

An Intellectual In Mexican Politics, The Case of Agustín Yáñez

Intellectuals have long had an important role in Mexican political life extending back to the early 19th century. In the latter part of that century, during the reign of Porfirio Díaz, their influence waned, as political order and government censorship dampened intellectual growth and the free debate of ideological preferences. However, in the early 1900s, this regime began to lose its legitimacy, and numerous men of ideas, disenchanting with the social and economic policies of Díaz, and with the lack of political freedom, secretly organized political groups or clubs to discuss their views of the Mexican situation. Many became intellectual precursors to the Revolution of 1910-1920, and although not at the forefront of revolutionary leadership, they often did provide the intellectual rationale for the plans or programs of various military caudillos.¹ Once the actual fighting subsided, generally by 1920, intellectual types, overshadowed by generals and politicians, were called upon to serve in various capacities within the Mexican government, giving them opportunities to influence and administer government policies denied them during the previous forty years.

The reasons intellectuals were called upon to serve Mexico in the post-revolutionary period were numerous, but important among them was the need for the governments after 1920: to create order out of chaos in labor, finance and agrarian legislation; to expand and revamp the public education system; and to consolidate and propagandize the revolutionary philosophy and legitimize governmental policies to Mexicans and foreigners alike. Intellectuals responded to a variety of needs, whether their disciplines or skills were legal, scientific, artistic, musical or literary, and did so enthusiastically, believing they were contributing to the rebuilding of a new and modern Mexico.²

As Mexico began to create or rebuild its institutional structures, both political and economic, to mold its modernization process in the 1930s and 1940s, the early enthusiasm among intellectuals began to wear off. Similar to revolutionary processes elsewhere, the growing gap between the goals of the 1910 Revolution, codified in the 1917 Constitution, and its achievements, discouraged many intellectuals; and they began to draw away from their positions of unqualified support to openly criticize the government and its leaders, and to remove themselves from government positions. During this early post-revolutionary period, a new crop of intellectual leaders became young adults without having participated directly in the revolutionary violence. This generation, born during the years 1900 to 1920, came to dominate intellectual life from 1940 to 1970, the period most critical to Mexico's development and evolution into its present state.³

There has been little speculation and almost no scholarship on the role which intellectuals have played in Mexico in the twentieth century, a condition not peculiar to Mexico.⁴ The purpose of this essay is to describe the general structure of intellectual life in Mexico, specifically the background characteristics of intellectuals and their recruitment patterns, using the career of the distinguished novelist Agustín Yáñez as a specific illustration of the career pattern of the Mexican intellectual who has involved himself in public life. Yáñez is an appropriate subject for several reasons. The most prominent intellectuals in Mexico from 1920–1980, according to North American scholars, Mexican public men, and intellectuals themselves, have been dominated by literary figures.⁵ Secondly, Mexican intellectuals have followed two general patterns in their relations with public life: they have been independent of it or part of it. However, in Mexico, unlike the pattern found in the United States, the majority of intellectuals have followed government careers.⁶ And lastly, although many studies exist about Yáñez's literary career, none, to the author's knowledge, have dealt with his political career.⁷

The social origin of Mexican intellectuals deserves examination for several reasons. Many observers believe that social origin has a significant influence on an intellectual's ideas and on his ideological orientation. For example, Raymond Aron argued that in France, "the attitudes of intellectuals can also be explained by reference to their social origins."⁸ Furthermore, Lewis Coser believes that it is the common background among English and French intellectuals that contributes "to a sense of cohesion in the intellectual community" of those two countries.⁹ Additionally, class background is a crucial determinant of the educational pattern followed by the intellectual, a pattern critical to his further socialization and contact with other intellectuals, a condition also found in England.¹⁰

The first of these reasons for examining social background, its effects on the individual intellectual's values and philosophical position, is difficult to ascertain definitively. It cannot be said, for example, that social class background determines by itself the ideas of an intellectual, or the policies he might implement in public life if he were in a position to do so.¹¹ Yet, Mexican intellectuals themselves believe social background has been crucial to their personal development. In a letter to the author, Martha Robles, a young novelist, clearly demonstrates her belief that her home environment, involving the background of her well-educated grandparents and parents, affected her values and identity.¹² Arturo Warman, a prominent Mexican anthropologist, attributes his own personal interest and concern for rural life that he had to his work, as a young boy and student in that environment, and experience determined by his family's economic situation.¹³

Agustín Yáñez, like Robles and Warman, believed his family environment, and that of Guadalajara, where he was raised, was more important on his personal formation than other sources of influence, including his teachers or books.¹⁴ Although very little information exists about his

family, his grandparents have been described as peasants and artisans, one of whom sold candies, bread and even took part in the business of bookbinding. His father, originally a peasant, is more complex. He seems to have become a political activist during the Revolution, and he and his brothers are known to have supported Francisco Madero. He became involved in local politics in 1912 as a supporter of José López Portillo y Rojas, the grandfather of the present chief executive, as the gubernatorial candidate of Jalisco. According to one author, he was in López Portillo's personal guard for a short time and represented the working class on a slate of candidates running for the City Council of Guadalajara.¹⁵

