Ricardo Flores Magón and the Transnational Anarchists in Los Angeles, 1900-1922

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In the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, many people such as Ricardo Flores Magón and the residents of Los Angeles found themselves in a perpetual state of exploitation by either the Mexican or U.S. governments. Mexicans found solidarity together, mounting resistance against insurmountable odds. Even under the direst of circumstances, their efforts in the early twentieth-century would propel Mexican-Americans' identity into an epoch of self-realization that is uniquely transnational. For many Mexican-Americans in this period, Ricardo Flores Magón was their inspiration. In 1917 Flores Magón gave a speech in front of a group of Mexicans from the California cities of El Monte and La Puente, commemorating the manifesto of El Partido Liberal Mexicano. After years of struggle against the Mexican dictatorship, he explained to his comrades that they

> must leave behind the clasping of hands and anxiously asking ourselves what will be effective in resisting the assault of governmental tyranny and capitalist exploitation. The remedy is in our hands: that all who suffer the same evils unite, certain that before our solidity the abuses of those who base their strength in our separations and indifference will crumble.[1]

This and similar calls for unity by Flores Magón and the many Mexicans residing in and around Los Angeles who flocked to listen to him together fostered the growth of Chicano nationalism.

Flores Magón was a renowned anarchist intellectual of the Mexican Revolution. Many scholars have regarded him as an important figure in Chicano history and view him as a fundamental figure of Chicano nationalism due to his rebellious actions in Mexico and the United States. He served as one of the intellectual

[1] Ricardo Flores Magón, *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 280.

forebears for the Chicano movement and a transnational figure who challenged national, ethnic, and gendered identities. With the use of Flores Magón's political writings, correspondence, and personal letters to reevaluate who he was and how transnational ideas shaped his political life. Sources for my research include American newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Los Angeles Herald-Post*, and the leftist magazine, *Mother Earth*, Flores Magón's personal letters and political writings, and court documents from Flores Magón's 1918 trial in the United States. By analyzing these sources, this essay shows that Flores Magón was part of a larger leftist transnational movement partly based in Los Angeles. Furthermore, these sources illustrate the hysteria and fear that the U.S. government and private business exhibited towards Flores Magón and other left-wing activists like him.

As one of the early leading figures of the 1910 Mexican Revolution, Flores Magón resisted the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, and is often credited with providing Mexican people with the intellectual fortitude needed to answer the call of the revolution.[2] His political activity forced him into exile, where he continued to resist not only the Mexican state, but also questioned the morality of capitalism. Many Chicanos admired the anarchist for his political activities, which led him to become an exclusive Mexican-American archetype. What transpired during this time was not limited to the U.S.-Mexico border, but was rather uniquely transnational, involving people from across globe. Flores Magón thought of himself as a person beyond the confines of a national identity. He advocated a form of anarchism that was based on the creation of local and self-sustaining communities.

Although the scholarship on Flores Magón is scarce, historians have illustrated that his political life transcended the Mexican Revolution. Colin M. MacLachlan explores Flores Magón's political trials in the U.S. as an exile.[3] Ward S. Albro examines Flores Magón's life in Mexico during the Díaz dictatorship and how

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[2] Frank McLynn, *Villa and Zapata: A History of the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 24.

[3] Colin M. MacLachlan, *Anarchism and the Mexican Revolution: The Political Trials of Ricardo Flores Magón in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 17.

his experiences during this period revolutionized his political ideology.[4] Most recently Claudio Lomnitz explores the transnational leftist networks that Flores Magón was a part of.[5] Lomnitz's monograph stands apart from previous works by taking a more nuanced approach to understanding Flores Magón. According to Lomnitz, much of his inner circle called themselves "Magonistas" in his honor.[6] This is known as *personalismo,* a mode of thought in which a group or organization follows a leader rather than an ideology. Flores Magón and his fellow comrades rejected this idea, arguing that their movement was not about one person but about a liberal revolution. This article expands the work of Lomnitz to further show that he cannot be compartmentalized solely as a Chicano figure because he also had intellectual links to other transnational peoples. By exploring his political life from a transnational perspective, I argue that Flores Magón proved a significant intellectual figure not only in Mexican and U.S history but in the study of the global left during the twentieth century. This article aims to broaden the perspectives of the fear of anarchism shared by citizens in Mexico and the United States. By exploring where this fear comes from, we can begin to separate the negative aspects of anarchism – violence and terrorism – from its positive attributes of individualism and community.

In the broader historical context of the time, Flores Magón was one of many active anarchists in the United States. Emma Goldman, along with Alexander Berkman, William C. Owen, and John Kenneth Turner, all contributed to the anarchist cause. What set Flores Magón apart was his ability to galvanize the Mexican-American population in Los Angeles against both the United States and Mexico. Considering Flores Magón's unique position among his anarchist counterparts, this article will answer four key questions: How did his transnational activities during the Mexican Revolution influence his intellectual thought? How did he contribute to the larger discourse of anarchism while in exile in the

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[4] Ward S. Albro, *Always A Rebel Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992), xiv.
[5] Claudio Lomnitz, *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2014), xiii.
[6] Lomnitz, *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* xxviii.

