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Revolutions Born Of Life's Stern Fight For Life

Somehow or other we have come into this world and we are here, with elemental needs and passions which MUST be satisfied. That is the one great fact. The question of whether we came here by special creation or spontaneous evolution; the question of what we have evolved from in the past and into what the future will evolve us; the question of what our ancestors did years and years ago, and of what our successors will do several centuries hence—these are doubtless interesting for those who have the leisure to speculate about them. But their speculations, at the best, are largely guesses, and the guesses are on minor issues. The certain and important fact is that we are here, with stomachs to be filled, backs to be sheltered, and dominant instincts, such as the urge to reproduce our kind, which MUST be satisfied. To these, which constitute Life's imperative commandments, all else must be subordinate. Life finally asserts itself; and when, checked and thwarted at every turn, it begins to assert itself energetically and violently, we pass into a revolutionary period. One of such periods we now are entering, and I discuss it here; largely in connection with the Mexican Revolution and, therefore, at unusual length.

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I do not think that the masses will rouse themselves to economic revolution because certain celebrated men have championed the cause of Liberty. I think the doctrine of equal rights will come to active life again, through strenuous economic revolution, because it is as old as the hills, because it is the natural instinct of the people, and because without it Life cannot develop or exist. I think this primal instinct has been suppressed temporarily by the artificialities of modern society and by those combined forces that cluster round and form the strength of governments, which, for the time being, have been able to cheat Life of its basic needs. I think revolutions are simply Life's violent efforts to win back its own. Things come to that pass from time to time. They came to that pass when the French peasants drove their nobility into exile, seized the lands and gave feudalism the death blow from which it never can recover. They came apparently to that pass in Russia some twelve years ago, but the suppressive forces of Government proved too strong and, for the moment, the struggle died away. They came to that pass in Mexico three years ago and the issue is still in doubt. They are coming, most rapidly, to that pass in the United States, in England and elsewhere, because for many, many millions of our fellow-creatures, Life today is held by a tenure most precarious, is unable to satisfy its actual needs, has nothing worth living for in the present and has only the blackest outlook for the future. Where such conditions exist there must come, sooner or later, a terrific struggle, and revolutionary re-adjustments must be made.

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The doctrine of equal rights is as old as humanity's first conibination, the family, and exists in full vigor today within the framework of that still vigorous combination. No family has ever been able to flourish without conceding its members at least a very considerable measure of equal rights; no parents are able to keep peace around the meal table without giving every child his fill, or to maintain harmony in the home while showing love for certain children and hatred or indifference toward others. The family, based on sexual attraction and blood ties, is the oldest, most natural and, therefore, most enduring of all human institutions, and the basic instinct of equality of rights has always saturated and today still saturates it. It has to, because with our family circle we are in constant touch, and there we must have peace, if life is to be worth the living. Outside that narrow circle we may tolerate, and unfortunately do tolerate, social arrangements that keep us in perpetual war, but within the family we must have peace; and peace without, at least, a substantial measure of equal rights is not to be obtained. This, to my thinking, is the true demonstration of the antiquity and unquenchable vitality of equal rights, and furnishes proof which no rhetoric can shake. It shows that concession of equal rights is necessary to peace, and, as such, forms the one and only foundation on which it is possible to build securely.

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As the result of never-ending war—wars by the quick cruelty of the sword and wars by the slower, more cautious and still more cruel methods of religious, political and commercial intrigue—we have been thrust beneath the yoke of an enormously complicated set of institutions, imposed by the conquerors upon the conquered; upon those they reduce to slavery; upon those, therefore, toward whom they feel no human obligation and with whom they do not stand on any footing of equal rights. Moreover, the conquerors have not the slightest intention of restoring the conquered to an equal footing or getting off their backs. On the contrary, they boast brazenly that man's chief function in life is to increase economic inequality, to make money, acquire real estate, get ahead of the other fellow and accentuate in every possible way that condition which already is bringing the United States to the verge of civil war.

