

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Rebellious Citizens: National Reforms and the Practice of Local Governance in Jalisco,  
Mexico, 1914-1940

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2017

## DEDICATION

Mi madre y padre trabajaron duro en este país haciendo los trabajos que muchos actualmente no quieren hacer para que mis hermanos y yo tuviéramos oportunidades. El presente trabajo está dedicado a ellos.

## EPIGRAPH

Vine a Comala porque me dijeron que acá vivía mi padre, un tal Pedro Páramo.  
-Juan Rulfo

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Rebellious Citizens: National Reforms and the Practice of Local Governance in Jalisco,  
Mexico. 1914-1940.

By

Ulices Piña

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, San Diego, 2017

Professor Eric Van Young, Chair

This dissertation is a political history of the central-western Mexican state of Jalisco from 1914-1940 that explores the interplay between national reforms, local and state politics, and popular responses to regional crisis. I approach the study of this region by focusing on three interrelated stories, showcasing how state power was understood at



various levels of society. The first is concerned with how individuals came to see their place in the social order, especially during and after moments of disruption and crisis. The second narrates the struggle between regional authorities in Guadalajara and the central government in Mexico City over effective political control of the state. And the third studies how political projects—such as agrarian reform, anticlericalism, and educational reform—came to intersect with the social and cultural contexts of life in the countryside.

Central to this dissertation are three significant rebellions that shook the established social order: the de la Huerta Rebellion (1923-1924), the Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929), and the Second Cristero Rebellion (1934-1940). Together, the long-term effects of these recurring upheavals were formative to the new regime that emerged in the postrevolutionary period. The dissertation argues that anxieties over violence shaped the manner in which citizens in Jalisco understood their rights and ultimately contested the presence of the state. This challenges our understanding of local participation in the political process, often seen as a closed sphere dominated by powerful state agents ruling with unquestioned authority, where ordinary people rarely made their voices heard. Instead, these episodes reveal how local officials debated the limits of national power and struggled with how to govern, while simultaneously consenting to the demands of citizens.

## Introduction

Tiempo es ya, jaliscienses, de que salgáis de ese ostracismo en que ha pretendido hundiros el fatico tirano, sacudid la apatía que os embarga y abate, erguíos altivos y bravos como sabéis hacerlo y aprestos a cooperar con las legiones que desde las apartadas tierras del Norte vienen a reconquistar los derechos del pueblo, tan ultrajado, tan oprimido, tan vejado.

-Manuel Diéguez, *Manifesto to the People of Jalisco*, 1914.<sup>1</sup>

The date was 21 July 1914. Pedro Ramírez, the Municipal President of Chimaltitlán, wrote Governor Manuel Diéguez to complain about several unruly men who surreptitiously appeared in the surrounding areas. Under the “shadow of the revolution,” the bandits had terrorized the region, stolen from many, set fire to buildings, and raped women. The people that Ramírez represented claimed not to understand politics, nor did they desire to mix themselves up in it. But the sudden turn of events had compelled many of these country folk to take up arms in defense of their way of life and to protect the town where they had been born, grown up, and called home. And they had done so for the better part of the past fourteen months. The triumphant entry of the Constitutionalist forces into Guadalajara earlier that month, however, motivated them to lay down their arms. They simply desired to remain in possession of their weapons. These people were against the bandits, not the Revolution. As such, they remained eager to submit themselves to the new order of things and to receive the promises offered by the Revolution.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Boletín Militar*, Tomo 1, Guadalajara, 18 de Julio de 1914, Núm. 3. 8 July 1914.

<sup>2</sup> Archivo Histórico de Jalisco (hereinafter cited as AHJ), Gobernación 1914, sin clasificación, Caja 41, exp. 3135, “Carta del Municipio de Chimaltitlán al General Manuel Diéguez, Gobernador Constitucional,” 21 July 1914.

In many ways, this is a microcosm for the larger divisions that would emerge in the central-western state of Jalisco in the tumultuous decades to follow—experiences that innately shaped how individuals understood their choices as citizens of a modern nation-state. The focus of this study is on the 1920s and 1930s, a period of high political drama in Mexico, but what I write here is in many ways a different kind of story. Instead of the high drama of national events, I examine how ordinary people and authorities used political institutions for their own ends, and interacted with officials and other powerful actors to enact democratic governance. *Rebellious Citizens*, then, is as much a story of ordinary people trying to adapt to the changing circumstances unleashed by the Mexican Revolution of 1910, as it is of state power.

This dissertation focuses on three significant rebellions that shook the established social order: the de la Huerta rebellion (1923-1924), the Cristero rebellion (1926-1929), and the Second Cristero rebellion (1934-1940). I contend that the long-term effects of these recurring upheavals were central to the new regime that emerged in the postrevolutionary period. After each rebellion officials debated the limits of national power, while simultaneously acquiescing to the demands of citizens. I argue that anxieties over violence shaped the manner in which locals in Jalisco understood their rights and contested the presence of the state. Collectively, the three rebellions were more about ordinary people struggling with modes of governance in the countryside than they were about ongoing efforts to dismantle the state's capacity to rule. By situating the history of postrevolutionary Mexico within the dynamics of local rule, we see the state emerge as a valuable historical site for reframing narratives of violence and resistance, and less as an instrument for the control of society.

Three narrative threads run through this dissertation. The first is a study of how individuals came to regard their place in the social order during and after moments of crisis. To this end, I am equally concerned with highlighting disorder as disruption as I am with revealing the anatomy of rule hidden beneath the surface of the social order. The second thread is a chronicle of the power struggle between regional authorities and the central government over effective political control of Jalisco in the decades following the Mexican Revolution. In particular, I explore Mexico's early attempts at democratization and document how the idea of a dominant revolutionary faction came to prevail within the political class of Mexico. As entrenched local power structures gave way to inchoate and outside forces, the capital city of Guadalajara gradually fell under Mexico City's sphere of control. This was a process that gained much traction after the founding of the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR) in 1929—the forerunner to the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), which became one of the longest-lived regimes of the twentieth century and remained in power uninterruptedly for seventy-one years. The third examines the ways in which short-term political projects of state building intersected with the social and cultural contexts of the countryside, and their subsequent translation into daily practices and/or strategies of collective resistance. During the 1920s and 1930s, Mexico's postrevolutionary government undertook an ambitious state-building scheme. Crucial to these efforts are what scholars of Mexico have called the “revolutionary” process, which consisted of the agrarian, religious, and educational reforms implemented in the postrevolutionary years. And this came to represent the most important medium through which the new ruling party attempted to construct political hegemony in the countryside.

Two concepts undergird my argument. The first is *citizenship* and what this meant in postrevolutionary Mexico. James Holston, for example, has reminded us that citizenship is an especially challenging concept because it “both constitutes fundamental structures of modern society and unsettles them.” Since the Enlightenment, citizenship has come to embody not only a hallmark of modernity, but has also played a dominant role in reconfiguring structures of social membership, privilege, and constraint away from previous forms of subjectship, kinship, and cultship; while the nation-state, in turn, replaced the “neighborhood, village, city, or region” in establishing its scope, rights, and obligations. In this regard, citizenship is viewed as one of many associational identities that individuals adopt in society, but it is unlike others because the state frames it: “Its conditions have greater effect because it articulates the other statuses in terms of the nation-state’s particular framework of law, institutions, demands, and sentiments.” As a means of organizing society, however, citizenship has been “subversive” and “reactionary” inasmuch as it has also been “inclusionary” and “exclusionary.” This dissertation understands citizenship as much more than a formal political institution; that is, through the establishment of laws, institutions, and cultural norms, the state simultaneously produces and perpetuates inequality.<sup>3</sup>

The second concept is *hegemony*. Antonio Gramsci made a distinction between ‘rule’ and hegemony. The former is expressed in political forms and in times of crisis by direct or effective coercion, while the latter is the more normal situation consisting of a complex interlocking of political, social, and cultural forces. Hegemony, then, “is either

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<sup>3</sup> James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 21-22.

this or the active social and cultural forces which are its necessary elements.”<sup>4</sup> William Roseberry has taken up the notion of hegemony “as ongoing, multilayered, geographically divergent, and conflictive.” He argues that the term should be understood as a “problematic, contested, political process of domination and struggle” through which a language is constructed for expressing both acceptance and discontent. In other words, it is a “common framework for living in, discussing, and acting upon social orders characterized by domination.”<sup>5</sup> Contention and struggle between ruling and dominated groups, then, takes place within “a field of force” connecting both groups in organic relations. *Rebellious Citizens* explores this field of force and common language, which emerged in postrevolutionary Mexico and was forged through state projects. National reforms, therefore, not only became arenas for articulating state domination, but also carved out arenas for contesting that domination. These types of arenas served a dual purpose. As creators of civil society, they opened a physical and ideological space for subordinate individuals to express demands; and they functioned “as the provider of skills, attitudes, linkages, and behaviors that would create citizens who would seek a new pact, a new language, and a new set of political relations” with the new postrevolutionary state.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p 108.

<sup>5</sup> William Roseberry, “Hegemony and the Language of Contention” in Joseph and Nugent *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 360-361.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Kay Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico* (The University of Arizona Press, 1997), p. 24

On a broader level, *Rebellious Citizens* is meant as a contribution to the extant literature on state formations. Over the past two decades, scholars have revisited long-standing questions of state-building, striving to illuminate state formation in a great number of diverse geographical areas.<sup>7</sup> Krohn-Hansen and Nustad, for example, have proposed to see states as outcome of practices and processes, while claiming that a state formation “is the result of myriads of situations where social actors negotiate power and meaning.” In other words, this shifts the focus to how a state is produced in everyday life and to the practices of power and rituals that make up the state.<sup>8</sup> Latin America, meanwhile, has proven to be a hotbed for thinking through such questions. With respect to this, two important camps have emerged: “[T]he first group focuses on how subaltern groups resist, appropriate or help construct the nation-state, while the [second] is generally more concerned with how state rule is accomplished.”<sup>9</sup> The extremely

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<sup>7</sup> See George Steinmetz, “Introduction: Culture and the State” in *State/Culture: State-Formation after the Cultural Turn* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando López-Alves, eds, *The Other Mirror: Grand Theory through the Lens of Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, eds, *State of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); James Dunkerley, ed, *Studies in the Formation of the Nation-State in Latin America* (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2002); Clifton C. Crais, ed, *The Culture of Power in Southern Africa: Essays on State Formation and the Political Imagination* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003); Diane E. Davis and Anthony W. Pereira, eds, *Irregular Armed Forces and their Role in Politics and State Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Robert Holden, *Armies Without Nations: Public Violence and State Formation in Central America, 1821-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, ed, *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Benjamin T. Smith, *Pistoleros and Popular Movements: The Politics of State Formation in Postrevolutionary Oaxaca* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); and Chris Vaughan, *Darfur: Colonial Violence, Sultanic Legacies and Local Politics, 1916-1956* (Boydell and Brewer, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Christian Krohn-Hansen and Knut G. Nustad, “Introduction,” in *State Formation: Anthropological Perspectives* (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2005), p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Helga Baitenmann, “Counting on State Subjects: State Formation and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Mexico” in Christian Krohn-Hansen and Knut G. Nustad, eds, *State Formation: Anthropological Perspectives* (Pluto Books Press, 2005), p. 171.

influential *Everyday Forms of State Formation* (1994) did much to chart out a marriage between these two approaches, and attempted to place them in conversation with James Scott's work on everyday forms of resistance. The result was that a generation of scholars working on state formation in Mexico took up Gramsci's concept of hegemony as a prism to analyze how the PRI maintained itself in power.<sup>10</sup>

Coronil and Skurski, however, have reminded us that while political violence has played a central part in the formation of nations, its historical constitution and its role in forming nations have received scant attention. Instead, what continues to prevail in the historiography is a "myth central to modernity" perpetuating the notion that modern states have established their authority not with recourse to divine will or force, but reason: "The modern state, it asserts, having domesticated the bloody theater of violence of the ancien régime, replaces publicly inflicted physical punishment with a myriad of disciplinary procedures that permeate the body politics and engender the modern soul."<sup>11</sup> While governments and institutions continue to assert, divert, and regulate violence to suppress what they deem threats and dangers, violence itself, then, cannot be divorced from the wider context wherein such action occurs.<sup>12</sup> I contend that the violence exercised in the formation of states should be understood with regard to the "social and

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<sup>10</sup> See the edited volume by Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent, *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994) and James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

<sup>11</sup> Fernando Coronil and Julie Skurski, "Dismembering and Remembering the Nation: The Semantics of Political Violence in Venezuela," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (April 1991): 332.