United States? If Los Angeles was the ideological battleground between anarchism and capitalism during the 1910s, what were the political ramifications for the Mexican-American population as a result of this protracted conflict?

The final question that arises at the center of this discourse asks, was Flores Magón's an anarchist? An anarchist believes in the individual freedom of one's life and on the opposing conservative end is the lack of social order which is needed to have a functioning society. The definition of anarchist stems from the Greek word *Anarchos*, meaning, "without a ruler."[7] George Woodcock argues that it is this simple nuanced definition that gives anarchism both a positive and a negative meaning. But anarchism does not call for the abolishment of complete order, rather it is a concept that expresses a desire to rid society of authoritarian systems in exchange for a society that is run by free individuals who cooperate among themselves without the need of a government. By exploring Flores Magón's political life from 1900 to 1922, this essay will tease out the center of anarchist theory with the hope of providing a deeper understanding of what anarchism means while simultaneously unraveling it from other leftist ideologies.

The early twentieth century was a tumultuous time and during this period, ideologies such as anarchism, communism, and capitalism jockeyed for global dominance. The Mexican Revolution was one of many global changes that would take place during this time. It is through this revolution that people like Flores Magón convinced the Mexican people to think beyond the existing social order. He was connected to all three of these events: the Mexican Revolution, the First World War, and the Bolshevik Revolution. He was the intellectual mind needed to start the Mexican Revolution and he found solidarity with Russian anarchists and opposed the First World War. To better understand his involvement in this extraordinary time, we must first explore his early life.

Flores Magón was born in September 16, 1874 in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. He was born into a rural mestizo family where his mother, Margarita Magón, and father, Teodoro Flores, lived off the

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[7] George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 12.

land as farmers. He had two siblings, Jesus and Enrique, who fought alongside Flores Magón. Teodoro was a well-respected member of the community, whom the local villagers called "tata" as a sign of respect.[8] He taught his sons to fight for justice for the rural communities, which Flores Magón and his brothers would do in the following years.[9] Not only was Ricardo Flores Magón a son of a rural radical leader, he was also born in a Mexican state with a long history of rural uprisings that continue to this day.

The first major rural uprisings occurred in 1849 in the states of Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Michoacán. Farmers fought for autonomy from the oppressive *hacienda* system in which private landowners exploited the labor of rural communities.[10] The uprisings in 1856 soon followed in opposing the *Lay Lerdo* (Lerdo Law) which forced rural communities to sell their lands and outlawed communal landholdings, leading to the War of Reform that lasted from 1857 to 1860.[11] Thus, Ricardo Flores Magón's political life followed a long history of rural unrest against oppressive systems. Flores Magón radically expanded his political struggle beyond Oaxaca, and beyond the nation-state of Mexico.

The brothers first major political action occurred in 1892 after Porfirio Díaz had served his presidential term from 1876 to 1880. According to the Mexican constitution, Díaz could no longer run for president and to consolidate his power in Mexico, Díaz handpicked Manuel Gonzáles to take his place. Shortly thereafter, Gonzáles changed the constitution to allow Díaz to return to the presidency in 1884.[12] With this constitutional change, Díaz solidified his control of Mexico. In May 1892, the Magón brothers participated in a student-led demonstration against Díaz's second election. In February of 1901, Flores Magón spoke directly against the Díaz dictatorship in San Luis Potosí, resulting in his arrest on

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[8] Mitchell Cowen Verter, *Dream of Freeedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 30.
[9] Verter, *Dreams of Freedom.* 31.
[10] John M. Hart, *Anarchism & the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 62.
[11] Hart, *Anarchism & the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931,* 63.
[12] Albro, *Always A Rebel Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution,* 4.

the charges of insulting the president. Undeterred, he continued to resist the dictatorship which would be followed by a series of arrests. By late December of 1903, he and his brother Enrique understood that if they stayed in Mexico, they risked imprisonment and potential murder. Realizing their dangerous situation, the Magón brothers decided to go into exile in the United States, where they resumed their resistance.

In his political writings, Flores Magón argued against any form of authority because he believed it existed to protect the bourgeoisie at the expense of the poor. He found that authority manifested itself in many people such as the police officer, the hangman, and the soldier; all of whom only served to protect the status quo. In the case of Mexico, Díaz was the authority that replaced the old conservative regime. Even if one could elect Díaz out of office in a democratic fashion, Flores Magón believed people were ignorant to the fact that they were electing a leader that would kill them in return.[13] He felt disdain for the democratic process, but this idea was not original. Octave Mirbeau a French journalist, wrote about the social conditions of France, and believed that people who participated in the democratic process were essentially handpicking their own killer.[14] Most Marxists had the same criticism of bourgeois democracy. In the eyes of Flores Magón, a democratic liberal solution to Mexico's revolution would revert it back to the status quo. Thus he – and others like him – believed that anarchism held the potential to liberate the people of Mexico from capitalism and liberal democracy, and create genuine self-governing communities. These self-governing communities would thus replace the need for a central state power, returning the Mexican people to a state of mutual aid, cooperation, and individual liberty. To better understand why anarchism influenced Flores Magón, we now turn to the transnational intellectuals of Russia.

