

## THE MAGÓNISTAS



### AUTHORS OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

### “THE RIGHT TO REBEL IS SACRED BECAUSE ITS EXERCISE IS INDISPENSABLE TO SWEEPING AWAY THE OBSTACLES BLOCKING THE RIGHT TO LIVE.”

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 was a world changing event. The Magónistas were people from all parts of Mexico who inspired the revolution that overthrew Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship. **Magónismo** was based on the philosophies of Ricardo Flores Magón, both Mexican indigenism and anarchism, Magónista activity became a security concern that reached the highest levels of the Mexican and US governments. Their vision was not able to fully see the light of day, and so Magónismo remains an unfinished story.

1876-1911) carried Spain's torch of oppressing the majority of Mexico. His tyranny used the system of government (brought by the European colonizers) to give rich Mexicans and military officers seats of power within the highest public offices all over Mexico. These political bosses would enrich themselves by selling out the natural resources of their localities to North American companies. To do this, the Mexican elites violently evicted entire communities from their ancestral lands, robbing them of their means of sustenance. By 1910, half of the nation's land belonged to fewer than three thousand families. Half of the rural population was landless and forced to work on brutal plantations (*haciendas*). Opponents of the regime who rose up in protest were violently attacked and/or killed by Díaz's *Rurales* paramilitaries. In life, as we all know, we must make difficult decisions in the face of the most challenging obstacles: when they encountered hunger

## Regeneración.

¡VIVA LA REVOLUCION SOCIAL!

**“A PERSON IS FREE. TRULY FREE. WHEN THEY DO NOT NEED TO RENT OUT THEIR ARMS TO ANYONE IN ORDER TO LIFT A PIECE OF BREAD TO THEIR MOUTH.”**

The Magónistas were the Mexican indigenist-anarchists whose rebellions led to the downfall of a dictatorship in 1910. Their widely popular philosophy of action — Magónismo — became the prototype for generations of movements: from the Chicanos of the 60s to the EZLN today. Unfold this document to read their words!



and injustice, the Mexican people said “fuck it let's get 'em!” and made their decision to resist. One may ask, “Why would anyone risk it all?” The rebels of the Mexican Revolution were driven by a purpose whose relevance still persists: a fight for the right of Mexico's indigenous and farmer populations to live peacefully on their ancestral lands without the threat of exploitation and violence from Mexican and transnational elites. The legacies of **colonization** — from displacement and exploitation, to the torture and disappearance of those who stand up to cruelty — are issues that all Mexicans and Latin Americans continue to face to this day. Nothing's changed.

The Magónistas sought to dethrone the brutal dictatorship through the most effective process: a **libertarian revolution** based on “*Tierra y Libertad*” (“Land and Freedom”). Although the slogan is often attributed to the legendary Nahuatl guerrilla, Emiliano Zapata, it

he would dismiss all attempts at making him into a leader or icon, Magón's legacy undoubtedly lives on today in the minds, hearts, and actions of countless people throughout the generations. Magónismo has had a profound impact on popular Latino consciousness. Its widespread influence exists in the present: from the Chicano Movement to the **anarchist cultures** among Mexican and Latino organizations. Now, the torch of “*Tierra y Libertad*” has been taken up by the might and bravery of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) of Chiapas in Southern Mexico, shining a light of hope for all peoples on Earth who continue to fight for their right to life. *Magónismo is your invitation to self-liberation. Land and Liberty or nothing!*

**“MAY BY BLOOD AND FIRE FALL, THAT BY WHICH BLOOD AND FIRE IS MAINTAINED.”**

The Magón brothers were raised in a Mazatec Oaxacan community, which was key in shaping the vision of Magónismo. Their indigenous roots affirmed the need to defend autonomy and solidarity with others, practices which still exist in the Sierra Mazateca and in countless Mexican indigenous communities. **Self-sufficiency** was and continues to be an ancestral form of freedom that the Magón brothers saw clearly.

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in worker's and farmer's spaces of daily life. They successfully agitated with their rebel words through their *Regeneración* newspaper. Their movement spread rapidly due to its **anti-leader, anti-authority approach**, which resonated with the existing sentiments of Mexicans. They facilitated and participated in **worker strikes** in both Mexico and the US, made possible through their efforts at building an international network. At the peak of their power, the Magónistas were able to pull off **uprisings** and attacks in all corners of Mexico and the Americas using the strategy of **decentralization**. Their goals were to directly seize stolen lands and the means of sustenance. Instead of waiting for orders from new political leaders or reforms, the Magónistas showed the world our untold power when we fight our oppressors through **collective direct action**.

Despite the assassination of Ricardo Flores Magón by the hands of American authorities, his dreams of freedom live on. Although

at the time, and made an effort to be present Magónistas were the most active opposition take down a 30 year-long tyranny? The what was thought to be unimaginable, to So how exactly could the people accomplish

The Mexican people hate, by instinct, authority and the bourgeoisie. Everyone who has lived in Mexico can assure us that there is no one more cordially hated than the policeman, and that the word “government” fills the simple people with uneasiness. This in itself is enough for a social revolution which is economic in nature and anti-authoritarian, but there is more. Four million Indians live in Mexico who, until twenty or twenty-five years ago, lived in communities possessing the lands, the waters, and the forests in common. Mutual aid was the rule in these communities. These simple customs lasted until authority grew strong enough to pacify the country. We see, then, that the Mexican people are suited for communism, because they’ve practiced it, at least in part, for many centuries; and this explains why, even when the majority are illiterate, they comprehend that rather than take part in electoral farces that elect thugs, it’s better to take possession of the lands.

