

Regeneracion.

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A Crime upon the Children of Our Land.

By John Kenneth Turner.

The honoring of "President Diaz" of Mexico in the American schools last week constituted a blow to freedom, to common decency, to the general idea of political progress such as has seldom been dealt through the public institutions of a republic.

No school board, superintendent, principal or teacher having any respect for his revolutionary forefathers and their Declaration of Independence, revering the principles upon which this republic is supposed to have been founded, and at the same time knowing the true character of Diaz, could plan or carry through a program such as was placed before the public schools of Los Angeles, September 16th.

What American schoolmaster would encourage his pupils to do honor to the Czar of Russia? Who would think of devoting an hour or praise to the late King Leopold, bloody brute of the Congo? Who would not shudder to the depths of his soul at the idea of singing praises to the name of the Roman emperor, Nero?

And yet Porfirio Diaz of Mexico is an incomparably greater autocrat than Czar Nicholas, a more ruthless and bloody murderer than ever was Leopold, and for his time, he is a vaster monster than was Nero. In Mexico today there are hundreds of thousands of slaves—chattel slaves who are bought and sold like mules, who are driven, beaten and starved to death by the tens of thousands every year. In the Mexican slave traffic hundreds of government officials are constantly employed. Not a week passes that does not see gangs of men, women and children, guarded by government rurales, leaving the capital city against their will, bound for a life and death in slavery in the agricultural states on the country.

Diaz is neither blind nor deaf. He knows of this slavery. He licenses it. He creates the system for political purposes. In Mexico, a nation of 16,000,000 people, there are not less than 5,000,000 peons—agricultural laborers compelled to remain on the land of millionaire owners, compelled to accept the pay he cares to give, which is usually no pay at all, unable to live decently, to dress decently, to attend school, to do anything to better their pitiful condition.

Diaz knows of this situation. He created it for political purposes. When Diaz came into power in Mexico most of the common people owned a little land. Diaz took it away and gave it to his political favorites. In Mexico today there is no free press, no free speech, no real elections. During the past year not less than 50 newspapers were suppressed for mildly criticizing officials appointed by Diaz. The Mexican prisons are full of men who have committed no crime except to attempt to exercise the right of suffrage guaranteed by the Mexican constitution.

Do not let those who are guilty say that the exercises in our public schools were held merely to celebrate the freedom of Mexico from Spain, accomplished one hundred years ago. For the program suggested by the city superintendent and sent out to every school in Los Angeles at least contains "Essay: Diaz, the Builder of Progressive Mexico." "Our Duty to Porfirio Diaz March." "Our Duty to Mexico." "Our Mexican Friends." This program was taken from a circular sent out by the Diaz press bureau, which circular made it very plain that "Our Mexican Friends" was to mean Diaz and his government, and that "Our Duty to Mexico" was to mean to praise Diaz and decry the exposures of Mexican slavery and political oppression which have been made in this country during the past year.

Is Diaz the maker of progressive Mexico? Is a country with thousands of thousands of chattel slaves, with millions of peons with none of the ordinary liberties which we ourselves enjoy as a matter of course, a progressive country? No. What progress Mexico has made since Diaz imposed himself as military dictator thirty-four years ago has been made in spite of Diaz, not because of him. The best thing that can happen for the progress of Mexico would be the fall of Diaz, and that thing is prevented only by the constant killing, imprisoning and deportation of the most enlightened people in the country.

The mind of a child is a plastic thing. Early impressions sink deep. There can be no greater crime than to teach the future rulers of America to justify the acts of the most devastating despot of modern times.

Espisodes of the Revolution

OF 1908

Viesca

The organization had been a laborious task executed in the midst of great difficulties and dangers. The discretion and the faint-heartedness of the masses, the vigilance of the authorities supported in their dirty work by spies and informers, the lack of financial support, all this was being overcome, victoriously by the revolutionists of the group of Viesca. Their organization acquired strength and consistency under the continuous impulse emanating from those few tollers for liberty. In the first instance, one by one, weapons were gathered by the group: today a pistol, some other day a carbine, and in quantities over so small, gradually the ammunition was provided. Double privation had to be undergone, and three-fold they had to toil to earn a little bit of money over and above the merest necessities of life indispensable to pay for the right to live. But in the end, when the appointed time for the insurrection came, history could count with some elements of the finest caliber if we take in consideration the miserable conditions encompassing all the fighters for higher principle.