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[13] Ricardo Flores Magón, "Death to Authority." Regeneración, March 23, 1912. *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 251.

[14] *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Octave Mirbeau," accessed April 20, 2018, https://academic-eb-com.mimas.calstatela.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Octave-Mirbeau/52937

Peter Kropotkin was one of the most renowned intellectuals of the twentieth century and a Russian anarchist. Flores Magón was not immune to Kropotkin's influence, which permeated throughout his political writings. In his early life, he advised his brother Enrique to avoid calling themselves anarchists because he feared that the people of Mexico would not listen to what they had to say.[15] This was due in part to some anarchists in the late nineteenth century who promoted terrorist tactics to achieve social change known as "propaganda by the deed."[16] Therefore, to avoid the negative view of anarchism and anarchists themselves, Flores Magón exposed the people of Mexico to the positive concepts of anarchism through their periodical *Regeneración*. The mission statement was simple: free the Mexican people from the corrupt executive, judicial, local, state and federal authority.[17] *Regeneración* also served as the public platform for Flores Magón's opposition party in Mexico, El Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM). It is through this periodical that we can begin to see Kropotkin's influence in Ricardo Flores Magón's work.

In 1906, *Regeneración* had published a list of demands directed at Porfirio Díaz titled the "Programa Del Partido Liberal." One of the demands listed was for the state to grant land for agriculture to whoever requested it, as long as the person used the land for agricultural purposes. Moreover, these agricultural lands would be utilized by the state to create agricultural banks that provide basic food needs for the peasants who could not provide for themselves.[18] One of the fundamental elements of anarchism focuses on communal agriculture. Kropotkin argued that the peasants under the yoke of serfdom and Tsar Nicholas, were coerced into creating a communal storehouse that would supply the poorest of the peasants with loans of grain to sustain themselves.[19] Thus, the

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[15] Magón, "Letter from L.A. County Jail." June 13, 1908. *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader,* 111.
[16] Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 127.
[17] Magón, "Periódico Independente de Combate" *Regerenación,* December 31, 1900, accessed April 20, 2018, http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e1n20.pdf
[18] Magón, "Programa del Partido Liberal." *Regerenanción,* April 15, 1906, accessed April 20, 2018, http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e3n6.pdf
[19] Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (Heinemann, 1902.), 211

peasants of Russia no longer needed to depend on the state to provide for themselves. By relinquishing their dependence on the state, the peasants learned to cooperate with one another for the betterment of their immediate community. It is interesting that after serfdom was outlawed, the peasants reintroduced communal storehouses on their own accord. Kropotkin theorized that rural communal life was suited best in providing for each member of a community as long as everyone worked to the best of their ability.

The Mexican-Russian connection can be seen as a bi-national relationship rather than a transnational connection. But one only needs to examine a few other sources by Flores Magón to see that his ideas went beyond the confines of Mexican or Russian identity. For example, his article, "El Derecho de Rebelion*"* argued that rebellion had pushed humanity forward, through personal sacrifice against voluntary submission to any type of authority. In this same article, Flores Magón directly referenced Kropotkin as one of the rebels who had pushed humanity forward.[20] Although this article was directed at the peoples of Mexico, Flores Magón did not call them Mexicans, rather, he used their full names, avoiding any use of "Mexicans." Lastly, the encompassing word used to encapsulate the Russian Kropotkin and the Mexican rebels was *humanity.* By referencing the rebels by their individual names, rather than their national identity, and by using the word *humanity* to cluster them all together*,* Flores Magón showed that he viewed the Mexican and Russian struggle as two parts of a larger, transnational struggle.

It is evident that Kropotkin influenced Flores Magón. From the serfs of Russia to the rebels of Mexico, the anarchist theories permeated through Flores Magón's writings. In the early stages of his resistance to the Díaz dictatorship, Flores Magón avoided any references to anarchism in his writings. Yet, he did not completely hide his anarchist leanings. By using words like *humanity* and concepts such as agricultural banks, Flores Magón was channeling larger ideas that were far from nationalistic. At the turn of the twentieth century, the development of the nation-state was on the rise, but it did not mean that everyone felt it was the proper course. In theory, people like Flores Magón and Kropotkin could write

[20] Magón, "El Derecho de Rebelion." *Regerenación,* September 10, 1910. Accessed April 21, 2018, http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e4n2.pdf

about a stateless society. How did these anarchist theories play out in the reality of peoples' lives? For the answer to this question, we must turn to the transnational node in Los Angeles.

