

The Partido Liberal Mexicano and Political Images as Emancipatory Discourse

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Abstract

In the early 20th century the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) published their independent news outlet *Regeneracion* in the U.S. Southwest, with readership on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. In *Regeneracion* the PLM published articles addressing the 1910 Mexican Revolution from an anarchist point of view. They also made limited but significant use of images to both critique the Revolution and promote their anarchist ideas. Given their limited budget, the usage of images had a specific goal: to propagandize. The images they used can be classified into two different sections. The first, critical propaganda, was used specifically to critique the events, individuals, and revolutionary factions of the Mexican Revolution. The second, positive propaganda, was used by the PLM to promote their organization. Both were used to engage readers in the PLM's main goal of organizing an anarchist revolution.

This essay examines the use of visual culture in the politics and discourse articulations of the Mexican Revolution, and it is grounded at the Mexico-U.S. borderlands with a focus on the Revolution's most radical political organization, the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM). Like most Mexican revolutionary groups at the time, the PLM utilized various mediums aside from political rhetoric to get their message across to the public and gain their support. The PLM used slogans like “Tierra y Libertad” (Land and Liberty) and “Viva la Anarquía” (Long live anarchism) to mobilize their readers into taking action. The PLM connected their movement to other anarchist movements around the world by using the symbolism of the red flag to represent anarchism. They also wrote poetry and plays to reach a larger audience beyond the readership of *Regeneración*, their independent newspaper. After 1910, visual imagery became particularly important to the PLM because it was precisely during this era that the organization began to publicly identify itself as anarchist instead of liberal; a moniker they had used in the past to avoid misinterpretation of their message. Their decision to print images was a conscious and politically important move that reflected liberal conventions in Mexico, which also took on a transnational

significance when considering the heterogeneous make up and reach of PLM supporters in the U.S. and abroad.¹

In this essay, I argue that the PLM used images in two major ways. One was the usage of images to support or portray their ideology in visual form, what I refer to as “positive” propaganda. As anarchists, they criticized institutions like the government and the Church whom they held responsible for the oppression of Mexican people. They also believed that anarchism was the only way to build an egalitarian, leaderless, and populace-driven revolution that would secure long lasting liberty. Thus, their positive propaganda portrayed institutions of the state as the enemy and the PLM as the redeemer of the Mexican people. The second way the PLM used images is what I call “critical” propaganda, which includes images that speak to the larger events and processes of the revolution. These images portrayed the state in a negative light, but differed from positive propaganda in that their central message did not include positive PLM-specific rhetoric. Whereas positive propaganda informed the public of the PLM’s role in the revolution, critical propaganda was more concerned with portraying the complexities of the revolution where the PLM may or may not be directly involved. The fact that the PLM published their newspapers from the United States added a discursive layer about transnational organizing and advocacy. Their heterogeneous and transnational audience forced them to engage the complexities of their discourse.

The Emergence of the Newspaper of Combat – Regeneración

In the early 20th century, Mexico experienced the first global social revolution.² In response to the government of Porfirio Díaz which politically, socially, and economically oppressed the lower social classes of Mexico for 30 years, millions of people rose up to create change.³ Many of these people organized along localized, culturally and socio-economic specific

lines to fight for a variety of specific concerns. This led to a multitude of revolutionary factions working to remedy a variety of issues which often collaborated, or sympathized with each other, but also resulted in competing factions fighting for influence or power. Examining how the Revolution was portrayed, is a complex task simply because of all the players involved and the variety of means and methods employed. The general public during and after spoke about and told stories pro and con regarding the events and participants of the revolution. The official narrative of the Revolution highlights the contributions and actions of a few revolutionary leaders. Among those discussed are Francisco I. Madero, Venustiano Carranza, and Álvaro Obregón. Identifying official histories requires questioning “who” and “when.” Arguably, if there is an “official” history it is dateable from the time of the Cárdenas administration when his lieutenants made speeches at official functions eulogizing aspects of the Revolution. The most notable figures in popular lore are Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa, who are the two most “romanticized” heroes of the Revolution but have a more complex genealogy as to “official” history. Also part of this official narrative are the dates in which the Revolution starts and ends. In popular Mexican culture and the mind of most scholars the Revolution began in 1910 when Francisco I. Madero declared a revolt and moved to oust Porfirio Díaz and replace him as Mexico’s president. The end of the Revolution is generally agreed to be in the mid-1920, when the government stabilizes and most of the revolutionary leaders are either dead or have given up fighting against the central government.⁴