<sup>12</sup> Coronil and Skurski, "Dismembering and Remembering," p. 332.



cultural worlds” in which citizens reside, without disregarding the myriad clashes among “forms of agency, interests and rationalities.”<sup>13</sup> The work of Vaughan—albeit in the context of colonial Darfur—warns us that while scholarship has underplayed the role of violence in maintaining authority, refocusing attention to violence can also run the risk of minimizing the importance of local negotiations in which the state actually attempted to engage the partial consent of subject populations. The “improbable stability” of the colonial regime in Darfur, for example, did not depend on an interpretive choice between a view of state power as either consistently, violently coercive or perpetually willing to compromise: “[R]ather it requires the acknowledgment that both violence and negotiation remained interactive elements of colonial authority, shifting in emphasis and manner over time, but nonetheless continually intertwined.” This dissertation follows Vaughan’s lead and seeks to understand authority in Jalisco as a limited version of hegemony, “in which consent to rule, generated in processes of local negotiation” centered around regional politicians, was extracted rather than freely given, while being firmly bolstered by the coercive capacity of the state.<sup>14</sup>

Working from the assumption, then, that Jalisco deserves to be seen as an important site of postrevolutionary state formation, *Rebellious Citizens* asks what a history of the violence there can look like from the viewpoint of the lowliest in society to the most powerful. In doing so, I complicate the standard interpretations of

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<sup>13</sup> Christian Krohn-Hansen and Knut G. Nustad, “Introduction,” *State Formation: Anthropological Perspectives* (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2005), p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> Chris Vaughan, “‘Demonstrating the Machine Guns’: Rebellion, Violence and State Formation in Early Colonial Darfur,” *The Journal of Imperial Commonwealth History*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (2014): 303.

postrevolutionary Mexico on the basis of four questions. First, what factors led to popular support for, or genuine opposition to the state? Second, how did common people, elites, politicians, rural teachers, and the clergy view the postrevolutionary order and their place in it? Third, what were the limits to state concentration of power at both national and local levels? Fourth, how did three decades of sustained (and cyclical) violence affect citizens and the practice of local governance in a historically conservative Mexican state such as Jalisco?

*Relevant Literature on Revolutionary Mexico*

*Rebellious Citizens* also engages the historiography of revolution and postrevolutionary reform in Mexico, traditionally separated into three historiographical currents: populist, revisionist, and neo-populist. In the first current historians focused on the desire of citizens for land reform, education, and political participation, arguing that these demands were fundamentally popular in origin.<sup>15</sup> The 1970s and 1980s brought forth a new generation of historians that revised the findings of earlier scholarship and brought to light how several aspects of pre-revolutionary Mexico such as *caciquismo* (strongman politics), corruption, and undemocratic principles survived the Mexican Revolution. These revisionist scholars tended to adopt a Marxist perspective and shifted attention toward the relationship between the revolution and the state, and focused on

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<sup>15</sup> For populist interpretations see the works of Frank Tannenbaum, *The Mexican Agrarian Revolution* (Washington: The Brookings Institute, 1929), *The Struggle for Peace and Bread* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), and *Peace by Revolution: Mexico After 1910* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966); Eyley Simpson, *The Ejido: Mexico's Way Out* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937); José C. Valdés, *Historia General de la Revolución Mexicana* (México: M. Quesada Bandi, 1963-1967); and Jesús Silva Herzog, *Trayectoria ideológica de la Revolución Mexicana, 1910-1917* (México: Cuadernos Americanos, 1963).

regional-level studies. Moreover, they suggested that the Revolution had overthrown the traditional land-holding class only to replace it with a petit bourgeois ruling class.<sup>16</sup>

In the late 1990s, another current of scholarship, which we may call the neo-populists, emerged that contested revisionist interpretations and findings. These scholars expanded upon revisionist theoretical frameworks and moved toward assessing the impact of revolution and reform through an analysis of everyday society and state formation.<sup>17</sup> While much of the revisionist historiography underlined the “defeat and subordination” of popular social movements, neo-populists drew particular attention to the vitality and efficacy of popular participation during the period of armed rebellion in revolutionary Mexico—or as Alan Knight has put it: “[T]here can be no high politics without a good deal of low politics.”<sup>18</sup> Three of the best recent studies on regional politics

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<sup>16</sup> See Roger Hansen, *The Politics of Mexican Development* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); Arnaldo Córdova, *La ideología de la Revolución Mexicana: la formación del nuevo régimen* (México: Ediciones Era, 1973); Jean Meyer, *La Cristiada*, Vol. 1-3 (México: Siglo XXI, 1974); David C. Bailey, *Viva Cristo Rey! The Cristero Rebellion and the Church-State Conflict* (Austin: University of Texas, 1974); Heather Fowler-Salamini, *Agrarian Radicalism in Veracruz, 1920-1938* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978); Nora Hamilton, *The Limits of State Autonomy: Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); David A. Brading, ed, *Caudillo and Peasant in the Mexican Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Ramón E. Ruiz, *The Great Rebellion: Mexico, 1905-1924* (New York: Norton, 1980); Ian Jacobs, *Rancher Revolt: The Mexican Revolution in Guerrero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983); Dudley Ankersen, *Agrarian Warlord: Saturino Cedillo and the Mexican Revolution in San Luis Potosí* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1984); Romana Falcón, *Revolución y caciquismo: San Luis Potosí, 1910-1938* (México: El Colegio de México, 1984); and John Gledhill, *Casi Nada: A study of Agrarian Reform in the homeland of Cardenismo* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1992).

<sup>17</sup> See Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, Vol. 1-2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); John Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Joseph and Nugent, *Everyday Forms of State Formation*; Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*; Jennie Purnell, *Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico: The Agraristas and Cristeros of Michoacan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); and Christopher R Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos: Politics, Identity, and Agrarian Struggle in Postrevolutionary Michoacán, 1920-1935* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, pp. x-xi

in Mexico that reflect the neo-populist approach have been those of Jennie Purnell (1999), Christopher Boyer (2003), and Matthew Butler (2004)—all of them, however, focus exclusively on the state of Michoacán.

Purnell studies peasant partisanship in the Cristero Rebellion of 1926-1929 and contends that the rebellion affords a different understanding of state formation, “holding that no Leviathan, embryonic or otherwise, existed in Mexico in the 1920s.”<sup>19</sup> She shifts our attention to local agrarian and political conflicts that peasant communities had been engaged in for decades, “and some times centuries, prior to the revolution.” These historical factors—among others such as local religious practice, petty political factionalism, popular notions of property rights, and the interaction with officials and clergy—directly affected people’s decisions to rebel against the state. Boyer challenges the assumption that individuals residing in the countryside inherently share a sense of cultural solidarity and political consciousness. He argues that what become known as *campesino* identity in twentieth-century Mexico was both the outgrowth of popular militancy and its subsequent translation through localized versions of popular ideology after the Revolution. Butler also challenges the assumptions regarding Mexican peasants in the 1920s, but does so from the perspective of religion and problematizes the idea that they held similar religious outlooks, and that their behavior was driven by political and materials factor. In doing so, Butler has reminded us that “religion mattered as peasants negotiated a path between the conflicting agents of Church and state [...]”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Purnell, *Popular Movements*, p. 11

<sup>20</sup> Matthew Butler, *Popular Piety and Political Identity in Mexico’s Cristero Rebellion: Michoacán, 1927-1929* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2004). p. 3

While all three works address salient themes regarding the Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929), none of them, nor other works, systematically pays attention to the two other major rebellions of the postrevolutionary period that preceded and succeeded this uprising. The de la Huerta rebellion (1923-1924) and the Second Cristero Rebellion (1934-1940) receive limited mention, at best. The recent works of Enrique Guerra Manzo (2005) and Ben Fallaw (2013) have begun to expand upon the complexity of the Second Cristero Rebellion through an analysis of its goals, organization, style of violence, and the challenges it posed to state projects. Guerra Manzo's study, which also centers on Michoacán, for example, has argued that the rebellion more closely approximated a social movement led by rebels promoting specific political plans, which intended to establish alternative social orders founded upon Catholic principles and civil liberties.<sup>21</sup> Fallaw's work has branched out to the states of Campeche, Hidalgo, and Guanajuato, and suggests that during the 1930s the revolutionary state project floundered, which led to the decentralized Catholic strategy of resistance and to the expression of complex offensive and defensive violence throughout the countryside.<sup>22</sup>

The de la Huerta uprising, on the one hand, continues to be interpreted as a mere anomaly in the history of postrevolutionary Mexico; while on the other hand, scholars

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<sup>21</sup> Enrique Guerra Manzo, "La Segunda Cristiada y el caso de Michoacán (1931-1938)," *Historia Mexicana*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (Oct. – Dec., 2005): 514-515. Adrian Bantjes' regional study of Sonora made a similar argument, however, claiming that the Second Cristero Rebellion should be understood as a three-month struggle occurring within the backdrop of the power struggle between Calles and Cárdenas. In his view, such violence was simply symptomatic of just how closely both national and regional politics were intertwined, which ultimately allowed for political openings at the local-level in which opposition groups took advantage of to promoted specific agendas; see Bantjes, *As if Jesus Walked on Earth: Cardenismo, Sonora, and the Mexican Revolution*. (Wilmington, Del: Scholarly Resources, 1998), p. 43-56

<sup>22</sup> Ben Fallaw, *Religion and State Formation in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

continue to acknowledge that the defeat of the rebellion consolidated central state power and reaffirmed Mexico's process of modernization. Very few studies, however, have actually attempted thoroughly to understand it.<sup>23</sup> Insufficient scholarly attention has been paid to the long-term effects of the recurring political upheavals of postrevolutionary Mexico on the process of state formation and on the lives of citizens—despite the fact that they were central and formative to the political system produced in their wake.

### *The Mexican Revolution*

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 to 1920 was the first major social revolution of the twentieth century. Its causes, among many others, included the authoritarian rule of dictator Porfirio Díaz (who had ruled the country since 1876), the confiscation of numerous village lands by wealthy oligarchs and foreign speculators, and the growing divide between the rich and the poor in Mexico. While the revolutionaries were successful in ousting Díaz from office in six-month's time, they could not agree on the new social and political order. Francisco Madero eventually inaugurated a period of democratic rule in 1911, but that came to an abrupt end on 9 February 1913 when a revolt turned coup d'état broke out against the Madero regime. General Victoriano Huerta emerged victorious from the bloodletting as the new president of Mexico; Madero and his vice-president, José María Pino Suárez, were assassinated three days later. The following month Venustiano Carranza, the governor of the northern state of Coahuila, issued the

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<sup>23</sup> See Jürgen Buchenau, *Plutarco Elías Calles and the Mexican Revolution*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007) and Gilbert M. Joseph & Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

*Plan de Guadalupe* opposing the Huerta regime. He subsequently called for a constitutional government and asked to be named First Chief of the movement.

