

Regeneracion.

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Can Debs Champion
Real Revolution?

As editor of the English section of "Regeneracion," it is my duty to aid the Mexican Liberal party to the utmost of my power. In my judgment this can be done best by appealing to the revolutionary feeling latent throughout the world and at present much stimulated by the stern events transpiring in Mexico, England and elsewhere. In fact, I believe a movement so drastic as the Mexican Revolution can be assisted in no other way, for only those saturated with the spirit of revolt will aid or encourage it. This is not a theoretical opinion, but one founded on the rock of fact, the record showing clearly that from the mere reforming element no assistance comes and from those who play politics little but opposition. It is from those who lose no opportunity of attacking the capitalist system at every point and intend to overthrow it long before a majority shall have been induced to vote it out of office; it is from the Direct Actionists, from the Syndicalists and from the Anarchists that help has come. I write with knowledge of the books.

"Regeneracion" itself is neither an Anarchist nor a Socialist paper; it is the organ of a set of men who are doing their best to overthrow the money power that has reduced Mexico to slavery, and are trying to do it in the quickest and most efficacious way. Its editors believe "direct action" is the way; they believe it from intimate knowledge of their own country (of course I am not speaking of myself) and from the hard-won experience of eleven long years. The facts that have developed since the overthrow of Diaz confirm them in their belief. This conviction has brought them, most unwillingly, into collision with the Socialists, whose set program teaches that the emancipation of the people must be accomplished at the ballot box.

The labor movement is essentially international, and no uprising in any country can be treated as a thing apart. Mexican politicians, of the Madero reforming type, adopt a certain line of ballot action which Socialists throughout the world approve. Accordingly Madero has Socialist support. Mexican revolutionists, of the Magon type, adopt a different line that appeals to Anarchists and Direct Actionists. Accordingly they receive world-wide Anarchist and Direct Actionist support. One can see that this is what would happen and it is what actually has happened.

It was not because we abused the Socialists—for we did not—that the Socialists opposed us. It was because we fought Madero, with whom they had formed what I myself regard as an entirely natural alliance. On the other hand, it is natural for Socialists to attack those who do not believe in political action. They always have done it and they always will. With Direct Actionists they may form a temporary alliance, but it will be dictated at bottom always by political considerations. All this seems to me inevitable.

For barren controversy I have no taste whatever, and if I notice Debs' article in the "Appeal to Reason" of August 19 it is only because I think it may assist the Mexican Liberal party by clarifying issues. First, therefore, I point out that Debs has evaded the main argument in my criticism, to which the article under consideration is an intended reply. The gist of that argument was that in Mexico plutocracy wanted time, above all else, to complete the system of slavery already so well advanced; and I insisted that Debs' plea for slow processes of edu-

cation and organization was the plan most welcome to the money power. I repeat the charge and call attention to the fact that Debs has carefully sidestepped it.

Debs dwells, or, more exactly, as I think, on the ignorance of the average Mexican, and this he does to support his contention that without education and organization no nation can successfully assert its rights. Is that, I ask, the outcome of the boasted historic school of "scientific" Socialism? Has Debs, I wonder, never heard of Magna Carta, wrung from an English tyrant by men of whom not one in a hundred could write their names? Does he suppose that the Englishmen who executed Charles I, the Frenchmen who sent Louis XVI to the guillotine and overthrew the feudal system, or that vast host which drove the Roman Catholic Church from power and established the Protestant Reformation—does he suppose these men, who erected some of the greatest landmarks of our common history, were educated and organized? Has he forgotten that he himself conducted the most formidable strike in the history of the United States with a so-called organization at which the "regulars" sneered as a thing of mushroom growth? If Debs intends to argue, these are positions he must be prepared to meet.

Debs writes that "in their manifestoes the Mexican leaders denounced the advocates of working class political action as steeped in depravity, in 'the opium den of politics,'—a term penned by myself—and that 'they attacked the Socialist party and insulted every member of it, and this was long before the Socialist party or any of its leaders felt moved to say anything about the anarchy that was taking possession of their movement.'" When I first heard a similar statement I mentioned it to Ricardo Magon, who replied, with blazing indignation, "Owen, it is a lie." It was, and it was a most convenient lie at that; but I was able to expose it by the date record, and I did so in "Regeneracion" of July 15, quoting from the brutal attack on Ricardo Magon made in the "New York Call" at a time when I had no connection whatever with "Regeneracion," when, in fact, it was edited by the wife of John Kenneth Turner, who trained with the Socialist Party. That is part of the printed and indisputable record, and Debs should be truthful enough to acknowledge it.

