

Two Essays on Woman's Participation in the Mexican Revolution and PLM

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Three Female Revolutionaries Deserve to be Rescued from Oblivion (2009)

By Olga Alicia Aragón Castillo, via *La Jornada*

María, Margarita, Valentina, protagonists of deeds, assures the Ensenada writer.

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Ensenada, Baja California, November 21st. By land, the sea of Baja California, did the remains of three female revolutionary protagonists rest who had done feats in the armed movement of 1910, that contributed to the defeat of the *porfierato* and even inspired legends and songs among the contenders.

María Talavera Brousse, the lover of Ricardo Flores Magón, is buried in Ensenada's cemetery; the remains of Margarita Ortega Valdés, executed by firing squad by *porfiristas* when they weren't able to subdue her, not even with torture, were thrown at Laguna Salada in the desert near Cerro del Centinela, Mexicali, and Valentina Vázquez Ramírez, a cavalry colonel who was the inspiration of the famous song that played around the warmth of campfires,¹ was cremated and her remains spread at Mar de Cortés, in the waters of San Felipe, as per her wishes.

Talavera Brousse was born in Zacatecas in 1867, she was a militant of the Mexican Liberal Party. She and her daughter Lucille Norman were active propagandists of anarchist communist ideals. Together with Ricardo Flores Magón, she spurred on the from Los Angeles, California the rebellion in Baja California in 1911 in an ill-fated strategy of PLM to "create a liberated land in Mexico" as a base to extend the social revolution to the rest of the country.

María was apprehended and prosecuted in a United States federal court, accused of the non-existent crime of 'violation of the Spy Act'. She was accused, according to the notes published in *The Times*, of being part of a plot to kill the presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Porfirio Díaz.

She and Flores Magón met in Los Angeles, California. On February 21st 1909, Flores Magón wrote a letter to María asking her to remain by his side.

In love, they fought, suffered jail and repression together, facing the dictatorial government of Porfirio Díaz, they shared socialist ideals and together defied death; the remains of the ideological precursor of the Mexican Revolution rest in the Rotunda de Hombres Ilustres and his name is written in gold lettering on the Wall of Honor in the Chamber of Deputies; on the other hand, the mortal remains of María are in an abandoned tomb in the city cemetery of Ensenada, lost to the memories of Mexicans. Half a century after the death of Talavera, Peggy Bonilla, a writer from Ensenada, points out that, after many attempts, recovered in the archives of Ensenada's civil registry is a death certificate in which the name "María Widow of Flores Magón" is recorded. She hopes to obtain a copy for an essay that she's writing about the presence of Baja Californian women in the revolution.

Peggy Bonilla found testimonies of people who remember when María lived in the port up until September 9th 1947, when she passed away at 73 years old; according to Roberto Meneses, who passed away a month ago and was a neighbor to the revolutionary when he was a child.

¹ Transl note: Reference to *La Adelita*, symbol of the peasant female soldier who rose up to fight in the Revolution.

Margarita Ortega Valdés was born in Sonora 1871 and assassinated in Mexicali in 1913. She joined the armed struggle starting in 1910, together with her daughter Rosaura Gortari, despite of her high social standing.

The origin of the *sonorenses* was confirmed by Peggy Bonilla, given that it was wrongly believed that she had been born in Mexicali.

Margarita Ortega was not just a militant member in the ranks of PLM as a partisan, propagandist and nurse; aside from delivering weapons, munitions, provisions and letters to her comrades during the taking of Mexicali on January 1911, she also took part in the pitched battles: Flores Magón admired her bravery and prowess as a fighter.

After the defeat of the rebellion in Baja California in 1911, Margarita Ortega took part in a second attempt to take the city's plaza, but also failed and was exiled from Mexicali along with her daughter Rosaura Gortari by Rodolfo Gallegos, under orders of Francisco I. Madero.

Without food nor water, on foot and in calamitous conditions, both crossed the desert into Yuma, Arizona, where they were arrested, but they managed to escape and take refuge in Phoenix. There they changed their names to María and Josefina Valdés to avoid persecution of which they were victims of. Her daughter Rosaura did not survive the desert.

Margarita continued to organize the guerrilla struggle in Northern Sonora under orders of Ricardo Flores Magón; together with Natividad Cortés, a PLM member, she took the town of Sonoyta as their base of operations.

