

2 years 1913

# Regeneración

## This Is Your Cause; That Of Each One Of You

If a great civil conflict, involving rights more dear than life itself, broke out in the United States, what would we Americans do, if we happened to be living in Canada or Mexico? What would we do, if we had a drop of red blood in our veins? Would not every one of us be anxious to get back to his native soil, that he might bear his part, aiding those who seemed to him in the right and helping to defeat those who seemed to him his country's enemies? To ask this question is to answer it.

If, in such conditions, Canada and Mexico tried to prevent us, by lining their frontiers with soldiers, and shooting or thrusting into jail those who attempted to get back, would that deter us? Would it deter men of fighting stock, who knew that the destinies of their fatherland were at stake and heard the imperious inner call to rally to her rescue? Of course it would not. In reality we should reproach most bitterly those who did not return, and their women would upbraid them as cowards who were flinching one of life's crucial tests.

Can we not put ourselves mentally in the Mexican's position? Have we not the impartiality needed to understand that he **MUST** act as we ourselves would act? How then can we defend the course of our Government which, for three years past, has been insisting that the Mexican resident in this country shall remain here, and that any attempt to return to Mexico and take part in that armed conflict, which today embraces all the country, shall be punished with imprisonment or death?

That has been the policy pursued by our Government for the last three years; ever since this Mexican Revolution began. Because Mexicans resident in the United States have not forgotten the land that gave them birth; because they have not felt themselves able to stand inactive, our Government has been running them into prison, and hunting them down, like wild animals, with its soldiers, its Rangers, its armed detectives. From McNeill's Island to Leavenworth the penitentiaries have been full of Mexicans whose only crime was patriotism, in its largest and truest sense. All along the Rio Grande death at the muzzle of United States rifles has awaited Mexicans who should attempt to cross the border.

They call this the enforcement of the neutrality laws. They call it the preservation of the peace, although it is self-evident that peace is the very thing it has not produced. They declare that a Mexican carrying arms of any kind must be ranked by that very fact as a would-be assassin, to be handcuffed and dragged to prison if he yields submissively, to be shot down like a dog if he ventures to resist. For this they keep thousands of soldiers strung out all along the frontier; thousands of special police, spies and detectives; all the costly hierarchy needed for the administration of what they call "Justice"—for every cent of which the taxpayer, and ultimately the workingman, must sweat.

All this is done in the sacred name of peace, but it is to be observed that our Government, so keen-eyed in the matter of the Mexican workingman, is stone-blind to the fact that our bankers and financiers lend money by the millions of dollars for the purchase and shipment to Mexico of those arms the importation of which it is supposed to be the special business of all these soldiers, Rangers, detectives, judges, etc., to prevent. What sense is there in that?

September 11, 1913, a small party of Mexican workingmen made an attempt to cross the border. Of course they were armed. Would you start out on such an errand without a gun? Would you venture into Mexico, with conditions as they are, having no weapons with which to defend yourself? They were surprised and fired at, one of their number being killed instantly. They disarmed their assailants; actually returned a man named Buck whom they had taken prisoner, and procured a written promise that they should be left in peace, signed by the leader of their assailants, one J. J. Campbell. Then they resumed their journey to the frontier. Early in the morning of September 13 they were attacked once more by a large force of Texas Rangers, near Carrizo Springs. The result was, two, if not three, Mexicans killed; an American deputy-sheriff killed; four Mexicans wounded; fourteen Mexicans thrown into jail, being treated on the long journey thither with infinite barbarity, according to all accounts, and threatened with lynching.

It was difficult, most difficult, to get any information; but at last we learned that there had been a change of venue from Carrizo Springs to Pearsall, it being held that local prejudice made it impossible to hope for a fair trial at the former place. Then we heard that one of the prisoners had been sentenced to twenty-five years imprisonment, and that a similar, if not worse, fate awaited thirteen others. This morning—Oct. 15—we are informed that another has been sentenced to six years.

Observe that no one asks by what right the authorities killed two, if not three, Mexicans—and most brave, intelligent and excellent workers they were, every one of them—and wounded four others.

Observe that, on the other hand, the killing of a deputy-sheriff, in the fight that naturally arose, is designated as

**"THE REAL FIGHT IS TO COME LATER, WHEN THE STATE IS GOING TO TRY AND GIVE THE DEATH PENALTY TO CLINE, RANGEL AND FOUR OTHERS."** (Extract from letter by Judge R. W. Hudson, counsel for the defense, dated Pearsall, Texas, October 18, 1913.)