After Flores Magón arrived in the United States on January of 1903, he and his brother Enrique continued to publish articles in *Regerenanción* from San Antonio, Texas. In 1904, a Díaz sympathizer attempted to assassinate Flores Magón, forcing him to move to St. Louis, Missouri. Now that Flores Magón and *Regerenanción* were located further from the Mexican border, the periodical began to ship tens of thousands of copies into Mexico with relative ease. Díaz, fearing that Flores Magón would further inflame the Mexican peoples against him, requested the United States Justice Department to arrest him and extradite him back to Mexico. This prompted Flores Magón to flee to Canada, and possibly El Paso, Texas, although the details of where he really escaped to are not clear.[21] What is clear is that by August of 1907, the U.S. government located Flores Magón in Los Angeles.[22]

In June of 1907 – two months before the U.S. learned of Flores Magón's whereabouts – he published "Clarion Call to Arms" in a new periodical in Los Angeles called *Revolución*. The article pointed out the meekness and willingness of Christians to sacrifice themselves without a fight. In other words, he argued against the martyrdom of Jesus Christ and those who wished to follow his example. He further explained that it was this meekness that created complacency, which allowed the authoritative powers to take control.[23] This was a major evolution in Flores Magón's political writings, especially because the Mexican people were, and arguably still are, deeply Catholic. Yet he risked being ostracized by the majority of the Mexican population by publicly attacking one of the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. In another publication titled "¡Abajo Los Farsantes!" he directly attacked the church and "la santa propiedad," stating that the struggle against it

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[21] Albro, *Always A Rebel Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution*, 68.
[22] Albro, *Always A Rebel Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution,* 84.
[23] Magón, "Clarion Call To Arms." June 1, 1907, *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader,* 151.

would continue as long as man retains his will to fight.[24] "¡Abajo Los Farsantes!" targeted two long-standing institutions of Mexico – private property and the Catholic church. This illustrates that Flores Magón was not tied to Mexico's Catholic identity, and now that he was in Los Angeles, he allowed himself to freely express his disdain for the Catholic church. Moreover, in this same publication, Flores Magón did not reference Díaz directly, but called attention to the "regime of abjection."[25] The word "abjection" left room for anyone reading the source to apply it to whichever systems of oppression that are applicable to their situation.

In Los Angeles, Flores Magón tried to reach out to the Mexican-American population by using the phrase "regime of abjection." This could have been the systemic racism that the Mexican-Americans were experiencing at the time. In August of 1907, the *Los Angeles Herald-Post* published an inflammatory article on Flores Magón accusing him of trying to provoke discontent among Mexican-Americans. The newspaper indicated that he was showing the Mexican-American "peons" that they were earning a dollar and twenty-five less than their Euro-American counterparts for the same work. The article also accused him of trying to replace Díaz as Mexico's dictator because the Roosevelt administration was working with Díaz to keep the "Mexican residents" of the U.S. in a perpetual state of peonage.[26] Interestingly, the article was released the same month that the U.S. Justice Department discovered Flores Magón in Los Angeles. The suspicious timing of this article could have been orchestrated by the U.S. Justice Department as a public fear campaign to justify his arrest in the coming months, while also fermenting distrust of the Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles. Whatever the case may be, the importance of these events would soon come to a head.

This period in Los Angeles has been regarded by some historians as a key moment in the development of Chicano identity. Through the help of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) – an international labor union – Flores Magón found the support of

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[24] Magón, "¡Abajo Los Farsantes!" *Regeneración,* March 9, 1912. Accessed on April 24,2019, http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e4n80.pdf.
[25] Magón, "Abajo", 151.
[26] "Plan Mexican revolt here," *Los Angeles Herald-Post,* August 9, 1907.

about 400 IWW Mexican-Americans.[27] This political nexus of Mexican intellectuals with Mexican-American workers is regarded as the "opening chapter" of Chicano identity.[28] The development of this identity occurred at a time when Mexico and the U.S. openly rejected Mexican-Americans on both sides of the border. Diáz considered Flores Magón and his counterparts as a threat to the state, while the U.S. saw the same people – because of their involvement in labor unions – as a threat to their capitalist interest. This forced Mexican-Americans to alter their understanding of both their "Mexican," and "American" roots, clearing the path toward a new national identity. In order for us to understand Flores Magón's position on nationality – which we will apply to Chicano nationalism – we must first understand what it means to be a Chicano.

Indigenous identity in Chicano nationalism is deeply tied to Aztlan, the ancestral home of the Aztecs. Mexico is the ancestral home of various indigenous peoples in which their ancestral ties to Mexico are not seen as the authentic antiquity of the Chicano identity. The Chicano identity is tied to masculinity, and indigenous identity, which creates limits to who can be "Chicano."[29] Mexican-American women have historically struggled to be part of this identity and they have often found themselves on the periphery of the Chicano civil rights movement. In retrospect, Flores Magón and others like him did not see themselves as creators of a new national identity, they saw themselves as implanters of revolutionary change.[30]

In September of 1910, Flores Magón reached out directly to women in *Regenercaión* with an article titled "A La Mujer," where he states that women had long suffered under the oppressive nature of men because they were seen as inferior. The inferiority of women was tied to social class and long-held traditions. Moreover,

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[27] George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.), 230.
[28] Lomnitz, *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón,* xv.
[29] Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 10.
[30] Lomnitz, *"The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón"* pp., xv.

