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The Porfiriato: Oıto: Order and Progress

Porfirio Díaz controlled the destird the destiny of the Mexican nation for a third of a century. These were interestirre interesting and vital years in the entire western world. Innovation characteriz characterized the era—in technology, political and economic systems, social valu, social values, and artistic expression. Otto von Bismarck transformed the Germaıthe German states into a nation. William Gladstone introduced England to a newnd to a new kind of liberalism. The leading powers of Europe partitioned Africa ned Africa unto themselves. The United States emerged as a world power, and Spwer, and Spain lost Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines—the last remnants of emnants of its once-glorious empire. Russia experienced a revolution that, thoug that, though abortive, presaged things to come in 1917. Pope Leo XIII enunciated enunciated *Rerum Novarum*, proclaiming that employees should be treated more eated more as men than as tools. Thomas Hardy and Thomas Mann revolutionizedvolutionized the world of fiction, while Renoir and Monet did the same for art. Bue for art. But even in a world of profound change, Porfirio Díaz's Mexico must be co must be considered remarkable.

Mexico in 1876

When Díaz assumed control of Montrol of Mexico in 1876, except in a few of the larger cities, the country had scarry had scarcely been touched by the scientific, technological, and industrial revolustrial revolutions or the material conquests of the nineteenth century. While muc While much of western Europe and the United States had been transformed in tformed in the last fifty years, Mexico had languished, less out of inertia than bertia than because of the intermittent chaos and resultant exhaustion. In the fifty-n the fifty-five years since Independence the presidency had actually changed hv changed hands seventy-five times, making continuity of policy impossible. sible.

Although the period of the Rest of the Restoration had pointed Mexico in a new direction, plans for change had oange had only been partially implemented. In 1876 Díaz inherited an empty trea empty treasury, a long list of foreign debts, and a huge bureaucratic corps whose sarps whose salaries were in arrears. Mexico's credit rating abroad was abominable, anminable, and its politics had become somewhat

of a joke in Europe. The value of Mexican imports consistently exceeded the value of exports, presenting a serious balance-of-payments problem. It was virtually impossible to secure sorely needed infusions of foreign capital, and the Mexican affluent, knowing the precarious nature of the political process, would not invest their own resources to any large degree. Because of graft, ineptitude, and mismanagement the public services were poorly run. The mail, if it arrived at all, came inexcusably late.

Mining had never really recovered from the chaotic and dour days of the Wars for Independence. A small number of mines operated inefficiently without benefit of technological improvements, and no coordinated efforts at new geological exploration had been undertaken. The economic situation of agriculture was much the same. Modern reapers and threshers and newly developed chemical fertilizers were still oddities. Practically nothing had been done to improve the breeding of stock animals.

When Díaz came to the presidency the iron horse had just started to compete with the oxcart, the mule train, and the coach. Telegraph construction had barely begun. The dock facilities on both coasts were in sad disrepair, and many of the most important harbors were silted with sand. Veracruz was so unsafe for shipping that some favored abandoning it altogether. The rurales had not yet been able to contain banditry and rural violence. A tremendously high infant mortality rate testified to the lack of modern sanitation and health facilities even as the last quarter of the nineteenth century began. Yellow fever plagued the tropical areas of the Gulf coast, particularly in the immediate environs of Veracruz.

Mexico City had a special health problem. Situated in a broad valley, it was surrounded by mountains and a series of lakes, almost all of which were at a higher elevation than the city. Heavy rains invariably brought flooding. In addition to extensive property damage (floods often caused adobe walls to crumble), the waters then stagnated in low-lying areas for weeks and months. Disease, reaching epidemic proportions, frequently followed on the heels of a serious flood. Projects to provide an adequate drainage system for the city had been proposed since the seventeenth century. The height of the surrounding mountains, however, thwarted proposals for a foolproof system of drainage canals and dikes, and the projects initiated from time to time were never fully successful.

Order and Progress under Díaz

If progress were to displace stagnation, Díaz believed it would be necessary first to change Mexico's image drastically and to remove the

stigma popularly associated with ciated with Mexican politics. Only if the potential investors from the United Sta: United States and Europe were convinced that stability was supplanting turbulering turbulence could they be expected to offer their dollars and pounds sterling, fds sterling, for profit, to quickly vitalize the manufacturing, mining, and agricultuid agricultural sectors of the Mexican economy. The task, then, as Díaz perceivedaz perceived it, was first to establish the rule of law. He was fully prepared to acpared to accept the positivist dictum of Order and Progress, in that order. order.

Díaz's liberal credentials and perstials and personal integrity were impeccable. Born to a family of modest means in the deans in the city of Oaxaca in 1830, he tried studying first for the priesthood and thenod and then for the law. But he eventually opted for a career in the army. Joining the. Joining the Oaxaca National Guard in 1856, he fought under the liberal banner durl banner during the War of the Reform. With the liberal victory promotions came wipns came with startling rapidity, and by the time of his history-making defeat of the Defeat of the French in Puebla on May 5, 1862, he was a thirty-two-year-old brigadier gd brigadier general. During the period of the empire he won additional military famenilitary fame championing the cause of liberal republicanism as a guerrilla fighter aglla fighter against the French army. Not even his abortive revolt of La Noria against Dria against Benito Juárez or his successful revolt of Tuxtepec against Lerdo de Tejadido de Tejada, both fought in defense of the liberal principle of no re-election, tarnlection, tarnished his liberal reputation.

During his first term, which lasti, which lasted until 1880, Díaz was faced with a number of insurrections. Agrarianns. Agrarian rebellions protesting seizure of village lands flared in many states, butly states, but not all the revolts were of an agrarian nature. Some were prompted bprompted by Díaz's failure to reward supporters or by his heavy-handed appoinded appointments at the state level. But the most serious were a number of number of revolts launched along the United States border in support of exiled rt of exiled president Lerdo de Tejada. These military movements not only threat only threatened the success of Díaz's pacification program but also damaged hi damaged his efforts to cultivate more friendly relations with his northern neighbor.rn neighbor. But Díaz was not hesitant in meeting force with force. Rebel leadersebel leaders who were not shot down on the field of battle were disposed of shorosed of shortly after their capture. Characteristic of Díaz's attitude toward thosoward those who would disrupt the national peace was his reaction to a revolt ito a revolt in Veracruz during his first year in office. When Governor Luis Mier yLuis Mier y Terán asked for instructions concerning captured rebels in that state,in that state, Díaz reportedly telegraphed him, *Mátalos en caliente* (Kill them on thi them on the spot). Such lessons were not lost on potential revolutionaries elsewheries elsewhere. Mexico was not as tranquil in the post-1880 period as often portri often portrayed. Yet the peace was not shattered as often or as violently as in thntly as in the past. Over eight hundred corpsmen had been added to the rurale the rurales to curb brigandage. Order was gradually coming, and progress wourogress would accompany it.

Within a couple of years of his assumption of the presidency Díaz had been recognized by most of western Europe and Latin America, but the United States held out pending the satisfactory resolution of several outstanding problems. One obstacle was overcome when Díaz in 1876 agreed to terms that would satisfy U.S. claimants over damages to their properties in Mexico. The Hayes administration had one further grievance. Groups of Mexican bandits and Indians occasionally crossed the border, attacked settlements in the United States, and drove herds of cattle back into Mexico. The Mexican government, in the name of national sovereignty, refused to grant permission to United States forces to cross over into Mexico in pursuit. In the summer of 1877 border depredations brought the two nations almost to the brink of war. Díaz was at his best at this crucial juncture. While he would not permit American troops to enter Mexican territory, he did dispatch additional troops of his own to the border region to prevent further encroachments. Tensions gradually subsided, and President Hayes authorized recognition of the Díaz regime in the spring of 1877.

During his first administration Díaz also began to put Mexico's economic house in order. As a symbolic gesture he reduced his own salary and then ordered similar reductions for other government employees. Thousands of useless bureaucrats were eliminated from the rolls altogether. In addition, the administration attacked a problem endemic since the colonial period—smuggling. To prevent the annual loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars in import and export duties along the United States border and in Mexico's leading ports, Díaz decreed heavy sentences for individuals and companies trafficking in smuggled goods. To stimulate legal commerce with the United States three new Mexican consulates were opened along the Texas border, at Rio Grande City, Laredo, and Eagle Pass.

As Díaz's first term drew to a close, several of the states urged that the no-re-election law be amended so that Díaz could be eligible to serve another term. But Díaz preferred the law as it was; it provided that neither the president nor the state governors were eligible for immediate re-election but could serve again after the lapse of an intervening term. He dutifully retired from office. By voluntarily stepping aside Díaz could give further substance to the growing conviction abroad that Mexico had begun to mature politically. As the term ended, Díaz threw his support behind forty-seven-year-old Manuel González, an imposing military man who had rendered yeoman service in the fight against Lerdo and who was currently serving as secretary of war. González won the election with a large majority.

The González Presidency

The González presidency was controversial. The new president wanted to follow the patterns established by Díaz and, in fact, even brought his predecessor into the government for a short time as head of the Department of Development. Revenues increased, but so did expenditures as the administration plunged headlong into further development. Modernization was expensive. Railroad construction continued, but the companies required large subsidies from the government—as high as $9,500 for each kilometer of track laid. The government also fostered new steamship lines and established the first cable service in the country. But González had overextended his regime and found himself without sufficient funds to meet government obligations.

Stories of graft and corruption began filling the press, and political pamphlets denouncing the regime circulated on the streets of Mexico City. The president and his cabinet were charged with a variety of personal and public improprieties, ranging from negotiating illegal contracts and receiving rebates, selling government properties to administration favorites for practically nothing, stealing from the treasury at a fantastic rate, and sexual misconduct. The public turned against the president.

The charges were either false or gross exaggerations. The suggestion that Díaz fabricated the stories to discredit González is more fanciful and cynical than accurate; the best scholarship of the period suggests that Manuel González was not a puppet of Porfirio Díaz. González called his own shots and, in fact, must be given credit for encouraging the developmental process that had begun timidly with the restoration of the republic. But perhaps the most important lesson to be drawn is that the attacks against the president, as intense as they were, did not occasion any serious armed insurrection. The vituperations certainly could have tarnished Mexico's changing image, but when elections, rather than a new revolutionary plan, followed, many were convinced that the country had finally turned the corner.

