

Regeneración English Section

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What Does Carranza Really Mean?

Carranza has given the special correspondent of "The Los Angeles Times" a statement which may be regarded as most significant, for it marks the length to which the Mexican Revolution has gone and the distance it has still to traverse. As I shall explain, it is the last stage that will be the hardest, for there the de-fenders of things as they are have piled obstacle on obstacle, and there they will make their final stand.

"My ambition from the beginning," says Carranza, "was peace for Mexico. For that very reason I took up the banner of revolution against the dictator Huerta, because I knew that we could not have peace so long as it justifies were committed in the name of liberty." As a general statement that is fine, being a paraphrase of Wendell Phillips' great saying that "God has given man one and only one guide to success. . . . utter and exact justice. That, he has guaranteed, shall always be expediency." If rulers could become convinced of that, social peace would take the place, instantaneously and automatically, of the everywhere-existing social war.

Carranza then states that, when Huerta was eliminated, he begged Villa to meet him in Havana and there come to an understanding but that Villa considered himself the stronger and was not seeking peace. He adds that he made similar approaches to Zapata, and promised "to carry out his agrarian plan," but unfortunately "the personal ambitions of his secretaries were greater than the needs of their country." The reference is to Palafox and another man whose name escapes me. As regards Palafox none of us can say with certainty what his personal ambitions may have been, but it has always been understood that he was a devout disciple of Kropotkin. As will appear shortly, such a man was not likely to be satisfied with what Carranza offers.

Then comes the prophesy that both Villa and Zapata will be eliminated within the next few months and Carranza gives that as his reason for thinking it unnecessary to parley with them in the peace conferences urged by the United States and Latin Republic. With the ruthlessness which is said to be one of his main characteristics he adds that "our enemies must be vanquished completely or there will be no lasting peace in Mexico," and he comments shrewdly: "Francisco I. Madero paid with his life by compromising with his enemies. Had he eliminated them Mexico would perhaps by now be enjoying peace and the respect of the nations of the world. The Constitutionists are not going to make the same mistakes. We are going to benefit by the experiences of the past."

Personally I applaud that stand. I commend it to the attention of the Bryans and others of the Chautauquan type, who dream that if they could induce the Allies in Europe to consent to peace they would be benefiting humanity. I think they would inflict on us an injury from which it might take centuries to recover, and I hold the happy opinion that England will not lay down her arms until Prussian militarism has been ground into the dust, and until the autocratically-invasive philosophy it represents has become a loathing to all the world. I take that position toward the entire social war, being convinced that only when unjust institutions have been overthrown can peace become effective, and holding that no question is really settled until it has been settled right.

Next comes a statement I in-

terpose most cordially, which runs as follows: "The revolution in Mexico is not of a political nature. It is an economic revolution. It means the industrial awakening of Mexico. During the days of Diaz natural resources of the country were by a few rich friends of Diaz, who were given special concessions. Only those few developed the country. Others—Mexicans as well as foreigners—had no opportunity whatever. Mexico was a land of special privileges. This could not last forever, and the result was the present revolution."

Note that phrase, "the natural resources of the country," and reflect that it is always by inducing the law-making power to give certain people "special privileges" in the "natural resources of the country" that economic inequality and economic dependence of the many on the few are brought about. It could not be otherwise. The statement cannot be denied unless one denies also the statement that this earth is the treasure house from which we have to draw every ounce of our supplies.

Carranza goes on to say that the wealth of Mexico, while naturally enormous, is at present merely potential. He says: "Money, and a great deal of it, has to be invested before we can utilize the riches of our country. We know this very well, and for that reason we want foreigners to come and exploit our resources, but they will come in the future under different conditions. Mexico will no longer be a land of a million opportunities. It will be a country where all will be given an equal chance."

That statement also I applaud. It is self-evident that a natural resource amounts to nothing until it has been exploited by human labor, and it should be self-evident that all ought to have an equal opportunity of exploiting natural resources, regardless of the flag under which they happen to have been born, of the color of their skin or of the creed they chance to hold. No intelligent Mexican wants to put a ring around his country and keep it as the sacred preserve of Mexicans. He wants the natural resources of the country exploited by those who can do it most efficiently, producing the greatest result with the least expenditure of effort. What he does not want is the exploitation of Mexicans, and that is an entirely different matter.