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All the fine sermons of the preachers and politicians only make matters worse, for they teach us to believe in words and shut our eyes to facts. They make us fancy ourselves educated while we are pursuing the very course against which true education would warn us effectually. They delude us with the idea that we are intelligent when, in reality, we have become so stupified by the slavery of commercialism that we are stone-blind to simple truths which have been patent to our race since it first crawled into a cave for shelter from the storm. The truth of this statement is found in the fact that while revolutionary conditions in this country are ripening with a rapidity probably unparalleled in history, the force that should be prepared to turn them to its good account is almost non-existent. This, as I see it, is because the entire labor movement in the United States has been humbugging itself and pretending to believe in a hundred and one quack remedies in which no radical can honestly believe.

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There are thousands of men and women in the United States who profess to regard land monopoly as a monstrous crime; who profess to believe, with their master Henry George, that no human power can give a valid title deed to real estate. If such men had, as it seems to me, the moral backbone needed for the Titanic struggle against the forces which have reduced our modern world to slavery, such men would have exulted in the fight which the Mexican peon has been conducting against the land monopolist. They would have shouted with joy, as Garrison and Wendell Phillips shouted when the Southern chattel slave revolted. They would have been delighted to hear that the rebellious serf had seized the title deeds and burned them, as he has done in instances too numerous to recite. They would have chuckled over the news that monopolists had been compelled to flee the country by the hundreds, as the French nobility fled when the storm of the Great Revolution burst over them. But apparently the United States is not producing men of that sturdy type in any alarming quantities today.

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There are thousands of persons in this country who profess to understand that whatever weakens the central government makes it easier for the masses to recover that which the few have stolen from them. Thousands understood this some twelve years ago in the case of Russia and responded liberally. In Mexico they have seen within the last three years two governments overturned, and some fourteen million people, formerly among the poorest and most helpless of all workers, somehow getting arms into their hands, somehow standing up against their rulers, somehow sending those rulers flying, and somehow forcing the governing class still seated in Mexico City to offer such agrarian concessions as no other governing class within the memory of living men has felt itself compelled to offer. The columns of this section have been loaded with the detailed evidence, and Mr. Araujo's article in our "Land and Liberty" booklet is conclusive on that head. These things are known; for months past the daily press has teemed with articles describing, in horror-stricken terms, the crimes against property laid to the door of the Mexican rebels, and yet avowed revolutionists keep silence. Since when did they begin to respect the property of absentee landlords and speculators? Since when did such a celebrity as Jean Grave, now conductor of "Les Temps Nouveaux," repudiate the articles on revolutionary tactics he formerly published in "La Revista Blanca." I must go to the trouble of translating extracts from those articles, to show how faithfully, but unconsciously of course, the Mexican rebel has followed his instructions, just as he has done the very things the French peasant did in his war against feudalism; all which Kropotkin described in the past with warm approval, in his "Great French Revolution" and other works. The early Mexican revolutionists were great admirers of Kropotkin and used his writings extensively in the long agitation that preceded the attack on Diaz.

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If the Mexican Revolution had existed only among the comparatively few who necessarily composed the Mexican Liberal Party; if it had been confined to men of the Magon and Praxedis Guerrero type, and the enthusiastic following they unquestionably gathered round them; if they alone had entered the lists and they alone had been responsible for the eruption which has shaken Mexico from center to circumference and caused the greatest uneasiness in the United States and Europe—if such men alone had been involved, they nevertheless would have been entitled to the sympathy and support of revolutionists. In such cases sympathy and support are given not because the cause is sure to triumph but because it is a just one. Indeed, judged rightly, the more desperate the odds against which those who stand for justice are struggling the more convincing their appeal should prove. Any coward can go into a fight when he knows that he will win, but the pluck comes in when you face an almost certain thrashing for the sake of doing right. I am almost ashamed to write these things, since to the honest they will be platitudes, while on the hopelessly corrupt, who cannot take that view, all argument is wasted.

