

Book Review

THE RETURN OF COMRADE RICARDO FLORES MAGON
By Claudio Lomnitz. Zone Books, 2014

With great pleasure and with the natural bit of sadness that accompanies turning the last page of a good book, I have just finished reading Claudio Lomnitz' recent and thorough account of Ricardo Flores Magón's life and political journey.

Ricardo Flores Magón was one of the main liberal intellectual and political precursors of the 1910 Mexican Revolution. He represented a very important current of thought among those fighting for the still unfulfilled ideals of the Mexican liberal Constitution of 1857. This group created the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) that became a serious opposition and consequent threat to the Porfirio Díaz regime, in power since 1876. Having been won over by the anarchist ideas promoted in Europe by Kropotkin and Malatesta, in August 1900 the same group began to publish a very important anarchist newspaper, *Regeneración*. Approximately 3000 authors wrote for this paper, which survived with great difficulty for 18 years. Ricardo, his elder brother Jesús, and some others in his intellectual cohort were imprisoned in Mexico several times, and its publication was prohibited. They therefore decided to seek asylum in the United States in order to be able to publish *Regeneración* from there. Ricardo lived in

the US from 1904¹ to 1922 as a political refugee. Despite living in exile, he became the main figure of the anarchist anti-Porfirista Mexican ideology, press and militancy, which managed to lead the important workers' strikes in both Cananea (State of Sonora, 1906) and in Río Blanco (State of Veracruz, 1908). During all those years he was persecuted in the US by both the Mexican and the American authorities, was in and out of prison constantly, and never again returned to Mexico. He died in jail in 1922.

Lomnitz sees the Mexican Revolution as "pure experience. It was its own sovereign; it was its own explanation" (p. xxvii). In it, *caudillo* leaders were much more important than ideologies or principles, for even if ideology was "the revolution's most cherished transcendental object," it was in fact "a constantly invoked absence" (p. xxvii). Lomnitz states clearly that he respects very much the history and the fight, one of the few currents that denounced

1 In early February 1904, Ricardo Flores Magón and three of his comrades – Rivera, Villarreal and Sarabia (see Lomnitz, reference 6) – arrived in Laredo, Texas, shortly after having been released from prison. They moved to San Antonio for a short while, brought back to life their newspaper *Regeneración*, then settled in Saint Louis Missouri where in 1906 they named themselves Junta Organizadora del Nuevo Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), declared they were trying to organize a revolution in Mexico, and were arrested for the first time in the US, in Los Angeles.

personalismo – the emphasis on personal power – since 1901, even before it became a political party. This party was fighting to “uphold the principles of the 1857 Constitution, and the *antipersonalista* idea had a great power among the PLM’s main leaders and militants” (p. xxvii). For Lomnitz, PLM’s liberalism was the first social movement to develop a coherent revolutionary ideology and program in the Mexican 20th century’s political history, an assertion which does not necessarily contradict the “bold point” made by Mexican revolution’s important historian Alan Knight “concerning the PLM’s marginality, even with respect to political life late in the Porfirian era ... [and the fact] that it ceased to be a major political actor in Mexico as far back to 1908” (p. xxiv²). Lomnitz further explains why he chose Ricardo Flores Magón as “a leitmotiv in this story.” Even though the “emphasis on a selfless attachment to [this movement’s ideal] created room for a personality cult, and Ricardo is [who] best articulates the biography of the larger network with which the book is concerned,” he was “the purest living example of uncompromising commitment to the ideal” (p. xxix). The way in which Lomnitz follows Magón in these pages and tries to “bring perspective to his strange story” is by seeking “to understand the collective that made him what he became,” by seeking out Magón’s “friends, kin and rivals,” as a way to see him “through [his] relationships” (p. xl).

