

Regeneración

English Section

Edited by WM. O. OWEN

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ENRIQUE FLORES MAGON.
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Priest, Soldier, State, Are Out Of Date.

Let us not deceive ourselves with words, or throw our breath to the winds by talking about fraternity. Fraternity cannot exist in such a society as this. Before it can quicken into birth we must pass through the throes of a terrific struggle for the establishment of something that shall, at least, approximate justice, and those throes shall be long and agonizing. Already we have their beginnings in the Mexican Revolution and the great European war.

And the United States, numbed into insensibility by the fine phrases on which it is fed assiduously, thinks it can escape those throes! The United States of all the countries in the world!

During the last six months of enforced leisure I have been able to renew my acquaintance with the revolutionary masters whose writings fired me with enthusiasm and set me ablaze with indignation some forty years ago. By the light of the experience gained during those years I have striven loyally to pass those writings under censorious review to unearth sophistries that might lurk behind them; to pick out flaws that might bring tumbling to the ground the entire fabric which had seemed to me logically irresistible. I could not find them.

All the hard things Proudhon and Bakunin, Tolstoy and Herbert Spencer, our own Tucker and other illustrious writers whose name is "Legion", have had to say respecting official authoritarianism and the State, have been proved up to the hilt during the last forty years, and the record is now being written in flaming letters of blood on the battlefields of Europe, Asia Minor and Africa. All that the great socialist writers have had to say about the monstrosities of our capitalistic, or, to speak more accurately, our monopolistic system, pales into nothingness beside the grim reality.

Henry George's main contention, that what we call "Progress" actually begets instead of exterminating poverty, stands today beyond all possibility of refutation. It is only in the most industrially advanced countries that men fight like wolves for the privilege of working to enrich some master. It is only in such countries that, apart from earthquakes or other exceptional catastrophes, men and women habitually die of hunger. These are the real tests; tests that all the eloquence that ever hypnotized bemuddled audiences can never upset.

Think also of the real meaning of such spurts of prosperity as we still enjoy; here and there, and from time to time. There is much real suffering, for example, in San Francisco, and it gives rise repeatedly to sporadic outbreaks of generally senseless violence. But after fire and earthquake had almost swept that city from the map, times were splendid. What did that mean?

At this moment times are comparatively good in the United States, and everyone knows that it is due to the European war, which is destroying property about faster than labor, with all the machinery we employ today, can reproduce it. What does that mean?

It means that our industrial and commercial system, being based on palpable absurdities, has reached the absurd climax of being able to thrive, of being able to exist only by destruction. Facts preach with an eloquence

no human pen or tongue can rival. Articles and speeches that breathe fire and thunder are, in my opinion, a ridiculous waste of effort, for readers and audiences justly conclude that those who advise violence should be the ones to risk the doing it. But thousands of the unemployed in this country realized, by their own most acute experience, that such a fire as visited San Francisco was to them a Godsend and they drew there from a general conclusion, from which strange fruit will yet be garnered. A similar conclusion, but on a vastly larger scale, is being reached today by thousands of sober-minded American workmen who understand that they owe their present prosperity to the appalling destruction of property wrought by the European war.

The upholders of the existing system, with the wage slavery and dependency on the job which it involves by its monopoly of the means of production and distribution, only make themselves ridiculous when they cry out against the destructive tendencies of the modern worker. Who else but they are teaching him, alike by word or deed, that jobs depend on getting rid, as speedily as possible, of the existing product? When tons of fish are dumped into the sea do you expect the man who makes his living by catching fish to feel indignant? Are carpenters and masons and iron workers likely to weep when buildings go up in smoke. Don't all the dealers want us to wear out our clothes and smash our furniture to pieces, and use up extravagantly a thousand things we do not want? We are all in the same boat, because we are all members of a decadent system which has reached the insane condition of being able to maintain itself only by systematic and habitual destruction.

This propaganda of destruction, taught by example, daily and hourly, in every walk of life, has saturated all modern thought, and its inherent viciousness is on a new beginning to be understood. It has revived militarism, and on an unprecedentedly colossal scale, for war is obviously the most effective of all destroyers. And naturally in reviving Militarism, which is violence organized by the State, it has given enormous impetus to violence by the individual; and I suppose it would be safe to say that fully a million of our population would be thrown out of employment if, by some miracle, deeds of individual violence were suddenly to stop. How would it fare with the poor detectives, and the court officials and lawyers, to say nothing of the mob that makes its little bit out of Societies for the Suppression of Vice? Do these people really hate and despise the criminal, as they profess to?