Margarita and Natividad were apprehended on November 20th 1913 by the federal forces of Victoriano Huerta. Natividad was executed in the act and she was transferred to Baja California to then be subjected to four days of torture in order to force her to squeal, fruitlessly so, on those who were organizing another uprising.

Valentina, the Colonel

María Valentina de Jesús Ramírez Avitia took part in more than 20 battles, including the taking of Topia, Durango which lasted three days under the command of Ramón F. Iturbe. She marched dressed as a man and armed to the teeth.

Valentina joined the movement lead by Francisco I. Madero. She took part in the taking of Culiacan, Sinaloa on March of 1911. General Ramón F. Iturbe awarded this woman the rank of lieutenant.

"In my inquiries I have found three women who it is said is the real Valentina, but we have to believe the army", said Peggy Bonilla in remarking that Valentina's service record in is the Mexican Army and Air Force Museum, located in Filomeno Mata, in Mexico City.

"In the 70s I found Valentina in one of my journeys, she was going the same way and got off the bus that was taking us before I did, she lived in Valle de Guadalupe, a wine-making region of Ensenada. She was an old lady dressed as a soldier, a uniform that the army gave her, with insignias on her cap which showed her rank: three stars, Calvary colonel, veteran status had been granted since 1962, endorsed and signed by General Iturbe."

She died in a hospital in the neighboring city of Brawley, California, where she was confined for the rest of her last five years, at the age of 113. She asked to be cremated and her remains, as per her wishes, were entrusted to the San Felipe, Baja California sea.

Peggy Bonilla was left fascinated with the story of Valentina and wrote her a novel: she first edited a video, however the work is still in need of an editor.

The three revolutionaries deserve to be rescued from oblivion.

After the Traces of the Women Libertarians in *Regeneración* 1907-1918

By Gabriela López Ruiz²

By Way of Introduction

Studying the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM), and familiarizing ourselves with the different eras of its propaganda arm, *Regeneración*, allows us to understand that it was a heterogeneous organization that held in its bosom differing ideas and experiences from those who contributed and fought to change Mexican society under the principle of freedom at the center of its programs.³ In each of its stages the newspaper, as well as the Party, there were militant women who contributed to the laying of foundations of a social-economic project that impacted everything, from their daily routine to more complex forms of organization.

But, just how important was the involvement of the female militants to the dissemination of the principles of the Party? How did they contribute to the upkeep of the newspaper? What kind of strategies did they implement to carry on the struggle of revolution in Mexico and freedom for their political prisoners? These are some of the questions that the history of the Mexican Liberal Party and a reading of *Regeneración* only hints at.

If the newsweekly started to be published in Mexico on August of 1900, in the charge of the brothers Jesús and Ricardo Flores Magón, the following eras would be edited with the involvement of men and women of different nationalities in the United States between the years of 1904 and 1918.⁴ The contribution of other Mexican men and women in exile was so valuable that members of *Regeneración* were able to establish themselves in the country and carry on their propaganda work. For example, when Camilo Arraiga, Manuel Sarabia, Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magón crossed the border heading to Laredo, Texas, they lived for a short while with Crescencio and Francisco Villareal Márquez, editors of the liberal paper *1810*.⁵ During the years of 1901 to 1906 there were women who were notable in their contributions, as much as in fundraising as in the discussion of ideas. Among the most important we find Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza, Elisa Acuña y Rosseti, Sara Estela Ramírez and Dolores Jiménez y Muro.

² History teacher. Doctorate in History from the University of Guanajuato. Current investigation: *Los anarquistas de Regeneración y su construcción de redes transnacionales, 1900-1918*. Founder of the Investigator Web of Anarchist Women, Mexico, 2023.

³ Traverso, Enzo, *Melancolía de izquierda. Marxismo, historia y memoria*, Buenos Aires, F.C.E., 2018, p. 17-20.

⁴ The second era of *Regeneración* was edited from 1904 to 1905 between San Antonio, Texas, and St. Louis, Missouri; the third in the same city, February 1906; the fourth and last era in Los Angeles, California, between 1910 and 1918. Interruptions of the publication and moving of the headquarters was a result of the persecution of its editors on behalf of the Mexican and American governments.

