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# Anarchist Kinships in California's San Gabriel Valley

Daniel Talamantes

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*Anarchist Movement In El Monte” in East Of East: The Making Of Greater El Monte, edited By Romeo Guzmán, Caribbean Fragoza, et al.; and the research of Sam Vasquez. An earlier version of this essay was published here (semapeastofeast.com/exhibits/show/burnthewagon/anarchist).*

## Links to Digital Materials

The most valuable digital collection of materials relating to Ricardo Flores Magón is Archivo Magón. The database includes letters; a virtual tour of Flores Magón’s travels through North America; and digitized copies of *Regeneración* (1900–1918), *Revolución* (1907–1908), and the Italian publication of *Regeneración* (1911).

La Casa de El Hijo del Ahuizote, a cultural center and archive in Mexico City run by Enrique Flores Magón’s great-grandson, Diego Flores Magón, houses Enrique’s personal archive and other materials relating to the PLM. SEMAP’s Omeka archive includes material from La Casa’s archive that is directly relevant to El Monte and the SGV.

Early twentieth-century San Gabriel Valley, California was an ideal location for Mexican migrants seeking work opportunities and hoping to escape the Mexican Revolution. Initially, they were seen as a convenient source of labor to fill a void left by the Johnson Reed Act of 1917 which barred migration from the Asia-Pacific zone. They were also seasonal workers, so their integration into communities was not considered threatening by white settlers. But as families joined the migration to California, these Mexican laborers were increasingly segregated from city-centers and Anglo-American neighborhoods into ethnic enclaves. Along with these families came radicals, militants, and political refugees. This included anarchists, Enrique and Ricardo Flores Magón, co-founders of the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM, 1905-1918), who had migrated to Texas before crossing the United States to Los Angeles where they established their revolutionary journal *Regeneración*.<sup>1</sup> Here, they connected with the labor organizing efforts of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), already underway in the San Gabriel Valley. And as a result, anarchism became a prevalent current within these migrant communities—a lesser known aspect to Los Angeles history which serves as a powerful counter to the pioneer narrative, still persistent in historical memory.

The San Gabriel Mission was situated between the Rio Hondo and Gabriel Rivers in the rich “green belt” bioregion of El Monte and populated for centuries by the Tongva peoples. In the early

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<sup>1</sup> This concept of *personalismo* is evident in the portrayal of anarchists and members of the PLM of the San Gabriel Valley who are called Magonistas. Certainly, Flores Magón’s charisma, devotion, and extraordinary talent for organizing solidarity movements, writing manifestos, and galvanizing insurrection earned him his totemic status. Ironically, though Flores Magón, disdained the term Magonista, which shows the complexities of leadership for an anarchist movement. Sometimes hierarchy, cult of personality, and historical recollection still emerge despite the collective efforts of communities on the ground level. Yet, this kind of historical emphasis on the big names and personalities, means that the stories of mutual aid and kinship in these movements are often forgotten in the revolutionary narrative.

twentieth century, with the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad, Anglo settlers expelled the remaining members of the tribe, and apportioned extensive acres of land as ranches for the benefit of a handful of white men to raise livestock. Eventually this led to a formation of a colony, the predecessor of El Monte, which was eventually incorporated as a municipality of Los Angeles in 1912. It became highly lucrative in cash crops, especially walnuts.

Despite the popular mythologized pioneer narrative of El Monte—development of agricultural land in the name of “progress;” Jeffersonian liberalism; and the alluring prospect of getting rich during the Gold Rush—in reality, it is a story of settler-colonial opportunism, exploitation, and domination. It is also a story of mutual aid and the importance of family, kinship, and the relational elements of anarchism. In the ephemeral orchards of El Monte’s past are the hauntings and whispering words of revolution and resistance from long-gone itinerant laborers. Along with the legacy of homesteader neighborhoods in present-day El Monte, vestiges of Mexican migrant barrios imprint the urban landscape, now polluted with industrial waste. It was in these neighborhoods, the lacunas of El Monte’s pioneer order, that the PLM and other anarchist mutual aid networks flourished.

El Monte’s anarchist history is, in fact, not just regional, Californian, or national, but transnational. With European migrants heavily active, the golden age of anarcho-syndicalism in North America emerged in metropolitan areas of the Eastern United States. While continuing to plot revolution in Europe, anarchists had considerable influence in the labor organizing power of the IWW. It was not until the Magón brothers brought the PLM to the U.S., however, that the real-time battleground of the Mexican Revolution became an important fight for anarchist possibility.