The Return of Díaz

Díaz used his four years out of office to relax and to build a new political machine. He served for a brief time in the González cabinet and for slightly over a year in the governorship of his native state of Oaxaca. His first wife, Delfina Ortega, had died in 1880, and the following year he married Carmen Romero Rubio, the daughter of Manuel Romero Rubio, a Lerdista statesman and cabinet member. She was eighteen; Díaz had just celebrated his fifty-first birthday. They trav-

eled to the United States on their honeymoon as Mexico's representatives to the New Orleans World's Fair; newspapermen often mistook her for his daughter. But the well-bred, sensitive, and perfectly-prepared-to-be-a-first-lady Señora Díaz began to educate her husband in the social graces. She performed her task admirably, and within a couple of years Díaz was much more the polished gentleman when he ran for the presidency in 1884. In September Díaz swept to victory. From this time forward he would not feel the need to step out of office after completing each term and would remain in the presidency continually until 1911. The conditions that greeted him in 1884 were a far cry from those of 1876.

Foundations of Modernization

Returning with renewed vigor, Porfirio Díaz had a plan for consolidating his political position and stabilizing the country. Mexico entered a period of sustained economic growth the likes of which it had never before experienced. As Mexico entered the modern age, steam, water, and electric power began to replace animal and human muscle. A number of new hydraulic- and hydroelectric-generating stations were built as the modernization process tied itself to the new machines it supported. The telephone arrived amid amazement and wonder in the 1880s. The Department of Communications and Public Works supervised and coordinated the installation of the wireless telegraph and submarine cables. A hundred miles of electric tramway connected the heart of Mexico City to the suburbs.

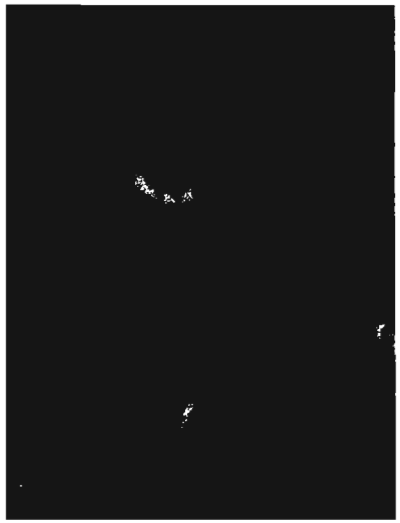
A major breakthrough in health and sanitation occurred when Díaz hired the British firm of S. Pearson and Son, Ltd., to bring modern technology to the drainage problem of Mexico City. For sixteen million pesos the English engineers and contractors, with the experience of the Blackwell Tunnel under the Thames and the East River Tunnel in New York behind them, successfully completed a thirty-mile canal and a six-mile tunnel that relieved the Mexican capital of the threat of constant flooding and resultant property damage and disease. At approximately the same time the face of the country was scoured to bolster the country's own self-respect and its image abroad. A public building spree changed the contours of boulevards, parks, and public buildings. Monuments and statues were dedicated to the world's leading statesmen, intellectuals, and military figures. A new penitentiary costing 2.5 million pesos opened in 1900, and a 3-million-peso post office in 1907. A new asylum for the insane, a new municipal palace, and a new Department of Foreign Relations were dedicated prior to the centennial

celebrations of 1910. The white marble National Theater, however, missed the centennial target date, and the heavy structure began to sink into the spongy subsoil of Mexico City before it could be finished. Each time a new project was completed, it was formally dedicated in an elaborate and well-planned ceremony to which foreign diplomats, dignitaries, and businessmen received special presidential invitations. Their impressions of Mexico, relayed to colleagues back home, would help effect the change of image.

Mexico's own adaptation of positivism provided the philosophical underpinning of the regime. The *científicos*, as those who followed in the footsteps of Gabino Barreda came to be known, were not all orthodox Comteans. Some blended Comte with John Stuart Mill, and others added a large dose of Herbert Spencer. A few of the científicos called for modest programs ushering the Indian masses into a rapidly modernizing world, but many were paternalistic toward the Indian at best and elitist at worst, believing that Mexico's future lay solely with the criollo class. According to Justo Sierra, a científico spokesman, Mexico had to pass through a period of "administrative power" (a euphemism for dictatorship) before it could attain nationhood. Then the time would be ripe to discuss the broadening of the participatory base.

The president and his científico advisers realized first of all that a series of structural reforms were needed to place Mexico's economic house in order, and they were fortunate to find an economic genius in their midst. José Ives Limantour, soon renowned in European financial circles, was the son of a French émigré. A man of many talents, he was a scholar, an accomplished jurist, and a dedicated linguist. First as subsecretary and then secretary of the treasury, he applied the best positivist thought of the day to the reorganization of the country's finances, which offered a fertile field for his talents. For Limantour, Mexico's future was fully dependent upon its economic regeneration. To be sure, Matías Romero, during the Restoration, had begun work on a revision of the tariff, but much remained to be done. Gradually, during the 1880s and 1890s Secretary Limantour lowered or eliminated the duties on many imports and permitted special tariff exemptions for economically depressed areas of the country. He also negotiated a series of loans at favorable rates of interest and, most important for the economic well-being of the country, shifted Mexico from the silver to the gold standard.

As significant as any of the individual reforms was Limantour's decision to overhaul the nation's administrative machinery so that the reforms could be properly implemented. While it would be foolhardy to suggest that all graft and corruption were eliminated, Limantour did improve the situation markedly, at least at the lower echelons of



José Limantour (1854–1935). An advocate of positivism, Limantour, as secretary of the treasury, brought order and reason to Porfirian finances. Able and attentive to detail, he was the epitome of the Porfirian statesman who would reinvent Mexican society.

government. The dividends were startling. In 1890 the last installment of the debt to the United States, growing out of the mixed claims settlement, was paid, and four years later Mexico had not only balanced its budget for the first time in history but actually showed that revenues were running slightly ahead of expenditures. When Díaz left office in 1911 the treasury had about seventy million pesos in cash reserves. Beyond all expectations he had succeeded in reassuring the outside world that Mexico had not only turned the corner but also deserved international dignity and respect.

The image abroad did change. As Limantour applied his skills to the reorganization of the treasury and Mexico met its foreign obligations on a regular basis, diplomatic relations were opened with all of Europe, and new treaties of friendship, commerce, and navigation were signed with Great Britain, France, Norway, Ecuador, and Japan. For the first time Mexico began to participate actively in international conferences. Foreign heads of state were lavish in their praise of the Díaz regime. By the late 1880s and early 1890s Díaz had begun to receive medals and decorations from foreign governments.

The Railroad Boom

Díaz was fully prepared to take advantage of the good economic indicators and the new reputation he had so assiduously cultivated. His government embarked upon a multi-pon a multifaceted program to modernize the transportation and mining sectors ng sectors of the economy. To accomplish this he turned to foreign investment an estment and technology in the 1880s. The Mexican Central Railroad Company, bac mpany, backed by a group of Boston investors, received the concession to constr n to construct the major line north from Mexico City to El Paso, Texas. Work be as. Work began from both terminal points, and the 1,224-mile project was complet as completed in an amazingly short four-year period. The Central was soon flan as soon flanked by two other new lines to its east and west. In 1888 the Mexican ne Mexican National Railroad Company, originally chartered under the laws of Col laws of Colorado but subsequently purchased by a group of French and English en English entrepreneurs, successfully completed a new narrow-gauge line between ne between Mexico City and Laredo, Texas, a distance of eight hundred miles an ed miles and the shortest route from the Mexican capital to the United States bord States border. Shortly after the turn of the century it was converted to standard gau tandard gauge. Finally the Sonora Railroad Company, headed by Thomas Nicker mas Nickerson, built the line between Guaymas, on the Pacific Ocean, and Nogal and Nogales, Arizona. By 1890 the total trackage of these three major companies companies approached two thousand miles.

Efforts to connect the country the country from east to west did not proceed so smoothly. After earlier attempts er attempts to build a line across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec languished, in 189 hed, in 1894 Chandos S. Stanhope completed a

Porfirio Díaz (1830–1915). As sol 915). As soldier, rebel, statesman, and president, Diaz co nt, Diaz compelled respect and dominated his countr his country as no previous figure in the nineteenth c nineteenth century.

line, but the construction work and terminal facilities were grossly inadequate. Díaz was forced to grant a new concession to S. Pearson and Son, Ltd., the famous British concern. Sir Weetman Dickinson Pearson drove an especially hard bargain, and the completed line proved to be one of the most costly in Mexican history. In 1907 the trains were running regularly between Puerto México on the Gulf coast and Salina Cruz on the Pacific. With the Panama Canal already under construction, the Tehuantepec Railroad would soon be rendered obsolete.

Numerous lesser lines were undertaken in the 1880s and 1890s. A line in the south connected Mexico City with Guatemala, and short feeder lines connected most of the state capitals with the major trunks running between Mexico City and the United States border. By the end of the Díaz regime railroads interlaced the entire country; from about four hundred miles of track in 1876, Mexico in 1911 could boast fifteen thousand. Approximately 80 percent of the capital outlay came from the United States. In 1908, however, under the constant prodding of Limantour, the Díaz government purchased the controlling interest in the major lines.

These achievements did not come easily. Mexico's lack of requisite managerial skills and, more generally, a prevailing development cul-

The arrival of the daily train triggered a burst of activity in hundreds of Mexican towns. This station scene was captured by American photographer Sumner W. Matteson in the station of Amecameca in 1907.

ture meant that years passed before the railroads were smooth-running operations, but ultimately they would contribute to the tremendous economic transformation of the country. As the cities were linked to the outlying areas, raw materials could be shipped to industries and finished goods distributed to a greatly expanded domestic market. As products could be quickly transported to population centers and the leading ports, new agricultural lands, specializing in commercial agriculture, were opened, and land values increased as peasants were dispossessed of their lands.[1] Mexico's textile industry, for example, relied primarily upon imported cotton at the beginning of the Díaz period, but with the opening of new lands in the north, near the railroad lines, cotton production by 1910 not only doubled but made the country almost self-sufficient. When the railroad arrived in Morelos the sugar planters began importing new machinery and setting up new mills to expand production. The larger market for locally produced products drove the costs down and, at least theoretically, widened the base of consumer use. Communities isolated by geography and centuries of tradition were gradually brought into greater contact with one another, and, as a result, the phenomenon of patria chica was challenged seriously for the first time.

