

Regeneración

English Section

Edited by WM. C. OWEN

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HENRIQUE FLORES MAGON.
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"Preparedness" Will End In The Pork Barrel.

If a man adopts the theory that he must make money and get ahead, no matter what principles he may have to trample on; if he tries to corner the earth, habitually pushes the weakest to the wall, shuts his eyes and ears to everything outside to his own immediate circle and concentrates all his faculties and energies on getting rich, that man becomes rotten to the core. In becoming rotten he becomes a weakling, shorn of all his natural strength, incapable of meeting great emergencies when they arise. Nature will not be denied. It is impossible to separate oneself from the rest of mankind without breaking the basic law of Solidarity, and nature punishes the violation of that law by reducing the violator to impotence. Men of the Napoleonic type march to their ruin with sickening monotony because they ignore that law. Aristocracies, originally the flower of their respective nations, fall into hopeless degeneracy because they ignore that law. Above all, the masses still drag out their existence in the mud of helplessness because, as a whole, they are the most narrowly-selfish of all classes. I am no admirer of the ordinary workingman, for it is the almost universal experience that when he can keep his belly full and body warm he does not give a damn about the other fellow. No aristocracy does worse than that.

You make apologies for the workingman. You say that the peasant, notoriously close-fisted and hard in all his dealings, is so because his own struggle for existence is severe. You say that the workingman cannot be expected to look beyond the confines of his factory and the wages he receives for working there. You say that it is preposterous to expect lofty conduct from a proletariat always on the edge of the abyss. All that seems to me unquestionably correct, and because I consider it correct I wage, to my own feeble best, war against the social inequities and philosophies answerable for making life one hideous tragedy. I will not stultify myself by pretending that the Mexican peon, today a landless and moneyless outcast, can rise until the institutions and philosophy that have made him an outcast are replaced by better ones. I will not stultify myself by pretending, with Woodrow Wilson and other politicians, that the Statue of Liberty or the Declaration of Independence are anything but an unparadonable insult to the men standing in the breadline. I will not stultify myself by pretending that a country in which money making is considered man's highest duty can be otherwise than rotten. The United States, being the most advanced of modern countries, is necessarily wedded to the delusions that are hurling modern society to smash. In the older countries there are humanitarian traditions which act as powerful brakes and force even the most autocratic to remember that, at least, a semblance of Solidarity must be observed. Here there is no such brake. In the United States it is "Every one for himself and the devil take the hindmost." As a consequence you have not a nation but a greedy, scrambling mob. And such a mob is just about the weakest thing on earth.

With characteristic frankness Germany has notified the world that she accepts in its entirety the essentially modern doctrine that "Might makes Right." Thereby, in my opinion, she has assured her downfall, for she has arrayed the world against her. No society of which we have any record has ever been willing to accept that doctrine when brought boldly face to face with it. Every society has recognized at once and instinctively that, pushed to its logical conclusion, such an ethic means incessant wars of universal extermination, and against that the instinct of self-preservation automatically rebels. So all the world is arming to protect itself. The United States feels also the necessity of arming for self-protection. But the United States, having mocked to scorn the doctrine of Sol-

idarity, cannot appeal to it successfully in its hour of need. If the English worker asks why he should care for a country that never cared for him, the worker in the United States puts that question still more vehemently. So the propaganda of "Preparedness" meets a thousand difficulties.

No movement succeeds until it has Solidarity back of it, and no movement gets that Solidarity until its followers are satisfied that it represents what is to them the right, the thing they believe in, the thing for which they are prepared to sacrifice, if necessary, life itself. All history proves that, and it is certain that such world-revolutionizing upheavals as the rise of Christianity, the Protestant rebellion against the authority of the Church of Rome, the French Revolution and others it is needless to name, never could have gathered the force that swept them to victory had not thousands of their adherents felt that those movements meant something absolutely essential to their lives and, therefore, worth dying for. I am also sure that history proves that a social scheme not based on, at least, some modicum of Solidarity is headed straight for self-destruction. Taking history as a whole the priesthood has been the ruling class, and every priesthood has defended its special privileges by the plea that it worked for and promoted human brotherhood. Priests have understood their business.