By looking outside of the official or state-sponsored narrative, we can complicate the nation-bounded narratives of the Revolution. There were groups, like the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) that organized from outside of the national content, enhancing and problematizing the story of the revolution. The PLM was an anarcho-communist group that

began organizing anti-government actions as liberal activists more than a decade prior to 1910. The PLM's most notable contributors were brothers Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magón, with Ricardo, the older of the two, being the most influential. Originally from a rural town in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, the Flores Magón lived their early adult lives in the nation's capital where they attended law school and became politicized. At the turn of the century the Flores Magón brothers were part of a variety of student activist and political groups that criticized the Díaz regime in order to expose the oppression and inequalities created by government initiatives. Eventually, many of these groups organized to thwart Díaz's continuation in office. Ricardo, one of the most vocal of these organizers, publicly denounced the government when others were cautious because of fear of persecution. The Díaz regime harassed and repressed reporters and journalists who engaged in questioning activities.

In 1900, along with the oldest Flores Magón brother, Jesus, Ricardo began the newspaper *Regeneración*. Initially, *Regeneración* was used to publically criticize judges and local government officials that unjustly sentenced or persecuted people. The brothers' training as lawyers provided them with legal knowledge to challenge these officials and expose their malpractices to the public. The liberal movement flourished in this period and the Flores Magón brothers were at the forefront of a wave of dissident activities. This made them reconsider the purpose of *Regeneración* and they soon re-launched the newspaper as a "periódico de combate," a newspaper for combat. *Regeneración* then became the primary outlet for the early PLM to openly criticize the Díaz regime directly and call for his immediate ousting. *Regeneración* was later also the transnational outlet through which the PLM communicated political ideologies because the second edition of the paper was published from Los Angeles, California. They published several forms of written documents including articles, editorials, poems, short stories,

and manifestos. They also made use of images to support their political messaging and used them as part of their emancipatory discourse. The PLM's use of the written word to express their politics has been discussed (and continues to be) by scholars. However, not much has been said about their usage of images as political tools. The PLM used images similar to the way they used literature. Images transmitted messages in a more accessible way to the largely illiterate Mexican populace. Two major messages transmitted by the images were the importance of the PLM in the liberation of Mexican people, and the danger posed by other revolutionary factions and power structures to the Revolution.

Because of their unrelenting opposition to the Díaz regime, the Flores Magón brothers were persecuted, their equipment was confiscated and destroyed, and they were imprisoned several times in both Mexico and the U.S. Their persecution occurred across borders and involved bi-lateral cooperation. In 1904, when they were in Mexico the Mexican government decreed that it was illegal for the Flores Magón brothers to publish their newspaper or any other written work, and any newspaper or publisher who distributed their work would be penalized. Feeling that they no longer could continue their political work in Mexico, Ricardo and Enrique, along with several other comrades, moved to the United States, a place they hoped would be less repressive.⁵

The PLM's situation did not improve in the U.S., in fact it became worse. Mexican officials working with their U.S. counterparts persecuted the Flores Magón brothers and other PLM organizers. PLM members also experienced the social and cultural limitations of being migrants and radicals in a society that did not agree with their politics and where they were viewed as outsiders because of their migrant status. The PLM had to constantly move to avoid persecution and to be able to continue publishing *Regeneración*. The Flores Magón brothers and

other PLM members were constantly jailed or had to go into hiding. This made their publishing of *Regeneración*, a laborious and dangerous endeavor, further complicated by their limited resources. At times they had to stop publishing the newspaper for months while they moved around the country or acquired equipment and monetary contributions from their readers to resume their work. When they were able to publish, they were limited to a few pages and only a bi-monthly publishing schedule. With the multitude of events, organizations, protests, and revolutions active in Mexico leading up to and during the 1910 decade, this meant that the space available in *Regeneración* became very valuable and had to be used effectively.

Positive and Critical Propaganda

PLM used images to communicate their political philosophy and agenda. They blurred the boundaries between popular and fine art. Mexican scholar Sergio Fernández argues that caricatures held a unique space in both the artistic and political spheres. Cartoons were considered “low” art, receiving less notoriety and prestige. Yet, the images that PLM published included both caricature and classical forms of artistic expression. Caricature allowed the PLM to combine irony and satire with political commentary. Fernández argues that this allowed cartoons to express human conditions that “high” art could not. Cartoons have the ability, and in fact it is their goal, to make the audience laugh. Therefore, the artistic skill that cartooning requires is as rigorous as so called “high” art because they make an emotional connection to the audience, instead of a solely intellectual one. Cartoons also conveyed irony and ridicule. Fernández argues that cartooning engages in a sort of social ridicule, one that is universal. This type of ridicule has elements of constructive criticism, but still maintains the irony, sarcasm, and satire of ridicule. Cartooning then enters the political sphere as tool when it can aim this type of social ridicule towards those who hold power or oppress.⁶

