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Jim Miller
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A Prelude to the San Diego Free Speech Fight
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The Magonista Revolt in Tijuana

A Prelude to the San Diego Free Speech Fight

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“Workers of the World Awaken!/Your comrades
call from Mexico”

Laura Emerson, San Diego Wobbly Poet

“You have got to haul down this red flag!”

Dick Ferris, San Diego Booster¹

“Man is worth nothing; the idea is everything.”

Flores Magon, Anarchist²

In 1911, San Diego, Tijuana, and the entire Southern California border region were swept up into a now obscure chapter of the Mexican Revolution, an anarchist uprising inspired by the brilliant but tactically incompetent Richardo Flores Magon. Magon, who had been imprisoned for his opposition to the

¹ Blaisdell 148

² Ibid 187

Diaz regime in 1903, was released from jail after a year and fled to Los Angeles where he reorganized his Liberal Party in exile and wrote searing attacks on the Mexican dictatorship in his party's main organ,³ *La Regeneracion*. As opposed to Francisco I. Madero, whose forces eventually did overthrow Diaz, Magon and his Liberal Party expressed not the wishes of the moderate, middle class nationalists of Mexico, but the unspoken desires of the majority working class.⁴ The Magonistas were unique because, as Magon put it in a letter from a Mexican jail, "No liberal party in the world has the anti-capitalist tendencies of we who are about to begin a revolution in Mexico."⁵ In a manifesto written on September 23, 1911 he clearly differentiates the Liberal Party's aims from those of Madero: "All others are offering you political liberty when they have triumphed. We Liberals invite you to take immediate possession of the land, the machinery, the means of transportation and the buildings, without expecting anyone to give them to you and without waiting for any law to decree it."⁶ The son of an Indian Mother and a Mestizo father, Magon grew up idealizing the communal lives of Oaxaca's Indians as opposed to what he saw as the corrupt artificiality of Mexico City. As an adult, his reading of Kropotkin, Bakunin, and Marx as well as his brutal treatment at the hands of the Diaz dictatorship fused with the lessons of his youth to create a passionate utopianism rooted in a belief that only communal ownership of the land and the dissolution of organized government would create real human freedom.⁷ Hence when the Magonista army took Tijuana, they hoisted a red flag emblazoned with the slogan "*Tierra y Liber-*

³ Philip S. Foner, *U.S. Labor Movement and Latin America*, Volume I 1846–1919, (South Hadley: Bergin and Garvey, 1988) 112.

⁴ *Ibid* 10

⁵ *Ibid* 13

⁶ James A. Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904–1923*, (Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1992) 36.

⁷ Blaisdell chapter 1; Sandos chapter 1

tad” and issued a proclamation calling on the people to “take the land.”⁸ Unfortunately, Magon’s powerful idealism was not accompanied by shrewd tactical thinking and his dream of an anarchist utopia was hijacked by a shameless opportunist and San Diego booster, Daredevil Dick Ferris, in what is surely the most bizarre series of events in the history of the city.

Magon brought his revolution in exile to a Los Angeles that was in the midst of its own labor war after the bombing of the *Los Angeles Times* building by radical unionists in 1910, and the growing influence of the Industrial Workers of the World which had inspired an Open Shop drive and an anti-labor propaganda campaign in Southern California.⁹ In addition to this, *Times* owner Harrison Gray Otis as well as *San Diego Union* owner John D. Spreckels had extensive water, land and railroad holdings in both the Imperial Valley and Baja, Mexico.¹⁰ Thus, as Lowell Blaisdell argues in *The Desert Revolution*, it should have been obvious to Magon that the odds of mounting a successful revolutionary campaign in a sparsely populated area with little money, and no military experience were slim.¹¹ Consequently, what little scholarship there is on the Magonista revolt has investigated the charge that the Magonistas were actually a front for a filibuster designed by American capitalists to capture Baja from Mexico.¹² Given the fact that no solid evidence of a real filibuster exists, what emerges is the farcical story of an anarchist revolution expropriated by boosters to sell the Panama-California Exposition that they hoped would help woo the military and promote real estate in San Diego.

⁸ Blaisdell 124–25

⁹ Ibid 27–8.