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Nevertheless it is absurd to suppose that such an upheaval as that which is still convulsing Mexico can have been the work of a handful of agitators, however able and devoted; and men of the Magon-Rivera-Guerrero type have been both able and devoted. In a recent number of this paper I quoted extensively from Senator Fall's letter to President Wilson; a reliable document by a man who is probably much better informed than is the anonymous writer in "Huelga General," Spanish organ of the I. W. W., with whose article in the issue of Sept. 27 I am now about to deal. The letter gave two causes as mainly responsible for the Mexican Revolution, the first being the constantly increasing intercourse between the United States and Mexico, and the second the activity of the Mexican Liberal Party. The curious fact about the letter was that it attributed the greater importance to the second cause, and I pointed out that Senator Fall should know, both by reason of his long and extensive connection with Mexican affairs, and because, as a member of the Senate investigating committee, he had made a special study of the history and activities of the Mexican Liberal Party. I myself differ in opinion from Senator Fall, for I believe that thousands of Mexicans coming and going continually between the United States and Mexico, and carrying with them stories of the freedom of discussion this country then permitted, stirred up a greater discontent with Diaz Methods than that engendered by the Mexican Liberal Party's agitation.

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Recently the various I. W. W. papers published a resolution passed by Local 172 of the I. W. W., situate at Phoenix, Ariz., in which the members expressed an opinion that the Mexican Revolution, especially in the Central and Southern States, is truly economic, and, as such, deserves of the attention of the I. W. W. The Local also called attention to the fact that, being near the scene of action, it had opportunities of knowing. Naturally I made a note of that, in "Regeneracion" of Sept. 13, and in connection therewith gave the following paragraph: "The second 'Cause of Unrest' is stated by the Senator in the following words: 'Present conditions are even more largely due to the exile of many liberal and progressive men as well as agitators, and the formation of the so-called Liberal Junta in St. Louis, in 1906; to the dissemination by this committee of militant socialistic and anarchistic literature through the columns of their paper 'Regeneracion' and through circular letters, pronunciamentos and plans (platforms), forwarded to their agents in every town and hamlet in eighteen states, and more or less thoroughly distributed in the other states of the Republic; to the promulgation by this committee and circulation of literature concerning the plank in the platform of these agitators, calling for the 'confiscation' of real estate and property which had been acquired by the ruling class, as it was claimed, by graft and by favor and without due compensation to the public treasury." The quotation is from an article by Senator Fall, published in "Leslie's," Aug. 14, 1913.

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The passing of the resolution mentioned has brought out a long but unsigned article of protest, to which "Huelga General," of Sept. 27, gives almost the whole of its front and a third of its back page. Its avowed object is to alienate sympathy from the Mexican Revolution as not being truly economic; to advocate the cessation of fighting and to represent "Regeneracion" as misleading its readers and the masses. As those are serious charges, and as "Huelga General" has been established and is being maintained by members of the I. W. W. who do not read Spanish, but who are anxious to help their Mexican brothers to emancipation, I give the article somewhat full notice, summarizing faithfully and translating literally. The first part of the article I need scarcely touch on, for it dilates once more on the iniquities of the Diaz regime, and states that until 1910 the Mexican peon was in a condition of unspeakably abject servitude. It asks, therefore, how he can be expected to have undergone, within three years, the mental revolution necessary to enable him to "shake off the yoke, and break an intellectual chain created laboriously, for centuries, by the oppression of the dominant class." I answer that I, at least, am not a believer in miracles, and imagine that the Mexican peon is just about as ignorant as he was three years ago. On the other hand, I believe he has picked up courage and is using his opportunity, just as the ignorant French peasant used his opportunity more than a century ago. It does not require a high degree of education to make a man understand that it is better to work for himself than for a landlord who kept him in slavery, under the whip, fifteen and sixteen hours daily, for some twenty cents a day. It does not require a long course in sociology for him to grasp the fact that he would be better off if he owned once more the lands he and his fellows formerly used in common, nor to be glad that the central government he always hated has become powerless to draft him into the army or squeeze taxes out of him, as it did during Diaz' reign. My dog will fight rather than starve, and in that he is infinitely more seasible and true to life than are the spineless beings our artificial civilization breeds in such profusion. As a matter of fact I believe that history will show that the Indian has not been given to invasion, but that when he has entered on a fight he will pursue it most tenaciously. The writer of the article I am criticizing had better get a copy of "Barbarous Mexico" and read up on Yaqui history.