Mexican scholar Manuel González Ramírez writes about the important role that caricatures played in the Mexican Revolution. Regarding cartoonists' participation in movements like the PLM, he argues that cartoons complimented and elevated the work produced by ideologues. Cartoons reached broad and diverse audiences in a language they understood. To a largely illiterate population, the writings of people like the Flores Magón were semi or completely inaccessible without some help from those who were educated. Articles and manifestos had to be read publicly or interpreted by those who could read. Even after this process the written word never failed to inspire, however, images made the PLM's rhetoric more accessible.⁷

Organizations like the PLM included images and cartoons in order to get their message across to their readership. Likewise, artists and cartoonists needed their work to be seen in order for it to make a contribution and so their work intersected with the political and ideological currents at the time. Both sides understood their dependency on each other, and so worked to create content that worked toward similar goals. PLM understood this need for political art and artists. PLM contributor Juan Sarabia, for instance, wrote poetry that was uncharacteristically political at a time when artists were creating "art for art's sake."⁸ In a letter to fellow anarchist Ellen White (pen name for Lilly Sarnoff) Ricardo Flores Magón expressed his discontent with artists who advocated for "art for art's sake." Ricardo Flores Magón and the PLM believed art should have a message for the viewer, instead of being simply a medium for expression.⁹

An example of the PLM's usage of both positive and critical propaganda in a single *Regeneración* issue is displayed in their publication on June 13, 1914. This publication is exceptional because the PLM planned it for months by fundraising specifically for this issue. Although the publication is not representative of a typical paper of the day, it does illustrate what

they hoped to achieve with their propaganda. The paper included eight pages of propaganda and a total of seven images. This special issue of *Regeneración* discussed several important topics including the U.S. government's intervention in the Mexican Revolution, essays on anarchism, communism, revolution, solidarity among movements, women anarchists, and a PLM manifesto previously published in 1911.¹⁰ The images represent two examples of positive propaganda (Figures 1 and 2) and two of critical propaganda (Figures 3 and 4). The two positive propaganda images are done by the same artist, Ludovico Caminita, an Italian writer and illustrator that worked with the PLM and contributed at various times to *Regeneración*.¹¹ The two critical propaganda images are done by a separate artist whose signature is "L. Villegas."

The special issue stands out as an exception among the other issues of *Regeneración* because of its size. This means that the PLM had more space to work with, allowing them to address topics that normally would require several issues of the newspaper and limited coverage. The extra space also gave them the freedom to include images, including photographs, which were rarely used because of the expenses associated with their reproduction. The publication of the special issue also meant they had to be more selective about what they included. In order to have maximum value, the images had to be useful and informative.

The image used as the front cover for the June 13th issue depicts a man holding a large flag (Figure 1). The flag wraps itself partially around the man as he is holding, or possibly swinging it. At the top of the image is the word "Regeneración" in large letters. Behind the man is a partial sun emanating rays with the visible phrase "Tierra Y" in large capital letters which is half of the popular slogan "Tierra Y Libertad" utilized by the PLM and eventually adopted by the Zapatistas. From the bottom of the image there are three words that move upward. These are "CLERO," "BURGUESIA," and "GOBIERNO" (Clergy, Bourgeoisie, and Government).

Further analysis of the image reveals that the man holding the flag has broken chains around his wrists, is shirtless, and is wearing pants that are secured around his waist by a rope. He is meant to represent the poor agricultural worker who has broken the chains of oppression. The flag he is holding is the red flag of anarchism, the liberating force that allows him to break his chains. The sun behind him, and the words inscribed within it, is the anarchist movement that illuminates the path of the oppressed. The three words rising from the ground are actually emanating out with the smoke that is emitting from a burned city behind the man. They signify the triumph over the oppressive forces of the state, bourgeois society, and the clergy. Together the image presents *Regeneración*, and by extent the PLM, as the avenue by which Mexican rural workers can become free. The image points to very specific institutional oppressors and also suggests anarchism as the way by which these forces are defeated. This image is an example of what I describe as positive propaganda, which focuses on presenting the PLM and anarchism in a positive light. Although the image identifies the three oppressive institutions, they are in the background. The main focus of the image is the man and the flag; the message is of liberation through anarchism.

