

gues that London's radical pornographers, like the Grub Street *canaille* of Robert Darnton's prerevolutionary Paris, were " 'carriers' of cultural strains which deserve closer scrutiny from historians" (p. 219).

In most accounts of London radicalism, even in I. J. Prothero's excellent study, William Dugdale and company rarely put in an appearance. By drawing attention to the contributions of these "Grub Street Jacks" and to the vitality of the culture and politics of the radical underworld, McCalman challenges accepted wisdom about the triumph of respectable radicalism in the early Victorian period. In the late 1820s and 1830s the taverns, chapels, and theatres of the metropolis continued to resound with the now familiar blend of millenarian prophecy, blasphemy, and infidelity. Held together during the difficult years of the 1820s by their participation in the tavern debates and convivial dining of this alternative culture, a small group of veteran Spenceans emerged during the next decade as organizers and leaders of the National Union of the Working Classes and later of the London Democratic Association and used their new found influence and prestige to shape the program and strategy of London radicalism during the years leading up to Chartism. The old guard of the ultra-radical underworld in fact disappeared as a political force in metropolitan radicalism only after the failure of the LDA in 1839–40 to win mass support for its Jacobin ideals and insurrectionary tactics.

Displaying a rare tenacity in tracking the "traceable spoor" of this tiny band of ultra-radicals, McCalman follows the trail from archive to archive and pursues his leads as well through the pages of radical newspapers, "bon ton" periodicals, bawdy chapbooks, and pornographic novels. While he makes good use of these sources in his exploration of the often overlooked world of unrespectable radicalism, he passes rather quickly over other aspects of London ultra-radicalism. He barely touches upon Spence's land plan, the central feature of the program of Thomas Evans and his circle, and limits himself to about a dozen pages on the insurrectionary plotting of the postwar years. Nevertheless McCalman's book is a valuable and very impressive contribution to the ever expanding body of work on the culture and ideology of early nineteenth-century radicalism. Apart from his contribution to the literature, McCalman manages to achieve a far more difficult task. For a historian, the rarest of all accomplishments is to write a truly fascinating book. With the publication of *Radical Underworld*, he joins this very select group.

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HERNÁNDEZ PADILLA, SALVADOR. *El magonismo: historia de una pasión libertaria 1900–1922*. Segunda ed. ampl. [Colección Problemas de México.] Ediciones Era, México 1988. 255 pp.

This book is an impassioned libertarian's history of "una pasión libertaria". The author has invested years of research in the radical newspapers of the epoch of the porfiriato and the Mexican Revolution, in interviews and secondary literature to offer the most detailed political history of the Magonistas heretofore available. Despite the detail, however, the new information is of marginal significance. It fills

in some of the lacunae, but fails to change the overall picture of Magonismo's significance in the period 1900–1922.

*El Magonismo* is enriched by extensive quotes from *Regeneración* and other contemporary sources of the time. The author skillfully intertwined the long newspaper tracts, which comprise forty percent of chapter one, with reports found in the Archivo General de Relaciones Exteriores in Mexico City. One of the best quotes is three pages long. The result is an especially rich political narrative beginning with 1900 and ending with Flores Magon's death in 1922. The author's focus is on ideology, Flores Magon's program, his polemics, political arguments and his efforts at armed insurrection. No attempt is made to link Magonismo with Mexico's nineteenth-century anarchist heritage at the political level or to explain the historical process in Mexico that led the crisis-ridden artisans and other workers to choose anarchism as an organizing vehicle before Marxism began to take hold in the 1920s.

The author focuses almost entirely on the great man. The often told story of his flight from Mexico with a small body of collaborators who ended up in Los Angeles is related with verve and enhanced with new detail. The strikes and violence at Cananea and Rio Blanco are related with considerable new detail, but, surprisingly, nothing is said of the powerful American interests that controlled Cananea. The fighting there, it is inferred, resulted from the activities of Flores Magon's Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM). The deeper historical process at work in the Cananea and Rio Blanco crises, which had created the PLM as well as the revolution, are reduced to the traditional explanations that have existed in the literature about Cananea since the event took place, a wage dispute and rivalries between American and Mexican workers over wage differentials. Recent scholarship on these events is ignored.