No; necessarily they adore him and hug him to their hearts as the meal ticket that stands between them and starvation. What a wallow of hypocrisy! Look at it from another angle. Why does the American workman vote stolidly, election after election, for that preposterous humbug called Protection, which obviously the undemocratic taxing of the many for the enrichment of the privileged few? The answer is that he does so because he is interested in destruction, and tariffs are among the most ingenious destroyers yet devised. They stop us from getting things where they grow naturally or can be produced with little labor, and force us to get them where they must be raised artificially by the expenditure of much otherwise unnecessary. Like landlords they check production; they destroy, and by destroying they create

more jobs. What a wallow of stupidity! The stupidity of trying to balance the social pyramid on an apex of restriction instead of setting it down, firmly and squarely, on its natural basis of freedom.

Yes; our commercial class (what is called in Europe the "bourgeoisie") has made a most hopeless mess of governing, for when a system has to destroy its own work habitually in order to keep going, that system already has the death rattle in its throat, and no heroic remedy can save it. What more cheerful message than this could one announce? How could I better encourage those who are clamoring for change than demonstrating to them that the present regime of destruction is ever now lying on its death-bed?

But what is to come after? Ah! there's the rub. There's the respect that puzzles the will and makes all these unbearable calamities of so long life. There's the great problem we should be straining every nerve to solve; for, unless we keep our wits about us, an even worse successor may slip into the dead man's shoes. Let us consider.

When a new set of rulers fails (and viewed historically, our present commercial rulers are newcomers of the rankest type) the "Old Guards" whom those rulers thrust from power always step promptly to the front, eager to seize the helm once more. Feudalism today is very much alive, and all our landed aristocracies are still convinced that they can govern far better than does the trading class. The Roman Catholic church is very much alive, and if that church exist for anything it is to govern. And do not imagine for one moment that the military, headed by Germany's War Lord have not had their heads turned by the same towering ambition. Let a big business house fail, and there is a furious scramble for the trade it previously enjoyed. Let a nation be thrown into uproar, as Mexico has been, and the scramble is still more furious. Let a world-wide system go to smash, and the ambitious instantly unchained are boundless. Nevertheless there are people who believe that the present European war will be succeeded shortly by a lasting peace!

For example, the Kaiser. No one understands more clearly than do the Kaiser, and the militarist clique behind him, how hopelessly the present system has broken down. They cannot help understanding; for capitalism, which turned a cold shoulder to them when it was strong enough to snap its fingers at all enemies, has run to them for protection in these latter days, when the proletariat is growling at its door. The military stand toward capitalism today precisely as the Prussian Guard stood toward the Senate oligarchy when the Roman Empire was tottering to its fall. Summoned, like them, to protect capitalism today, militarism will dictate to its employers tomorrow, and nominate its own man for emperor the day after. However hot the present frying pan may be, we do not want to jump—as, in my opinion, the unfortunate Germans have jumped—into that infinitely military fire. Under no stress of circumstances can we afford to rehabilitate the Caesars or bring back the Man on horseback.

How bitterly the bourgeoisie has hated the clergy, and how increasingly it has found it necessary to seek the clergy's aid, to tranquillize the people! Thereby a thousand clerical ambitions have been resuscitated, and once more the Roman Catholic Church

dreams of recovering that World power she exercised for centuries, when the forefathers of the Hohenzollerns & Hapsburgs were still roaming the woods, mere savages. But that brought us the Dark Ages, and no one, outside of the clergy and their more fanatical adherents, wants the Dark Ages back again.

We owe the bourgeoisie, however, an even greater debt, for they brought the world from the ideal, which always sets up false alters for our immolation to the real, which is our one true friend. They believed, as realists, in the enjoyment of this life, and they threw the doors wide open to scientific investigation and human ingenuity, inviting them to enlarge, at every point possible, the opportunities for enjoying life. Thereby they brought into existence all that marvelous machinery for ministering to human wants which is at once this age's proper glory and its problem.

Enjoyment of life, far greater than we have known as yet, is precisely what we want. On that the priest, who sets up asceticism as the ideal, has always frowned. We want all the machinery human ingenuity can devise, that we may become more masters of life; and our quarrel with the bourgeoisie is not because it introduced machinery but because, false to its former assertions of the Rights of man, it has monopolized it. What we did not want was to remain slaves of the autocratic State, doomed for all time to break our backs over the wooden plow. Under the rule of King and feudal lord, of warrior and priest, that had been our fate for untold centuries. It would have been our fate today but for the valiant part played by the bourgeoisie of France only a little more than a century ago.

No; we cannot go back to the rule of the soldier, for his trade is death, and we are struggling for a larger life.

We cannot go back to the rule of the priest, for he exists only to sacrifice us to an unprovable ideal, and our existence has been one long hell of sacrifice.

