

Shall We Keep Silent?

It is to laugh; as men often laugh, to keep the heart from breaking. In Europe millions—so many that one cannot keep the count—are murdering one another. As I write men are falling in the trenches; sailing through the air that they may drop explosives on helpless towns; plowing their way beneath the waves that they may catch some merchantman and hurl her crew and passengers to death. A saturnalia of blood such as this world, in all its savage past, has never seen; a devil's dance started and led by those whose office is to guard the flock! Under the banners of "For God and King," "Our country 'tis of thee," "We above all," the nations march to murder.

On top of all these horrors comes a new one. Here, in peaceful America, three men have been discovered, so destitute of conscience, so depraved, as to write of revolution and circulate their writings through the mails! Los Angeles papers inform us that the grand jury deliberated only fifteen minutes before returning the indictment. Small wonder, therefore, that moral indignation is ablaze.

Peaceful America! Peaceful America, whose every economic quarrel is a war! Peaceful America, where the paper is tossed by as tedious if it fails to bring its daily sensation of some building set on fire, some factory dynamited, some deed that ends in blood! Peaceful America, whose President tours the country advising it to equip itself with a navy "incomparably" more powerful than any now afloat, and arm itself to the teeth, that it may dominate as its civilization entitles it to dominate! Peaceful America, with—on the word of her President—no territorial ambitions, but with a plutocracy notorious for grabbing, and with a proletariat that already strains the standing capacity of its prisons and asylums!

Where the Rio Grande divides the United States from Mexico there are murmurings of discontent; murmurings that have increased most rapidly in bitterness and number; murmurings that are the echo of that other war which for the last five years has been tearing Mexico to pieces. I am not a Mexican, and it happens that my home of late has been at the other extremity of our far-flung possessions; within a few miles, indeed, of the Canadian border. Nevertheless I have not been able to shut out those murmurings, for they are a human cry that pierces everywhere and will not give us rest. Of the various ways in which that cry has embodied itself in action I, by the necessity of the case, have known only such dubious fragments as I could glean from papers and occasional correspondence. But I have heard, with growing intensity, the cry; and, with growing intensity, I have tried to trace its origin, to interpret it. Many others of my Anglo-Saxon kindred, men and women well known wherever our mother tongue is spoken, have done likewise. It has seemed to us vital that the cry of all these millions should be understood, and that, an effort to understand it, and help others to understand it, must be made.

If we, so far removed, feel thus, how much deeper must be the feelings of such men as the Magons; men born and brought up in Mexico; men whose eyes were

forced to see and whose ears were compelled to hear what we know only second-hand? How could they keep silent? How, having put their hand to the task of enlightening the world, could they turn back and retain even the barest shred of self-respect? Their record has shown conclusively that they could not keep silence; and I trust that I myself, now indicted jointly with them, shall prove to be made of not greatly inferior stuff.

Nearly forty years of my life have been devoted, as I may fairly say, to the professional investigation of economic conditions; and this carries with it the investigation of national policies, because on them economic conditions chiefly depend. As a journalist and mercantile agency man I have been compelled to make them my professional study; for I had to become, as far as possible, master of my tools. And the fact, the central fact, is that, comparing conditions in the United States with those in Mexico, I am convinced that we have not so much to brag about. If they have their Terrazas, who lorded it supreme, we also have our land monopolists whose one ambition appears to be the creation of armies of tenants over whom they also can rule supreme. If Mexico has had her Cientificos and well-nigh omnipotent financiers, we also have our Morgans, by the scores and hundreds, whose power is even vaster. If Mexico has been the prey of vulture-politicians, the very entrails of the United States are being torn out by a similar swarm; more dangerous because more numerous, more keen-eyed, with sharper beaks and talons.

This is a political prosecution; essentially political. If the party now in power were not backing Carranza, and if Carranza had not called on his ally to protect him, the Magons and I would have been permitted for all time to continue the heart-break struggle of publishing a weekly paper in which we set before a too-indifferent world our thoughts on justice. What we have been writing weekly is not different from what is shouted nightly in a thousand halls, expounded from a thousand soap-boxes, taught in cautiously-framed language from many professorial and editorial chairs, and elaborated for the really studious few by world-claimed philosophers of the Herbert Spencer type. I may be pardoned, perhaps, for adding that I have made rather a special business of endeavoring to interpret Spencer, on whom I wrote a book many years ago. He, the author of "The Coming Slavery," "Man vs. The State," etc., is, to my thinking, the supreme Anarchist, for he devoted his entire life to demonstrating that only under perfect individual freedom could mankind attain its proper growth.