¹⁰ Ibid 36, 54

¹¹ Ibid 38

¹² Richard Griswold del Castillo, “The Discredited Revolution: The Magonista Capture of Tijuana in 1911,” *The Journal of San Diego History*, Fall 1981; Lawrence D. Taylor, “The Magonista Revolt in Baja California: Capitalist Conspiracy or Rebellion de los Pobres,” *JSDH*, Winter 1999, Volume 45, Number 1; Blaisdell, Foner, and Sandos also address this point.

As the Panama-California Exposition solemnly celebrated the emergence of an Imperial America backed by God as well as massive naval firepower and showcased San Diego's desirability as a strategic port,¹³ the Ferris filibuster spectacle that preceded it grabbed headlines by crassly exploiting a life and death situation and making a joke of Mexican independence for the sake of publicity.

In the beginning, Magon's cause was received well in both California and national labor and left circles. They generated funds by selling *La Regeneracion*, took in donations from individual workers and unions, and got fairly favorable press coverage. Italian anarchists and the Industrial Workers of the World were their biggest supporters.¹⁴ The IWW with its anarcho-syndicalist philosophy of organizing all workers into "One Big Union" without racial, craft, or any other distinctions, along with their instinctive distrust of the bourgeois state and legal system made them the most likely, if not perfect, fit with Magon's anarchism. Like the Liberal Party, the Wobblies were born of repression, believed in direct action, and had an open door policy with regard to membership. As one IWW organizer put it, "One man is as good as another to me; I don't care if he's black, blue, green, or yellow, as long as he acts the man and acts true to his economic interests as a worker."¹⁵ Magon too had an internationalist perspective, "In the ranks of the Liberals are men who are not our nationality but are our ideological brothers ... they sacrifice themselves to destroy the chains of our slavery."¹⁶ These attitudes help explain why the Wobblies supplied the largest number of soldiers for the Liberals. Still, the great irony of the Magonista army was that the majority of its members were gringos, not Mexicans fighting for inde-

¹³ Shragge 52, 218

¹⁴ Blaisdell and Taylor address this point

¹⁵ Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*, (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 2000) 85

¹⁶ Griswold del Castillo 261

knew about as well as Tijuana regulars and “the In crowd of San Diego and Hollywood.”⁵⁴ The labor movement was also opposed to Tijuana’s “illicit traffic in drugs, booze, and women.” Apparently angered by a Tijuana promoter’s effort “to break up the labor day celebration at Balboa Park,” the San Diego Labor Leader threatened to expose the “prominent citizens” who owned the den of inequity.⁵⁵ The Labor Council’s mouthpiece, which also frequently protested the importation of unskilled Mexican workers to San Diego, was apparently unconcerned by the racist employment practices of the resort owners across the border. In 1923, the Tivoli was invaded by fifty Mexicans who rioted, overturned gambling tables and tried to make their way to the Foreign Club, protesting the fact that only whites were employed in many of the bars and casinos frequented by San Diego’s wealthy Anglos.⁵⁶ This spontaneous uprising failed to disturb the fun seekers for long, but by 1926 a new group of Mexican insurrectos along the border was enough to slow the party down.⁵⁷ While San Diego’s Anglo booster party animals were happy to chug down the Czar’s vodka purchased from the Bolsheviks,⁵⁸ Mexican rebels with guns still made them nervous. Flores Magon would have been happy.

⁵⁴ Ibid Part X 88

⁵⁵ San Diego Labor Leader 9/10/20

⁵⁶ Ridgely, Part VII, 111

⁵⁷ Ibid Part X, 88

⁵⁸ Ibid Part X, 103

pendence. Richard Griswold del Castillo cites several reasons for the failure of the Magonistas to attract more Mexicans to fight with the American radicals including the abstract nature of Magon’s rhetoric, the small population of Northern Baja, the United States army presence at the border, the junta’s lack of connection with the region, and, most importantly, the perception of the army as a filibustering expedition.¹⁷ One might also add to this list the junta’s careless recruitment of ideologically suspect mercenaries in the name of expediency, the fact that Richardo Flores Magon never left the Liberal Party’s headquarters in Los Angeles (making communication with the rebel army difficult to say the least), Magon’s choice to distribute more copies of Kropotkin than bullets, the racial tension that existed between some of the troops despite the official rhetoric of the revolt, and the general chaos on the ground.¹⁸ Nonetheless, in the face of these seemingly insurmountable odds, the revolt got off to a good start. After receiving the word from Los Angeles, the rebels began planning an attack on Mexicali at the IWW headquarters in Holtville, a small town near the border in the Imperial Valley. After a successful scouting operation, about thirty, mostly Mexican Magonistas led by Jose Maria Leyva, took Mexicali in a pre-dawn raid on Sunday, January 29, 1911, killing only the town jailor.¹⁹ The Liberal Revolution was born.