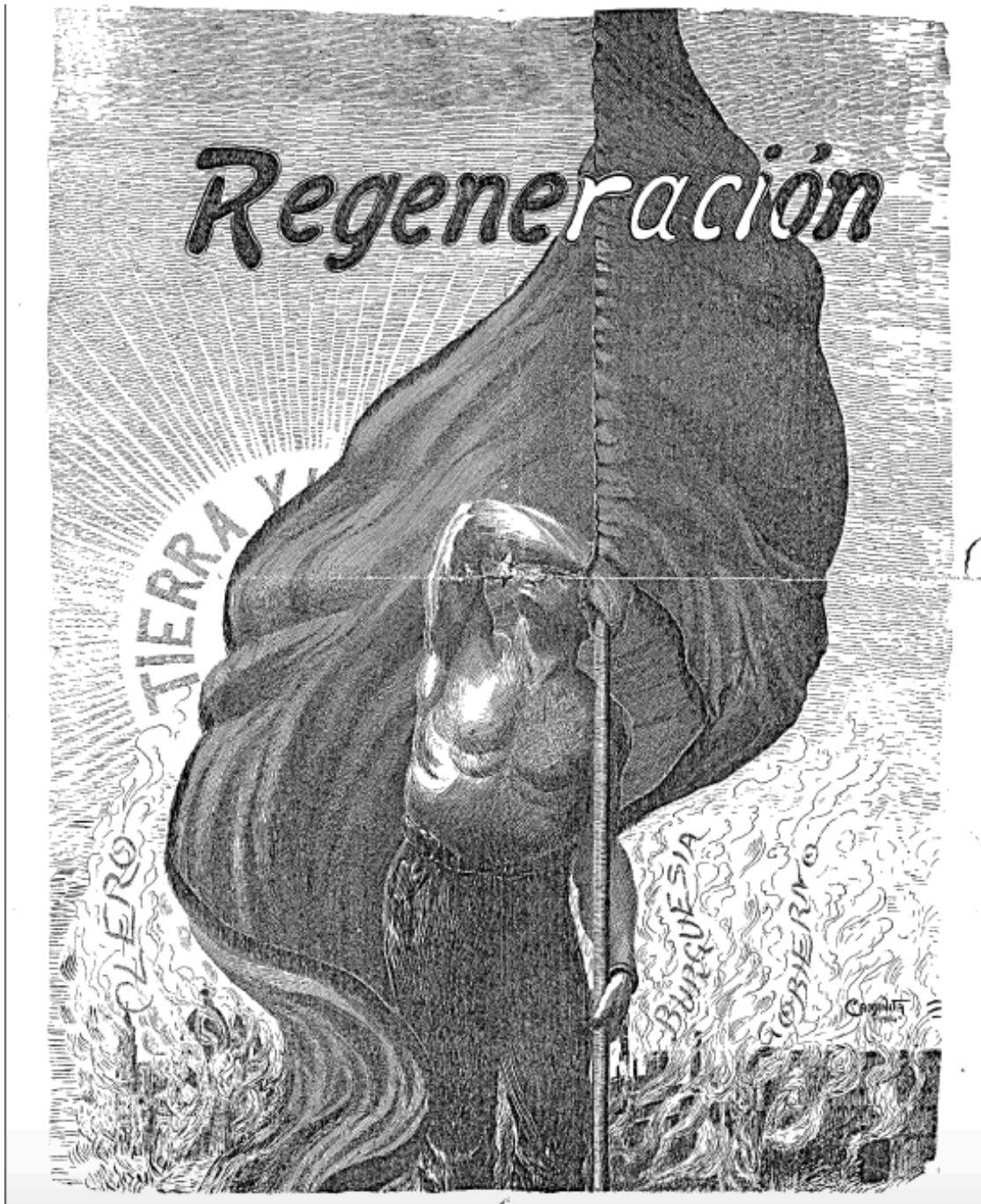


Figure 1

The second image is similar to the first in that it presents a positive image of the PLM and state institutions as the enemy (Figure 2). In this image a man holds a sword over his head, ready to strike down a dragon-like winged beast that is blocking the road on which the man is