According to Ricardo Flores Magón, anarchism “aims at establishing peace forever among all the races of the earth by the suppression of [the] fountain of all evils—the right of private prop-

1915

- November 2, *Luz y Vida* group established

1917

- July 10, *Tierra y Fraternidad de El Monte* established
- July 29, *Luz Libertaria de El Monte* established
- August 26, Picnic in Basset with El Monte, San Gabriel, and La Puente groups
- September 23, sixth anniversary of promulgation by Flores Magón

1918

- Arrest of Rivera and Flores Magón
- Dissolution of PLM and *Regeneración*

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*This article would not have been possible without the research, writing, and editing of public historian Dr. Romeo Guzmán (romeoguzman.com/publications) of SEMAPS/East of East; Yesenia Barragan and Mark Bray who wrote “Ricardo Flores Magón And The*

care that would provide for the basic needs of their members. During the 1940s, the Community Union out of Oakland, California was a beacon of anarchist mutual aid in California, providing an alternative model for living that challenged the capitalist and hierarchical structures of mainstream society. While the Community Union was eventually dissolved in the 1950's, it remains a powerful example of how anarchist mutual aid can be put into practice to create alternative communities based on principles of cooperation, solidarity, and direct democracy.

Anarchism has continued to play a prominent role in activism, with many activists and organizations embracing anarchist principles such as mutual aid, direct action, and decentralized organization. The history of the PLM and these early twentieth century Mexican-American communities are an important part of the story of the El Monte and San Gabriel Valley regions and the anarchist currents of resistance that have existed there throughout the years. This includes the complex relationships of family, kinship, and friendships and how they influence revolutionary relationality and movements.

## Appendix: Chronology

1911

- September 23, PLM Manifesto of 1911 published with a political vision characterized as anarchist
- *Regeneración de San Gabriel* established

1914

- May, *Acracia Grupo Puente* established
- July, *Ideal Emancipador* group established (same members as SG group)

erty.”<sup>2</sup> For many anarchists, forming nonhierarchical, mutualistic communities is just as important as labor rights and revolution. Since the colonial era, communities across the globe have endured and suffered innumerable violence(s) including displacement, cultural erasure, enslavement, genocide, and environmental ruin. Migrant peoples were left to seek new opportunities within the very states that displaced them, while also facing exploitation, segregation, policing, and denial of basic humanity. In response to these brutal conditions, migrant communities collectively cultivated ways to support each other—they engaged in mutual aid—as a source of survival.

This type of anarchism in practice was not always explicitly called such by these communities. It was an affective anarchy, containing values that are more subtle than other more contentious direct forms of action associated with anarchism—as Kropotkin would argue, because mutual aid is organic. But the PLM also actively existed in the barrios, meeting in houses, conspiring in the fields, and attending rallies in Eastern Los Angeles. As reported in the pages of *Regeneración*, groups often formed after community events, frequently fundraisers, that served as ways to support PLM propaganda and foster mutual-aid based communities. In these groups there were two constants: first, the groups' compositions were often familial; and second, a vast majority of members mi-

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<sup>2</sup> On January 4, 1904, Ricardo Flores Magón, Enrique Flores Magón and Santiago de la Hoz arrived in Laredo, Texas after they were forced into exile in the United States by the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. Joined by Librado Rivera, Antonio I. Villareal, Juan Sarabia, Manuel Sarabia and Rosalio Bustamente, collectively, this group represented the revolutionary wing of the Mexican Liberal Party. September 28, 1905, in St. Louis, Missouri, through the Organizing Junta of the Partido Liberal Mexicano, Magón and other anarchists continued their efforts to organize workers in Mexico and the United States, and to build a revolutionary movement against Díaz. Often, when talking about the history of anarchism, the personalities of iconic revolutionaries and leading theorists like Emma Goldman, Peter Kropotkin, Eugene V. Debs, and Flores Magón have come to characterize entire movements, ideas, or communities.

grated from Mexico. In other words, family formations and kinship networks played a critical role in these local PLM groups—from the more anonymous members of the collectives to the Magón family itself at the Edendale commune (located in what is now known as the Silverlake neighborhood of Los Angeles).

## The PLM in the San Gabriel Valley

While the PLM did not formalize a *Regeneración* group in El Monte until 1917, barrios there already served as temporary homes for itinerant migrant Mexican families and agricultural laborers. In the early years of the PLM, there is evidence in *Regeneración* contributions of members based in El Monte, who were also active participants in the Oxnard, Santa Paula, San Gabriel, and Los Angeles groups.<sup>3</sup> Most of the contributions from El Monte were in September, aligning with walnut harvests—the industry pervasive in the area.<sup>4</sup> And while early formations of these groups and their members are difficult to pin down, it does appear that there was also a PLM presence in San Gabriel Valley.