The Constitutionalist Revolution, as it became known, quickly gathered strength and allies, and began advancing from the north to south in three divisions, which were led by Alvaro Obregón, Francisco “Pancho” Villa, and Pablo González. Meanwhile, the *Zapatistas*—led by Emiliano Zapata—and others continued fighting Huerta in the south, just as they had previously fought Porfirio Díaz and Madero.<sup>24</sup> In June 1914, the Constitutionalist forces advanced towards Jalisco and, a month later, took the capital city of Guadalajara. It was in this context, then, that the Constitutionalist Revolution arrived into the region under the command of Obregón and appointed General Manuel Diéguez as the new governor and military commander of the state. In his first address as governor, Diéguez declared to the people of Jalisco the following:

What in the beginning was only a heroic push of only a few gambling patriots, soon turned into the formidable Constitutionalist Army that today victoriously advances to the Metropolis to finish the triple job of restoring order, punishing those responsible for the sorrows that afflict the country, and to ensure the fulfilment of effective rights.<sup>25</sup>

After the occupation of Veracruz by the US Marines and a series of decisive losses, Huerta resigned on 15 July 1914 and Obregón went on triumphantly to occupy Mexico City.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Jürgen Buchenau, *The Last Caudillo: Alvaro Obregón and the Mexican Revolution*, (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> *Boletín Militar*, Tomo 1, Guadalajara, 18 de Julio de 1914, Núm. 3. 9 July 1914.

<sup>26</sup> Buchenau, *The Last Caudillo*, pp. 64-65.

The first reports regarding differences between the clergy and the Constitutionalist government in Jalisco, however, began to circulate the following week. On 22 July, the *Boletín Militar* claimed that the local government had discovered a deposit of weapons and munitions in Guadalajara linked to the clergy. In response, the Constitutionlists occupied the churches of the state capital, “assuring the public that for now they [the clergy] will not be above the Law [and will not] trample upon our Constitution, as [several prominent clergymen] have.”<sup>27</sup> Three days later, the Constitutionlists asserted that they were not antireligious:

What the Constitutionalist Government detests [and] what it considers as an irreconcilable enemy of peace and public order is intransigent clericalism, [which has historically] caused more damage to our nation [...what we do not want is] clericalism within politics, the church within the State, the instigating and evil friar who converts his pulpit into [a] parliamentary tribunal to advise contempt for our laws, hatred toward the legal Government and rebellion in all of its forms; [the Constitutionalist Government] is an enemy of the lustful and cunning clergy (not of religion) which only lives to exploit the masses [...].<sup>28</sup>

Over the course of 1914, the disagreements between the multiple revolutionary factions again expressed themselves. In Jalisco, Alan Knight notes that the anticlerical acts of the Constitutionlists won them an evil reputation in the eyes of many Catholics: “Since the perpetrators were Carranza’s men, Jalisco’s Catholics logically inclined towards [Pancho]

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<sup>27</sup> *Boletín Militar* Tomo 1, Guadalajara, 22 de Julio de 1914, Núm. 3. 22 July 1914.

<sup>28</sup> *Boletín Militar* Tomo 1, Guadalajara, 25 de Julio de 1914, Núm. 3. 25 July 1914. While a radical, anticlerical liberal tradition dating from the nineteenth century existed among some sectors of the working, artisan, and middle classes, “it was eclipsed in the early years of the revolution by the rise of a multiclass Catholic social and political movement that promoted the principles of Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* of 1891;” see Maria Teresa Fernández Aceves, “The Struggle between the *Metate* and the *Molinos de Nixtamal* in Guadalajara, 1920-1940” in *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico* edited by Jocelyn Olcott, Mary Kay Vaughan, and Gabriela Cano (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 148



Villa: Villismo seemed the ‘antidote’ to anti-clerical Carrancismo.” As a result, some of the more militant and conservative Catholic groups began to recruit armed brigades “with a view to violent resistance” against the Constitutionalist. By the fall of 1914 there were already reports of actual revolts against the Constitutionalist order and forces mounted by outraged individuals. These acts, therefore, represented “the first shots [fired] in the Church/state struggle that would culminate in the great rebellion of the ‘twenties [and beyond].”<sup>29</sup>

The Mexican Revolution eventually produced one of the most radical doctrines on social rights in the twentieth century. Crafted at a time of global upheaval, the Constitution of 1917 championed human solidarity with the poor and the working class over abstract ideology. It was also the first of its kind to begin to take into account a world that had been profoundly shaped by World War I, Russian unrest, significant globalization, and the growing power of Latin America’s northern neighbor. The document preserved almost intact the complement of classical civil and political liberties granted to citizens under the previous Constitution of 1857, but also extensively incorporated social and economic guarantees to all Mexicans—significantly adding important provisions on labor, agrarian reform, and the social dimensions of property rights. In 1920, after some military generals led a coup to overthrow the regime of Venustiano Carranza, the conflict “officially” ended. A succession of revolutionary generals began to govern in Mexico and gradually centralized political power until 1946, when the first civilian presidential candidate was elected.

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<sup>29</sup> Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, p. 208.

### *Overview of the Chapters*

The de la Huerta rebellion (1923-1924) left a significant legacy for the political future of Mexico. It was the first of three successive conflicts of the 1920s and 1930s that began to weed out the *caciques* (regional political bosses) who had formed fiefdoms during the Mexican Revolution. Scholars still know very little about how this rebellion actually played out on the ground, why some rural dwellers decided to take up arms in defense of the national state, and why regional political bosses and generals attempted to undermine the state's capacity to rule. **Chapter 1** focuses on the regional manifestation of this uprising, known locally as the *Estradista* Rebellion. I analyze the political precursors that led up to the rebellion and explore a set of contemporary statements regarding what citizens from all walks of life thought about local authorities, governance, and the social order. This chapter makes use of a *comisión*,<sup>30</sup> which interviewed approximately four hundred citizens hailing from various classes, ages, occupations, and political views. The *actas* (records) that made it into the final report reflected the experiences of people who took part in contemporary events or who were witness to them. Rather than constructing a larger explanatory model for understanding the rebellion, this chapter instead takes up a thematic approach to assess how local officials, ordinary citizens, and rural dwellers interpreted the behaviors of elected officials, struggled over what the insurgency meant to them, and why they decided to risk their lives or simply discount the disorder that engulfed the countryside.

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<sup>30</sup> Archivo General de la Nación (hereinafter cited as AGN), Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales (hereinafter cited as DGIPS), Caja: 244, Exp. 9, 313.1-968, Tomo I, March 1924.

**Chapter 2** shifts our attention to an analysis of the anatomy of rule and establishment of a local power structure in the Guadalajara region of the 1920s. In the aftermath of the first significant challenge to the new social order, Governor José Guadalupe Zuno Hernández established himself as the most powerful politician in the region. One of the most controversial public figures of the period, Zuno's political career provoked conflicting opinions from contemporaries and has also led to a healthy debate among historians.<sup>31</sup> On one hand, the national and Catholic conservative presses portrayed Zuno as a politician who did not respect the legal system and as an individual determined to reach and maintain power by any means;<sup>32</sup> while on the other hand, most of the revisionist historiography has lauded his role in defense of regional autonomy at the municipal and state levels, and his anticlerical, pro-labor, agrarian, and educational policies.<sup>33</sup> Very few studies, however, have attempted to understand the consequences of such state inventions on the lives of citizens or their impact on local governance. This chapter explores the chronic anxieties that Mexican citizens expressed about state sovereignty in the first decade of the postrevolutionary era. I argue that such *disorder* was not only part of an on-going negotiation over how to govern and rule, but was also part of an extensive debate regarding the limits of local and national power during this period.

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<sup>31</sup> Maria Teresa Fernández Aceves, "José Guadalupe Zuno Hernández and the Revolutionary Process in Jalisco" in *State Governors in the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1952: Portraits in Conflict, Courage, and Corruption*, edited by Jürgen Büchenau and William Beezley (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), p. 95.

<sup>32</sup> AGN, DGIPS, Caja: 2024-B, Expediente: 9 & 10. These *expedientes* contain well over 300+ pages of newspaper clippings from regional and national presses, government reports and letters, political analysis, and such an incredibly detailed inventory of Zuno's possessions in 1925 that one would have thought him a *bona fide* celebrity by the scope of coverage devoted to him.

<sup>33</sup> Fernández Aceves, "José Guadalupe Zuno," pp. 95-96

**Chapter 3** centers on two significant problems that the administration of President Plutarco Elías Calles (1924 to 1928) encountered in Jalisco during its first two years in office: 1) the specter of another armed uprising in the countryside; and 2) a local political crisis over effective control of the state. First, I explore how Mexico's budding intelligence services—the *Departamento Confidencial*—systematically engaged in the surveillance of Jalisco's countryside. This process began in earnest following the suppression of the de la Huerta Rebellion, but intensified in the years to come. The spy reports that my analysis rests upon are located in the collections of the *Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales* (DGIPS). These spy reports, however, provide us with an intellectual challenge: on the one hand, they reveal a certain degree of selectivity on the part of supervisors in positions of power, who decidedly privileged certain snippets of information over others deemed irrelevant; while on the other, as practicing historians we *too* engage in this same exercise as we select from the already selected pool of sources in the dusty boxes we find. As a result, the use of these sources requires us not only to focus on their content, but also on the nexus of networks that produced this knowledge. The decoding of this information and rumors contained in it, for the most part, reveals a great deal about the popular beliefs of those individuals that were targets of surveillance; and they also reveal the preoccupations of agents themselves and what authorities believed important enough to archive. Consequently, the fear of another rebellion greatly transformed the manner in which the central state interacted with, and produced knowledge, of the countryside.

The second part of this chapter focuses on the how *zunistas* attempted to survive politically after their leader Zuno was “toppled” in March 1926. Despite being officially

ousted from power, Zuno remained the *de facto* governor of Jalisco for quite some time and posed a significant challenge to President Calles's plan for organized labor. He made considerable progress, for example, in halting the centralizing efforts that increasingly came to characterize the Calles administration. In particular, I highlight how federal intervention into labor politics and state elections affected the local power structure of the Guadalajara region. The section focuses on two political disputes: The Cinco Minas Company Strike and the gubernatorial election of 1926. I argue, however, that the supporters of Zuno were not merely reactors to official policy emanating from Mexico City, but were also "political initiators" who themselves exercised an important role in limiting the impact of the national government in the region during these formative years.

