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Critical Summary

Span 307

Pancho Villa by John Reed

The author John Reed is an American journalist who gave the world his perspective of the Mexican revolution as he traveled alone and unprotected through the revolutionary war in Mexico. He writes this article to let others know how he talked and created a friendship with Villa himself and how Villa was seen as a bandit but also a brave person standing up for the poor’s rights. Reeds main point gives of the life story of Villa; what he dreamed as a revolutionary of Mexico, how he rose from being a bandit and how he lived and cared as a human.

Reed describes Villa as “The Friend of the Poor, He was the Mexican Robin Hood” (365). Reed gives an example of how Villa states [pg. 367] that why should rich men be granted huge tracts of land and not the poor men giving the view of how he wanted to be fair with the poor and the rich. Pancho Villa also thought that when there was Peace the best thing to do was to put the soldiers to work it was Villa tells this to his advisers as they try and propose a new idea of finance the revolution. Reed starts out mentions how Villa was an outlaw to begin with as he started from the ignorant peon parents with no education at all. He had no trust in anybody. Especially the Spaniards who Villa thought they didn’t deserve to be on the Mexican land. The Spaniards were to be believed as bad men after they took the Indians land and disrupted their lives. Also those who opposed the revolutionary war were sentenced to evacuate and leave the state and their land was taken in custody of the constitutionalist government. Reed mentions that the Germans, who were politically active, as well as the Englishmen and the Americans Villa would have not tried to get in argument with them until the government was established.

Reed got to capture the Human Side of Pancho Villas, who had two wives one was his honest wife while the other was a mistress in his house of Chihuahua. This was not seen as a bad thing because it was customary between the peons to have more than one partner. Reed says that it was fascinating to watch him discover new ideas, for example when Reed asked him what he believed in Socialism and asked if it was a good idea that women vote like they were in the United States, and Pancho Villa started asking his wife about an accident and asked for her opinion but all she said that whatever he decided would be a good solution but then he asked her again and that’s when she replied for the solution to be to kill the traitors.

Reed believes that Pancho Villa was a good man as he says close to the end that “It’s incredible to those who don’t know him, that this remarkable figure, who has risen from obscurity to the most prominent position in Mexico in three years, should not covet the Presidency of the Republic”, and that is because Villa doesn’t believe he should be president because he was never educated for him to speak for Mexico to the ambassadors of to the countries. He wouldn’t want other countries to see Mexico as an uneducated state run by uneducated people. The way Reed views Francisco Villa is a strong and positive perspective, he was there to see the actions of Villa and not here it secondly by others. This article is a good way to get to know Pancho Villa as a leader and also in a personal human way.