

CAN CARRANZA HOLD Down The Job?

The well-known publicists, Samuel G. Blythe and Lincoln Steffens, have been devoting their pens of late to studies of Carranza; Blythe writing in two consecutive numbers of the "Saturday Evening Post" and Steffens in "Everybody's." Blythe, is utterly contemptuous, but it must be remembered that he is a frank advocate of United States intervention. Steffens is laudatory, and Steffens is bitterly opposed to intervention which he denounces as "a disgrace to us and a disaster to the world." Blythe apparently has only paid a flying trip to the border—just enough to enable him to put a little local color into his stories. Steffens, on the other hand, has just returned from a second visit to Mexico. For three months he toured the country with Carranza, eating generally at Carranza's own table and mingling with his chief advisers.

According to Blythe, Carranza is "a slow-thinking, grandiose, pompous, hair-splitting, phrase-making, obstinate Mexican of the Spanish type, full of resounding phrases of the dignity of his country and of himself. He prates of the honor of the fatherland and uses all the Mexican bombast in speaking of his troops and his patriots. He has taken to himself, as a true description of his magnificence, all the flattery with which crafty subordinates have fed him."

According to Steffens, and he emphasizes this sentence by italicizing it—"Senor Carranza and his inner circle of advisers are as sincere, as honest as determined, and as perplexed a group of radical reformers as I ever saw (or heard of or read about) in power." He dwells on Carranza's admitted honesty, and on the fact that he is not a dictator and does not wish to be. He is slow and patient; makes a public speech only when he cannot help it, and then leaves the people "impressed, not inspired, but impressed with a quite sense of his solidity, honesty and loyalty." On this head he remarks further: "To a democrat it was discouraging to see how little that people asked; how much they wanted, and hoped, and trusted; and how dependent they are upon the good faith, the understanding and the loyalty to them of their First and Last Chief. They are giving all, all their power to Carranza, and he is going around collecting it. And he has, to have it."

This last ominous sentence Steffens explains by saying that "the First Chief" and his inner circle need the power of the people to awe and check the power of the outer circle of second chiefs, and third, and fourth, and has enemies and Mexico's. He is the head now of an oligarchy; his power is military; it is made up of the powers contributed by the uncertain loyalties of generals and chiefs, some of whom (not only all) are not revolutionists at all, but only able individuals out for individual success, not Mexico's Without democratic power the Carranzista oligarchy cannot deal now with that general who saved the three thieves of Vera Cruz. That general's army, is his, as Villa's was, and he might lead it into the field against Carranza, as Villa did his, with foreign financial help."

Steffens gives an account of a meeting at which Cabrera, Carranza's Secretary of the Treasury, listened and replied to the grievances of a number of American and other foreign business

men, and reports him as explaining—to men each of whom was wrapped up in his own troubles and, therefore, incapable of viewing the situation as a whole—that "the Government wanted business to be resumed, but on a better basis; better for the people of Mexico. They wanted banks to be more useful, socially than before, and not to make so much money for the bankers. And so with the other lines of business. How were the railroads, the mines, the shops, to be got to perform their true functions? A hard question. The Government didn't know how to answer it; they needed help, but couldn't get it from the specialists, because the banker and the broker, the merchant and the miner, seemed to think that all that was necessary was to start business and its privileges up again. Cabrera had to explain, therefore, that the Government was not trying to establish the old order of things, and Steffens says of him: "He understands, better than most Mexicans, that it isn't only Americans and foreigners, but all privileged persons, that don't see any wrong in privileges or any right in abolishing them. Privileges pay. Concessions, cheap labor, big land grants, are profitable. That settles it."

For the rest, Steffens represents Carranza as playing for time—time in which to unravel economic problems; to stave off intervention and the pressure of foreign Powers; above all, to build up a democratic following which shall outweigh the military chiefs whose otherwise will fall. Of the Carranzistas generally he claims that "it is economic, not political democracy and equality they are working for. In a word, they are trying to change the rules of the game, their game, our game, the game as it is played all over the civilized world."

Blythe, on the other hand, scoffs unreservedly at the claim that Carranza has any actual power, and writes that "the real heads of the government are Obregon and Gonzales and Cabrera; and even these men are flouted by their subordinates." He thinks it preposterous to imagine that the Carranza government can become strong, inasmuch as it is at this moment hopelessly bankrupt, the fiat money with which it has flooded the country being today worth only a few cents on the dollar. He epitomizes his judgment thus:

"He has failed, to negotiate a foreign loan; has closed all avenues of outside assistance, especially in the United States, though we have recognized him politically, and this has financially ruined the country, which is now bankrupt."

"He has not preserved military discipline and has no real control over his generals and troops."

"He is personally unpopular—not simpatico, as the Mexicans say—and has made no attempt to cement the people to him."