In mid-1926 a massive upheaval of a religious character erupted in central-western Mexico and quickly engulfed the states of Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacán. **Chapter 4** narrates the events at both federal and state level that led to the Cristero Rebellion in Jalisco and explores how citizens reacted to the ensuing violence. The first part of this chapter provides a history of anticlericalism in Mexico following the Constitution of 1917 and, above all, contextualizes the Calles administration's effort to implement anticlerical measures. In the second part, I shift my analysis to how partisans of the national state experienced the rebellion. Much like Chapter 2 of this dissertation, my interest in this chapter is not so much in analyzing the logic of the rebellion; instead, I focus on how partisans of the state, such as *agraristas*, local authorities, and tax collectors thought and wrote about the violence they encountered. I begin with an overview of agrarian reform and the formation of political identities in the countryside, and then examine the anxieties that agrarian communities expressed in the early phases of

the rebellion. Through an analysis of letters or reports submitted to state and federal authorities, I subsequently consider how local governance and politics functioned in times of unrest and crisis, particularly emphasizing the apprehensions that municipal administrations and government employees expressed to their superiors. The chapter ultimately draws attention to the state government's acquiescence to Mexico City with the creation of the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR) in 1929.

**Chapter 5** focuses on the upsurge in rural collective political violence in 1930s Jalisco, known as the the Second Cristero Rebellion or colloquially as *La Segunda*. When Lázaro Cárdenas came into office in December of 1934 and displaced the informal political clout of Calles, he inherited a “Six-Year Plan” on education that intended to increase rural schools by 12,000 to a total of 20,000 by the end of 1939.<sup>34</sup> The instruction imparted in these schools was to be socialist and, on the one hand, sought to eliminate “religious dogmatisms and prejudices” in schools; and, on the other, to put an end to the Church's role in educating the masses. The implementation of the socialist education program in the countryside played a tremendous role in inciting the widespread popular uprisings of this period. Despite the constant insistence on the part of the high clergy in assuming a conciliatory attitude towards the state, many rebel groups and parish priests interpreted socialist schools as state instruments to eradicate their traditional belief systems. I argue that local community grievances, political divisions, and varying degrees

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<sup>34</sup> The plan provided for the opening of these schools on the following timetable: 1,000 in 1934; 2,000 in each of the years 1935, 1936, 1937, and 1938; and 3,000 during the year 1939. And to achieve this, fifteen per cent of the national budget was set aside for public education, which was raised gradually so that by 1939 the budget for public education would have reached 20 percent; see *El Universal*, 20 July 1934.

of religious sensibilities directly molded the manner in which rural people understood the state's cultural revolution of the 1930s. In what became increasingly a hostile working environment for supporters and representatives of the postrevolutionary state, as rebels and parish priests worked together to undermine federal schooling policy, violence against partisans of the state again became a central story. This ultimately determined whether locals accepted, disregarded, or altered the Six-Year Plan on education.

Let us now turn our attention to the eastern shore of Lake Chapala in Jalisco where President Alvaro Obregón had arrived from Mexico City to get some much needed rest from running the country. It is now the fall of 1923. Meanwhile, Governor José Guadalupe Zuno hurriedly left Guadalajara and also made his way to the small lake town. Zuno had urgent news to deliver. This was a matter of national security and it could not wait. The president must be interrupted.

**Chapter 1**  
**‘As Revolutionaries We Are Obligated to Comply’: The Politics of Reconstruction  
and the Estradista Rebellion**

The civil war roused by the action of President Obregón in his endeavors to usurp the public liberties of the people, assumes the character of a National War. The revolt for freedom that started with the perils that were threatening our democratic institutions is growing to a gigantic size and [so too is the] dignity in the sacred duty to defend the sovereignty and the freedom of our country.

-Adolfo de la Huerta<sup>1</sup>

Bárceñas: Where did you pass the revolution?

Mejía: In my pueblo, in Tonaya.

Bárceñas: Who rose up in favor of the Government?

Mejía: Nobody, neither in favor nor against, even though everyone in my town was against [it].

-Acta twenty-seven of the *Comisión*<sup>2</sup>

In mid-October 1923 President Alvaro Obregón retreated to his ‘El Fuerte’ residence on the eastern shore of Lake Chapala, near the town of Ocotlán, Jalisco. The president’s sojourn had salubrious undertones, but not long after his arrival Governor José Guadalupe Zuno made the short trek to speak with his *compadre*.<sup>3</sup> Zuno, accompanied by General Jesús Madrigal, informed President Obregón of the recent

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<sup>1</sup> State Department (hereinafter cited as SD), 812.00/27042, 20 February 1924.

<sup>2</sup> Archivo General de la Nación (hereinafter cited as AGN), DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 27. “Declaration of Antonio Mejía,” 1 April 1924.

<sup>3</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 103-Z-4. “Correspondence between Obregón and Zuno,” f. 1-9, 16 October 1923-10 November 1923. Alvaro Obregón and Governor Jose G. Zuno began to correspond on 16 October 1923 about the impending birth of the latter’s first child—born María Eugenia Zuno Arce on 28 October. Two weeks later, Obregón writes: “It would be an honor for us to act as godparents to your first-born, certainly accepting this distinction.” In a subsequent letter, the president reiterates his happiness to serve as godparent to the daughter of Zuno, “I have the pleasure of informing you that María [the first lady] already has the dress here and I only wait to recover my health which has seriously weakened in the last days to give you notice [so you can] indicate to us the time and day with the objective of transferring ourselves there. We would like to know if you desire to carry out the baptism at the house or at the church, and if you could provide me with that information I would greatly appreciate it.”



sedition activities that General Enrique Estrada—the former Commander-in-chief of the Second Division of the Mexican Army of the Northwest—had committed under his watchful eye, which included the sending of arms to the Head of Military Operations in Zacatecas and secret meetings with military officials in Guadalajara.<sup>4</sup> The rumblings of rebellion were now in the air. All had not been quiet on the western front of Mexico.

After the men broke the news to Obregón, he led them to the terrace of his residence, situated near the lake. Zuno recalls what happened next: “We saw [General] Estrada there, in short sleeves, his grand gala jacket and hat had been left on the seat of a chair [...and] he was [imitating] a horse for the son of Don Alvaro, who joyfully hit him with his own whip [...while Estrada] pranced in the most human of imitations, throwing kicks and [making] weak neighs.” Obregón asked Zuno and Madrigal, “Do y’all see him [...] he appears to be a friend of my family and my own...he plays with my son Alvarito.” General Madrigal interrupted the president and reiterated that the documentation they presented to him was convincing, indisputable. “I also believe it [...but] my duty is to respect him until his acts of rebellion are verified [...] I am not a traitor of traitors,” affirmed Obregón, “I do not know yet if he will rebel; but if he does, then I will have all the justification [needed] for my actions [...]”<sup>5</sup>

On the afternoon of 6 December 1923 General Enrique Estrada<sup>6</sup> declared himself in open rebellion against the Government of President Obregón and denounced the First

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<sup>4</sup> José Guadalupe Zuno, *Reminiscencias de una vida*, 2a. ed. (Guadalajara: Biblioteca de Autores de Jaliscienses Modernos, 1956), p. 139.

<sup>5</sup> Zuno, *Reminiscencias*, p. 139.

<sup>6</sup> The Second Division of the Mexican Army of the Northwest commanded by General Estrada encompassed the states of Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacán. Forces under his command, according to a State

Magistrate for violating the Constitution of 1917.<sup>7</sup> The following day, Estrada made official declarations to the press regarding the scope of his efforts: “This movement is not the result of a political pact [...our] loyalty to the Constitutional Charter of the Republic, cannot be conserved [if we do not] disavow whomever violates the Constitution,” affirmed the General, “[...the] decision to not recognize [the] President of the Republic, was taken [to] sustain our institutions and to once again raise the banner of the Revolution [...]”<sup>8</sup> The lines were crossed, bridges burned. The rebellion had now begun and there was no turning back.

The overthrow of Governor José G. Zuno’s pro-Obregón regime in Guadalajara was accomplished on the following day “with such celerity and lack of the usual ostentation and military display” that very few individuals, outside of the governor’s inner circle, were aware of it until many hours after. Obeying orders emanating from General Estrada, armed soldiers swiftly entered the *Palacio de Gobierno, Casa Municipal*, and revenue offices (State and Federal), and obtained complete control in the name of the rebel forces. The officials in charge of these posts were immediately dismissed, and guards disarmed and replaced—on a temporary basis—with military officials. “No opposition was offered to the demand of the military officers,” reported A.J. McConnico, the American Consul, “and no conflicts of any kind occurred [...in]

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Department report, were estimated to be in the vicinity of 16,000 soldiers, “all being regarded as loyal and well-disciplined;” see SD, 812.00/26651, 8 December 1923.

<sup>7</sup> Archivo Histórico del Municipio de Autlán (hereinafter cited as AHMA), Gobernación 6, “Telegram to ex-President Alvaro Obregón from General Enrique Estrada,” 6 December 1923.

<sup>8</sup> *El Informador*, 8 December 1923.

fact, it was a quiet and peaceful surrender of an unprotected civil government to military power [...] Opposition or resistance of any kind would have resulted tragically; hence, the surrender.”<sup>9</sup>

The Estradista Rebellion formed part of a larger series of contemporary armed insurgencies already in motion—collectively known as the de la Huerta Rebellion—that for nearly sixty days shook the newly established social order<sup>11</sup> to the core and reverberated all throughout the countryside of Mexico. The de la Huerta Rebellion was comprised of four major rebellions in Guerrero, Jalisco, Veracruz, and Oaxaca led respectively by Rómulo Figueroa, Enrique Estrada, Guadalupe Sánchez, Fortunato Maycotte. While Adolfo de la Huerta claimed to be the Supreme Chief of the movement, “with the exception of Guadalupe Sánchez none of the military caudillos [that were] up in arms recognized him as such.”<sup>12</sup> In the subsequent bloodletting, politicians came of age,

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<sup>9</sup> SD, 812.00/26651, 8 December 1923. The military authorities demanded 500,000 pesos in the form of a forced loan. Shortly thereafter, a commission was nominated to secure the amount and its delivery before the imposed deadline of 10 December, 11:00am. The forced loan was met with much resistance and debate, however, in particular by the Members of the Consular Corps of Guadalajara. As the American Consul made clear: “Members of the consular corps in this city, including the consul of France, the consul of Italy, the vice consul of Great Britain, and the vice consul of Spain, met at the American consulate at noon on the day mentioned (Saturday), and after a conference decided to submit a protest to General Estrada against the proposed loan insofar as it would affect their respective nationals. And each consul advised his nationals to refuse to make contributions except under protest;” see SD, 812.0026701, 11 December 1923.