⁵ Flores Magón, Ricardo letter to Crescencio and Francisco Villareal, 5 May 1904. *1810* was published in the period of 1904 to 1906 in the cities of Laredo and Del Rio, Texas.

Juana Belén was particularly paramount,⁶ she served as a correspondent of *Regeneración*, campaigned and contributed to the formation of PLM in 1905, such as the principles which were published in 1906, under the titles “Program of the Liberal Party”.⁷ If her name does not appear in the signatures of the program, we can assume her influence given that the document was worked on while she belonged to the Party, and she denounced the specific problems in the conditions of women in areas of labor and motherhood.⁸

If well the history of the Party and in its propaganda arm many women actively participated, it’s important for us to delve in the present text into the labor of the women militants of PLM in two periods, from 1907 to 1909, and from 1910 to 1918. The interest I propose as eras of the Party, is in response to the fact that it wasn’t published in the first *Regeneración*, in its place they edited *Revolución* as a cautionary measure given the persecution of the American and Mexican governments, who finally succeeded in jailing the representatives of the Organizing Board of the Mexican Liberal Party (JOPLM).

The first stage is of value because the women who worked to distribute the printed material, implementing different cultural activities and disseminating the Party program published in April 1906, managed to gain the support of other socialist and anarchist groups, and thanks to their propaganda work, by 1910 PLM’s struggle was known internationally.

Of the second period of 1910 to 1918, we rescue those who wrote for *Regeneración* and were militant members within PLM, because they are a different type of women, workers and peasants, with an incendiary discourse, emphatic of problems of their gender proper, who influenced the culture and the values of the bases within the Party, and some who took up arms to fight in Mexico.

The above is taken up with the end of naming them, to see them and stress that they were not extensions of men, nor secondary figures by being, in different occasions, loving partners of *luminaries*, but rather that they were women who lived as libertarians – taking up the word they used for themselves – without placing the adjective of liberals, feminists, socialists and anarchists. They, in their actions and convictions took up a public space, in their different circumstances. They acted from their own trenches and in the process of building – ideologically as well as practically –, they intermingled activities that led them to new ways of living, questioning and reconfiguring gender roles.

⁶ Gargallo, Francesca, *Las mujeres en la Revolución Mexicana, un acercamiento a una participación que no se estudia*. Online: <https://francescagargallo.wordpress.com/ensayos/feminismo/feminismo-filosofia/las-mujeres-en-la-revolucion-mexicana-un-acercamiento-a-una-participacion-que-no-se-estudia/> Juana Belén stood out because of her track record and journalistic and political influence; she was one of the first who dared denounce the working conditions of the mines in Northern Mexico, particularly in Chihuahua, a deed that cost her years in jail, from 1897 to 1899. Once freed, she founded the *Club Liberal Benito Juárez*, promoting the ideas of 19th century liberalism, denouncing the abuses of the clergy and, thus, the entire administrative network of the government. In 1901, she founded the newspaper *Vesper* in Guanajuato, which was later transferred to Mexico City and circulated through different states in the Republic.

⁷ “Programa del Partido Liberal y Manifiesto a la Nación”, *Regeneración*, 3rd era, #11, (1906), p. 1-3.

⁸ “Programa del Partido”. Of the publication of said document is rescued a fourth section dedicated to “Capital and Work”, in which a maximum workday of eight hours was proposed, with a minimum salary established according to the region of the country, regulations to domestic work and housework, essentially to alleviate the exploitative conditions of women, as well as to ban child labor. Towards the end of 1905, the group that joined PLM separated itself due to differing strategies and ideas. On the one hand, the moderates Juana Belén and Camilo Arriaga fought for a political change in Mexico without violently challenging the government, whilst the brothers Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magón proposed an open war and began to seed the necessity of a social revolution.

To investigate about the women who participated in the Party entails a challenge, give that, as Graciela Gonzáles says, “they suffer from a double-silencing stigma: *being women ... and revolutionaries in the most radical project at the start of the Mexican Revolution: PLM*”.⁹ The majority are women without history, who we scan following the clues that the sources bring, but with the assurance that they were protagonists in the history of the Party.