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He says further that "the revolution in Mexico cannot be a social revolution in the first place, or affect in any way the system of exploitation under which we live, because it has not been made by the exploited but by the exploiters." Before me is a copy of "El Bien Social," (Social Welfare), a Roman Catholic paper, which deals editorially with the spontaneous uprising of the natives of Zacualpan, who, it says, "were despoiled of their lands during the epoch in which the native communities were extinguished." The article is sympathetic and remarks that those who have applied to the Federal governor to put down the uprising, "are precisely those who wish to see the last native disappear, that they may keep with impunity the lands of which they robbed such natives." If the "Huelga General" writer had troubled himself to keep even cursory track of the articles we take continuously from such leading Mexican dailies as "El Imparcial" and "El Pais," he would have known that their one bitter cry has been that this movement has got out of the hands of the educated and into those of the proletariat, whom they regard as savages. Does he suppose that the guerrillas, which have formed a network covering almost the whole of Mexico, are composed of or are under the leadership of capitalists? Does he think they have been heading the numerous bands gathered around Zapata? The truth of the matter, as nearly as I myself can get at it, is this: On the one hand, the revolutionists complain that, thanks to their possession of money, superior education and experience in organizing, the well-to-do and the politicians, unfortunately so numerous in Mexico as elsewhere, often succeed in acquiring an ascendancy over and diverting from its direct path some section of the movement. This is one of the deplorable features of every revolution. On the other hand, the unceasing cry of the capitalist press has been that Mexico is face to face, not with an orderly Socialist agitation but with Anarchy in its most pronounced and dangerous form. I have translated and published in this section various editorials from Mexico City papers to that effect, and it has been the constant clamor of the "Los Angeles Times," which uses it as its main argument on behalf of that intervention for which it works assiduously.

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The writer of this anoymous article says further that "in Mexico they are trying to change the semi-feudal system into modern capitalism, and, inasmuch as this converts the peons into slaves, the slaves, with machinery simplified as it is, have no longer any role to fill, and the best way of getting rid of them, their ignorance being conceded, is to kill them off in a prolonged war." It seems to me that criticism of such a paragraph is waste of space. Capitalism, and up-to-date capitalism, got its clutches on Mexico long ago. Economic systems are not changed by wars engineered with that set purpose. They grow. If foreign capitalism succeeds in annexing Mexico and reducing its conquest to orderly possession, it will have immediate use for all the cheap native labor on which it can lay its hands. Cheap labor is the lure that is beckoning it to invasion, and it is absurd to suppose that capitalism wishes to kill off the supply.

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The writer then passes to a consideration of Zapata, whom he describes as "proclaiming the distribution of the land among the peons." He adds: "But Francisco Bulnes and Porfirio Diaz himself also proclaimed this as a necessity for placing the new regime of exploitation on a solid basis, because those who are revolutionists today for the sake of getting a piece of land tomorrow, when they have acquired it, will be reactionaries more dangerous than the capitalists themselves." I find it hard to criticize that passage patiently. In the first place, it is notorious that Porfirio Diaz climbed to power as a revolutionist, having promised a more equitable distribution of the land. In the second place, it is equally notorious that Diaz fell because he sold the country, in huge slices, to favorites and foreign speculators. In the third place, if you oppose the restoration of the land to its actual cultivator because you believe he will thereby become reactionary, you must adopt a similar line of reasoning toward every proposition to reinstate the disinherited in their stolen rights. For my part, I wish to do justice now, and not to be deterred by guessing that abuses will follow in its train. Some one must have possesion of the land. Deny it to the peon and it necessarily falls into the hands of the monopolist, and he, indeed, is precisely the personage for whom the anonymous writer is pleading.

