

OBREGON AS A PEACE DOVE

THE TROOPS WERE THERE to awe the crowd when General Obregon was elected President of Mexico the other day. But the troops weren't needed, say the correspondents; in fact practically everybody was voting for the one-armed soldier. There was nothing to fight about, and Mexico enjoyed the most peaceful day of balloting since the efficiently managed elections of the Diaz régime. The elevation of Mexico's best fighter to the Presidency in such an undisputed manner, strange as it may seem at first glance, is taken by many editorial observers as foreshadowing an era of peace. General Obregon, it is remembered, visited this country during the Great War and was taken on a tour of inspection of our camps and munition-factories, and returned home an earnest advocate of peace between Mexico and the United States. In fact this soldier has become an outspoken pacifist, saying: "I would rather teach the Mexican people the use of the tooth-brush than to handle a gun. I would rather see them in schools than upon battle-fields. I prefer any day a good electrician, machinist, carpenter, or farmer to a soldier." Mindful of Obregon's experience and present attitude the *New York Tribune* calls his election "an omen of promise," and the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* hopes, with many American dailies, that the General's success at the polls "will supply a starting-point for better relations between Mexico and the United States, as well as for a brighter future for the American people."

General Obregon's policy in foreign affairs may be foreshadowed by certain planks of the platform of the Liberal Constitutional party which supported him. As quoted in the Mexico City dispatches, they call for facilities for foreign investors, acknowledgment of foreigners' legitimate rights, and guaranties that foreigners shall enjoy full protection of the law. All of General Obregon's public statements and speeches on international questions are, according to a *New York Times* correspondent, on file in the State Department at Washington, where it is said that Obregon "has made it plain that he intends to deal fairly with foreigners and that he will accord all the protection possible to American lives and property." Yet, altho official Washington "is inclined to be optimistic" over Obregon's election, this, we are told, "does not mean that there is any immediate intention on the part of this Government to recognize the Government now in power in Mexico City."

At the very least, we may expect that "even if Obregon should say the same things to us that Carranza once said, he will say them much more tactfully," observes the *New York Globe*. And, it adds, "the outlook is for a sensible modification of the Carranza policy which will be a much greater gain than courtesy." Obregon, the *New York Tribune* notes, is a civilian soldier who "has seen all of the seamy side of soldiering in Mexico," and "was the most competent military leader developed in the civil

wars following Diaz's expulsion." He does not belong "to the exclusive *Cientifico* circle which ruled under Diaz," but is, we are told, "one of the larger Mexican group which prefers civilization to anarchy, economic progress to a succession of barren military revolutions." *The Tribune* continues:

"Obregon knows the United States much better than Carranza knew it. He realizes that Mexico's recovery must depend very largely on a restoration of amicable relations with this country. It will be easy to regain friendship, for the United States has no evil designs on Mexico, and merely demands reasonable respect for the rights and property of Americans under Mexican jurisdiction. If Obregon is willing to deal fairly with Washington, the friction which Carranza perpetuated and aggravated will soon disappear."