The Revival of Mining

The railroads were a means to many ends, and not least among these was the revival of Mexico's potentially wealthy mining industry. The railroads, of course, offered the only practical and economical means of transporting massive shipments of ore. But, equally important, the Díaz-controlled legislature passed a new mining code in 1884. In order to appeal to the foreign investor the code made no mention of traditional Hispanic jurisprudence reserving ownership of the subsoil for the nation. Further, the proprietor of the surface was explicitly granted ownership of all bituminous and other mineral fuels. Several years after the mining code was enacted, the mining tax laws were revised, exempting certain minerals altogether and lowering the tax rates on others. United States and European investors recognized that the potential profits were great and entered Mexico in increasing numbers in the

1. One perceptive analysis of some fifty-five agrarian protests during the early Porfiriato indicates that over 90 percent occurred at a distance of less than forty kilometers from a new or projected railroad line. See John Coatsworth, "Railroads, Landholding, and Agrarian Protest in the Early Porfiriato," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 54 (1974): 55–57.

1880s and 1890s. The new miners introduced modern machinery and new processes of extracting the metal from the ore, producing a radical transformation of the entire industry.

Between 1880 and 1890 three large mining developments were initiated by foreigners in Mexico: Sierra Mojada in Coahuila; Batopilas in Chihuahua; and El Boleo in Santa Rosalía, Baja California. Within a few years the Sierra Mojada region was yielding a thousand tons of silver and lead per week, and Batopilas had made a fortune for its owners. El Boleo, under French and German ownership, proved to be one of the richest copper mining areas in North America.

The introduction of the cyanide process, which made it profitable to extract metal from ores containing only a few ounces of metal to the ton, revolutionized the mining of gold and silver. Largely because of new explorations and the adoption of modern mining techniques, the value of gold production rose from about 1.5 million pesos in 1877

Colonel William Greene's town of Cananea, Sonora, was the hub of Mexico's copper production and a symbol of the foreign domination of the country's natural resources.

to over 40 million pesos in 190esos in 1908. Silver production followed a similar pattern, rising from 24.8 millior 24.8 million pesos in 1877, to over 85 million pesos worth of silver was being mvas being mined in 1908.

Some of the foreign investsign investment came in the form of huge conglomerates. The Guggenheim iggenheim interests, for example, spread out over much of Mexico and entered nd entered numerous interrelated mining activities. They owned the American Smelerican Smelting and Refining Company, based in Monterrey but with large plants large plants in Chihuahua. Durango, and San Luis Potosí as well. The AguascalienAguascalientes Metal Company, the Guggenheim Exploration Company, and the ıy, and the Mexican Exploration Company were either partially or totally owned ally owned and controlled by Daniel Guggenheim and his six brothers. In addition,In addition, the Guggenheims acquired many already proven mines, such as the such as the Tecolote silver mines and the Esperanza gold mine, as well as n well as new mines in Durango, Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Zacatecas. By 190cas. By 1902 Guggenheim investments in northern Mexico totaled some $12 miome $12 million.

Other foreign investors came tstors came to Mexico with practically nothing and built multi-million-dollar busineollar businesses. Perhaps the best example is Colonel William Greene, the coene, the copper king of Sonora. In 1898 Greene obtained an option on a Sonora c a Sonora copper mine for forty-seven thousand pesos from the widow of Ignacio of Ignacio Pesqueira, a former governor of the state. Greene sold stocks for his ocks for his mining venture on Wall Street, and within a few years his Cananea s Cananea Consolidated Copper Company was one of the largest copper companper companies in the world, operating eight large smelting furnaces and employing employing thirty-five hundred men. With some of the profits Greene became a became a lumber factor and a rancher as well; one of his ranches grazed some fazed some forty thousand head of cattle.

Oil Fields and Other Industrial Enterprises

American and British investors er investors engaged in a spirited competition for the exploitation of Mexico's oil. Thxico's oil. The first wells were sunk in areas where surface seepages clearly indicated ly indicated the presence of petroleum reserves, but after the turn of the century sıe century systematic geological exploration began in earnest. The American intererican interests were led by Edward L. Doheny, an American who had successfull successfully developed oil fields in California; he now purchased over six hundrer six hundred thousand acres of potentially rich oil lands around Tampico and Tuxico and Tuxpan. Within a short time his Mexican Petroleum Company brought fay brought forth Mexico's first commercially feasible gusher, El Ebano.

The British answer to Doheny to Doheny was Sir Weetman Dickinson Pearson, who had worked on the drainn the drainage of Mexico City, the moderniza-

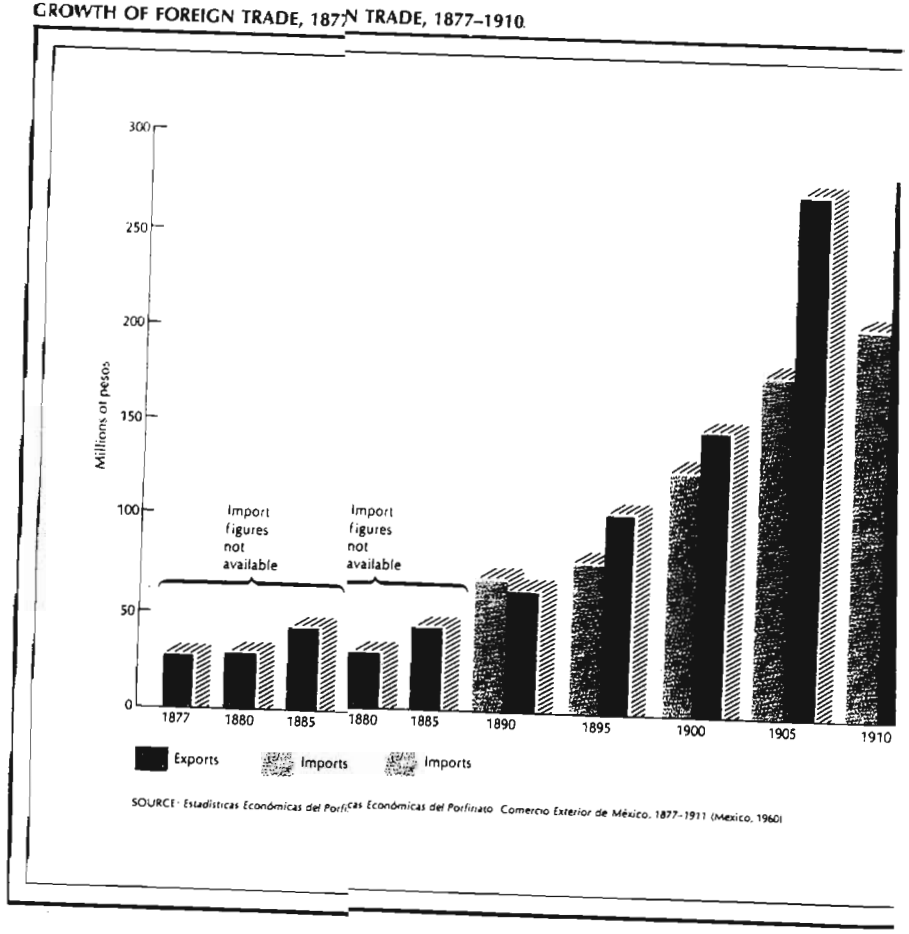
tion of the Veracruz harbor, the reconstruction of the Tehuantepec Railroad, and the building of the terminal facilities at Puerto México and Salina Cruz. Enjoying cordial relations with Díaz, Pearson eventually obtained drilling concessions in Veracruz, San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas, and Tabasco. Progress came slowly at first to Pearson's El Aguila Company, but a dramatic hit brought forth the Potrero del Llano, Number 4, a gusher that, when successfully capped, produced more than a hundred million barrels in eight years. Doheny's Mexican Petroleum Company and Pearson's El Aguila Company, whose board of directors included Porfirio Díaz, Jr., dominated the petroleum industry in the early twentieth century and within a few years made Mexico one of the largest petroleum producers in the world.

It would be an exaggeration to suggest that Mexico experienced a profound industrial revolution during the Díaz years, but the industrial process did make itself felt. In 1902 the industrial census listed fifty-five hundred manufacturing industries. The volume of manufactured goods doubled during the Porfiriato. The process began in Monterrey, Nuevo León, where, in addition to the huge Guggenheim interests, other American, French, German, and British investors backed industrial enterprises. Attracted by excellent transportation facilities and by the progressive policies of Governor Bernardo Reyes, which included tax exemptions for industries, foreign and domestic capital was directed into Mexico's first important steel firm, the Compañía Fundidora de Fierro y Acero de Monterrey. Within a few years the company was producing pig iron, steel rails, beams, and bars, and by 1911 it was making over sixty thousand tons of steel annually. Monterrey was soon dubbed the Pittsburgh of Mexico.

In 1890 José Schneider, a Mexican of German extraction, founded the Cervecería Cuauhtémoc, which quickly became the largest and most important brewery in the country. Among its products was Carta Blanca, the number-one selling beer in Mexico. By 1900 it was also producing bottles for its products, other kinds of glassware, bottle caps, and packing cartons for both local use and national consumption.

Other industrial concerns based in Monterrey constructed new cement, textile, cigarette, cigar, soap, brick, and furniture factories, as well as flour mills and a large bottled-water plant. Capital investment in the city grew steadily throughout the Díaz regime but most dramatically during the first decade of the new century, when it rose from under thirty million to over fifty-five million pesos. Smaller fledgling textile and paper mills, cement factories, leather works, and soap, shoe, explosives, and tile manufacturers located themselves in other areas of the country, but by 1910 Monterrey was without question the industrial capital of Mexico.