There is no Solidarity in the United States. There is no real patriotism, although there is never-ending talk about it. The United States is one of those erring ladies who "doth protest too much." There has not been the assimilation the papers and politicians brag of so constantly. When, in the face of a really impending danger, the call goes forth there is no sinking of individual differences, but rather a more fixed determination on the part of the individual to catch all the fish possible out of the muddied waters and make hay while sunn the shines. At the very moment when military men are talking sacrifice for the good of the country our press is commenting sarcastically on the recent discovery that every cadet sent to West Point cost this nation 20,000. "The Los Angeles Times" works tooth and nail for a large standing army and navy. At the same time it prints on its editorial page such cartoons as the one now before me, in which Europe is represented as Red Ridinghood trembling at the sight of a ferocious military wolf, whose ears and nose are cannon while his tongue is a bomb and his teeth are bayonets. The sympathies of the "Times" are obviously pro-German and militaristic, yet it caters also to its pacifist following with such cartoons as that just mentioned and articles from which Bryan himself might quote. Its real attitude is that of its correspondent, Harry Carr, who tells us that he does not care a cent which way the war goes; who, in other words has no opinions and cares only to write what will catch the fancy of subscribers. And the "Times" is typical of all our Western journalism.

There is no Solidarity because there are no convictions; there are no convictions because there is not that sense of brotherhood, which makes men sympathize in the struggles of their fellowmen. Convictions and Solidarity being lacking there is no strength. Strong men are incapable of witnessing a great conflict without forming decided opinions, one way or the other, and translating those opinions into action. For this they may be hated but they are not despised. Weak men, on the other hand, always stand aside to please both parties, and thereby win well-earned contempt. Today the United States, having been too indifferent and timid to face the real facts concerning Mexico, has Mexico's general contempt; and today the United States, having catered to the vote of its foreign-born citizens and tried to please every one, has the unlimited contempt of Europe and the European-born population within her gates.

Joseph H. Choate, formerly leader of the New York bar

and our ambassador to Great Britain, is unquestionably a brainy man. He delivered an address recently from which all the papers of the country have quoted freely, and told his audience that today the United States is the most hated nation on earth. As he put it, "at least two of the warring nations of Europe (Great Britain and Germany) dislike us more than they do the men they are fighting in the trenches." They denounce us, he declared, as cowardly neutrals who care only for getting fat on increased trade, and he emphasized in particular that throughout the British dominions we are sneered at as having taken shelter under Wilson's phrase that we are "too proud to fight." I, of English parentage and therefore strongly opposed to the State Socialist, bureaucratic ideals Germany represents, am one of those sneerers; and I am positive that the United States is full of Germans who also sneer for reasons that seem equally good to them. I sneer at a country that, professing to be a democracy, encourages by its silence what seem to me the infamous aggressions of the most powerful military autocracy on record, swallows complacently what seem to me unpardonable outrages and insults, and dares not declare that a government allegedly based on the will of the people can have no sympathy with the ambitions of a Kaiser who tells his subjects everlastingly that he rules as the representative of God. I feel that if my friendships were sought by a man who professed that sort of nonsense and arrogated to himself the right of sending thousands of his fellow-beings to premature graves, I should decline all dealings with him; and I consider that Wilson, Bryan, and the rest of them—my alleged servants and representatives—should feel as I do. I imagine that a foreign-born German citizen, who regards things from an angle to which I am blind, feels similarly on what he considers Wilson's partiality to England. In Germany today they say: "Why should we care about the United States when she is afraid even to go to war with Mexico?" They take not the slightest stock in our President's high-sounding phrases. They look on this nation as a powerless mob.

Few things in this country of false pretenses have been more sickening than are our President's speeches on the duties of the naturalized citizen, or than the agitation based thereon. This whole business of naturalization, with the never-ceasing efforts of the politicians to manufacture a fictitious affection for the United States, is a fraud so gross and degrading that no self-respecting man can afford to countenance it. I, for example, became a citizen because I had to, in order to take up a homestead; and now it is pretended that, in taking that forced oath, I changed my whole character, became incapable of judging cases on their merits, converted myself into a supporter and admirer of what I have always considered a plutocracy, and pledged myself to stand by it, right or wrong. That is the pretense, the fraud, the sham, the unspeakable hypocrisy—a hypocrisy that has done much toward dragging the ethics of this country down to their present level; for no man or nation can profess high standards and follow low ones without suffering a moral deterioration no words can measure. If you don't mean to do a thing you should not talk about it. If you really think money and place the only things worth hunting for, God's sake spare your preaching. It is your habit of saying one thing and meaning another that we of English blood detest.