If we examine the class background of the Mexican intellectual, we find that Yáñez's class origins are not typical. The majority of Mexican intellectuals, about whom we have background information, come from middle- and upper-class homes. Studies of smaller intellectual groups, reveal a similar domination of middle- and upper-class backgrounds.¹⁶ Although Yáñez's social background is the exception, rather than the rule, his father's political interest is characteristic of many Mexican politicians, or intellectuals with political proclivities. For example, among Mexico's elite intellectuals, Octavio Paz, Narciso Bassols, and Luis Cabrera had fathers, grandfathers or uncles actively involved in politics, and each himself was involved in public life.¹⁷ It can also be suggested that among those intellectuals choosing public or political careers, relatives engaged in political activities will be more common, suggesting that this is a determinant in their choice to become politically involved. Also, given the importance of kinship ties among Mexican political groups, such family activism could indeed be crucial to a successful political career.¹⁸

If we examine the second impact of social class background, the effect on the level and place of education, other important patterns emerge. It is quite clear from studies of the major educational institutions in Mexico that children from middle- and upper-class families attend those institutions in numbers disproportionate to their distribution in society in general.¹⁹ Furthermore, students from those two classes actually complete their education in larger numbers than do students from the working class. Donald Mabry cites figures from the 1960s which show that the family income of students from professional schools at the National University, Mexico's largest and most prestigious institution, were more than 350 percent above the national average.²⁰ This means that family background is an influential determinant on the prospective intellectual receiving a college education, a credential important in the certification of an intellectual in Mexico. Even though some prominent Mexican intellectuals do not have a college education, more striking is the extraordinary number of intellectuals, even in the 1920s, who had a professional degree, and advanced work in Mexico or abroad. Less than ten percent of Mexico's intellectuals are "self-educated."²¹

Yáñez, despite his social origins, was among the exceptional group

that sought higher education, and achieved it. His class background suggests that he should have gone to public grammar schools, instead, it is known that much of his primary and preparatory education took place in a private school in Guadalajara. Before his entry into law school, Yáñez also visited Mexico City in June, 1922, where he took a philosophy course as a private student of Antonio Figueroa.²² Like many other future intellectuals and politicians who were unable to go to Mexico City, Yáñez enrolled in 1923 in the most prominent provincial institution, at this time, the Free School of Law in Guadalajara.²³ Similar to other intellectuals from his class, he had to teach both at the Normal School for Women and at a private and preparatory school to finance his professional education.

The location and level of education of an intellectual is important for various reasons. In Mexico, where access to higher education is limited, a college degree is an important key to a successful career, whether in the private or public sector. Furthermore, the choice of secondary and preparatory school, as well as professional school, determines another set of socialization experiences through which an individual will pass. In addition, social contacts made at school have been shown to be important determinants of successful intellectual and political careers.²⁴

Agustín Yáñez's best choice, had he been able to afford it, for furthering his education, would have been to attend the National Preparatory School and the National University in Mexico City. The reasons for this are clear: these two schools have had a singular influence on the educational and career experiences of the majority of Mexican politicians and intellectuals.²⁵ However, two characteristics in Yáñez's background intervened to make this pattern unlikely: the working-class background of his parents, and his place of birth. Having been born in Guadalajara, Yáñez would have found it very expensive to attend the two prestigious schools in Mexico City, for although the tuition was nominal, the cost of living in the capital was more than the family could have afforded. Instead, he chose schools in his hometown, a place which happened to be the capital city of Jalisco.

However, before attending the School of Law, he studied several years at a seminary in Guadalajara, but abandoned the career of a priest his second year.²⁶ It is this education, an early writing career which included several works with highly religious overtones, and his student activities during the 1920s as a supposed member of the Catholic Association of Mexican Youth, which has caused some individuals to assert that Yáñez was a Cristero. Yáñez indeed may have been a young sympathizer of the Cristero movement in Jalisco, but there is no evidence of his ever having had direct ties with Cristero leaders.²⁷ Yáñez's sympathies for this religious movement are not surprising for a student from Guadalajara during the 1920s, since other individuals, later prominent in national politics, were also involved.²⁸

Yáñez, like the majority of Mexican intellectuals, decided to follow a

career in the legal profession.²⁹ Although he did complete his legal training, and even practiced law with Saturino Coronado, a prominent lawyer who later had an important political career, his legal education and his early experience did not lead him into a successful intellectual and political career.³⁰ Instead, Yáñez, like many other figures in politics and letters, began to develop a reputation for himself in extracurricular activities, as a writer and speaker. In 1925, at the age of twenty-one, he participated in a regular Saturday reunion of friends who met to discuss literature and music. This pattern of regular intellectual gatherings was something Yáñez did throughout his life. More importantly, it led to the establishment of his intellectual career and to his first taste for public life. Using his intellectual contacts, Yáñez founded the literary magazine in May 1929, *Bandera de provincias*. Seeking out many young writers, Yáñez succeeded in obtaining the collaboration of many of Mexico's major literary figures and intellectuals, some of whom also followed political careers.³¹

Yáñez's intellectual activities also led him into the political realm. Earlier in 1929, he attended a dinner for José Vasconcelos while Vasconcelos was in the midst of his presidential campaign against the government candidate. His interest in Vasconcelos' candidacy persisted, and in July, as a member of a student delegation, Yáñez attended the Anti-reelectionist Party convention nominating Vasconcelos as their candidate.³² However, using this trip as an excuse, he sought to make his newly-founded literary magazine known to Mexico City intellectuals, something he succeeded admirably in accomplishing.

