

## *Regeneración. Sezione Italiana (26 August 1911)*

### MURDEROUS SILENCE

**Luigi Galleani and *Cronaca Sovversiva***

Like all collective revolutions that have had a measure of economic and political importance in the history of peoples, so the Mexican revolution – which some consider dead and others livelier than ever – has its apologists and its detractors who make their thoughts know through the press, both in America and in the old continent.

We shall not dwell upon the European press because it is only natural that at a remove like one separating it from the scene of the action, and in the face of the muddled and contradictory reports reaching it, it would be hard for it to arrive at an accurate assessment of developments. To date, few have managed to properly understand them.

Let us turn instead to the American press which, being on the very doorstep of Mexico, is well informed as to what is happening in that neighbouring nation; and indeed is duty bound to be cautious in its judgment given that it is shaping public opinion \*\*\*\*  
(few words, illegible)

The first to slander the Mexican revolution have been the bourgeois newspapers, which, by means of fake news have done everything to have their own readers believe that the Mexican revolution was merely a political revolution of interest to Mexicans only; that, today, it is over; that the disturbances still afflicting Mexico are merely the predations of a few bandits who, masquerading behind a fake socialism, profit from the state of confusion in which the government newly emerged from the revolution finds itself in order to indulge their own savage instincts. “Peace”, says *THE LOS ANGELES HERALD* of 22 August – “between the government and its people has been assured. Attacks on property persist only as the handiwork of armed bandits who will assuredly be destroyed by good government after the presidential elections.”

No point in our concerning itself about them, then. Just a bunch of common thieves who will doubtless be seen off in a couple of weeks.

Could the bourgeoisie say anything else? On the one hand, it sees its privileges in serious danger, aboard a vessel that, up until yesterday, was their happy hunting ground; on the other, it is afraid lest example might drag in the slaves of this peaceable free country, to whom it has not yet occurred to rise in revolt, consumed as they are by [Socialist politician Victor] Berger’s speechifying or by boxing matches.

The bourgeoisie employs all means in its defence; which is only natural; history repeats itself and we have no reason to feel put out.

The bigwigs of the Socialist Party, cashing in on the trust they command among the working class which sees in them the heralds of the interests of proletarians, have, in cahoots with the bourgeois, done the Mexican revolution greater harm than the bourgeoisie has managed to do it. They started out arguing that the Mexican proletariat has no understanding of socialism; that its revolution had, could not but have had, one merely political aim; that the rebellions still raging are out and out acts of brigandage; that the whole thing, all the turmoil has been the handiwork of four lunatic anarchists from Los Angeles. Who are out to exploit the situation in order to win over the world proletariat to helping them out with their bold utopia.

In other words, the Socialist Party has done nothing but repeat the same calumnies as the bourgeoisie, albeit with a greater dose of poison and hypocrisy.

None of which should come as any surprise to us. Any social movement that does not carry the stamp of the Socialist Party is doomed to be not just be disowned by it, but fought against, vilified and slandered. Karl Marx was the first to set the example by slinging mud at the Paris Commune and its Communards; his acolytes follow faithfully in the footsteps of their great master.

Besides, were we to expect a friendly word towards the social revolution from North American socialists, whose mentality is the very same as that of evangelical reformer? Or from socialists who reject Ricardo Magón because he lives with a woman not his lawfully wedded wife?

True, the odd socialist worker has criticized the conduct of their leaders, but when did a working man ever have a say in these matters?

And even the odd anarchist has been of the same mind as the socialists, the odd anarchist who looks upon any proletarian revolt as holy and deserving of all our enthusiasm, even should it be only some meaningless scuffle over higher wages like happened in Paterson back in 1902.

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Our readers will have picked up on that; we refer to Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA*.

True, they have not uttered a single word against the Mexican revolution, but they blithely hosted a communique that outright disowned it; a communique denouncing the members of the Mexican Liberal Party Junta in Los Angeles as charlatans and thieves; a communique advising all comrades to withhold all moral and financial solidarity – financial specially – from the Mexican revolution.

And they hosted that communique twice in a row; and reaffirmed it with the stubbornest of silences. They have done worse; they have rejected each and any correction to that communique coming from not just the Mexican revolutionaries but also from one of its own signatories, Ernesto Teodori.

How are we to account for the behaviour of Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA* as they hamper, damage and combat an entire social revolution?

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Let us see. Maybe Galleani thinks that the Mexican revolution has been just another of those very many political revolutions by which the little republics of Central America are beset; that it was merely designed to substitute Madero for Diaz; that any attempt to convert it into an economic revolution is pointless?

In short: do Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* believe that it was not or is not worth bothering about?