Who are the women who support PLM?, 1907-1909

From 1906 on, we see the participation of women who inevitably radicalized the ideological and strategic perspective of the propaganda organ of PLM. Throughout the program published that year, the Party attracted the attention and support of other libertarian organization in the United States, networking with another type of militancy and ideas. Deepening the reading of the works such as those of Anselmo Lorenzo, Charles Malato, Élisée Reclus, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Piotr Kropotkin and Francisco Ferrer. Also, they met the anarchists Emma Goldman, or “Red Emma” as the American press called her, and Voltairine de Cleyre.¹⁰

Emma Goldman and Voltairine de Cleyre were essential for the dissemination of the principles of PLM’s program, the legal defense of the incarcerated Mexicans, and the fundraising for the newsweekly *Regeneración*. Thanks to their vast political and propagandistic trajectory, both women validated the social and economic revolution that the members of *Regeneración* proposed to carry out in Mexico. In the case of Goldman, she had started her journalistic work in the 1890s, taking part in *Anarchist*¹¹ and *Freiheit*.

By 1906, when she met the Mexicans, Goldman had gained a vast experience as a militant libertarian, aside from a series of connections with other groups and women such as the Russian revolutionary Natasha Notkin who introduced her to Voltairine de Cleyre, Emma Lee and María Rodda, a young Italian who was the romantic partner of the Spanish anarchist Pedro Esteve. She struck up a friendship and political affinity with all of them, but it was with Emma Lee with whom she established a greater closeness because of her interests on free love and the rejection of the institution of marriage, a mindset that was later included in *Regeneración* articles.¹²

From that era were bonds of friendship forged and later political-organizational affinities that were the support of the *Regeneración* editors up until the last days of its publishing. Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman and Voltairine de Cleyre embarked in a struggle for the Mexicans. During this period they launched the first edition of *Mother Earth*, a paper headed by Emma and in which at different times she requested monetary aid for the Mexican newsweekly, as mentioned by Ricardo Flores Magón in the lines of *Regeneración*.¹³

Both women contributed money to arm the rebel groups looking to venture into Mexico, realized propaganda tours and exchanged printed material with the men and women of PLM.¹⁴

⁹ González Philips, Graciela, *Anarquistas mexicanas redactoras en los albores del siglo XX*, Casa del Ahuizote, 2012, p. 15.

¹⁰ Duffy Turner, Ethel. *Ricardo Flores Magón y el Partido Liberal Mexicano*, Mexico, INEHRM, 2003, p. 72.

¹¹ Goldman, Emma, *Living My Life*, Book I, Madrid, Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 1996, p. 127.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 160-180.

¹³ *Mother Earth*, Vol. 6, #2 (1911), p. 46-49. Flores Magón, Ricardo, “Emma Goldman”, *Regeneración*, 4th Era, #37, (1911), p. 2. “*Mother Earth* which is published in New York, is going to open a membership for the Red Flag rebels, and [...] extol the sacrifices of our brothers who fight in Mexico for Land and Liberty.”

¹⁴ Flores Magón, Ricardo, “Movimiento de solidaridad”, *Regeneración*, 4th Era, #35, (1911), p. 2.

Voltairine's relationship with the other female militants of the Party lasted until her death in 1912. She was known for her criticisms of the social and cultural construction that imposed on women the role of submission and acceptance of the marital institution.¹⁵

One of the most important contributions that Voltairine made for anarchist praxis, and which was later adopted by the greater part of the militants in PLM, was what she called "direct action". It dealt with violent attacks to any person against the libertarians and against private property; there were great similarities to "propaganda of the deed" that was practiced among those kinds of groups; but the difference was that the latter that directed itself to the representatives in the heights of political power, *direct action* proposed violence directed to the representatives of authorities at every level, and attacking material goods.¹⁶

In 1906, the year that Goldman, Voltairine and the leadership of the JOPLM established political relationships, *Regeneración* stopped being published due to continued persecution of its editors. In these circumstances, in Los Angeles, California, the publication of *Revolución*, a newsweekly born in 1907, began with the intention of shaking off the American and Mexican authorities and, primarily, to replace *Regeneración*. During this year, María Talavera Broussé, also called María Broussé, joined PLM. Not just Talavera, for in expanding PLM's contacts, they came in touch with other women.