What I have just written is, I believe exceptionally true of Mexico. Many of my friends have lived in Mexico working on the land and not endeavoring to exploit the peon. Their testimony has been unanimous, absolutely unanimous, that in no country will you receive a warmer welcome than in Mexico, provided you convince the people that you are there to work and not to work them. And this is most natural, for the Mexican has a great capacity for enjoying the good things of life and an even greater incapacity for understanding that strange philosophy which teaches that work is an end in itself and is itself life's greatest blessing. That the Mexican does not understand at all, and I myself consider it his greatest talent. From those who make a God of work we get only a slavish philosophy of life, and one that leads straight back to despotism. To the lazy, who hate work, or to those sufficiently intelligent to understand that it is better to use one's brain than exhaust one's muscles, we owe the great discoveries and inventions which differentiate us from the savage and are destined to emancipate the race when themselves freed from

the bondage of monopoly and put at the disposition of every human being.

So far so good. Mexico is no longer to be a land of special privileges but one in which all will be given an equal chance. Nothing could be better; and it is to be remarked, as showing the rapidity with which thought has ripened in Mexico during the last five years of revolutionary activity, that no man of prominence in the United States or Europe has ventured as yet, to propose a program anything like as radical as this. It goes to the very roots; for when special privilege shall have been abolished and when all men and women shall have been given an equal chance, the millennium will have arrived and the revolutionary movement will have done its work. But, just as, in every walk of life, thousands asseverate loudly that they believe in equal opportunity for all, and, in the same breath, insist that vested legal rights are sacred, so does Carranza declare for a new deal and simultaneously assure the public that privileges acquired under the Diaz regime will be respected. Here are his exact words:

"They accuse us of being confiscators. A little reasoning will immediately show the fallacy of such a thought. Of what value could all the foreign property be to us even if we did confiscate it? Mines, oil fields and other property are of no value if they are not exploited. To confiscate them would mean nothing more than getting a white elephant on our hands. But when they are operated by their owners the government derives a revenue from such properties, and that is what we are after." There follows an assurance that "from the outset of the revolution it was the intention, the honest desire, of the Constitutionists to reimburse all those who suffered through loss of property and valuables," and Carranza adds that "the question of foreign claims is to be passed upon by a tribunal composed of members from various countries and of Mexicans."

Before considering the basic question of confiscation, I call attention to the extraordinary frankness of the extraordinary statement contained above. I cannot think of any other man high in office who has acknowledged boldly that the reason for developing a country is that the government may extract revenue. I had supposed that the real object of work, in theory at any rate, was to enrich and benefit the worker, and not at all to provide incomes for office-holders. But apparently it is Carranza's belief that society exists for the benefit of the politician; and, this being so, I can understand his concluding with these words: "What Mexico needs is not a man on horseback but an honest, energetic man of experience; a man who understands the needs of the country and the people; one who can rule wisely and sympathetically." Naturally this white blackbird is Carranza.

Not as a revolutionist but as one who wishes to apply the most ordinary intelligence and common sense to the solution of a difficult problem, I ask myself—"What does Carranza really mean?" I ask myself—"Can two bodies occupy the same space at the same time, and is it possible to leave the broad lands of Mexico in the possession of the speculators who have cornered it, and at the same time return it to the people? Can you overthrow the pillars of the old regime and simultaneously leave the building intact? Terrazas, for example, owned the greater portion of the huge and rich State of Chihuahua. The

revolutionists drove him out and certainly many of his acres are now in the possession of the peon-cultivators. Does Carranza propose to restore Chihuahua to Terrazas, and, if so, where will the peon come in? Surely one need not dwell upon absurdities so palpable as this. Surely every intellectually-honest man or woman must understand that if A is to be recognized as the sole proprietor—as he was before the revolution—B. C. D. and all the rest of the alphabet will be left empty-handed, and that for them the revolution will have been fought in vain. Surely that is self-evident. Surely all who plead for the restoration of the land to the people must recognize that this inevitably implies confiscation of what the monopolist calls his property. Yet Carranza insists that this is not a political but an economic revolution!