<sup>11</sup> I define the “social order” as reflective of the manner in which societies create institutions that support the presence of specific forms of human organization and relationships, and through the incentives created by the pattern of organization. Political, economic, religious, and military powers, then, are created through those same institutions; that is, “these institutions simultaneously give individuals control over resources and, by doing so, limit the violence by shaping the incentives faced by individuals and groups who have access to violence.” See Douglass C. North, John Joseph Wallis, and Barry R. Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders: a conceptual framework for interpreting recorded human history* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> Fidelina G. Lleneras and Jaime Tamayo, *El levantamiento delahuertista: cuatro rebeliones y cuatro jefes militares* (Guadalajara, Jalisco, México: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1995), p. 15.

rose to prominence or were eliminated; political parties were created and dissolved; alliances shifted and were strengthened. The established historiography recognizes that the defeat and suppression of the de la Huerta Rebellion served an important role in reaffirming Mexico's process of modernization and in reconfiguring politics at regional and local levels. Very few studies, however, have investigated how these regional wellsprings of violence actually played out on the ground, why some rural dwellers decided to take up arms in defense of the national state, and why regional political strongmen attempted to undermine the state's capacity to rule.<sup>13</sup> Scholars, on the one hand, have deemed the rebellion as merely a reactionary movement against the impositionist politics of the National Government (in the same vein as those that occurred against Díaz, Huerta, and Carranza); while, on the other, some have instead conceptualized the four major strands of the rebellion as "a great social conflict" comprised of forces that were either ideologically identified with the Revolution or

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<sup>13</sup> The classic study on the rebellion is Alonso Capetillo's book, *La rebelión sin cabeza (génesis y desarrollo del movimiento delahuertista)* (México: Imprenta Botas, 1925), which is filled with anti-de la Huerta propaganda and paints a portrait of a rebellion without much leadership. While this is an important topic of debate (that is, whether Generals like Estrada actually supported and recognized Adolfo de la Huerta as the *Jefe Supremo* of the Revolution) it has perpetuated the lack of historical analysis applied to studies regarding the rebellion. The idea of whether certain Generals supported certain leaders distracts from the fact that these rebellions were great social upheavals that not only impacted national and regional political loyalties, but also shaped how citizens interpreted and began to conceptualize their place within the new social order. The study of Llerenas and Tamayo (*El Levantamiento delahuertista*) provides a detailed account of each rebellion, focusing on political and military developments, and shifts the focus towards the diversity of social actors involved in the conflict; while Enrique Plascencia de la Parra's *Personajes y escenarios de la rebelión delahuertista, 1923-1924* (México: Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, UNAM: M.A. Porrúa, 1998) instead focuses on the major figures of the rebellion—avoiding an analysis of social classes. No study, however, has focused on how these forces impacted how ordinary people, among others, interpreted these contemporary events. As Plascencia de la Parra writes on page 14, "the disdain towards this topic, perhaps is due to [the fact] that it deals with a military rebellion, it lacks the fascination of a 'popular war' like Villismo, el Zapatismo or the Cristero War."

comprised of social actors, such as landowners, clergy, and military officials, “who simply sought to reverse the revolutionary process.”<sup>14</sup>

This chapter explores the political precursors to the rebellion led by Enrique Estrada in the state of Jalisco and also analyzes a set of contemporary statements concerning what citizens thought about local authorities, governance, and the social order during a destabilizing moment of crisis. The first part of the chapter revisits the years following the triumph of the *Plan de Agua Prieta* and reevaluates the administration of Alvaro Obregón. This section offers a chronological narrative on the major political events—alternating between national and regional developments—that culminated in the mass outbreak of violence in December 1923. Rather than constructing a larger explanatory model for understanding the rebellion, the second part takes on a thematic approach and focuses on how local officials, ordinary citizens, and rural dwellers interpreted the behaviors of elected officials, struggled over what the insurgency meant to them, and why they decided to risk their lives or simply discount the disorder that engulfed the countryside.

Three central questions guide the analysis in this chapter: How did the *Obregonista* regime reestablish control and effective rule in the years immediately following the Revolution? What factors led to popular support for, or genuine opposition to, the new state? How does the Estradista Rebellion help us to reconsider the importance of popular *inquietudes* (anxieties) about state interventions as a central tenet in the longer history of the revolutionary process in Mexico?

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<sup>14</sup> Lleneras and Tamayo, *El levantamiento delahuertista*, p. 12

### **The Time in Between: From Revolution to Rebellions**

*Plans* (proclamations) in Mexican history have always sought to explain and justify the reasons for an armed revolt. The *Plan de Agua Prieta* was no different. On 23 April 1920, Generals Alvaro Obregón and Plutarco Elías Calles, and fellow Sonoran Governor Adolfo de la Huerta, declared themselves in open revolt against the National Government of Venustiano Carranza. The *Plan*, deemed a reaction to the president's efforts to "impose his will by intimidating de la Huerta's state government," announced to the nation that Carranza had repeatedly violated the sovereignty of the Mexican people and was no longer considered president of the republic by the insurgents.<sup>15</sup> Support for the rebellion grew in great numbers.<sup>16</sup> Widely seen as the definitive end of the Mexican Revolution, it culminated a month later with the assassination of Carranza, while he slept in the town of Tlaxcalantongo in the *Sierra Norte de Puebla*. A week later de la Huerta was elevated to interim president of Mexico and General Calles to secretary of war. General Obregón eagerly waited in the wings for the next legitimate (and legal) popular elections to sweep him up to the highest office in the country.

During the six months that de la Huerta remained in office much of his attention focused on pacifying the country. The Sonoran dynasty, as the three prominent figures came to be known, believed the process of pacification not only to be a crucial step towards national reconstruction and modernization, but also a necessary one in order to

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<sup>15</sup> Jurgen Buchenau, *The Last Caudillo: Alvaro Obregón and the Mexican Revolution* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 99.

<sup>16</sup> Among those who remained loyal to Carranza, however, were General Manuel Diéguez (Jalisco), Cesáreo Castro (Coahuila), Cándido Aguilar (Veracruz) and Francisco Murguía (Michoacán).

achieve “internal and external legitimacy, and, with it, the recognition of the United States of America.” One of the first orders of business on the agenda was the complete overhaul of the armed forces. As Secretary of War, Calles attempted to reform the armed forces through a four-part project that would: 1) limit the total number of military men to fifty-thousand; 2) revise the military ranks of commanders and officers under more well-established criteria; 3) curb the number of these promotions and prevent their exceeding existing established numbers; and 4) retire those commanders and other officials who could no longer render service to the armed forces. Once the size of the military had been reduced, the aim was to introduce a new military culture consisting of proper instruction, discipline, obligatory service, moral reorientation, and reorganization of garrisons.<sup>17</sup>

These precautionary measures made it clear to all that there was to be no repeat of *Agua Prieta*. The political power the federal government achieved after the Revolution melted away in the face of established regional and local military fiefdoms, preventing complete control of the country. If the new national state was to achieve any semblance of cohesion and truly succeed, then, it needed to rein in the same armed forces that it had ridden to power during the previous rebellion. Political compromises with the prominent *caudillos* who supported the *Plan de Agua Prieta*, thenceforward, needed to be reached, and their power effectively curtailed (or in certain cases completely suppressed). These important relationships had to be “mediated through personal loyalty,” which in the

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<sup>17</sup> Martha Beatriz Loyo Camacho, *Joaquín Amaro y el proceso de institucionalización del Ejército Mexicano* (México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas: Fideocomiso Archivos Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca: Instituto Nacional de Estudios de la Revolución Mexicana: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003), pp. 63-65.

coming decade would come to form the cornerstone of the Mexican political system.<sup>18</sup> Or as General Obregón bluntly put it: “there is no general that can resist a *cañonazo* (cannon shot) of fifty-thousand pesos.”<sup>19</sup> But many of the triumphant revolutionaries, however, who over the years climbed the highest ranks of command into powerful positions, did not have a unifying ideology beyond the shared experience of the Revolution. “Some [gravitated] towards agrarian or labor reforms, be it out of idealism or towards the end of solidifying their support bases,” asserts Loyo Camacho, “[...] the personal power of the [military] general converted itself into a potential threat to the political stability [of the state].”<sup>20</sup> While the Constitution of 1917 headlined a national effort at reconstruction, central political authority continued to remain relatively weak in Mexico as “Governors and local *jefes políticos* defied the federal government to rein in their powers, applying revolutionary-era legislation inconsistently.”<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the institutional place of the presidency in Mexico, from the start of the Revolution to the triumph of *Agua Prieta*, had yet to be confirmed and reaffirmed; that is, no elected president had managed successfully to complete his term in office and peacefully transfer power to a successor. Meanwhile, the role of the federal branches of Government, within the new strictures the Constitution of 1917 laid out, also remained unclear.

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<sup>18</sup> Loyo Camacho, *Joaquín Amaro y el proceso*, pp. 63-65

<sup>19</sup> Loyo Camacho, *Joaquín Amaro y el proceso*, p. 76

<sup>20</sup> Loyo Camacho, *Joaquín Amaro y el proceso*, pp. 75-76

<sup>21</sup> Buchenau, *The Last Caudillo*, p. 113



It was during this crisis of political legitimacy—and in the midst of a post-World War I economic recession—that Alvaro Obregón was sworn into office in the fall of 1920.<sup>23</sup> Dulles observes that metal mining had long proved to be an important activity and source of tax income and foreign exchange, and that in this respect the year 1920 had been a “banner year for metals generally and had seen Mexico export more silver and at a greater value than during any earlier year of the century; the value of copper and lead exports in 1920 was second only to their value in 1918.” The following year, however, proved to bring vastly different fortunes as the fall in quotations led to a decline (and in some cases a complete cessation) of mining production.<sup>24</sup> On this matter, Buchenau writes that from 1920 to 1921 “the value of silver and copper exports decreased from 159 million to 78 million pesos.” Additionally, the violence of the Mexican Revolution had also proved detrimental to agriculture to the point that in areas that had been “marked by intense fighting” were the areas where landowners had abandoned their landholdings, infrastructure had been devastated, and railroad tracks in disrepair. “Only the performance of the oil industry saved the nation from greater disaster,” affirms Buchenau, “[since] in 1921, Mexico was the world’s leading oil exporter, contributing to 26 percent of the world market.”<sup>25</sup> As president, Obregón quickly became known for his pragmatic style and not his revolutionary ideology. He cautiously implemented many

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<sup>23</sup> Obregón won the election in a landslide on 30 November 1920. He obtained 1,979,801 votes to the 47,440 cast to his closest opponent, Ing. Robles Domínguez; see Jaime Tamayo’s *La conformación del Estado moderno y los conflictos políticos 1917-1929* (Guadalajara: Gobierno de Jalisco, Universidad de Guadalajara, 1988), p. 95.

<sup>24</sup> John W.F. Dulles, *Yesterday in Mexico: a chronicle of Revolution, 1919-1936* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), p 106.

<sup>25</sup> Buchenau, *The Last Caudillo*, p. 112.

social and economic provisions of the Constitution, while at the same time supporting others he had no intention of actually implementing.<sup>26</sup> The Constitution itself created an expansive framework for the dissemination of “a populist political culture” in Mexico, as Buchenau notes: “[The] political culture centered on the idea of the ‘revolution’ as a way of bringing redress to a variety of grievances, from the concentration of land in the hands of the wealthy to the Mexicanization of the economy, the absolute separation of church and state, and guarantees for labor.”<sup>27</sup> Over the course of his presidency, Obregón carried out such determinations through the cultivation of extensive connections with governors and regional bosses, Congress, the military, and with the formation of alliances with popular organizations; the creation of an impressive cabinet (*consejo de ministros*); continued efforts at reforming and institutionalizing the military, as a way of preventing threats to his authority; and through the establishment of a federal Ministry of Public Education.