The strikes that swept central Mexico following the Rio Blanco upheaval leading to the development of the 150,000 member revolutionary era labor organization, the Casa del Obrero Mundial (Casa), are also ignored. The author instead focuses on the uprisings in rural Mexico that began contemporaneously with the labor unrest. He attributes these fights with the Mexican army to the PLM rather than the actual participants, the aggrieved villagers and townfolk of rural Mexico, who in each case pointed to specific cases of land usurpation by the government to justify their actions. The author focuses on those episodes where the peasantry and townfolk claimed affinity to the PLM. However, that allegiance was secondary to their grievances and they were capable of making other choices if the PLM leadership failed to provide direction. He does not point out that the PLM failed in every respect.

Living the disputes of seventy years ago, the author refuses to consider the Casa as a serious component of Mexican workers' and peasant history. The Casa leadership denounced Flores Magon as a prima donna living in exile while they were fighting the revolution. But their dispute goes deeper than that. The Flores Magonistas recruited a sizeable band of supporters that included soldiers of fortune, a wide variety of scoundrels and filibusterers and invaded Baja California. They declared the Anarchist Republic of Baja California after seizing Mexicali and Tijuana. These men behaved as one might expect and gave their opponents ample opportunity for criticism. Those opponents included the Otis, Chandler and Hearst interests in California and Mexico, and the Mexican government of Francisco Madero. By the

time the PLM fighters had straggled back across the border Ricardo Flores Magon had suffered the greatest loss of prestige possible. The author offers considerably more information about this episode than heretofore available. His own description of events is a defense of the PLM Junta's judgement. A wide range of Mexican supporters drifted away from the PLM at that point and shifted their allegiances first to Pascual Orozco and then to Francisco Villa as the revolutionary process unfolded.

Ricardo and his supporters at one point were reduced to the escapist status of life on a five acre ranch in California where, the author assures us, they attempted to create a small scale model of the utopian society they envisioned for all of Mexico. However, as Colin MacLachlan has pointed out, Flores Magon never really gave up and he was repeatedly arrested. The American authorities did not always have evidence of his violations, but they knew he must be doing something. Frameups, judicial kidnappings, Flores Magon suffered a nightmare of persecution at the hands of the United States Government before finally dying of cardiac arrest in Leavenworth Prison.

When he died Flores Magon was escorted to his final resting place in Mexico City by President Alvaro Obregon Salido. In death he became far more powerful than in life. During the revolution, as the mass movements of industrial workers under the Casa, and the fragmented, undirected, multidimensional and numerous country folk operating under the rubric "Zapatista", and the equally complex Villistas of the northern countryside took up arms; the once prominent, now ignored PLM, receded to marginal significance. However, after Ricardo Flores Magon's death, his brother Enrique delivered speeches to enormous crowds in Mexico's industrial towns indicating that the ideology still had importance.

This book is well written, nicely executed within the limits set out above, and offers a wealth of documentation not readily available elsewhere. It is not critical, indeed it is a defense of Ricardo Flores Magon and of anarchism. It deserves to be read for that reason. Anarchism was important in Mexico at that time. In the world of scholarly writing, I do not agree with the author's almost polemical lack of objectivity, but perhaps even that has a place when facts have been dealt with so loosely as they have in the case of Mexican anarchism. Unfortunately, his approach will cause some readers to discount the author's argument.

The author correctly points out that Magonismo, or at least the principle of libertarian socialism is an important part of Mexico's political heritage. Especially so, since so many Mexicans still believe in it however modified by liberalism the creed may have become.

*John Mason Hart*