

The Places and Voyages of Ricardo Flores Magon and Contemporary Magonismo

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... FOR PIETRO FERRUA, A GREAT CROSSER OF BORDERS AND DELIVERER OF THE MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY ...

We start with two quotes:

“The Huei cuauhxicalli iixiptla teaches us that each human being is the center of the universe in the beginning of time.”

— Contemporary Tolteca Movement

“Respect for rights of the Alien is peace.”

— Benito Juarez

Part Zero: Introduction

On January 7, 1911, a few months after Francisco Madero began his November 1910 uprising against the Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz and only a few more months after his August 1910 release from prison, Ricardo Flores Magón described his conception of the revolutionary, the model of the apostle.

Flores Magón wrote:

Traversing fields, crossing roads, over thorns, through rocks, his dry mouth burning with a devouring thirst, thus goes the Revolutionary Delegate to pronounce his catechism, under the sun, that appears to avenge itself against him with bold movement with its arrows of fire; but the Delegate does not delay; he can not lose a minute. From one of the miserable huts comes out weakened dogs to persecute him, as hostile as the miserable inhabitants of the huts, who laugh stupidly at the apostle's passages of Good News.

Why did Flores Magón describe the revolutionary as an apostle? Who is the apostle? To respond to this question, we must first respond to two other questions: (1) where does the apostle exist? (2) What is his function? The first: the apostle exists neither here nor there, but always in between, always traveling from one palace to another. And this task of moving is an essential part of his function. The apostle is always traveling because he is a messenger and he has a very important Good News. He is moved himself to deliver a message that we do not need to remain in whatever misery we find ourselves. The apostle who moves carries the message of movement, of how physical movement can begin sociopolitical movements, of how revolutions upon the earth can foment revolutions of the mind and the spirit.

In this talk, I will reflect upon these themes: What is the significance of physical movement? What are the connections between locality and globality? What are the affinities between indigenism and internationalism? And how does nationalism interrupt this affinity? And, most important for a person like me, I who am not from here, I who am not Mexican and who do not have any Mexican ancestors; I who speak Spanish poorly, very brokenly, who speaks like an immigrant; for me, the most important question is this: why do people cross borders in order to express solidarity with each other?

Part One: Ricardo Flores Magon

Section One: From Locality to National Responsibility

We are going to illustrate these themes in two narratives: first with the history of Ricardo Flores Magón; and second with a contemporary history, a history we can read about in the news of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

The life of Flores Magón is characterized by a movement outwards, always beginning in a point and expanding to an exterior territory.

The initial point for the voyage of Ricardo Flores Magón was San Antonio Eloxochitlan in the northern mountains of Oaxaca state. These were his first experiences of a *locality*, of a true community where people treat each other like neighbors, living in cooperation with each other. His father Teodoro explained to Ricardo and his brothers Jesus and Enrique that in their village there were neither rich nor poor, that all people lived like equals. Each person produced what he could and each person took what he needed. They did not miss having judges or police or jails or governors because all lived in peace and respect like friends and brothers. [Kaplan and Flores Magón, *Peleamos la Dictadura*, page]

But the Flores Magón family did not stay in this idyllic locality. Margarita Magón had ambitions for her sons, and the family moved to Mexico City. The big city did not have the same intimacy as the small community of San Antonio Eloxochitlan. It was full of inequality and injustice; men treated each other like wolves. Although there was not the same harmony in this new environment, Flores Magón encountered something else, a new responsibility, a consciousness of the problems of others – not simply his neighbors but of people he did not know, of people he would never know. And so Ricardo, along with his two brothers, took responsibility for acting politically to end the suffering of all the unknown people.

The political activities of Flores Magón opened him up to a national consciousness. As the editor and chief writer of the periodical *Regeneracion*, he learned about injustices in all parts of Mexico. For example, one article discussed corrupt officials in Oaxaca who received bribes for a road construction project. More terrible still, other articles described slavery in the mines of Sonora and the forests of Yucatan. Additionally, Ricardo Flores Magón developed his national consciousness as a member of the Partido Liberal Mexicano. The first conference gathered together members of fifty clubs that came from all parts of the country, such as Librado Rivera and Juan Sarabia from San Luis Potosi.