I believe that *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* also shows a great respect for many of those who preceded the author in studying this important political and ideological strand of Mexican revolutionary leadership. In effect, much has been written in Mexico and elsewhere, at least during the last fifty years, about the life of Magón and his fellow fighters, their ideas, their political party and their newspaper. Many of these writings about those who came to be known as the “*magonistas*” show to what extent they – and especially Ricardo Flores Magón – have remained a part of the memory of Mexican progressive intellectuals and political movements as “the purest living example of uncompromising commitment to” (p. xxix) the true revolutionary ideal

of the Mexican masses. I also believe that this book makes an important contribution to the long-lasting collective effort to know and understand Ricardo Flores Magón because it sheds on him a renewed, non-dogmatic, non-apologetic, non-religious light. This perspective is based on serious and responsible research that was conducted mainly in Mexico and the United States, using archival documents, periodicals and secondary sources. I believe that the book was built upon a “Life and Times” biographical methodological approach.³ The author consulted key sources in several US archives that, to my knowledge, had not been consulted before in regards to Magón.⁴ From my point of view, the newly-consulted sources and the methodology he employs in reading and interpreting them allow Lomnitz to dialogue with his subject in a unique way, marked by his already known and welcome critical eye.

On one hand, Lomnitz tries to understand the very original intellectual and politically radical figure that Magón was, for example, regarding:

- His unquestionable status as a well-read and knowledgeable intellectual, and as a good writer and journalist.
- His mistrust of Mexican president Francisco Madero whom he criticized for not being a revolutionary enough democrat and for being too attached to the electoral agenda.
- His irreducible animosity towards Pancho Villa whom he always considered a bandit even when, side by side with Zapata, he fought Carranza.
- His very early criticism of Lenin’s and Trotsky’s “turn towards dictatorship” (p. 482), and what he called “Marxist oppression in Russia.” Magón wrote: “Tyranny cannot but breed tyranny ... sooner or later Marxian intoxication will fade away, and the sobered minds will adopt the Ideal that in their darkness they scoffed at” (p. 483).⁵

3 The author does not state it in these terms.

4 For example, among others, the United States Senate’s Committee of Foreign Relations’ archives (see note 20 in the Introduction) or the McNeil Island Penitentiary, Inmate Case Files 1899-1920, belonging to the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons’ archives, that can be found in the National Archives (see Note 14, Chapter 3).

5 Lomnitz is quoting “Ricardo Magón to Ellen White, February 22, 1921,” in *Obras Completas*, vol. 1, *Correspondencia* (1899-1918), Ed. Jacinto Barrera Bassols, Mexico City, Dirección General de Publicaciones de CONACULTA, 2001, p. 118.

2 Lomnitz refers to Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, vol.1, p.102, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968.

while at the same time condemning “the allied invasions of Russia” and calling for “strategic alliances with Marxist in Europe” (p. 483).⁶

- The way that the “dread of fragmentation and treason to the anti-*personalista* idea became for him (and his comrades) such a form of ‘vertigo’” (p. 394) that it sometimes led him to bluntly accuse those they had considered comrades to have become traitors when they changed their points of view and did not agree with him anymore or not in every way.
- His stubborn and absolute belief, which never changed, that the harsher the suffering of the masses as a result of the savagery of capitalism – for example the slavery of Indigenous populations in the Yucatán – the more radical and the more successful their rebellion would be and the more they would achieve freedom from oppression. This was a belief that made Magón and the PLM bet, mistakenly enough, on the imminent beginning of a triumphal revolution in Mexico, during at least two important political junctures: in 1906, after the Cananea copper miners’ strike was drowned in blood, and in 1908 (one year after the similarly harsh repression of the Río Blanco textile workers’ strike) when Díaz declared to the American journalist James Creelman that he would leave power immediately before the 1910 presidential elections.

On the other hand, *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* also constitutes a dialogue with Magón the man:

- As a member of the very important 1892 generation, who developed his political conscience when Díaz consolidated himself in power, the social implications of this regime hardened, and the “*Científicos*” started to dominate as the regime’s political clique, representing the technocratic and financial elites. In this moment, a group of students arose in a movement against re-election. They had very different ideas and plans for the country, and that is why they hit a glass ceiling, because they started to become important opposition thinkers.

6 “Ricardo Magón to Ellen White, September 19, 1921,” in *Obras Completas* 1:263.