From these intellectual activities, Yáñez made friends with Luis Castillo Ledón, a prominent historian and governor of the neighboring state of Nayarit. In 1930, Castillo Ledón appointed Yáñez Director of Primary Education and first rector of the Institute of Nayarit. Yáñez's duration in these two positions came to an end in 1931, when Castillo Ledón left the governorship.³³ Yáñez's career as an intellectual and public figure might never have gone beyond the confines of Guadalajara, if he had remained there. Although Guadalajara is Mexico's second largest city, intellectual and political success in Mexico is determined by one key variable: residency in Mexico City. Provincial cities, regardless of size, have not provided sufficient support for most intellectual and political careers to become nationally recognized.³⁴

In 1931, therefore, Yáñez made a decision crucial to the remainder of his career. He moved to Mexico City. The following year, taking advantage of his new residence, he made two more important choices: he became a professor at the National Preparatory School while simultaneously enrolling as a student. Thus, he was to acquire two characteristics found among a sizeable number of intellectuals and politicians: first, the majority of Mexican intellectuals have taught, and among those, the greatest number at the National Preparatory School and the National University, or both;³⁵ and second, most Mexican intellectuals have been

educated at the National Preparatory School and the National University. By teaching at one, and attending the other, Yáñez placed himself in a social environment conducive to his coming into contact with most of Mexico's future intellectual and political leaders, either as fellow students, his students, fellow professors, or his professors. In Yáñez's case, two examples are worth noting. During his studies for an MA in philosophy at the National University, Salvador Zubirán, later Assistance Secretary of Health and Rector of the National University, was his thesis advisor.³⁶ Some years later, upon completing his thesis, his committee included Eduardo García Máynez, José Gaos, Julio Jiménez Rueda, Samuel Ramos and Edmundo O'Gorman, all prominent intellectuals.³⁷ As a professor, Yáñez taught many politicians, among them Adolfo López Mateos,³⁸ a student who would ultimately influence his career.

Yáñez embarked on a teaching career which was to last for many years. But his political future was largely determined by his intellectual activities and his merit as an acclaimed novelist. For although he attempted to use his teaching career to advance himself to prominent administrative posts, he failed to gain the position of director of the National Preparatory School in 1944, despite his active involvement in student politics and in the formation of his own student clique.³⁹ Perhaps this failure supports the contention by most persons close to Yáñez that he really was never a politician in that he skillfully manipulated those around him to achieve important political posts. In 1932, Yáñez became Director of the Radio Extension Program of the Secretariat of Public Education under Secretary Narciso Bassols, and in 1934, when Bassols moved to the treasury ministry, Yáñez became Director of the Library and Economic Archives, a post he held until 1952. This type of lower echelon position with intellectual-technical responsibilities is typical of many intellectuals' public careers in Mexico, but holding the same position for eighteen years is not suggestive of political success. The typical pattern of intellectuals with successful political careers, like politicians themselves, is to move rapidly from one position to another, whether horizontally or vertically. Someone observing Yáñez's political career during the 1930s and 1940s would have been correct in concluding that there was little likelihood of immediate political success.

The stagnant quality of Yáñez's public career raises an important question, since it was not until 1952 that he entered public life in a full-fledged way, at the highest level, as the official party candidate for governor of Jalisco. How did a man rise from an unobtrusive, bureaucratic office, after having abandoned his home state for so many years, and become an important political figure? The answer is that Yáñez devoted his talents to his literary and intellectual career. His major literary works were completed by 1952, and they brought him invitations to speak in Mexico and abroad. Furthermore, Yáñez's fame helped him to obtain intellectual posts of some prestige, including his appointment in 1946 as editor of the *Philosophy and Letters Review* of the School of Philosophy

and Letters of the National University. Two years earlier, he became the founding director of *Occidente*, a magazine which he used, like *Banderas de la Provincia*, to surround himself with Mexico's best and brightest in the intellectual world. It was during these years that he developed personal friendships with many intellectuals highly successful in public life, including Antonio Carrillo Flores, Nabor Carrillo Flores, Javier Barros Sierra, and Antonio Armendáriz. His fame as a literary figure brought him invitations to join from outstanding intellectual academies, among them the Seminar of Mexican Culture in 1948 (of which he became president just one year after his appointment), the Mexican Academy of Language in 1952, and most prestigious of all, the National College in 1958.

