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EDITORIAL

MODERN MEXICO.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A NEWS item recently appeared in these columns, and in other papers too, that ran thus:

As a result of the strike of engineers on the Mexican International Railroad, President Diaz has issued strict orders prohibiting strikes in the Republic and proffering Government aid if necessary to break any further strikes like that of the engineers. In return the railroad management has promised not to re-employ any of the strikers.

These few lines tell more completely the tale of recent developments in Mexico, and betray that country's actual social stage more accurately than all the essays, syndicated and otherwise, that periodically sprout forth on the "Land of the Montezumas." It is incomparably more full of information than the essay on Mexico that appeared this January among that remarkable serial on the 19th Century. Indeed, that essay was, compared with this short news item, mere tinsel and hollow sound.

The news item simply records two facts. What lies back of them? This: That at some previous time the Railroad Company, having a strike on hand, got Government troops to help it out; that, the strike being squelched, the Company made its peace with the strikers, reinstated them, of course on the Company's terms, soothed their lacerated feelings with capitalist taffy, and allowed the resentment of the strikers to be turned and vent itself against the Government.

To guard against this, the Government now engages, on its part, to prevent strikes, but exacts from the Company a pledge NOT TO RE-EMPLOY ANY OF THE STRIKERS. This may seem to be a plain case of capitalist log-rolling. Log-rolling it is; but it is not capitalist log-rolling. What does it mean?

During the last twenty years there has been such an in-pouring of American capital into Mexico that the impression is prevalent that Mexico has been suctioned into the sisterhood of capitalist nations. That she eventually will be is undoubted,

unless headed off by the Social Revolution. That she is not yet, the above news item denotes; and it furthermore denotes that the feature of Mexican development, just now, is a struggle, on the one hand, between the old feudal element that wrenched Mexico from Spain, in the first instance, and subsequently cast off the stockjobbers' domination that the Third Napoleon sought to fasten upon her, and, on the other hand, the upstart capitalist element, partly made up of foreigners and partly of smaller holders of land. The former holds the reins of Government; the latter is growing, as capitalism has always done under such circumstances, like the underbrush in the shadow of the tall trees, that it undersaps and eventually causes to crumble down. In the progress of this process of capitalist undersapping, the feudal ruling class of Mexico has experienced the effect upon it of the capitalist dealings with that portion of the country that, to the feudal land-holders, are essential as "peons," and which to the capitalists are essential as proletarians. This peon-proletarian element naturally gravitates away from the feudal lord and under capitalist domination. The feudal Government of Mexico seeks to check this tendency, if not to stop it altogether. The method it has adopted is to deprive the capitalists of a means of "becoming solid" with the peon-proletarian element at the expense of the ruling feudal class.

A highly interesting course of a development this of Mexico promises to be. It certainly will furnish a fascinating variation to the gradations through which landlordism declines and capitalism rises.

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