

# The Murder of Jose Diaz

By MANUEL GOMEZ.

YOU will never understand the heroic struggle of the Mexican peasants from 1911 to the present day if you think of it, as most Americans do, in terms of its chieftains—Zapata, Villa, Villareal, Soto y Gama, Obregon, etc.

You must think rather of a dogged, long-suffering human mass that presses firmly forward notwithstanding that at every step some of its precious life-blood is spilled and mutilated pieces are hacked from its composite body. Old leaders betray or are cut off in the struggle. Yet the mass struggles on, recreating a leadership from its own tissue. Here is the essential vitality of the Mexican revolution, fighting now under the banner of the government, now against it, and accomplishing marvels in the teeth of the unrelenting opposition of the United States, the greatest imperialist power the world has ever known. Surely this is a mighty, an epochal movement!

The Mexican revolution is being constantly beheaded. When I visited Mexico recently the comrades were still talking of the assassination of Moreno, the Communist member of the legislature of Vera Cruz, who was shot down in cold blood at the very door of the legislative chamber. During the first week of my visit one of the delegates to the approaching convention of the Communist Party of Mexico arrived in Mexico City with the news that Primo Tapia, recognized leader of the organized peasants of the state of Michoacan, had just been brutally slain by the police. My readers will no doubt remember having seen the story of Primo Tapia in *THE DAILY WORKER*. A couple of weeks later came the murder of Jose Diaz.

IT is said that right now—during the present "peaceful" phase of Mexican progress—five hundred local leaders are being murdered every day in the towns and fields of Mexico. Some are shot in the back by police officers nourished in the traditions of the old "ley de fuga," some are killed by professional "white guards" in the pay of reactionary landowners; some are done to death by agents of powerful American corporations.

Jose Diaz was one of the latter.

Jose was not a prominent revolutionary figure, altho he had been an anarchist. He was one of the multitude of poverty-stricken Mexican workers, and would never have been murdered at all if he had not induced his fellow-workers in the mines of the "Cinco Minas" corporation to strike for more pay. "Cinco Minas" is a Mexican name, but an American company, controlled by the same Mr. Gerard who was United States ambassador to Germany when the World War broke out and whose flashy book entitled "My Four Years in Germany" was one of those used by professional patriots to lay "all the crimes against civilization" at the door of the German kaiser. Jose should have thought twice before exercising the constitutionally guaranteed right to strike against the great Mr. Gerard.

It is true there were mitigating circumstances in Jose's favor. Conditions at Cinco Minas were frightful, even as compared with the other American-owned mines in the neighborhood. The pay was only 40 cents a day (U. S. currency), whereas the other mines paid 50. Accidents occurred frequently, for the company had bribed the government mine inspectors not to look for safety appliances. When a man was injured he was simply struck from the payroll and left to puzzle out his own future by himself before he was out of the hospital.

MOREOVER, it is just as ridiculous to blame the strike on Jose as to blame the World War on the kaiser. The other men were willing enough. They went out to a man on the first day.

The Cinco Minas strike, which had



long been preparing, broke out about the middle of last May, shortly after my arrival in Mexico. The workers demanded higher wages and improved conditions. Looking at it from the number of men affected, it was a small affair, quite as insignificant as Jose himself. Only a couple of hundred men were involved, and news of it might not have gone far beyond the little village of Hostotipaquille in the state of Jalisco, where the Cinco Minas property is located, if the company had not appealed to the United States consul to exert pressure on the Mexican government to force the men back to work.

No beneficial results were secured for the company by this maneuver, but it gave new significance to the Cinco Minas struggle. It showed foreign capitalism still up to its old tricks. At once the interests of the entire Mexican people became manifestly identical with those of the striking miners. Labor papers in all parts of the country took up the issue of the Cinco Minas strike. Contributions began to pour in from trade unions—and not only from trade unions but from all those interested to free Mexico from the domination of foreign capital. The Mexican section of the All-American Anti-Imperialist League arranged a mass meeting of protest and sent a contribution. The strike was now part of the Mexican revolution.