Yáñez seemed to have reached the high point of his literary fame in 1952, and it is this fame, according to those who know his career intimately, which attracted Adolfo Ruiz Cortines to Yáñez, while Ruiz Cortines was Secretary of Government. When Ruiz Cortines was chosen by Miguel Alemán as the official party candidate for president, he asked Yáñez to serve as his speech writer, something Yáñez had long excelled in, even during his college days.⁴⁰ Yáñez accepted this invitation, and duly impressed the presidential candidate with his oratory skills. Secondly, according to Raúl Cardiel Reyes, at the very beginning of Ruiz Cortines' campaign, Yáñez obtained the signatures of many of Mexico's most distinguished intellectuals in support of his candidacy, a list of which was published prominently in the major daily newspapers. Furthermore, he was chosen as the principle orator to announce the support of intellectuals at a public act in the auditorium of the National Lottery.⁴¹ Although any reason might be sufficient for a president to appoint someone to such a high political position, Ruiz Cortines had a ready-made opportunity for Yáñez. In 1952, the then governor of Jalisco, J. Jesús González Gallo, a powerful Jalisco politician and protégé of President Manuel Avila Camacho, began organizing support for his chosen successor, Miguel Moreno Padilla. However, three powerful political enemies in Jalisco, Esteban García de Alba, Silvano Barba González and Margarito Ramírez, all of them friends of Ruiz Cortines, were opposed to his choice. Essentially, they told the president that they did not care who the candidate was, as long as it was not González Gallo's man. Thus, while Ruiz Cortines could have imposed his own choice in Jalisco, he found a ready-made situation which allowed him to put his "own man" in that state, without ignoring local political leaders.⁴²

Once Yáñez became governor of his home state, he reached an enviable position in the career of a politician, one which would allow him to build a political following and to implement programs. It is not the purpose of this essay to evaluate Yáñez's contributions in political office. However, his emphasis on cultural and intellectual activities is important because it reflects the role which the intellectual-politician can play in stimulating his colleagues and intellectual life in general. In this

sense, Yáñez appears to have used his powers as governor to encourage the expansion of cultural institutions and activities in Guadalajara. Among the cultural achievements of his administration were: the creation of the School of Philosophy and Letters at the University of Guadalajara; the redefinition of the Jalisco Prize to include awards for important contributions in the letters and arts; the construction of new facilities for the Normal School, the state archives, the public library and the House of Culture; the augmentation of state monies for the University of Guadalajara and for a regional symphony orchestra.⁴³ Although Yáñez admitted in his yearly state addresses that there were insufficient public schools, he did attempt to devote a sizable proportion of state monies toward education and cultural activities.⁴⁴

His emphasis on such activities as governor are important for several reasons. First, most intellectuals agree that very few opportunities exist for cultural activities in the private sector. José Rogelio Alvarez, a collaborator of Yáñez during his governorship and presently editor of the *Encyclopedia of Mexico*, best expressed this view: "The need to live is more important to the intellectual in Mexico because it is so difficult for the intellectual to support himself off of this work. But, this has also resulted from the fact that the intellectual has not used his abilities to create his own means of living. Unfortunately, intellectuals have not recognized this."⁴⁵ Second there are ideological reasons why intellectuals believe it is advantageous to enter government service. As one public figure suggested to the author:

Many intellectuals go into public life for social reasons, not just economic reasons: Dr. Chávez, for example, who is an intellectual and was prominent in the study of cardiology; or Dr. Zubirán, who was equally prominent in the study of nutrition and founded the National Institute for Nutrition. These men were very successful in private practice, but they worked within the state because they both wanted to create large organizations, and in Mexico, only the state has the resources to create such projects.⁴⁶

A third reason for intellectual participation within the state is that the intellectual, through his education, personal skills, and values, could improve public life. Daniel Cosío Villegas, commenting on the designation of Jesús Reyes Heróles as minister of government, suggested it was important to have placed an intellectual in an eminent political position because "things will be better with intelligence than without it."⁴⁷ Yáñez himself believed that these reasons applied to his decision to join the government. His initial bureaucratic position in Mexico City provided him with the time and income to devote himself to his literary interest, whereas his accession to an important political post, was, in his own words, "the chance to serve and to try to put into practice many ideas which I have expressed. I think that in my own case, I did have some

success in achieving some of my goals, or at the very least, of serving as a model, in terms of my personal conduct, of what a public figure should be."⁴⁸

It is obvious from the accomplishments of his administration that Yáñez did achieve some personal goals. However, Yáñez did not use the opportunities his position provided to build a strong political faction helpful to his career or those of his collaborators. This can be seen in Yáñez's failure to have his disciple, José Rogelio Alvarez, whom he reportedly favored, succeed him in office. One of his collaborators has suggested that his failure to create such a political group—both as governor and in later, important national political offices—was due to his "reluctance to engage in this type of activity, whether to help political careers or those of his own close friends."⁴⁹ In a sense, Yáñez represents the aloof intellectual who has stayed away from the rough and tumble aspects of the political arena, even while holding positions in public life. He does not seem to have had the personal inclinations for this type of activity during his career, with the possible exception of his candidacy as director of the National Preparatory School in the 1940s.