San Gabriel was established following the Pacific Electric Railway's installation in 1911, but its boom happened after its incorporation in Los Angeles in 1913. Just north of the Southern Pacific railroad was the San Gabriel Mission and Mission Drive, which literally and figuratively bisected the city's past and future.<sup>5</sup> On the west side was a growing urban sprawl with common commercial enterprises like grocers, butchers, sundries, black-

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<sup>3</sup> Barragan, 69.

<sup>4</sup> Paul F. Starrs and Peter Goin, *Field Guide to California Agriculture*, Berkeley: U of California, 2010. 148-54, 208-210, 216-219. Barragan, 68. They write, "Tomas Mendoza sent in 60 cents on September 9, 1911. C. Martinez also sent in 1 dollar on September 21, 1912, Feliciano Macías and his compañera S. Morales sent in \$5, and an anonymous compañero also contributed an undisclosed amount on September 12, 1910."

<sup>5</sup> Barragan, 68.

dora, La Verne, Covina, San Dimas Redlands, Monrovia, Upland, and San Bernardino—absorbed the members of PLM. This group proved to be one of the more powerful forces of agricultural labor organizing of the time, beginning with the Duarte-Monrovia Fruit Exchange in 1919 and remaining influential until the renowned 1933 Berry Strike. Veteran PLM militants such as Guillermo Velarde were seminal in the development of agricultural strikes such as these throughout California and the Northwest.<sup>44</sup>

As historian Matt García recounts, the more labor done by workers of color, the more wages dropped, plummeting to about \$13 per week during the late 1920's and 1930's.[45] The immigrant acts of 1917 had also started placing caps on migration. And after the labor strikes of the thirties and the boom after World War II, rapid urbanization and industrialization of the San Gabriel Valley changed the landscape. Manufacturing pushed agribusiness northward and the structures of migrant labor changed entirely. During the era of "white flight" in which new suburban developments bloomed from Los Angeles eastward, attracting middle-class, white landowners, social tensions resulting from industrialization were often blamed on immigrants and their introduction of foreign ideologies, such as Marxism and anarchism.

Even so, revolutionary anarchism did not disappear but became embedded in the militant, syndicalist character of labor strikes and unions. The aspects of kinship and care had also laid the foundations for the inner networks of community building and mutual aid-focused urban centers. In the labor strikes, they presented as *mutualistas* and auxiliary networks. But some of the values and practices of anarchism on the community level became even subtler. Mutual aid was a central component of anarchist philosophy during this time period, with many anarchist organizations and communities prioritizing the creation of systems of support and

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<sup>44</sup> Matt García, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970*, Univ of North Carolina Press, 2001.



appeal.. Nevertheless, the values of anarchism were infused in the culture and social fabric of the communities. And, although in the years following the PLM's dissolution, anarchism's influence on radical groups in El Monte and the San Gabriel Valley declined, the foundation was well-established, and the spirit lasted for decades to come. Networks and communities of families, collectives, and individuals now existed, and ultimately flourished, because of the PLM, *Regeneración*, and the Magón family.

## Conclusion

The PLM and *Regeneración* formally ended with Ricardo Flores Magón's final imprisonment in 1918. In San Gabriel Valley and labor rights historiography, the legacy carried on in Magonista groups, which would become prominent actors in labor unions and the wave of agricultural strikes across California in the 1930's. Without the formative roles of the PLM or *Regeneración*, and excluded from labor unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, Mexicans organized in the IWW, the Communist Party USA, the *Confederación de Uniones de Campesinos y Obreros Mexicanos* (Mexican Campesinos and Workers Union Confederation, CUCOM), *El Congreso de Pueblos de Hablan Española* (Spanish-Speaking People's Congress, or *El Congreso*), and the Cannery Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (CAWIU).<sup>43</sup>

There was no longer as much desire to radicalize for the sake of insurrection. Instead, the demands of labor and precarity took on greater importance for radical organizers. However, the ideologies and praxis of anarchism laid a foundation for future action. The IWW group, Citrus SGV— comprised of Mexican and Russian communities around La Puente, El Monte, Pomona, Azusa, Glen-