Less than a week after the fall of Mexicali, a meeting was held in support of the Magonistas at the Los Angeles Labor Temple. They raised \$140 dollars and socialist novelist Jack London penned a manifesto in support of the rebels:

We Socialists, anarchists, hobos, chicken thieves, outlaws, and undesirable citizens of the United

¹⁷ Ibid 263–65

¹⁸ Both Blaisdell and Griswold del Castillo address these problems thoroughly.

¹⁹ Blaisdell 39; Griswold del Castillo 258

States are with you heart and soul. You will notice that we are not respectable. Neither are you. No revolutionary can possibly be respectable in these days of the reign of property. All the names you are being called, we have been called. And when graft and greed get up and begin to call names, honest men, brave men, patriotic men and martyrs can expect nothing else than to be called chicken thieves and outlaws. So be it. But I for one wish there were more chicken thieves and outlaws of the sort that formed that gallant band that took Mexicali. I subscribe myself a chicken thief and revolutionist.²⁰

In San Diego, the local Anti-Interference League sponsored a speech by Emma Goldman at Germania Hall that raised \$113 dollars on the eve of the battle of Tijuana. The league, whose members included prominent local Socialist Kasper Bauer and progressive lawyer E. E. Kirk, was formed to oppose United States intervention in Mexico. Bauer and Kirk were also the local contacts for the Magonistas.²¹ Events such as these soon swelled the ranks of the rebels that came to include around 150 men comprised of Mexicans from the Mexicali area, Cocopah Indian scouts, IWW volunteers, and a number of soldiers of fortune.²² Despite a lack of military funding from Los Angeles and constant chaos and squabbling in the field, the Magonistas managed to briefly take Tecate and hold off a lackluster attempt by Mexican Federal forces to recapture Mexicali.²³ The leadership of the rebel army underwent several changes with some of the Mexicans leaving to fight with Madero and the troops squabbling about tactics and leadership. By the time of

²⁰ Blaisdell 213

²¹ Ibid 213

²² Griswold del Castillo 258 and Blaisdell 47

²³ Blaisdell 77, 82

was well exemplified when, in 1920, the American Legion successfully demanded the border be opened for their private convention in the midst of a standoff between the Governor of Baja and the Mexican government.⁴⁹ Indeed, with the bars closed in San Diego, “racing fever was spreading to all walks of life.”⁵⁰ Spreckels’ Union was crowing about the amount of money spent by visitors at the track⁵¹ which exceeded the Park and the beaches as a tourist attraction. Los Angeles was so worried by San Diego’s unrivaled tourist attraction across the border, that it sent in a “morals squad” to humiliate its Southern neighbor. Many San Diegans hypocritically enjoyed the prosperity created by the border trade as they railed against the vices of Tijuana. As Ridgely points out:

[T]hey liked to delude themselves that the only beginning-to-be-developed beaches, the tiny zoo, the Park, and a few fringe attractions

... were entirely responsible for the accommodations shortage, for the rage of construction, and for the Pan Pacific luxury liners electing to make the town a port of call.⁵²

Thus pious reformers who had conveniently forgotten the city’s history of brothels, gambling, and opium dens in its own Stingaree district, engaged in an effort to preserve a mythological “Old San Diego innocence,” and lobbied for the “nine o’clock law” which shut the border down early.⁵³ In response to their efforts, the twenties’ version of contemporary coyotes in reverse shuttled Anglo visitors back and forth through “the famous Hole in the Fence” which all the track employees

⁴⁹ Ibid Part V, 57

⁵⁰ Ibid Part VII, 102

⁵¹ Ibid Part II, 129

⁵² Ibid Part X, 106

⁵³ Ibid Part X, 106

time laugh at another indefatigable dreamer busy seeding, seeding, seeding.”⁴⁴

Tijuana itself was saved from radicalism only to be turned into a playground for wealthy San Diegans, Hollywood stars, and other vice seekers that Ferris would have loved. Less than a decade after the failure of the Magonista revolt, Prohibition turned the Tijuana/San Diego region into a boomtown. One of the central players in all of this was “Sunny” Jim Coffroth, who built a racetrack with money from the Spreckels family.⁴⁵ The combination of liquor, gambling and other illicit pleasures drew many visitors to San Diego and spurred an orgy of building. As Roberta Ridgely observes in her series of San Diego Magazine articles on “The Man Who Built Tijuana:”