We cannot go back to the authoritarian State, for that combines the cruelty of priest and soldier.

These castes, with the institution to which they naturally gave birth, belong to the past, sternly and unflinchingly, toward the future. We are, first and foremost, material beings, and we are now on the very threshold of the struggle for universal material freedom. If the bourgeoisie, clinging to their special privileges, throw themselves into the embrace of Army, Church and State, so much the worst for them.

WM. O. OWEN.

The Real Carranza.

(Continued from last issue.)

But this also goes to show the extremes to which Carranza went to win his ends. It has been pointed out before, the desperation in which he was after the break with Villa; with Huerta on one side and Zapata on the other and with little support from the laboring class, as he did not understand their ways very well yet. But upon realizing their radical trend he went more than the limit, for he knew his salvation was there. He not only sent his hosts of paid agitators to preach socialism, industrial unionism and anarchy to the workers, but he actually fostered discontent, and promoted strikes thru them to win the workers to his side the quicker, as Villa at that moment was a keen competitor, being at the height of his career and therefore by far more popular with the masses than the "First Chief". With the consciousness awakened among the masses in the course of the revolution, the masters and exploiters of all sorts

were in marked disfavor. Carranza proceeded to capitalize this discontent by promoting, thru his paid agitators, a series of strikes and striving to show what he could do for them. He used all the power at his command to win the strikes in their favor and this became so common that they actually forgot themselves in the belief that Carranza was in earnest.

One strike in particular was characteristic of Carranza's policy to ensnare the workers into his trap. That was the Longshoremen's strike at Veracruz. He set his agents to work and promote a strike for the 8 hour day and double pay. It was won in less than no time and with the protection lent the strikers, they became elated with their "chief".

Anxious for the support of the workers, Carranza was willing to do anything for them except get off their backs. So, observing their hostile attitude towards the catholic church that had accursed them for so long, he instituted a campaign of house cleaning against it, more so because the church has ever sided with the científicos, the bitterest foes of Carranza, altho in reality his enmity towards it is not so strong, as demonstrated by the following, utterances thru one of his generals, Elias Calles, governor of Sonora. Calles said, referring to some priests that had been expelled from that State: "Those priests have been expelled after being proved that they had conducted an extraordinary and active campaign in favor of the 'cientifico' party. I want all the world to know that the expulsion of those ministers of God does not constitute an enmity of the constitutional government towards the catholic religion. If the catholic church desires to send honest priests in substitution to those expelled, the constitutional authorities shall welcome them, and more, all priests coming to our territory shall be gladly received and all facilities tendered them for the fulfillment of their mission."

That is the kind of "social revolutionist" that Carranza is, a typical politician, always zig-zagging and catering to anything that will win his ends, even if he has to contradict himself at every turn as in the above case. Of one thing Carranza is very careful and that is to instruct his mouthpieces and apologizers that whatever good the people have accomplished is because of him and his good government. When he sent his paid agitators around preaching everything on the radical calendar to bait the workers, these minions went about telling the masses that the First Chief had ushered in an era of free thought and expression and that such thing could not be possible without him.

(To be continued.)

R. G. COX.

The Alarm.

We reproduce the following excerpts from a letter we received a while ago from the comrades of THE ALARM, and which, among other things, we had not printed for utter lack of space:

"Owing to the fact that many of our most active comrades have left the city, the work of editing, mailing etc., of THE ALARM for the past four months has fallen on a very few—three or four.

"Under these circumstances the paper is not doing its work as originally intended. Not wishing to blindfold ourselves or anyone else, we have decided to suspend publication of THE ALARM until such time as we shall be able to gather a good, active group once more to take up the work with new enthusiasm and spirit. Now, do not think this is a case of 'lie down' or failure. We simply want to conserve what strength we have until such time as other necessary elements are in working order.

"Look for the re-appearance of

the paper just as soon as we can arrange for its further publication.

"The International Propaganda Group of Chicago, 1605 Milwaukee Ave."

RUSSIAN BALL.

And entertainment, given by the L. A. Relief Society for Russian Political Refugees and Exiles. Saturday Oct. 21, 8 p. m., at FLOWER CLUB HALL, 1720 S. Flower St. Slides of political prisons and revolutionists will be shown. Russian costumes will be worn. Buffet and Russian meals. Admission 25 cents.

Our Frisco Prisoners.

With Warren K. Billings now convicted by an M. and M. jury and sentenced to spend the rest of his life in prison, the next in line for the gibbet is Thomas J. Mooney. We are informed that the date for his trial is to be set on the 16th of this month.