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<sup>43</sup> Kevan Antonio Aguilar, "Ricardo Flores Magón and the Ongoing Revolution," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, Jul, 2017, DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.445

smiths, restaurants, and saloons.<sup>6</sup> To the east were the remaining citrus groves and labor tenements with "two wash houses and a general store . . . Chinese peddlers brought the vegetables in one-horse wagons to the back door of every city dweller and of every farmhouse."<sup>7</sup>

Unlike other incorporated areas, however, Mexican immigrants were allowed to own housing in San Gabriel.<sup>8</sup> Whereas in areas such as El Monte and La Puente, segregation was common law, San Gabriel had a less restrictive zoning ordinance. That is not to say that Mexicans in the community did not face serious discrimination. For example, in 1857, a crowd of Mexicans assembled outside the mission on the orders of the justice of peace in the region to watch Miguel Soto's brutal execution.<sup>9</sup> Although San Gabriel made landowning a possibility, other forms of violence were used to reinforce racial order. Meanwhile, across the valley, vigilantes like the El Monte Boys paroled and persecuted Mexicans, indigenous people, and Asians.<sup>10</sup>

The Rincon family home on Mission Drive was just two blocks up from the mission and across the road from suburban

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<sup>6</sup> Barragan, 68.

<sup>7</sup> Thirty-nine years ago, Los Angeles was just a mere outpost of the San Gabriel Mission and rancho, and by 1913 it was Los Angeles's twenty-eighth incorporated city. Along with its tardy incorporation, San Gabriel Valley to this day contains an uncanny number of unincorporated territories. A cursory investigation would reveal San Gabriel's agricultural history and perhaps composition of the labor and settlement demographics within the valley. With rapid industrialization and a pivot toward manufacturing and distribution, the hierarchies of location and production are mutable and riddled in asymmetry. One could fathom how two towns could flip roles under a decade. One could also fathom these shifts in centers from San Gabriel to Los Angeles tangential to a racial dimension.

<sup>8</sup> William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, "The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 2 (2003): 416. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3790404>

<sup>9</sup> Barragan, 70.

<sup>10</sup> SGV Data sheet.

developments.<sup>11</sup> They were the first family to join the PLM and the *Regeneración* movement in 1911. Down the street was their comrade Jose Cisneros' home, another early member of the group.<sup>12</sup> It was, in fact, at Cisneros' house where the first iteration of a *Regeneración* group was announced in the region, which included members recorded to be in El Monte.<sup>13</sup> Not only did they assume administrative roles with the rest of the San Gabriel group, but both Juan Jr. and Refugio had written important articles including Refugio's "No me extraña" ("It Doesn't Surprise Me").<sup>14</sup>

Family ties to the valley were deep and organic in the PLM movement of San Gabriel Valley and Los Angeles. While the metropolis offered important spaces and venues to disseminate propaganda and host rallies—work was available mostly in the eastern regions of Los Angeles—important meetings took place in private homes and residences. Cisneros and the Rincon family, for example, maintained a direct line between with the Magóns and Riveras throughout the PLM's duration in Los Angeles. One of the most tender moments between the PLM leaders and the San Gabriel group, evidence of the importance of these ties, occurred in 1914. When the Magón brothers and Ricardo's closest comrade and co-founder of PLM Librado Rivera faced a prison sentence, Rivera's wife, Concepción Arredondo de Rivera, was also diagnosed with tuberculosis.<sup>15</sup> Concepción was under Rincon's

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<sup>11</sup> SGV Data sheet.

<sup>12</sup> T. Mata, "Se Multiplican los Grupos 'Regeneración,'" *Regeneración*, February 11, 1911; "Diccionario Biográfico," <http://archivomagon.net/>, Dirección de Estudios Históricos, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (DEH-INAH).

<sup>13</sup> Refugio Rincon, "No me extraña," *Regeneración*, November 11, 1911.

<sup>14</sup> SGV Data sheet & "Diccionario Biográfico," <http://archivomagon.net/>, Dirección de Estudios Históricos, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (DEH-INAH)

<sup>15</sup> SGV Data sheet.

for the divisions between the two groups remain unclear and may simply reflect the itinerancy and instability these families faced at that time.