GROWTH OF FOREIGN TRADE, 1877–1910



SOURCE: Estadísticas Económicas del Porfiriato. Comercio Exterior de México, 1877–1911 (Mexico, 1960)

The improvement of harbor and dock facilities during the Porfiriato opened Mexico up to world commerce on a grander scale than ever before. Millions of pesos spent on Veracruz transformed it markedly, although its status as chief port was seriously challenged by Tampico, located at the mouth of the Panuco River. After U.S. engineers supervised the dredging of the harbor and the modernizing of dock facilities, this northern city grew rapidly as a business and commercial center and challenged Veracruz in volume handled. Similar improvements were made in the harbors of Mazatlán, Manzanillo, Puerto México, and Salina Cruz. By the turn of the century the number of serviceable ports had increased to ten on the Gulf coast and fourteen on the Pacific side. Par-

tially because of the improvements in port facilities, and partially because of Limantour's reforms in the tariff structure, Mexico's foreign trade (exports and imports) increased from about 50 million pesos in 1876 to about 488 million pesos in 1910.

Although many of the trappings of traditional society were still to be found, the Mexico of the first decade of the twentieth century was a far cry from that of 1876. Improved public services and modern transportation and communication facilities opened the country to new ideas and challenged the concept of patria chica. The economy boomed, and dynamism permeated the atmosphere. Technology in general and mechanization in particular made tremendous strides. Foreign travelers for the first time marveled more than they criticized, for peace and growth allowed them the luxury of contemplating the many natural beauties Mexico had to offer. Mexico's foreign credit rating was firmly established throughout the world. But perhaps the most important product of the modernization process was that Mexicans, especially urban Mexicans, began to view themselves differently. A new consumer culture began to alter urban lifestyles. Self-confidence replaced the embarrassment occasioned by the decades of internecine strife. For a third of a century there were no major civil wars, no major liberal-conservative struggles, and no major church-state controversies. Mexico was assuming its rightful position in the twentieth-century world. Very few yet questioned the costs the transformation had exacted, because the material dividends seemed so self-evident. But the price paid was great, and the rapid modernization contained seeds of self-destruction.

Recommended for Further Study

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24

The Costs of Modernization

Dictatorship by Force

Modernization came to Mexico during the Díaz regime not simply as the result of positivist theory and careful economic planning. The peace that made it all possible was in part attributable to brute force. Díaz maintained himself in power from 1876 to 1911 by a combination of adroit political maneuvering, intimidation, and, whenever necessary, callous use of the federal army and the rurales. He was the consummate bully.

Throughout the thirty-four years the dictator maintained the sham of democracy. Elections were held periodically at the local, state, and national levels, but they were invariably manipulated in favor of those candidates who held official favor. The press throughout the epoch was tightly censored; journalists who dared to oppose the regime on any substantive matter found themselves in jail or exile, while recalcitrant editors found their newspapers closed down. Filomeno Mata, the editor of the *Diario del Hogar*, suffered imprisonment over thirty times for his anti-re-electionist campaigns. While a few persistent critics were killed, the large majority of the journalists were bludgeoned into submission and ceased to constitute a problem.

The dictator played off political opponents against one another, or bought them off. Potentially ambitious generals or regimental commanders were shifted regularly from one military zone to another to assure that they would be unable to cultivate a power base. State governors were invited to assume the same position in other states or to become congressmen, cabinet secretaries, or diplomats to remove their influence at home. Not even members of the Díaz family were immune. When the dictator's nephew, Félix Díaz, decided to run for the governorship of Oaxaca against Don Porfirio's wishes, he shortly found himself on a ship bound for Chile, where he was given a diplomatic post and allowed to cool off. Most influential Mexicans cooperated with the regime and were rewarded with political favors and lucrative economic concessions. Díaz himself never accumulated a personal for-

tune, but many of his civilian his civilian and military supporters in high positions had ample opportunity for grunity for graft. The científico advisers, for example, always seemed to know in ad know in advance the route of a new boulevard or railroad line, the property coroperty could thus be bought up at a low price and sold back to the government overnment for a profit.

When Díaz needed to use ded to use force it was provided by the army and the rurales. He recognized thcognized the need for professionalizing the army, and, although he did not invitid not invite foreign military missions into the country, he did send military obserlitary observers to West Point and to the French officer's school at St. Cyr. The r Cyr. The recently reorganized Colegio Militar de Chapultepec provided formalded formal instruction for the officer corps and made use of the most current ost current European training manuals. By the turn of the century about half of tut half of the active officers (but very few of the generals) were graduates of theduates of the Chapultepec academy. The cadets, resplendent in snappy uniforms, y uniforms, were highlighted at the frequent military parades during which Díaz which Díaz took the opportunity to display the latest armament obtained from Fned from France or Germany.

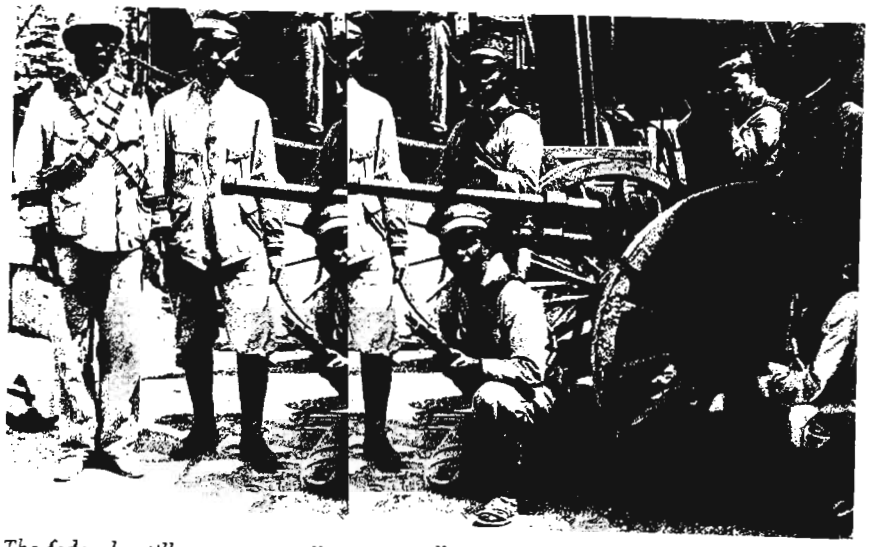
The rurales, Díaz's praetoriaz's praetorian guard, also constituted an important enforcement tool for the *Pax* or the *Pax Porfiriana*. The dictator strengthened the corps considerably, not simbly, not simply to curtail brigandage in the rural

To reinforce the desired image, thed image, the rurales were always featured during mil rades. Sumner Matteson photograph photographed this salute to President Díaz on May

areas but to serve as a counterpoise to the army itself. By the end of the regime the strength of the rurales had been increased to over twenty-seven hundred men. While the force was not large, it was used to good advantage by the dictator. In addition to its original patrolling functions, Díaz had rural corpsmen guard ore shipments from the mines, support local police forces, escort prisoners, enforce unpopular court decisions, and guard public payrolls and buildings. We are now quite certain that the rurales were neither as harsh nor as efficient as generally thought. While Díaz did not, as commonly understood, deliberately induct known bandits into the corps, neither did he try to set straight their image for cruelty and excess. The myth served his purposes well, for the rurales were feared by brigands, marauders, political opponents, and recalcitrant villagers. When trouble flared it was often more prudent to send in the nearest corps than to allow a distinguished federal general the chance to enhance his reputation.

Díaz used the military not only to force compliance with the dictates of Mexico City but to administer the country as well. By the mid-1880s it was not unusual for military officers, most often generals of unquestionable loyalty, to dominate the state governorships and to be well represented among the three hundred *jefes políticos* (local political bosses). In 1900, although relative peace had already been achieved, Díaz was still spending almost one-fourth of the total budget on the military establishment. He believed it was worth it because the modernization process was so intertwined with his concept of enforced peace.

Díaz's científico advisers have been labeled racist for their conscientious denigration of the Indian population. But the generalization has certain flaws, for it presupposes a monolithic philosophical framework within the científico community. José Limantour was less a follower of Comte than of Darwin. He adapted notions of natural selection and survival of the fittest to Mexican reality as he understood it and emerged from his introspection calling for an aristocratic elite to reorder society. Little or no help could be expected from the Indian population. Francisco Bulnes, a prolific historian and apologist for científico rule, was more openly racist. Five million (white) Argentines, he argued, were worth more than fourteen million Mexicans. The Mexican Indian was sullenly intractable and hopelessly inferior, not because of innate corruption of his genes but because his grossly deficient diet sapped his mental, moral, and physical vitality. He responded more to the logic of force than to the art of persuasion. Less biologically oriented was Justo Sierra, the most famous científico of them all. Cofounder of the conservative newspaper *La Libertad*, author of *Evolución política del pueblo mexicano*, secretary of education during part



The federal artillery corps, well trorps, well trained and well equipped, was the pride of the Díaz army. y.

of the Porfiriato, and first rector first rector of the national university, Sierra argued forcefully that social and cubcial and cultural forces, not biological ones, had shaped the Indian's inferior po inferior position. And unlike Limantour and Bulnes, Sierra asserted the Indiard the Indian's educability.

In the political sense the cientße the científicos may have had a point. Perhaps Mexico was not yet ready for derady for democracy, and perhaps it was too early to broaden the participatory basepatory base. But their impassioned defense of the need for "administrative powe rative power" implied at best self-deception and at worst blatant hypocrisy. If they risy. If they truly believed that the Indian masses could be prepared for a more ac a more active role in the political life of the Mexican nation, the logical place tgical place to begin the preparation process was an educational system that reache that reached the people. But the schools built during the Porfiriato, even when tlven when the Department of Education was in Justo Sierra's hands, were almost /ere almost all located in the cities where the criollos lived, not in the rural areas rural areas where they might serve the Indian and mestizo population. At the en1. At the end of the Porfiriato Mexico still had two million Indians not speaking it speaking Spanish. They had been left aside.

The Hacendados

Mexico greeted the twentieth centuntieth century still a predominantly rural country, and the rural peasantry bore mntry bore most of the costs of modernization.

The payment was exacted in fear of the rurales, intimidation by local hacendados, constant badgering by jefes políticos and municipal officials, exploitation by foreign entrepreneurs, and, most important, seizure of private and communal lands by government-supported land sharks.