This war, like all great tragedies, is forcing us to search our hearts; to examine closely the political conjurer's fine words and observe the enormous chasm between them and the realities. In every large American city there is a Jewish ghetto, inhabited by Naturalized Jews. The theory is that they are American citizens. The fact is that they are Jews, members of a race pre-eminent among the peoples of the world for running true, century after century, to racial type. In every large American city there is an Italian quarter in which the life is distinctly

Italian, and from which the members return to Italy the moment they have saved sufficient money. In every large American city there is a German quarter in which the life is German; just as everywhere there are Scotchmen to whom Burns day is the great festival of the year, and Englishmen who meet in Sons of St. George and other societies, and speak favorably of this country as being money mad. "Emigration is but a change of climate and not of character," ran the old motto, and it holds good today. Let the United States treat her foreign-born citizens well and they will think well of her. Let her treat them badly and all the oaths of allegiance in the world will not secure their loyalty.

I can understand an Englishman's affection for his native land, both on the ground of family and historical traditions, and because he considers—as I think, rightly—that in England he enjoys rights obtainable nowhere else. Talk to such a man and he will tell you that in no other country can he speak his mind so freely, be so sure of a fair trial, or so free from the spy and the official, with their infernal methods for keeping track of men and women as if they were so many bales of merchandise. He will tell you that he is not robbed by a fraud of a protective tariff, and if you remind him that he is the slave of land monopoly and capitalism, he will reply that he knows of no country where he can be exempt from that, such institutions being part and parcel of a world-wide system. I can understand the German being loyal to his Fatherland, for her bureaucratic methods are doubtless congenial to his love of method, and his rulers make actual efforts to organize industry, naturally giving him some security. I can understand the Frenchman's passion for France, the beautiful, and the Italian's longing to return to his own sunny Italy. But seldom have I found a native American who would not go anywhere, and live under any flag if he thought he could make money there more easily; and I have the decided belief that such loyalty as the United States will be able to rely on will be confined to those who have prospered materially by the great opportunities the opening up of a new continent afforded them.

When I hear Americans boasting of their loyalty to the United States I always remember that, almost with one voice, they denounce her politics as hopelessly corrupt; her administration of justice as most venal and here, of all countries, "This often seen the wicked hand buys out the law." United States prisons, lunatic asylums, poor houses and other public charities are honeycombed with graft, and are only too often managed with a cruelty that cries to heaven for vengeance. United States exploitation of labor is on the most coldly-calculating business basis, unsoftened by a single drop of the milk of human kindness. When obedient Congresses have voted huge sums for an enlargement of the army and navy will the necessary men be forthcoming, and will they have the necessary devotion? I do not believe it. I think that twenty years hence will see, as regards that most important of all points, an "unpreparedness" even greater than exists today. A society of speculators, stock jobbers, land and money monopolists and discredited politicians will find few willing to lay down their lives in its defense. The trade of soldier and sailor will grow more and more unpopular. Only one thing, in my judgment, could alter that, viz. actual invasion by Germany or Japan; an event at present most improbable.

The agitation of centuries, which began with the revolt against the authority of the Church of Rome is coming to a head. The whole world, now rendered practically one by steam and electricity, is being dragged into the maelstrom; and as that world is made up of peoples varying infinitely in ignorance and understanding, the conflict is certain to be long and bitter. We cannot hold aloof. We are all men, and to nothing that deeply affects mankind are we entitled to stand indifferent. We cannot plod along in the old, narrow ruts, for the action is now upon the largest scale. We cannot stifle ourselves in the straitjacket of patriotism, partyism or any other "ism," for the conflict reaches far beyond the narrow confines of national boundaries, and we must pass judgment on it and play our part in it as cosmopolitans, who face facts impartially and care only for the triumph of the right.

When men's lives and fortunes are at stake, as they are today, they hunger for truth instead of for fine words. They grow intolerant of shams, and they are growing most intolerant of the United States, with its brazen brag of equality and individual liberty, to which its entire record gives the lie. That cannot last. That fraud is being punctured at a thousand different points by thousands upon thousands of the cheated. And those cheated ones cannot be trusted; cannot be depended on to stick; cannot be relied on to fight for the United States when the country's leaders give the signal. The campaign for "preparedness" will produce plenty of fine talk and doubtless will swell the Pork Barrel still more portentously, but it will not produce the one essential—the reliable man behind the gun. This country is steeped to the lips in individual money-making, and to convert it to militarism would be to revolutionize its life from top to toe and shake the whole economic structure to its base. The material for such a fighting machine as Germany created is not to be found in the United States, but the material for a drastic and far-reach-

ing revolutionary movement abounds, and the country has reached the stage of dissolution at which it is sick of petty reforms and aching for substantial change. The conditions that preceded the downfall of Porfirio Diaz are finding a close parallel on this side of the Rio Grande.