The revolution has never possessed any large capital. The rich who possess things hardly ever enroll for militant activity in the struggles for the emancipation of mankind, and still less are they disposed to risk some of their things, a part of their capital, in political games of any kind. They are egoists of the suicidal type: they claim for themselves even the useless things they do not need, though they are almost ready to burst from stuffed overconsumption. For that reason a Tolstoy and a Kropotkin are exceptional types in our times. The night of June 24 to 25th, the anniversary of the assassination of Venustiano Carranza in obedience to the historic infamous telegram from Diaz: "Matalos en caliente"—"kill them quick," had been set as the date for the rebellion to break out in different parts of the country. The group of Viesca enlisted in the great secrecy. The most minute precautions had been taken. But all this could not avoid their work from becoming so manifestly clear and threatening in appearance that the chief authorities of the locality, shaking of fear, fled on the eve of the uprising. Moreover the treachery of Casas Grandes had revealed to the government the existence of a vast conspiracy, and what was of greater importance for the outcome of their plans, also the date set for the attack on the part of the rebels. The telegraph had wired urgent orders to all the villages and cities impressing upon the civil and military authorities to do all in their power to suppress the revolution, whilst an ambassador made ready to present himself in Washington to demand for the most shameful assistance possible in favor of the Mexican tyranny.

At midnight the comrades came together. To each one his place was assigned and the work begun. The police made a pretence at resistance. A few shots were exchanged resulting in one of the gendarmes being killed, and one on each side wounded. The jail was opened wide and no one remained there. The liberal program was proclaimed and the power of the usurper and dictator declared null and void. Horses were requisitioned and the scarce funds in the public offices were taken possession of. The revolution took full hold of the village without a single case of violence or outrage to the resident families or neutral persons.

Jose Lugo, who had taken no part in the preparations became very active when the time had come to do things. Denunciation paralyzed the activities of a good many groups. Others who had chances for effective rising failed to live up to their duty of solidarity holding back in a silence of shame. The government began to dispatch troops over the Laguna region. And to all this came also over the insurgent Viesca the inundation of calumny and insult. Penny-annons assuming the fictitious garb of liberals and of friends of the proletariat took upon themselves the task of arousing against the rebels the blind hatred of, we might call it, Mexican jingoism, a patriotism made assertive then, that the arms of the revolutionists had been helped over the border by the United States which, eager to get the mastery of Mexico, had incited to mutiny some bad Mexicans, or misguided persons, bought creatures like those of the mock-republic of Panama, bandits and highwaymen. The kindest epithet applied to us was "mitoleros," Indian dancers.

In that way the "friends of the people" showed their worth and value. With their poor declamations they desired to assist in the crushing of the manly and worthy by the mercenaries of the powers that be and by the ignorant pseudo patriotism of the masses. As far as they were concerned the brutality of the repression of their insidious attacks to all the extent cherished by the despots. Even amongst the liberals themselves voices became loud condemning the few who ashamed of being mere cattle led to slaughter had broken with their passive attitude of meek submission. But those voices with all the earmarks of the lowest passions, those murmurs which were but the grunts of impotent envy, died and had no effect when they reached the ears of the parias, of the brethren of the unshod bandits. In spite of the dejection and degradation depressing the character of the masses, they did not entirely give credit to the "friends of the people." As a whole and in general they thought with love and with admiration of the daring ones who knew how to stand up resolutely in a power that filled the faint-hearted and the vile with fear.

The evacuation of Viesca became unavoidable. The volunteers of liberty came forth from their appointed stations and left, followed by the looks of love and of hope of the proletarian women whose sympathies had been enlisted by the actions of the true conservers of peace and order, who had voluntarily taken upon their indomitable shoulders the appellation of bandits as in past history was done by the beginners of all reforms, the badge of contempt and promise of ultimate victory worn by the liberators of all ages. To the hills, to the friendly mountains they direct their steps. And once there the nucleus dissolved in obedience to new plans. The body dissolved into unities projected in all directions, there to create and form new rebel organizations, repeating the biological phenomenon of certain zoological species which reproduce themselves from their fragments.