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"What we revolutionists understand by social revolution," our critic writes, is the complete change of the economic system in all that concerns production and distribution." This is followed by the declaration that there are required also "the elimination of every authoritarian principle, of every pernicious prejudice, of all the customs begotten by the present corrupt society," etc., etc. The moral is that a revolution which does not tackle the whole of that gigantic contract is not worthy of support. But, if you are not to move until every one has agreed to strike for the ultimate ideal you never will move, and because of the sentence just quoted I have prefaced this article with an explanation of my belief that revolutions are the outburst of that unconquerable Life principle which, sooner or later, will assert itself at every cost. It moves along the natural line of least resistance, as it must. The French peasant was probably as ignorant as is the Mexican peon today, but he knew that the land was the mother who fed him, and he insisted on access to her. The Irish peasant was ignorant, but he acted similarly. So did the Russian peasant, and so does the Mexican. This anonymous writer's argument is merely that of a man who will oppose all movements unless they will consent to move exactly as he prescribes. There are many alleged revolutionists of that type, and the type will endure until we understand that revolutions are not manufactured either by champions of the proletariat or by scientists and distinguished writers. They are Life's indignant protest; the outcome of general discontent. A Herbert Spencer protests because stupid social arrangements offend his intellect. A Wagner protests because he longs for harmony. Each of us protests for reasons of his own, and from those tiny rivulets of individual protest there is formed Revolution's mighty stream which finally overflows its banks and alters all the adjacent scenery.

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Thus far I have dealt only with the general problem, as to which perfectly honest men may differ with perfect honesty. Unfortunately I have now to pass to personalities. The anonymous writer says that "Zapata has never been in connection with the Mexican Liberal Party, or with the Regeneracion Junta." How does he know? The fact is that, although the Mexican Liberal Party has always disclaimed direct connection with Zapata, who runs an independent movement and would properly resent attempts to assert alliance, it has had occasional communication with him and has found certain points of mutual agreement. Recent issues of "Regeneracion" contained long reports by two separate members of the party who had just returned from visiting Zapata.

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The attack is advertised as "to be continued," but I have met it immediately, and I find it bolstered up on the second page of the same issue of "Huelga General," in an article signed "Cardinault," which is given the position of leading editorial. The article opens with some remarks on the French Confederation of Labor, and succeeds in evolving itself into an assault on the staff of "Regeneracion," which is spoken of as having attempted for more than a year past to arouse public opinion to the fact that the imprisoned members of the Mexican Liberal Party Junta should be set free. Then the writer adds: "But I have understood that what they wanted was to keep these comrades in prison, that they might be able freely to manipulate the funds without having any one to check their management." What do you think of that?

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I will tell you what I think about it, and what I know about it. I think and know, by letters received constantly from McNeil's Island, that the foregoing is as baseless, absurd and foul a calumny as pen could frame. I know by these letters that the men in charge of "Regeneracion" are the personal and completely-trusted friends of the Magons, Rivera and Figueroa. I know that they have left no stone unturned to procure the liberation of our comrades, and that they have succeeded, as readers of this section will remember, in bringing the whole question before President Wilson himself; a matter by no means easy. They are now even trying their utmost to procure a Congressional investigation. In short, they have done wonders, and, while I am about it, I may state that almost the only difference of opinion between myself and our Spanish editors has arisen over the fact that I have been, and still am, unwilling to devote any considerable space to personal appeals. I have considered the campaign for pardon hopeless from the start, for I hold, that it is practically impossible to procure the release of really forceful agitators. Therefore, and because the explanation of the Mexican question and its connection with the general revolutionary movement of the world has been my special task, I have thought it wise to confine myself closely to that text. I believe that to be what our imprisoned comrades most desire, since the cause to them is everything.