WM. C. OWEN.

What Will The Machine Do Next?

The case of George D. Burkitt, until recently assistant postmaster at Winnetka, a suburb of Chicago, should go far toward opening the eyes of the public to the bureaucratic tyranny which now has this country by the throat. He has been summarily dismissed from the service, and, for all we know, thrown starving on the world, for the hideous crime of having criticised President Wilson. The facts of the case are established by official correspondence which cannot be denied, and they reveal a situation which would not have seemed possible ten years ago.

Burkitt, as he claims, holds the opinion that a widower should allow twelve months to elapse before marrying again. Accordingly he expressed his disapproval of President Wilson's proposed marriage. He says that his criticism was made only to one or two persons, and in the course of casual conversation. That is immaterial, for he had a right to shout his opinion from the housetops. It is also immaterial whether his opinion is wise or foolish, the one point being that he has been dismissed from the postoffice service on the ground of DISLOYALTY to the President. The official letter which preceded his dismissal will doubtless become historic, for it has raised a question of the very first importance and unfurled a standard around which the hottest kind of fight is being fought to rage. This was the letter:

U. S. Postoffice, WINNETKA (Ill.) Oct. 20, 1915.—Mr. George D. Burkitt, Assistant Postmaster: It has been reported to me that on the day the reports concerning the engagement of the President were published in the daily papers you made remarks concerning the same which I consider disloyal, not only to your superior officers, but also the administration as well, thereby placing me in a very embarrassing position.

Please let me have promptly a written statement from you quoting the exact language you used and submit such explanation as you may wish in this connection.

"A. M. KLOEPFER,
Postmaster"

Burkitt was removed from office despite his vigorous assertions that he intended no disrespect to the President, and his urgent prayer that his case be specially investigated. The final letter he received from the office of the Postmaster-General is dated Nov. 13 and ends as follows: "The papers in your case were very carefully reviewed before final action was taken. Favorable consideration, therefore, cannot be given your request that the matter be made the subject of a special investigation by a postoffice inspector."

How can Americans, who boast that they have discarded loyalty, regard with complacent indifference the situation this case reveals? How can they have the face to ridicule the prosecutions for "lese majesté" so common in despotic countries, while tolerating this sort of thing at home? I do not believe their present blindness to a State tyranny which has grown to such colossal proportions in this country will continue long, and I look confidently for stubborn rebellion against the kingships to which a slavish State Socialism has made us subject. I look for unsparring criticism of Wilson's autocratic course in the matter of Mexico, and for a rapidly-growing appreciation of the lamentable fact that the United States is ruled today by a politician-king, and under him, by a locust-swarm of politician-kinglets, all fattening at the public crib and exercising unrestrained powers that in days past brought kings' heads to the block.

After I had mailed this week's leading article I received, at my home in Washington, copies of

"Regeneracion" of November 13, and learned that the postoffice authorities are preparing to attack the paper and its editors for something—one knows not what published in it last month. It confirms the opinion expressed in my leading article, viz. that the United States is the most disappointing of all countries, precisely because it talks the best and acts another, and is freedom and practices despotism. Where rulers make no pretence of allowing free speech one knows what to expect and governs oneself accordingly, but in United States one is actually invited to take one's part in the general discussion, only to find oneself in jail if the views expressed are displeasing to the authorities that invited them. No man ever amounts to anything who blows both hot and cold. No nation can be really an influence that sits on two stools. One of two things the United States will have to do, and quickly. It must either embrace Freedom, openly and frankly, or it must throw her overboard and go in outspokenly for despotism. Then we of the United States shall know exactly where we stand. At present we do not.

The gigantic eruption known as the European war is forcing to the front this great question of Freedom as against subjection to the will of a State Socialist autocracy; for the contest is, at bottom, between the ideal of individual freedom, with England as (most imperfectly) its champion, and the ideal of a society governed bureaucratically, with a King, in or out of uniform, guiding the machine. I do not believe in this latter ideal. I do not believe that the paternal government of Porfirio Diaz benefited Mexico. I do not believe that the paternal government of the Czar has benefited Russia. I hold most tenaciously to the opinion that men can grow out of their ignorance, their weakness, their lack of wisdom, only by being clothed with full opportunity to govern themselves and themselves make or mar their own fortunes.

