

EDITORIAL

## MEXICO; A LESSON IN THINKING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**T the same time that a Wallace, Ida., correspondent furnishes us with an article—found elsewhere in this issue<sup>1</sup>—upon the difficulties that beset the rank-and-file in its desire to escape the domination of the “Labor Leader,” Mexico is furnishing material that is valuable in training men to think. The two—the article from Idaho and the things from Mexico—are strangely supplemental.

From Mexico, from almost the very instant when treachery placed President Madero in the hands of his foes, there followed a procession of assertions, or allegations, and thereby connected events.

First, there came the charge that Madero was a “monomaniac,” an insane man into the sanity of whom a regular Commission on Lunacy was to inquire.—An impossibility this was not. Was the charge true? was it false?

Second, there came the charge that Madero had embezzled large funds from the National Treasury, for which he was to be tried.—However unlikely, this charge also was not impossible. Though a member of one of the greatest land-holding, and most affluent families in Mexico, Madero had headed a vast revolution. Revolutions require and absorb large funds. The line is hard to draw between the legitimate and the illegitimate appropriations made by the successful chieftain of a revolutionary movement. Without attaching in Madero’s instance the stigma of personal greed to the act, it was not an impossibility that he did “embezzle.”

Then came the charge that Madero was a murderer. It was charged that, one day, during the ten days duel of cannon between the Ciudadela and the Castle of Chapultepec, an officer having approached Madero with suggestions of surrender,

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<sup>1</sup> [“Labor Leaders, Their Conscience and Material Interest,” by Alex. Smith. *Daily People*, March 3, 1913, pg. 3. Not included here.—R.B.]

the President whipped out a pistol and shot the officer dead on the spot, an act for which it was announced, he was to be court-martialed.—Neither was this charge an impossibility. The facts in the case may, or may not have justified the charge of murder.

At this distance from the city of Mexico, nobody, even in the city itself, none but a small minority of people can have any personal knowledge of the facts to form an opinion of any of the charges. At this stage of the procession of allegations and facts, opinion might “be divided.” But the procession did not stop there.

After this series of charges had been advanced Madero was killed, and the killing was explained, by the identical element from whom the charges came, with the statement that, the Government having decided to try Madero, it decided to transfer him to the Penitentiary. To this end he was placed into an open automobile, and was being driven to his destination when an armed body of Madero’s partisans attacked the guards that conducted the automobile, whereupon Madero jumped out and started to run, and was then shot by the guards.

Thereupon the thinking man reasons:

“The charges against Madero might and might not have been well founded. The explanation of his killing is unacceptable. A man who is pronounced insane; a man who is, in addition, charged with embezzlement of National funds; a man who, furthermore, is charged with murder;—would such a man be transported in an open automobile? Reason answers: ‘No!’ Reason adds that not only can Madero’s killing not be explained in the way that Ambassador Wilson’s twin pets Felix Diaz and Huerta claim, but that Madero was assassinated; that the managers of the assassination were Diaz and Huerta themselves; finally, that the charges against Madero were slanders, of which his assassination, at the instigation of the slanderers themselves, is Madero’s completest vindication of either insanity or guilt.”

It is only at a very early stage in human society when the individual has himself full knowledge of all the facts necessary to arrive at a conclusion on matters of importance. The more society expands, the more complex it becomes, all the more difficult grows the task of direct knowledge regarding any important matter, and all the more numerous do such matters become. When society has reached its present stage of world-encircling expansion and of complexity, and when, as a consequence,

the matters on which it is of importance to form an opinion have reached the myriad mark—when that stage has been reached, REASON—the power to think, which implies the power to weigh evidence—becomes pivotal.

To strengthen REASON is not the least of the factors in Socialist propaganda. To the extent that REASON is weakened by bad, slipshod and incoherent thinking, to that extent injury is done to the Movement. To the extent that Reason is strengthened by correct, careful, cogent thinking, to that extent the day of Labor's Emancipation is drawn nearer. The Socialist Movement can never thrive by the buzz of flies, it can not be pushed to triumph by dumb or insolent cattle. Nor can the Socialist Republic be the home of any but an alert, self respecting and thinking citizenship.

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