Viesca brought forth to light characters like Lugo, and others whose names cannot yet be mentioned. Viesca unmasked the liberals of convenience and excluded from the revolution elements tainted with fear or incompetency. In 1908 the soldiers of the tyranny have in no place won victories. Only treason crushed the triumph of the revolution, and that is all there is to be said.

PRAXEDIS G. GUERRERO.

Miss Eloisa L. Moreno

PROFESSOR OF SPANISH

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760 CLARA ST. LOS ANGELES

Prison Life

We were moved to the new penitentiary at Florence in September, 1909, and remained there until the end of our term, August 3, 1910. In some respects the change was a welcome one, for the buildings being now, were necessarily much cleaner, and we suffered far less from mosquitoes and vermin. On the other hand, Florence is nearly as hot a place as Yuma, and our cells, made of steel, were even more suffocating. At this point I desire to make a reflection that I am confident will commend itself to every thoughtful and humane person. It is this: Here was a brand new prison; built, one would suppose, according to the most advanced ideas. For prison reform is a subject that has received much attention during the past few years, and the conditions under which prisoners are immured have raised a cry of general indignation. Yet in equipping this new structure with steel cells, constructed after the most approved pattern so far as preventing all possibility of escape is concerned, the authorities decided that 7x9x7 was the proper allowance of space for four men.

As at Yuma, there was nothing to be done except to go to bed, since there was barely room to turn around; there was no light by which to read; the atmosphere was stifling, and the greater part of the thirteen hours was spent in tossing restlessly to and fro. However, we were allowed to talk until 8 o'clock, at which hour the lights went out.

To me, at least, it is self-evident that reform ideas have made no impression whatever on the Arizona authorities responsible for the construction of this building, for to suppose that men can be improved by a 13-hours' daily confinement under such conditions is to declare oneself incapable of reasoning. In reality it served only to encourage the grossest immoralities and to make the prison the school for crime it unquestionably is. Both from the standpoint of humanity and from that of the interests of the public, which are not furthered by the wholesale manufacture of criminals, those answerable for this outrage should stand the blame. Moreover, there were, in all, fourteen feet by forty-four, in which there were never less than forty-five and sometimes as many as seventy-five, prisoners. This was the inferno to which the short-timers were usually assigned, and we took our turn there for a while.

I am not seeking to pile on the agony or harrow the feelings of my readers, and content myself therefore with the barest statement of actual facts. There were three rows of bunks, one above the other, along the walls, and three tiers of bunks in the middle of the room. Steerage quarters on an old-fashioned immigrant steamer could not have been more crowded. There was one door; there was no toilet, but we were supplied with old filthy slop-buckets brought from Yuma. Diarrhoea was a common ailment, and the resulting stench, always nauseating, became overpowering when the pen was full. We were furnished with drinking water in buckets, but it was both hot and dirty. Again I ask if the cause of physical or mental sanity can be served by such conditions.

We found the diet—always a most important item in prison life—something that improved at Florence, but the main staple was beans, which were served for breakfast, dinner and supper. They are hard on men condemned to a sedentary life. Of course we had much, but it was often of an old and inferior quality, and had to be eaten without sugar or milk. Magon and I continued working in the tailor's shop, but Rivera was given employment as assistant druggist. The great bulk of the convicts was employed building a bridge over the Gila, about a mile away, manufacturing adobe, and filling the new prison yard. As a rule, the American prisoners were given the lighter, and the Mexican prisoners the heavier jobs.

Out of a total of 420 prisoners, some 40 were negroes and about 275 Mexicans. I found that about sixty men were serving life sentences; from thirty to forty were in for terms so long that they were almost equivalent to life sentences, and that many others were going from eight to fifteen years. Most of these men came from the poorer class and were imprisoned for offenses against property, which shows again how closely connected with the economic problem is the prison question. As confirmative of this, I may say that I was particularly impressed with the large percentage of crippled men among the inmates. Naturally these unfortunate had been heavily handicapped in the struggle for employment, and I discovered that the crimes with which they had been charged were invariably against property. Most of the prisoners were young men under 30. There were few old men.