Flores Magón stated that women are "eterna minor de edad," eternally treated as minors.[31] Women in the Chicano movement had been pushed to the margins, relegating them minor participants. Flores Magón's intellectual reasoning on these issues is not coherent, nor conducive to the development of Chicano nationalism. He made this abundantly clear in his response to the Congress of Women held in Yucatán. Flores Magón stated that "anarchists consider the woman entirely equal to the man and entitled to the same rights, and we observe with pleasure the important resolution of the Congress of Yucatán Women that declares "the woman is exactly equal to the man in intelligence."[32] Considering that masculinity was one of the dominant features based on gender hierarchies, Chicano nationality could not see women as equals.

In traditional Mexican culture, and countless others around the world to this day, women are not treated as equals to men. Women are forced by society to have domestic responsibilities such as, cooking, cleaning, raising the children, and supporting men. It is out of the norm for women and especially Chicano women, to participate in social movements. Therefore, rather than taking a leading role for the Chicano movement, women were only seen as a support system to push the movement forward. For example, a woman named Eva Bonilla, who participated in the Chicano Movement in the 1970s, stated that women's main role was to cook food and sell it to raise money.[33] What was interesting about Bonilla's account, was the fact that she was proud of her supporting role and she even stated that without their help, the men – not the women – could not have pushed the Chicano Movement forward. Bonilla had internalized her supporting role, rather than taking the lead as a free individual to enact change directly for herself. Indeed, not all women in the Chicano Movement cooked for men but in

[31] Magón, "A La Mujer." *Regeneración,* September 24, 1910. Accessed April 26, 2018. http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e4n4.pdf
[32] Magón, "Revolutionary Progress." Regeneración, February 12, 1916. *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader,* 232.
[33] Eva Bonilla, (Civil Rights in Black and Brown Oral History Project) Interviewed by Caleigh Prewitt, and Justin Theberge, Fort Worth, TX, March 28, 2013. Accessed on April 27, 2018. https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/women-in-the-chicano-movement

Bonilla's case, the long-standing gender roles permeated the Chicano identity. If one wishes to place Flores Magón as a Chicano forbearer, one must come to realize that the gendered separation was a social construct that he was greatly opposed to. Thus, as an intellectual anarchist, Flores Magón's ideologies on gender cannot be applied to Chicano nationalism.

One of the most ardent anarchists of the twentieth century was Emma Goldman. Like Flores Magón, Goldman attacked the hierarchies of gender. In 1911, Goldman published an article entitled "Woman Suffrage" in which she attacked Christianity for making women subservient to men, and the State for trying to convince women to be good "keepers of the house."[34] Goldman's "Woman Suffrage," and Flores Magón's "A La Mujer" strike a similar tone. Both point out that women have been seen by Western society as inferior and both attack the Christian Church for forcing women to accept a subservient place in society. Considering that Flores Magón was a Mexican man, Western culture expected him to repress women and Goldman was expected to accept her place of inferiority in the same society. Yet, both Goldman and Flores Magón were not complacent to their gendered roles. Rather, they managed to transcend the gendered, cultural, and national norms of the era. Here we have a nexus of transnational thought converging in Los Angeles. Both Goldman, and Flores Magón were exiled from their countries, but because of their transnational ideology, they found solidarity in one another. Indeed, they were intellectual counterparts but they were also rebellious partners.

After both Goldman and Flores Magón met in St. Louis, Missouri, they worked together in their endeavor for the anarchist cause. In May of 1911, Goldman dedicated her time to speak in Burbank, California, about the Mexican Revolution, and its importance to anarchism. Flores Magón stated that Goldman gave one of the best speeches about the Mexican Revolution, which was translated into Spanish and Italian.[35] One can surmise that if the speech was given by a Russian woman in English, and translated

[34] Emma Goldman, "Woman Suffrage" *Mother Earth,* 1911. Accessed April 28, 2018. http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/goldman/aando/suffrage.html
[35] Magón, "Emma Goldman" *Regeneración,* May 13, 1911. Accessed May 7, 2018. http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e4n37.pdf

into Spanish and Italian, Flores Magón was reaching a wider audience that encompassed more than just Mexican-Americans. This solidarity did not stop with Mexicans and Russians; it also included people from the United States like John Kenneth Turner, as well as Englishmen like William C. Owen. For the global left, the revolution in Mexico was the epicenter for their hopes and aspirations for social and political change. Considering this large breadth of intellectuals, it would appear that Los Angeles and its surrounding cities served as a transnational node for Mexican, Russian, Italian, British and American peoples. This becomes undeniably clear in the aftermath of Flores Magón's arrest.

By May of 1911, revolutionaries Francisco Madero, Pancho Villa, and Emiliano Zapata were attacking Díaz with full force. By months end, Díaz and Madero signed the Treaty of Ciudad Juárez ending the first phase of the Mexican Revolution. This treaty forced Díaz to step down. What transpired after the treaty signing was not an abolishment of the oppressive authorities, but a transfer of power from Díaz's hands into Madero's. If we recall, Flores Magón's father Teodoro helped put Díaz into power. Thirty-five years later, Flores Magón witnessed the same occurrence. Madero decided to preserve Díaz's systems of power, keeping himself at the center of control. Although Madero did offer piecemeal changes to the Mexican people, many felt that he did not go far enough. Fearing a repeat of the Díaz regime, Flores Magón continued to resist the Mexican State from Los Angeles.