Thus, life in Mexico City manifested conditions that lacked justice, the kind of justice that had existed in the locality of Eloxochitlan, and this is how Ricardo Flores Magón came to manifest a great responsibility for the entire nation. Unfortunately, his enthusiasm for changing the conditions in Mexico, for deposing the tyrant Porfirio Diaz, resulted in his exile from Mexico for the rest of his life, and thus also in a new stage for the development of his consciousness.

Section Two: Exile and Nationalism

The Palestinian author Edward Said described exile as a state of essential sadness, of never feeling satisfied, placid, or secure. Additionally, he explained that people who live in exile maintain a dialectical relation with nationalism: “Nationalism is an assertion of belonging in and to a place, a people, a heritage. It affirms the home created by a community of language, culture, and customs; and, by so doing, it fends off exile, fights to prevent its ravages. Indeed, the interplay

between nationalism and exile is like Hegel's dialectic of servant and master, opposites in forming and constituting each other. All nationalisms in their early stages develop .from a condition of estrangement." (Reflections on Exile, 176)

We can read this dialectical phenomenon exactly in the first political writings from Ricardo Flores Macon's exile. Throughout his articles, manifestoes and proclamations, the most urgent problem was to define who was the foreigner – both to fight against foreign forces and also to fight against his own identification as a foreigner. On the one hand, Flores Magón found himself as a foreigner in the United States, and on the other hand, he witnessed how the sovereignty of the Mexican people was being usurped by foreign powers, above all the United States.

The first declaration of the Junta Organizadora del Partido Liberal Mexicano on September 28, 1905, began with this theme, at the same time a declaration of combat an admission of vulnerability, saying "The Organizing Junta of the Partido Liberal Mexicano is constituted of the persons who sign the following manifesto. The Junta will exist publicly, and it will reside in exile for reasons of safety; until it is safe to return, against the attacks of the Mexican government." (Dreams of Freedom, 123). Miraculously, from this position of exile, the Junta had great success with organizing a nationalist resistance against Porfirio Diaz. They invited people everywhere to organize, to discuss political affairs of the country, and to maintain correspondence with the Junta. In response to this call, many revolutionary cells blossomed in all parts of Mexico and the southwestern United States and made contact with the exiled Junta. For example, the peasants of Zacatecas sent their modest donations of twenty-five centavos to Saint Louis; in Veracruz grew armed forces and instruments of propaganda. Additionally, in the US the Junta made alliances with organizers of agricultural workers in Texas and miners in Arizona. To coordinate this disparate web, the Junta needed real revolutionary apostles – Special Delegates like Praxedis Guerrero, Antonio de P Araujo, and Fernando Palomarez who spread the message of the Junta, enlisted new members, carried communications and arms, and always put themselves at risk of arrest and murder by government agents.

And the Junta responded effectively to its diffuse membership. Not withstanding that they were being constantly persecuted, they compiled the revolutionary desires of all their members in a Manifesto and Program for revolution. The indefatigable writers of the Junta solicited ideas in letters and in announcements in newspapers, and members in Mexico and in the United States, as well as in prisons such as Belen and San Juan Ulua. Despite being doubly exiled to Canada, the other members of the Junta received letters from members of the Partido Liberal Mexicano through Librado Rivera who remained in Saint Louis

The Junta published its Manifesto and Program in April 1906. This document was the most important and most comprehensive of the Mexican Revolution; it was the model for the reforms of Madero; for the plan of Zapata and even for parts of the 1917 Constitution. While the text of the program discussed concrete resolutions for reform, the most magnified of all – even more than the corruption of Diaz, the complaint that was repeated incessantly throughout the Manifesto was the problem of the invasion by foreigners. For example, it began with the exigency "Look at our country today oppressed, miserable, abject, the booty of foreigners, whose insolence has grown gigantic thanks to the cowardice of our tyrants; see how the despots have trampled national dignity, inviting foreign forces to invade our territory ... misery, humiliation before the foreigners ... The country in chains, exhausted by so much exploitation, subjected to whatever the foreign powers want to do to it, its dignity trampled upon by its own and by foreigners." (DoF, 127) Against this menace of the foreigner, the manifesto proclaimed a very intense nationalism. It was