Life in rural Mexico had been dominated by the hacienda complex since the colonial period, but the abuses of the system were exacerbated markedly during the Díaz regime as railroad construction pushed land values up. The problem of exaggerated land concentration was directly attributable to a new land law enacted in 1883. This law, designed to encourage foreign colonization of rural Mexico, authorized land companies to survey public lands for the purpose of subdivision and settlement. For their efforts the companies received up to one-third of the land surveyed and the privilege of purchasing the remaining two-thirds at bargain prices. If the private owners or traditional ejidos could not prove ownership through legal title, their land was considered public and subject to denunciation by the companies.

The process that ensued was predictable. Very few rural Mexicans could prove legal title. All they knew for sure was that they had lived and worked the same plot for their entire lives, and their parents and grandparents had done the same. Their boundary line ran from a certain tree to a certain stream to the crest of a hill. The few who could produce documents, some dating back to the colonial period, were convinced by the speculators and their lawyers that the papers had not been properly signed, or notarized, or stamped, or registered. But not even those communal ejidos that could produce titles of indisputable legality were immune. The Constitution of 1857 with its Reform laws was once again applied to the detriment of the ejidos, and with greater vigor than ever before.

Within five years after the land law became operative, land companies had obtained possession of over sixty-eight million acres of rural land and by 1894 one-fifth of the total land mass of Mexico. Not yet completely satisfied, the companies received a favorable modification of the law in 1894, and by the early twentieth century most of the villages in rural Mexico had lost their ejidos and some 134 million acres of the best land had passed into the hands of a few hundred fantastically wealthy families. Over one-half of all rural Mexicans lived and worked on the haciendas by 1910.

The Mexican census of 1910 listed 8,245 haciendas in the republic, but a few wealthy individuals, often tied together by a marriage network of family elites, owned ten, fifteen, or even twenty of them. Though varied in size, haciendas of forty or fifty thousand acres were not at all uncommon. Fifteen of the richest Mexican hacendados owned haciendas totaling more than three hund three hundred thousand acres each. The state of Chihuahua affords a classic exa classic example of how the hacienda system operated and brought wealth anc wealth and prestige to one extended family. Throughout the Díaz regime the fegime the fortunes of that north central Mexican state were guided by the Terrby the Terrazas-Creel clan. Don Luis Terrazas, the founder of the dynasty, had sersty, had served as governor prior to the French Intervention and fought with Juáret with Juárez against the French in the 1860s. His land acquisitions began shortly tgan shortly thereafter, when he obtained the estate of Don Pablo Martínez del Río, nez del Río, a French sympathizer. In the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s, in and out of the d out of the gubernatorial chair, he acquired additional haciendas, profiting immenting immensely from the land laws of the Díaz government. By the early twentiethly twentieth century Terrazas owned some fifty haciendas and smaller ranches totalanches totaling a fantastic seven million acres. Don Luis was the largest hacendadst hacendado in Mexico and perhaps in all of Latin America; his holdings were eings were eight times the size of the legendary King Ranch in Texas. He owned 500 owned 500,000 head of cattle, 225,000 sheep, 25,000 horses, 5,000 mules, and sonles, and some of the best fighting bulls in the western hemisphere. Encinillas, norcinillas, northwest of Chihuahua City, was the largest of his haciendas, extending extending to some 1,300,000 acres and employing some 2,000 peones. San Migues. San Miguel de Babícora was over 850,000 acres, while San Luis and Hormigasd Hormigas were over 700,000 acres each.

But the wealth and power of the ower of the Terrazas family cannot be judged in terms of landholding and its relatand its related activities alone. Don Luis also owned textile mills, granaries, railroaries, railroads, telephone companies, candle factories, sugar mills, meat packingeat packing plants, and several Chihuahua mines. Each of his twelve children ve children was married with the care characteristic of Renaissance nobility. Daugbility. Daughter Angela Terrazas married her first cousin, Enrique Creel, the sonel, the son of an American consul in Chihuahua and a man of wealth, eruditalth, erudition, and prestige. Enrique Creel also served several times in the stat in the state governorship and, in addition, was Mexico's secretary of foreign rela foreign relations in 1910–11. Creel's own haciendas totaled more than 1,700,000n 1,700,000 acres. He was also one of the founders and directors of the Bancf the Banco Minero de Chihuahua, which gradually absorbed many of the other of the other banks in the state. He was a partner, furthermore, in many of his fatherof his father-in-law's enterprises and directed or owned iron and steel mills, brewemills, breweries, granaries, and a coal company. Other daughters and sons also d sons also married well. The sons, as to be expected, became hacendados and elados and entrepreneurs. Sons Alberto and Juan each had haciendas totaling ovetotaling over 600,000 acres, and son-in-law Federico Sisniega held some 260,000me 260,000 acres and was a director of the Banco Nacional de Chihuahua. To strahua. To strengthen the already strong Terrazas-Creel ties, son Alberto marrieerto married his niece, Emilia Creel, the daughter of his sister Angela and Enela and Enrique Creel. Son Federico Ter-

razas married into the Falomir family and daughter Adela into the Muñoz family, two of the other most wealthy and prestigious families in the state.

It is virtually impossible to calculate the extent of either the fortune or the power wielded by the Terrazas-Creel clan. Luis Terrazas himself probably did not know how much he owned. He surely did know, however, that the value of rural land in Chihuahua rose from about $.30 per acre in 1879 to about $9.88 per acre in 1908. Had he been able to liquidate only his personal, nonurban landholdings on the eve of the Mexican Revolution, he would have carried over $69 million to the bank.

One can be certain that little of major importance occurred in Chihuahua without the approval of patriarch Don Luis Terrazas. During the Díaz regime members of the extended family sat for a total of sixty-six terms in the state legislature and twenty-two terms in the national legislature. Because residency requirements were loosely defined, Enrique Creel and Juan Terrazas became national senators from other Mexican states. Municipal and regional officialdom bore either the Terrazas-Creel names or their stamp of approval. The immense power was built upon a foundation of land, and the state of Chihuahua was a microcosm of what was happening throughout the Mexican republic.

The state of Morelos was dominated not by one extended family but rather by a handful of powerful sugar families: the García Pimentels, the Amors, the Torre y Miers, and a few others. To fund the purchase of expensive new machinery these families had to increase production and so began expanding into new lands. As no public lands were available, they completely encircled small ranches and even villages, thereby choking off all infusions of economic lifeblood. Some towns stagnated, while others vanished from the map altogether. The town fathers of Cuautla could not even find sufficient land for a new cemetery and were reduced to burying children in a neighboring village.

The Peones

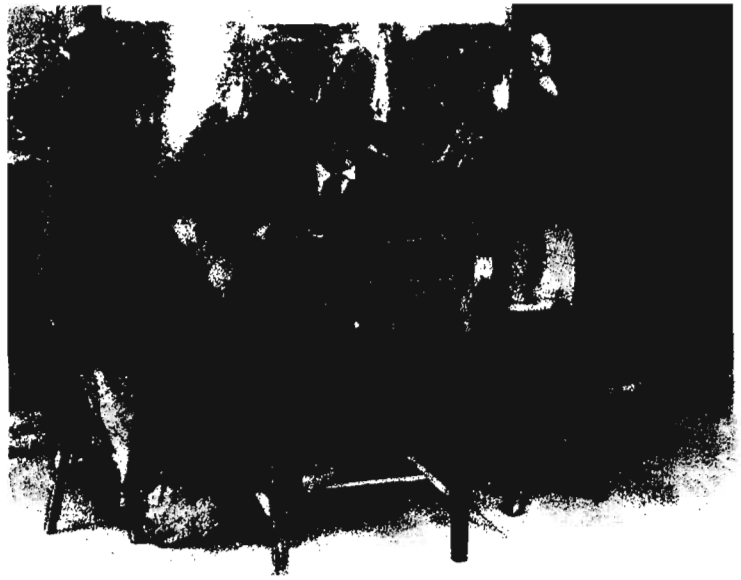
The millions of rural Mexicans who found themselves in dying villages or subsisting as peones on the nation's haciendas were worse off financially than their rural ancestors a century before. The average daily wage for an agricultural worker remained almost steady throughout the nineteenth century—about thirty-five centavos. But in the same hundred-year period the price of corn and chile more than doubled, and beans cost six times more in 1910 than in 1800. In terms of purchasing power correlated with the price of corn or cheap cloth, the

Mexican peón during the Díaz g the Díaz regime was twelve times poorer than the United States farm laborer. m laborer.

Working conditions varied cors varied considerably from region to region and even from hacienda to hacienda, o hacienda, but they were generally poor. Peones often availed themselves of the lves of the talents of a scribe to spell out their gamut of complaints. While it wa While it was not uncommon for the peón to be allotted a couple of furrows to plarrows to plant a little corn and chile and on occasion he might receive a small rve a small ration of food from the hacienda, he worked from sunrise to sunset, ofo sunset, often seven days a week, raising crops or tending cattle. Sometimes he metimes he was allowed to cut firewood free; on other occasions he paid for the righd for the right. The scant wages he received most often were not paid in currency h currency but in certificates or metal discs redeemable only at the local *tiend* local *tienda de raya*, an all-purpose company store located on the hacienda coacienda complex. Credit was extended liberally, but the prices, set by the hacendathe hacendado or the mayordomo, were invariably several times higher than thher than those in a nearby village. For the hacendado the situation was perfect.was perfect. The taxes on his land were negligible; his labor was, in effect, free, ffect, free, for all the wages that went out came back to him through the tienda dhe tienda de raya with a handsome profit. The peón found himself in a state of] a state of perpetual debt, and by law he was bound to remain on the hacienda se hacienda so long as he owed a single centavo. Debts were not eradicated at theated at the time of death but passed on to the children. Should an occasionan occasional obdurate peón escape, there was scarcely any place for him to go. Nim to go. Many states had laws making it illegal to hire an indebted peón. peón.

The bookkeeping procedures inocedures in the tienda de raya always seemed to work to the disadvantage of tantage of the illiterate peón. Goods charged against his account were more exp'e more expensive than they would have been had he been able to pay cash. Andy cash. And other items were often debited to his account. Charges for a marriagr a marriage ceremony or a funeral often exceeded the monthly wage. Fines fege. Fines for real or imagined crimes on the hacienda were added; forced contrprced contributions for fiestas and interest on previous debts were tallied. And, illied. And, in the most ignominious charge of all, some hacendados even addedven added a monthly fee for the privilege of shopping at the tienda de raya. a de raya.