In January of 1911, the PLM attempted its first and last armed resistance against Mexico by invading and taking over Mexicali in Baja California. This invasion was hardly a massive military campaign. There was only one casualty – a prison guard. But this nonetheless boosted morale for Flores Magón and the PLM.[36] On May 10, 1911, Tijuana also fell into the hands of the PLM. This happened at the same time that Madero defeated Díaz, which greatly shadowed the PLM's success in Baja California. Madero, understanding the PLM couldn't defeat his army, offered the PLM's occupying forces a peace agreement. At first, Madero sent Flores Magón's oldest brother Jesús, who recanted his anarchist support

[36] Lomnitz, *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón*, 320.

after being arrested in Mexico in 1901 and was now a member of Madero's government, to Los Angeles to try and bolster peace. Jesús was unsuccessful in convincing his brothers Ricardo and Enrique to end their occupation. On June 17, Madero, circumventing the brothers, made a direct peace agreement with the occupying troops of the PLM, to which they agreed.[37] The fallout for Flores Magón and his brother Enrique would soon follow. In June of 1911, the U.S. Justice Department arrested Flores Magón and Enrique for violating the U.S. Neutrality laws.[38] The Neutrality law stated that Mexican nationals could not enter the United States for the purposes of attacking their country of origin. On June 22, 1912, the brothers were found guilty. Both were sentenced to one year and eleven months at the McNeil Island federal penitentiary located in Washington.[39]

The response to the conviction of the Flores Magón brothers was swift and violent. According to the *Los Angeles Times,* the Mexican anarchist and I.W.W. Members shouted and cursed "wildly," which led to a massive riot outside of the courtroom. From outside they shouted "Abajo con Estados Unidos."[40] Upon closer examination of this report, called the "Howling mob threatens when Flores Magóns convicted," we can see that the leaders of this riot were not the men. The leaders were Flores Magón's stepdaughters, whose names were not mentioned in the article, and who pushed the rebellion forward. The article stated that his oldest stepdaughter "stepped out and up to the steps of the sidewalk, where she was joined by half a dozen other women, all talking at the top of their voices and denouncing "Los Estado Unidos." Moreover, these women were described as "hysterical" who had on "little red flags across their breast."[41] The report makes it clear that women were not on the sidelines of this anarchist rebellion. Women were thus a real threat that had to be dealt with.

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[37] Lomnitz, *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón*, 329.
[38] MacLachlan*, Anarchism and the Mexican Revolución*, 41.
[39] MacLachlan*, Anarchism and the Mexican Revolución*, 46.
[40] "Howling mob threatens when Magóns convicted" *The Los Angeles Times,* June 23, 1912.
[41] *The Los Angeles Times*, "Howling".

The *Los Angeles Times* feared the liberty with which women voiced their discontent, which is obvious in the language describing the events. The first two words that demand inquiry are "howling," and "wildly." By describing the people outside of the courthouse as "howling," and acting "wildly," the *Los Angeles Times* was trying to portray the people's discontent as something primal and animalistic rather than a legitimate protest against something they saw as unjust. The newspaper article also made a distinction of "Mexicans," and did not include Anglo-Americans who were also among the protesters. Moreover, the article stated that the Mexicans could "hardly speak distinctly," further alluding to their desire to portray them as something other than human.[42] The newspaper described these women as acting hysterical, meaning that they were not acting rationally, but were somehow crazy. Furthermore, to make clear to the reader that these were women supporting anarchism, the article emphasized their gendered otherness by describing their breasts. Yet breasts had nothing to do with the Flores Magón's case, nor anarchism. Still, the article made it clear that women were adorning anarchist colors across their breast in a public fashion. This public display of breast was cause for concern for the well-to-do Western society in which women's breasts should remain at home, away from public view. These women were not only acting outside of gendered "norms," but they were actively voicing their discontent in public. By describing women's breasts, the *Los Angeles Times* was possibly trying to illustrate that these women were hyper-sexualized, hysterical, anarchist fanatics rather than women with legitimate concerns for society. The reaction to Flores Magón's conviction would move beyond Los Angeles with the help of Emma Goldman's magazine, *Mother Earth*.