not just a question of liberating a people from their enslavement. The language throughout the text is the language of patriotism and of fatherland. That is to say, that in this text there is a vision of masculine belonging and domination and possession. Flores Magón wrote “You yourselves will bring it forth with your enthusiasm if you are patriots, if you love this soil which your fathers sanctified, irrigating it with their blood, if you haven’t denied your race which has known crushing despotisms and monarchs.” Therefore, this vision of Ricardo Flores Magón was not a pure vision of equality and liberty but a vision of patriarchy, of a race, of the private property of a tribal inheritance from the father. Similarly, these themes can be heard in the ultimate declaration of the Manifesto “come to the Liberal Party that fraternizes with the noble and the virile.” (Dreams of Freedom, 45–46)

We could possibly excuse the patriotism of the JOPLM as a comprehensible reaction against imperialism, as an expression of an anticolonialism. However, this patriarchal nationalism was manifested in a very ugly way. Appealing to economic and racial xenophobia, the Program proposed the elimination of Chinese immigration. It stated “The prohibition of Chinese immigration is, before all else, a measure to protect the workers of other nationalities, principally the Mexicans. The Chinese, disposed in general to work for the lowest salary, submissive, with meager aspirations, is a \ great obstacle to the prosperity of other workers. His competition is baneful and must be avoided in Mexico. In general, Chinese immigration does not produce the least benefit for Mexico.” (Dreams of Freedom, 46)

Section Three: Refuge for a Refugee

Thankfully, these sentiments of patriotism and masculine nationalism are not the entire history of Ricardo Flores Magón’s exile. In the United States, he confronted not only Mexicans but also other types of people. In Saint Louis Missouri, this revolutionary exiled from Mexico encountered other exiles from all over, people like Emma Goldman an anarchist from Russia and like Federico Bazona an anarchist from Spain and a comrade of Errico Malatesta. Although Flores Magón had already read anarchist texts and already knew anarchist ideas, it is very possible that these experiences with other anarchists exiled from other parts of the world taught him the importance of internationalism and the dangers of nationalism, that a world without borders is a precondition for liberty and equality.

Additionally, the nationalism of Flores Magón was challenged by the fact that, living in exile, he was very vulnerable to a lot of persecution and the other Mexicans could not offer him sufficient help. Therefore, he depended upon the hospitality of people in the nation of his exile. For the survival of Ricardo Flores Magón, for the survival of the Partido Liberal Mexicano, for the survival of a libertarian revolution, he had to accept the refuges that the other foreigners gave to this foreign refugee.

The first important recognition of this dependence upon foreigners occurred in the case of Manuel Sarabia. Demonstrating its power to extend its brutality to the United States, the Mexican government enlisted the help of the Arizona Rangers who apprehended Manuel Sarabia in Douglas, conducted him over the border to Cananea, then to Imuris, and finally to Hermosillo, the capital of Sonora, Mexico. Fortunately, a worker in Douglas observed Sarabia yelling and fighting against his apprehenders. And in response, the people of Douglas organized themselves against this rendition, writing letters to state and federal officials, publicizing their case in newspapers such as the Douglas Daily Examiner and the Douglas International. Finally, the great labor or-

ganizer Mary Jones, who was organizing copper smelters, condemned this arrest and visited the governor of Arizona to make a complaint. Thanks to this pressure, the Arizona Rangers traveled down to Hermosillo to bring Manuel Sarabia back across the border.

This dependency upon the goodwill of American leftists increased with the increasing number of arrests and murders of the members of the Partido Liberal Mexicano. The Americans supported them against their persecutors, by writing letters to officials, by contributing money for their legal expenses and more. Ricardo Flores Magón recognized the importance of this support and instructed the members of the Partido Liberal to associate with and to spread their message among the socialist groups in the United States. It is probably that this decision was not solely one of utility but was also a part of his recognition that the libertarian project is international.