walking. The sword bears the word “Regeneración” along the length of the blade. The man is barefoot and almost completely naked except for a thick piece of cloth wrapped and tied around his waist. This piece of cloth is inscribed with the letters “PLM.” The man again represents the poor, but unlike the man in the first image this man is clearly identified as a member of the PLM, or an ally. As a PLM sympathizer the man has the knowledge that the PLM publishes on the pages of *Regeneración*, represented here by the sword. This knowledge affords him the tools and power to strike down against his enemy, the beast. The beast blocking the movement of the man through the road is shorter than the man, yet still menacing. We cannot see the man’s expression in this encounter, but we can see the beast’s which is threatening. It is also preparing itself for a strike against the man. On its right wing are written the words “CAPITALISMO,” “AUTORIDAD,” “MILITARISMO” (Capitalism, Authority, Militarism). On the left wing are three words that are partially visible, “RELIGION,” “MORAL,” and “PATRIOTISMO” (Religion, Morals, Patriotism). The beast is meant to represent all the institutions that the PLM believe are oppressing the Mexican people: capitalism, authorities, militarism, religion, morals (meaning normative social expectations), and patriotism. Together all these institutions are preventing the Mexican people from reaching their freedom at the end of the road, which in this image is represented by a sun with the word “ANARQUIA” written inside. Similar to the first image, this one clearly points at the antagonist and hero of the interaction. Both images have a similar message, but figure 1 is depicting a scene of triumph, whereas figure 2 is depicting a scene of battle.