A month after the Magón brothers' conviction, Goldman published an open letter to the readers of *Mother Earth* asking for donations to help Flores Magón with his legal expenses. Although the financial aspect of this letter is important, there are a few other parts of this letter that complicate the reevaluation of the Legacy of Flores Magón. Goldman, understanding that Flores Magón was not a nationalist – Mexican, Chicano, or otherwise – clearly articulated

[42] *The Los Angeles Times*, "Howling."

that he was not only fighting against Madero's Mexico but was also fighting against "world-wide forces of capital."[43] By making the point to print the words "world-wide" Goldman was clearly illustrating to her readers that even though he was fighting in the Mexican Revolution, his success or failure would directly impact the world, and more importantly the readers themselves. Moreover, Goldman told the readers that the Mexican Revolution was a part of a global labor movement, meaning that his actions weren't solely for Mexicans or Mexican-Americans. Rather, Flores Magón's actions were one of many steps needed to emancipate the peoples of the world from capitalism. Flores Magón's global aspirations are made clear in an earlier article he published in *Regeneración.*

In April – a month before the publication of Goldman's open letter – he published "Manifiesto a los Trabajadores de Todo el Mundo" which he called for the expansion of the Mexican Revolution beyond its borders – which Goldman had also done in her open letter. He warned that even though the Díaz regime was about to fall, Madero was poised to keep the bourgeoisie republic intact – meaning that the social classes, the rich and the poor remained. He further stressed that the events of Mexico "es el primer acto de la gran tragedia universal que bien pronto tenderi por escenario la superfiet todo del planeta."[44] A comparison of Flores Magón's manifesto with Goldman's open letter shows that their intellectual thoughts were moving beyond the immediate events of the Mexican Revolution. Flores Magón and Goldman placed responsibility on the individual to make sure the revolution did not end with economic, social, and gendered oppression still intact. He also openly called for the manifesto to be translated into as many languages as possible in order to reach a global political base. What is keen to point out about Flores Magón's observation is that he indirectly predicted the global events that were to come in the following years; the First World War, and the Bolshevik

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[43] Emma Goldman, *"Mother Earth."* Vol. VI, July, 1911 No. 5. Accessed May 7, 2018.
http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_Archives/goldman/ME/mev6n5.html

[44] Magón, "Manifiesto a los Trabajadores de Todo el Mundo" *Regeneración,* April 8, 1911. Accessed May 8, 2018. http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e4n32.pdf

Revolution. With the onset of these events Flores Magón more than ever transcended his Mexican nationality and embraced his transnational anarchist ideology.

On January 19, 1914, Ricardo Flores Magón was released from prison. By this time, military leader Victor Huerta assassinated Madero in order to take control of the provisional government. Shortly thereafter, another military leader, Venustiano Carranza, and Emiliano Zapata forced Huerta to step down. Clearly, the situation in Mexico was volatile and unstable. Flores Magón, being astutely aware of the political situation in Mexico, once again understood that this was another transfer of authoritative power. He thus resumed his publication of *Regeneración* to attack Carranza. Carranza, fearing Flores Magón's action, requested the U.S. government to monitor and arrest him as soon as they could. The U.S. government was well aware of Flores Magón's location and monitored his actions. In February of 1916, he was once again arrested; this time for mailing *Regeneración* which – according to the U.S. government – contained material that was "indecent."[45] With the financial help of Emma Goldman and fellow anarchist, Alexander Berkman, Flores Magón was able to pay for his bond and resumed his publication of *Regeneración.*

After Flores Magón posted bail, he published another manifesto in March, 1918 called "Manifiesto a los Membros del Partido, a los Anarquistas de Todo el Mundo y a los Trabajaordores en General" In this short, but important piece, Flores Magón clearly stated that he was an anarchist, calling on those who believed that any form of government only served to oppress the people of the world to act and rebel in order to preserve the human species.[46] Using the key concept "the human species", he articulated his larger intellectual scope that moved well beyond the national or even geographical ties to the land. Evoking the words *human species,* Flores Magón tied his struggle – and the struggle of the oppressed peoples of the world – to a larger biological transhistorical movement. The word "species" rids the manifesto of

[45] MacLachlan*, Anarchism and the Mexican Revolución*, 60.

[46] Magón, "Manifiesto a los Membros del Partido, a los Anarquistas de todo el Mundo ya los Trabajadores en General" *Regeneración,* March 1918. Accessed on May 8, 2018. http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e4n262.pdf

any ethnic, or racial separations that are tied to other nouns used to describe or categorize humans. *Species* also implies a scientific connotation to the social struggles of humans. One of the leading biologists of the twentieth century, Ernst Mayr, defines *species* as "groups of actually or potentially interbreeding natural populations which are reproductively isolated from other such groups."[47] If we apply the biological understanding of the word *species* as a natural population, we can see that Flores Magón was framing the human struggle of anarchism to a natural process of riding humans from unnatural separations of class, gender, and race.

Flores Magón was not the only intellectual who saw humans as one unified species struggling for freedom. Leo Tolstoy – a Russian intellectual – also understood and wrote about this very issue. Tolstoy's 1908 essay, *From the Law of Love and the Law of Violence* described people who work for the monarchs, senators, and political parties for the sole purpose of organizing and governing the lives of others as "vile and alien to human nature."[48] Even though Tolstoy and Flores Magón were geographically separated, both intellectuals were attempting to find a unifying concept – like species, or the alien act of governance – to articulate a wider shared *human* experience. This shared human experience in both cases was the desire to reclaim liberty and freedom. What is interesting about Flores Magón and Tolstoy is that they did not share the same ideology. Flores Magón was an anarchist, and Tolstoy was a pacifist. Yet, both intellectuals reached a consensus on the human need to be free.