This itinerancy (and the difficulties of getting a full picture of how and why these groups were made up as they were) is reflected by the fact that there were also members of the PLM group who lived in El Monte, but participated in other regional groups members or who participated in El Monte groups but lived elsewhere, or who donated to *Regeneración* without belonging to either group.<sup>41</sup> In one sense, the support provided to Florencia Hernandez is not unique, in that often groups of one region will aid someone as distant as the mother of a fallen militant in Mexico.<sup>42</sup> Still these seemingly random connections convey a different side of anarchist revolution. Long-lasting affiliations with several groups symbolize anarchism's commitment to community support for networks of migrant families that are always on the move. This is especially the case when barrios or *colonias* were difficult places to live in: exposed to floods, poor infrastructure, and lack of access to markets in town. However, to stay nationally competitive, crop shares rotated products to remain viable all year. This required year-round labor and the formation of more sedentary neighborhoods. Under these new conditions, families established community support and kinship networks to survive harsh migrant conditions in the United States.

By the time the PLM emerged in El Monte, revolutionary anarchism in Mexico was already fading. With the adoption of the Mexican Constitution in 1917, which provided for liberalist ideals such as the separation of Church and state, government ownership of the subsoil, holding of land by communal groups, and the right of labor to organize and strike, anarchism was losing its urgent

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<sup>41</sup> For example, the multiple fundraisers, such as Fundraiser for Sarabia or for Cuban prisoners, which went beyond national borders.

<sup>42</sup> Devra Anne Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 86.

*generación* announced *Tierra y Fraternidad*'s formation.<sup>36</sup> It was in September of that year, in an edition of *Regeneración*, that former *Tierra y Fraternidad* secretary Feliciano Macías introduced a new group's formation, called *Luz Libertaria de El Monte*.<sup>37</sup> *Luz Libertaria* supported *Tierra y Fraternidad* but was also a separate group of the editor (then, Enrique Flores Magón).<sup>38</sup> Crossover members from the *Tierra y Fraternidad* only included a few individuals such as Pedro Huerta, Ramón Romero, and Macías.

In this announcement, Enrique writes that *Tierra y Fraternidad* would join rallies shared between "several and different propagandists . . ."<sup>39</sup> Again, why the two groups? It is hard to say. The only real difference between the two groups, it would seem, is the documented support by *Tierra y Fraternidad* members for the defense of Raúl Palma. Macías offers an interesting—and the only—case of a member in these groups both hosting events for Ricardo and fundraisers for the defense of Raúl Palma.<sup>40</sup> Even so, the reasons

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<sup>36</sup> Feliciano Macías, "Nuevo grupo, El Monte California. Julio 29 de 1917," *Regeneración*, September 1, 1917.

<sup>37</sup> Macías, 1917.

<sup>38</sup> Macías, 1917.

<sup>39</sup> Ricardo Flores Magón, "Ejemplo," *Regeneración*, no. 260, October 6, 1917

<sup>40</sup> Benita Televera, who lived in South El Monte, first appeared in a 1910 fundraiser for the mother of Juan Sarabia (one of the founding members of PLM who was arrested in Mexico during the Díaz reign) before joining the *Luz y Vida* party in 1915. Tomas Mendoza, who contributed sixty cents on September 9, 1911, to the newspaper from El Monte, was affiliated with the Santa Paula the Lázaro S. Alanís Regeneration Group of Santa Paula—an active group in early PLM days of Southern California and where Ricardo gave his 1914 speech, "El miedo de la burguesía es la causa de la Intervención." Also, from the Lázaro S. Alanís *Regeneración* Group of Santa Paula, was a man named Ancension Martínez who contribute to the newspaper on September 12, 1910, and September 21, 1912, from El Monte. Before his participation in Santa Paula, he was a founding member of the Oxnard group, then joined the one in San Gabriel after Santa Paula. In 1915, it was at his and his partner Elisa Martínez's house that the *Luz y Vida* group was born along with their child in June 1917. "Diccionario Biográfico," <http://archivomagon.net/>, Dirección de Estudios Históricos, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (DEH-INAH)

care and eventually passed away before Librado was released.<sup>16</sup> Stories like this point to to striking kinship dynamic in the San Gabriel Valley anarchist migrant communities. This kind of care is apparent throughout the stories of PLM and anarchism in this region.

It was also in Cisnero's house where he and his wife raised Juan Rincon Jr. At an early age, he and Cisneros joined the revolutionary group of José María Rangel's defense campaign in their effort to fight for the labor struggle in Mexico via the Texas border.<sup>17</sup> After being targeted for their connection to the PLM by local vigilantes, Juan Rincon Jr. was killed. Needless to say, the story of his murder also speaks to the xenophobic and anti-radical violence faced by the PLM members. In Carrizo Spring, Texas, sheriffs tracked the Cisneros. Although they made it to Capones Wind Mill in Dimmit County, they woke up to an ambush. Shots were fired behind their backs and a comrade, Silvester Lomas, fell dead instantly. The PLM workmen seized two of the assailants as the other militants fled and continued their march to the border. On confrontation with a band of rangers, they released their captives and were allowed to proceed. Yet, that night, while camping in a ravine just a few hours walk from the border, a gang of "law-abiding [anglo] citizens" attacked them in their sleep. *Regeneración* and *Organized Labor* both report that after Juan Rincon Jr. was shot, the antagonists tormented him with jeers and whistles as he asked for water before he died. The rest, including Cisneros, were detained in Texas.