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"Huelga General" is only six weeks old. It was started, after long delay, with money subscribed by the general I. W. W. movement, which hopes that it will help the revolutionary movement. Judging by the last issue it will not, for this last issue is in direct line with a most scurrilous leaflet issued some months ago by certain Spanish-speaking members of the I. W. W., a leaflet which reeked with personalities and was inspired, in my judgment, solely by a bitter personal quarrel with which the revolutionary movement should have no concern. I presumed that certain of those members would be interested in the new paper, but I hoped they would not dominate it, and I welcomed the newcomer in the most cordial terms, in our issue of July 19. I introduced, however, a note of warning, for my notice ended as follows: "We want another good, live, well-edited Spanish revolutionary paper in Los Angeles. We always have wanted one. If "La Huelga General" does good work it will have in us its most generous friend. If it goes in for slush and feeble-minded personalities we shall flay it alive. Our business is the Social Revolution, and, like good business people, we judge solely by results."

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In reality I do not think such an article as I have criticized worth flaying. I have used it merely as a peg on which to hang certain reflections and explanations I have wished to make. The work done by the Magons and their co-laborers will stand on its own merits, and I am only too happy to think that I have been able to put a part of that work into the more permanent form of our booklet, "Land and Liberty," where it will be submitted as we sincerely hope, to the analysis of thousands. The Mexican Liberal Party, from all I know of it, has done a great propaganda work, and, its most active propagandists have suffered proportionately, as is always the case. In my opinion it functions today mainly as a scattered, permeating force; and it seems to me that it can function most effectively in that manner, for I believe that propaganda is best conducted by free and individually-independent guerrilla methods. The business of us Non-Mexicans, as I see it, is to get the Mexican peon a hearing in the great court of international intelligence; to explain his case; to show its intimate connection with the cause of the oppressed and disinherited in every land.

WM. C. OWEN.

LONG LIVE "REVOLUTION!"

"Revolution," a monthly magazine and successor to "The Saturday Review," has come to our table from Medford, Oregon. The space it devotes to Mexican affairs necessarily predisposes us in its favor, but, apart from that, we can say sincerely that it is just the sort of magazine most wanted on this coast, and, for that matter, everywhere. It speaks out, calls a spade a spade, and has honesty stamped all over it. That alone would cover a multitude of sins, if sins there were, for it is high time that we grew tired of the dust storms with which so many agitators have been buffeting us. Mere gustiness, blowing simultaneously from a dozen different directions, carries us nowhere.

Alan Brackinreed and Bill Guernsey are named as editors. The former writes good poetry—poets are always the best of revolutionary material—and one of his poems is reproduced from "The Pacific Monthly," which does not print rubbish. Note also the excellent little parody, entitled "'Tis of Thee," by Mary Field, a bright woman.

"One day the mother went on strike—
What did the brave boy do?
He took his Governmental Gun
And shot his Ma in two."

That tells the whole story and conveys the moral, tersely and vividly. It is typical of the general trend of the magazine. In a concise editorial Brackinreed jolts his fellow-Socialists sharply, giving them the real reason for their alarming loss of membership and the deathly respectability which, in Los Angeles at any rate, marks their meetings. An excellent selection from Robert Hunter reminds modern Socialists that Marx detested sectarianism, hated pedantry and was absorbed in the class struggle, which, as Hunter shows, is an entirely different thing from vague humanitarianizing. He says aptly: "The growing determination of the workers to be masters of 'their own destiny' is the foreshadowing of the most tremendous change the world has ever known . . . There is in that something real, something awful and majestic, something not to be ignored by the wise, nor tittered at by the foolish."

Guernsey contributes the shortest of salutatories, in which he expresses his discontent with the Socialist Party "while it is dominated by its present officialdom," with its "methods of centralization." As he puts it: "If Socialism means anything it means revolt against the present social system. And revolt will admit of no compromise. Revolt is either REVOLT or it is NOT revolt. Many of these so-called Socialists of today are anything but revolutionists."