I have no desire to prolong this article and wish merely to add that, while the Magons differ from me widely in things to which many agitators and educators attach importance, there is between us a bond of sympathy which no doctrinaire differences can break. My experience with men prominent in agitation has been long, my conclusion, formed from close association, is that I have known no men so whole-souledly devoted to what they consider their special task; have known none more indifferent to personal profit or that craving for notoriety which is usually the leader's bane. I look on them as serious men, profoundly impressed with the gravity of the struggle in which they are participants, and exceedingly disdainful of the trivialities on which most agitators fritter away

their own strength and the enthusiasm of their followers. I believe they have found something of the same sort in me, for I regard the conflict now racking Europe as insignificant when put in comparison with the struggle of ideas which is beginning to shake the world as, in all probability, it has not yet been shaken.

We are not peace-at-any-price men. We will not shut our eyes to facts and pretend that tyrants will step down from power at the people's polite request. We will not profess to believe that any people can be robbed of their heritage, the land, and adequately compensated by putting the possibilities of education, as construed by the robbers, within their reach. Education! The only education worth talking about is that which induces men to face the truth and see facts as they are.

I have read, in the "Los Angeles Tribune," the extracts from "Regeneración" on which this indictment is based. There is no quotation from anything I have written, but that is immaterial. What I desire to say, most particularly is this:—The thing worth doing at all is worth doing thoroughly, and if the Government intends to punish the use of such language as is quoted in the indictment, it must suppress every labor meeting in the country and prosecute the editors of many leading magazines. That means, of course, that it must hurl this country back to what Russia was some fifty years ago.

In reality no such program is under contemplation. In reality, we are at the beginning of an enormously-important political game, the stakes in which are the whole future of Mexico and the question of whether this country shall abandon its industrial ideals and become, as are the European Powers, a military nation. The Magons and I recognize clearly that if the United States accumulates a large standing army and navy, "incomparably" superior to that of any other Power, there will quickly be an itch to put that army and navy to the test, and Mexico will be the dog on whom the first experiment will be tried. The land monopolists of Mexico, among whom Americans cut the biggest figure, will clamor for protection, and the result will be a war of intervention that will drag its bloody length through years of barbarous struggle.

Such, as I honestly believe, is the real purpose of this prosecution. I have at this moment no files to which I can refer, but I am confident that the authorities cannot produce even the tiniest fragment of the most fragmentary article in which I have incited to murder. I am a careful writer, and the role I chose for myself was that of interpreter, of explainer of the evils of monopoly and of that invasive, militaristic philosophy of life which is the great upholder of monopoly. That issue the people of the United States will have to face, speedily and squarely. The one thing fatal to them will be the inclination to side-step it, as do the politicians.

WM. C. OWEN.

TRIAL OF THE MAGONS

On Monday March 13th Ricardo and Enrique will appear in the Federal court, fourth floor, Post-office Building, for preliminary hearing. All those interested in their liberation are requested to show their solidarity and support by their presence.

Thus Spake "The Los Angeles Times"

For ninety five years every revolution that has taken place in Mexico has had for its object, so far as the masses of the people are concerned, a "ley agraria," or agrarian law. Iturbide, sarny in 1821 accomplished the independence of Mexico from Spain; but Iturbide had no sooner succeeded than he sought to make Mexico an empire, with himself on the imperial throne.

When the first Congress of Mexico assembled in 1822 there were two parties, one composed of the army and the church, which favored the establishment of an empire with Iturbide on the throne; the other composed of the conservative Spanish element, which also desired an empire, but wanted a Bourbon prince from Spain for Emperor.

Iturbide and his wife were crowned Emperor and Empress and a series of revolutions and counter-revolutions ensued, lasting through the nineteenth century a republic succeeding a republic, Gomez Pedraza, Santa Anna and Juarez succeeding other. Then came Maximilian and his empire. After his execution Juarez, Lerdo and Gonzalez succeeded each other, and Porfirio Diaz finally became fixed in the Presidency.

Diaz ruled Mexico despotically, but he preserved order and fostered mining and manufacturing interests. Yet he never encouraged the enactment of an agrarian law, or attempted to disestablish peonage, or relieve the people from their mental bondage to

the priesthood and their material bondage to the holders of the vast landed states.

The masses clamored for land under the Spanish rule, and it was because their cries were unheeded by the hacendados who controlled the government that the spaniards were ousted.

The demand for a division of the land into small holdings was urged upon each regime after the fall of Iturbide, but was unheeded. Diaz secured the support of the masses by promising them a ley agraria, but after he obtained power, like all his predecessors, he forgot his promises and became the servant of the landed aristocracy.

The promise of Madero to secure land reform procured him the succession to Diaz. But he, too, forgot his promise and so gave to Huerta the excuse and the opportunity to "remove" him. No opportunity was afforded Huerta to carry forward land reform, for the rebellion of Carranza and Villa against him occupied his efforts.