Even after Juan Rincon Jr.'s death, however, the Cisnero's continued to promote PLM and share their home with the *Regeneración* organization. They also hosted the San Gabriel groups meetings until the PLM's dissolution in 1918 along with another group, *Ideal Emancipador*, which was established after a rally held for the news-

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<sup>16</sup> Rachel Cline, "Texas Workers Face Death at Hands of Labor Exploiters," *Organized Labor*, Volume 15, Number 32, 8 August 1914. Rachel Cline's husband Charles Cline was the sole white American in the PLM group.

<sup>17</sup> Enrique Flores Magón, "Picnic," *Regeneración*, September 1, 1917, 3.

paper. Trials and tribulations like those experienced by the Cisneros's remained constant throughout the lives of these anarchist groups and families. Their ability to establish networks and communities of support and mutual aid were critical in surviving these struggles. Although the revolutionary cause always remained an important thread that bound them to their history and future, it was at the family level that anarchist foundations of care and kinship provided community.

## The PLM in El Monte

On Sunday, August 26, 1917, members from San Gabriel Valley's anarchist groups *Luz Libertaria de El Monte*, *Tierra y Fraternidad de El Monte*, *Acracia de Puente*, and *Regeneración de San Gabriel* organized a picnic to raise funds for *Regeneración*. Though the exact location remains unknown, the newspaper reports that the event was situated near the barrio of Basset—an unincorporated town nestled between two of Southern California's agricultural meccas in La Puente and El Monte. Considering its proximity to the numerous barrios of El Monte and La Puente, it is not a surprise the event was a marked success. In the September 1, 1917, issue of *Regeneración*, Enrique Magón heralded the picnic as an example for other groups to follow.<sup>18</sup> Lasting more than nine hours, comrades and attendees danced to a Mexican orchestra and the groups were able to raise over \$76.61 (\$1,720.76 today).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ricardo Flores Magón, "Ejemplo," *Regeneración*, no. 260, October 6, 1917 & Yesenia Barragan, and Mark Bray, "Ricardo Flores Magón And The Anarchist Movement In El Monte" *In East Of East: The Making Of Greater El Monte*, edited by Romeo Guzmán, Carribean Fragoza, Alex Sayf Cummings, and Ryan Reft, 68–73 (Rutgers University Press, 2020) <https://doi.org/10.2307/J.Ctvcjfsx.9>.

<sup>19</sup> Untitled response to Feliciano Macías from Enrique Flores Magón, *Regeneración*, September 1, 1917, 3.

other members of the group to demand her expulsion.<sup>34</sup> By 1918, Enrique and Teresa separated themselves from Ricardo, who was imprisoned in Leavenworth for his third and final time. Lucía made numerous efforts to free him before the Mexican and United States governments.<sup>35</sup> Lucía's death in Mexico City, August 1923, just after the funeral of Ricardo, speaks to the complexities and problematic aspects of family and kinship in these anarchist communities. These complexities underscore the influence that family dynamics have on the formation and dissolution of radical groups.

Indeed, why were there two groups in El Monte, where most cities have one? It is difficult not to speculate on the Magón brothers' late involvement in the community and how their personal relationships and community ties played into this. Only two weeks prior to *Luz Libertaria*'s emergence, the July 28, 1917, edition of *Re-*

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<sup>34</sup> In 1916, as she went on to publish some of *Regeneración* doctrinal texts and served as secretary of the Los Angeles Workers International Defense League.

