

# Regeneración English Section

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## Woe Unto Him By Whom Offenses Come.

What is the economic question, of which they talk so much? Stripped of the bone—and to the bone we finally shall have to come—it means that a civilization devoted to industrialism will not tolerate much longer those who consume enormously while they produce nothing and hinder production at a billion points. It means, therefore, that we intend to get rid of the landlord and the usurer; Old Men-Of-The-Sea who have straddled Labor's neck for centuries. This, our urge toward industrialism, is at the bottom of the European war as it is at the bottom of the Mexican upheaval.

What good is the landlord? Obviously, as a landlord—how rankly the word smells of territorial aristocracy!—he produces nothing, for no man made the earth. The landlord, therefore, is a parasite, a toll-lever, a tribute gatherer. But he is incalculably worse than that, and for this reason I write of him as hindering production at a "billion" points. In truth the hindrance is incalculable. Look over the field of modern industry. Not a pick can be driven into the soil until the landlord grants permission, which means until the tribute offered him is such as satisfies his greed. Not a lathe turns, not a wheel is set in motion, until the landlord's terms are met. At every point he dominates; everywhere he says to modern industry: "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther; in these channels shalt thou move; the earth is MINE and I am the dictator."

What good is the usurer? His smooth fingers dominate the credits of the world, and he also says to industrialism: "Without me you cannot pay the landlord's tribute. Without me you cannot exchange your goods. I dominate the distribution of your product, and I too am in a position to say: 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther; within these channels thy energies shall be confined, for I too am king!'"

I am opposed to militarism, but my opposition is not merely on sentimental grounds. The horrors of the battlefield I leave to those who can paint the picture in colors my own palette does not boast; but I take what seems to me higher, broader, more comprehensive and incomparably firmer ground. I say that Landlordism and usury flourish under militarism, but they are vultures out of the same nest, brother robbers, partners in the common business of skinning industrialism and indispensable to one another. I understand it as axiomatic that in proportion as we slump back into militarism—which has been our barbarous past—the hold of the landlord and the usurer grows more secure, and that as we advance toward industrialism—which is the civilized future—the hold of the landlord and the usurer relaxes.

Militarism tends inevitably toward the creation of an aristocracy that looks down on Labor, and is sympathetic toward all those forces that help to keep Labor "in its place." Such forces are its natural and permanent allies. On the other hand, industrialism needs Labor, and finds itself crippled at every point by precisely those very forces which are the blood-suckers of Labor. Millions of men in these United States would start thousands of industries tomorrow were not the opportunity of starting them stopped by the monopolies which the landlord and the usurer enjoy. Millions of men,

therefore, goaded on continuously by industrial longings, are in uprisings against monopoly; and chronic revolt against the impediments that bar their way, and those impediments are the landlord and the usurer. I don't believe there is, or ever has been, a country in which the feeling against monopolists is so universal, so bitter and so persistent, as it is here in the United States; and that, in my opinion, is because all our aspirations as a people are instinctively industrial.

Now we are slumping back into the barbarous past; to militarism. We are slumping back because we have allowed the monopolists, who traffic off and dominate Labor, to get the upper hand; because although we wanted industrialism with all our hearts and souls, we did not understand what militarism wanted; did not understand that in tamely adopting the land-owning and usury arrangements of military-ridden Europe we were doing our best to kill industrialism; did not understand that we were building up once more the very bayonet-supported aristocracy which drove most of us as exiles to these United States. Today, therefore, we have 10,000 millionaires and paupers by the million.

I, an Englishman by birth, did not come to the United States because the soil, the climate or the people of my native country were obnoxious to me. On the contrary, I loved them and still love them. I came solely because I hoped to find here those opportunities of which monopoly—the landlord and the usurer—had deprived me in England. The German did not come here because he detested his Fatherland, but for the same reason as that which actuated me. The Mexican would a thousand times rather live in Mexico, but land monopoly and usury have chased him out. And so it goes all round. Labor—by which I mean all who earn their living by rendering service to society—has as its enemy the tribute-lever, the landlord, the usurer, the man who, by obtaining a monopoly, dominates and squeezes. It suffers from invasion. Its foe is the invader.

Recently I was talking with a somewhat noted Single Taxer who explained to me at considerable length the identity of rent and profit, quoted Mill, Ricardo, Adam Smith and I know not whom else, and wound up with a dissertation on the slow evolution of society—the sort of stuff the late Mr. Debs used to vent when discussing Mexico.

Finally I said: "You Single Taxers make the thing too complicated for the ordinary man. It is very simple, the fact being that if you allow the other fellow to have the cinch he will squeeze you. Whether you call it rent or interest is immaterial, the one important thing being that he has the power to squeeze, and squeezes. Stop giving men the power to squeeze! Stop giving the few a monopoly of production and exchange! Stop giving a few officials—Kaisers or dog-catchers—the power to govern nations! Stop giving special privileges of any kind to any one! Then all men will have equality of opportunity; then Labor will be free. Then you Labor 'in its place.' Such a world will have industrialism and peace, instead of the infernal militarism and war that now decimates society unceasingly."

