

SIN JEFES

[Without Bosses]

By Ricardo Flores Magon

To want bosses and at the same time to want to be free is to want the impossible. It is necessary to choose once and for all between two things: either to be free, completely free, refusing all authority, or to be enslaved perpetuating the power of man over man. The boss or government is necessary only under a system of economic inequality. If I have more than Pedro, I naturally fear that Pedro will grab me by the neck and will take from me what he needs. In this case, I need a government or a supervisor to protect me against the possible attacks of Pedro; but if Pedro and I are economic equals; if we both have the same opportunity to profit from the riches of nature, such as land, water forests, mines, and everything else, just as the riches created by the hand of man, like the machineries, houses, railroads, and the thousand and one manufacturers, reason says that it would be impossible that Pedro and I would grab each other by the hair to dispute the things that we both profit from equally and in this case there is no need to have bosses.

To talk of bosses between equals is a contradiction, unless we speak of equals in servitude, brothers in chains, as we workers are now. There are many who say that it is impossible to live without bosses or government; if it is the bourgeois that say such things, I admit they are right in their reasoning because they fear that the poor will seize them by the neck and will snatch away their riches that they have amassed by making the worker sweat; but for what do the poor need bosses or government?

In Mexico, we have had and have hundreds of proofs that humankind does not need bosses or government if not in the case of economic inequality. In the rural villages and communities, the people have not felt it necessary to have a government. Until recently, the land, forests, water, and fields have been common property of the people of the region. When government is spoken of to those simple people, they start to tremble because for them government is the same as an executioner; it signifies the same as tyranny. They live happily in their freedom, without knowing, in many cases, the name of the President of the Republic, and they only know of the existence of a government when the military chiefs pass through the region looking for men to convert into soldiers, or when the federal tax collector comes to collect taxes. The government was, then, to a large part of the Mexican population, the tyrant that pulled the working men out of their homes to convert them into soldiers, or to savagely exploit that they would snatch away the tax in the name of the tax authority.

Would these populations feel the need to have government? They needed it for nothing and they could live in that way for hundreds of years, until the natural riches were snatched away for the benefit of the neighboring landholders. They did not eat one another, the way that those who have only known the capitalist system feared would happen; a system in which each man has to compete with everyone else to put a piece of bread in his mouth; the strong do not exert tyranny over the weak, as happens under a capitalist civilization, in which the most idle, greedy, and clever rule over the honest and good. All were brothers in these communities; they all helped out, and sensing equality, the way it really was, they did not need authorities to watch over the interests of those who had them, fearing possible attacks of those who did not have.

In these moments, for what do the free communities of the Yaqui of Durango, of the South of Mexico and so many other areas in which the people have taken possession of the land, need government? From the moment that they consider themselves equals, with the same right to the Mother Earth, they do not need a boss to protect the privileged against those without privileges, because all are privileged.

Let us open our eyes, proletariats: the government should only exist when there is economic inequality. Adopt then, as a moral guide, the Manifesto of September 23, 1911.

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¿GOBIERNO? [Government?]

By Ricardo Flores Magon

There are people, who in good faith ask this question: how would it be possible to live without government? And they conclude saying that a supreme chief, a crowd of officials, large and small, such as ministers, judges, magistrates, legislators, soldiers, jailers, policemen, and executioners, are necessary. These good people believe that without authority we would all turn ourselves over to excesses, the result being that the weak would always be the victim of the strong.

This could happen only in this case: that the revolutionaries, through a weakness of the guillotine, would leave afoot social inequality. Social inequality is the fountain of all the antisocial acts that the law and the bourgeois consider crimes with theft being the most common of those crimes. Well, when all mankind will have the opportunity to work the land or to dedicate itself, without the need to work for salary, to be able to survive, who will take theft as a profession the way it is seen now? In the society that the libertarians long for, land and all methods of production will no longer be objects of speculation for a determined number of proprietors instead they will be the common property of the workers and as before there will be only one class: that of the workers with the right of all to produce and consume in common, what need would there be to steal?

It will be said that there are persons given to idleness and that they would take advantage of another's work to instead of working. I have lived in different prisons; I have spoken with many thieves, with hundreds of thieves; almost all of them have stolen out of necessity. There is no constant work: salaries are meager, the working day of laborers is truly exhausting; the scorn of the proprietary class for the proletariat class is irritating; the example of living in idleness, luxury, abundance, in the vice of doing nothing useful that the capitalist class gives to the working class, of this causes some workers, out of starvation, indignation, or as an individual protest against the plunder of the bourgeois, to rob and they become criminals, to the point of murder, to take what is necessary to live.

The profession of theft is definitely not one of the happiest. It requires great activity and waste of energy on the part of the thief, major activity and major energy that in many cases is required to recover some task; so to complete a theft, the thief has to stake out his victim, study his practices, be careful of policemen, plan a map, risk his life or freedom, in continued anxiety, without limit in this case of work, and assume that a man does not come to him for happiness, but instead forced by necessity or the anger of seeing himself in misery, when the rich pass by his side intoxicated by wine, luxury, his mouth twisted with the hiccups of satiation, dressed in suedes and fine clothes, enveloping in one scornful look the poor people who sacrifice in the workshop, the factory, the mine, the furrow . . .

The immense majority of the jail population is composed of individuals who have committed a misdemeanor against property: theft, swindling, fraud, falsification, etcetera, while in a small minority of delinquents, prisoners with crimes against people, are found. Once private property is abolished, when one will have all of the means to choose a job of one's liking, but beneficial to the community; humanizing the work in a virtue that will not effect the patron and make him rich, but to satisfy necessities; returning to the industry the thousands and thousands of day laborers that today corner the government in its offices, in the districts, and the prisons themselves; all will be put work to gain sustenance, with the powerful help of machinery of all kinds, it will be necessary to work only some two or three hours daily to have everything in abundance. Would there then be those who prefer theft to be able to live? Man, although the most perverse, always likes to attract the esteem of all. This can be observed today, although the way in which humanity lives weakens the best instincts of the species, and if it is so, why not admit that man would be better in the cavity of a free society?

In referring to the crimes against people, the major part is the product of the sickness in which we live. Man lives in a constant state of nervous over excitement; the misery, the insecurity of winning the bread of the next morning; the offenses of authority; the certainty that he is victim of political tyranny and capitalist exploitation; the desperation of seeing the child without clothes, education, future; the spectacle, nothing constructed of the struggle of all against all, that is born specifically of the right of private property, that facilitates the shrewd and the malicious to accumulate capital by exploiting the workers; all of that and much more fills the heart of man with bitterness, makes him violent, angry, and nudges him to take out a revolver or dagger to attack, many times for issues. No society exists in which savage between human beings satisfies all necessities, sufferings, softens tempers, and strengthens in the instincts of sociability and solidarity. All of which are so strong that, in spite of worldly disputes of all against all, they have not died in human beings. No, there is no need to fear life without government; we long for it with all of our hearts. There would be, naturally, some individuals given to criminal instincts; but politics would take charge of attending to them, as ill as they are, because those poor people are victims of [atavismos], illnesses inherited of inclinations born of anger from the injustice and brutality of the environment.

Mexicans: remember how the rural populations of Mexico have lived. Communalism has been practiced in the rural huts; authority has not been missed; before, to the contrary, when it was known that an agent of authority was coming near, the men would flee to the forest because authority is only present when men are needed for the barracks or for contributions to maintain the parasites of the government and nevertheless life was more tranquil in those places where laws were not known nor the threat of the gendarme with his club. Authority is not missed except to maintain social inequality.

Mexicans: Death to Authority!
Long Live Land and Liberty!

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