At Florence the grounds are much larger than they had been at Yuma, and this gave us a distinct advantage. Ball play was indulged in from 12 to 1, and a baseball team was formed. The assistant superintendent, whom I criticized in a former article, was held somewhat in check by the superintendent, and that made conditions easier. On the other hand, the prison was run, as Yuma had been, on the stool-pigeon system, and sexual degenerates occupied the best positions. To complain was to subject oneself to certain persecution and did no good.

As a matter of fact, however, we did complain—not officially but privately—of the sexual degeneracy with which the place was rotten, for it was habitual in the cells and common in the bull pen, although in the latter concealment was almost impossible. We got no satisfaction, being told that the conditions were an inevitable feature of prison life, and were even informed, with unspeakable cynicism, that such vices served

a useful purpose, since they kept the men quiet and submissive. I compiled a list, giving the names of forty men who habitually sold themselves, but it fell into the hands of the assistant superintendent who destroyed it, as he did other notes I made. Publicity is the one thing prison officials seem to dread the most. Therefore, it is the one thing that should seem to me practically hopeless.

Particularly, as it appears to me, does this hold good of the prevalence of sexual degeneracy, to which I have alluded and only alluded, since it is a subject almost impossible to discuss in print. Yet of all the evils inflicted upon prison life, as conducted at present, this surely is the one that should be most ruthlessly exposed and relentlessly abolished. For all are aware that the prison falls of its purpose if it turns men out again upon the world worse than when they entered its gates, and this it unquestionably does in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, as things are at present. When the prison has succeeded in producing a class of men who have become slaves to unnatural vices it has constituted itself a school of crime in the fullest and most comprehensive meaning of the term, for it has wrecked character and destroyed manhood beyond possibility of redemption. It is impossible to speak too strongly.

While writing this last paragraph, I have fellow who was obviously a most decent man when he entered Florence. Within a few months he was, openly and shamelessly, the boon companion of a notoriously corrupt negro. He will be a criminal for life, beyond all question.

It seems to be generally admitted that all prison administration is tainted, more or less, deeply, with graft, and it is certain that Florence is no exception. The very quality of the concrete of which the building is composed testifies to that, for most of the stone used has neither been broken nor crushed, being simply river pebbles varying in size from five and six inches in diameter. But I wish to call attention to one particularly contemptible form of official theft. The prisoners are allowed to earn a little pocket money—most of which they spend on sugar—by the manufacture of saleable articles during the hours when they are not engaged with their daily tasks. Mainly they devote themselves to making hair goods—hat bands, belts and brushes—which are sold to tourists and others by storekeepers throughout the Southwest. On every hat band the officials exact a tribute of 25 cents, on every belt one of 50 cents, and on every bridle one of \$3. They declare the sums so levied are for the library. There is no library.

ANTONIO I. VILLARREAL.

Notes and Comments

Colima.—The alleged protector of the murderer Pizano, Mr. La Madrid, seeks his own "unanimous re-election" as governor of the state, and following illustrious examples he put out of commission the "Kaskabel," "El Combate," and other papers which dared to be against him, by sending out all the police to take the papers away, and by imprisoning the vendors and releasing only those who were willing to offer for sale only papers that did not speak of the government. Also copies of "El Pais" and "El Globo" were seized. And then boast of the free institutions of our republic.

Puebla.—Under date of September 3d it is reported from Teztlintlan that the sellers of newspapers in that locality refuse to handle "El Mexicano," because of its "Mexico Nuevo," because the jefe politico has threatened to imprison any person in whose possession is found a single copy of the paper. How is that for "freedom of the press in Mexico?"

San Luis Potosi.—Under August 26th a great many desertions from the fourth battalion marching against the restless Huasteca Indians are reported. Rumors have it that Lauro Muñoz, his wife, Valderas and others of the dissatisfied Indians held imprisoned in Tancuanhuets were tortured to get information, and that a list of several thousand adepts of rebellion, Discontent is of long standing, as the natives were treated like slaves and a good many cheated ignominiously of their land. A government movement. The attorneys, Messrs. Carmen Campos and Francisco Martinez, have been arrested on September 5th and the police are terrorizing those suspected of independent spirit.

Sinaloa.—We hear that in Mazatlan another intrepid newspaper man has been arrested in the person of Ramon P. Buco, editor of "La Voz de Sinaloa." We expected such action for quite a while because right from the campaign for the assassination of Dr. Albino Ruiz. In the interest of decency we hope urgently that soon he will be set free and the murderers apprehended to meet the penalty prescribed by the law.