Then why not say so openly and explain their reasoning? Who knows? Maybe he would have persuaded us to abandon a cause that we embraced with such enthusiasm.

But, take it from me, I do not concede that the Mexican revolution was merely designed to overthrow the Porfirio Diaz dictatorship but was always the rebellion of an unhappy nation against a thirty-five year tyranny and thus should have been let off lightly with just some open and well-intentioned criticism.

When the Mexican Liberal Party's Junta, back in 1907, feeling that Diaz's downfall was required if the way was to be opened to fresh gains, issued an appeal to the peoples of every nation to support it in the battle against Porfirio Diaz's politics, *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA*, meaning Luigi Galleani, reprinted that appeal in its entirety and urged the press to do likewise and pay heed, arguing that the political revolution in Mexico was more than justified and necessary if the Mexican people were to feel comfortable in moving on into the economic realm.

Back then, since this was a political revolution, *LA QUESTIONE SOCIALE* refused to pay it any heed. Is that perhaps why Luigi Galleani is baulking now? Now that the Liberal Party feels that the time is ripe for an economic revolution, *LA QUESTIONE SOCIALE* and *L'ERA NUOVA* are enthusiastic about it. Is that perhaps why Luigi Galleani is standing in its way today?

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That the Mexican revolution was a political revolution could have been and may well be the reasoning behind Galleani's unfounded opinion. Someone in charge of the running

of an anarchist newspaper has no right to base his views upon mere supposition, especially when dealing with social developments of a certain significance. He ought to keep abreast of developments in events and form his own views about them and spell them out in public. If this is not the case, what is the point of the newspaper?

Events are now telling us that the Mexican revolution came about for an essentially economic reason: that Mexicans took up arms, not in order to serve Madero's ambition, but to conquer the land.

Even the bourgeois newspapers, whining about the Maderistas' disobeying Madero and refusing to lay down their arms with the firm intention of carrying the revolution through, against Madero himself, admit that Madero is partly to blame for that, because when he called the people to arms he PROMISED SOCIALIZATION OF THE LAND, his own included.

So in order to spur the people into revolution, Madero was obliged to promise the peasants land, meaning that Mexicans have not taken up arms just for a change of president, but in pursuit of a radical economic change, for that socialization of the land that is the cornerstone of the anarchist program.

Therefore it was rather important that heed should have been paid to the revolution right from the outset; rather more important than a few broken bar-room windows or peaceable struggle between hireling and millionaire.

But other circumstances assure us that the Mexican revolution was born with an essentially economic purpose on the part of the unhappy peons.

The Mexican government has decided to come to an accommodation with the Yaquis, to whom it has promised – provided that the latter agree to down arms – restoration of their lands. The Yaquis have declined the government's proposal, saying that Madero's performance has shown them that there is no radical economic change to be expected of any government.

What is more, Baja California was in the hands of Liberals whose program provides for socialization of the land and freedom for all, man or woman. Baja California may well not have been retaken by the Federales had the Liberals had enough arms and ammunition. Where the Liberals won, the red flag flew in token of proletarian glory and of a fresh start in history. What more starkly anarchist gesture could Luigi Galleani have asked for?

He is certainly not going to tell us that the Yaquis and the Liberals were bandits. That might pass with bourgeois and suit the likes of Teodori or Perrone who, due to their poor historical and social knowledge, are unable to see past the phenomena in front of their noses. But Luigi Galleani, who has a store of studies behind him that affords him some right to call himself an intellectual: Luigi Galleani, who brags of having been

Elisée Reclus's secretary (?); Luigi Galleani who delivers critical lectures on the history of the Great Revolution and on the Commune, cannot reach for such a poor excuse.

Aside from a minority of American bums who in Tijuana tried to seize the upper hand and were instead seen off by the vigour displayed by the Liberals, the Mexican revolutionaries' aim has been and is high-minded and splendid: proletarian emancipation. The cry LAND AND LIBERTY cannot burst from the chest of a brigand, but rather from the mind of an apostle. Someone who faces death even when he has every option open to him for saving his own skin is no brigand.

Mosby, who in prison in San Diego had openly admitted that he is a communist, has stated candidly that, had he had at his disposal the three cannons he had been hoping for, not only would he not have lost Tijuana to a force outnumbering him ten to one, but would indeed have marched on Ensenada and, with the support of Guerrero's Liberals, would have taken the whole of Baja California. In so saying, Mosby has, in the face of the threat of a severe sentence, shown a civil courage that Luigi Galleani himself failed to display in front of the judges in Paterson, NJ.

Stanley, a member of the IWW, with just sixty-seven men at his command, beat five hundred *federales* equipped with good rifles and two machine-guns, and perished on the battle-field shouting: "Long live Land and Liberty!"