Outrageous and high-handed as the conviction of Billings is, little better can be expected for Mooney, Mrs. Mooney, Nolan and Weinberg, all of them being active and devoted fighters in the ranks of Labor, which is the crime for which they are being tried. Nothing will save these comrades from the wrath of the ruling class but an aroused working class.

Labor organizations, except for a few, have been criminally indifferent in this case, but fortunately as time passes the conspiracy of the law and order gang against the comrades is more evident and the tide seems to be turning. But it will take herculean efforts to secure their release the International Workers Defense League of San Francisco, which is doing splendid work for them needs all the support that can be mustered for this fight.

R. G. COX.

The Magon case

As had been announced, the appeal in the case of our comrades Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magon was to be reviewed by the court on the 2nd of October, but the necessary money for the proceedings not being raised up to that time, attorney Ryckman succeeded in having action deferred until the 1st of December, which will afford us another chance to raise the necessary amount for the appeal.

It is to be hoped that those interested in the freedom of expression will not forget the significance of this case, for the decision of that court will determine the future of the radical press. The idea of being subject to the whims of a public utility department official for what we may care to say is hideous enough, but to tolerate it is worse still, and it will take no little effort to put a stop to this infamous invasion of our most common rights. Money is necessary to carry this case thru and contributions should be sent to:

KATHERINE L. SCHMIDT, P. O. Box 935, Los Angeles, Cal.

R. G. C.

MARIA MAGON ARRESTED.

Authority never sleeps and her minions are ever on the watch for those who are in her disfavor. On the 25th of September Maria Magon, Ricardo's life partner, went into a department store to buy a pair of socks for Ricardo. While these were being wrapped she was looking at other socks on the counter when a woman spy accused her of stealing them. Maria was all alone and cannot speak English.

She was detained and in a few minutes two detectives, a man and a woman, arrived. In the mean time the store manager had released her but the lackeys grabbed her purse and started to search her. Among other insignificant papers, Maria happened

to have an old pass from the U. S. Marshall's office that she had used to see Ricardo when he and Enrique were in jail. That she had it; the minions seeing the name "Magon" on the paper, seized Maria and threw her in jail, charged with petty larceny, altho one of the detectives himself told her that this was only an artifice, and that she was really being held for the papers she had.

To avoid scandal Maria gave the name of "Margarita Ortega", and the next day the press came out with the story that the papers in her possession revealed a plot to start a revolution in Lower California. As if she were incommunicado, no one was allowed to see her the next day until attorney J. H. Ryckman was called. Her bond was fixed at \$500, just before being released she was called into the Bertillon room and brutally assaulted by three plain clothes mercenaries. Upon refusing to seat on a bed, they pounced upon her and held her by force while they took her picture. Then they proceeded to measure every part of her body finally taking her fingers print in about a dozen different places and forcing her to sign them.

And this is free America, progressive California and glorious Los Angeles!

While Maria's Trial had been set for the 10th of this month, the farce was so ridiculous and the failure of the detectives to notoriety so dismal, that the case was dismissed before coming to trial. Such are the hounds of Authority.

R. G. COX

David Caplan.

The trial of comrade David Caplan is to open again on the 16th of this month at 10 o'clock, on the third floor of the old Courthouse. What the outcome of the trial will be is more than can be predicted, but we know capitalist justice. However one thing can be said and it is that the attendance of labor at such trials has a good deal to do with decisions, and we urge all of those who really value the meaning of solidarity, and concern themselves with the fate of a true soldier of the revolution to attend the trial with all the frequency possible.

The appeal of comrade Mathew Schmidt will also be decided this month, and we earnestly hope that fate will be in his favor.

R. G. C.

Carranza's Wobblies.

Carranza seems to be in a real bad way these days; that decree of death to the strikers and their sympathizers has had its echo and he should be realizing by now that he has made a little mistake.

One of the strongest props that Carranza has in this country, next to the Wilson administration, is the conservative labor element, and in particular the A. F. of L. But his famous decree savored so much of the dark ages and his general attitude towards labor is so stupidly brutal of late, that even Sam Gompers sat up and took notice, hurrying to the Mexican-American commission now in session in New London, to file his protest, as shown by the press dispatch we reprint below:

COMPERS PROTESTS TO MEXICAN ENVOYS

ATLANTIC CITY, N. J., Oct. 8.—Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, came here today to protest to the Mexican members of the Mexican-American joint commission against Gen. Carranza's attitude toward labor unions in Mexico, and to ask the American commissioners to take this phase into consideration in their conferences with the Mexicans.

Gompers's complaint was based on a decree issued several weeks ago declaring that participation in a strike was a treasonable act and providing that the death penalty should be applied to any one striking or conspiring to strike. (From "The Times" October 9, 1916.)