While thirsting pilgrims funneled through Southern California on their way to the international line, hotels and apartments quickly became San Diego’s hottest real-estate items. The tap-tap-tap of the hammers putting up Tijuana saloons and pleasure resorts was echoed by the noise of heavy equipment at work along San Diego streets as the epoch of the stucco-frosted bungalow court and neo-Mission apartment-hotel came into fully landscaped bloom. The future looked as rosy as a Tequila Sunrise.⁴⁶

Largely because of this record building boom, by 1924 San Diego was “the only Pacific Slope city showing as a white spot (indicating conditions good) on the nation’s business map.”⁴⁷ In downtown, grand new structures such as the Balboa and Pantages theatres were built and suburban development exploded.⁴⁸ San Diegans’ sense of ownership over their backyard

their biggest victory, however, the Magonistas were under the command of Caryl Ap Rhys Pryce, a Welsh soldier of fortune who had fought in India and South Africa and, after reading John Kenneth Turner’s condemnation of the Diaz regime Barbarous Mexico, had developed a fledgling sense of social justice.²⁴ While his military experience proved a temporary asset, his lack of any deep commitment to the cause along with his affinity for Dick Ferris ultimately proved disastrous.

The new commander’s greatest achievement was the result of either direct disobedience or a mistake. Flores Magon had sent orders directing the rebels to march east and attack the Mexican forces near Mexicali. Instead, the day after 30 Indians led by Juan Guerrero had taken the tiny port town of San Quintin, Pryce turned west and attacked Tijuana. At dawn on May 9, 220 Magonistas seized the small town after a fierce battle that killed 32 and wounded 24.²⁵ After the battle, while the rebels behaved with some restraint, a group of sightseers from San Diego crowded into the town and looted the shops.²⁶ This marked the beginning of the steady, farcical decline of the revolt with the Los Angeles junta refusing to dismiss the untrustworthy Pryce or to give him aid or more ammunition. As Magon remained inactive, the rebels were forced to open Tijuana for tourism and gambling in order to raise money. Battle watching was a popular spectator sport along the border with the occasional spectator actually falling to a stray bullet. Once the battle was over in Tijuana, the town received a large number of tourists who were just as interested in meeting the eccentric Magonista army as they were in watching the battle. San Diegans were fascinated by the wild mix of Cowboys, Wobbly hobos, mercenaries, black army deserters, Mexicans, Indians, and opportunists. The army lacked any traditional class hierar-

⁴⁴ Blaisdell 201

⁴⁵ Roberta Ridgely, “The Man Who Built Tijuana,” Part V, San Diego Magazine, September 1967, 88.

⁴⁶ Ibid 2

⁴⁷ Ibid Part VIII, 113

⁴⁸ Ibid Part VII, 113

²⁴ Ibid 99

²⁵ Ibid 118–19

²⁶ Ibid 120

chy and was characterized by the rough camaraderie that was common amongst the Wobblies and their fellow *lumpenproletariate*.²⁷ Magonista soldiers were happy to pose for pictures with visitors and also for postcard re-enactments of the battle that were sold in A. Savin's Bazaar Mexicano, the town's most visited curio shop. The "*tarjetas postales*" sign is evident in still-existing photos of the post office where the rebels flew the red flag.²⁸ It is ironic that the Wobblies who were so popular as a tourist attraction for slumming San Diegans in Tijuana would be savagely driven out of San Diego in only a year's time. Apparently, revolution could be enjoyed as a commodity as long as it stayed across the border.