Whatever may be Germany's fate on the actual battlefield she has already won a triumph in the political and economic field which is likely to prove of more permanent and pernicious importance. Forcing her enemies to revert to Militarism she has forced them also to revert to that State Socialism which made her a military power; for, in the last analysis, the all-government philosophy of Socialism leads to militarism and that centralization of official power without which militarism cannot exist. War visits that curse on us. War makes men afraid and prompts them to run to Authority for shelter. War has made the American people bend their backs and pray to Wilson, as the one great "I AM" who can keep them safe. War already has forced on individualistic England a State Socialism to which she never would have consented in times of peace. It is useless to complain. This is the logical consequence of militarism, and it should teach us that militarism will have to be overthrown at any cost.

War may force England to adopt conscription, which is alien to all the nation's deepest instincts; but, as yet, organized labor there bitterly opposes it. On that head William A. Atkinson remarks, in "The Individualist": "The fact that organized labor opposes conscription counts for little. It only means that they dislike that particular form of coercion. We have abundant evidence that, when the form is changed and given an industrial character, they are keen to uphold and enforce it. Thus, a man must not be forced into the army however great the nation's needs; but the same man shall be forced into a trades' union—which is to all intents and purposes an industrial army under bureaucratic control—at all costs, even at the risk of giving victory to a nation which has made Militarism its greatest ideal."

Labor, at present, is under the influence of the Socialist philosophy, which is, at bottom, the philosophy of Militarism. It does not believe in Freedom but in Compulsion; does not believe in Voluntary co-operation but in forced unions; thinks, with Elizabeth Gurlv Flynn—as stated by her most positively in San Francisco last winter—that it

needs only two articles in its creed: (1) That the end justifies the means, and (2) That might is right. The lady in question is no uncomplaining trespasser on the rights of the speech of a man of Eastern radicalism, but she is, according to her own lights, enough to suppress her they have the right.

Carranza had the hardihood to denounce the Catholic Church as being, "with the houses of prostitution, the worst enemy of the people." Note that Carranza is a Catholic, and a financial capitalist who has putted themselves on the life blood of the helpless poor. But we will let that pass, and present purpose being to point out that Carranza is unpopular with the church; this, for example, is how the "Morning Star," organ of the archdiocese of Savannah and published at New Orleans, puts it:

"We are also informed that Carranza will not attempt to organize a constitutional government in Mexico for at least a year. During this period, backed by the authority and the military of the United States, he will be the veritable dictator. It will take him perhaps a year to kill off all his opponents and prepare the way for his election as the constitutional President. The programme of waiting has met with the approval of Washington. The 98 per cent of Mexican people who do not favor Carranza and do not want him, count for nothing. It is the imperial will of Mr. Wilson that Carranza should be the Czar of Mexico, and Mr. Wilson is he who must be obeyed. The voice of the people is nothing to him."

Even our worst enemies are sometimes right, and in this case the church has the truth upon its side—especially in its strictures on President Wilson. The argument is not affected by the fact that the church itself yearns to govern Mexico, while the Mexicans themselves yearn only for one single thing, viz. to be let alone.

On the authority of James Blaney, who is a representative of the Red Cross Society but also a special correspondent of the "Los Angeles Times," it is stated most positively that Carranza is wilfully concealing famous conditions that are terrible. From the wealth of detail furnished I find it difficult to doubt the story, and indeed I believe that her warring politicians have inflicted on Mexico a misery that is very real. That has been the forecast made by this paper from the very first. Always we have warned the Mexicans that they must act for themselves instead of trusting to the State Socialist promises of aspirants for office. In this connection it is to be remarked that Blaney makes charges against John Kenneth Turner and the "Appeal to Reason" which it is imperative for them to answer. If the "Times" charged me, for example, with having sold my pen alternately to Madero, Huerta and Carranza, and backed the statement up at Blaney does, I should sue the "Times" immediately for libel, Turner and the "Appeal to Reason" must answer in a manner that will establish their innocence beyond all possibility of cavil.

WM. C. OWEN.

Laconics of Liberty

From Charles T. Sprading's book
LIBERTY AND THE
GREAT LIBERTARIANS

They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffin, and abuse
Rather than in silence shrink;
From the truth they needs must think
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three,
—LOWELL.

LIBERTY for the few is not liberty.
Liberty for me and slavery for you means slavery for both. —SAMUEL M. JONES.

THEY that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety. —BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.