will you be able to live fully.

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— *Albert Libertad*