The spectacle of the Magonistas continued to draw visitors and was given a further boost when Dick Ferris re-entered the scene. Ferris had been hired as the manager for the upcoming groundbreaking ceremony for the Panama-California Exposition in Balboa Park, and his job was essentially to drum up publicity for San Diego in order to draw attention to the upcoming event and the city itself. Less than a month after the Magonistas took Mexicali, Ferris launched his first scam that involved giving the Mexican consul in San Francisco an "offer" to buy "lower California" or be faced with a well-funded filibuster. He then had an assistant place an ad in several newspapers calling for a thousand men to come fight for "General Dick Ferris." If this was not enough, Ferris even sent a telegram to a Maderista general declaring that: "The peninsula rightly belongs to our country, and must, in time, be part of it."²⁹ Ferris's first stunt was successful enough to garner an angry response from the Diaz regime and plenty of press coverage about his plans for a "sporting republic" which would offer not just rights but "the pursuit of happiness, whether that happiness may take

²⁷ Ibid 121; "Writing History with Postcards: Revolution in Tijuana," *The Journal of San Diego History*, Winter 1988, Volume 34, Number 1

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Blaisdell 62

as a fighter."⁴¹ He was found dead on the floor of his cell in Leavenworth on November 21, 1922. Ironically, in death, Flores Magon became a hero honored by the Mexican poor. He came to be seen as a predecessor to Zapata and was buried as a respected revolutionary figure. In *Rebellion in the Borderlands*, James A. Sandos argues that Flores Magon's legacy is important in the American context because his writings in *La Regeneracion* expressed the anger of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans and helped to inspire rebellions in the Texas border region which were not "an external conspiracy directed by enemies of the United States, but a domestic response to exploitation."⁴² Perhaps, Sandos ponders, the old anarchist ideas went "underground" in the Mexican community and were preserved privately "within their families, thereby giving the Chicano community a later militancy."⁴³ If so, then maybe the San Diego activists who built Chicano Park, the janitors striking for higher wages, the maquiladora workers struggling for their basic rights, the Zapatista support groups, and the globalphobics challenging the excesses of neoliberalism are part of something started long ago. As a desperate Flores Magon wrote in the face of failure and death:

The dreamer is the designer of tomorrow. Practical men ... can laugh at him; they do not know that he is the true dynamic force that pushes the world forward. Suppress him, and the world will deteriorate toward barbarism. Despised, impoverished, he leads the way ... sowing, sowing, sowing the seeds that will be harvested not by him, but by the practical men of tomorrow, who will at the same

⁴¹ Ibid 202

⁴² Sandos 175

⁴³ Ibid 174

port of his fellow Mexicans who saw him as a pawn for American filibusterers, the AFL, and the Socialists who thought his anarchism was too extreme, and finally even fellow anarchists and the IWW who condemned him for failing to participate in his own revolution or help defend his comrades. As Lowell Blaisdell concludes in *Desert Revolution*, “as a leader of men, his incompetence was truly breathtaking.”³⁹ Nevertheless, he held true to his faith in “the idea” of human liberation and was duly crucified for it. As opposed to Pryce and Ferris who were not convicted of violating the neutrality laws, Flores Magon and the leaders of the junta were convicted of violating the neutrality laws and given the maximum sentence. Unrepentant after his release from prison in 1914, Flores Magon again took up the editorship of *La Regeneracion*. Within two years of his release, he was again arrested for writing a vehement attack on the Mexican government and while he was appealing the decision in that case, he was arrested yet another time for violating the Espionage Act by writing a manifesto with Librado Rivera that predicted the downfall of capitalist society and called on intellectuals to prepare the masses. Although there was no specific reference to World War I in his piece, Magon was convicted and sentenced to twenty years in prison, a clear victim of the Red Scare. When, in 1920, a later administration of the Mexican government offered Rivera and him a pension to help ease their time in prison, Magon thanked them graciously but turned the money down on anarchist principle because coming from the state, “it is money that would burn my hands and fill my heart with remorse.”⁴⁰ For the same reason, he refused to even ask for a pardon knowing that, “This seals my fate. I shall go blind, putrify, and die within these horrendous walls ... I have lost everything ... except my honor