The Single-Taxers, I believe, and such men as Lincoln Steffens, to my certain knowledge, have been busily pleading Carranza's cause. I know this because some of them have made personal appeal to me. They think we should drop what they are pleased to call our "personal differences," and they more than hint that the Magons and their followers are irreconcilable, whom nobody could satisfy. But how can one be satisfied? Take my own case as an illustration. I am interested in all movements that have as their motive the restoration to man of what I regard as his natural heritage, the land; because I consider monopoly of natural resources the tap-root of human slavery; because I look on the ambition to acquire territory and live on it at the expense of other people as being, at least, one of the great incentives to that barbarous anachronism known as war. How can I be content with Carranza's smooth avowal that the Mexican revolution does not mean confiscation?

On the one hand, Carranza declares that the revolution was inevitable because Diaz exploited Mexico by giving special concessions to a few rich friends. In truth, they were concessions worth talking about, for they amounted to the gift of principalities. As a celebrated English publicist, William Archer, who was sent by Mc Clure to make a special investigation, remarked: "Diaz gave away his country as if he had been blowing soap-bubbles." On the other hand, Carranza assures the frightened foreign investor that confiscation is not on the Mexican revolutionary program. In other words, he announces that, when he shall be seated in the presidential chair and shall have restored order, everything will be—so far as the vested interests are concerned—as it was before the revolution.

I am not a whit surprised that the "Los Angeles Times," which is "par excellence" the champion of special privilege, printed Carranza's statement, playing it up as conspicuously as possible on its front page. Ours and his supporters will swallow with complacency all the denunciations of monopoly and special privilege in which Carranza may indulge. Their anxiety is about what Carranza, who now claims that he has seven-eighths of the country at his back, proposes to DO. What they want is some guarantee that the immense concessions they and other Americans got from Diaz will not be confiscated, as the Magons, for example, assuredly would confiscate them. What they want is substantial assurance that, when things have quieted down, business will proceed as before, the peon doing the work and they reaping the profits. They have been anxious to bring Carranza to the point, and he has come—to THEIR point.

As I understand it, the Single-Taxers and American Socialists are now booming Carranza as they formerly boomed Madero, believing that he will tax land values and thus abolish land monopoly. But unfortunately Carranza now declares that the Constitutionists have no intention of doing the very thing Henry George insisted on as absolutely indispensable. George taught that there should be no such thing as private property in land,

as much as men can have property only in what their labor produces, and no man's labor produced the land. He taught that the grant of the exclusive use of a certain piece of land was the grant of a special privilege by the community to the user, for which the user must pay to the community, as being the only legitimate owner, the full rental value. If, for example, the user of a piece of property worth \$1000 a year pays a rental of only \$500 he is enjoying the special and unjust privilege of getting \$500 a year presented to him as a gift. George advocated the Single Tax, as it is called—and called, most injudiciously, in my opinion—as the easiest and most certain method of confiscating the special privilege the land monopolist today enjoys, and it was as the enemy of special privilege that he defended such confiscation. Today Carranza denounces special privilege and in the same breath declares that its vested interests must be protected.

Does Carranza intend to tax out of existence the land monopolist's special privilege? Of course he does not. Such taxation would be equivalent to confiscation, which he carefully repudiates. As it appears to me, therefore, the Single Taxers and Socialists are engaged once more in building castles in the air, and Carranza's own position is this. With that wave he must swim, and with its onward rush he must keep pace. He does not really trust the wave, for he is not honestly a part of it. His secret prayer is that it will subside as quickly as possible after landing him in the presidential chair. Perhaps he is right, inasmuch as revolutionary waves have a habit of subsiding, but in this particular case I doubt it. Perhaps the runaway will be subdued once more and driven tamely back into the stable, but I should not care to bet on it. Too many previous drivers who calculated on that have gone to smash. If a people becomes dead in earnest the experiment of feeding them words instead of bread becomes quite dangerous.

