



The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón

By Claudio Lomnitz

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In this long-awaited book, Claudio Lomnitz tells a groundbreaking story about the experiences and ideology of American and Mexican revolutionary collaborators of the Mexican anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón. Drawing on extensive research in Mexico and the United States, Lomnitz explores the rich, complicated, and virtually unknown lives of Flores Magón and his comrades devoted to the "Mexican Cause." This anthropological history of anarchy, cooperation, and betrayal seeks to capture the experience of dedicated militants who themselves struggled to understand their role and place at the margins of the Mexican Revolution. For them, the revolution was untranslatable, a pure but deaf subversion: *La revolución es la revolución* -- "The Revolution is the Revolution." For Lomnitz, the experiences of Flores Magón and his comrades reveal the meaning of this phrase.

The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón tracks the lives of John Kenneth Turner, Ethel Duffy, Elizabeth Trowbridge, Ricardo Flores Magón, Lázaro Gutiérrez de Lara, and others, to illuminate the reciprocal relationship between personal and collective ideology and action. It is an epic and tragic tale, never before told, about camaraderie and disillusionment in the first transnational grassroots political movement to span the U.S.-Mexican border. *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* will change not only how we think about the Mexican Revolution but also how we understand revolutionary action and passion.

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Editorial Review

Review

Historians know so very little about how revolutionaries act and think, especially those who lost. Lomnitz does us a great service by illuminating the psychologies and everyday lives of a small, and for a brief period effective, band of intellectuals; one, perhaps small, example of what it was like to live in times of profound upheaval.

(*American Historical Review*)

The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón needs to be read and enjoyed. Its story is exciting and its execution is exhilarating: as history, as psychological analysis and sociology, and as a historian's personal commitment.

(Jorge Aguilar Mora, author of *Una muerte sencilla, justa, eterna. Cultura y guerra durante la Revolución Mexicana*)

Lomnitz's magnificent story of the Mexican Revolution -- told in a Deleuzian 'minor' key around the borderland revolutionary figure of Ricardo Flores Magón and the circles he moved through -- is at once a brilliant reconstruction of this particular piece of twentieth-century transnational history and a poetic interrogation of the pathos inherent in the very conception and practice of revolutionary politics. An outstanding and memorable achievement.

(Dipesh Chakrabarty, author of *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*)

Lomnitz unearths completely unknown archival sources and offers a fresh look at late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Mexican history. *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* challenges conical histories of the Mexican Revolution by offering a new, transnational and comparative model to comprehend the origins of twenty-first Mexico."

(Rubén Gallo, author of *Freud's Mexico: Into the Wilds of Psychoanalysis*)

The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón is a magisterial work, at once epic yet intimate; erudite yet lyrical; dispassionate yet deeply personal. In revisiting the seemingly minor story of Magón and his transnational revolutionary network, Lomnitz offers a profound meditation on the very nature of revolution itself, and on its role in modern history making. His deft probing of the tensions that spur this story -- between ideology and accommodation, exile and return, *personalismo* that is strikingly relevant to our own time: one that rejects predatory nationalism in favor of collectivism, mutual aid, welfare, enjoyment.

(Jean Comaroff, author of *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People*)

About the Author

Claudio Lomnitz is Campbell Family Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. He is the author of *Death and the Idea of Mexico* (Zone Books); *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism*; and *Exits from the Labyrinth: Culture and Ideology in the Mexican Space*.

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