Elizabeth Darling Trowbridge joined forces with PLM in 1907 acting as a double member, for in 1908 she became affiliated with the Socialist Party in Los Angeles and she maintained an important network with other women, among them Frances Nacke Noel. In that era, Frances was an active suffragist and syndicalist.¹⁷ Precisely then, in that geographical moving and establishing of connections, the militants Librado Rivera, the Flores Magón, Antonio I. Villareal, and Manuel Sarabia were jailed, and the *Revolución* edition was laid in the hands of Práxedes G. Guerrero.

Among other militants, Trowbridge and Talavera worked together for the legal defense of the imprisoned Mexicans with whom they kept constant communication and managed to liberate Ricardo due to his health issues. Together with the above mentioned, Hattie de Lara – Lara Gutiérrez de Lara's wife – worked, who had an arrest warrant for violating the neutrality laws, a charged based on the sale and distribution of PLM's Manifesto, something she took part in with Talavera in the Mexican Plaza.¹⁸

Once *Revolución* went out of print in 1907, the propaganda work and diffusing of printed materials continued on with Trowbridge, Talavera and her daughter Lucía Norman, who, together with Fernando Palomarez, labored on an issue of *Libertad y Trabajo* where articles by Ricardo, Enrique, Rivera, and Sarabia were still published. The newspaper was funded by Trowbridge and

¹⁵ Tuñón, Enriqueta, *¡Por fin ... ya podemos elegir y ser electas!*, Mexico, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2002, p. 17.

¹⁶ De Cleyre, Voltairine, *Direct Action*, Online: <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/voltairine-de-cleyre-direct-action.pdf> The importance of *direct action* was that it was proposed as a type of micro-organizing for women and it arose from observing daily life. If a group of them identified their unfavorable working conditions, they would join to share their experiences at home and at work, evaluate the means at their disposition, and decide to change their situation through the organization, deciding on *direct action*, and in becoming an example to their fellow female comrades, it transformed into an act of propaganda which in a greater scale hailed social change through violence.

¹⁷ Lomnitz, Claudio, *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón*, Brooklyn, NY, 2014, p. 29, Worth noting that Noel, apparently leading a syndicalist movement, was able to win the vote for women in California in 1910.

¹⁸ Kenneth Turner, John, *México Barbaro*, Mexico, EMU S.A., p. 237. And Ricardo Flores Magón to María Brouse, September 27, 1908, Ricardo Flores Magón, *Correspondence*.

didn't get publish more than a couple issues. It mainly functioned as a kind of fundraiser and bear part of the costs of their legal process.¹⁹

Moreover, in December 1908, Trowbridge alongside Ethel Duffy, John K. Turner, Murray and Manuel Sarabia publish *The Border* magazine in Tucson, Arizona, whose aim was the political activity in favor of the jailed Mexicans. Based on a trip to Mexico that Turner and Lázaro Gutierrez de Lara went on, they denounced what they considered "slave conditions".²⁰ Trowbridge also wrote articles on Mexico for *Appeal to Reason* and *Miner's Magazine* newspapers.

The Border closed publishing in January 1909 since it had reached the influence its editors had hoped for, printing was expensive and Trowbridge's resources were running low.²¹ The members of the group remained in Los Angeles, they dedicated themselves to handing out small leaflets with the PLM Program. Despite the economic support and solidarity on behalf of the women, there were personal conflicts that affected the relations among the members and caused ruptures. Trowbridge and Sarabia entered into a marriage contract in 1909, their union herald a split in the group.

Ricardo accused the couple of betraying the cause; however, the reason for the anger was of a personal character, he reproached Manuel Sarabia for courting his adopted daughter, Lucia Norman, months earlier only to later leave her for Trowbridge.²² The result was a series of public attacks against Sarabia and Trowbridge. The couple set sail to England due to the ill-reception of their union, the threat that Sarabia would once again be jailed, and because he was once again gravely sick.

Elizabeth was known for being a strong source of economic support for the Party, *Revolución*, and the paper *The Border*, published together with Duffy, John K. Turner, John Murray, and Sarabia in Tucson, Arizona, and for the apparent ruptured caused by her marriage. Apparent because it can't be confirmed that it was final since when the couple went to live in London in 1909, they spread the principles of PLM throughout Europe.