Tom Burns, who played so prominent a part in Portland recently, contributes a page of characteristic pithy reflections. One of them is that "a politician is a politician no matter what dog collar he wears."

"Revolution," in short, represents a genuine revolt against party officialdom, and we are pleased to see that it hails with delight the birth, in Los Angeles, of "The Wooden Shoe." Unless we greatly miss our guess that paper also has no kindly feeling for bureaucratic authoritarianism.

G. R. Satchwell writes strongly on "Strength," his article closing with these words: "Until economic freedom is established there is no hope of intellectual, moral or spiritual freedom for humanity." Ah! if only we could hammer that into the public's consciousness; if only we could make it understand that without a sound root of economic equality of opportunity there can be no flower of health and happiness!

This new review trusts to voluntary contributions for support. Both for the sake of the revolutionary movement, which needs such a mouthpiece badly, and because "Revolution" has been exceedingly generous to us in the advertising of "Regeneracion" and our booklet, "Land and Liberty," free of charge, we hope the contributions will come in liberally. We hope our friends will reciprocate by sending for sample copies and subscribing according to their best ability. Guernsey is a practical printer, has an established plant, is a fighter from Fighterville, and will make this stick if given half a chance. In their present venture he and Brackinreed offer us an opportunity we cannot afford to neglect, for a prosperous magazine will be a center from which we can work far more effectively than is at present possible.

Mexican Notes

Most suggestive as to the cause of all this trouble in Mexico is the complaint of Mr. Charles F. O'Brien, general sales agent of the Yaqui Valley. If you suppose this gentleman lives there you are mistaken. His residence is Los Angeles, and in his letter to Senator Perkins he says: "In order that my position may be plainly understood, permit me to inform you that, in a sense, I am one of the settlers, as I have a large ranch in the valley which I am farming. My superintendent, J. J. Donovan, is one of the Americans brought out by the Buffalo." For we don't know how many scenturies that "ould sod," of which Mr. O'Brien and his manager, were probably natives, has been ravaged by this monster of absentee landlordism, of which they have now become, like so many other formerly rebellious Irishmen, a part. Forty and fifty years ago the Irish peasant was making the whole world ring with just the outcry the Mexicans are raising today, and was treating the "agent" just as the Yaquis and others are disposed to treat him today. In his complaint, which he accuses Secretary of State Bryan of neglecting, Mr. O'Brien says that his agent was compelled to abandon personal property belonging to him valued at $25,000 and that other settlers left goods worth at least $1,500,000. The Yaquis still think that valley belongs to them. Mr. O'Brien and other foreigners—John Hays Hammond, for example, who obtained title deeds to some 260,000 acres—consider that it is their property, although they are scattered all over the world and work it with Mexican labor.

Yet "The Wooden Shoe," an I. W. W. publication, accuses us of thinking always "in terms of forty acres and a mule" when we call attention to this condition as basic, and representative of the case of the disinherited throughout the world!

At this writing a proposition to postpone the elections is still under debate in the Mexican Congress.

In Full Retreat.

From all accounts it appears that the Constitutionalist movement has gone to pieces in Coahuila, having been deserted by many of its officers. Gabriel Calzada, the acting governor, is reported as having fled, taking with him large sums of money. The rebels abandoned Sabinas, where they had been erecting fortifications, and fell back on Peyotes. The country in that neighborhood is mountainous, and the rebels, if the situation is as represented, doubtless will split up into small bands and follow their old guerrilla tactics. Their total force, said to be now fortifying itself on the south side of the hills at Peyote, is estimated at 1500. At Piedras Negras, immediately opposite Eagle Pass, the greatest confusion has reigned; a neutral guard has been formed to watch over the safety of the international bridge, over which fugitives have been streaming, and a Committee of Safety appointed to save the town from being looted. Gen. Jesus Carranza is credited with having entered into an agreement to the effect that American property shall not be destroyed, but the Constitutionalists hitherto have been putting the torch to pretty well everything along their line of retreat, to embarrass the advancing federals. With things as they are the rank and file would seem little likely to respect contracts into which their leaders have entered.