P. Guerrero, millionaire, gave away all his land to the peasants, helped with the compilation of *REGENERACIÓN* for a while and, once the revolution broke out, took up arms and perished gloriously on the field of battle, defending land and liberty for the people.

And Berthold died on the field of battle defending land and liberty for all.

All these martyrs overthrew the same bourgeoisie who did not have the daring to call them brigands; all these heroes say to the anarchist Luigi Galleani that his silence in respect of the Mexican revolution is an indescribable crime.

Galleani uses up a bottle of ink every year in commemorating the Paris Commune. He knows that whereas it may have saved France, it was not designed for socialization of the land and of the instruments of labour and exchange. Yet, year in and year out, in *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA*, he reminds comrades of it, on the basis that it was a proletarian revolt against the tyranny of Thiers.

So how can he justify his silence on Mexican events which are of greater social import than the Paris Commune?

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So far we have been talking on the basis of the social revolution in Mexico's being over.

Instead we are in a position to assure our readers that the Mexican revolution is not in fact over; we can state, with the evidence to hand, that in Mexico there is an economic revolution under way that will shortly present the proletarian world with the finest example that will go down in history. When we assert that Mexico is a burning volcano, we are not exaggerating; we know what we are talking about. Prudence dictates that we back up that claim with bourgeois documents.

Here is a dispatch from Mexico in the *LOS ANGELES TIMES* of 20 August inst.

“There is high alarm in the capital. It is a certainty that a second revolution, fiercer, less restrained and more terrifying than the first, is to break out. Numerous bands of Liberals are being raised daily to attack the haciendas. Liberals under the leadership of Castro in Baja California, numbering about a thousand, all of them armed are threatening to re-take Baja California. C. Knox, secretary of State in Washington has granted the Mexican government permission to bring 1,800 federal troops through American territory to enter Baja California and trap the *federales* [Liberals?] in the crossfire.”

Another dispatch lifted from the *LOS ANGELES TIMES* states:

“The state of Mexico is in the throes of revolution. General Zapata, at the head of four thousand rebels, has invaded the countryside, ousting the rightful owners from their *haciendas*, hoisting the red flag and handing the land over to the peons to farm for themselves. Lots of American *farmers*, stripped of their assets, are making their way through the United States where they are calling for intervention by the American government.”

None of this amounts to anything. We shall see shortly what the bourgeois papers will have to say.

Galleani will certainly not want to object that the big towns have been content with mere political change; that the workers in the larger centres have restricted themselves to strikes for better pay. He knows, or ought to, that the true strength of an economic revolution lies in the countryside; and he ought to understand that the Mexican revolution is an essentially economic revolution precisely because it has been desired and made by the peasants.

Galleani knows, or ought to, that the Paris Commune was snuffed out by the indifference and hostility coming from the countryside.

He cannot raise with us the objection that the current rebellions are mere guerrilla wars between ambitious men squabbling over political power. At the head of his men, Zapata carries out expropriations. Urged by Madero to lay down his arms and run for the presidency, he replied unequivocally that he was not making revolution in order to

become president, but in order to expropriate the land and that he will not lay down his arms until such time as he has accomplished this purpose.

If Galleani is unaware of all these things, let him stop asking *Cronaca* to cover his fees for attendance at parliamentary sittings in Italy that are worth less than a dried fig and let him get hold of *EL PAIS*, *EL DIARIO*, *EL IMPARCIAL* and all the bourgeois newspapers incapable of lying on the revolution's behalf. With a modicum of good will, it is not hard for Italians to make out the Spanish language.

So the Mexican revolution carries on and it is an economic revolution. Galleani is duty bound to give it his attention, report it to his readers and also set out his own opinion with regard to it. His stubborn silence and his hostile behaviour leave the way open for anybody to raise quibbles whilst quoting his lead and misusing his intentions.

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Aside from the considerations above, the stubbornness on the part of Luigi Galleani and *Cronaca Sovversiva* forces us to go a step further.

Galleani knows that some Liberal Party members, wounded in the battles of Mexicali and Tijuana are recuperating in Los Angeles. As no hospital was willing to admit them, the Junta, taking on sacrifices actually beyond its capacity, placed them in a private, paying hospital. We can all imagine what this must cost the Junta, which has no resources beyond the solidarity of comrades. At the same time, the Junta was arrested on charges of having breached this country's neutrality laws.

Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* know that the American government has breached its neutrality laws repeatedly in order to help Madero. Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* know that the members of the Junta have wives and children and have no source of support for their families outside of comradely solidarity; the solidarity that has always been so generously accessible to Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA*.

Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* know that this REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE has issued heartfelt appeals, through the press and in the form of circulars, in a range of languages, inviting the moral and financial solidarity of subversives towards the arrested Mexican Junta and the families of the imprisoned men, left without bread.

Now then: Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* have not uttered one word of solidarity with those victimized by the republican reaction; they have not felt it their duty to advise comrades not to allow the children and the wives of those behind bars to go short of bread, yet ...



That Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* do not see eye to eye with the ideas and modes of struggle of that Junta, we will concede, but in this present case Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* should have felt it their over-riding duty to stand by those persecuted by the bourgeoisie. In the present instance, Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* should have remembered that at the time of Galleani's Paterson trials – a trial that was a real disgrace as far as the accused was concerned – all the comrades from Paterson and across the United States, regardless of schools of thought or personal relations, afforded Galleani their full and unconditional solidarity, amounting, over a couple of months, to thousands upon thousands of dollars for which neither Galleani nor *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* has yet provided an accounting.

“Let us close ranks” has always been the war cry of all subversives in the face of the reaction. But for several years now Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA* have been deaf to that appeal, except when it came to defending their own exclusive interests. Come the Mexican revolution, Galleani and *CRONACA* have acted worse than Debs, Berger and others, and continue so to do.

Here is what Eugene Debs wrote in issue No 820 of *THE APPEAL TO REASON*:

“The *leaders* of the Mexican Liberal Party press on with all their zeal and energy to hasten a true revolution in Mexico, where they run up against Madero, who is nothing but a revised edition of Diaz, in order to turn the land over to the people and usher in the reign of freedom and peace.

Whether one subscribes to their program or not, one cannot help but admire their loyalty and applaud their incorruptible purposes. That these men really do strike fear into the ruling classes in Mexico and the United States is plain from the fact that they are still being hunted down and imprisoned.

The latest dispatches state that Ricardo Magón has been arrested yet again on a charge of having breached the neutrality laws and has been awarded a bail so high that there is no way that he can raise it. Enrique Magón, Librado Rivera and Anselmo Figueroa are in prison, however, awaiting trial and likely conviction. Six of the Liberal Party are presently in jail in Los Angeles or San Diego.

There is absolutely no excuse for the arrest and imprisonment of these men. The charge against them is designed solely to put paid to their agitation and break their revolutionary strength. It is simply monstrous that the perpetration of such an offence against utterly innocent men should be tolerated in the United States. It is more than an oddity that the people has not risen up against such a breach of freedom, especially the people adjacent to the scene of the outrage committed. Countenancing this sort of brutal persecution of people who have sacrificed themselves to emancipate their countrymen from the torments of Hell is nothing short of a shame upon ourselves ...



If such people are to be helped, it will take money and anyone who can make a donation is asked to forward it to M G Garzia, 519½ E. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Los Angeles, Cal.

I personally do not agree with the ideas and tactics of the *leaders* of the Mexican Liberal Party, but cannot but admire their honesty, their sincerity and their devotion to the cause of freedom to which they are wedded; and I feel obliged to struggle with all my might on their behalf against the recent outrages perpetrated against them by American capitalists ...”

And here is what the *EL PASO MORNING TIMES*, a bourgeois newspaper, had to say. Reporting that twelve Liberals had entered Juárez hospital to free comrades Silva and Rangel by force, it had this to say:

“It required nerve on the part of perhaps a dozen men to go into a city that is garrisoned by approximately 5000 seasoned and loyal troops and undertake to remove two of their number from under the constant guard that has been maintained since their capture and the incident is sufficient to serve further notice that Juarez may not be surprised at any further developments. It also serves to demonstrate that the men who are at work in an effort to foment the second revolution in Mexico are both cool and daring and prepared to take any chances in the achievement of their purpose.”

We deliberately included this in English lest there be any suspicion that in our translation of it we might have twisted it to suit ourselves.

Here is the translation, as faithfully as we could make it:

[Same text in Italian]

So courage, daring, self-sacrifice for the proletarian cause are so pronounced in the members of the Mexican Liberal Party that the bourgeoisie itself is obliged to speak of them with a degree of admiration.

But Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* who purport to be anarchists and worshippers of freedom for all; Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* who argue the case for every revolution but have not a friendly word to say of these heroes of the proletariat struggling desperately to shatter the shackles of lengthy, unbearable slavery, are content to host calumnies and pig-headedly line up against the martyrs and against the revolution with the most cynical, most hostile and most criminal silence.

Luigi Galleani and *CRONACA SOVVERSIVA* have taken upon themselves, in the eyes of history, a grave, very grave responsibility that authorizes honest men from whichever persuasion to pass severe judgment upon them. And if Galleani and *CRONACA* have any supporters left, that means that there are damned few anarchists in the United States of America.

*REGENERACIÓN*