At the time of the manifesto's publication, the Bolshevik Revolution was underway. Flores Magón, who understood the Mexican Revolution as one of the first steps to a larger global movement, saw the Bolshevik Revolution as the next step in this process. Flores Magón provided a translation of Vladimir Lenin's – the political leader of the revolution – words about the Bolshevik

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[47] Kevin de Queiroz, *Ernst Mayr and the Modern Concept of Species.* (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 102, May 3, 2005.)

[48] Leo Tolstoy, "From the Law of Love and the Law of Violence" in *Last Steps: The Late Writings of Leo Tolstoy*, Ed. by Jay Parini (London: Penguin Classics, 2009), 271.

Revolution in the hopes of creating global solidarity between anarchist and communist.[49] Indeed, anarchism and communism are theoretically different; anarchism does not believe in the state, while communism believes in a state-centered society, governed by the working class. Although anarchism and communism have their differences, both ideologies believe in the need to rid the world from capitalism. In this endeavor, they found solidarity. Moreover, Flores Magón saw a type of fraternity forming among the Bolsheviks and anarchists to rid the human *species* from the errors of prejudice. Thus, Flores Magón's unifying factor between anarchists, pacifists, and communists was not their political associations. Rather, it was the basic human need to achieve equality. Unfortunately for Flores Magón, his anarchist manifesto and his support of the Bolshevik Revolution would land him in prison one final time.

By mid-1918, the United States had already entered into the First World War, and President Wilson passed the Espionage Act of 1917. Fearing discontent and opposition to the war, the Espionage Act of 1917 became the unilateral tool the U.S. government utilized to arrest anyone it deemed a threat during wartime. This of course, included Flores Magón. On April 19, 1918, he was indicted for violating the Espionage Act of 1917. According to the U.S. government, he broke the Espionage Act by publishing his manifesto to the workers and anarchists of the world, and was also accused of trying to bolster support for the Bolsheviks in the U.S. He was found guilty in August of 1918 and sentenced to a twenty-one-year sentence at the Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary. With his conviction, *Regeneración* and the Partdio Liberal Mexicano (PLM) ceased to exist. By November 22, 1922 he was found dead under suspicious circumstances. Some people believed he died from his long battle with diabetes, while others were convinced that he was strangled to death by a prison guard.[50] Whatever the case may be, his incarceration and death at the Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary was the only way he was able to

[49] Magón, "La Revolucion Rusa" *Regerenación,* March 1918. Accessed May 8, 2018. http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e4n262.pdf

[50] Christina Heatherton, "University of Radicalism: Ricardo Flores Magón and Leavenworth Penitentiary," *American Quarterly*, 66, no. 3 (2005): 574.

return back home to Mexico. Following his death, his body was returned and hailed by the Mexican State as a revolutionary hero.

What is deeply perplexing about this reception of the anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón, is that he fought very hard against the state that welcomed him. From his fight against Díaz, then Madero, followed by Carranza, it was clear that no matter who was in control, as long as there was a Mexican government, Flores Magón would continue to resist. How then are we to interpret Flores Magón's welcome reception in post-revolutionary Mexico? To answer this, we must understand that after the revolution ended, the post-revolutionary government began to formulate a state-sponsored myth of a successful revolution. In actuality, the oppressive regime of Díaz did not end but morphed into new systems of oppression. The upper land-owning class still ruled while the lower classes continued to suffer. Some piecemeal changes were achieved, but it was a far cry from true revolutionary change the people of Mexico envisioned. In order to convince the population that change had arrived, the Mexican state created the mythos of successful change. He was thus one of the first to be enveloped in this state-sponsored myth.

Ricardo Flores Magón's life in the U.S. fostered another myth; the myth that Flores Magón was at the intellectual nexus of Chicano nationalism. As shown here, Ricardo Flores Magón's intellectual fortitude worked well beyond the compartmentalization of being a Chicano forebear. Let us consider that Flores Magón was a transnational person who shared common ideas with minds of people like Octave Mirbeau, Peter Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Leo Tolstoy, and found solidarity among the Bolsheviks, and detested the oppression of women. If we recall the exclusionary nature of Chicano nationalism – both ethnic and gendered – the sources left behind by Flores Magón articulate his unwavering support of ridding the systems of oppression like gender, nationality, and race -which are inherent in the Chicano identity.

Flores Magón saw people as one *species,* not a conglomerate of "Mexican" "Mexican-Americans" "Russians" "Italians" or "men, and women." He saw past all of these divisions and as we enter deeper into the twenty-first century, we must reexamine peoples like Ricardo Flores Magón in the hopes of finding new ways to move the human species forward. If we wish to find some sense of

dignity, respect and freedom for peoples the world over, we must find inspiration from intellectuals who want and do well for everyone. It is imperative that people understand that even though we find ourselves labeled by national, ethnic, and gendered parameters, at our core, we all come from the same human species. When we consider this fact, we must acknowledge that in order to improve our own individual lives, we must better the lives of others. Regardless of what one thinks of Ricardo Flores Magón – or what labels he might carry – it is his message of human unity that is worth echoing.