*The Principled General: Enrique Estrada*

When the *Plan de Agua Prieta* was proclaimed Enrique Estrada threw his lot in with the Sonoran faction, which he supported out of a genuine revolutionary conviction. He held the proud distinction of never having chosen the wrong side during the Mexican Revolution; an impressive feat, considering the shifting alliances that came to characterize the civil strife. Estrada could also trace his revolutionary lineage to the “Apostle of Democracy,” Francisco I. Madero, because his older brother, Roque Estrada,

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<sup>26</sup> Buchenau, *The Last Caudillo*, pp. 113-114

<sup>27</sup> Buchenau, *The Last Caudillo*, pp. 113-114

served him in the capacity of personal secretary. Enrique Estrada, however, came into prominence on the battlefield when he collaborated with the famed Felipe Ángeles during the *Decena Trágica* in 1913; and then again in 1914, under the orders of Lucio Blanco and Alvaro Obregón, when he fought against the forces of Victoriano Huerta to take Guadalajara.<sup>28</sup> The following year he was promoted to *General de Brigada* and began to serve a series of appointments: governor and military commander of Zacatecas (1916) and Chief of Operations in Michoacán (1917). After the movement against Carranza triumphed, he emerged from the conflict largely unscathed and with an impeccable revolutionary reputation intact. In 1920, Interim President Adolfo de la Huerta promoted him to *General de División* and in June of that year he began to serve as the Chief of Operations in Jalisco, Colima, and Zacatecas. In November, Estrada was appointed Sub-Secretary of the Department of War and Navy.<sup>29</sup> And when General Benjamín Hill died in mid-December, he was elevated to the post of Secretary of War.<sup>30</sup>

A year into the Presidency of Obregón, General Enrique Estrada—now a well-respected star in the Military—received official notification of his nomination to become the next *Secretario de Agricultura y Fomento*; a nomination, to the surprise of many, which he declined in spectacular fashion. Experience and influence had emboldened the young General. As Plascencia de la Parra writes: “Enrique [came to represent] the powerful military [man] with command of troops and a great power in the [western]

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<sup>28</sup> Plascencia de la Parra, *Personajes y escenarios*, p. 95

<sup>29</sup> Archivo Histórico de la Defensa Nacional de México (hereinafter cited as AHDNM), Archivo de Cancelados, XI-111-1-75, Tomo III, “Estrada Reynoso, Enrique. General de División.”

<sup>30</sup> Loyo Camacho, *Joaquín Amaro y el proceso*, p. 76

region, willing to question presidential politics.”<sup>31</sup> In a carefully drafted response addressed to the president, Estrada praised him, offered his loyalty, but implicitly decided against the appointment on moral grounds:

Even though the problems and branches that correspond [to] the aforementioned Ministry are important and varied, [with] the most important [one being,] because of [the] imperious demand from the public opinion [which] requires consideration and [an] immediate solution, given the action [related to] it that has developed, is the restitution and *dotación* (granting) of *ejidos* [...]. I understand that my criteria over the particular matter differs radically from the collaborators that have dealt with these matters, and also differs from the public's erroneous opinion on the matter. These circumstances oblige me, as I said before, to ratify to you with my customary loyalty [my] way of thinking about these matters, so that in [the] case [that] I do not deserve your approval, it be appropriate to designate another person who with more sound judgment and identification, can be a more effective and suitable collaborator. The public opinion[,] induced to error and without a doubt founded upon the procedures and problems developed in the Ministry of Agriculture[,] believes that the resolution of the agrarian problem fundamentally derives from the granting and restitution of *ejidos*; the Ministry of Agriculture approves the same criteria. My opinion is radically different.<sup>32</sup>

The agrarian problem, according to Estrada, was, and continued to be, an overbearing necessity created by modern life; instead, the resolution of this problem needed to be developed in accordance with the needs of the period. “In summary the system of granting *ejidos* [...] within modern life is essentially reactionary, inadequate, detrimental,” continued the General, “and it is enough to understand this, the fact that it was characteristic of the Viceroyal Government [of New Spain].” Estrada was not opposed to land redistribution and insisted that if the Constitution provided another

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<sup>31</sup> Plascencia de la Parra, *Personajes y escenarios*, p. 99.

<sup>32</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 104-E-25, “Letter from General Enrique Estrada to *General de División* D. Alvaro Obregón,” f. 1-4, 9 December 1921.

“more radical” and “more sensible” procedure that took into consideration contemporary needs, and incentivized the formation of the *pequeña propiedad* (small private holdings), he would support it. But simply granting peasants communal land was not the solution and it represented what he considered a *menos mala* (lesser evil) solution. The General reiterated that if he was chosen to serve in the capacity of *Secretario* he would continue the system of granting *ejidos* only “to the people who legally petitioned and [it rightfully] belonged to, but on a purely constitutional basis, without committing the error of deceiving ourselves that with only this, we are resolving the agrarian problem and consolidating, as is our capital duty THE ORGANIC PEACE OF THE REPUBLIC [emphasis in the text].”<sup>33</sup>

General Estrada’s views were very much shaped by those of his older brother Lic. Roque Estrada. To support his detailed positions, he attached an article written by his brother where R. Estrada argued that the granting of *ejidos* is not only unjust, but should not even be considered legal. According to R. Estrada, the Mexican Government had yet to stipulate what the “maximum extension” of any given private property could be (and this was important because the break up of those lands was the basis for the granting of *ejidos*). Therefore, the main argument resided in the fact that the Constitution protected the *pequeña propiedad*, but that it had not—up until then (except in Zacatecas)—been clearly defined or demarcated: “Not one administrative step forward should have been

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<sup>33</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 104-E-25, “Letter from General Enrique Estrada to *General de División* D. Alvaro Obregón,” f. 1-4. 9 December 1921.

taken [with regard to] the granting of *ejidos* without the “*pequeña propiedad*” previously having been deemed unconstitutional [...].”<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 1:** *General de División* Enrique Estrada. N.D.  
Courtesy of the AHDNM, Archivo de Cancelados.

As expected the response caught Obregón off guard—in fact, it placed him on the defensive. After reading the lengthy letter (that with attachments numbered twelve pages), the president praised the General’s sincerity and actually appreciated the frankness and honesty contained in the letter. Without wanting to enter into what he called “dissertations about the distinct points which the alluded to memorial touches upon,” Obregón made it absolutely clear that the politics on agrarian matters which he intended to carry out during his Presidency was well-defined and had already been made

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<sup>34</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 104-E-25, “La administración agrarian sobre dotación de ejidos carece de base constitucional desde el primero de mayo de 1917 hasta hoy,” ff. 5-11. N.D.

clear.<sup>35</sup> President Obregón cited the following guidelines to support the relative consistency of his political thoughts on agrarian matters: a conference that he gave at the *Cámara Agrícola of Jalisco* (November of 1919); a lecture that he held in an extra-official manner, but in the capacity of president-elect at the Chamber of Deputies (October 1920); and the two subsequent law projects he sent to the two legislative Chambers. The first one was related to the subdivision of *latifundios* (February of 1921), “[which] created the right so that all citizens who are capacitated to be so can be proprietors in accordance with the stipulations that the same law contains;” while the second, had been recently approved by the Chambers, “related to the restitution and granting of *ejidos* (November of 1921) whose promulgation has already been ordered.” He was, however, able to find common ground between them: “I am entirely in agreement with the thesis that you establish, which says: ‘...the collaboration of the Government should not be based only on good will, trust and personal esteem, but rather principally on the identification of ideals and procedures, without which it is impossible [to] assure the unity of governmental action’ [...]” The president reiterated that the nomination had been extended to him, Estrada, before knowing his personal position on agrarian matters, since he had always been a reliable collaborator. “[But] if I have incurred in an error, it is up to you to resolve this matter [by] accepting or declining said nomination,” ordered Obregón, “I consider it useless to reassure [to you] that [the] resolution [of] this matter, whichever it may be, will not diminish the personal esteem

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<sup>35</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 104-E-25, “Letter from *General de División* D. Alvaro Obregón to General Enrique Estrada,” ff. 12-14, 12 December 1921.

that I have always had for you.”<sup>36</sup> General Estrada promptly responded to the letter with the following: “If I am to be sincere, I not only find myself appreciative but also confused by the distinctions of which I have been the object of, and especially, that to which refers to your note from the twelfth; reiterating in a firm and conclusive manner, that you have not acquired even the slightest commitment to me on this matter and that, returning to the starting point, you should make an appointment, with all freedom, of the person for his ideas you judge [to be] more appropriate to carry out the politics of our Government on this matter.”<sup>37</sup> After receiving the letter, the General withdrew from consideration and continued serving in his post as Secretary of War and Navy. While Estrada’s loyalty at this time was never in doubt, he proved to be the antithesis of a sycophant; he was a principled individual willing to defend his ideals, even if they went against those held by the most powerful man in the country—and this would not be the last time he stood up for what he believed to be righteous.

When it became clear that Estrada would not accept the nomination to become the next *Secretario de Agricultura*, he was also suddenly out as Secretary of War. As a result, he was surprisingly transferred to the position of Chief of Operations in the states Jalisco, Colima, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, and Michoacán. In other words, the General was given the reins of the famed and powerful Second Division of the

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<sup>36</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 104-E-25, “Letter from *General de División* D. Alvaro Obregón to General Enrique Estrada,” ff. 12-14, 12 December 1921.

<sup>37</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 104-E-25. “Letter from General Enrique Estrada to General de Div. Alvaro Obregón,” ff. 16-17, 14 December 1921.



Northwest.<sup>38</sup> But Estrada's newfound power proved deceptive and only temporary, and the following year his Second Division was dissolved, leaving him with only jurisdiction in Jalisco. "This agreement was part of a reform whose end was to debilitate various military caudillos," writes Plascencia de la Parra, "[out of] 20 headquarters of operations, the number rose to 35." The president then proceeded to transfer regiments and battalions belonging to the Second Division and relieved those whom he deemed to be most loyal to Estrada.<sup>39</sup>

On 19 May 1923 there appeared much discussion about the importance of the presidential elections to be held later in the year. *El Universal*, for example, published an editorial in which it emphasized that if was to be in reality a just election, rigidly subjected to democratic principles, with effective suffrage protected, "let the parties be organized at once: let there be, as it [is] planned, conventions, programs, candidates, political propaganda, leagues, and agreements between groups, etc." While the newspaper emphasized its belief that the farce of a single-candidate election in Mexico was a relic of the past and would not repeat itself as it had so many times before, it warned:

[...If] we are mistaken, if contrary to all our optimistic predictions, the steam-roller policy should be made use of in favor of some candidate or another; and what is worse, if that candidate be of official extraction and there be placed at his service, as in other times, the machinery of the State, the failure of the Revolution and the Government will be absolute and

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<sup>38</sup> Plascencia de la Parra, *Personajes y escenarios*, p. 100.

<sup>39</sup> Plascencia de la Parra, *Personajes y escenarios*, p. 105. With regard to the larger purpose of this effort, the author writes: the 'professionalization' of those armed forces served, at least in this case, more or less as an excuse than an end [...]. In Irapuato, for example, the president established a camp that would supposedly functioned as an instructional base for the troops, but that in reality served [the purpose] of keeping close to Jalisco [the] forces loyal to the government and independent of Estrada."

resounding. History invariably repeats itself and all impositions will be reproduced once more. And the popular disdain and ire, then [would be] more profound than ever because the taunt would be greater, would provoke a new bloody convulsion, whose consequences would be sad and not only for those to blame, but also for the country.<sup>40</sup>

Three days later, the first rumors attaching Plutarco Elias Calles to the presidency began to appear, when Mexico City's *Excelsior* learned that he was expected to resign from his position as the Secretary of Interior to take up his campaign. "The candidacy of General Calles would be supported by the National Cooperatist party, which is threatened with division, but has the support of several State Governors," explained *Excelsior*, "[while] the Congressional minorities: labor, agrarian and Socialists of the southwest, it is said will join the Cooperatista party in support of its candidate."<sup>41</sup>

With the presidential elections on the horizon, President Obregón issued a lengthy circular admonishing Army leaders, requesting their complete abstention from the political conflict. The circular read:

Seldom in the lives of men are duty and expedience found to be running parallel. Generally these two guides run in opposite directions and men of honor never hesitate to follow the dictates of the former. [...] Duty demands from the members of the Army a complete abstinence from the political conflict and expedience counsels the same abstinence, for if the Army takes no part in the politico-electoral campaign, whatever party may triumph and whatever man may be called upon to represent the Executive Power of the nation will have to respect and have every consideration for the members of the Army, which in one of the most transcendental and delicate crises of our national life, has zealously fulfilled its duty. On the other hand, if following a contrary policy part of the members of the Army, forgetting the dictates of their duty and the suggestions of their own

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<sup>40</sup> See *El Universal*, 19 May 1923.