In any case, the leftists responded to his petitions. They recognized that oppression has no frontiers. Additionally, it was a very repressive time in the United States for the left. In particular, there was a law that allowed the government to deport foreign leftists who had lived in the United States for less than three years. Therefore, leftists such as Eugene Debs published the problems of the persecuted Mexicans in his speeches, in socialist periodicals, and even in his campaign for the presidency of the United States

Above all, the most important US leftists were John Kenneth and Ethel Duffy Turner. They met the members of the Junta while interviewing them in Los Angeles jails. The stories of Porfirio Díaz's brutality repulsed them. Therefore, John Kenneth Turner, determined to reveal this injustice, decided to take the assistance of Lázaro Gutiérrez de Lara as his guide throughout Mexico. In response to what he saw, he wrote a series of articles which described the systematic extermination of the Yaqui tribe, the perpetuation of slavery in the tobacco plantations of Oaxaca and the hemp fields in Yucatan. Additionally, he described how Porfirio Díaz systematically destroyed all the voices of political protest and how the US government and businesses aided the Mexican regime financially and morally. This reporting was published in *American Magazine* and ultimately in the book *Barbarous Mexico*. Turner continued to visit Mexico and to expose its injustices. His wife Ethel Duffy wrote one of the most detailed histories on *Ricardo Flores Magón y El Partido Liberal Mexicano*.

Why did this foreigner John Kenneth Turner traverse the frontier to be in solidarity with a nation of foreign people? Why did he risk to be persecuted and jailed by the government of a country that was not his fatherland, a place where did not have any ancestor, which was not any part of his inheritance? We are going to return to this question in the second part of this talk. But first, we will conclude the narrative of Ricardo Flores Magón.

Section Four: Indigenism, Internationalism, and the Right of Property

These experiences of exile in a foreign country and of imprisonment and support from Americans, culminated in a new political vision for Ricardo Flores Magón. During the beginning of the Mexican Revolution, Flores Magón was clarifying his ideas about the connections between places and people, over the questions: How do people belong to places? How do places belong to people? His response to these questions were revealed in two ways. On the one hand, Flores Magón proposed an ideology of indigenism that affirmed the ultimate importance of locality; on the other hand, he proposed an ideology of globalism that affirmed the ultimate importance of internationalism. How could Flores Magón have advocated these two extremes at the same time? To understand this, we must first investigate his ideas about private property.

When he exited prison in 1910, Flores Magón changed the motto of the Partido Liberal Mexicano to “Land and Liberty”, and one of his first articles in *Regeneracion*, on October 1, explained the first part of this phrase. He explained that “The earth is for all ... this planet did not have an owner for millions of years.” Like Jean Jacques Rousseau, Flores Magón affirmed that “Violence is the origin of territorial property and by violence it has been sustained until our present days.” According to this article, the concept of territory is founded upon an artificial and unjust fact. What is the significance of this observation? If there are not any places that belong to particular persons, than it is clear that equally there are not any people who belong to particular places. Following this logic, therefore, the idea of patriotism and the distinction between native and foreigner are the products of the same violence.

But when the Mexican Revolution broke out, the rhetoric of Flores Magón changed a bit. In his article on March 11, 1911, “The Right of Property,” Flores Magón repeated the idea that, originally, the right of territorial property did not exist for a single individual; all the goods of nature were communal. This is the same idea as the previously discussed article. However Flores Magón added a new element of rhetoric to this analysis. He wrote “Examples of this natural condition can be seen even know in some primitive tribes ... among indigenous communities ... And this practice still survived until a few years ago ... indigenous tribes who had cultivated these lands in common for centuries.” There is an ambiguity in this analysis, the first expression of indigenism by Ricardo Flores Magón. Clearly, he desired to criticize the idea of individual property. But with which idea did he want to replace it? The idea of communal property, that is to say, the property of communities and tribes? Or the idea of the property of everyone, that is to say, the property of nobody, that is to say that the idea of property, of belonging, of possession, are absurdities. Additionally, in this article, Ricardo Flores Magón repeated a part of the previous analysis, that the contemporary property relations are a product of robbery. But here he identified the thieves and the victims. He wrote

“The earth which the Spanish invaders stole by force from our Indian forefathers; the land that these invaders handed down through their estates to their descendents, who currently possess it. This land belongs to all Mexicans by natural right.” (DoF 275–77) Thus, in this article, Flores Magón seems to have affirmed a certain type of belonging, a “natural right.”