- As a male born in the second half of the 19th century in the province of Oaxaca but who adopted and was adopted by the capital city during the anti-Díaz government turmoil. He belonged to a family with an interesting story that occupies some important pages in this book. In them, the author analyses why and how the family story that Enrique, Ricardo’s youngest brother, wrote for posterity,⁷ endeavoured to feed the myth of the Magóns’ being absolutely pure, clean and radically ethical revolutionaries, by lying about two important aspects: first, by presenting his father as an Indigenous man, something that led the reader to believe that their ancestors were very poor and came from one of Mexico’s Indigenous populations; and secondly, by hiding the fact that not only were the three Magón brothers the children of unmarried parents, but also that they had four siblings born to both their parents’ first and only legal marriages.
- As a son, a brother, a husband, a father; as a lover of culture and beauty; as an exile for whom the English language was always difficult.
- As a strict moralist in his personal life. This had very positive aspects such as the fact that he was absolutely honest about ideas, money or marital duties. However, it also had some negative ones. For example, his severe judgment of homosexuals (something which was still common among many of the leftists of his time), even if they were his comrades, or his implacable judgement of any deviation from what he considered to be the only and true revolutionary path, and that he too easily punished with the accusation of treason
- As an extremely honest and consequential human being who was capable of all the possible sacrifices for his cause. These included exile, repression, prison, poverty, and never giving priority to his fragile and deteriorating health. At the same time, he always decided in favour of those voices who advised him that because he was such an important leader, he should not risk his life by going back to Mexico during the revolutionary war.

7 Ricardo and Enrique, after many years of comradeship and love, separated in 1917 in a harsh and irreconcilable way that this book describes and analyzes. Enrique, liberated from prison in 1919, went back to Mexico in 1923, and lived there until his death in 1954.

Several good historians – including Josefina MacGregor and Eduardo Blanquel, among others – had already analysed the alliance between the different Mexican⁸ and American governments of that period, directed at silencing the Magón brothers and their Mexican comrades,⁹ by incessantly persecuting and imprisoning them and by shutting down *Regeneración* time after time. Lomnitz’ book also looks inside this crucial aspect of Magón’s exile in the US, but does so by also exploring the US archival material that I mentioned before. This allows *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* to explain very clearly, not only to the Mexican readers but also to American and other ones, how the governments of the United States of America and of some of the states where Ricardo lived – mainly Texas, California and Arizona – understood very clearly, especially after 1907, that it was not wise to accuse, persecute and condemn the exiled “Magonista” anarchists for trying to change things in Mexico through revolution. The book also explains that the reason behind this understanding was not only that these men were not breaking any US laws. It was also rooted in the fact that a portion of American citizens, especially in the southern states that were in close contact with Mexico, was sympathetic to many of this revolution’s goals. They knew to what extent a large part of Mexicans suffered from too much poverty and injustice, and they believed that they had the right, as had had the Americans before, to fight for equality.¹⁰ So American authorities found a better and more efficient path towards persecuting these men that the American public would not question: to accuse them of violating one American law, the neutrality law that allowed the US to condemn whoever organized movements inside the country that would partly imply the entanglement of the United States in foreign conflicts. Then, in 1918 they

invented different ways of persecuting Magón. First they accused *Regeneración* of publishing “obscene” material, an accusation that they were using against socialist and anarchist American publications that were against the US engaging in WWI. Then, they managed to condemn him to 18 years in prison by accusing him of “violating the Espionage Act for a manifesto that he published ... in the final issue of *Regeneración*, ... on March 16, 1918” (p. 445). This manifesto included “a brief declaration trumpeting the coming of world revolution ... [and] argued for workers’ strikes against the war ... with no regard for patriotic interests” (p. 445). This condemnation presented Magón as an undesirable exile who dared to attack the Americans’ justified and correct nationalist feelings.

From page 429 to page 435, Lomnitz explicitly develops a subject that has been the focus of some of his other works on Mexico and that is in fact present in large parts of this book: racism against Mexicans in the United States. When the “Texas martyrs affair” exploded in the US, Magón wrote:

Who among you has not received an insult in this country for the mere fact of being Mexican? Who has not heard tell of all the crimes that are committed daily against the people of our race? Do you know that in the South Mexicans are not allowed to sit in the same table as Americans in restaurants? ... Don’t you know that American jails are full of Mexicans? [p.432]

Finally I believe that Lomnitz’ book is innovative in its treatment of an important aspect of Magón’s personal and political life in the United States which he carefully explores and develops, and which, seen from this close perspective, is not familiar to the Mexican reader. This aspect is the “American Cause,” a small but very committed and loyal group of American radical men and women that joined Magón and his “expat” Mexican comrades, supporting them unconditionally for several years – from 1907 to 1915 – in the cause of fighting for the Mexican Revolution in accordance with Magón’s views of it.