To this complexion must we come at last; in some way, somehow. If we cannot get rid of the landlord peaceably, by mutual agreement, we shall have to do it forcibly, as they have been doing it in Mexico. If our brains are unequal to the task of erasing the one method by which monopoly can be destroyed, there will

be a series of blind and bloody uprisings against monopoly; and it cannot by any possibility be otherwise. It cannot and should not be. Industrialism has to realize itself—has to shake off its militaristic monopolistic straitjacket now suffocating it; has to break out of its present jailers' custody; has to rid itself of its ruling parasites or perish. It is a case of life or death, and mealy-mouthed moralizings and sentimental pacifisms should have no place in the discussion. Today, we all recognize that chattel slavery HAD to go. The monopolies now strangling industrialism are in a similar case.

Let me now apply these considerations to the recent massacre in Mexico—a massacre I deplore with all my heart but cannot wonder at. If you WILL go down to Mexico to grab her land the Mexicans are apt to kill you, for the Mexicans have made up their minds to get rid of landlordism at any cost. If you WILL go down there to corner her natural resources, and thus, having rendered her Labor helpless, exploit it, that Labor will do its best to drive you back again. If you WILL try to play the part of King-maker, deposing this President and crowning that, as Woodrow Wilson has been doing, Mexicans will hate you with the same deadly hatred you would feel toward a Kaiser or a Czar who attempted to play the dictator in United States.

Carranza cannot shield you, and he should not be able to even if he could. The crime of landlordism in Mexico has been so huge that even the stones of her deserts cry out against it; and the miserable, the unspeakably miserable, truth is that Americans, held by their fellow-countrymen in high honor and esteem, have been the greatest criminals. It is infamous, most infamous, that men who ape the role of moulders of the public's thought—such men as Hearst and Otis—should still be holding back for speculative purposes millions of acres in Mexico, for these men know well what havoc that brutal policy has brought, and I could quote their own papers by the yard to prove it. "It must needs be that offenses will come, but woe unto him by whom they come. It were better for him that a millstone be tied about his neck and that he were cast into the sea." Christ said it; and, for my part, I think he uttered an immortal truth.

WM. C. OWEN.

## Such Is Life

Mr. Jacob Koch, of Alhambra, Cal., is calling me all sorts of names because I am nailing him, and others like him, to the cross. I am. I am driving in the nails so hard that it hurts; and, as there is no escaping, they are covering me with abuse. In letters to "Regeneracion" they are calling me "an English fool who makes them laugh," saying that they are not, like me, "a dog who joins the enemies of his race," whatever that may mean; ect. ect. Yes, I have nailed them to the cross all right.

What I have said, in the simplest and most emphatic language, is that if you defend the brutal and unwarranted invasion of Belgium you will not be able, logically, to object when the United States decides to invade Mexico. There is no getting away from that argument. The man who defends the invasion of Belgium and their only chance of redeeming themselves from poverty and

from combating the invasion of any other innocent country. I, both as a private individual and as editor of this section, am opposing intervention which means the invasion of Mexico by the United States. I am pointing out that it would be as unwarranted as have been all the invasions of weaker by stronger nations, who endeavor to defend their actions by pleading that "Might is Right." The most uneducated man can understand the truth of that position, IF he is willing to be honest with himself.

Also I am accused of advocating in this section intervention—which means invasion—in Germany. What rubbish! I have said that when the high-handed crime of invasion is attempted by any government it is the duty of all lovers of Freedom to cry "Stop! Drop that! We are all a unit against the invader." I have said; and I believe it to be true, that if this course had been adopted the world would have been spared the horrors of these eighteen months of bloodshed. I have said that, treaties or no treaties, all who wished to put an end to the infamous invasiveness of military aristocracies should have united on such a course; and I have said, and I believe it to be true, that the United States was particularly called on to adopt that attitude. First, because it is everlastingly bragging that it is an enlightened, humane and non-military nation; second, because it was a party to treaties and agreements by which Germany had pledged herself most solemnly not to do the very things she subsequently did. I am not a partizan, or a patriot, or the slave of some pet partiality; I am a student of facts; of the evidence in the case; whatever that case may be.

