Communist Painters Defend Art Against Bourgeois Vandals

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(Special to the DAILY WORKER)

MEXICO CITY, July 31.—The decadence of capitalism and the new revolutionary ideas born under this system which has long ceased to serve humanity adequately has had a tremendous influence on the development of art in Mexico. It has created a revolutionary art, a communist art. In strong colors and graphic, telling lines, it describes the lives of the upper classes, their debauches, their baseness, their uselessness to the society they live upon. With the same strength, with a clear understanding, with a real artistic genius, the Communist painters are covering the walls of public buildings with the simple stories of the productive worker—in the mines, in the mills, in the steel works, in the sugar industry, in the dyeing industry, in the quarries, in the fields.

This vivid contrast between the lives of the parasites and those of the useful members of society has offended the delicate nerves of the "upper" classes and they have set a number of reactionary students to destroy these artistic productions which disturb their consciences. The reasons they give for their abhorrence of this new movement in Mexican art is that it is out of proportion, it offends their good taste, it is not aesthetic. Truth, if it hurts, is not aesthetic. And so the excellent works of the Communist painters, J. Celemente Orozco and D. Alfaro Siqueros have been practically destroyed; the unparalleled works of Diego Rivera have been threatened. One Saturday morning Rivera and a group of workmen, armed, held off a group of young vandals who were making for his paintings.

The foreign colony here has protested strongly against the ruin of these paintings. The protest appeared in the form of an open letter which was pasted upon the walls of the capitol. Names of many leading painters and sculptors of France and Latin-America, writers and newspaper men of the United States and Spanish poets appeared on the protest.