Veracruz.—The district judge of Veracruz has refused habeas corpus under bail to the political prisoners apprehended in the Orizaba district, and the attorneys of Messrs. Gavira, Camarillo and Sussico have directed an appeal to the first circuit court.

Yucatán.—Merida, September 5.—The political prisoners held at the disposal of the secretary of war for alleged participation in the Valladolid uprising are on the road from Valladolid to Progreso, ultimately bound for notorious San Juan de Uda. This news has caused a great sensation, as they were considered entirely innocent and daily their release was expected. Amongst them is the notable Crescencio Jimenez Borreguero, pending. The political prisoners in the Juarez prison of Merida, on whom we reported last week, have been placed incommunicado. A warship is expected for the transfer of all to San Juan de Uda. If the innocent are dealt with in that way, what will happen to those found guilty?

Federal District.—Mexico.—A stormy opening session of the chamber of deputies of Mexico enacted on Saturday, September 10th, a farce of grim humor for the benefit of the visiting foreign diplomats, presenting a fit introduction into the scientific Machiavellism of modern Mexico. It was the day of canvassing the credentials of the members elected to that body. Mr. Lic. José Guadalupe González, deputy elected from the district of Juchipila, state of Zacatecas, demanded that the memorial presented by the anti-re-election committee, accompanied by over 180 affidavits from the different states of Mexico, be read. This was refused by the chairman, Pablo Macedo, on the ground that the document was too lengthy and that it was already published in some papers of the capital. Mr. González, seconded ably by deputy Mr. Batalli, defended his claim in a vigorous and manful speech. But to shut him up and out his mandate was declared null and void, though he had presented proper credentials, the chair declaring that Mr. González was no legitimate representative, because in view of his own declaration of irregularities taken place in his own district, there apparently had been no election in Juchipila, that the two seats of that district were vacant to be filled by a new election, and that for that reason the floor was to be denied to Mr. González, he not being duly elected a deputy entitled to vote and vote." After gagging the opposition in that ingenious manner, the memorial was summarily tabled and declared, "that it could not be considered because the electoral executive committee of the anti-re-election party is no legal person in the sense of the law, because said party is not recognized as such by the government." That brilliant bit of legal sophistry will be of great assistance to the visiting diplomats of the empires of Germany, Russia, Austria and Great Britain as an object lesson of how to deal with the undesirable at home if the people will stand for it. In view of these actual happenings of recent history, has any one yet the gall to speak of the "constitutional republic" of Mexico, and will the kind reader tell us what resource within the law is left to a people under such conditions?

"The right to associate or to come together for any permissible object can not be restricted to anyone; but only the citizens of the republic can do so to take part in the political affairs of the country. No armed gathering has a right to deliberate," says article 9 of the constitution of Mexico, and yet on Sunday, September 11th, the foreign guests of the exploiters of Mexico got a fine primary lesson of the constitutionality of the guarantees of citizenship in theory and practice witnessing on the Paseo la Glorieta Colón of the capital the spectacle of Mexican Cossacks on horseback charging with their weapons on unarmed citizens peaceably assembled for a lawful purpose guaranteed by the constitution. The anti-re-election clubs had arranged for a parade as a moral support for the petition of their party to have the election annulled, and for the main purpose of depositing flowers at the foot of the monuments erected in honor of the sons fallen in the war of independence. Though such intention was published broadcast, Mr. Landy y Escandón, governor of the Federal District, waited to the last minute to cite the leaders of the clubs before his austere personality and to tell them that their lawful and constitutional demonstration was not desirable. Of course, it was too late to notify all the prospective participants. Chief of Police Francisco Chavez, sent by Felix Diaz, head of secret service, acted as a gentleman, permitting Mr. Enrique Lallson Bannet to address the crowd to notify them of the action of the government, and the people started to disband quietly, when the chief of the mounted police, Ramon Castro, appeared and without the slightest provocation attacked the people with his Cossacks. The exasperated unarmed people defended themselves as well as they could, picking up stones and incidentally breaking the front windows of the "beloved" paper, "El Imparcial." Messrs. Daniel Cabrera, Enrique Lallson Bannet, José Silva, Pablo Doris and others, the officers and members present of the clubs Benito Juarez, Idea Libro, Leonora Vi-

carlo, and two young women officers of the women's clubs, Club Femenil Anti-Reeleccionista and Daughters of Cuauhtemoc, were arrested, and immediately placed in the vile bastille of Belem charged, with sedition, incitement to rebellion, resistance and injury to officers, damage to property. And then people wonder how the friends of constitutionality in Mexico rally under the device, "Mexicano, el tu mejor amigo es un fusil." What other redress have the people against the anarchists in power?