This was the first expression of indigenism of Ricardo Flores Magón. Therefore, I would like to pause a bit to meditate upon the significance of the word “indigenous”. Etymologically, we can analyze the term into two roots: (1) *indi*, which signifies in a place; and (2) *gene*, which signifies birth. Therefore, indigenous signifies those who were born in a certain place. But again, I would like to ask: Is the fact that a person is born in a place sufficient to give them a right? What right? Is the fact that a person is born in a certain place sufficient to give them a belonging? What belonging?

Flores Magón modified this rhetoric a bit a few months afterwards. Inspired by the example of Emiliano Zapata and others, his article of September 2 1911, “The Mexican People are Suited for Communism” evoked the ideas that he learned as a child in Eloxochitlan. “Four million Indians live in Mexico who, until twenty or twenty-five years ago, lived in communities possessing the lands, the waters and the forests in common. Mutual aid was the rule in these communities ... Everyone had the right to the land, to the water to irrigate it, to the forests for firewood, and to the wood from the forests for the construction of small houses... The work of weeding and harvesting was done in common by the entire community – today, Pedro’s harvest, tomorrow Juan’s, and so on.” As before, the theme of this article is the necessity of expropriation, of taking

possession of everything. However, I would like to claim that the emphasis has changed a bit. Here, the salient question is the *practices* and *orientation* towards the environment, much more than the titles over the lands. Additionally, I would like to claim that fundamentally the idea of indigenism is one of customs and not of belonging.

In addition to praising the customs of the indigenous as a model of just social organization, Flores Magón also discussed the necessity of involving foreigners in the Mexican struggle. He had already seen that this own existence depended upon the good will of Americans. Thus, when the revolution broke out, he called for the aid of foreigners in battles. On April 3 1911, *Regeneration* published in English and in Spanish “The Manifesto to the Workers of the World”. This document declared “This formidable struggle of the two social classes in Mexico is the first act in a grand universal tragedy which very soon will burst out upon the surface of the planet... Comrades of the world: the solution of the Social Problem is in the hands of the disinherited of the earth, but it only requires the practice of one great virtue: SOLIDARITY.” Notably, an international force did respond to this call. Among its histories of military failures, the Partido Liberal Mexicano realized one significant victory in the Mexican Revolution, in Baja California. But a majority of the fighters were not Mexicans but rather foreigners. John Kenneth Turner and others smuggled arms across the border. From all over – the United States, Italy, Spain, England and other countries came anarchists, socialists, members of the International Workers of the World, union members, as well as some adventurers, to fight with the PLM and support their battle. The captured Algodones and Tecate, and finally Tijuana, but in the end this effort failed because of a few adventurers without dignity, the resistance of Baja natives, and the Mexican military.