Apart from the fact of this group of radicals being an important part of the Magón story in the US, for this book Lomnitz went about what he calls

8 Díaz, Madero, Huerta, Carranza (and during his presidency Calles as the governor of the state of Sonora), De la Huerta and Obregón.

9 Librado and Concha Rivera; Antonio I Villarreal and his two sisters, Juan and Manuel Sarabia; Anselmo Figueroa, Práxedes Guerrero; Antonio de P. Araujo, William C. Owen; Blas Lara; Jesús M. Rangel, Francisco Manrique and Lázaro Gutiérrez de Lara.

10 Lomnitz studied, through several papers published in US academic journals, the deep differences existing in those years between the life and the economic conditions of American and Mexican workers (see Note 3, Chapter 8).

a true “reading pilgrimage” (p. xl) of “these women and men’s writings and letters.” He engaged in this pilgrimage, explains the author, not because they were considered to be important intellectual figures in the United States, but because of three aspects that refer to important concerns of his on Mexico, Latin America, the United States and the world:

- The first aspect lies in the reason why Lomnitz wrote this book: “Exile and return, ideological purity and pragmatic accommodation, *personalismo* and its principal refusal, the three antipodes that shape [it] ... have also been at the heart of my relationship with Mexico and with Latin America” (p. xxxv). And, he reveals to the reader that, in a similar but different way as that of Magón, “I have always been an exile – mine has been the exile of a Jew, haunted by a long-foretold Jerusalem that I have never actually known (p. xi).¹¹ And “although I have loved Mexico as much as anyone, I have aspired only to be known there, to return and be among friends, to teach and write and participate in public life” (p. xi), “there has never been a proper return. The scars of exile linger, even for those who do go back” (p. xii).¹²
- The second aspect is that he “was touched by the characters who shaped the “Mexican Cause,” because they fought “*personalismo* and the cult of the state” that keep coming back in these lands, and they did so by “daring to explore a third alternative ... cooperativist, not *personalista*; internationalist, and deeply critical of the state” (p. xxxv).

11 Claudio Lomnitz was born in Chile to a French mother and a Chilean father, both academics and Jewish. The family arrived in Mexico in the seventies. Lomnitz received his undergraduate degree in Anthropology from the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana. In 1987 he obtained his Ph.D. in Anthropology from Stanford University. He lived in Chicago for many years, teaching History at the University of Chicago, serving at different points in time as the co-director of the University of Chicago’s Mexican Studies Program (with Friedrich Katz), and as the Director of the University of Chicago’s Latin American Studies Program. He moved to New York in 2005. He first taught at the New School University, where he was a Distinguished University Professor of Anthropology, the Chair of the Committee on Historical Studies, and the editor of the academic journal *Public Culture*. In 2006 he was hired by the Columbia University, where he has been the Director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, and the Campbell Family Professor of Anthropology at the Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures, an appointment that he holds up to now. He has published many books and articles (see <http://anthropology.columbia.edu/people/profile/368>).

12 Lomnitz travels often to Mexico to teach, give lectures and conduct research.

- The third aspect is that “they proved an “existential openness, beyond nationalism, [that] is timely, shakes the foundations of a North American order that is blighted by lack of imagination for a collective future of cooperation and mutual aid” (p. xl), and partly because they tried to serve both the Mexican revolution and translate the Mexican revolutionaries’ social and political demands to the majorities in both countries.

“The American cause” members were all college educated and half of them came from well-to-do families. For the Mexican public, there is no doubt that the most famous of them is the writer John Kenneth Turner who, after meeting the Mexican expatriates, went on a several-years journey to the Yucatán that Lomnitz describes. He disguised as an American entrepreneur interested in investing in the sisal plantations. That is how he managed to dig up so many first hand testimonies about a phenomenon that had been illegal in Mexico for almost 90 years already and about which nothing had been published up to then: the slavery conditions in the Yucatán, – also a product of racism in Mexico – in which worked, the local Mayan populations and the Yaqui Indigenous rebels and their families that had been deported there, far away from their home state as a punishment. The result of his research gave birth to Turner’s later famous book *Barbarous Mexico*, published in Mexico only in 1955, despite the still existing strong resistance from many, writes Lomnitz, even from the great historian Daniel Cosío Villegas.