Carranza has promised to divide the haciendas among the people and his officials have begun the work in the State of Yucatan. The ley agraria is in effect there now, although its application is to be gradual. Distributions of the lands are to be made on August 1 and February 1 of each year. But there is to be no absolute ownership of land in the occupier. He will be given a lease for 999 years, which lease will be forfeited if he fails to pay the rent, which will go into the public treasury as a tax.

The Henry George single-tax system has been adopted and is being enforced in Yucatan, but the lessee of the land is not accorded the privilege of transferring his leasehold estate to another. The law there guarantees to every Mexican or foreigner more than 17 years of age living in the State the right to personally cultivate a piece of land where, by means of his labor, he may obtain what is necessary to maintain his family, thus acquiring economic independence and the comforts for living quietly, according to his social condition.

("Los Angeles Daily Times.") Feb. 8, 1916

Why We Oppose Carranza

At this moment I am a fugitive from justice—a fact mentioned only to explain this article. The remainder of REGENERACION's staff is in jail in Los Angeles, charged with having used the mails to circulate a newspaper that incited to murder and revolution. That the prosecution will not err on the side of mercy appears certain from the fact that the Magon Brothers' bail has been fixed, in each case, at \$7,500.

For years I have been pointing out how suicidal is the policy of enlarging, instead of diminishing, the power of Government. All organizations resent attack and do their utmost to annihilate the attacker, precisely as does the individual. Consider only how many millions have suffered imprisonment and death for having ventured to attack the Roman Catholic Church.

In particular I have been in the habit of pointing out that Government, the moment it finds the attack really dangerous, will resort to its first and most formidable weapon—its monopoly of the postal system. Through that monopoly, indorsed so foolishly by Socialists, it is able to arrest the pen of every critic, fining, imprisoning or exiling him as the case may be. What it is able to do it will do whenever its own danger seems sufficiently alarming.

The danger to the United States Government from what has been going on in Mexico is very real, and the more one knows of the conditions there the more one appreciates the danger. Rightly or wrongly our Government, like all Governments, exists primarily for the defense of vested interests and the maintenance of things as they are. Moral considerations are never permitted to swerve it from its program.

For example, you may prove absolutely that Porfirio Diaz and his Cientificos rendered millions of Mexicans homeless outcasts by confiscating their lands and selling them to speculators. That, however, will have no effect on our Government which will rec-

ognize only that titles have been acquired and that its business is to protect them, no matter what the cost.

It is useless to declaim against this state of things, for obviously the Government which fails to live up to its program thereby confesses its impotence and invites a series of new attacks which must end, sooner or later, in its downfall. Every Government, therefore, does its utmost to increase its strength, that it may crush its enemies and render its own life secure.

Of late the Mexican desinherited have been forcing the speculators, foreign and domestic, to disgorge, and that to an extent quite unprecedented within living memory. That they have been successful is evident when we consider that claims filed against Mexico by the foreign speculators alone are estimated at more than \$700,000,000. Every one of these speculators is calling on our Government to protect his title, and what is our Government to do? If it pleads inability it signs its own death warrant.

At present our Government is supporting Carranza. Why? simply because, in exchange for that support, he has promised publicly that he will do his utmost to restore order, protect the speculators, titles and reimburse them for all losses suffered during the last five years of revolution.

Naturally we of REGENERACION oppose Carranza, because the realization of his promises would mean the restoration of the conditions that prevailed under Diaz—conditions so unbearable that they drove the entire nation into violent revolution. On the other hand, the United States Government is now Carranza's backer and ally. It has made his enemies its own, and as anxious to suppress them as is Carranza himself.

Carranza has been making desperate efforts to borrow money from Wall Street. Has he not to assure the prospective lenders that their interests will be protected, that losses will be repaid, that the "security"—how suggestive is the word—is good? Of course he has to. Equally of course the lenders reply: "The

way to convince us that your security is good is to show us that you are able to put down your enemies." Naturally, therefore, Carranza runs to Washington, crying "You are my ally. You are as much interested as I am in putting down my enemies." And of course the United States Government has to answer: "Yes, we shall live up to our obligations, however much we may dislike the job."

You understand; an impossible situation has developed. In my opinion there is no question of moral turpitude on either side. It is, for example, my profound conviction that the Mexicans MUST get rid of their land speculators; and of course I do what I can to voice that conviction. On the other hand, I have every reason for believing that many of our leading officials, including President Wilson himself, share that conviction with me, but their hands are tied. As I see it, I, for the moment at least, am free and they are not.