Section Five: Solidarity Without Frontiers

After this period of Ricardo Flores Magón’s life, he began to abandon all nationalism and to embrace an international perspective. There were many reasons for this change. First, his relation to the Mexican Revolution changed a great deal, because he was not able to involve himself directly in the events in Mexico, and additionally the forces of the Partido Liberal Mexicano had diminished due to murders, imprisonments, and defections. Second, the problems of Flores Magón in the United States increased because he administered his anarchist protests against the conditions of the country of his exile. Therefore, he needed a lot of mutual aid from many people, such as Emma Goldman who raised funds to bail him out of jail in 1916. Third, he was repulsed by the first world war, a war of nations and nationalisms. Like other leftists, he thought that it was absurd that the poor of each nation were fighting against each other. According to Flores Magón, there was no reason why people from the same class should kill each other. There was no reason for this classification of people by nations and races. Flores Magón best explained his position in a speech on September 19, 1915. “On the battlefields of Europe, the poor destroy one another for the benefit of the rich, who have made the poor believe that they are fighting for the benefit of their country. Well then, what country does a poor man have? What shelter do the poor have in their respective countries? None! The poor man is a slave in all nations; he is a wretch in all of them; he is a martyr under all governments. Again, I must mention that in this discourse, Flores Magón continued to use a very complicated rhetoric of gender to describe his nationalism. For example, he wrote “Because the nation (*patria*, also fatherland) should be a good mother that supports equally all of its children... The nation is the loving mother of the rich and the callous stepmother of the poor. The nation is not our mother, it is our persecutor.”

Instead of this war among nations, Ricardo Flores Magón imagined an international class struggle of the poor against the rich. As he said in a Manifesto to the Workers of the United States “To neglect solidarity to the Mexican workingman is like putting yourself against the cause of the wage slave which has no frontiers.” And in the end, this belief in a global class struggle was the final idea of liberty for Ricardo Flores Magón. During this epoch, President Woodrow Wilson wanted to suppress the voices of dissidence that could disrupt the involvement of the United States in the European war. Therefore, the US government punished Flores Magón when he published his final Manifesto to the Members of the Party, the Workers of the World, and the Anarchists in General. This document discussed how, instead of a war among nations, the workers should declare a strike because they became conscious that the nations were the property of the rich. The manifesto predicted the death of bourgeois society, proclaiming “Comrades: the moment is solemn: it is the precursor moment of the greatest political and social catastrophe of recorded history, the insurrection of all peoples against existent conditions.” That is, Flores Magón has a great hope that the order of capitalist nationalisms would collapse and would be replaced with a new world of international solidarity. For this threat against the means of production and the order of society, the government of the nation of his exile punished him with a prison sentence that Flores Magón would never complete. But even in prison he continued to dream about the possibilities of a world of liberty equality and fraternity, a city of peace for all people, a place with no prisons nor judges nor officials, where all people helped each other out, a vision of the world that had the same sense of community as his first locality of Eloxochitlan.

Part Two

Section One: The Solidarity of Brad Will

The first part of my discourse was a historical meditation about the revolutionary and magonista connections between physical movement and political movement; about the question about how we should think about belonging, about the connections between persons and places, natives and foreigners.

And now, in this second part, I would like to continue with the same questions in a modern context. As I said in the beginning of this talk: for me, a foreigner here in Mexico, the most important question is this: Why do people cross borders to express solidarity with each other?

The first example of this solidarity that I would like to discuss is a matter very close to me. That is, I am an American anarchist more or less from New York. And there in New York, we are comrades in this movement, more or less like family. And therefore I was very upset, and moreover my sisters and brothers were very very upset that our brother, the independent journalist Brad Will was murdered by government forces in 2006 in Oaxaca during the uprising of the people. Who was Brad Will? Why was this foreigner in Oaxaca? What was this gringo doing in a country where he did not belong? The answers are clear: Brad Will came to put into practice solidarity with people who were fighting for their rights and human dignity against the oppressive governor of Oaxaca, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, who like his predecessors, has spread misery in all parts of the state. And for his effort of recording the testimonies of a people in resistance, Brad Will was murdered in the street. And Brad Will filmed his murder as well as the people who murdered him. And everyone in Oaxaca, in Mexico, and in the United States knows that the murderers were PRI officials in Santa Lucia del Camino. Nevertheless, the corrupt government arrested a

humble gentle and honorable man, a person who is a member of a group for indigenous rights, and put him in prison for several years. Thankfully, this innocent person received his liberty in February, but the real murderers are still free.

Therefore, as a north American and as a friend of Brad Will, the first petition I would like to demand in this Colloquium is this: I demand justice in the case of Brad Will and I demand for the arrest of the Santa Lucia officials who murdered him and the prosecution of Governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz.