On the other hand, Ethel Duffy worked on propaganda favorable of PLM, and in various journalistic projects proposed by Trowbridge. When the paper ended publication, Duffy traveled to Mexico City in 1909, a place she later described as naturally beautiful, but with a contrasting misery that shocked her, stating that, "what's most moving is the spectacle composed by children, emaciated by ravenous hunger and raising their painful eyes to passers-by, in the plazas and streets (... and these) are the gifts Porfirio Díaz lavishes his people with."²³

After the group broke with Elizabeth, Duffy continued to help and worked as an editor of the English section at the beginning *Regeneración's* fourth era in September of 1910, work she abandoned in April of 1911. Her place was taken by the anarchist William C. Owen who made strong declarations against the socialists and against Duffy in particular.

The anarchist did not acknowledge the labor the American had done in *Regeneración*, neither journalistic as a writer nor as a champion of the Mexican cause. Owen declared that the articles

¹⁹ Vásquez Montaña, Rosario Margarita, *Ethel Duffy Turner. Una biofía política e intelectual desde la frontera, 1885-1969*, (History Doctorate Thesis), College of Mexico, 2019, p. 72.

²⁰ Lomnitz, *The Return of Comrade*, p. 117 y 252. Lomnitz, points out that the description of "Mexican Slave" was commonplace among the authorities to describe the harsh conditions the workers lived in the large plantations south of the country. [Transl. note: This is also highlighted by Turner's aforementioned book.]

²¹ Vásquez Montaña, *Ethel Duffy Turner*, p. 80-88.

²² Lomnitz, *El regreso del camarada*, p. 400-410.

²³ Duffy Turner, Ethel, "La benevolencia del déspota", *Regeneración*, 4th Era, N.o 8, (1910), p. 2.

signed as Duffy were the work of Turner, which to Duffy meant an implicit accusation of incompetence. She said, "I was furious when he later said that John had written everything! It's not true, it was my name on the headings."²⁴ This was a constant type of argument and part of the journalistic practice of the era.

Up to this point, considering the involvement of Ethel Duffy and Elizabeth Trowbridge, we can say that the women that worked with the Party were educated, both had studied copperplate letters. Duffy did so at the University of Berkeley in 1904; meanwhile Trowbridge studied the same subject at Harvard University, she was also a millionaire heiress from Boston²⁵ with the ability to invest in a political project such as the kind proposed by PLM.

By 1910, the female participation took on other characteristics because the context in Mexico and the group's circumstances so required it. We find Paula Carmona -whose pseudonym was Consuelo Rivas-, who urged Mexican women to send their husbands to the armed revolution. There were others such as Delfina Morales setting up clubs in Mexico. The militant Antonio Villareal described them as strong, brave, and virile examples before the men.

PLM was also nourished by family ties; Antonio's sisters, Andrea and Teresa Villareal published from San Antonio, Texas *Mujer moderna* and *El Obrero*, respectively, and declared, "we are women, but have felt no weakness that obliges us to abandon the fight. The sharper the pain that wounds us, the greater the love grew for the cause of liberty that we profess..."²⁶ But they were not the only ones who worked with the Party and with the weekly newspaper *Regeneración*.

For Women and Anarchy! The Women and Their Pen in *Regeneración*

If very well the participation and propaganda of Ethel Duffy and Elizabeth Trowbridge was foundational for PLM to be internationally known, it also impacted the group internally. With their work, they broke new ground for the male militants to question the importance of work and female contribution with the Party, undermining the ancient forms they were accustomed to in relating with one another. On recognizing the other, the difference, and that women were a section with their own agenda, they changed the discourse within *Regeneración*.

From 1910 onward, the editors of the newsweekly directed articles to the female populace, emphasizing the ones by Práxedes G. Guerrero who was one of the first in addressing them as comrades in the struggle, and said,

The virtue of our cause has found refuge in the delicate bosom of woman, man's joint female comrade who now rebels, she doesn't set her children to sleep with mystic psalms, she doesn't hang ridiculous amulets around her husband's neck, she doesn't cease in web of her caresses to her loves; virile, resolute, splendid, and beautiful, she lulls her little ones to sleep with *La Marseillaise*. Women, you, the ones inspired by the sublime spirit of the struggle...²⁷

Doubtlessly, the articles directed to the feminine gender multiplied. But what was more interesting was that they created a figure of a female militant to show that they too were part of

²⁴ Lomnitz, *El Regreso del camarada*, p. 415.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 83.