Other important figures included John Kenneth Turner’s first wife, the writer Ethel Duffy Turner; the suffragette and union leader Frances Noel and her husband P.D. Noel, who was a socialist activist and a businessman; the socialist lawyer and politician Job Harriman; the union activist and journalist John Murray, who was the editor of the SP organ *Common Sense*; and the rich Radcliffe graduate Elizabeth Trownbridge.

John Murray, from a very wealthy and famous Manhattan family that was active in the Underground Railroad that brought runaway slaves into the North, was moved by the writings of Tolstoy. This led to him renouncing his inheritance and taking up the cause

of the Socialist Party (SP) in which he was already active in 1901; he also fought for the fusion between the party and the union movement. He remained a union man until his suicide in 1921. In 1903 he began working with the Mexican unions; in 1906 he supported the Cananea strike in Sonora. Significantly, “labour organizing was critical to supporting the integration of Mexicans into unions in the US” (p. 28). In 1907 Murray supported Harriman’s decision to legally defend the Mexican liberal prisoners, whose organization was the only one to have a pro-labour program in Mexico, where unionizing was at the time prohibited. In 1898 Harriman made a run for office as the governor of California and, in 1900, he had been Eugene Debs’ running mate for the vice presidency of the US. This decision was extremely controversial even within the Socialist Party that was racist, anti-Chinese, and anti-Mexican. On the other hand, some of the organizations that it supported were not radical but reformist, and Magón was an anarchist.

Trownbridge was also an easterner from a wealthy family, who had studied English in Radcliffe, Harvard, where there were some radicals, like John Reed for example. She joined the Socialist Party at the age of eighteen, and moved to Los Angeles in 1908 because her health was poor. There, she met the Noels and lived in their house for some time. When she met the Mexican prisoners she was powerfully drawn to their cause, especially because she heard that they had been detained in the US by private Furlong detectives working for the Mexican government and thus violating US civil rights. She invested all her money in this cause, becoming its biggest donor for some years. For her, there was a connection between the fight against slavery in Mexico and the struggle for female suffrage in the US. Trownbridge and all her fellow Americans that supported the Magonistas belonged also to an ideological current called “Nationalism” that was quite strong in the Socialist Party, and that had points in common with Russian populism. Its motto was “production for use, not for profit,” which shows us to what extent it was a communitarian current that had ties also with Kropotkin’s cooperativist thought and project that, in turn, had points in common with the PLM’s ideology (p. 34). Even if, writes Lomnitz,

Mexico was a country they did not know well and Spanish a language that they did not speak, “there were aspects of the Mexican situation that were disturbingly familiar to members of The Mexican Cause” (p. 26). For these US radicals, political circumstances in Russia and Mexico in 1905 had many points in common, mainly regarding both their autocratic governments which violently repressed peasants’ and workers’ movements. *Regeneración* also frequently compared the Czar and Díaz. Finally, the main cause for these US citizens’ support for Magón and his fellow thinkers was that Mexico was a US neighbour, and that the Díaz regime was supported by American capital, something which explained why Mexican dissidents exiled in the US were persecuted by the US authorities (p. 35).

In 1908 these American liberals reunited around the public defence they had organized of the Mexican PLM activists who were persecuted, jailed, and deported. In February Turner, Harriman and Murray met in prison with Magón and his three Mexican ideological brothers, and they were deeply moved by their intellectual and political profile, their ambitious political program for Mexico and their valiant history of opposition to Díaz, whom they considered to be a harsh Mexican dictator. This encounter led them to create a circle of US supporters of these Mexicans that they saw as “role models,” a support that was fundamental in their new life and struggle in their land of exile.

I must confess that during the last decade I had not seriously read anything on Ricardo Flores Magón and his fellow fighters, something that I did very often when I was a social science student and also when I researched the story of the leftist opposition to Stalinist communism and to *lombardismo* in the thirties in Mexico. I suppose that, during both these periods, I must have joined the mainstream of progressive thought about Ricardo Flores Magón as representing the essence of what true revolutionaries should be. As the more mature and ideologically independent and critical human being that I hope to have become, reading *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* projected me in mainly two different although not necessarily opposite directions that I detail in what remains of this review.

