

# The New Threat to Mexico

By Manuel Gomez

## All-America Anti-Imperialist League.

OUR newspapers have rediscovered the Mexican bandit. So long quiescent, he is again robbing trains and indulging in cruel massacres on the front page—precisely at the time when another section of the same page is given over to stories of the threatening U. S. note of protest against Mexico's new petroleum and land law. The coincidence is not surprising. To those familiar with the history of U. S.-Mexican relations it means another assault of American imperialism against the republic to the south of us. The cause is to be found in Wall Street's objection to the petroleum and land law; the banditry is brot in to supply atmosphere.

Senor Aaron Saenz, Mexican minister of foreign affairs, declares that his government, which has bowed so often before the insistence of Wall

Street in the past, will not give in to the latest arrogant demands. He points out that the note delivered to him last week by Ambassador Sheffield is nothing less than an insult to Mexican sovereignty. The note hints at a withdrawal of recognition by the Coolidge administration unless Mexico revises her law and permits free exploitation by the American interests.

"Mexico will sustain her rights as a sovereign nation," Senor Saenz affirms, "and will pass such legislation as she pleases, the Mexican courts being capable of deciding if the legislation is injurious to foreign interests."

AS a matter of fact the petroleum and land law is merely putting into effect article 27 of the Mexican constitution. It has been part of the fundamental law of the republic for nine years but its application in supplementary legislation has been repeatedly prevented by pressure from the United States. The regulations

now worked out and approved by an overwhelming vote of both houses of the national legislature limit the rights of foreigners to hold land in Mexico and limit foreign investment holdings in Mexican corporations. They provide, however, that foreign corporations may operate in Mexico unhampered on condition that they agree to accept the same treatment as Mexicans before the law—that is, on condition that for the purposes of the law they agree to be considered as Mexicans, to accept the judgment of the Mexican courts and to refrain from invoking the intervention of their governments.

Opposition to the law indicates that American capitalists are not willing to discontinue their tactics of appealing to the U. S. government whenever they get criss-cross with the Mexican courts. It means that they will leave no stone unturned to maintain themselves in a privileged position.

MEXICO has suffered sufficiently for her great natural wealth and her proximity to the United States. The latest note from Washington was the most unkindest cut of all; it was directed at a government that had worked overtime to keep on the good side of Wall Street, to such an extent that it has become known as "a Wall Street government." Only a few weeks have passed since President Calles handed back the National Railways of Mexico (under government control since the time of Carranza) to the foreign investors. It was demanded that he make things still better for the investors by smashing the Mexican railroad unions, and he complied. He sent Minister of Finance Pani to New York to negotiate with the House of Morgan a substitute for the Lamont-de la Huerta agreement. He let Morgan into the National Bank of Mexico, and arranged for payments on the Mexican external debt. But

Wall Street is insatiable, particularly where there is oil. Backed by the United States government, the American financial oligarchy demands that Mexico tear up her constitution and turn over all her resources to American exploitation.

THAT is what the note delivered by Ambassador Sheffield asks for. And that is something that no Mexican government can grant, if it does not wish to lose every vestige of support among the masses of its own people. The Mexican workers are in a militant mood. They have just forced the British-owned Aguila Oil company to pay out 2,000,000 pesos covering full wages during the entire period of the recent oil strike. The government appears to be taking a strong stand in the face of the insulting U. S. note. Every enemy of imperialism on the American continent will support its attitude.