

EDITORIAL

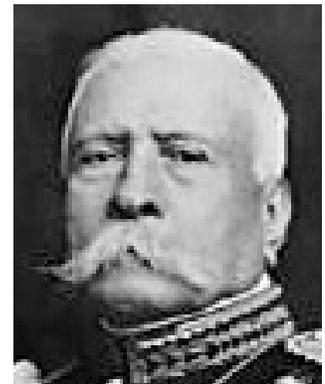
AT THE BIER OF DIAZ'S REPUTATION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WITHOUT meaning to throw a stone at the infuriate masses who are now trampling upon the name of Porfirio Diaz in Mexico, on the contrary, with charity for their delusion, the Socialist stands by and looks upon the scene.

There are two choruses performing in the drama—both alike guilty.

Diaz himself is the center figure in one. Fifty years ago Diaz was the military chief of an element in Mexico that believed the root of all evil lay in the Church. He saw the Roman Catholic clergy, at the same time that it called upon the people to turn their eyes and thoughts to heaven, turning their own thoughts and eyes, and hands to boot, to earth, and seize and gradually absorb the land in mortmain, and, partly luxuriate on the same, partly turn it to uses of political corruption. The Diaz element fell into an error similar to the error fallen into by the Anti-Semites in Germany. These, seeing the devastation of their property by the bankers who happen to be notably Jews, fail to detect the parasite in the BANKER, and conclude it is the JEW. The Diaz element felt itself tyrannized economically and politically: the priesthood being the external appearance of the Tyrant, it was fallen upon, while the economic institutions and opportunities that were the Tyrant in fact were left untouched, ignored. The circumstance that the "Liberal" assault upon the priest's powers in Mexico was instantly resented by the then head of that political organization, Pope Pius IX, and speedily resulted in an armed intervention by the Jesuit-ruled court of Napoleon III., confirmed the "Liberal" delusion. A Homeric war ensued, with Diaz as the Achilles, an Achilles, however, who triumphed, and drove the foreign foe from



PORFIRIO DIAZ
(1830-1915)

the land, and curbed the prelacy.

Fifty years passed. In the interval the Diaz element itself was absorbed, as to be absorbed it was bound to be, by the economic forces of tyranny which it had ignored. The Diaz element slid insensibly, little by little, into the shoes of the clerical usurper of yore. It became, in turn, the agency of the identical tyranny, political and economic, which fifty years before had dominated the land. The uniform—the priest's cassock and shovel hat—was changed for the soldier's epaulettes and chapeau, or the bourgeois' broad cloth and stovepipe hat. The power remained. Inevitably the consequences were the eventual repetition of the scenes of fifty years before, with slogans changed to suit the changed stage settings. Before, it was: "Down with the priest!" now it became "Down with the military dictator!" Thus a fresh chorus arose, with Madero as its center figure; a fresh struggle broke out, yet how essentially alike to the first may be gathered from the colossal wealth of the Maderos and the valuable assistance these received from the silently working clerical party with its "immense following of willing and unwilling peons," as reported by the *New York Times's* special correspondent from Mexico on the 22nd of last month. And thus forty-five years after the clerical French Marshal Bazaine evacuated Mexico to the swish of the sword of the then Diaz element, Diaz himself evacuated his own country, from the identical port of Vera Cruz to the swish of the Maderists' sword.

The guilt of the Diaz element does not extenuate the guilt of the present "Liberals," the Maderists. Not a word of opprobrium heaped, and justly heaped, by the chorus of the Maderists upon Diaz, but the Maderists themselves will presently deserve, if they do not deserve it now. It is a fate inseparable from the law of the existence of modern Revolutions by Property.

The only guiltless element in the Mexican drama is its proletarian population, the "willing and unwilling peons" whom the light of Socialism has not yet rescued.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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