Section One: The Solidarity of Jyri Jaakkola

More recently, there has been another case of the murder of a foreigner who came to Oaxaca to support indigenous rights. I must speak about this case now.

During the period of the uprising that Brad Will had recorded, the people of the indigenous community of San Juan Copala organized themselves and decided that they could no longer tolerate the bad government of the caciques and state powers that controlled their community. Therefore, on January 1, 2008, the people declared itself a Free and Autonomous Municipality, resolved to inaugurate a new social order based in traditional Triqui customs, such as creating a council of elders and making decisions in communal and open assemblies. The people said that their leaders “must govern according to Triqui principles and pay attention to the people ... We want those who govern us to walk with us with a deep respect for our mother earth, our culture and our indigenous cosmovision.”

San Juan Copala has been punished with great ferocity for this decision for its autonomy. The state government rejected its declaration of independence and the paramilitaries who are affiliated with the PRI, the ruling power of the state, have attacked this population. One day after its declaration of autonomy, the paramilitaries shot up the offices of the new municipality and killed a member. On April 7 2008 Teresa Bautista and Felicitas Martinez, two journalists from the Triqui radio station “The Voice that Breaks the Silence” were murdered.

More recently, the violence in San Juan Copala has exposed. This past November, the paramilitaries blocked the entrance to the community and began shooting: a child was murdered; two others were wounded. In December, the paramilitaries kidnapped a member of the municipality with his wife and four children. There are shootings every day in the community. In total, more than twenty members have been murdered or disappeared. In addition, there is a very intense collective punishment against the population. The paramilitaries have cut the cables for electricity as well as the plumbing pipes, and for this reason, the people lack power and potable water. A siege has blocked the entrance and exit to the village. Neither food nor provisions nor supplies nor medicines can enter the community. There are no doctors or teachers. The community is isolated and is surrounded by paramilitaries.

On April 27, a foreigner was murdered by one of these paramilitaries. A solidarity caravan came with supplies for the people of Copala, upon which were many people who were members of various human rights organizations. When this caravan came to the population governed by pro-state-government paramilitary forces, its movement was blocked with boulders and the paramilitaries began to shoot at the caravan and destroyed its tires so they would not be able to escape. The assailants declared that they had the support of Governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz. Two deaths resulted from this assault. The first was Bety Carino, the director of the group CACTUS, who for more than 15 years had organized for human rights, especially those of the indigenous

and of women, who had organized against mining interests who wanted to exploit this reason, who had created the Network of Indigenous Radio, who had developed institutions of autonomy and mutual aid in various communities, and who had done much much more. The second was Jyri Jaakola, a foreigner. I am going to discuss him below.

But first I must discuss other events that have occurred since the assault upon the caravan. On May 15, a group of six women, five children, and an infant were kidnapped by the same paramilitaries. The kidnapped were beaten, threatened, and robbed of everything, including all the food that they had just bought. And on May 20, the moral leader of this village, Timoteo Alejandro Ramirez and his wife Cleriberta Castro were murdered in their house. The people of Copala said, "Our comrade Alejandro was the guiding moral force of the Triqui community, a tireless leader for building stronger indigenous autonomy in the region"

The second person who was killed was named Jyri Jaakola. Finally, I have to talk about him. Jyri was a Finnish anarchist and activist who came to Mexico to learn and to support the indigenous people. In an interview, he explained why he came to Mexico with a quote from Paolo Friere, "True solidarity is putting oneself in the same position with the person with whom you are in solidarity." That is, Jyri was very conscious that the problem of solidarity is one of position, of location. Therefore, to truly express real solidarity, one has to move, to cross borders and to become a foreigner in a foreign country.

Jyri had two reasons to be here in Mexico. The first was to learn the indigenous way of life. He was very concerned with the environment. He said the environmental crisis was not simply a problem of technology but of culture. There is a problem in our way of life, in the western practice of over consumption. But Jyri knew that there were different ways of life in Mexico, among indigenous communities. Therefore, he came to observe social movements, to learn how people practice autonomy. Jyri knew that the motto of these movements is "Land and Liberty" and he admired the Zapatista and Magonista tradition of Mexico, with its principles of anticapitalism and anarchism.