Complaint has been lodged at Washington that while the Federals have been allowed to buy horses, saddles and forage at San Antonio, Tex., Col. Ortego has been prevented from exporting lard, flour and sugar for the use of the Constitutionalists. Merchants at Eagle Pass and Laredo have been arrested for purchasing overalls. H. L. Beach, publisher of the "San Antonio Light," has filed formal charges, accusing the United States government of unjust discrimination. As we have shown repeatedly, the neutrality laws have operated always in favor of the existing governmental regime in Mexico and against the rebels. It could not be otherwise. Governments side with governments. Rebellion against those who, somehow or other, have managed to seize the governing power is always the crime of crimes. In fact, President Wilson in refusing to recognize Huerta, because he had obtained power by treachery and assassination, set a new precedent which has taken away the breath of diplomatists of the old-fashioned school.

Orders from Great Britain.

With Oct. 1 came the news that the British legation in Mexico City had warned Huerta that unless the railroad between the capital and Veracruz was kept open British troops would be landed for the purpose of patrolling the line. Two trainloads of federal troops were reported as having been despatched in obedience to this command.

A despatch to the "Los Angeles Times" of Sept. 30 stated that, prior to vacating, Governor Calzada, of Coahuila, ordered the execution of a number of men, including among them that of Felipe Sanchez, over whose proposed extradition to Texas, on a charge of murder, a legal controversy was pending. We have been unable to get any further information respecting this report.

Numerous Mexican and Japanese refugees have been refused admission to cross the frontier to United States soil.

It was reported, Sept. 29, that American cavalrymen had crossed into Mexican territory, near Juarez, and pursued some Mexican woodcutters a matter of two miles, firing at them and being fired at in return.

Calexico has been expecting another attack, rebels having been discovered in some force in the immediate vicinity. Sixteen hundred Federals have been reported as advancing to the recapture of Parral, Chihuahua.

"El Pais," of Sept. 20, gave a detailed account of the Government's proposed military measures to suppress the Constitutionalist movement in Sonora, declaring at the same time that it had obtained its information in spite of the fact that the Government had exerted every effort to keep its plans secret. The account stated that the Government was acting on the information furnished by numerous spies who had penetrated the camps and inner councils of the Constitutionalists; that it was taking advantage of internal dissensions and of the cooler weather which has now set in, and that it had commenced a carefully arranged advance both from the front and rear. Above all it was determined to drive the Constitutionalists from Agua Prieta, Naco and Nogales, at which points they get large sums in the form of customhouse receipts and much ammunition, the latter being smuggled in notwithstanding the continuous efforts of the United States authorities. Gen. Ojeda, it was stated, was to advance as rapidly as possible to the attack of Hermosillo, taking adjacent towns on his way. His brigade, divided into three columns, was said to be composed of specially selected troops, regarded as thoroughly seasoned and acclimatized. Simultaneously a force of 2000 men was to proceed from Juarez for the capture of frontier towns, after which a strong force was to be sent to Cananea, where the Constitutionalists were expected to rally.

From lengthy reports and articles in Mexico City papers of the latest date there seems to be no doubt that Francisco Villa, who was captured at Palomas, has been shot. He had played a prominent part from the early days of the Madero revolution, had been much feared by the Government and, of late, was trusted by the Constitutionalists. His death will be a distinct loss to them and will increase the present demoralization.

In the Central States the Government must have received much encouragement from the reported surrender of Panfilo Natera, who, it claims, had been at the head of 3,000 men, and played a leading role in the recent attacks on Zacatecas, Durango and Torreon. His surrender is attributed to the influence of his wife, and the reports add that a great part of his command split immediately into guerrilla bands which have started independent campaigns of their own.

Walter C. Riotte, of Coronado, is anxious to get the address of Rafael Strasburger, understood to be in Los Angeles. Riotte wishes to forward letters received from C. R.

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