Yáñez left the governorship of Jalisco in 1959, and returned to Mexico City where he took up his teaching responsibilities as a professor at the National Preparatory School and at the School of Philosophy and Letters of the National University. During this time, President Adolfo López Mateos appointed him as a presidential advisor. However, three years later, he was elevated to the post of Subsecretary of the Presidency. His appointment to a second high-level office was determined by his relation with the President, and not with his superior, the cabinet minister. Yáñez came to know López Mateos politically when the latter heard one of his addresses as governor of Jalisco. Like others before him, López Mateos was impressed with his speech-writing abilities, and asked Yáñez to revise his state of the union addresses from 1959 to 1962. Even after his appointment as Subsecretary, his fundamental task was to write, research and refine these speeches.⁵⁰ Thus, once again, Yáñez's literary talents helped him achieve high office.

Yáñez finished out the López Mateos' term as Subsecretary of the Presidency. In 1964, when Gustavo Díaz Ordaz became President, he named Yáñez to the most important post of his entire public career, that of Secretary of Public Education. Díaz Ordaz probably selected Yáñez for several reasons. The President believed that the position of Secretary of Public Education should go to someone who was recognized as well-cultured. Furthermore, Díaz Ordaz respected Yáñez's literary merits to the extent that he cited Yáñez by name during his campaign for the presidency.⁵¹ Also, Yáñez had earned himself a reputation as an honest and responsible figure in his previous posts, something which even his worst political enemies would not deny.⁵²

As Secretary of Public Education, Yáñez was not known for major,

innovative changes; however, he attempted, as he had once tried to do as governor, to favor intellectual and cultural activities.⁵³ His appointment as secretary can be seen in more general terms as recognition by the politicians of the importance of intellectuals in public life, especially in the field of education and culture. As one intellectual suggested, the post of Secretary of Education might be considered at the pinnacle of cultural agencies in Mexico.⁵⁴ Generally, intellectuals have served the government in education or in foreign affairs. Yáñez did not hold a position in the next administration, but in 1976, upon the death of Martín Luis Guzmán, President José López Portillo appointed him President of the National Free Textbook Commission, a post which he held until 1979, shortly before his death.

Agustín Yáñez had a long and distinguished career as an intellectual engaged in public affairs. The preceding analysis sheds some light on obscure aspects of the political side of his career which also might be important to understanding his literary activities. However, Yáñez's political career is significant because the patterns characterizing his background, recruitment and climb in public life reflect a general type of intellectual role found within Mexican government.

Initially, it was suggested that two general types of intellectuals exist in Mexico, those who believe in the importance of participating in public life and have devoted most of their careers serving the public sector; and those who believe equally strongly in maintaining their independence from public life and have attempted to remain outside of government. Obviously, Yáñez represents the first of these two types, one typical of most intellectuals in Mexico. However, these two groups are further divided by at least two subtypes: the intellectual with a group following and the intellectual without.

The structure of intellectual life in Mexico has some parallels with political life. Among these is the similarity in the structure and process of recruitment among incipient politicians and intellectuals. Political life is characterized by overlapping political groups, whose informal leaders are important to the political success of its members. In intellectual life, groups have formed around individual intellectuals who help to promote the careers of their collaborators and disciples by promoting their work in their respective journals and through publishers with whom they are well-connected. Thus, it is difficult for a talented person, whatever his merit, to break into intellectual circles as a nationally-recognized figure without close personal ties to a certain group. Both the political system and the structure of intellectual life strongly encourages such ties, but there is greater opportunity for a maverick intellectual to achieve such prominence because of the divisive qualities characteristic of various intellectual groups. Such a career breakthrough can even happen temporarily in public life, when an individual without political experience or ties is suddenly given a top-level position through the personal intervention of the President.

Yáñez, therefore, represents the subtype of the intellectual without a significant group following who has followed a public career. Although he has been said to have had some disciples, neither Yáñez himself nor his acquaintances have offered any names of prominent intellectuals from succeeding generations. This does not mean that Yáñez isolated himself from other intellectuals, in fact, throughout his lifetime he associated with a group of contemporaries whether in Guadalajara or Mexico City.⁵⁵ But, Yáñez did not surround himself with an important coterie of younger intellectual or political disciples. Politically this can be seen by the fact that almost none of his subordinates or collaborators themselves obtained higher posts after serving with Yáñez.⁵⁶ As far as intellectual disciples, Yáñez's personality, on the surface, was aloof and formal, not suggesting someone who would naturally attract younger types.⁵⁷

Yáñez's personal style and unwillingness to engage in bureaucratic politics might have had some influence on his impact as a political leader. Since he did not develop a political following, it would be difficult for him to have obtained additional revenues to support his administrative goals given the stiff competition for scarce federal monies which characterizes the Mexican bureaucracy. Furthermore, his intellectual disciples, had they chosen to follow a public career like their mentor, would have had fewer opportunities to reach a position whereby they too might have had some influence over government programs beneficial to intellectuals and cultural life in general. In this sense, Yáñez left no major political legacy.