³⁹ Ibid 204

⁴⁰ Ibid 202

the form of horse racing, prize fighting, bull baiting, or betting where the little ball will fall.”³⁰ A little more than a month later, Ferris had a Los Angeles horsewoman ride across the border and plant a silk blue flag with a rising sun and the scales of justice embroidered upon it on the Mexican side of the border near Agua Caliente. The feminist filibusterer then told the San Diego Union: “Lower California, I claim you in the name of equal suffrage and model government.”³¹ Miss Flora S. Russell then fled across the border amidst the Mexican consul’s calls for her arrest. With these two successful promotional scams under his belt, Ferris seized the opportunity that the fall of Tijuana represented. With the aid of a San Diego Union reporter he was introduced to Pryce. The Union followed this favor with extensive coverage of Ferris’ publicity schemes that would seem to indicate the editorial approval of the paper itself, then owned by San Diego’s own main booster and robber baron, John D. Spreckels. Whatever the case, Ferris proceeded to befriend the rebel commander and champion their cause, minus the troubling Mexican nationalism and anarchism. He brought Pryce to San Diego and introduced him to several prominent boosters and encouraged him to reconsider his position on “Lower California” which might do well as a “white man’s” republic. When Pryce was arrested on his way back across he border, Ferris helped secure his release and tried to stage a hero’s welcome for him back in Tijuana for which he was too late but the Union helped him embellish nonetheless. While all of Ferris’s efforts were, in fact, disingenuous maneuvers designed only for publicity, they did stir supporters of the Mexican government to action against the “filibusterers.” In San Diego, an anti-liberal group led by Dr. Horacio E. Lopez raised \$1000 dollars and a

³⁰ Ibid 63

³¹ Ibid 88

good number of recruits to go help fight the mythic gringo filibuster.³²

Throughout all of this comedic mess, Flores Magon continued to refuse to go to Mexico, aid the rebels, or dismiss Pryce, so Pryce came to the junta to convince them to fold their tents, join forces with Madero, or fight him. When no new directive was forthcoming, Pryce lost all interest in both social justice and filibustering and ended up in Hollywood acting in Westerns before disappearing from history for good. With Pryce out of the picture, Ferris bled the dying revolution of all the publicity it had before he bailed out. After the departure of Pryce, there was a power struggle between the adventurers, Wobblies, and Mexicans. The last gasp of Ferris and the adventurers came when Louis James, who was relentlessly unable to get the Ferris joke, strove to enlist Ferris as their leader and hit up John Spreckels for filibuster funds. When Spreckels refused, James stupidly threatened his Mexican interests which may explain the Union's eventual loss of sympathy with the filibuster story and Ferris' exploits. For his part, Ferris, with no intention of actually doing anything, went to Tijuana and gave an impromptu speech where he chastised the rebels to "haul down this red flag" and "cut out your socialism, your anarchism, and every other ism you have gotten into, and form a new government" that would appeal to "the young blood of America."³³ According to James' version of events, Ferris was elected president after his departure, but, when James returned with a new flag for a Ferris-led "Republic of Madero" which Daredevil Dick had flippantly sketched out and handed to his tailor, an angry group of Wobblies burned the flag and nearly executed James before deciding to expel him.³⁴ None of this prevented Ferris from playing up his possible presidency of a

³² Ibid 131–36

³³ Ibid 148

³⁴ Ibid 146–58

filibuster republic in the press even as his much-desired publicity gravely insulted Mexicans, destroyed what was left of the liberal rebellion, and made a less violent end to the conflict impossible. Meanwhile, IWW man Jack Mosby was elected as the new rebel commander and proceeded to threaten to blow up Spreckels' railroad lines if he used them to transport Mexican troops.³⁵ Spreckels then pressured the United States government to intervene and Mexican forces finally moved against the Magonistas. With the junta still unable to either offer aid or accept compromise, the Magonistas stayed and fought anyway. On June 22, in the second battle of Tijuana, Mosby led a contingent of 150 Wobblies and 75 Mexicans into a fight against 560 advancing Federal forces, including many recruited as a result of Ferris' antics. Badly outnumbered and seriously low on supplies, the rebels fought hard but were routed in only three hours. Thirty rebels were killed.³⁶ The "wretched band of outlaws," as the Union was now calling them, had been wiped out. Mosby was captured as he fled weeping across the border and was later shot trying to escape military custody. Ferris fell from grace as Exposition manager after his joke backfired. He was charged but not convicted of violating the neutrality law. His fortunes never did reach the same heights as they had while he was boosting for the Exposition although he did return to his original profession, acting, and played himself in a farce called "The Man from Mexico," where he continued exploit the Mexican struggle for freedom as a bad joke for financial gain.³⁷ After they were released from Federal custody, most of the Wobblies drifted elsewhere, but some stayed in San Diego and sought work in the Wild West show proposed for the Exposition.³⁸

Richardo Flores Magon, who had steadfastly refused to leave the junta's headquarters in Los Angeles eventually lost the sup-

³⁵ Ibid 178–9

³⁶ Ibid 180–81

³⁷ Ibid 171

³⁸ Ibid 195