Not only foolhardy quacks and short-sighted politicians attempt the risky business of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. Only little men play double, and Carranza is playing double when he assures us with one corner of his mouth that Mexico, under his rule, will become a land of social equality, in which special privilege will exist no more; while with the other corner he insists that vested interests will be protected and those who have suffered by the revolution—ninety-nine per cent of them having been the holders of special privileges—be recompensed. Things are good or they are bad, beneficial or injurious, desirable or undesirable. If land monopoly is good it should be encouraged and protected. If it is bad it should be destroyed, ruthlessly and at once. If special interest is right the more we have of it the better. If it is wrong away with it immediately. There is no middle ground.

Observe also how profoundly reactionary is the economic thought of this alleged revolutionary leader. He points out the necessity of developing Mexico's natural resources and forthwith assumes that this will be possible only with the help of the native and foreign capitalist, according to the methods now in vogue. Grant that and all revolutionary movements become absurd. Grant that and you are bound to seek the capitalist's aid, on such terms as the capitalist sees fit to grant. But the necessity for crawling on one's knees to capitalism vanishes when natural resources, and the interchange of credits based on labor applied to natural resources, are set free; when the reign of special privilege is abolished.

I devote unusual space to this analysis of Carranza's latest ma-

nifesto because the one and all-important thing is that the outside world should understand that Mexicans are fighting for realities, and a leader like Carranza, who declares that this is an economic and not a political revolution, will not be allowed to substitute the shadow for the substance. Fortunately, as I believe, among Carranza's present followers there are many who understand that clearly, and on them, and on others who link with them, the future of this great struggle rests.

WM. C. OWEN.

Manifesto to Mexicans, Issued by Emiliano Zapata AND SIGNED BY HIM AND THIRTY-FIVE OFFICERS, AUGUST 1914.

The revolutionary movement has attained its zenith and it is, therefore, time for the country to know the truth.

The existing revolution did not make itself for the purpose of satisfying the interests of any one personality, of any one group or of any one party. The existing revolution recognizes that its origins lie deeper and that it is pursuing higher finalities.

The peasant was hungry, was enduring misery, was suffering from exploitation, and if he rose in arms it was to obtain the bread which the greed of the rich denied him, to make himself master of the land which the egoistic landed proprietor kept for himself, to vindicate the dignity which the slave-driver iniquitously trampled on daily. He threw himself into revolt, not to conquer illusory political rights, which he did not need him, but to procure for himself the piece of land which must supply him with food and liberty, a happy fireside, and a future of independence and growth.

They make a lamentable mistake who suppose that the establishment of a military government, that is to say, a despotic government, will insure the pacification of the country. It can be obtained only by the realization of the double operation of reducing to impotence the elements of the ancient regime, and creating new interests linked inextricably with the revolution, solidaric with it, in danger and prosperous if it becomes established and consolidated.

The first task, that of making it impossible for the reactionary group to be any longer a danger, is carried out by two different methods; by the exemplary punishment of the chiefs, of the great criminals, of the intellectual directors and active elements of the conservative faction, and by attacking the pecuniary resources they employ to work up intrigues and provoke revolutions; that is to say, by the subdivision of the properties of the hacienda owners and politicians who have put themselves at the front of the organized resistance to the popular movement which began in 1910 and has attained its crowning point in 1914, after living through the gallow of Ciudad Juarez and the reactionary crisis of the Ciudadela, the tragedy which the Huerta dictatorship let loose.

In support of this subdivision there militates the circumstance that the greater part, not to say the whole, of the cultivable lands to be nationalized represents interests created under the shadow of the Porfirio Diaz dictatorship, to the grave injury to the rights of a multitude of natives, small proprietors and victims of all kinds, who were brutally sacrificed on the altars of the ambitions of the powerful.

The second task, that of creating powerful interest akin to the Revolution and in solidarity with it, will be brought to a happy conclusion when the natives, individually and in their communities, receive back the innumerable tracts of land of which they have been despoiled by the great land owners; and this great act of justice receives its complement, as regards those who have nothing and have had nothing, in the proportionate repatriation of the lands given to the dictatorship's accomplices or expropriated from idle proprietors who do not choose to cultivate their heritages. Thus there will be satisfied both the human demand for land and the appetite for liberty which is making itself felt throughout the Republic as the formidable reply to that savagery of the hacienda owners which has maintained, even in the twentieth century and in the heart of free America, a system which the most unfortunate serfs of the Middle Ages in Europe would hardly have endured.