Yáñez is not the typical model of a politically active intellectual, represented much more clearly by individuals such as Antonio Carrillo Flores and Jesús Silva Herzog. On the other hand, many other characteristics of Yáñez's career coincide with the pattern typical of most intellectuals, suggesting the universal importance of certain credentials and experiences for achieving prominence in intellectual life and in politics. To summarize, in Yáñez's case, these included his urban birthplace, his residence in a capital city, his skills as a writer and orator, his student cultural and political activities, his early association with other intellectuals, his later education at the National University, his teaching activities at the National Preparatory School and National University, his residence in Mexico City, and his involvement in cultural academies, particularly the Academy of Language.

Yáñez's career demonstrates that the Mexican presidents have long considered intellectual participation in their regimes to be important, whether for symbolic or practical reasons. However, such participation is most frequently confined to agencies dealing with educational and cultural matters. Furthermore, Yáñez's success politically adds evidence to the assertion that political skills, at least for the intellectual, are not necessary credentials for intellectuals with political ambitions. Moreover, an intellectual like Yáñez used his public posts to encourage the

expansion of institutions, prizes and journals to provide a greater stimulus for intellectual life in general, rather than for any specific group. And lastly, although considered highly for his literary skills, Yáñez's unclear ideological emphasis and low-keyed political activities earned him less prestige than expected among intellectuals and politicians,⁵⁸ suggesting that while politicians prefer politically active intellectuals to independent ones, they also seem to prefer those with combative social and political views.

Roderic Camp
Central College, Pella, Iowa

NOTES

1. Cockcroft, 1968; Ross, 1977, pp. 396-437; Careaga, 1971, p. 47; Rutherford, 1971, p. 81; Krauze, 1980, p. 232.

2. Interview with Ignacio Chávez, Mexico, June 13, 1978.

3. Based on an analysis by the author of 526 prominent intellectuals in Mexico from 1920 to 1980.

4. Scholarship on Mexican intellectuals has largely been limited to analyses of literary groups and intellectual biographies of selected persons, the best of which has been the recent work of Henry Schmidt, 1978, on Samuel Ramos and Enrique Krauze, 1980, on Daniel Cosío Villegas. North American scholarship on United States intellectuals, while prolific and speculative, has not been based, with few exceptions, on serious evaluations and descriptions of the structure of intellectual life, on an analysis of intellectuals in general, and from a national perspective. For an important exception, see Kadushin, 1974.

5. Camp, 1980, Table 4.

6. Camp, 1980, Table 6. Fifty-five percent of Mexico's elite intellectuals from 1920-1980 held a national political office, either elective or appointive, or a diplomatic position.

7. For a complete bibliography, see Rangel Guerra, 1968, p. 303ff.

8. Aron, 1957, p. 213. Cockcroft also found this to be true of two different groups of intellectual precursors. Cockcroft, 1968, p. 88.

9. Coser, 1967, p. 7.

10. Samuels, 1969, p. 215.

11. Polsby, 1974, p. 106.

12. Letter from Martha Robles, June 4, 1980.

13. Interview with Arturo Warman, Mexico, August 22, 1978.

14. Interview with Agustín Yáñez, Mexico, August 22, 1978.

15. Yáñez, 1968, p. 25.

16. For example, Bonilla, 1971, found that among the Mexican intellectuals he examined, over 90 percent came from the middle or upper social classes, p. 299. Also, among scientists at a research institute at the National University, Lomnitz, 1980, found over 80 percent came from similar backgrounds, p. 16.

17. Octavio Paz's grandfather was a politician and controversial journalist during the 19th century; and his father, a lawyer, fought with Emiliano Zapata during the Revolution. Interview with Octavio Paz, Mexico, June 29, 1978; O'Campo, 1967, pp. 277-78; and Rodman, 1958, p. 198. Narciso Bassols' father was a judge, and Bassols himself was the great-nephew of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, a prominent 19th century political leader. See Bassols, 1964, p. 2 and Krauze, 1967, p. 295. Luis Cabrera's uncle Daniel, a long-time political opponent of Díaz, was the founder and director of *El Hijo del Ahuizote*, an important opposition paper.

18. Among high-level office holders in Mexico from 1935, to 1980, at least 31 percent

had politically active kin; but of those who went on to hold four or more such offices, 43 percent were known to have such ties. Camp, 1980a, p. 35.

19. Camp, 1981b, p. 41ff.

20. Mabry, 1980, viii, p. 4.

21. Based on an analysis of the biographies of 526 prominent intellectuals studied by the author. Family background has also been an important determinant in the education of the political elite in the Soviet Union, which also underwent its own major revolution comparable in time to that of Mexico. Burg 1961, concludes that "only a handful of students attending the prestige institutions come from families outside the intelligentsia; it is the children of the intelligentsia who virtually monopolize the better known universities . . ." p. 80. Also see Churchward, 1973 p. 36, for additional support. Coser, 1967, p. 7, found the same condition in England. In the United States, however, this is not the case. See Kadushin, 1974, p. 26. However, the pattern in 20th century Mexico does seem to have been present in 19th century Latin America, suggesting that Mexico is continuing an established tradition, Burns, 1980, p. 35ff.