Stories of corporal punishment onishment of the peón (petty theft could bring two hundred lashes) and sexual violl sexual violation of the young women on the haciendas are commonplace, but thelace, but they are virtually impossible to prove or disprove. It is certain that conditithat conditions on the henequen haciendas of Yucatán were the worst in the repubn the republic. While the rebellious Mayas of the Cross in the eastern Yucatán p Yucatán peninsula maintained a more autonomous but politically fragmentec fragmented existence, the henequen hacendados worked their Maya peons likea peons like slaves. Because many of the pe-



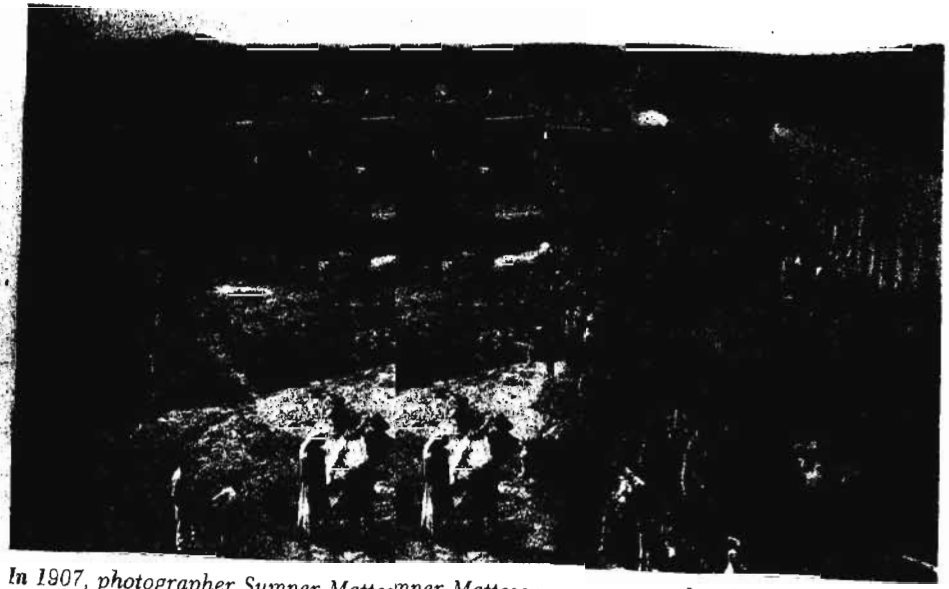
For a couple of centavos the rural, illiterate Mexicans could hire a scribe to scratch out a few lines to a relative or friend.

ones in Yucatán were deportees from other parts of Mexico (some were recalcitrant Yaqui Indians from Sonora, and others were convicted criminals), they were forced to work in chains, and flogging was not uncommon. There is little evidence, however, that this type of physical maltreatment was widespread throughout Mexico. Surely the peón and his family were everywhere subject to the personal whims of the hacendado or the mayordomo, but hacienda records and correspondence to local, state, and even national officials reveal that complaints, while frequent, rarely contained charges of physical abuse. More common are complaints of intolerable working conditions, violence in the peón community itself, and dishonest record keeping in the tienda de raya—and always the sense of poverty, powerlessness, and hopelessness. During especially busy times like planting or harvesting, the permanent work force was augmented by temporary workers, often from surrounding villages. New arrivals, frequently earning a slightly higher wage than the resident peones seemed to break the socioeconomic equilibrium, and violence between the two groups of workers was a constant threat.

The dichotomies of nineteenth-century Mexican life, especially those of wealth and poverty, are almost all to be found on the hacienda.

The main hacienda house was house was sumptuous, externally and internally. But the hacendado would seldo would seldom spend more than a few months a year there. Most often he had en he had other haciendas to attend, inevitably businesses to manage in the citi in the cities, and then he had to visit his children in their fine European or ropean or United States boarding schools. The hacienda provided, in addition to addition to its income, a summer vacation home, a change of pace, and social status social status. The hacendado's teen-age children, remarkable for their conspicuous conspicuous consumption, used trips to the hacienda to impress their friends. Tir friends. The extended families could be comfortably accommodated, and youd, and young boys, donned in charro costume and mounted on carefully bred arully bred and well-groomed horses, could fancy themselves country squires. Birthuires. Birthdays, saints' days, and feast days were reason enough to move the famive the family from the state capital to the hacienda for an outing, and on specia nd on special occasions, like an eighteenth birthday or a wedding, entire train carire train cars could be reserved to carry guests, musicians, local dignitaries, and daries, and domestics.

The contrast between the hacen n the hacendado and those who worked the hacienda and made it live is so stark e is so stark as to be absurd. Because all "justice" on the hacienda was adminis was administered by the mayordomo, the peón had no genuine judicial rights or le rights or legal recourse. If a mayordomo over-



In 1907, photographer Sumner Mattes nner Matteson was surprised to find burros, horses, mules, and people sharing quarters in quarters in this pulque hacienda, where the stench of animals was rivaled only by the stenchy the stench of fermenting pulque.

reacted in punishment of some real or imagined offense, he was accountable to nobody. Within a mile of the grand hacienda house were miserable, one-room, floorless, windowless adobe shacks. Water had to be carried in daily, often from long distances. The individual plots allotted to the peón were worked often after sunset, when the important work of the day had been completed. Twice a day a few minutes would be set aside to consume some tortillas wrapped around beans and chile, washed down with a few gulps of black coffee or pulque. Protein in the form of meat, fish, or fowl, even on the cattle haciendas, was a luxury reserved for a few special occasions during the year. Infant mortality on many haciendas exceeded 25 percent.

Diversion in the form of a local fiesta might occur once a year. An amateur bullfight could be staged in the hacienda corral, and resident aficionados would try their hand with a half-grown fighting bull that somehow looked bigger as it got closer. The peones, fortified with pulque or mescal, who found momentary escape entertaining their friends often paid dearly for their bravado, but a broken arm or a punctured thigh was a small matter when one had nothing to look forward to but the drab existence and appalling squalor of the next twelve months.

Porfirio Díaz had developed his country at the expense of his countrymen. He hermetically sealed himself off from the stark realities of Mexican masses. The great material benefits of the age of modernization in no way filtered down to the people. They were still an amorphous mass destitute of hope. Their lives were not in the least changed because the new National Theater was built in Mexico City or because José Limantour was able to borrow money in London or Paris at 4 percent. In fact, for them the cost of modernization had been too great.

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Society and Culture during the Porfiriato

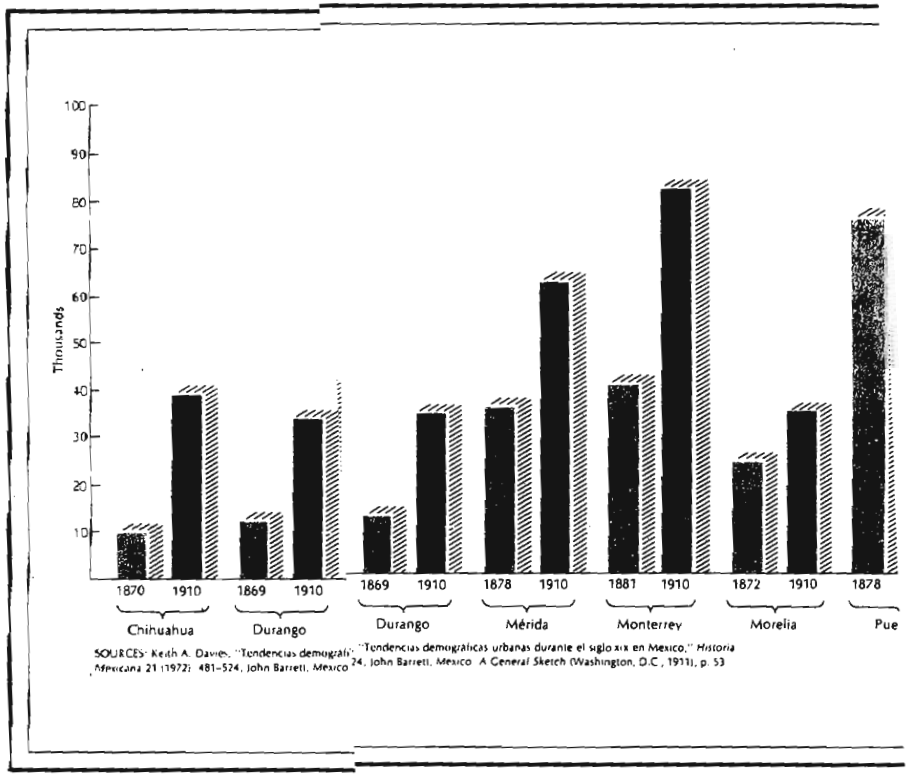
The changes in Mexican society and culture during the Porfiriato were every bit as profound as those in the political and economic realms. Most noteworthy perhaps was the fact that Mexicans began to view themselves differently. Self-esteem replaced the sense of shame that had characterized the introspective diagnoses of the past. For the first time Mexico had shown its potential and had began to catch up with a rapidly changing world. Optimism had replaced pessimism, and xenophilia at least challenged xenophobia.

POPULATION

The stability of the Porfiriato resulted in Mexico's first period of prolonged population growth. In the absence of war and its social dislocations and with modest gains recorded in health and sanitation, the population grew from 8,743,000 in 1874 to 15,160,000 in 1910. From 1810 to 1874 the average annual population growth had been about 43,000, but during the Díaz era population increased at an average of 180,000 per year. Mexico City and the state capitals grew even more rapidly than the population at large, increasing some 88.5 percent during the epoch. From a population of 200,000 in 1874, Mexico City in 1910 was the home of 471,066 Mexicans.