"It has failed to initiate any reforms in a country where everything is open to reform, not only since he was recognized by the United States as heading the de facto government, but during the two years before that in sections of the country where he was in control. His reforms are all conversational."

no Government will, or can, do it for them. Moreover, I consider it proof positive of Carranza's inability that his first step was to issue fiat money, and that he seems actually to have believed that his personal decree could keep it at par. Naturally it has fallen almost to zero, and has served no purpose except that of enriching a few rascally speculators to the ruin of countless thousands. That this must have been the result is self-evident to all who have any knowledge of economics or even the most superficial acquaintance with the history of similar experiments made by similarly ignorant men in other countries. There have been a number of such unthinking experiments and the result has been invariably the same, for the good reason that it could not possibly be otherwise. That alone should prove sufficiently that the Government was not trying to establish the old order of things, and Steffens says of him: "He understands, better than most Mexicans, that it isn't only Americans and foreigners, but all privileged persons, that don't see any wrong in privileges or any right in abolishing them. Privileges pay. Concessions, cheap labor, big land grants, are profitable. That settles it."

Against this, however, the circumstances are not of the character that permit of the slow and cautious methods described by Steffens, for while the grass is growing the steel is dying of starvation. This is what always happens with these State Socialist experiments, which waste the precious years on elaborate enquiries and wind up eventually by doing nothing. Meanwhile they have robbed the people of its power of initiative and quenched, by that deferment of hope which always sickens the heart, whatever revolutionary flame originally inspired the movement.

In truth, as seems self-evident to me at least, if it should be in the power of any one man or set of men to carry the Mexican Revolution to its logical conclusion, that man, or set of men, must be of the Napoleonic type; and it appears to me that Zapata approaches it most nearly. He has done something; probably much. Almost certainly there are now in Mexico thousands of formerly helpless peons who today are, in the enjoyment of the crops, their own labor produces, and for this they have to thank, in great part at any rate, Zapata and the Zapatista movement. That movement has done something; has actually put bread into stomachs previously empty and given economic security to those who were outcasts, at the mercy of every money-shark and political man-hunter. For all I can see, the other leaders in Mexico have busied themselves solely with wading to office through the blood of their opponent politicians, with making triumphal tours, and with drenching the country with a flood of oratory almost as bad as blood. The reason for this is to be found, as I myself conceive, not in the innate bloodthirstiness of Mexican politicians but in the profound State Socialist delusion that the first essential is to seize the political power, being self-assured, as all reformers are, that you will govern more capably than did your predecessors. To which reflections I may add the reminder that Zapata, although all men's hands have been against him, is the one leader who has survived and steadily grown stronger; that this can be only because increasing number of the people have become his loyal supporters, and that they have become such because they have discovered that by him they prosper. One may well question if a single peon profited by the philanthropic yearnings of the unfortunate Madero, or whether a single worker has been enriched by Carranza's proclamations.

Steffens, as has been noted, is opposed most bitterly to intervention, which will mean in his opinion, that "we shall have to slaughter the Mexican race as we did the Indians." Our stand on that question is well known, and I myself have never wearied of reminding Interventionists that what they are actually proposing is by far the greatest Indian war on record—a war that inevitably will be one of extermination. In particular also have I reminded our readers that the United States would have against it in such a war the hostility of the great Latin race

throughout the world, and I have criticized the Pan-American conferences as more gab-fests of political wire-pullers at Washington. In this morning's paper I read the following Washington despatch: "Instead of approving intervention by the United States in Mexico, the Powers of Latin America will be opposed to any such action." Notification to this effect has been given to the Secretary of State by representatives of the interested nations."

WM. C. OWEN.

RICARDO and ENRIQUE FLORES MAGON Convicted.

Our comrades Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magon have again paid the price of being Social Rebels and of using their right of free expression.

As had been announced, the "trial" opened on the 31st of May, and after a week consumed in tedious court routine the jury returned a verdict of "guilty," and at this moment our comrades only await the final touches which will decide what part of their lives Authority may care to take as its toll for their audacity in thinking for themselves. This part will be the pronouncing of sentence and has been set for Monday, June 12.

The indictment was based on three counts and the jury found Ricardo and Enrique "guilty" on two of these, and "not guilty" on the other. The law prescribes for a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a \$5,000 fine in each count. The attorneys for the defense will likely ask for a new trial, although the only advantage of this would lie in the possible chance for some propaganda, as the nature of the first trial made it very hard for any such thing, although the comrades, and even the lawyers, Kirk and Ryckman, used every opportunity not to leave it out all together. Besides every well informed person knows that the Magons were convicted long before they entered the court room. The same as everyone who has followed their work knows that they never were indicted for misuse of the mails as claimed by the Government, but for their activity in trying to prevent the Wilson-Carranza plot to crush the aspirations and efforts of the Mexican people for economic freedom, and establishment of a dynasty that will insure peace and safety to the exploiters and blood suckers of the working class.

This should not be hard for people to understand; for it is well known that the Magons have been persecuted for more than twenty years for the same offense. It is very evident. In the time of Porfirio Diaz the Magons were hounded like wild beasts for their proletarian agitation. After his downfall it seemed that this would cease, but the interest of the exploiters have remained the same in Mexico and the persecution has continued just the same as before from every would be ruler that gains any power in that country.

This will undoubtedly be the last time that the vultures of Authority shall feast their fetid beaks and clutch their beastly talons upon Ricardo, for his health is in such condition that he cannot possibly stand the rigors of a prison term even if were short. So, his sentence will amount to a death penalty, whatever it be, making it a case of plain and slow murder. Attorneys Kirk and Ryckman called the attention of the jury to the condition of Ricardo, and also to the fact that Enrique being solely in control of the paper, Ricardo could not be considered as equally accountable for