<sup>41</sup> *Excelsior*, 22 May 1923.

expedience, take part as militant political factors, they will be exposed to the contingencies of the contest and will share in its vicissitudes.<sup>42</sup>

Estrada, not one to back down, replied with a cryptic message of his own: “Today I permit myself the satisfaction of communicating to you the opposite sentiment, and it is the favorable and moralizing effect [that] the doctrine you expressed has caused in the [public] opinion [which states] that NO FUNCTIONARY, WHILE HE REMAIN IT, HAS THE RIGHT TO INTERVENE IN ELECTORAL POLITICS [emphasis in the text].” The General continued stressed that the president was correct in pointing out that functionaries should steer clear of the coming election; Estrada, however, implied (without directly writing it) that if this logic held true, then Obregón also needed to steer clear. But if the president could not separate himself from the matter—given that it was long rumored that he had already decided on Plutarco Elias Calles as his successor—what, then, was he to expect from the many ambitious military men who were already champing at the bit to ascend the political ladder? Not long after, Estrada received a *cañonazo* of \$15,000 pesos via a presidential decree, “without there being any administrative reason [for it].”<sup>43</sup>

### *The Presidential Campaign*

During the greater part of 1923 General Calles was touted as the next president of Mexico, whereas Adolfo de la Huerta, now a popular figure within Obregón’s Cabinet (as

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<sup>42</sup> SD, 812.00/26468, 27 September 1923. The following day, General Francisco R. Serrano—the Secretary of War and Marine—in a statement directed to the press, “heartily seconded the president’s sentiments and declared that the army had thus far abstained from political activity and would continue to do so.” According press reports, several other Army leaders were put on record as being in agreement with the position of their chiefs.

<sup>43</sup> Plascencia de la Parra, *Personajes y escenarios*, p. 107.

Finance Minister), showed no real inclination towards running for the highest office in the country.<sup>44</sup> The first rumblings of discontent within the triumvirate that had ruled the country in the aftermath of *Agua Prieta*, however, began to be felt much earlier in the summer of 1922, when de la Huerta entered negotiations with U.S. bankers. After the meeting, Obregón privately (and then eventually publically) chided the Finance Minister for consenting to American interests much too easily. The Bucareli Agreements negotiated the following year altered the relationship between the two Sonorans: “For don Adolfo, the agreements hurt worse because they wounded his personal pride. After perusing the minutes from the meetings, he complained bitterly that Obregón had raked him over the coals one year earlier for promising too much to US negotiators.”

Negotiated on 13 August 1923, the agreements laid the foundation for formal U.S. recognition of Mexico. The concessions given to the U.S.—in particular the curtailment of the retroactive application of Article 27 against the landed interests of foreign companies, as long as they demonstrated positive intent to put the land to use—were seen by de la Huerta (and nationalists alike) as “a treasonous sacrifice of national sovereignty.”<sup>45</sup> To make matters worse, a few days later, President Obregón on the pretext of invalid elections sanctioned the violent removal of the governor in San Luis

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<sup>44</sup> As a matter of fact, regarding de la Huerta’s intention to run for president, Dulles writes: “A great deal of pressure was brought to bear on Don Adolfo, who was probably pleased to find himself so popular but who made it clear that he would not run for the presidency and who repeated that his choice was his friend, General Calles;” see Dulles (*Yesterday in Mexico*), p. 175.

<sup>45</sup> As Buchenau writes: “[...] Obregón’s delegates promised that most existing concessions awarded to US investors by the Díaz and [Victoriano] Huerta regimes would remain in force;” see Buchenau (*The Last Caudillo*), pp. 130-131.

Potosí.<sup>46</sup> The intervention provoked the ire of many statesmen who resentfully complained that these actions were not becoming of a regime, which three years earlier had made such a big fuss about the inviolability of state sovereignty. The coalescing of both the Bucareli Agreements and the San Luis Potosí affair led de la Huerta to tender his resignation, officially putting on record that “he would not tolerate an attack on the sovereignty of the state of San Luis Potosí.”<sup>47</sup>

De la Huerta’s decision to leave the Administration was “final and irrevocable,” and he would now seek to stake a claim to the Presidency. His subsequent entry into the election transformed the race into a dangerous one; there were now two powerful candidates with two fairly evenly matched factions who had the potential to undermine the established order. General Calles’ main support, on the one hand, resided chiefly among the agrarian and labor organizations and he also appeared to have the support of President Obregón, “with his technical command over the Army.” His popularity, however, had recently begun to decline and his strength among conservative and moderate elements had completely disappeared. On the other, de la Huerta—in addition

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<sup>46</sup> There were originally three candidates running for governor of the state. General Samuel M. de los Santos withdrew and threw his support behind Jorge Prieto Laurens. This was not viewed favorably by President Obregón, because the other candidate, Professor Aurelio Manrique, Jr. “the Agrarista Part leader” and a supporter of the candidacy of Calles appeared destined to lose out on the governorship. After a highly contested gubernatorial election, both sides declared victory. Meanwhile, Prieto Laurens set up his administration in the state capital and had also been endorsed by the previous interim governor. The situation escalated to the point that the powers of the state, on Obregón’s orders, were declared “disappeared” and a provisional government was established. Given that Prieto Laurens was a *Cooperatista* candidate, this created a political maelstrom and led to the party’s leader declaring “open battles against Calles and all his supporters in Congress. On the heels of these actions, the National Government refused to recognize the Prieto Laurens government and instead declared the powers of the state disappeared. “Perhaps this is brought about because of the reputed Prieto support of de la Huerta [...perhaps] it is really because the election was nothing more than a farce,” observed the American Consul. See SD, 812.00/26504, 13 November 1923 and Dulles, *Yesterday in Mexico*, pp. 181-186.

<sup>47</sup> SD, 812.00/26467, 28 September 1923.

to the avowed support of a majority in the Chamber of Deputies, numerous “petty” political clubs and parties—had the clear moral support of the Army and the support of trained officers from the conservative group, and also drew a preponderant financial backing. “The army is generally believed to be more friendly to Mr. de la Huerta than any other candidate,” confirmed the State Department: “[Sure] of a large body of moderate and conservative support, Mr. de la Huerta is discovering rapidly an increasing strength among the radicals themselves.”<sup>48</sup>

In the coming month, General Calles and de la Huerta both released several campaign manifestos to the press in Mexico City expressing their ideological positions. The Calles faction was said to have taken a more radical and “revolutionary” stance: with Calles announcing his intention to fight against “capitalism, landlordism and the Church.” The de la Huerta manifesto, in stark contrast, was described as boldly conservative (in fact, he even claimed that he was not a “radical”). He promised to encourage foreign capital and to carry out the sound economic reconstruction of the entire republic. And of note, many of his followers championed the cause of the persecuted Catholic Church. “With issues sharply drawn between radicalism and conservatism as it has been thus far, the enormous following which has attached to the de la Huerta cause, regardless of the personalities involved,” commented a State Department communique, “is a noteworthy commentary on the tendency of the Mexican public sentiment.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> SD, 812.00/26467, 28 September 1923.

<sup>49</sup> SD, 812.00/26483, 19 October 1923.

Meanwhile, the Cooperatista Party had also broken up into two factions. And while a group of de la Huerta supporters continued to call themselves the Cooperatista Party, the party—as it was heretofore constituted—ceased to exist. As a result of the factional fighting, the pro-Calles faction formally seceded from the organization, “including the former president of the party and about a third of the Cooperatista bloc in the Chamber of Deputies.” The stark divides directly affected the *Obregonista* administration, as they lost the ability effectively to use the party as an instrument to carry out its policies in Congress: “The Cooperatista Party of today is a body of young politicians who have flaunted President Obregón, and scorned the ‘ignominious cooperation of the Agraristas and Laboristas’.”<sup>50</sup> Another State Department report from 6 October 1923 also confirmed that the Cooperatista Party, formerly led by General Calles and presided over by his loyal second, Emilio Portes Gil, “is now out-and-out and unanimously a De la Huerta organization [...and] that in changing from Calles to De la Huerta, it has not lost more than possibly a fourth of its membership.” Recent votes and actions within the Chamber of Deputies demonstrated that there was serious and determined support of de la Huerta on the part of the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>51</sup> The numerous political parties of Mexico, therefore, followed the lead set by the “dominant” Cooperatista Party, of either siding with the Calles or the de la Huerta factions, “allowing their former identities to disappear.”<sup>53</sup> In the ensuing political turmoil rumors of the possibility of an armed

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<sup>50</sup> SD, 812.00/26467, 28 September 1923.

<sup>51</sup> SD, 812.00/26473, 8 October 1923.

<sup>53</sup> SD, 812.00/26513, 16 November 1923. Specifically, the U.S. Chargé d'affaires decried the contemporary political climate in the following manner: “Where a large majority favor either one of the two leaders[,] the party declares in favor of him and the dissenting members secede from the party and

conflict arising out of the presidential contest began to circulate, and were increasingly taken into serious consideration by interested observers and the public.

The flames were further fanned on 23 November 1923, when Adolfo de la Huerta formally accepted the nomination of the Cooperatista Party to be their presidential candidate. Such actions invited both *Callistas* and *delahuertistas* to indulge in threats of military action to enforce their political views. The speeches delivered at the Cooperatista Convention, in particular, were “alarmingly tinged with threats of revolution and generally dangerous bravado.” The following day, for example, *El Democrata* of Mexico City reported that delegate José Villanueva Garza, who formally presented the nomination to de la Huerta, prefaced his remarks with an unabashed appeal to the Federal Army, urging them to ignore the desires of the Administration of Obregón and to support the candidacy of his party’s nomination through military force—if necessary. The speaker declared the following: “...the army is our brother, because it springs from our class. When the sword was given to that glorious army, to those glorious officers, the words of the Emperor Trajan should have [been] used: ‘Use this [on] my behalf, if I deserve it; but use this against me if I deserve to be overthrown.’”<sup>54</sup> Despite calls for armed revolt on the part of his supporters, de la Huerta resisted the idea of rebellion, that is, until he received a death threat and was presented with an order for his arrest. As a result, he secretly fled Mexico City, bought passage and boarded a train to Veracruz, and

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form an opposition group. In their convention held in Mexico City this week, the Social Reform Party and the National Agrarista Party declared for Mr. De la Huerta and General Calles, respectively. The Liberal Constitutionalist Party, on the other hand, appears to be dividing into two distinct Callista and De la Huerta factions.”

