

The Pacification of the Yaqui

Librado Rivera

1927

Already the government of Mexico announces very proudly the withdrawal of ten thousand assassins of the federal forces, with all their equipment of bomb-dropping airplanes, from the intricate mountains of Bacatete and other parts of the Sierra Madre inhabited by the Yaquis; because, it says that the pacification of the tribe is assured. All this has been rather a great failure for the tendentious views of the government to annihilate the rebellious Yaqui.

The tyrant Porfirio Diaz also sent numerous battalions that were embedded in the mountains of Sonora, and spent many millions of pesos from the people's treasury with the perverse purpose of stripping the Yaquis of their lands, to give them to his favored and unconditional supporters, General Lorenzo Torres and some North American companies of exploiters. Now the Calles government has tried to do the same to enrich his unconditional supporter, millionaire landowner Alvaro Obregón and other thieves of the sweat of the worker.

It was said at the beginning that the complete pacification of the Yaqui was a matter of three months. The government has already spent fourteen months in a constant war of extermination, in which it has used all the weapons of destruction and death, from the most modern machine guns in the art of killing to bomb-dropping airplanes and asphyxiating gases. It has already spent more than fifty million pesos taken from the pockets of the people for the consummation of this crime, and lost thousands and thousands of its loyal thoughtless lives, dressed in uniform, to wipe out this tribe, the hardest working, the most intelligent and the most rebellious to the yoke.

This exceptional race that for so many centuries has maintained that unsubmissive attitude towards all the governments of Mexico, towards those that have always tried to take away their lands and exploit their women and men in order to impose all kinds of taxes and contributions to fill the coffers and pockets of the idlers – rulers, soldiers, bourgeois and friars – those who live without doing anything useful. This exceptional race will continue to assume the same attitude as long as they are treated in the same way.

It is a lie that the government has pacified the Yaquis. What it has done is to sweep away by fire and shrapnel the non-combatant villages that were most within reach of the government murderers, taking to concentration camps some of the survivors, mostly women, children and old people in order to force by this means the warrior Yaquis to surrender out of love for their own.

It is true that no less than ten thousand federal automatons have already withdrawn from the mountains of Sonora. But this measure of the government is not because it has already finished

with that fratricidal war, but as a precaution against the barracks that Generals Arnulfo R. Gómez and Francisco Serrano were preparing in Mexico City.

The Yaqui tribe is composed of some six thousand families, among which there are no less than three thousand combatants, of which the government claims to have gotten some eight hundred men to surrender, leaving, therefore, refugees in the mountains of the Sierra Madre, with a rebellious attitude, a great majority of the combatants, to whom the government seems not to give importance.

It is not with barracks nor with dynamite bombs that the Yaquis can be pacified, much less is it the most adequate method to convince them and erase from their hearts that concentrated and natural hatred of the yori (a scathing nickname applied to us so-called civilized Mexicans), but by leaving them in peace so that they can govern themselves as they please, and then give them back their homes and lands that have been taken away from them by force; the Yaquis would not only cease to be a threat against the government and against the yori, but would be a race of human beings who will contribute with their intelligence and their work to the progress and well-being of all.

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