"Few of the works now started or just concluded appear to us in fact of such importance as the new general prison. It was an imperative necessity," states the Imparcial, commenting on the laying of the cornerstone to the building by the vice-president, "to redeem Mexico City of its sin of Belem." This will be quite lucid to the reader when he hears that according to the Diario del Hogar, "the new structure will be erected upon swamp land to become of 'such importance' as Belem to keep a people in subjection. The prison has been, under the Diaz regime, a factor of such importance as, few other works, and apparently that tradition is to be kept, to judge from the quoted editorial of El Imparcial.

The Appeal to Reason has battled manfully for the cause of the people of Mexico, and now again comes Wayland to our assistance with his personal check for one hundred dollars. Contrast that action of a man, of an American worthy of the historic traditions of his country, with those of people high and low of this land who in the past years volunteered to do the bidding of the Czar of Mexico until the spirit of decency of a people revolted, and, temporarily at least, put an end to the deplorable incidents. Publicity did it. We thank Debs and Warren and Wayland and Shoaf and Turner and all our other American friends for their untiring efforts on our behalf to procure for our cause the needed publicity. A whole people will seldom go wrong if fully informed of the actual facts. That is why we are conducting this English department.

Do you remember how, after some kind of a parliament had been forced after generations of untold suffering, blood and tears of a people, from the Czar of Russia, the Tauride palace was "prepared" for the meetings of the Duma, and one day a heavy canopy, smashing the chairs of the left of parliament, which accident would have killed a good many of the representatives of the people, had there been a session? And then against the Tschernagapalace was devoured by flames, the meeting place of the young parliament of the Turkish empire. And on the 16th, on Independence Day of Mexico, it strangely happened after the meeting that the balcony in front of the grand organ of the Simpson Auditorium tumbled with a loud crash and went no apparent cause, just upon the very spot where twenty minutes before it would have seriously, if not fatally, injured Magon, Villarreal, Rivera, De Lara, Turner and a flock of gaily attired little Mexican girls. Verily, the accidents are more charitable than man.

In eight thousand schools of Uncle Sam's, Diaz was celebrated and the plastic minds of little children inculcated with a lie in the place designated for the dissemination of truth, according to Ambassador Francisco L. de Barra, as published in the Imparcial. There will be a time when this nation will be ashamed of that day and of that act, and on that day the useful classes of both countries will be in reality one in mind, in heart and in aspirations.

In this connection it will be of interest to our American friends to know which other American universities are sharing the "honor" of representation, and which of these most honorable institutions are allowed to be dragged into the gigantic official whitewash arrangements of the powers that be in Mexico:

University of Texas, William Seneca Sutton, president of the Department of Education; Eugene C. Barker, professor of History; Dr. S. E. Mezes, president of the U. Mass.; University of Harvard (Massachusetts)—Frederick Ward Putnam, conservator of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and History; Rolando Burrage Dixon, professor of Anthropology; Alfred Marston Tower, professor of Archaeology of Central America; Thomas Barbour. Columbia University—Professor Franz Boas; Nicholas M. Butler, president of the university; Victor M. Braschi, graduate of the university. Yale University (Connecticut)—Dr. Ernest Carroll Moore, superintendent of Education and professor of History and Education. University of Pennsylvania—Dr. Leo S. Rowe, professor of Political Economy. Syracuse University (New York)—Professor George W. Cook, Esq. University of California—Professor Benjamin Ide Wheeler. Cornell University (New York)—Thomas Frederick Crane, professor of Romanic Languages and Literature.

"United States decreed Mexican Day," reports the Imparcial. But the American people are about getting tired of being decreed Mexican fashion, and at least some of the decrees, or White House ukases, in matters Mexican will undergo a kind of a revision before the senate commission that is to investigate the treatment of political refugees.

EL CRONISTA.