The Plan of Ayala, which translates the peasants' ideals, satisfies both terms of the problem, for, while it treats the sworn enemies of the people as they deserve to be treated, reducing them by expropriation to impotence and innocuousness, it establishes

in articles 6 and 7, the two great principals of the return of stolen lands (an act of imperious justice), and the splitting up of the expropriated cultivable lands (an act required alike by justice and expediency).

To take away from the enemy the means of doing damage, was the wise tactic of the reformers of 1857; at the time when they despoiled the clergy of his immense possessions, which it used solely for the purpose of plotting conspiracies and keeping the country in perpetual disorder through those military uprisings which bear so striking a resemblance to the last barrack outbreak, which also was the fruit of an understanding between the military and the reactionists.

As for the reconstructive work of the Revolution, the formation of a nucleus of interests which shall support the new order, this was the task of the French Revolution, which for fruitful results has not had its equal up to the present day; for it divided among tens of thousands of humble peasants the vast estates of the nobles and clergy, and made the multitude thus favored such vigorous adherents of the Revolution's work that not even Napoleon, with all his genius, nor the Bourbons, with their aristocratic intransigence, were ever able to root it out of the French nation's physical and spiritual life.

It is certain that the deluded believe that the country is going to be contented—as it was not contented in 1910—with an electoral pantomime, from which are to arise new and apparently honest men who are to occupy the curule chairs, seats in the legislature and the Presidency's lofty throne, but they who judge the matter thus appear to ignore the fact that the country has reached, during the crisis of the last few years, a harvest of lessons it can never forget, which will not permit it to lose its road, and has acquired a profound understanding of the causes of ill-being and the way to combat them.

We may be sure that the country will not be satisfied with the timid reforms sketched so ingeniously by the lawyer D. Isidro Fabela, Minister of Relations in the Carrancista government and a man who is a revolutionist only in name, since he neither understands nor sympathizes with the Revolution's ideals. The country will not be contented with the mere abolition of pluck-me stores, if exploitation and fraud are to exist under other forms; it will not be satisfied with municipal liberties exceedingly problematical at they are, while the basis of economic independence is still lacking, and will less will it be possible to wheedle it with a petty program of reforms in the laws dealing with land, taxes, when what it is urging is the radical solution of the problem relating to the cultivation of the lands.

The country wants something more than the vaguenesses of Sr. Fabela, which the silence of Sr. Carranza is endorsing. It wishes to break, once and for all, with the feudal epoch, which is now an anachronism. It wishes to destroy with one stroke the relationships of lord and serf, overseer and slave, which, in the matter of agriculture, are the only one, which rule, from Tamaulipas to Chiapas and from Sonora to Yucatan.

The country people wish to live the life of civilization; to breathe the air of economic liberty which as yet they have not known; and this they never can do while their still remains about the traditional lord of the scaffold and the knife, who disposes at whim of the persons, of his laborers; an extortioner of wages who annihilates them with excessive tasks, brutalizes them by misery and ill treatment, dwarfs and exhausts his race by the slow agony of slavery and the enforced withering of human beings whose stomachs and empty brains ever hunger.

First a military and then a parliamentary government; with administrative reforms in order that the reorganization may endure; an ideal purity in the management of the public funds, official responsibilities scrupulously exacted, liberty of the press; for those who do not know how to write, liberty to vote for those to whom the candidates are unknown; the correct administration of justice for those who will never employ a lawyer—all these democratic prettinesses, all these fine words in which our grandfathers and fathers took such delight, have lost today their magic attraction and significance to the people. The people have seen that with elections and without them, with suffrage and without it, with the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz and the democracy of Madero, with the press gagged and with the press given the full est liberty, always and in all circumstances, it has still to chew the cud of its bitter lot, to endure its miseries, to swallow humiliations that know no end. For this reason, and with abundantly good cause, it fears that the liberators of today may prove themselves like the leaders of yesterday, who clipped their beautiful radicalism at Ciudad Juarez and in the National Palace forgot all about their seductive promises. (To be continued till next week.)