22. Rangel Guerra, 1968, p. 129.

23. Letter from Raúl Cardiel Reyes, September 9, 1980; letter from Emmanuel Palacios, September, 1980.

24. Camp, 1980b, 196ff.

25. Camp, 1980b, 75ff. Among Mexican politicians, where preparatory school location is known, 53 percent attended the National Preparatory School. For the National University, the figure is 64 percent of all high-level political leaders.

26. Letter from Raúl Cardiel Reyes, September 9, 1980.

27. According to friends and local figures in Guadalajara, Yáñez wrote for the ultra-Catholic newspapers and authored a book entitled *Llama de amor vivo* dedicated to the Sacred Heart. Copies of this work are today rare since most of the original copies were purposely destroyed. Yáñez's religious beliefs, and his political-religious activities, are still much disputed, and a biography of Yáñez would do well to consider the psychological implications of Yáñez's strong, youthful Catholic sentiments. Some observers believe that Yáñez may have had some feelings of guilt towards his rejection of his strong, conservative Catholic background for the liberal, anti-Catholic position of his middle years, a decision which initially may have come about for reasons of political expediency rather than for philosophic reasons. Interview with Guillermo García Oropeza, Guadalajara, July 10, 1980; Arturo Rivas Sainz, Guadalajara, July 29, 1980; and Ernesto Flores, Guadalajara, July 14, 1980. Letter from Emmanuel Palacios, Mexico, September, 1980.

28. According to several sources, Efraín González Luna, J. Jesús González Gallo and Yáñez were all members of the Catholic Association of Mexican Youth in Guadalajara during the 1920s. See Bravo Ugarte, 1968, p. 46.

29. Among Mexican intellectuals in general, 35 percent obtained a law degree.

30. Coronado later became a senator from Jalisco when Yáñez was governor. According to Rivas Sainz, Yáñez probably joined Coronado's law firm because it had a good reputation. Interview, July 29, 1980. An anecdote told to the author, suggestive of why Yáñez never continued his legal career, indicated that when he wrote his first legal brief he was complimented for the writing but was told to pay more attention to legal principles. For background about Coronado's career, see *Enciclopedia de México*, V, 1977, p. 579 and Blancas, 1956, pp. 45-46.

31. As Yáñez himself told the author, the purpose of the review was to "offer writers from Jalisco and from all over the republic a means of expressing their views." Interview, Mexico, August 22, 1978. Some of the collaborators included Efraín González Luna, co-founder of the National Action Party, 1939; Antonio Gómez Robledo, ambassador to various countries; Julio Jiménez Rueda, Secretary General of the National University and Dean of the School of Philosophy and Letters; and Samuel Ramos, Official Mayor of the Secretariat of Public Education.

32. According to Emmanuel Palacios, this may have been most important since Yáñez organized a group of sympathizers called the "Group Without Name or Number." Also see Rangel Guerra, 1968, p. 133; Skirius, 1978, p. 205.