²⁶ ¿Qué hacéis aquí los hombres?, *Regeneración*, 4th era, # 21, (1911), p. 2.

²⁷ Guerrero, Práxedes G., "La mujer revolucionaria", *Regeneración*, 4th era, # 20, (1910), p. 2-3.

the struggle and were necessary. Thus, “Rosa Méndez” was born under the pen of Enrique Flores Magón, whose goal was to, “raise woman’s morale, inciting them to the struggle, and to support the struggle of the men, encouraging them to remain steadfast, firm and daring before persecution”.²⁸ Once the articles began to be published with Rosa Méndez’s signature and incendiary speech, the financial contribution of women to the newspaper increased.

Rosa Méndez’s wasn’t the only “female” signature plastered in *Regeneración*. Francisca J. Mendoza had been a columnist and contributor since April 1912 when the notice of her arrival to Los Angeles was sent out.²⁹ She was described by her comrades as a woman who was, “intelligent, firm, resolute, a persuasive and simple speaker. Additionally, she is a worker, not a bourgeois.”³⁰ It is important to stress these last few words, since they are elements of the emancipated, militant women that came from the working class,³¹ who experienced exploitation, and so sympathized with the cause and struggle for a new society.

Francisca was a woman convinced that PLM were the only ones who vindicated the cause of workers’ emancipation and, so, the flag under which the struggle should bind itself. In an article she wrote in remembrance of Práxedes G. Guerrero she declared that, “your early death weighs heavily among the disinherited; your genius is deeply missed within the proletarian’s cause”.³² She also emphasized on the necessary education for the people and sent out a call of international solidarity for the Mexican struggle:

Send funds to the Organizing Board of the Mexican Liberal Party in Los Angeles, Cal., to continue with the *Regeneración* weekly; purchase books so you may learn. Carry each of you upon your blouses the Party’s button that bears the watchword of Land and Liberty. Fight, comrades, all together. Let us set an end to the representatives of the oppressive ivy: Government, Capital and Clergy. Long Live Land and Liberty! Death to Authority! Death to Capital! Down with the Clergy!³³

Finally, Francisca J. Mendoza quit the newspaper editorial on October 1912 due to personal disputes between Anselmo, Librado, Ricardo and Enrique, and her romantic partner, Rafael Romero Palacios. There was a letter published in *Regeneración* where the Board demanded that Palacios immediately hand over the offices where the newsweekly was published and they offered Francisca the management of the paper, a position she refused and resigned from her duties.³⁴

What is interesting of Francisca’s rupture with the agency with the reason why, she kept sending money to keep *Regeneración* going, and in the meetings she held afterwards, she positioned herself in favor of PLM. From June 1912 onward, and in parallel to Francisca, the political

²⁸ Sixth citation, taken from González Phillips’s work, *Anarquistas mexicanas*, p. 8.

²⁹ “Bienvenida”, *Regeneración*, Los Angeles, California, 4th era, # 86, (1912), p. 1.

³⁰ “A los compañeros”, *Regeneración*, 4th era, # 60, (1911), p. 1.

³¹ Mendoza, Francisca J., “Una explicación”, *Regeneración*, 4th era, # 71, (1912), p. 1. Francisca lived in Bridgeport, later in Alba and subsequently in Como, Texas. She lived together with her three daughters and her parents for whom she was the primary breadwinner, she moved around constantly to work in the various factories located in those cities. She found herself in Como when members of JOPLM asked her to move to the city of Los Angeles to contribute to the newspaper given that she was one of the loyal militants with whom they kept correspondence with, who sent money and established liberal clubs.

³² Mendoza, Francisca J., “En memoria de Práxedes”, *Regeneración*, 4th era, # 71, (1912), p. 3.

³³ Mendoza, Francisca J., “En Defensa de los Mexicanos”, *Regeneración*, Los Angeles, California, 4th era, # 71, (1912), p. 3.