In reality I am not so much an agitator as a teacher, and I find it necessary to teach the A. B. C. of Anarchism to many who call themselves Anarchists and are really nothing but State Socialists; on the side of might, regardless of whether it is or is not the side of right. He who occupies that attitude indorses, in politics, the rule of the majority; because, in politics, the majority has on its side the might. Such a man will always condone the invasion of the weak by the strong, and invariably you will find him justifying it on the plea—a gross distortion of Darwin's teaching—that the destiny of the less developed is to be crushed out of existence by the more developed. Lots of that barbarous sort of talk is going round just now, and it all tends to justify rule by the sword, rule by the purse, rule by the cunning of the priest and politician. All that I, as a teacher of Anarchism, oppose. I tell my readers, as I tell all men, that Anarchists have not a leg to stand on unless they themselves restrain from invasion and unless they also resist invasion to the best of their ability. He who tries to justify invasion is not an Anarchist, he is a barbarian.

It is not a question of Anarchism. It is a question of civilization. I say most positively that no science of society is possible unless you start by distinguishing between the invader and the invaded. The cry of the slave against his master is that the master has invaded and deprived him of his individual rights. The cry of the disinherited against those who have bought up the earth, or conquered it by the sword, is that they have been invaded and deprived of their right to the free and equal use of those natural resources which should be for the use of all. Wherever men are poor and helpless you will find that they have been the victims of invasion, and their only chance of redeeming themselves from poverty and

helplessness lies—in resistance to invasion and overthrow of the invaders. All monopolists are invaders. The hope of the future rests exclusively on the expectation that mankind will pluck up the courage to assert its rights and have done, once and for all, with this invasive business.

Among the civilized all this is recognized already, so far as the conduct of everyday life is concerned. Men of experience turn the cold shoulder—repel—the bore who insists on trespassing on their time and invading their personality. Cultured people do their best to keep out of their company—vulgarily offensive fellows who insist on pushing themselves where they are not wanted. Everybody hates the busybody who aches to have a finger in every pie, and I never knew what is called a "managing" man or woman who was not unpopular. In our hearts we all feel that life is hardly worth living unless we can be masters of our own actions, at liberty to gratify our own individual tastes and choose our own company. What applies to the individual applies with incomparably greater force to the class and to the nation, for they are only the individual multiplied a million times. No man can be happy with the hand of authority perpetually on his shoulder. No nation can be happy so long as its life is regulated by an invader. This is the fundamental doctrine of Anarchism; the ground on which it must make its appeal to a humanity seeking greedily for happiness. As I edit a professedly Anarchist paper; as the European war is the subject of which all men's minds are full; and as the European war abounds with Anarchistic lessons, I draw on it repeatedly for illustrations.

I take off my hat to Hugo Munsterberg, professor of psychology at Harvard; a German, and, I suspect, a far better German than any of my abusive correspondents, for he states expressly that, although resident in this country more than twenty years, he has refused to be naturalized. In an article specially contributed to "Current History" for November last, he, upholding Germany, has stated with a frankness truly admirable the fundamental issue at the bottom of this European war. It is the issue between Anarchism and Socialism; between those who believe in individual freedom as superior to all else, and those who claim that our first allegiance must be to what Munsterberg calls the "over-individual"—the State. This distinction being of unspeakable importance, since it explains everything I quote Munsterberg at considerable length. He says: "The fundamental issue has often been shown in this year of excited discussions. If all the absurd misunderstandings and willful distortions be disregarded, and the pitiful declamations about Treitschke and Nietzsche be set aside, the real difference comes clearly to light—the Anglo-Saxon system is controlled by the belief in the individual as such, and the Teutonic ideals are bound by the belief in the over-individual soul."

"The greatest happiness of individual men on the one side; the growth of cultural value, independent of the happiness which they bring on the other side; that is the world contrast. Everything else necessarily results from it. The overemphasis on the State as the bearer of the cultural values on the German side, the submission of the State to the perfection of the individuals on the Anglo-Saxon side, are the necessary consequences. "Like two great religions, these two groups of ideals are blessing Western mankind, both strikingly different from ideals of

the East. Different virtues must be emphasized, different defects must be censured, when the State is made to serve the individuals and their happiness, than when the individuals are to serve the State as the bearer of the national culture. This difference must not be minimized. We must keep it steadfastly before our eyes."

Later on, defending Garman-Americans for the active propaganda they have conducted in this country—and I myself consider their activity far nobler than the coldly indifferent "neutrality" on which so many Americans pride themselves—Munsterberg points out that German-Americans suddenly awoke to the feeling that it was their solemn duty to make an energetic propaganda, precisely because "their national ideals are so strongly contrasting with some Anglo-Saxon creeds. He proceeds to elaborate the subject thus: "Their whole devotion to the over-individual ends, their faith in the State as bearer of the ideals, their trust in thoroughness and discipline, in purity and loyalty, were involved. They had become almost unconscious of this contrast in the routine of everyday life. But the great struggle about the war has awakened the burning consciousness of the tremendous issue. They suddenly have felt with shame that they had not done enough to bring these German ideals into the American life and to arouse understanding for their eternal value."