Don't forget the two mass meetings at Mammoth Hall, 517 S. Broadway, Saturday and Sunday nights, Oct. 25 and 26. Jaime Vidal, Rafael Adams, M. Fसानो, Bill Cook, Wm. C. Owen and other speakers. Admission free. Tell everybody that these meetings are to save Labor advocates from the gallows.

murder, and has formed the theme for furious articles in the local press, which lays stress on the fact that the spirit of revolution has been allowed to invade the cotton fields, in which thousands of Mexicans are employed.

Observe that these poor and comparatively helpless men had entered in all good faith into an agreement with the powerful authorities, and that the latter broke the agreement and took them by surprise.

Remember that these Mexicans are very poor, and that they must have made great sacrifices in order to return to their fatherland and answer what they considered the call of duty. For example, Juan Rincon, one of the killed, had travelled, as best he could, more than a thousand miles, from Los Angeles.

Remember that the accused cannot speak our tongue and are ignorant of all court usages, so difficult for even an educated American to master.

Therefore, they must have counsel. Such heavy sentences as twenty-five years must be fought against by skilled lawyers, who alone know how to conduct the fight.

For this money must be collected; and, we regret it inexpressibly, there must be considerable money, for there will be many trials and appeals.

We must appeal to the workers, and those wise and generous spirits who sympathize with the workers, since there are no others to whom we can appeal. The revolution in Mexico is a war of the poor against the rich, and the rich, as a class, together with those who consider their interests identified with the rich, are all against us.

All over the world the workers are finding themselves involved in a terrific struggle, which even now is only in its earliest stage. All over the world the interests of the workers are absolutely identical. It always pays them, therefore, to exhibit solidarity; to stand together and win, if possible, every one of the fights into which they are forced, even if a particular fight seems to them, at first glance, remote and comparatively unimportant.

This particular fight, however, is most important, just as the economic struggle in Mexico is most important, to every one of us. It is vitally important that Government should not be allowed to treat as criminals and assassins men who are trying to fulfill duties which we ourselves should be ashamed to flinch. It is necessary to insist that the life of honest workers is worth, at the very least, as much as those of officials. It is necessary, in a word, to stand by men of our own class when they are being made to suffer, and suffer most horribly, for the honest attempt to perform their duty to their class.

It is a class war in Mexico; the war between those two classes into which, to its unspeakable shame, the human race today has divided itself—the rich and poor. The Mexicans killed at Carrizo Springs, Tex., and the Mexicans now on trial for their lives, were warriors in that great struggle; our warriors; our battlers for rights to which, as a class, we are entitled, and of which, as a class, the wealthy and powerful have deprived us by force; since cunning and the shrewd taking of unfair advantage are at the bottom of all great fortunes and are in themselves the most deadly type of force.

These men, though they speak a different tongue, are our men. We should not desert them. We should not leave them in the lurch. We should go to the very limit of our power to champion and free them.

In Los Angeles we shall hold such public meetings as we can. We shall start as active and international a publicity campaign as our most slender forces permit. The one local of the I. W. W. we have had time, as yet, to visit unanimously promised support. But we shall appeal to Labor as a whole, in this country and abroad, and to all those noble and intelligent spirits who understand that a great nation belittles itself inexpressibly and lays the foundation for its certain fall when it persecutes the weak.

Our campaign will be a fair one. We shall endeavor to give the facts as they actually are, knowing that if the public finds itself deceived the public will turn its back on us.

We have heard, as yet, from two legal firms, both near the scene of action and likely to know something definite as to the merits of these cases. One of them writes: "We read the Judge's charge and the newspapers' version of the evidence. If both are correct, this case—that of Serrano, a mere lad, who was given twenty-five years—will undoubtedly be reversed in the higher courts, and, according to the law and the evidence, this man should have been acquitted." The other writes: "I do not believe under our law they are guilty of the charge against them, but the jury are convicting them for wanting to go to Mexico."

As we have explained, according to our view that is not a crime, but an act of true and courageous patriotism, in its widest sense. It is clear to us that, if left to their fate, these men will not receive fair trial. It is clear to us that such a sentence as that passed on Serrano should not be permitted to stand unchallenged; and, believing most firmly in all that we have written here, we publish this in the hope that tens of thousands of our fellow-workers may come to see the matter as we see it.