<sup>35</sup> Feliciano Macías, "Nuevo grupo, El Monte California. Julio 29 de 1917," *Regeneración*, September 1, 1917 & Ramon Andrade, "Tierra y Fraternidad" *Regeneración*, July 28, 1917. The column published a list of members including notable, recurring characters in the San Gabriel Valley anarchist timeline like Tenorio mentioned above, Jesus Aguirre who Ricardo references in his letters to Enrique, and Secretario Ramon Andrade. Ramon Andrade's election as secretary could in part be due to his enduring service to the paper and organization. Though it cannot be confirmed it was an R. Andrade who contributed 1 dollar and 5 cents in 1910, and 1 dollar on June 1, 1912. Evidence against this would show in a 1910 census him living in Essex, California around this time. *Tierra y Fraternidad* included several members of his family as well, such as his wife Maria, and others of unknown relation like Angela, Consuelo, and Jesus. A 1920 census relocated him and his family to the once goldmining boomtown of Belleville, California where he worked on the Southern Pacific and Arizona Eastern Railroad Company. Like Andrade, these families and people were never very stationary. They drifted from town to town to find seasonal work. Thus, the census is perhaps not a great indicator of where they were located, nor indications found in donation section of the newspaper. The number of relatives joining a group can also a probable explanation for these discrepancies as well. In nearly every group it is rare to find just one person attributed to a surname. On occasion, they will only use their first initial, which only complicates the matter further.

work, as when he complained that the boss, ‘*el burgués*,’ hadn’t paid them yet. Enrique had clearly developed a feeling of intimate connection with the community—evident in his establishment of “De la familia liberal” in *Regeneración*, as a space for the PLM to mourn, commemorate, and celebrate the lives of its members. Ricardo, however, wrote private letters to him expressing his longing for home.<sup>30</sup>

Among the many developing fissures between the two, family conflicts had also included María Brousse Talavera’s distaste for Enrique’s attenuating revolutionary fervor, Teresa Magón’s greater involvement in community mutual aid efforts, Enrique’s envy of Ricardo’s notoriety and, above all, Ricardo’s founding of the Committee for the Defense of Raúl Palma.<sup>31</sup> María was a powerful leader and long term romantic partner of Enrique, though she never, by principle, chose to marry or take the Magón name. Throughout the years in which the Magón brothers were detained in prison, she was responsible for keeping PLM operations going. Yet, a major conflict arose between the brothers, when Enrique and Teresa would not support María’s daughter’s partner, Raúl, accused of murdering a white shopkeeper in July 1916. In a letter to his brother, Ricardo asked Enrique to forget the drama.<sup>32</sup> But this conflict is attributed to the eventual separation of Enrique and Teresa, among others, from the newspaper and the PLM.<sup>33</sup>

In 1917 she became the center of the interpersonal conflicts that broke out in the Edendale commune, leading Enrique, Teresa, and

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<sup>30</sup> Guidotti-Hernández, 132.

<sup>31</sup> “Letter from Ricardo Flores Magón to Enrique Magón,” *East of East*, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://semapeastofeast.com/admin/items/show/266>

<sup>32</sup> Guidotti-Hernández, 133. As an aside, while Ricardo and Enrique split, this brought Ricardo closer to María and her daughter, Lucía, who actively defended her step-father during the trials of 1912 and 1918, including one laudable occasion in June 1916 when she slapped Peter Martin (Pedro Martínez), a Mexican government spy-agent and prosecutor’s witness.

<sup>33</sup> Guidotti-Hernández, 138-141 & “Aviso,” *Regeneración*, March 16, 1918.

Along with ambitions to raise money, the picnic provided an opportunity to “*activar la propaganda*” (activate propaganda).<sup>20</sup> Despite the movement of substantial number of Mexican migrants into the region and the subsequent proliferation of radical groups in the area, regular attendance at meetings and financial support was falling.<sup>21</sup> Whatever the exact reasons, this signaled a simultaneous shift away from national events to local matters. Increasingly, auxiliary networks and community relations established in transient labor camps and barrios (*colonias*) fostered a strand of anarchism centered on mutual aid over disruptive radicalism. As Claudio Lomnitz writes in *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón*, “anarchist ideals took form in railcars, jungle camps, and other places of independence and refuge.”<sup>22</sup> Given the common experience of displacement and precarity by Mexican migrants, events like the picnic created powerful spaces

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<sup>20</sup> “Letter from Ricardo Flores Magón to Enrique Magón,” *East of East*, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://semapeastofeast.com/admin/items/show/266>.