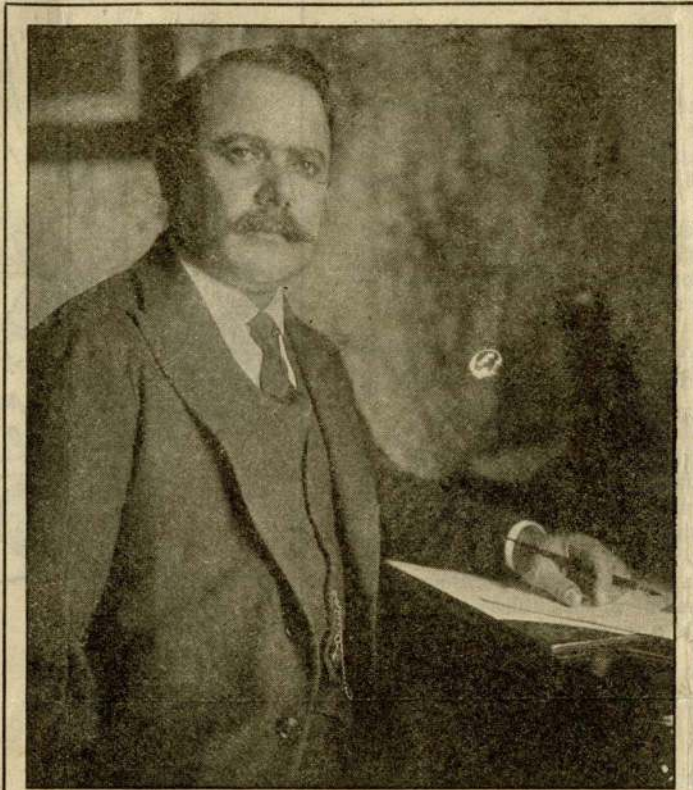
While General Obregon deserves his high military reputation, he does not, in the opinion of the *New York World*, "really belong to the professional soldier class, which has been at the bottom of so many of Mexico's political troubles." He shows "more of the solidarity of character that goes to the making of a temperate and intelligent ruler than any of the generals who have come to the fore in Mexico in the last twelve years." And, continues *The World*, "in public utterances he has revealed a strong inclination to adhere to the policy of civilian control of the Government, which Carranza, to his credit, sought to establish."

In an optimistic review of recent events in Mexico, the *New York Times* tells how Obregon overthrew Carranza

and set Pablo Gonzales aside and then found Adolfo de la Huerta to take office temporarily. Francisco Villa was "placated and pensioned." Governor Cantu, of Lower California, was "painlessly removed from office." Morelos was "pacified without the firing of a shot." "Americans who had property interests in Mexico were assured of protection and fair play." And President de la Huerta opened Congress with a message in which

"The Mexican people were assured that the Government's returns from its oil-wells would 'cover almost all the national budget.' Treaties of amity and trade were to be revived to 'meet the situations which have grown out of the European War.' Steps were being taken to indemnify all nationals who had suffered wrong and loss of property in Mexico during her years of chaos. The army was being reduced. It was to be improved by a General Staff and an aviation corps. The oil problem would be solved satisfactorily to holders of concessions. In six months domestic business had increased by nearly seven million pesos. Mexico would pay all her obligations."

While optimistic talk like this is characteristic of much editorial comment, the other side is not entirely forgotten. The *Washington Post* says that one American interest in Mexico aided Obregon's election financially. The *Des Moines Register* warns us that whether this is so or not nothing "could be more mischievous in effect upon our American continental relationships than the making of Mexico a playground of dollar intrigue."



THE NEW OBREGON.

All dressed up, in contrast to his familiar tramp-like portraits in his ragged field uniform. This photograph, in fact, seems to illustrate his remark that he would rather teach the Mexican people to use the tooth-brush than to handle the rifle.

See the good things that are said of you. Do you best and you will have nothing to fear.

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"We want less war and more work," is Alvaro Obregon's motto for Mexico, according to a signed article he has written for the September *Mexican Review*, and from which the *New York Times* quotes these paragraphs in which the President-elect outlines his program:

"After satisfying our internal needs we will attack the foreign debt. The principal will be paid in full as it comes due, of course, if we can possibly pay; otherwise we will make arrangements for extension which will satisfy our creditors.

"When that is done we will talk about borrowing more money for the rehabilitation of our railroads and the building of our ports and other public works which have been allowed to go to pieces.