After several weeks of struggle the Cinco Minas company was forced to capitulate. The men went back to work with a 10-cent increase in pay and a general adjustment of grievances.

That was all. Except that in the joy of victory the miners had forgotten that they must continue to protect their leader, Jose. Jose liked to take long walks at night, which is a dangerous custom for one who has just led a successful strike. A few days after the victory his body was brought in, riddled with bullets.

Of course, the workers of Cinco Minas will find someone to take Jose's place. That great India and mestizo mass has replaced far bigger leaders than poor Jose. The Mexican revolution goes on inexorably. But with what terrific sacrifices, we who look on it from afar can never comprehend.

ON my way back to the United States about a week after the Cinco Minas settlement I picked up a train acquaintance with a certain well-to-do Mr. P—, who, as it chanced, owned a small mining property quite near the village of Hostotipaquille. Naturally I turned the conversation into the channel of Cinco Minas.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. —, "the min-



## A PEEK EACH AT MOTI

### "PADLOCKED."

CAPITALISM goes to astonishing lengths sometimes to achieve its conceptions of morality and it develops some astonishing conceptions, too. But the responsibility for practicing moral laws and the penalty for their violation decreases in direct proportion to one's wealth and the length of time one has possessed it. All of which is brought out in exaggerated form by the "movies," as for instance in "Padlocked," adopted from a Cosmopolitan serial story by Rex Beach showing this week at the "Chicago."

There has been an epidemic of these moralistic pictures ever since the debut of the "flapper." They are usually advertised as "a modern daughter's problems." In the movies, let it be understood, a "modern daughter" is always a rich man's daughter at least any daughter that is considered important enough to have "problems." Working girls are introduced as movie characters for any purpose except that of exposing their problems; usually, however, in order to serve as problems for rich men's sons!

The troubles of the modern young rich girl in "Padlocked," similar to those of most other "daughters of today," arise from the fact that her father, altho he has "made" the necessary fortune to entitle his family to all the pleasures of the idle rich, nevertheless hasn't cast off his skin of puritanical morality. In a reformist furor, kindled by close personal contact with spinster social welfare workers, he starts a crusade to uplift society's morality, with his own daughter as one of the victims. Figuratively and literally, she is "padlocked" to keep her from dancing parties, etc., until finally the father allows her to be sent to a state reformatory to see what "higher" disciplinary measures can do to save her soul.

The picture reaches the tragic depths of the modern young rich girl even having to scrub floors. All the other girls at the reformatory have to scrub floors, too, of course, and march in uniformed, criminal lines to eat, sleep and pray. But their punishment of drudgery isn't any "problem" for them; the case of the modern rich girl is different. Her sentence was an "accident"; and the "movie" shows the other girls brutally teasing her about her pretty hands being spoiled (they themselves apparently being jealous because they never had any to spoil).

But the modern young rich girl doesn't have to scrub floors long enough to affect her hands; she is conveniently rescued by a modern dragon of an old villain, who has been rich enough and for long enough that he moves comfortably in the same high society as the modern young upright rich man who spurs the modern daughter because he misunderstands her, thinking her displayed affection for the old dragon rose is due to ulterior commercial ambitions instead of to her "innocence." And so it goes.

What finally awakens the old-fashioned rich father to the folly of his Puritanical scruples? Is it because he comes to realize that it was his cruelty that killed his wife? Is it because it eventually trickles into

ers have won. But to tell the truth, the Cinco Minas outfit can well afford to pay 50 cents a day. They started in on a shoestring—a million dollars, I think, was the original investment. In the last ten years they have gotten something like \$10,000,000 out of the mine, which has gone into increased capitalization. Besides that they have paid themselves regular dividends of 10 per cent on their investment.

"Of course they sweated it out of their men. Always warned Gerard to go a bit easy or there would be the deuce to pay."

The ex-ambassador, you will remember, is the one who could not contain his righteous indignation at the kaiser's crimes against humanity.