I hope they will not catch me, for I desire most ardently to continue the propaganda of explanation I have been pursuing for nearly forty years. I was trying to explain to the people of England the importance of the land question about the very time when Henry George was writing "Progress and Poverty". I have stuck closely to that program of explanation ever since, but nearly a year ago, in a moment of weakness, I decided that I was entitled to the comparative rest of a chicken ranch in Washington. From there I have been doing only a regular writing; just enough to meet my obligation to the editors of REGENERACION, who took over my "Land and Liberty" subscription list when I found myself no longer able to continue that publication.

The Magons had not grown tired, and thereby they showed themselves my brothers. I hope now to shake off my weariness—since the Government will no longer permit me to squander my energies on merely private business—and resume that campaign of explanation which today seems more imperative than ever.

WM. C. OWEN.

Shall The Magons Again Be Railroaded To Prison?

A monster mass meeting will be held at Labor Temple Saturday March 18 to protest against the latest attempt of the Federal authorities upon Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magon, writers of Regeneración, now in jail in this city.

The following speakers have been called upon to address the meeting. Sam Adkinson of the National Rationist Assn; T. W. Williams, of the Socialist Party; Cyrus Grow, of Organized Labor; E. E. Kirk, of Counsel for defense.

Speakers in other languages will also address the meeting; Chaim Shapiro, of the Jewish Organizations, in Hebrew; Raul Palma of the Mexican Liberal Party and Mrs. Enrique Flores Magon, in Spanish.

Speakers in French and Italian will be announced later. Carlos Treseña, well known Italian Organizer for the I. W. W. is also expected to speak.

The meeting will be held under the auspices of the International workers defense league. The Meeting will be held at 8 p. m.

NOTES ON THE MAGON CASE

Up to this writing, Wednesday morning, our comrades Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magon still remain in jail, as no bail has yet been secured, notwithstanding the unceasing activity of our friends in this line. This had been comparatively easy in former times, but the friends who used to be ever ready to offer bond before, are not financially fixed to do so now. However, a portion of the bail has been subscribed and it is expected the necessary amount will be forthcoming before long.

It is extremely urgent that our comrades be released at the earliest moment possible for their health is in a very delicate condition.

At the time of their arrest, both Ricardo and Enrique had just begun to recover from illness that had almost caused their death. A prison term of any length, or long confinement in any way, would be on a par to a death sentence, as they have all ready endured more hardships than can possibly be imagined. Ricardo is especially in a real dangerous condition.

This last attempt of the Federal authorities upon our comrades, has caused unusual indignation and surprise among all radicals and liberty loving people. Some way or other they don't seem to realize that such high-handed and tyrannical methods can still cling to this supposed enlightened age and under a regime that boasts so much of its democracy. Such outrageous farce cannot but call for the most unbounded indignation in the face of the fact that conditions under the present scheme of things have reached the point where men, women and children by the millions are subjected to a life of abject slavery, beggary, and prostitution, in order that a privileged set of bloodsuckers, whiteslavers and worthless drones may live in splendor, while those who give their lives to abolish such monstrosities are marked for eternal punishment.

A very active campaign of protest has been started all over the country since the arrest of the Magons. In this city—as already announced—a Defense Committee in connection with the International Workers Defense League, has charge of the work. A mass meeting is to be held at Labor Temple on March the 18th as a part of the campaign.

In San Francisco the radicals are also very active in behalf of our comrades. We have a letter from Alexander Berkman in which he says they have also organized a strong Defense League, and he also sends us a bold hand-bill announcing a monster protest mass meeting they have advertised for March the 8th. Also announcement of another mass meeting to be given on March the 15th.

From George Speed, Secretary of the San Francisco I. W. W. local, we have also received a letter saying they have already given a meeting in favor of the Magon defense and that they are working for the other mass meeting to be held on the 8th of this month.

Emma Goldman has also been very active in New York in behalf of our comrades; in a letter we have just received from her she says in part:

"I have made copies of your letter and have sent them to the radical press. Have also written the various editors urging them to give the case publicity. The New York Folks Zeitung and three or four Jewish papers have promised to take the matter up and to make the outrage known to which our comrades have been subjected."

Of course we are not to neglect our comrades. Please give them our fraternal greetings and tell them that MOTHER EARTH and I will do all we can. We have an article about the case in MOTHER EARTH and also your letter and will begin a campaign as soon as we know definitely what the charge is and how our comrades intend to go about it. Keep me posted please and rest assured that we are with the imprisoned comrades.

The Gods must be uneasy these days for simultaneous with the arrest of the Magons, they have also raided and suppressed "ALARM" a new Anarchist monthly of Chicago, and "REVOLT", an Anarchist weekly of New York, is held up by the Postal authorities. At the same time Emma Goldman also has been arrested in New York for the heinous crime of advocating birth control and is awaiting trial on bonds. The white-winged fraternity don't seem to have had enough with the free course they got from Margaret Sanger, who made them wish they had never started something.

R. B. GARCIA.