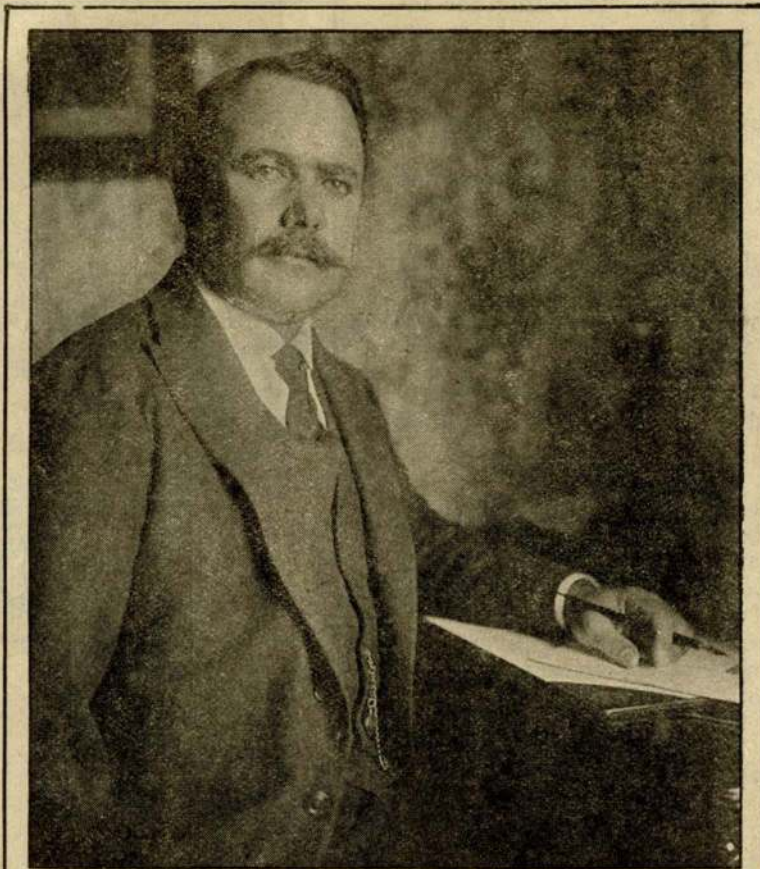
"Whatever money we borrow will be devoted to public works only. That guaranty I will personally give. Not one penny of borrowed money will be spent for the current expenses of the Government.

"Our army will be cut in two. It will be reduced to one-half its present size, or fifty thousand men, and will be well paid, clothed, equipped, and modernized. The fifty thousand men retired will be aided to go to work on farms. We are

now trying to discharge men in regions where work is plentiful and well paid. These men will remain in the reserve, subject to call.

"I shall propose to Congress that the generals be paid a lump sum in lieu of retirement pay that will enable them to buy homes or go into business and increase production. I shall try to reduce the number of clerks in government employ, too, and do away with sinecures.

"The country is at peace. . . . There is to be no punishment for political offenses, but those who have broken the law can not hope to escape retribution merely because they have been Obregon's enemies. Magnanimity can not be stretched to make a cloak for lawbreakers."



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M. M. Parker

has put forth Herculean efforts to get credits abroad, convertible into supplies on which Italians could work. Much has been secured, but not enough, as the price of the lira attests. Destroy all confidence, and there would be nothing."

We find many explanations for Italy's "mild attack of Sovietism," as one correspondent calls the conflict between labor and capital, but they all revolve about Bolshevism. As soon as Russia, "which supplied Italy not only with most of its imported food, but with the greater part of the raw materials used in its manufactures," can resume trade with Italy, order will be restored, thinks the Springfield *Republican*. "Whether the inflammation will spread remains to be seen," says the Baltimore *Sun*, and we read on:

"Italy is mainly an agricultural country, and the peasant population is said to have little sympathy with Bolshevism. A 'Red' revolution will not be so easy in a country where the people are the real sovereigns as in a land like Russia, where liberty was unknown.

"Nevertheless, there are elements of serious trouble in the hostile attitude of industrial employers and employees, in the shortage of coal, in the unsatisfactory harvest, and in the cumulative burdens of years of suffering and hardship."