Why should we not be honest in this matter? Why should we so perseveringly dodge and evade the central point? The German mind expects great things of the State and is prepared to undergo great sacrifices to uphold and strengthen it. The Anglo-Saxon mind looks on the State with dread, and hopes some day to do away with it entirely, as Herbert Spencer hoped. I, a true Anglo-Saxon, share that dread, and, having come to the conclusion that the State is today what Roman Catholicism was in the past, wish to undermine and destroy it as fast as possible, just as the Protestant rebels wished to undermine and destroy the Church of Rome. I have arrived quite logically at my Anarchism, and I object to men calling themselves Anarchists when the institution to which they truly pin their faith is Anarchism's great enemy, the State.

Under the name of the Reformation the struggle between free thought, as represented by the Protestants, and authority, as represented by Rome, tore all Europe to pieces for many generations. Who, if he were actually alive and a thinking man, could have been neutral on that soul-stirring struggle? Today the same struggle is rending Europe and agitating all the world; the struggle between authority, as represented by those who have confidence in the State, and revolt against authority, as represented by those who have no confidence whatever in the State and look on its increasing influence with most profound alarm.

REGNERACION is a rebel sheet. It has only hostility toward the State, whether in Mexico or the United States, in England or in Germany. Its natural affiliations, which I faithfully reflect, are with the rebels against authority. Its natural antipathies, which I represent as strongly as I can, are toward those who today make a fetish of the State and its hierarchy, just as their ancestors did of the mumbo-jumbo priests who skinned the people for centuries and forced martyrdom on every daring rebel who questioned their authority by endeavoring to un-

lock the gates of knowledge. This is not a new quarrel. It has simply come to us got up in a modern costume and speaking a language more suited to the times. You believe in the State and all that State government implies? Well and good. I detest the State and have not a particle of confidence in it. We are at war, and one or the other of us is a deluded fool, destined to learn the truth through bitter suffering.

WM. C. OWEN.

## Unite For Propaganda

The Anarchist groups of Chicago have joined hands for the purpose of doing, as they hope, more propaganda work; and doing it more effectively. With this in view they have opened a library and reading room at 712 S. Loomis St., Chicago, and they ask friends to donate books and literature, the supply they have on hand being insufficient to meet the demand, which is quite brisk. All communications should be sent to Max Charnick, Secretary, at the above address. Naturally we publish with pleasure this announcement, for if ever there was a time and place in which Anarchists needed to get down to solid thought, that time is now and that place the United States. They are called on to grapple intelligently with the greatest upheaval in history. They have to make up their minds whether they mean it when they declare themselves opposed to the State, as representing not individual freedom but the government of the many by the few.

All the world knows that certain countries are essentially military and certain other countries anti-military. Anarchists, therefore, have to make up their minds which they favor. Especially in the United States must they understand this question of militarism, for militarism is essentially a question of economics; of forcing the world to do its work under a system of orders from above.

Obviously this sort of knowledge is not to be got by attending lectures on homo-sexualism, by reading erotic literature, or by sleeping oneself in the literature of the past—in memoirs of this and that noted Anarchist, who did his work years ago, when the conditions now existing were not dreamed of. That is hero-worship of the rankest kind.

Anarchists should understand the Mexican upheaval, which is almost an exact facsimile of the great French Revolution and fundamentally a struggle by the disinherited to drive out the usurpers and regain possession of their inheritance. Most Anarchists in this country have not taken the least trouble to study it. Their opinion on it, and on the difficulties in which it is involving the government of the United States, is therefore worthless, and they are forced to neglect that magnificent opportunity for propaganda.

Anarchists should understand the European war; should know who started it and why; should be able to explain how some countries are still wedded to militarism while others are struggling to free themselves from militarism and emerge into a true industrialism. Knowledge of that sort does not grow on trees. It needs to be dug for, but luckily the digging has been made easy. The war has given rise to a literature which is extraordinarily eloquent—for it has been born of most profound emotions—and extraordinarily lucid in its handling of documentary evidence on which future historians will place the highest value. Anarchists, if they want to make propaganda out of the war, will have to study that literature and know what they are talking about. The International Radical Library can do good work, if it is used and not abused. Usually such institutions become loafing-places for chair-warmers who talk the more loudly the less they know. May this venture have a better fate!

## NOT EXAGGERATED

There are no words that can make this fact hideous and ghastly enough, or vivid and revolutionary enough—the fact that society and its institutions are organized for the purpose of enabling some people to live from the toil of the many. There is no language strong enough to lay bare the chasm that lies between the owning class and the producing class, between the class that works and the class that reaps the fruit of that work. Nor can there be any enduring peace among men until this class crime is forever abolished, and those who produce the wealth of the world are permitted to enjoy that wealth and no man shall eat bread in the sweat of another's brow.—George D. Herron.