Abriéndose Camino

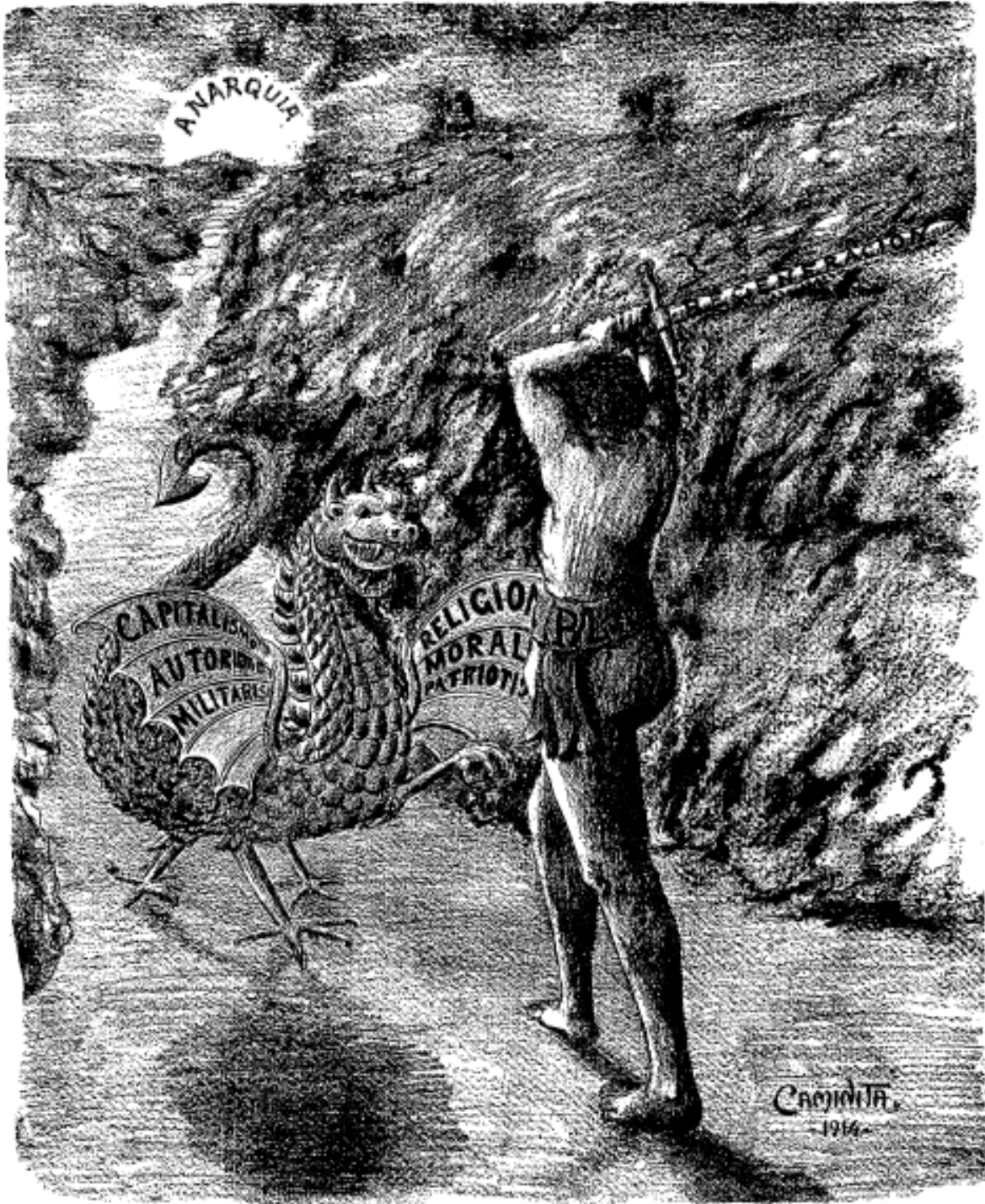


Figure 2

The purpose of images 1 and 2 is to depict the PLM in a positive light. The PLM has a specific idea about their position within the Mexican Revolution. They see themselves, and anarchism, as the solution to the oppression that the Mexican people are living. It was common for the PLM to make this argument in their writings. They often published articles and manifestos that called people into action. They specifically wrote of anarchism as the political and social ideology that would bring true, non-hierarchical, liberty. However, the images emphasize the PLM and *Regeneración* more than their writings. The caption in *Regeneración* for image 2, for instance, reads “El Partido Liberal Mexicano con su ponderosa arma, REGENERACIÓN, se abre paso destruyendo los obstáculos” (The Partido Liberal Mexicano with its powerful weapon, REGENERACIÓN, clears the path [by] destroying the obstacles).

The PLM used these images in part because of their sensationalism. The positive propaganda was meant to represent their organizations and their ideals in a way that was easily accessible. In their writings about anarchism they could go in to depth about its usefulness in revolution. The images, however, were more direct. They used imagery that depicted a conflict with an antagonist and a hero. The man in image 2 is fighting a beast to open up the path to freedom, whereas the man in image 1 is seen triumphant over the defeat of the oppressors. The images allowed the PLM to transmit a message that was easily decipherable by their readership. This was also a technique used in their critical propaganda.

The male figures in images 1 and 2 are meant to be representative of the PLM, if not its sympathizers and readership. However, these images do not give justice to the true demographics of the PLM and its supporters. Women were constant and important members of the PLM, sympathizing groups, and the readership. More importantly, women often took charge of *Regeneración*, managing its distribution and contributing to its content. To portray the

organization and the populace with the image of a single man is to elide the participation of women. The images of a man wielding the sword to open the path or lifting the flag in victory suggests that men are singularly responsible for political actions and their consequences. The PLM held progressive ideas about gender and women, including their positions in revolutions. They regularly engaged with, and wrote about, the re-organization of social orders, including gender norms. Women in the PLM (or associated with them) were at the forefront of gender critiques within left organizations as well as the PLM's impact in organization and ideology. However, unlike other newspapers at the time, like *El Colmillo Publico* and *El Hijo del Ahuizote* (which were published in Mexico), who often included women in their images, the PLM rarely did.

The second set of images presents a different narrative. The third image also depicts a scene of conflict, but in another context and with a different message (Figure 3). On the left side of the image stands Uncle Sam in full star spangled regalia holding a music box with words on the front side that read "PROMESAS AGRARIAS DE WILSON A LOS MEXICANOS" (Wilson's agrarian promises to the Mexicans). Tied to the music box are two apes who are part of the performance that Uncle Sam is presenting. To the right of the image there is a large crowd of people who are seemingly marching. Someone in the crowd is holding up a flag that reads "TIERRA Y LIBERTAD." To the right of the crowd there is a building up in flames. In this image the apes are a satirization of Venustiano Carranza's revolutionary movement and eventual government. These apes are owned and being controlled by Uncle Sam, who represents the U.S. government in general, and President Wilson specifically. Moreover, the apes are being conducted by Uncle Sam, Carranza is very explicitly being depicted as U.S. government's dancing monkey, completely subservient to his master's direction. The image suggests that the

promises that the Carranza government is making to the Mexican people are actually coming from the U.S., and are false. The crowd to the right is aware of this and is resisting against Carranza and the U.S. government. The people in the crowd are dressed in attire that identifies them as agrarian workers, the group that would be most outraged that true agrarian reform is not being enacted by the government. They carry the flag that reads “Tierra y Libertad,” linking them to the PLM and/or the Zapatista movement. However, unlike the examples of positive propaganda, this image’s purpose is not to send a message about the PLM, *Regeneración*, or their qualities as liberating forces. Instead the focus is on events that are happening in the revolution that do not directly involve the PLM. The concern is that of Wilson’s manipulation of Carranza and the people’s response to that. Here the message is not of the multitude of oppressive institutions and the salvation that the PLM can help gain, but the one institution, the U.S. government, who is behind a specific enemy, Carranza. The protesters are not all identified as PLM supporters or *Regeneración* readers. Their political involvement in this protest is not directly informed by a participation in, or acceptance of, PLM political rhetoric and ideology.