To the charge that "the Italian Communist party is working on Russian Bolshevik lines, and is supported by Bolshevik money," *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* (New York) replies:

"The action of the metal-workers of Italy has in it nothing of the spirit of Bolshevism tho certain papers are painting Italy as having become 'Red.' The operatives are demanding nothing more than an increase of pay, and the companies are resisting this demand. There has been no conflict between the workmen and the forces of law and order, and the varied reports emanating from interested publications and financial circles are entirely false. Italy is not on the brink of a revolution, as our enemies would have the world believe."

And this paper quotes an Italian industrial magnate as saying:

"Bolshevism is not the word that should be used to qualify the rising that has recently occurred among the metal-workers in Italy, unless by the term Bolshevism one proposes to indicate all forms of violence that take place in connection with strikes among workers. When a striker throws a brick at a scab, it is a piece of industrial violence, but not necessarily Bolshevism. Bolshevism is in its essence an attempt to establish a political dictatorship of the Communist party over the rest of the nation. It is—outside of Russia—absolutely distinct from syndicalism or from a strike of unionized operatives who hope to obtain by their efforts a larger share in the products of their labors and to better conditions in general. The movement now stirring in Italy is motivated and developed by a new and possibly a dangerous form of labor tactics. But the Italian Communist party is very far from having the approval of the labor-leaders, and we are confident that the latter will have the good sense to avoid the trap that the Communists are trying to set for them."

The German-American Socialist New York *Volkszeitung*, however, thinks the Italian workers "must either seize complete control of the state or in a short time they will be put back in their old position." "It is even possible," continues this paper, "that the example of the metal-workers will find further imitation, and the workers will take over the administration of affairs, as well as the industries of the country, and establish their own government." For, goes on the *Volkszeitung*:

"If the capitalist government of the nation can not bring about any agreement between workers and employers in such a way as to reestablish essentially unchanged the old relationship between the exploiters and the exploited, then the Government will be compelled to use force against the workers. Anything else would be a voluntary abdication for capitalism. This is unthinkable. The workers must fight against the power of the state, and so long as the capital classes are in possession of power, the workers will never be able to take over the means of pro-

duction. For these reasons the seizure of the factories by the workers is only a step on the path toward a social revolution. If the workers want to obtain full right of possession and the fruits of their labor, they must follow it by the final step, namely, the destruction of the capitalist government and the erection of their own government."

The Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, however, thinks there is little likelihood of Italy's workers taking this advice. "The majority of Italians, or even a considerable minority, are not advocates of communism, altho Russian Bolshevism has long looked to



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THERE SEEMS TO BE A CATCH IN IT SOME PLACE.

--Darling in the New York Tribune

Italy as the most fertile field for its venomous propaganda," declares *The Plain Dealer*, and it explains:

"The national impoverishment resulting from the war created discontent throughout the Italian kingdom. Successive governments have endeavored to cope with this dangerous dissatisfaction, but they have not been successful. So menacing has become the attitude of the Communists that the present Government has been doing its utmost to induce Italy's allies to join in recognition of Soviet Russia. It hoped by this means to convince the Italian radicals that it is in sympathy with their demands. It is probable that only the timely protests of France and the United States deterred Giolitti from actually recognizing Lenine and his gang as the legitimate rulers of Russia.

"Even a temporary triumph of communism in Italy would be a world disaster. It would mightily strengthen the nerve of the Communists and Bolsheviks throughout Europe. It would bring courage to the Russian autocrats and give an aspect of permanence to their régime. It would add impetus to the movement of the British Laborites, which already has assumed tremendous power. It would, conceivably, even weaken the democracy of France, which has thus far stood firm against class fanaticism. America could not escape the effects of an Italian overturn, for more than ever it would be America's task to stand as democracy's strongest defense.

"It may be hoped that the Italian people, once aware of the terrible peril in which their fatherland has been placed, will rally to the Government and stamp out the rebellion. If they do not act it is not impossible that the tragedy of Russia will be repeated and that Italy will suffer as Russia has suffered."