Jyri knew that there were problems with being a foreigner. He knew that Mexico was not Finland, and that there were not the same conditions of life. And furthermore, he knew that many of the problems in Mexico were caused by the practices of foreigners: the indigenous people did not have rights to the spaces where they live because the grand businesses of foreign investors were exploiting the earth. Therefore, Jyri had a very sharp critique of foreign exploitation. But in addition he had a foreign hope. He said that he came to Mexico to look for ideas to change life in Finland. He said "The hope for an alternative world can come from another place." This then is the great dream of all of us who are foreigners, all of us who are strange, all of us who are extraterrestrials.

To understand why Jyri put so much importance upon these Mexican social movements, it is important to understand the Social Ecology in which he believed. This philosophy proposes a vision of life very similar to that of Flores Magón, both of his initial life in the community of San Antonoin Eloxochitlan and of his thinking at the end of his life. According to Social Ecology, the environmental crisis is caused by capitalism and more profoundly by social hierarchies. As an alternative, it is necessary to renew or create ideas of communalism. According to social ecology, the most important is that sociopolitical power be located in open assemblies. True democracy occurs in meetings where people confront each other and discuss matters face to face, in order to govern for their own benefit. Although these assemblies are very local, Social Ecology does not propose an insular ideology. Jyri explained that the organization of society is

based on principles more grand than localism. Members of each assembly meet in democratic and libertarian confederations in order to establish alliances with other assemblies, and ultimately in a national and international movement. Jyri explained that the ultimate objective of these social movements is to create a moral economy in which people work for the benefit of the community, not for their won necessities; an economy in which each one gives according to his capacities and takes according to his needs.

Furthermore, Jyri commented that, when people organize themselves in such an independent way, the political powers and the capitalists do not like it. And they respond with a great deal of repression, because this type of autonomy can not exist at the same time as hierarchies. For this reason, this person from Finland, Jyri, coordinated a visit with activist groups in Oaxaca in order to denounce the criminalization of autonomy and of protest.

And thus, this is the second reason why this foreigner was here in Mexico, a foreign nation, this was the reason why he crossed borders to a country where he did not belong. Again, the quote of Paolo Friere: "The true solidarity is putting oneself in the same position with the person with whom you are in solidarity." That is, political solidarity is a very special type of movement, of crossing borders. Jyri expressed this in a single word: accompaniment. Let us analyze this word: to accompany means to accept another person as a companion; companion which signified to share one's bread (pan) with another person. In an interview Jyri said "I know that it is very possible that this movement will be crushed by the powerful. And thus, I will try to accompany the local people and I will try to spread information about their struggles and their objectives. This is the primary reason I am going to Mexico. It is very possible that the people will need this type of presence and support. I am going to Mexico to prevent violence. Tais is the thing to do."

And thus, this act of accompanying, of acting out of solidarity, of putting oneself in the place of another person to prevent violence was the final act of Jyri Jaakola. According to witness, the shot that impacted the head of Bety Carino afterward went through Jyri. And, in a desperate act, he took the head of Bety and immediately, a shot went through his head. Jyri cried to his comrades to save them. He was found protecting Bety's body.

And thus, in response to the murder of this brave human being, this foreigner who acted in solidarity, the always corrupt and wicked government of the state of Oaxaca responded in the only manner it knows: repression. Since these events, state officials have claimed that possibly foreigners had plans for a violent conflict in order to create an atmosphere of tension in the state. The state officials said that the Mexican Constitution prohibits and person of another nationality from involving himself in Mexican affairs without being deported. Jyri did not have permission for these actions. And thus the migratory police are going to inspect all the documents of foreigners to see if they should be deported.

[SHOW FILMS OF BRAD FILMING HIS OWN MURDER AND OF JYRI SPEAKING BROKEN SPANISH ABOUT HIS PHILOSOPHY

CIRCULATE PETITION SUPPORTING BRAD AND JYRI AND CALLING FOR AN END OF IMPUNITY IN OAXACA]

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