<sup>21</sup> Claudio Lomnitz, *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón*, New York: Zone Books, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández, *Archiving Mexican Masculinities in Diaspora*, (New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2021), 131-133. The story of Teresa Magón’s betrothal to Enrique is addressed by Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández at length in her article, “Partido Liberal Mexicano: Intimate Betrayals: Enrique Flores Magón, Paula Carmona, and the Gendered History of Denunciation.” Guidotti-Hernández argues that in Enrique’s version of his life story his wife was Teresa Arteaga (Teresa Magón), whom he claimed to have married in 1905. This was years before he seemed to have even met her. In fact, it was when he was in a romantic relationship with Paula Carmona, daughter of Rómulo Carmona who owned a bookstore in Los Angeles which became of the early distributors of *Regeneración*. After three children, while Enrique was in prison in 1913, Rómulo Carmona and another anarchist attempted to take control of *Regeneración*. The betrayal and latent mysogyny of the movement pushed Paula out of the movement, at which point Teresa entered the picture, adopting the name Magón and becoming the “originary mother [sic] of revolution.” It is somewhat ironic that his espoused values seem counter to the movement’s pressure to expel his first partner Paula and erase her with the fictionalized chronology of Teresa’s marriage arrangement with him.

for developing community supports and an anarchism infused with a culture of care. To be fair, this focus on community may have shifted focus away from the goals of the PLM's broader resistance efforts. However, it was an important way for families to connect and create kinship networks.

Interest in multinational revolutionary strategy was increasingly secondary to Enrique and, perhaps more particularly, his wife Teresa Magón.<sup>23</sup> As Enrique and Teresa Magón attended the picnic as honorary guests, Teresa used the occasion to collect funerary and living funds for their La Puente neighbor, Florencia Hernández. Her husband, Pedro Hernández passed away the month prior from a head injury sustained by a mare that bolted while he was loading PLM propaganda into a wagon.<sup>24</sup> Helping Florencia was important for Teresa, not just as a familial gesture for a "neighbor" but as she was a *comadre* (close friend) and long-standing party member of PLM.<sup>25</sup> "Anarchist expressions of communal loss," writes historian Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández, "became actionable through the monetary support of a socially marginalized, Afro-Mexicana destitute widow, Florencia Hernández."<sup>26</sup> Teresa was able to raise \$4.60 (\$110 today) for Florencia by expressing the importance of common struggle and, more importantly, the value of kinship in forming anarchist groups.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Guidotti-Hernández, 131-133.

<sup>24</sup> Guidotti-Hernández, 131-133. Florencia, first as a participant in the *Regeneración de San Gabriel*, organized collections at the campaign "Against the Death of Regeneration" which was to help with PLM's first financial crisis in 1914 before joining the exclusively women run and participated in the *Luz y Vida Regeneración* Group. She and Pedro were raided by the police on April 15, 1916, under the accusation that they were storing weapons. In the search and seizure, police destroyed what was the *Regeneración de San Gabriel* archive. "Diccionario Biográfico," <http://archivomagon.net/>, Dirección de Estudios Históricos, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (DEH-INAH)

<sup>25</sup> Guidotti-Hernández, 131-133.

<sup>26</sup> Guidotti-Hernández, 131-133.

<sup>27</sup> Guidotti-Hernández, 131-133.

Being that Florencia was from El Monte, the thirteen anarchist comrades who donated to Florencia speaks to their ethic of mutual aid and sharing.<sup>28</sup>

*Luz Libertaria's* donation also provides unique insight into a growing tension between the Magón brothers that mirrors broader tensions in the party toward the end of PLM as well as the potential downsides that personal relations and kinship can have on radical communities and revolutionary efforts. Indeed, the new group's formation at the end of July as an alternative to El Monte's *Tierra y Fraternidad* established only a few weeks earlier, may reflect Enrique's shift away from Ricardo's hardline revolutionary positions and frustration with the outcomes of the Mexican Revolution. After all, by February 1917, the Mexican Constitution was adopted by the Constitutionalist Governor of Coahuila, Venustiano Carranza. The constitution provided for liberal ideals such as the separation of Church and state, government ownership of the subsoil, holding of land by communal groups, and the right of labor to organize and strike. While many of the laws were modeled off Ricardo's positions, it was far from what he wanted.

By 1917 the El Monte radical community was also more closely involved with the PLM efforts. During this period Enrique was working in the orchards of El Monte and La Puente while Ricardo convalesced in San Gabriel River, enjoying more leisurely activities and time spent swimming.<sup>29</sup> And while both stayed connected to the communities of La Puente and El Monte they did so in very different, and independent ways, which no doubt is part of what led to their divergent and changing attitudes toward the movement. As Yesenia Barragan and Mark Bray write in "Ricardo Flores Magón & the Anarchist Movement in El Monte, California," Enrique "faced challenges experienced by any laborer in precarious, temporary

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<sup>28</sup> Barragan, 69.

<sup>29</sup> "Letter from Ricardo Flores Magón to Enrique Magón," *East of East*, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://semapeastofeast.com/admin/items/show/266>