Debs devotes some paragraphs to the Anarchists, whom he accuses of being themselves corrupt politicians. I have not the space to enter into a comparison of the individual merits of those who make up the mass of Socialists and Anarchists. I express, however, the personal opinion that Socialist party leadership today is usually a safe, lucrative and easy profession, and prominence in the Anarchist movement a bed of thorns.

That the "Appeal to Reason" was the first to take up the Mexican question—an assertion Debs elaborates—is neither true nor to the point. It is not true, because Los Angeles Anarchists, myself among the number, were the first to call mass meetings of protest, some five years ago. It is not to the point because the past is dead, and because no one with any knowledge of the movement supposes that the "Appeal to Reason" took up the Mexican question from motives of philanthropy. It is a sensational paper, perpetually on the lookout for new issues to exploit; just as Socialist mass meetings celebrate the execution of the Chicago Anarchists, the Japanese Anarchists, Francisco Ferrer, and others whom in actual life they repudiated and would have stoned to death. It is the party's established policy to seize every chance of gaining popularity for the sake of winning votes.

When Debs writes that "the 'Appeal to Reason' has only good will for the Mexican cause," does he mean thereby the Mexican Liberal party, the Junta and "Regeneracion"? I do not think so. I think he has used an ambiguous phrase—the "Mexican cause"—because his sympathies and those of his party are with the Sarabias and the Villareals, the political editors of such political sheets as "El Radical" and that spineless hybrid which recently has made its appearance in Mexico under the stolen title of "Regeneracion." These men, whom the Magons denounce as hireling renegades, are those with whom the "Appeal to Reason's" Los Angeles correspondent has been in constant touch; and it was from those Madero headquarters that attacks on the Magons found their way into Socialist papers before I myself had the slightest connection with "Regeneracion." These are easily proved and exceedingly awkward facts, but Debs ignores them.

The important thing, however; the one important thing, beside which all else shrivels into insignificance, is this:

The Sarabias, the Villareals and the other place and officeholders are urging day and night that the revolution shall let up; that the country be given time in which to readjust itself; which means, when you put it in plain words, that plutocracy be allowed a breathing spell in which to recover its seat and take a firmer hold upon the bridge. For this they are urging the slow processes of evolution, systematic education and long-continued discipline to demeritate masses. It is a eulchre game in which Debs is playing up to them, consciously or unconsciously, with all his might. This, I repeat, is the all important thing.

Debs praises the personal characters of the imprisoned members of the Junta, and I am glad, for the praise is well deserved. But I cannot forget that the paper in which he writes made it self busy calumniating Ricardo Magon, the man for whose apprehension Madero has offered \$50,000. Debs calls for financial aid, and I am glad; for those who find themselves at war with plutocracy could put their money to no better use. But I cannot forget that his paper did its utmost to cut them off from sympathy and aid by declaring the Mexican revolution at an end, by personal attack and by the studied belittling of what I myself regard as the most important movement of the age. Perhaps I should be more charitable and say that Debs recognizes the fatal error into which his party has been led and is trying to retrieve the situation. Unfortunately I do not see the matter in that light.

WM. C. OWEN

Revolutionary Notes

The following summary has been compiled almost exclusively from the columns of "El Diario," "El Imparcial" and "El Pais," the most conservative Mexico City dailies. The mechanics on the Mexican railroad, in Veracruz, remain on strike, despite the fact that their original demands were granted. They are now asking for an increase of wages. One also notes that two thousand miners went on strike in the State of Mexico and attacked the stores. Federal forces were sent to put them down and a bloody encounter followed. The "Los Angeles Times" laments the fact that Mexican strikers are usually well armed. The miners of the "Terrible" group of properties in the State of Durango have gone out and are said to be displaying much resolution. Strikes of miners at Guanaeivi, Durango, and of factory operatives at Rio Blanco, Veracruz, and at San Lorenzo, in the same State, are also particularly noted. The rurales at Jaltipan, Veracruz, acting under orders from the Jefe Politico, attempted to break up a meeting. They were disarmed by those present and put to tumultuous flight, the Jefe Politico being taken captive.

