

EDITORIAL

PORFIRIO DIAZ.

By DANIEL DE LEON

MEXICAN despatches, announcing “quiet in the Republic,” may or may not be reliable. They may tell the truth about the attempted revolution having been smothered; and they may be doctored, governmental information to steady stocks and prevent a financial crash in the United States, more painful to many American and Mexican interests than would be the crash of Diaz’s mock-presidential chair: However this may be, the fact that a revolutionary movement did break out, and that its sweep embraced such leading centers and strategic posts as Orizaba, Torreon, Guadalajara and Queretaro, is food for thought.

Out of the great Mexican upheaval that covered the period between 1859–1866, and which culminated in the French intervention, the French military occupation of the Republic, the raising of a throne with Maximilian for Emperor, the capture and execution of the usurper, and the final evacuation of the land by the soldiery of Napoleon III,—out of that great conflict there emerged two men, with two great names. One, Juan Benito Juarez, the indomitable representative of a people’s indomitable civic will;



PORFIRIO DIAZ (1830–1915)

the other, Porfirio Diaz, the representative of the military powers latent and inherent in a nation determined to be free. As President of the Republic during all those fateful seven years when his country was battered by foes from within and by a powerful coalition from without, Juarez, the aged Indian of pure Indian blood, left, when he died, not many years later, a name imperishable. Well for Diaz—the gallant soldier whose maiden sword, fleshed {flushed} with the blood of his country’s

manifolded foes, cleared the path for Jaures's triumphant re-entry in the capital—well for him and his name had he followed his civic chief speedily to the grave.

That the Juarez-Diaz triumph of 1866 could not bring about the freedom of the Mexican people—that was in the cards. No bourgeois revolution can accomplish that feat. All that a bourgeois revolution can accomplish—and great is the accomplishment thereof—is the promotion of the economic conditions that make actual freedom a possibility, and the establishment of the civic facilities to bring that freedom about. In the transit there is slavery with even aggravated features, yet a slavery that is transitory, a slavery fruitful of Freedom. Hard enough would be the fate of him, who, wreathed in the laurels of the bourgeois struggle against feudalism, is compelled, by the very loss of his past prowesses, to preside over and even enforce that aggravated though transitory and beneficent slavery which the Bourgeois Revolution, the pathfinder for Socialism, brings along in its folds. Hard enough would Diaz's fate have been if his length of years had devolved upon him that thankless task. Diaz's fate is harder. He stands to-day, whether this revolution turn out a failure or not, at the grave of all he battled for in the days of his youth; and, what is worse still, the impersonation of a cause that is marked Ichabod.

One single fact illumines the posture of Diaz. Feudal is the persecution of the heirs of a political foe. Significant is the condemnation of the process in our Federal Constitution. No act shall work "corruption of blood," that is, forfeiture of property, except during the life of the person attainted. The leader of the present revolution in Mexico is Francisco I. Madero, a man of vast holdings. The decree that has issued from the Mexican Government restores the feudal principle of "corruption of blood." Madero's property lying in the Republic has been pronounced confiscate, absolutely to the use of the Government.

His judgment unhinged by what may be called the "fairy tales of capitalist progress"; his mind poisoned by the insidious approaches of American Capital, which, curbed at home by the progressive laws that even bourgeois institutions demand, found in Mexico a soil on which to graft feudalism upon capitalism, or capitalism upon feudalism; his ideals of old debased by American adventures {adventurers?};—the Diaz of to-day is a pitiable caricature of the Porfirio Diaz of

1866, a social monstrosity whose being—and also whose unavoidable fate—can serve no purpose other than {as} a towering warning to us all in America against Capitalism, and an additional warning against Capitalism when it treads the path of Reaction.

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