Railroad development, mining activities, and port improvements caused a number of tiny villages to burgeon into towns and cities. Torreón, at the intersection of the Mexican Central Railroad and the International Railroad (running from Eagle Pass, Texas, to Durango), jumped from fewer than 2,000 inhabitants in 1876 to over 43,000 in 1910; Sabinas, Coahuila, from 788 to 14,555; and Nuevo Laredo from 1,283 to almost 9,000. The two port terminuses of the Tehuantepec Railroad recorded similar gains. Puerto México had only 267 inhabitants in 1884 but reached 6,616 by 1910, while Salina Cruz grew from 738 in 1900 to almost 6,000 ten years later. Colonel Greene's copper town of Cananea hardly existed at the beginning of the Porfiriato. From

POPULATION OF SELECTED MEXIC ECTED MEXICAN CITIES DURING THE PORFIRIATO



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a population of about 100 in 187 100 in 1876, it catapulted to almost 15,000 in 1910.

URBAN IMPROVEMENTS NTS

The rapid growth of towns and cit wns and cities throughout the republic was accompanied by an obvious dynamisr us dynamism in society. The sleepy Mexico that caught the visitor's eyes earlier in s earlier in the century had awakened from its slumber. Travelers were astonished e astonished by the amount of construction going on everywhere. By 1910 all th 1910 all the state capitals had electricity, and most had tramways. Weekly newsp eekly newspapers became dailies, potable water systems and sewage systems w systems were extended, hospitals were constructed, and new hotels sprang up ls sprang up to cater to the greatly increasing tourist trade. Even small, out-of-th ll, out-of-the-way towns improved their facili-

ties. Whereas travelers during the first fifty years after Independence were often horrified at Mexico's hotels and inns, tourists late in the Díaz regime were pleasantly surprised.

On occasion growth got out of hand. When Mexico City held its Independence Day celebrations in September 1882, the forty thousand tourists who descended on the capital simply could not all be accommodated. But the lesson was not lost. In 1910, during the more elaborate centennial celebrations, there were rooms for everyone.

The transportation system in the capital was excellent, with first-, second-, and third-class streetcars and cabs carrying passengers throughout the city. The streetcars were sometimes put to strange uses. One caught the eye of an Irish visitor during the late Porfiriato.

> A curious feature of the streets is the electric tramway hearse. Frequently one sees a funeral consisting of a number of cars on the rails; first comes an open one like a long low truck with a black catafalque covering, under which reposes the coffin and the wreaths; the next may be another piled up with wreaths and crosses, and then follows car after car with the mourners. This of course stops all the tramway traffic for the time being.[1]

But to many the most dramatic change was in the field of law and order. Scarcely a traveler in the late nineteenth century failed to comment upon the relative absence of obvious crime and political upheaval. Most were astute enough to realize that payment for law and order was exacted in fear of the army, rurales, and local law-enforcement agencies; they considered the result worth the price. Perhaps once Mexico had passed through the difficult transition from a law-breaking to a law-respecting society, the intimidating atmosphere could be relaxed.

The changing face of urban Mexico was accompanied by a not-too-subtle modification of the value structure. Porfirio Díaz recoiled at English and United States suggestions that the time-honored tradition of the Mexican bullfight was nothing more than a cruel and barbarous spectacle. It was the epitome of a clash of values. The phenomenon has been perfectly captured by historian William Beezley, who wrote that while most Mexicans saw "the ballet of cape and animal," foreigners "saw only blood and sand." Díaz ultimately placed a higher premium on international respect than on preserving this part of Mexico's Hispanic heritage and, although he later reversed himself, during his first administration prohibited bullfighting in the Federal District,

1. Mary Barton, *Impressions of Mexico with Brush and Pen* (London, 1911), pp. 45–46.

Zacatecas, and Veracruz, areas cruz, areas where tourists would be most likely to witness the Sunday event. An event. An American import soon offered itself as a substitute. Abner Doubleday' Doubleday's baseball made its Mexican debut in the 1880s and had caught on beaught on beyond anyone's expectations by the turn of the century. Not a few Mexicafew Mexican traditionalists lamented the exchange of the bat, the ball, and the bagand the baggy pants for the cape, the sword, and the suit of lights.[2]

Social Classes

The Porfiriato also witnessed soritnessed some improvement in the lot of women as a select few began to enter pro to enter professions hitherto regarded as the sole preserve of men. The medical sc medical school in Mexico City graduated its first woman doctor in 1887, and by t87, and by the turn of the century others had followed. In the 1890s and early 19nd early 1900s women began to make significant inroads into dentistry, law, pharm, law, pharmacy, higher education, and journalism. A new commercial school cial school for women was inaugurated in 1903, and shortly thereafter its classes r its classes were filled. But Mexico was not yet quite ready for an active feministive feminist movement designed to challenge in depth the traditional roles of the roles of the sexes. The prerogatives of the males were not to be questioned. The Aoned. The Admiradoras de Juárez, a militant feminist organization founded in 190nded in 1904 by Laura Torres, was attacked by Justo Sierra as a refuge for old age for old and ugly women whose only recourse was to try to become men. His acmen. His advice to the women was to leave politics and law to the opposite sex pposite sex and to concentrate instead on creating a better social atmosphere in osphere in which Mexicans could live more happily. Despite Sierra, however, manwever, many talented Mexican women no longer felt the need to confine themselvae themselves exclusively to the home.

Of course, not everything charything changed from 1876 to 1910. There was certainly more crime and alcoholand alcoholism than the foreign visitors saw in the tourist zones of the cities. The cities. The léperos and cargadores continued to attract their attention. Althoughn. Although most visitors were not aware of the working conditions in the factorieshe factories throughout the republic, the plight of the urban laborer had changed ad changed little, but there were many more of them. A few employers initiated m initiated modest reform early in the twentieth century. The Cervecería Cuauhtéma Cuauhtémoc in Monterrey, a Mexican-owned and Mexican-managed enterprise, enterprise, was the first major industrial concern to adopt the nine-hour day. Few c day. Few other Mexican industries, however,

2. These themes are developed in Williamped in William H. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* (Lian Mexico (Lincoln, 1987), pp. 13–25.

Life for the peón on the hacienda was bad; living in a city slum was even worse. But nowhere was it more difficult than in the mines.

and practically none owned by foreigners, followed suit. Even at the end of the Porfiriato the workweek for the large majority of urban laborers was seven days and the workday eleven or even twelve hours. Pensions were almost unknown, as was compensation for accidents suffered on the job.

The diet of the lower classes—day laborers, rank-and-file soldiers, beggars, domestics, street vendors, and the unemployed—remained monotonous and constantly inadequate. Corn, beans, chile, and pulque still constituted the staples; meat was almost totally absent. The grossly deficient diet and unsanitary living conditions made the masses susceptible to a wide array of debilitating diseases, and the large majority passed their entire lives without a single visit to a qualified doctor. Life expectancy remained constant—about thirty years. Infant mortality remained unacceptably high, averaging 30 percent for most of the Porfiriato. A Protestant missionary in Díaz's Mexico recalled his impressions.

> I used to ask, "How many of you, fathers and mothers, have children in heaven?" Usually all hands would promptly go up, while the replies came. *"Tengo cinco." "Tengo ocho."* . . . Deplorable ignorance as to proper sanitary conditions in the home and the care of children is responsible for a large proportion of this death harvest among the little ones. Children's diseases, as measles and scarlet fever, carry multitudes away.[3]

Modernization occurred at the expense of the poor, in both urban and rural settings.

The lower-class barrios of Mexico City—La Merced, La Palma, and Nonoalco—were so bad that some suggested they be burned to the ground. There was no indoor plumbing in these districts, and only one public bathhouse per fifteen thousand people. Garbage collection was sporadic at best. Only the completion of Mexico City's drainage canal registered a positive impact on the lower-class neighborhoods, as the masses at least were able to escape the ravages of seasonal flooding.

3. Alden Buell Case, *Thirty Years with the Mexicans: In Peace and Revolution* (New York, 1917), pp. 61–62.

Consumption of pulque and other alcoholic beverages among the lower classes did not increase during the Porfiriato, but the public and private outcry against alcohol did. Because alcoholism was unempirically linked to robberies, sex crimes, child abandonment, and mendicancy, temperance societies sprang up throughout the country. The Catholic press initiated a journalistic campaign, and state and local governments enacted legislation to curtail the use of alcoholic beverages. But limiting the hours of pulquerías and restricting new openings seemed to do little good, so the establishments were made as uncomfortable as possible. To discourage the patron from squandering away too much time and money, pulquerías were to have no windows, no chairs, no music, and, most important, no women. But profuse legislation did not accomplish its goal. Both alcoholism and toxemia from the high bacterial content of the pulque were widespread as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth.

The most dramatic change in the social structure was the expansion of the middle class. The earning power of skilled artisans, government bureaucrats, scribes, clergymen, low-ranking army officers, and professional men had increased. They demonstrated no class solidarity, but their lives were perceptibly different from the lower classes whence they had sprung. The booming economy made it possible for many a small businessman and neighborhood merchant to move his family from the drab room above the store or from his parents' residence into a larger and more comfortable apartment or house. The extension of water and sewage facilities provided many the luxury of indoor plumbing for the first time in their lives. The middle-class diet included meat and soup several times a week.

With middle-class status, creating the proper impression became important. It was not unusual for the monthly wage or monthly profit to be idled away on a single night of entertainment for friends. While the middle-class wife was beginning to break out of the home, she generally resigned herself to her husband's marital infidelity and to having but a small voice in the family's decision-making process. Seemingly possessed of infinite patience, she found some solace in the church and endured her submissive role with remarkable stoicism.

Middle-class children were taught to make class distinctions based upon outward appearances. If a well-dressed person appeared at the door they were expected to report to their parents *Allí está un señor*, but if the caller was dressed poorly the proper announcement was *Allí está un hombre*.[4] Although only recently sprung from the lower class

4. Jesús Silva Herzog, *Una vida en la vida de México* (Mexico City, 1972), p. 9.

José Guadalupe Posada (1852–1da (1852–1913), Mexico's most famous printmaker, parodies a fashionable lady durple lady during the Porfiriato.

themselves, many members ofnembers of the middle class could be callous in their appreciation of the problef the problems of the downtrodden.