From an immense number of States the appearance of new guerrilla bands is reported, but in many instances they are spoken of as lacking arms and ammunition, and having no money with which to acquire them. However, the remark that the bands occupied such and such a place and provided themselves with arms, ammunition and horses is of frequent occurrence. For example, "El Norte," of Chihuahua, reports the Figueroa forces as having attacked the Hacienda de San Carlos, seized all the horses, thrown open the prison doors and recruited the prisoners into their own ranks, whereupon they passed on to another hacienda, where they got more horses and mules and were joined by all the peons employed on the estate. Reports of peasant uprisings on various properties abound, and one notes particularly that of the Maya Indians in the South, in which henequen plantations were destroyed, whatever promised to be of service expropriated and houses set on fire.

The "Los Angeles Times" has been exercised greatly over renewed activity on the part of the Magonistas, in the States of Durango and Coahuila. It reports three bodies, each composed of about 300 men, as in the mountains to the South of Panasquero; another band of 200 which is showing great activity in the neighborhood of Cuatro Ciénegas, and yet another near Camargo. The Guaymas, Sonora, correspondent of "El Diario" calls attention to the passage of numerous wagons loaded with arms and provisions, reported as being for the use of Magonistas.

In the State of Tabasco, according to "El Imparcial," agriculture is suffering severely from the insubordination of the peons.

Commenting on the determined attitude of the workers at various points our Spanish reporter says: "The meek evolutionists will begin to see that centuries of scientific study are not required for the development of solidarity. The instinct of solidarity is innate; what is destroying it is the capitalist system."

Peeps beneath the Surface of
Revolutionary MexicoWhat the Peasant Wants and how He
is Succeeding in getting ItLines between Revolutionists and
Politicians Clearly Drawn

The anti-re-electionists also held their convention on August 13. Their nominees are Emilio Vasquez Gomez and Jesus Flores Magon, brother of the notorious Ricardo Flores Magon, who was in jail in Los Angeles and Arizona for various crimes, and who cannot return, even now, to Mexico. Jesus Flores Magon, however, is one of the most highly respected attorneys of the Mexican bar and is quite a different person from his brother.

The quotation is from the "Los Angeles Times" of Aug. 23, a paper that, having brains and being a most sagacious watchdog of the privileged class, is devoting great space to Mexican affairs. Naturally it hates Ricardo Magon, who is leading one of the most formidable attacks on privilege that history has recorded; and naturally it is careful to convey the impression that he is a man of many crimes, who cannot return "even now" to Mexico, despite the powerful protection of his brother. To one who knows the facts it is amusing.

Magon's "crimes"—like those of his brother, Enrique, who still lies in jail,—consist solely of having worked for the overthrow of Diaz, and of having insisted furthermore that a mere change of dictators would amount to nothing, it being necessary to give the Mexican workers economic liberty, and, above all, access to the land. Those are the "crimes" for which they have suffered various long terms of imprisonment.

The brother Jesus, now candidate for vice-president of the Republic was formerly with them in that work, and also suffered imprisonment. Whereupon he saw a light, practised law, rose to wealth and power, is now Under-secretary of Justice, and is highly honored by the "Los Angeles Times." How foolish are those revolutionists who do not understand how easy it is to butter one's bread, and what a delicious thing is butter!

MADERO'S OFFER SPURNED

Jesus Magon took sides with Madero, and made a special journey to Los Angeles—in company with Juan Sarabia—that he might induce his brothers to make peace with the new dictatorship. The brothers are of the type that does not believe in putting the hand to the plow and turning back; so they declined with indignation and their arrest, with that of Rivera and Figueroa, followed.

Madero recently saw fit to order that Emilio Vasquez Gomez, who had been his right-hand man during the struggle against Diaz and had been rewarded with the post of Minister of the Interior, should be discharged from office. The Anti-re-electionists, Madero's special party, rebelled, deposed Madero from the head of their ticket and put Gomez in his place. This is the party that has selected Jesus Flores Magon for vice-president.

The defection of the Anti-re-electionists was a most serious blow to Madero and he immediately ordered the leaders under arrest, as already related in this English section. According to the "Times," which writes intelligently on the subject, those leaders controlled 20,000 troops still under arms in the States of Mexico, Morelos, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacan, Veracruz, Tamaulipas, Sinaloa, Chiapas, Tabasco, Puebla, Tlaxcala, Durango, Oaxaca and the Territory of Tepic. It is certain that the followers of the imprisoned leaders will make it hot for Madero, and already they are doing so.