The first direction has recalled the sadness that I often feel when revisiting the history of many of the currents of the left in the first half of the 20th century. This feeling develops from observing, for example, how a rigid interpretation of communist ideology led some leaders to form bureaucratized governments, thus losing their *raison d'être* and their path, and contributing to some terrible blood baths, whose victims were too often leftists. Others on the left were so strongly attached to their ideological principles that these became straitjackets which too often did not allow them to see reality as it truly was. Lomnitz' book shows us how some of Magón's and his comrades' important political mistakes can be explained by their extremely optimistic and/or rigid revolutionary ideology. It happened in 1906 and in 1908 when their optimism was so misplaced that it had major consequences for their freedom and for the already difficult conditions of the workers that supported them. It happened when they despised Madero's correct way of reading the importance that the electoral moment had for the revolution, so not only did they not support him when they still had a strong influence especially in the north, but they fought him. It also happened in 1915 when Magón decided that his American friends from the Mexican cause had simply become traitors because they were reading the political situation in Mexico in a very different way than he was, something which led them to search for alliances in several of the revolutionary camps (see p. 429).

I think that this ideology – in a certain way very close to the basis of the Judeo-Christian philosophy – also had to do with the cult of suffering that Magón practiced in his own life, as if it were in concert with his revolutionary ethics. Lomnitz shows us how William Owen¹³ reacted in a very different way from Magón when in 1916 he received the news of his imminent detention: he left California and fled to England. From there he continued to publish and to send the English-language page of *Regeneración* by post. In it, he explained to his readers his reasons for escaping:

First: I have no love for the martyrdom of prison.
... Secondly: I am opposed, on principle, to surrender. We should fight. We should not surrender. ...
Fourthly: outside the jail I can write. Inside I cannot.
[Owen quoted at p. 455-56]

From Lomnitz' book I sensed that the same difference between Magón and Owen towards the cult of martyrdom – a cult that many leftists also regarded as inherent to their ideology and purposes – was also central in their different views of whether to go or not to go back to Mexico in 1913. Shortly after Magón's death, Owen wrote to a comrade of theirs saying that he had always questioned the reasons why they had not all moved back to Mexico at that time, maybe after Madero's assassination. According to him, that would have been much better not only in the sense that they could have actively participated in the Revolution, but also in the sense that participating would have raised their morale and their spirits, and would have been more aligned with their ideals. Some argued that Magón did not go back because of cowardice. Others, like Owen himself, argued that it had been Magón's wife, María Brousse, who, in fear of losing him, had always convinced him not to go back (p. xxiii). And that had proved not to be too difficult for her, because Magón himself strongly believed that his pen and his being at the helm of *Regeneración* from exile should never be put in jeopardy, for they were much more useful to the revolution than wielding a gun in his country, something which hundreds were already doing back there.

Magón died in prison sick and lonely when he was only 49 years old. The prison's medical service deliberately did not attend to his health problems and needs. He had lost many of his old friends and *compagnons de route*. Following personal-political-economic issues around *Regeneración*'s administration and survival, as well as family conflicts, he and Enrique had so drifted apart that, while being in the same prison for several months, they did not see each other or talk. Ricardo finally returned to Mexico but only after his death, and he was buried in the Panteón Francés in Mexico City. Despite *Regeneración*'s undoubted prestige in the memory of many Mexicans, its last number was published in

13 Owen was the British exiled "editor of the English-language page of *Regeneración* and one of the leading lights of the groups' inner circle" (p. xxiii). Of course Magón could not have fled to England, but could he have fled to Mexico to escape prison?

1918, and it did not manage to make any important difference in the paths that the Revolution followed at least from 1913 on.

Despite this line of thinking, the second direction this book has led me in has nevertheless renewed the fundamental respect that I used to have, and that Lomnitz has, towards the intellectual and political honesty of these men and women whom we remember as the Magonistas – even if Magón rejected the term for its *personalista* and *caudillista* nature. This type of honesty is almost impossible to find in Mexican politics, and not only in Mexican politics. It also allowed me to refresh my understanding of the important political stories of many of these idealist liberal-anarchist men and women of the first decades of the Mexican revolutionary history – like Práxedes Guerrero or Francisco Manrique – whose memory we should not allow to be drowned in today's cold scepticism.

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