While the poor continued toontinued to live in misery and a new, small middle class emerged in the cities, t the cities, the rich became more convinced than ever that upon the pillar of p pillar of private property civilization itself was braced. The pinnacle of social ac of social acceptance during the Porfiriato was to be invited, for a monthly dues nthly dues of seven hundred pesos, to enjoy the amenities of the Jockey Club in ey Club in Mexico City. The club was located in the Casa de Azulejos, the most s, the most opulent mansion in the capital. One could enjoy a sumptuous dinner ious dinner there, spend an hour at the baccarat table, and hope to see cabinet mi cabinet ministers, governors, military zone commanders, or perhaps even Don Pe ven Don Porfirio and Doña Carmen themselves.

The true measure of aristocrat f aristocratic success was to see how French one could become in taste and manne and manners. The advantages of a French education and a French governess f governess for aristocratic children were beyond debate. Beautiful Spanish colonia ish colonial furniture was stored away, and modern French furniture adorned th adorned the houses. When Mexican composer Gustavo E. Campa wrote an opera ote an opera based on the life of Nezahualcoyótl,

"the Poet King of Texcoco," he entitled it not *El Rey Poeta* but *Le Roi Pòete* and prepared the libretto in French. Membership in the Sociedad Filarmónica y Dramática Francesa assured one of brushing elbows with the most Frenchified members of Mexican society at a concert or a ball and might even garner one an invitation to attend one of the famous soirées at the Lyre Gauloise. The Paseo de la Reforma was redecorated to look like the Champs Elysées, while architectural design aped *fin-de-siècle* Paris. When Mexican millionaire Antonio Escandón donated a statue of Columbus to adorn the fashionable avenue, he commissioned the Parisian sculptor Charles Cordier to do the work. Having no notion of the revolution that would soon engulf Mexico, the aristocracy blissfully celebrated Bastille Day, July 14, with almost as much enthusiasm as their own Independence Day.

French cuisine reigned supreme in the capital. The best and most expensive restaurants were the Fonda de Recamier and the Maison Doreé. Between the Consommé Brunoise Royale and the Tournedos au Cèpes, one could sip imported French wine and listen to the orchestra play "Bon Aimée," "Amoureuse," "Rendezvous," or some other tune everyone knew to be *à la mode*. For the athletic there was also membership in the French Polo Club and for the more sedate a season ticket to the French comic opera to partake of such quickly forgettable productions as *Les cloches de Corneville* or *La Fille de madame Angot*. Those who had pretensions to both music and athletics adopted the cancan, a French import that took Mexico by storm in the 1880s.

Cultural and Intellectual Life

Literary expression during the Porfiriato found nineteenth-century romanticism yielding first to realism and almost simultaneously to modernism. The realists of the period, unlike their romantic predecessors, were not interested in instruction or moralizing. Hoping that the enforced stability of the Porfiriato would encourage the development of the arts, they early made their peace with the regime. Not a socially conscious group, the realists viewed the poor not as oppressed but rather as lazy and shiftless. On occasion a crusader emerged from the realist ranks, such as Arcadio Zentella, who decried the evils of the hacienda system in his novel *Perico* (1885). But Zentella was the exception.

More typical was José López Portillo y Rojas (1850–1923), perhaps Mexico's best realist novelist of the nineteenth century. Born to a prominent Guadalajara family, he studied law and traveled widely in Europe, imbibing the French spirit, before dedicating himself to literature. In his novel *Nieves* (1887) López Portillo did recognize that

an occasional hacendado might brutalize a peón, but he found no fault with the system that conditioned the relationship or anything reprehensible in a society that tolerated it. His solution was a simplistic one. It was all a matter of volition. The poor of Mexico simply had no desire to improve themselves. "Our workers will come out of their abject condition," he wrote in *Nieves*, "when they aspire to eat well, to dress decently, and to acquire the comforts of life."[5]

The realistic period in Mexican literature was briefly prolific but not very distinguished. Much more important were the modernists of the Porfiriato. Culturally mature, stylistically innovative, and concerned with refinements in the language and a new kind of imagery, the modernists stood in favor of a symbolic revolt not against Porfirian society but against nineteenth-century culture. While the modernists generally also turned their backs on political, economic, and social problems as they sought refuge in the world of imagination, they succeeded in transforming Mexican literature into an art. Modernist literature was elitist—it was designed for the upper class—but without question it was literature of vitality, perceptivity, perception, and grace. Just as Limantour's balancing of the budget had yielded economic confidence, just as Díaz's quelling of rebellion had yielded political confidence, the modernist movement brought forth genuine cultural confidence.

The best and most versatile of the modernist fiction writers was Amado Nervo (1870–1919). After studying briefly for the priesthood, Nervo left the seminary and became a journalist in Mazatlán. At the turn of the century he moved to Paris—for Mexicans a cultural mecca—where he met the founder of the Latin American modernist movement, the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío. Before his literary career had ended, Nervo had to his credit more than thirty volumes—novels, poetry, short stories, plays, essays, and criticism.

The theme of Nervo's first novel, *El bachiller* (1895), was sensational and even horrifying. A young priest, tempted by physical love, castrates himself to avoid seduction. But the theme was developed with such skill and grace that few took umbrage or reproved the licentious plot. If Mexicans really wanted to be worldly they had to understand that the French were not offended by Gustav Flaubert's even more salacious *Madame Bovary*. In much of his work Nervo showed himself a perceptive amateur psychologist. His insight into the motivations of the protagonists he created and his appreciation of the conflicts between the material and the spiritual captivated his readers. Like most

5. José López Portillo y Rojas, *Cuentos completos*, vol. 1: *Nieves, El primer amor* (Guadalajara, 1952), p. 41.

of his contemporaries, he was not interested in analyzing broad social problems but rather in probing personal problems of both a psychological and a philosophical nature.

Mexican artists during the Porfiriato, unlike their literary colleagues, did not make their peace with the regime. The Art Academy of San Carlos continued to dominate the artistic community, but it was poorly supported by the government. The future giants of Mexican art—Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco—were students at the academy and began perfecting the techniques that would win them world acclaim two decades hence. While heavy emphasis was placed upon copying European models, a few of the students began to break with tradition and experiment with Mexican themes.

Díaz and his científico advisers, in art as in so many other areas, continued to show preference for all things foreign. To celebrate the centennial of Mexico's Independence, the government constructed a new building to house a Spanish art display and provided a subvention of thirty-five thousand pesos for the Spanish show. When the Mexican artists at the academy protested that they wanted to put on a national art show to coincide with the celebrations, they were forced to limp along with their old building and a paltry three thousand pesos to realize their efforts. Those who saw the Mexican exhibition probably understood why the regime chose not to support it. It was youthful, exuberant, and iconoclastic in both technique and theme. Gerardo Murillo, who changed his name to Dr. Atl, a Náhuatl word meaning *water*, had experimented with wax, resin, and oil in several scandalous bacchanals, while other young artists developed Indianist themes. Many of Mexico's most promising artists exhibited there for the first time and seemed to take special pride in their bold departures from staid European models. Slums and brothels decorated canvases, and somber Indian faces depicted the stark reality of Mexican life. This was not the impression of the stable, conservative, white, progressive Mexico that Díaz wanted portrayed.

The Porfiriato also distinguished itself as a productive period in Mexican historical scholarship. The best of the historians put polemic behind them and moved into the archives for painstaking research. Manuel Orozco y Berra and Luis González Obregón interested themselves primarily in the colonial period and produced seminal works on the society and culture of New Spain. Perhaps the greatest historian of the epoch was Joaquín García Icazbalceta (1825–94), who collected and edited several monumental series of colonial documents and prepared a bibliography of the sixteenth century—*Bibliografía mexicana del siglo xvi*—listing and annotating all of the books published in Mexico between 1539 and 1600. But his most distinguished work was a

four-volume biography of the iphy of the first bishop and archbishop of Mexico, Fray Juan de Zumárraga. árraga.

Of those historians not concens not concerned with the colonial period, one name stands out far above the rest. Jus the rest. Justo Sierra (1848–1912) set himself to the task of attempting a new interpi new interpretive synthesis of Mexican history. The result would occupy a unique n/ a unique niche in Mexican historiography. *México: Su evolución social* was publishwas published at the turn of the century and shows Sierra as an eclectic. Though th. Though the book was written during the period of positivist domination of Mexican of Mexican intellectual thought, one can still detect the impact of historical romistorical romanticism on the author. Unlike the historians who preceded him, Sierd him, Sierra, from a new perspective, could view Mexican history with optimism. 'n optimism. The chaotic and unseemly events of the early nineteenth century were, fitury were, for him, necessary steps in the progress of mankind. Criticism of past Mm of past Mexican politicians and institutions was abundant but never indulged. Sindulged. Sierra's analysis of his contemporary Mexico was especially brilliant: everrilliant: even Díaz did not emerge completely unscathed. Sierra trod a path betv a path between a tolerably mild censure and the apologia that Díaz undoubtedlyundoubtedly would have preferred. While Sierra could not overlook the authoritahe authoritarianism of the regime, on balance he found it worthwhile. For Justo S For Justo Sierra the Díaz regime, much like the early nineteenth century, was situry, was simply a step in Mexico's evolutionary process. It, too, had to yield to :to yield to something else. And in the best nineteenth-century liberal tradition, tl tradition, the ultimate goal was not a more equitable distribution of wealth but rwealth but rather liberty.

Mexico's cultural and intellectnd intellectual life flourished from 1876 to 1910. When it did not come into direce into direct conflict with the goals of the dictatorship, it received encouragemencouragement and even direct support. The novelist could concern himself withimself with refining the language, the artist with painting a landscape, and the his and the historian with probing Mexico's colonial heritage, all with little to fear. Ble to fear. But artistic and intellectual expression that ran contrary to the all-impohe all-important image so assiduously cultivated by the regime did not fare so wet fare so well. Freedom of expression existed for those who accepted the dictatorshe dictatorship for what it was and who, because of personal interests, rejected therejected the sound instinct that makes the independent intellectual suspicious osuspicious of government. Only they could continue to pursue their individual tindividual tasks.

During the three and one-haand one-half decades of peace and economic growth a younger generation of liberation of liberal intellectuals gradually emerged. As they began to test the cultura the cultural atmosphere with matters of honest concern, and as they began to exbegan to expose some of the obvious shortcomings of the regime, they encounteey encountered no benevolent patronage or passive resignation. The more passi more passionate and direct their indictments, the more likely they were to exwere to experience harsh retribution. Despite