One should not rely exclusively on the press for information, and the writer recently interviewed at great length a Los Angeles visitor whom he considers a real authority on conditions in Mexico. The gentleman, in question was born and raised there, but has been in England and Europe many years, having passed through several universities. For some time past he has been travelling through Mexico, trying to get the truth respecting a very complicated situation. What he thinks is this.

BY FORCE OF ARMS

Madero may be elected, because he was first in the field, seized the strategic points and is holding them with some 26,000 soldiers. He may be able, therefore, to secure his election by force and fraud, for the masses are innocent in the matter of political tricks. On the other hand, they are immensely suspicious, and—a point much emphasized and discussed in detail—particularly suspicious of the priests. The Indian is superstitious, and will go to the priest for an amulet to preserve his life, but he is not religious. He does not look to the priest for guidance. Many priests have flocked of late years from France to Mexico, and it is their universal complaint that the peasant is not religious; that they cannot really influence him. The peasant is at heart what a scientific social student would describe as an Anarchist-Communist. Get away from the railroads and you will find what is very similar to the Russian "Mir," the municipality holding the land for the common use of the inhabitants. When an Indian wants to build a house he calls on his neighbors for assistance, which is always given. A house-building bee is held. This is his life; these are his inherited instincts, and he holds them with a grip incomparably more powerful than that of any book student. Above all, he must have land. Without it the care-free existence that is his very life-blood is impossible. He needs no Debs, no Karl Marx course, no labor organizations, to teach him that.

Readers of "Regeneracion," and of the daily papers even, must have noted that the name of Gen. Emiliano Zapata was cropping up continually. One sees that Madero is now making desperate efforts to effect a reconciliation with Zapata, but Zapata is a hard case. He is one of Victor Berger's real "bandits," and he was a bandit before the revolution broke out; for he is one of those unforgiving Indians who have been subjected to cruel tyranny and intend to get even. At the "Regeneracion" offices we think a great deal of Zapata, because from one end of the State of Morelos to the other he has divided up the big haciendas and turned them over to the peasants, who are now in possession and busily sowing crops. This is what my informant told me, and I was so impressed that I ran to Ricardo Magon for confirmation. He was astonished that I did not know it.

PROLETARIAT IN CONTROL

Morelos is a small State, but very centrally located, being within striking distance of the City of Mexico. Its population is given in the latest guidebook as 212,000, which was that of Southern California only a few years ago. What would you have thought if you had heard one fine morning that the Southern California proletariat had dispossessed Otis, Huntington, Hellman and the swarm of men who have done exceedingly well in real estate? That is the position in Morelos, and it is being duplicated in many other highly revolutionary States.

This seems likely to make it hard for Madero, to whom I now return; and my informant expressed the strongest opinion that, even if Madero forced his election through, he could not hold the job. Madero is a vacillator, and the times are unfavorable for vacillators. A strong man may yet turn up; another Diaz in the prime of life, capable of gathering to his standard what the "Times" would call the forces of law and order, though we consider them the forces of special privilege and, consequently, of disorder. In such an event the final struggle will be between this modern Napoleon and the Mexican Liberal Party, as representing the true aspirations of the masses.

That was my informant's opinion, and, as he backed it up with much apparent proof and was seemingly impartial, it impressed me greatly. By the way, he added that the cattle kings were suffering heavily from Indian

Rally to Aid of
Revolutionists
in JailMass Meeting Scores
Course Adopted
by Mexican
Officials

At a mass meeting held in Mammoth Hall, Sunday last, the following resolutions condemnatory of the action of the Mexican government in attempting to procure the extradition of Gons. Pryce, Mosby, Reed, Laffin and others, and the imprisonment of members of the Junta of the Mexican Liberal Party, were adopted:

"We, the people of Los Angeles, in mass meeting assembled at Mammoth Hall, this 20th day of August, 1911, for the purpose of expressing our feeling of indignation, and protest against the unwarranted efforts of the bloodthirsty and tyrannical officials of barbarous Mexico to secure the extradition of J. R. Mosby, J. Reed, D. B. Laffin, Rhys Pryce and Pedro Solis, for the purpose of satisfying the spirit of revenge which such officials feel toward these men because of their active participation in the recent military uprising and political revolution in Mexico, do hereby resolve—

"That we condemn the Mexican Government and officials for attempting to secure the extradition of these men on sham and perjured charges of murder, arson and other crimes pretended to have been committed in Mexico when said Mexican officials know and all the world knows that any acts they may have done were done and performed as soldiers in the Liberal Army and in the regular line of their duty.

