

EDITORIAL

CASTRO'S PREDICAMENT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“COMPLICATIONS” between the Latin American republics and European powers are nothing new. They started almost immediately after the independence of Latin America from Spain. Indeed the “complications” were born with and of the Latin American war for independence. The moneys raised in Europe, England especially, to carry on the war against Spain speedily became the basis for “complications.” The loans were outrageously usurious. The outrage of the usury could have been borne; but it bred a craving after fresh extortions. With the usurious loans as a basis, that Latin America never disputed, European nations proceeded to conduct themselves like veritable roaring hyenas, and to make fresh exaction, that Latin America resisted. The story is a long one. It is punctuated with “blockades,” “bombardments,” occasional “invasions,” followed by treaties that usually were compromises, and often victories for Latin America.



José Cipriano Castro Ruiz
(1858-1924)

The present “complications” with Venezuela are of a different species.

Originally, the “complications” were only about the collection of debts by an exacting and unscrupulous creditor, and the natural resistance of the debtor. The present “complication” involves no less an issue than that between Capitalism and Landlordism, in fact, Feudalism. Castro typifies feudality. Holland, just now; a few years ago England, France and Germany; and, in between, the United States, typify capitalism, pure and simple, in these recently recurring “complications.” Originally, accordingly, when the issue was between greedy creditorship and outraged

debtorship, the fates rather sided with Venezuela; now that the issue is a truly historic one, an issue involving nothing less than the overthrow of a regime that has seen its day, feudality, and its substitution by the next order of things, capitalism—now the fates are against Venezuela.

This fact Castro knows. He is a man of culture and learning—vastly the superior of any of the rafts of minister plenipotentiaries and consuls from Europe and the United States with whom he has had to deal, and whom it was easy work for him to throw—witness the fate of our own Loomis, “acting Secretary of State.” Nevertheless, all the culture and knowledge of a man can not always overpower long acquired habits of thoughts, which have had time to warm into feeling, and which then become part and parcel of his material being, his physical and mental anatomy. Castro is to-day an atavistic creation of a Venezuela that was, but is no more—is no more because she is of this planet, and the planet’s orbit has whirled her into a social climate that dooms her feudalism and enforces capitalism, as inevitably as her tropic vegetation will be doomed to make place for the vegetation of the temperate zone when the next glacial period shall have physically changed her climate.

Castro’s posture is tragic—as tragic as was that of the Indian caciques who, with bow and arrow, strove to contend against Castro’s own Spanish forefathers. As the Indian cacique stood up with lyric rhymes in heroic defense of his old tribal social system against the invading Spaniards, who had that same tribal system full 2,000 years behind them, so Castro, to-day, wastes his impassioned rhetoric and the fervid throbs of his heart in defense of a feudal social system against the “invasion of barbarians from Europe or the United States,” who have the same feudal system full 200 years behind them.

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

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