Lo Despachan con su Musica a Otra Parte



Figure 3

The final image (Figure 4) is also an example of critical propaganda. In this image there is a tiger-like beast that has its two front paws on a man lying on the floor. Its face is directed at the audience and has a menacing look. The beast here symbolizes the combination of capital, the authorities, and the clergy as part of a single oppressive force. To represent these institutions the beast is wearing regalia on its shoulders similar to that found on military uniforms, which implicates government authorities. From its neck hangs a crucifix, which points to the involvement of the clergy. Finally, on its lower back the beast bears the symbol of money which is made to seem like part of the animal's stripes. The man that the beast is stepping on is cuffed and chained by the wrists. The man is lying face down on the floor, and on his back we can see the word "PROLETARIO" (Proletariat) written. The message of this image is similar to figure 2. There is a beast that is the enemy of the proletariat that involves a collection of oppressive institutions. What makes it critical propaganda as opposed to positive propaganda, however, is the fact that like in figure 3 the PLM does not appear as part of the central message. The purpose of this image is the recognition of oppressive institutions, but not necessarily an answer to them. The image is clearly rhetorical, but the ideology it presents is not identified as exclusively a PLM one.

La Verguenza del Siglo



Figure 4

Images 3 and 4, more than the first set, are meant to educate and inform. The emphasis of these images is on the people or institutions that are oppressing the Mexican people, not on the PLM's role in the revolution. Whereas positive propaganda represents the PLM as an organization and revolutionary faction, critical propaganda presents the PLM's ideas about oppression in image form. They are meant to critique those that the PLM believe are working against the liberation of the Mexican people. There is also a difference between images 3 and 4. Image 3 reports on events that are occurring at the time that it is produced. It is clearly addressing Carranza's rise to power and the connections to the U.S. government and business interests that some, including the PLM, believe there is at the time. Their critical voice certainly came from their position as exiles in the U.S., their proximity to the border, and their anarchist politics. Image 4, on the other hand is not reporting on current events. Instead, it is informing the readership of the oppressive system made of capital, authority, and the clergy that the PLM argue are primarily responsible for the conditions in Mexico. Attacking the U.S. and Mexican institutions and individuals that were responsible for the oppression of the Mexican people (on both sides of the border) was all part of the PLM's mission to educate and encourage their audience toward revolution.

Figure 4 suggests that the man being attacked by the beast is representative of the oppressed. This also is misleading as men were not the only ones who suffered from political, social, and economic oppression under the Díaz dictatorship. Women were also subjected to the same oppression and many times to oppression that did not impact men in the same way. Societal norms were often the root of these layered limitations to women's participation in political movements and similarly impacted their representations in propaganda.

Figure 3, for instance, unlike the other three shows a crowd of people, as opposed to a single person. It depicts those who would stand up against Carranza and his supposed conspirators in the U.S. More importantly, it depicts a crowd that is openly involved in revolution. They are marching down the side of a street, burning buildings in their path and holding signage with political slogans. Yet the majority of the participants appear to be men. Even this image, which is intended to be a literal depiction of the population (as opposed to a symbolic one) does not truly show the participation of women, whose involvement was also common in violent resistance.

Visual analysis of these images provide us with a definition of the message, but the question still remains about the significance of the deployment of that message through images. In other words, why did the PLM publish two sets of images that had different purposes? Given the limited space of the newspaper, which even at eight pages does not allow for a lot of discussion compared to the multitude of events that are occurring in Mexico and the U.S. at the time, the deployment of these images had to be calculated and deliberate. Part of the answer lies in the complexity of the PLM's message and goals. As an organization the PLM considered themselves both activists and educators. Their task was to provide knowledge to the people of Mexico so that they might seek their freedom. This meant first identifying the institutions and individuals who were oppressing them. Hence the usage of images like figures 3 and 4. The PLM, however, also had a specific idea about what liberation looked like and how it should be achieved. For the PLM, anarchism was the true road to liberation. Figures 1 and 2 clearly depict this idea. Figures 3 and 4, then are in line with the PLM's goal to educate and mobilize the Mexican people against specific institutions, the enemy. Figures 1 and 2 point to anarchism as the ideology, the weapon, by which these institutions can be defeated.