33. Castillo Ledón was also a federal deputy, alternate senator, and held several administrative posts at the National University. See Hilton, 1940, pp. 113–14; López, 196, p. 180; O'Campo, 1967, p. 72; Valázquez, 1928, pp. 51–55; *Diccionario Porrúa*, 1970, pp. 402–03.
34. Guadalajara intellectuals interviewed by the author were unanimous in their assessment of the cultural poverty of Guadalajara and in the necessity of any talented Guadalaran intellectual to journey to Mexico City if he wanted national recognition. As I concluded in an earlier study: *Not one individual* among the forty-five intellectuals chosen by North American academics (as most prominent from 1920 to 1980) resided outside of Mexico City after establishing their career." Camp, 1980, p. 12. Economic, political and cultural life is very much centralized in Mexico City.
35. Of those Mexican intellectuals who taught, 75 percent did so at the National Preparatory School, the National University, or both. More than 25 percent of political leaders in Mexico since 1935 taught at the National University. Camp, 1980b, p. 169.
36. Zubirán, 1973, p. 47.
37. *Excelsior*, January 19, 1980, p. B 1, 3.
38. Letter from Raúl Cardiel Reyes, September 9, 1980.
39. Mabry, 1980, VI, p. 11ff.
40. Letter from Raúl Cardiel Reyes, September 9, 1980; interview with Ernesto Flores, Guadalajara, July 14, 1980; interview with Guillermo García Oropeza, July 10, 1980; and interview with Antonio Rivas Sainz, July 29, 1980.
41. Letter to the author, September 9, 1980; letter from Emmanuel Palacios, September, 1980.
42. *Excelsior*, April 21, 1974, p. 13, includes an anecdote of how Yáñez's name was added to the traditional three-person list (terna) in Mexican politics. Interestingly, although Yáñez had no political ties with González Gallo, Yáñez's family was from Yahualica, the same small village González Gallo was born in, only four years before Yáñez's birth in Guadalajara. *Excelsior*, February 3, 1980, p. B 7, 9. Furthermore, as suggested above, Yáñez knew González Gallo in the Mexican Catholic Youth Association. For more information about how gubernatorial candidates have traditionally been selected in Mexico, see Camp, 1974, pp. 454–481 and Camp, 1977, pp. 23–34.
43. See Yáñez, 1954, p. 28; 1955, p. 31; 1956, p. 17; 1957, p. 34; 1958; 1958, p. 43; interview with Carmen Castañeda, Guadalajara, July 12, 1980.
44. Yáñez, 1955, p. 31.
45. Interview with José Rogelio Alvarez, Mexico, July 18, 1978. This has been the thesis of Enrique Krauze's analysis of Daniel Cosío Villegas, who he has seen as a cultural entrepreneur. Krauze, 1980.
46. Interview with Alfonso Pulido Islas, Mexico, August 18, 1978.
47. Cosío Villegas, 1972, pp. 10–11.
48. Interview with Agustín Yáñez, Mexico, August 22, 1978.
49. Letter from Raúl Cardiel Reyes, September 9, 1980.
50. Letter from Raúl Cardiel Reyes, September 9, 1980. Cardiel Reyes was Yáñez's private secretary during this period. Yáñez and López Mateos also had in common their support for Vasconcelos as students in 1929.
51. Letter from Raúl Cardiel Reyes, September 9, 1980.
52. Interview with Ernesto Flores, Guadalajara, July 14, 1980; letter from José Rogelio Alvarez, September, 1980. According to one anecdote about Yáñez when he became governor of Jalisco, he did not have a home in Guadalajara, nor did he have enough money to buy one. Supposedly, the government purchased a home for him. However, it was unfurnished, and since Yáñez did not have sufficient savings to buy furniture either, he initially entertained his friends sitting on the floor. Whether apocryphal or not, this story suggests Yáñez's reputation for honesty. Interview with Manuel García Oropeza, Guadalajara, July 10, 1980.
53. Alfonso Rangel Guerra, 1968, p. 152ff.
54. Interview with José Rogelio Alvarez, Mexico, July 18, 1978.

55. For example, in the 1970s, he met monthly with Antonio Carrillo Flores, Ignacio Chávez, Antonio Gómez Robledo, Andrés Henestrosa, Emilo Sánchez Piedras and Antonio Armendáriz, all prominent in intellectual or political life. *Excelsior*, January 18, 1980, pp. 26-27. Other intellectual friends included Juan Rulfo, Mauricio Magdaleno and Juan José Arreola. According to all of Yáñez's acquaintances interviewed by the author, he never created or belonged to a political group. Although Manuel de la Isla Paulin, in an epilogue to Kenneth F. Johnson's *Mexican Democracy*, p. 183, claimed Yáñez led the so-called "Jalisco Group" in favor of the candidacy of Juan Gil Preciado for president in 1970, no evidence exists to support this assertion. In fact, Yáñez opposed Gil Preciado's career on several occasions, both when he was a mayor of Guadalajara in 1956-58, and when he succeeded to the governorship after Yáñez in 1959. For further evidence of this, see *Excelsior*, November 12, 1978, p. 18. Correspondence and interviews with Raúl Cardiel Reyes, Ernesto Flores and Antonio Rivas Saínz; letters from Emmanuel Palacios and José Rogelio Alvarez, September, 1980.

56. For example, Alfonso García de Alba, his Secretary General as Governor, although later a federal deputy, has remained prominent only locally, holding this same position in the present state administration. José Rogelio Alvarez, who first knew Yáñez as a student at the National Preparatory School, became his private secretary in 1953 as governor of Jalisco. Alvarez did become Director General of diesel Nacional, an important decentralized agency in Mexico City in 1965-66, but his prestige is largely attributed to his literary activities and cultural enterprises, particularly the *Encyclopedia of Mexico*. Mauricio Magdaleno, as Yáñez's Subsecretary of Education, had, like Yáñez, already earned his literary reputation, and had long been well-connected politically, especially with Adolfo López Mateos, whom he had known since the Vasconcelos campaign. It is also true that he was a personal friend of Yáñez's since 1929, but his career as a deputy and senator before 1964 had no connection with this friendship. The only person serving under Yáñez who did achieve greater political prominence *afterwards* was his state treasurer, Francisco Medina Asencio, who went on to become mayor of Guadalajara and governor of Jalisco. However, his political rise to governor can be attributed to his close personal friendship with Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, rather than to his original ties with Yáñez. *Proceso*, July 21, 1980, p. 26; letter from José Rogelio Alvarez, September, 1980.

57. Interview with a prominent Mexican poet, Mexico, August 9, 1978. Yáñez himself showed an unwillingness to discuss anything which might have disputable overtones, and was unwilling, even after much prodding, to suggest who his disciples might be. Personal interview, Mexico, August 22, 1978.

58. When asked to list the most prominent intellectuals in Mexico since 1920, North American scholars ranked Yáñez 13th; intellectuals ranked him 27th; and public men, to the author's surprise, excluded him altogether from their top list. See Camp, 1980, Tables I, II, and III.