³⁴ Lara, Blas, “Conocimiento”, *Regeneración*, 4th era, # 114, (1912), p. 1.

practice of another woman stood out who, through her writings, gained the respect and a place alongside the offices of the paper; “Someone once said that in times of peace we must prepare for war, let us prepare and Long Live Land and Liberty! The watchword of the Mexican proletariat.”³⁵ We’re talking about Sofía Bretón, of Cuban descent. Bretón’s involvement with *Regeneración* was announced in various anarchist papers.³⁶

For example, in July 1912, Paris’s *Le Libertaire* announced, “another female comrade, Sofia Bretón has joined the editorial making up four of the most steadfast pillars of the Mexican cause.”³⁷ She joined as a writer at a time when the Organizing Board of the Mexican Liberal Party (JOPLM) were still in jail, and was the person who described one of the crowds she found herself in when the Mexicans were sentenced to eight months behind bars.

Bretón wrote solely about oppression and the struggles against it, although she also demonstrated sympathy for the class struggle, she proposed a union between men and women, a fight irrespective of sex towards a common goal: the overthrow of the capitalist system. Regardless of “however small the contingent that women lend may be, together we shall form a phalanx and will accomplish as much as our male comrades. Rise, female proletarians! Long Live the Work of *Regeneración!*”³⁸ The final article bearing her signature appeared in September 1912, which announced her departure from the editorial; however, she continued organizing liberal clubs from where she lent support.

The work of these women did not just impact the interrelations of the Party’s representatives –men and women–, but also directly influenced the values, dynamics, and relationships of those who made up the base of the Party, from the most important of militants to mere sympathizers. In *Regeneración*’s records one can read the following note: “‘Liberty’ is the name given to the girl given birth to on November 17 in Colgate, Okla., her parents, Herlinda Martínez and Severino announce that it is a provisional name while Liberty grows and chooses a more agreeable one.”³⁹

The following example reflects how the Party’s base gradually internalized and applied into their daily lives the culture and values of libertarianism such as a rejection of the civil and religious institution of marriage:

There was a simple ceremony. It dealt with a couple who lived in free union: Jesús Rincón and Luisa Rincón, who, inspired by free-thought, wished to baptize a girl, the fruit of their union. The girl was given the name of *Regeneración*, dressed in red, the color of the universal liberty of the proletariat.⁴⁰

They were values adopted solely by adult women, little girls and teenagers also took part in the propaganda of libertarian values and lessons. From Florence, California, Julia Monreal, daughter of the militant Santana Monreal, began at eleven years old to read *Regeneración* and “upon learning of the egalitarian and just ideal it propagated, became enamored of said ideals”.⁴¹

³⁵ Bretón, Sofía, “Punto de atención”, *Regeneración*, 4th era, # 101, (1912), p. 3.

³⁶ Fabra Ribas, Antonio, “La guerra civil en México. Una lucha fratricida. Cuál debe ser la actitud de los revolucionarios”, *L’Humanité*, Paris, (1912), p. 1.

³⁷ Doillon, David, *El magonismo y la Revolución mexicana en la prensa ácrata y radical francófona*, Mexico, National Institute of Anthropology and History, 2013, p. 130-135.

³⁸ Bretón, Sofía, “¡Guerra al déficit!”, *Regeneración*, 4th era, # 105, (1912), p. 1.

³⁹ *Regeneración*, 4th era, # 167, (1913), p. 3.

⁴⁰ M. González, Jesús, “Siempre adelante”, *Regeneración*, 4th era, # 21, (1911), p. 1.

⁴¹ “Julia Monreal”, *Regeneración*, 4th era, # 205, (1915), p. 2.

Unfortunately, Julia died at the age of fifteen, the funeral procession that was her farewell was described within the pages of the paper:

Dressed in red and surrounded by flowers, as pure and innocent as her, with smiling lips and serene face, the girl-gladiator of grand and combative soul, has died, brethren ... She died this past March 18th, and on the 20th, her body was accompanied to the cemetery by many comrades of both sexes, Mexicans, Spaniards, and Americans. At her house, en route to the cemetery, and over her tomb, songs of revolution were sung in a worthy farewell to the strong fighter.⁴²

Aside from those already mentioned, the Colombian libertarian Blanca de Moncaleano joined PLM and the editorial team of its press organ. She emphasized the necessity of woman's education and denounced the double exploitation to which they were subjugated to at the start of the 20th century. Given the articles she published in such as *Ravachol*, *Regeneración*, *Pluma Roja*, *Fraternidad*, *¡Tierra!*, and *La Protesta*, edited in

⁴² Ibid.

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