### **THE MEXICAN PEOPLE ARE SUITED TO COMMUNISM**

September 2, 1911

Capital, according to political-economy, is accumulated work. The machinery, buildings, docks, railways are accumulated labor, that is, the work of intellectual and manual laborers in all of the ages up to the present day; but they belong—so declares the law—to only a few individuals. It’s because of this that the proletariat must put itself at the orders of a boss to be able to live, permitting that the product of its labors pass almost entirely into the pockets of those who hold the social wealth. The right to live is the basis of all rights. Understand, proletarians, that you have the right to something more than the handout that you are given for your labor under the name of “wages.” You have the right to receive the full product of your labor, because capital belongs to all, men and women, old and young. A wage, therefore, is an outrage: it’s the chain of the “free”—the chain that is necessary to break. If this is done, we’ll have achieved economic liberty.

### **THE CHAINS OF “THE FREE”**

October 22, 1910

The dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz is about to fall. But the revolution will not end because of this sole fact; upon the grave of this infamous dictatorship will remain standing, face to face, with arms in hand, these two social classes: that of the well fed and that of the hungry. This formidable struggle of the two social classes in Mexico is the first act in the great universal cataclysm which very soon will break upon the scene all over the planet, and whose final act will be the triumph of the magnanimous formula of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity which the bourgeois political revolutions have not been able to translate into physical reality, because these revolutions have not dared to break to pieces the dorsal spine of tyranny: capitalism and authoritarianism. Comrades of the entire world: the solution of the social problem is in the hands of the disinherited of the entire Earth, because it only requires the practice of a great virtue: solidarity.

### **MANIFESTO TO THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD**

April 3, 1911

‘La Patria’ [the homeland] belongs to those who own it, and the poor have nothing. The homeland is the policeman armed with a club, who kicks us into the bottom of a dungeon or puts a rope around our necks when we do not want to obey the laws written by the rich for the benefit of the rich themselves. It is a lie that homeland belongs to all of us who were born in it. It belongs to a very small minority of hoarders of the land. It belongs to the landlords, big businessmen and bankers. If the homeland were like a loving mother who gives shelter and sustenance to her children, if they were given land and tools to sow, no one would leave their homeland to go beg for bread in other countries where they are despised and humiliated. I love a universal homeland, a homeland without limits and without borders; a common homeland whose interests belong to all its inhabitants, just as the air, the light and the heat of the sun are shared by us all.

### **THE BOURGEOIS HOMELAND AND THE UNIVERSAL HOMELAND**

October 9, 1915

No government can provide the well-being of families. It is you yourselves who must conquer these things, taking immediately the possession of the earth. When you are in possession of the land, you will have liberty, you will have justice, because liberty and justice cannot be decreed: they are the result of economic independence, that is, the ability of an individual to live without depending on a boss, the ability of individual to receive the full product of his labors. So then, take the lands. The law says that you can’t take them, that they’re private property; but that law was written by those who hold you in slavery and as such does not represent a social necessity that requires the force of arms to uphold it. If the law were the result of the consent of all, it wouldn’t need the support of the police, the jailer, the judge, the hangman, the soldier. The law is imposed on you; and against these arbitrary impositions, upheld by force, we honorable people should respond by rebelling.

### **THE REVOLUTION**

November 19, 1910

The true revolutionary is an outlaw par excellence. The law conserves; the revolution renews. For the same reason, if one must renew, one must begin by breaking the Law. Throughout history, the liberties conquered by the human species have been the work of outlaws who took the law into their own hands and tore it to pieces. The tyrant dies from stab wounds, not from articles of the legal code. Expropriation is achieved through trampling over the law, not by lifting it to the heavens. For this reason, revolutionaries must necessarily be outlaws. It would be senseless to respond through the law to someone who does not respect the law; it would be absurd to open statute books to defend ourselves from an attack with a bayonet or from being shot down as a fugitive. We must abandon the well-worn road of conventionality and open up with our whiplashes upon the old flesh new paths out of the established channels. Our electoral ballots will be the bullets our guns fire.

### **OUTLAWS**

September 3, 1910

For a majority of people, revolution and war have the same meaning: this is an error that in light of mistaken criteria makes the last resort of the oppressed appear to be barbarism. War has the invariable characteristics of hatred and national or personal ambitions; from it comes a relative benefit for a given individual or group who is paid with the blood and sacrifice of the masses. The Revolution is an abrupt shaking-off, the human tendency toward improvement, when a more or less numerous proportion of humanity is subjected by violence to a state that is incompatible with its necessities and aspirations. Against humanity wars are waged, but never revolutions. The Revolution is the torrent that sweeps over the dryness of the dead countryside, spreading the silt of life into fertile lands. The Revolution is a fully conscious act, not the spasm of a primitive bestiality. There is no inconsistency between the idea that guides and the action that is imposed.

### **THE PURPOSE OF REVOLUTION**

September 17, 1910

It’s necessary that the workers themselves determinedly take possession of all industries, ensuring in this manner that the lands, mines, factories, workshops, foundries, cars, railways, ships, warehouses of all kinds, and the houses remain in the power of each and every one of the inhabitants of Mexico, without sexual discrimination. Everyone offers you political liberty *after* the triumph: the PLM invite you to take the lands, the machinery, the means of transport, and the houses *immediately*, without waiting for anyone to give you all this, without waiting for some law to decree these things. Liberty and well-being are within the reach of our hands. The cost is the same in effort and sacrifice to elevate a ruler, that is, a tyrant, as it is to expropriate the wealth held by the rich. It is for you, then, to choose. Either a new ruler—that is to say, a new yoke—or *life-giving, redemptive expropriation* and the *abolition of all imposition*, be that imposition religious, political or of any other kind.

### **MANIFESTO OF THE MEXICAN LIBERAL PARTY**

September 23, 1911