Another aspect that gives insight to the significance of their usage is the PLM's involvement, or lack thereof, in the production of the images. The PLM's involvement in production is evident in figures 1 and 2. This points to an amount of consciousness about the images' message. The PLM are aware of the "theatricality" of the narrative they are presenting through these images.¹² They are aware that images allow for the artist to sensationalize a message and so they use imagery that does that most effectively. It is no mistake that in figures 1 and 2 what gives the men in the images power and victory are the PLM, anarchism, and *Regeneración*. Also purposely used is the imagery of the sun as the only thing that illuminates the road to freedom and its association to anarchism. The tone of the images is also different. Figures 1 and 2 are more serious in tone than figures 3 and 4. Figures 3 and 4, because they are meant to critique instead of provide a positive message, are more satirical in nature. The animals in figures 3 and 4 are dangerous, but not as threatening as the one in figure 2. The PLM's direct involvement in the production of figures 3 and 4 is unclear. Nonetheless, the usage of these images can mean that the PLM either consciously produced the images to provide a different, but still useful message, or had the plan to present both messages and found images that could do that. Either way, they were instrumental in choosing the message the images would portray.

The PLM's involvement in the possible production (and distribution) of images allows for a critique of their usage of these specific images. For instance, their usage of beasts to represent those they disagreed with or thought of as their enemies is in line with the PLM's written material on the same topic. The PLM would regularly write disparaging things about the people they disagreed with, including Madero, Carranza, Villa, and former PLM adherents, among others. Clearly, meant to be symbolic and present a message with a simple image, the

usage of the beast is also meant to dehumanize their opponents and make the triumph of a man much more significant.

Conclusion

Together these four images are used for specific purposes yet send a more complex message than perhaps intended. The PLM used images similar to how they used other media. In their writings they transmitted a message of awareness and a call to political action. They encouraged their audience to be informed and promoted anarchism as the path toward revolution and liberation. They attempted to identify true sources of oppression and the people they thought had intentions to further subjugate the people in Mexico. Similarly, they used images to transmit an often inaccessible message to those who would not read their words. The PLM were aware that their audiences in both Mexico and the U.S. were often illiterate or uneducated which required them to deliver their message through a multitude of mediums.

Of course the images also transmitted messages that the PLM were not aware of or possibly did not agree with. The PLM, like other anarchists at the time, attempted to address the concerns many women had about their position in society. They wrote articles emphasizing the importance of women participation. They also supported feminism and encouraged others to do so as well. As progressive as these ideas were at the time, the PLM still had its limitations when engaging the topics of women, gender, and sexuality. These images are an example of that.

Undeniably the images the PLM used served several purposes. In the June 13, 1914 issue of *Regeneración*, however, they primarily served two purposes. One was to promote anarchism and the PLM (positive propaganda) and the other was to critique oppressors and those they disagreed with (critical propaganda). Images used by the PLM before and after the special issue

also served these purposes. What is exceptional about this issue is the amount of images presented together. As a group, the images show the different ways the PLM used visual media to get their message across. Like any political and artistic expression, the production and deployment of these images was not without its limitations. However, the PLM made use of a medium they rarely had the resources to include in *Regeneración* and nonetheless understood the importance of utilizing such a medium.

Notes

¹ Shelley Streeby argues this point in her book *Radical Sensations*, saying that the inclusion of images in *Regeneración* was meaningful given their limited resources; Shelly Streeby, *Radical Sensations: World Movements, Violence, and Visual Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

² China's began in 1911 and Russia's took place in 1917

³ Micheal J. Gonzales, *The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002).

⁴ Scholars like John Mason Hart and Michael J. Gonzales, whose works were consulted here, provide discussions of the conditions that led to the Mexican Revolution and the different groups that were involved. Gonzales in particular discusses at length the U.S. involvement in creating those conditions. Hart gives a comprehensive examination of the differing strategies and ideologies that informed the various revolutionary factions; John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Gonzales, *The Mexican Revolution*.

⁵ Juan Gómez-Quiñones' monograph on the PLM, as well as Ethel Duffy Turner's detailed biography, and Chaz Bufe and Mitchell Cowen Verter's edited collection of reading material produced by the PLM, all provide the biographical information discussed here. Gómez-Quiñones' and Turner in particular discuss the early political development of the Flores Magón brothers.

⁶ Manuel Gonzalez Ramirez, *La Caricatura Política* (Fuentes para la historia de la Revolución Mexicana, 1974).

⁷ Ramirez, *La Caricatura Política*.

⁸ Justino Fernandez, *A Guide to Mexican Art: From Its Beginnings to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

⁹ MagónRicardo Flores Magón to Ellen White, 30 November 1920, United States Penitentiary, Leavenworth, <http://www.archivoMagón.net>.

¹⁰ Material produced by the PLM, especially those written by Ricardo Flores Magón, are found online at www.archivoMagón.net. The material in this archive include copies of *Regeneración*, literary work, and personal correspondence; El Partido Liberal Mexicano, *Regeneración*, June 13, 1914.

¹¹ Streeby, *Radical Sensations*.

¹² Rosa Linda Fregoso, *meXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

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