"We declare our firm and full belief in the honesty and good faith of these men and firmly believe that whatever part they took in the recent war in Mexico was done solely as men who were willing to risk their lives on the battlefield for the sole purpose of destroying and overthrowing a tyrannical

depositions, and that the Indians defended such depredations on MORAL grounds; saying that for one man to own thousands of head of cattle was unnatural, and, therefore, wrong. They can argue, I am told, quite intelligently on that subject; and, reflecting on Madero's position as one of Mexico's landed gentry, I do not wonder that he dislikes Ricardo and Enrique Magon, with their bandit undesirables. Accidentally I have coupled the Berger-Roosevelt epithets, but we will let it go. Hard words break no bones and win no battles.

SCORING HIS BROTHER

Let us return to the Magons. Inasmuch as a candidate for vice-president must have his organ, a paper has been started in Mexico City with the title of "Regeneracion," and if any one who thinks Ricardo Magon would spare that paper because of his brother's interest in it he does not know Ricardo. His review appeared in our last week's issue and, after remarking that the Jesus Magon's representative was "without color, taste or smell," despite the appalling number of learned men advertised as writing for it, and after stating that its proper name should be "Degeneration," it proceeded thus: "An honest journal should speak frankly, but this journal in question cannot do BECAUSE ITS EXPENSES ARE DEPRAYED BY THE UNDERSECRETARY OF JUSTICE, Jesus Flores Magon." The review then glanced at the record of the men who are acting as its editors, and adds that one of them, Antonio I. Villareal, "is worthy of being a director of a journal of the castrated."

The previous careers of the editors will not be of interest to the American public, but those who have been endeavoring to follow the course of the Socialist Party may like to know that the editor in chief is Juan Sarabia, whose brother, Manuel Sarabia, has been a voluminous contributor to radical papers since he jumped his bail in Arizona some four years ago, and fled to France. He is the only Mexican I know who has jumped his bail, and I said at the time that his action would make it hard for other Mexicans who got into trouble with the authorities. It has.

Manuel Sarabia's arguments, repeated with excessive tediousness in various radical papers, are those of Eugene V. Debs: "Let us have peace; give the country time in which to develop its wealth; trust to the slow processes of education and organization." They are his brother's arguments in "Regeneracion" of Mexico City, which is the paid organ of Jesus Flores Magon, formerly of the Madero faction and now candidate for vice-president on the Anti-re-electionist ticket, with a fair chance of pulling off the prize. His brother, Ricardo Flores Magon, of the Los Angeles "Regeneracion," now out on bail, makes mincemeat of their sophistry as follows:

STRAIGHT FROM THE SHOULDER

"They come out, at this hour, in an article entitled, 'Strikes and Organization,' with the statement that the workers ought to be prudent; say that they ought to wait until the much-to-be-pitied rich masters have stocked their warehouses with goods they cannot sell; claim that to declare strikes under the present circumstances is to jeopardize generous enterprises that are sacrificing themselves for the welfare of the disinherited, and declare, to quote their own actual words, that 'the strikes result in illegal assaults on the national welfare'—that 'first we should have peace'—that 'we should stimulate the development of national wealth'—that 'then, when everything is flourishing, we should call the workers out on strike.' But what they really want is a long period of 'education' and 'organization,' during which the parasites will fill their bellies. Comrades, if you make peace the bourgeoisie and authority will strengthen themselves, and then you will not have the opportunity of declaring even a strike—which is but a game for children—much less of taking possession of the different industries of Mexico to work them for your own benefit."

By such a review as this I believe the play of conflicting philosophies and interests is shown at work far more forcibly than it could be by any catalogue of the thousand and one conflicts that are rending Mexico at a thousand and one points. We see a nation in the throes of what is always the real revolution—the bitter struggle between conservatism, which cannot tear itself away from the old, and that incandescent radicalism which would sweep the boards clean that the new order may have a chance of life. In the past conservatism has invariably won, for invariably it has had the support of the pretended revolutionists; always pleading for delay; always checking the natural instinct of the masses; always sickly over the native hue of resolution with the pale cast of timid thought. In this present contest stand, on the one side, the Sarabias, the Jesus Magons, the Debs, Bergers and other paid spokesmen of the Socialist party. On the other side stand the Ricardo and Enrique Magons, with the stalwart following the Mexican Liberal Party has gathered to itself. Which will win?

W. C. O.