<sup>54</sup> SD, 812.00/26546, 30 November, 1923; *El Demócrata*, 24 November 1923.



took refuge in Orizaba.<sup>55</sup> The de la Huerta Rebellion officially began two days later on 7 December 1923.<sup>56</sup>

### *The Rebellions Arrive*

The insurgencies that emerged in the wake of the *Plan de Veracruz* spanned almost the totality of the country with their greatest concentration in the states of Jalisco, Guerrero, Veracruz, and Oaxaca (due in large part to their strategic political and military strength).<sup>57</sup> On the eve of the rebellions, the army was comprised of 508 generals, 2,758 commanders, 8,583 officials, and 59,030 troops. Estimates vary, but at least a total of 102 generals, 576 commanders, 2,477 officials, and 23,224 troops, 18 infantry battalions, 28 cavalry regiments, two marine infantry battalions, and some of the corps comprising the air force—that is, roughly over two-thirds (70 percent) of the entire Army—joined the rebel forces. “At the beginning the government could only count upon 35,000 men to resist 50,000 rebels,” writes Loyo Camacho, “but this disadvantage was counteracted during the course of the month because the army reserves were mobilized [...and] some

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<sup>55</sup> Dulles, *Yesterday in Mexico*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>56</sup> It was on that day that Adolfo de la Huerta proclaimed the *Plan de Veracruz*, formally denouncing President Obregón for favoring the candidacy of Plutarco Elías Calles and for his multiple violations against the Constitution. According to de la Huerta, Obregón had not limited himself to simply undermining the sovereignty of the legislative and judicial powers, “but moreover had used the immense power which the people had deposited in his hands to place liberties in chains, turning himself into the political leader of [Plutarco Elías] Calles’ unpopular candidacy with the idea of assuring for himself later on a re-election [...]” De la Huerta’s platform that gave life to the plan, however, called for more intensive education to be implemented, effective suffrage for women, abolition of the death penalty (except in certain cases), and that payments to be made—in cash—for expropriated real estate. See Dulles, *Yesterday in Mexico*, p. 219. For other versions of subsequent proclamations released by de la Huerta see AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-P-18, “Plan Rebelión Delahuertista” and SD, 812.00/27042, 12 March 1924.

<sup>57</sup> The following states, however, also saw action: Michoacán, Colima, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, Yucatán, Hidalgo, Tamaulipas, Sonora, Nuevo León, Chiapas, and Campeche.

irregular forces were armed [...including *agraristas* and laborers].”<sup>58</sup> In addition to General Estrada, the rebel movements were led by the following important military *caudillos*: Fortunato Maycotte, José Guadalupe Sánchez, Rómulo Figueroa, Manuel M. Diéguez, Cirpiano Alzado, Salvador Alvarado, and Rafael Buelna, among others.<sup>59</sup>

On 9 December 1923, after the bloodletting broke out, General Calles officially accepted the nomination “offered [to] me by political groups, all of revolutionary tendencies.” His crafted response had a two-fold purpose. First, he vowed to continue the work begun under the administration of Obregón “in the sense of carrying out the social reforms which embody the aspirations of the Mexican People.” Moreover, Calles painted the current regime as an intrepid protector of the rights of citizens, as one which, for example, had been the first government to accomplish the distribution of lands as quickly as the Constitutional procedure permitted it, and of being the first to afford the “greatest facilities for the perfecting of labor organization.” In sum, he ensured the citizens of the country that they would be able to reap the benefits enshrined in the Constitution of 1917. Second, he painted those who had recently taken up arms as neo-reactionaries; as individuals who endeavored to prevent the consolidation of a regime so firmly devoted to social reform that sought on the battlefield “what it would never obtain in the legitimate field of civic activity.” Calles asserted that the neo-reactionaries, which were led by Enrique Estrada and Guadalupe Sánchez, who were two sworn enemies of agrarianism

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<sup>58</sup> Loyo Camacho, *Joaquín Amaro y el proceso*, p. 111. Estimates related to contemporary size of the military varies among primary and secondary sources; however, my own forays into the archive show that the size of the military troops to be in the vicinity of 40,600; see AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-A-1, Legajo, No. 1, Anexo 1, pp. 10-11.

<sup>59</sup> Llerenas and Jaime Tamayo, *El levantamiento delahuertista*, p. 9.

and accomplices of the great landowners in Jalisco and Veracruz, would not succeed because “for the first time in history, the regular Army is united, by its origin, with the proletariat of the country and the city and with the strong nuclei of the middle class [...]”<sup>60</sup>

The presidential candidate was not one to show any sign of weakness and, to the tune of war, offered his services to General Obregón. He vowed also to enter the battlefield—in the process interrupting his own campaign—to once again defend with arms in hand the revolutionary principles, which the neo-reactionaries now threatened.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, in his address to the nation after the rebellions began, President Alvaro Obregón captured the gravity of this moment:

After our internal struggles, in which the people through necessity bought by the price of blood [the] civic liberties and social reforms which have served as a basis for tranquility and welfare[,] the fearful specter of another rebellion headed by Generals Guadalupe Sánchez and Enrique Estrada [arises...]. The Executive declares in all sincerity that the situation will be met with the same energy that has marked passed crises and that not one sacrifice will be made that will compromise the norms for which the Revolution was fought.<sup>62</sup>

After Estrada made his telegram public on 7 December 1923, declaring himself in open rebellion against the Government of Obregón, the president wrote to the former clearly conveying a feeling of betrayal: “[during] my stay in El Fuerte, Jalisco, just in the last days, you would make no less than two trips a week to visit me, and you would stay at my house and occupied my table at the place of honor, [even] having invited me in the

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<sup>60</sup> *El Demócrata*, 9 December 1923.

<sup>61</sup> *El Demócrata*, 9 December 1923.

<sup>62</sup> *Excelsior*, 12 December 1923.

last [couple of] visits to be a witness to your wedding.” For Obregón this betrayal stemmed from Estrada’s own vanity because of his removal from the post of Secretary of War, and because of the spite held and expressed when he was not appointed Secretary of Agriculture. “My own fault lies in having esteemed you more than what you deserved,” lamented Obregón, “and in having believed in your military honor and in your gallantry.”<sup>63</sup>

Over the course of the next sixty days the rebel forces fought it out against what remained of the federal army and, in the process, posed a grave challenge to the national process of reconstruction. In Jalisco, the forces of General Estrada swiftly overtook Guadalajara and continued to accumulate decisive victory upon victory. Dr. Cutberto Hidalgo, Minister of Foreign Relations during the interim-presidency of de la Huerta, and now a representative of General Estrada, confirmed to the State Department on 11 December that the “present revolution was the result of false promises made by President Obregón; that efforts had been made in every possible way to obtain from the president effective suffrage, but without success; and that as a last resort an appeal to arms had been made.” Dr. Hidalgo, however, predicted that the “revolution” would be successful within fifteen days since they already controlled fourteen states and were currently fighting for the possession of six others, whereas the Obregón government “has only seven, including the Federal District.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Jaime Tamayo and Laura Romero, *La rebelión estradista y el movimiento campesino, 1923-1924* (Centro de Estudios Históricos del Agrarismo de México, 1983).

<sup>64</sup> SD, 812.00/26710, 11 December 1923.



**Figure 2:** Generals during the de la Huerta Rebellion. Pictured from left to right (top): General Plutarco Elías Calles and General Francisco R. Serrano, Secretary of War; (bottom): *General de División* Eugenio Martínez and President Alvaro Obregón. Circa December 1923. Courtesy of the State Department, 812.00/27028.

One of the premier battles of the rebellion took place in late December 1923, when President Obregón ordered General Lázaro Cárdenas to combat the rebel forces in Jalisco. As soon as Estrada got wind of the advancing two thousand cavalymen, he sent General Rafael Buelna with numerically superior forces to trail them. Buelna encountered the troops of Cárdenas at Teocuitatlán de Corona and after twelve hours of fighting “completely routed the Federal forces.”<sup>65</sup> On 27 December, Buelna reported to his

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<sup>65</sup> SD, 812.00/26729, 28 December 1923.

superior, Estrada, that the column of *callista* General Lázaro Cárdenas had been completely destroyed—Federal General Paulino Navarro killed, Cárdenas wounded and taken prisoner, alongside all of this Staff. “I have at this moment more than five hundred prisoners and more than a thousand rifles taken from the enemy who lost their droves of horses,” boasted Buelna, “It is my opinion that very few times [in history] has such a complete triumph been obtained.”<sup>66</sup> The State Department echoed similar sentiments: “It was a complete victory [...] and has caused much rejoicing among them and their supporters.”<sup>67</sup>

After the crushing blow dealt to General Cárdenas and his forces, rebel victories did not continue in such a spectacular fashion and became few and far between. During the course of the following month, the tide began to turn in favor of the Federal Forces. The eventual defeat of the rebellion was in large part due to three primary factors: 1) Obregón’s ability to rally the majority of the *campesino* element and working-class individuals to fight for the state; 2) the lack of military coordination amongst major rebel leaders commanding the rebellions; and 3) the U.S. government’s willingness to sell arms to federal forces and their reluctance to afford the rebels the same privilege.<sup>68</sup> The last point was well-expanded upon in a letter written by Federal Deputy Juan Manuel Álvarez

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<sup>66</sup> AHMA, 1923 (Gobernación, 6). “Telegram from General Enrique Estrada to Chief Supreme of the Revolution Adolfo de la Huerta.” 27 December 1923. Estrada made it clear to Buelna to not “follow barbarous customs but rather to treat prisoners like old companions and to attend to the enemy wounded with the same care applied ‘to our own wounded.’” As a result, General Cárdenas, who was in bad shape, received first-rate medical treatment in Guadalajara and duly recovered from his injuries; see Dulles (*Yesterday in Mexico*), p. 242.

<sup>67</sup> SD, 812.00/26729, 28 December 1923.

<sup>68</sup> Lleneras and Tamayo. *El levantamiento delahuertista*, p. 13.

del Castillo to U.S. President Calvin Coolidge. Álvarez del Castillo—who was writing in the capacity as a representative of Adolfo de la Huerta—asked President Coolidge to “end [...] all of the assistance, the good will and help, and support which you have heretofore extended to the Obregón Government which had initiated a policy of intervention hurting the most sacred sentiments of the Mexican people as none of your adversaries had done up to this date and compromising the diplomacy of the United States [...]” The federal deputy did not ask for assistance, but rather on the contrary, he wanted the assistance given to the Obregonista Government to cease because their “authorities have made use of the arms obtained from the United States not only for their fight against the Mexican people but also for the murder of respectable official.”<sup>69</sup> The western-front experienced the heaviest fighting during the insurgency, or as a contemporary put it “the heaviest in recent Mexican revolutionary history,” but the reverberations of that violence were not just felt on the battlefields; they permeated everyday life, indiscriminately thwarted class lines, subsumed political loyalties, and influenced how citizens interpreted the new social order.

The Estradista Rebellion was indeed comprised of a wide array of participants, among them urban intellectuals, state-level politicians, landowners opposed to agrarian reform, pro-clerical rebels eager to wipe out the secularizing provisions of the 1917 Constitution, and *agraristas* defending their newly enshrined rights. Nevertheless, no study has attempted to shift the focus of inquiry down to what these citizens actually thought about these contemporary events, how they interpreted the social order (or

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<sup>69</sup> SD, 812.00/27043, 27 February 1924.

disorder), and how they imagined (or reimagined) their roles and places within it. Let us now turn to Ocotlán, Jalisco, the area where we began our chapter. If the reader recalls Governor Zuno and President Obregón met to discuss the evidence that linked General Estrada to a major rebellion. The time is four months removed from that fateful meeting and the scene is the most significant battle of the rebellion.

### **Interpreting Political Behaviors and Social Constructions in the Estradista Rebellion**

Near the town of Ocotlán not far from the shores of Lake Chapala, well-entrenched rebel forces held out against federal forces for more than twelve days. The day was 9 February 1924 and the battlefield in question was the principal rebel stronghold in the West. It had been carefully selected for its naturally formidable strategic position. In an effort to reach rebel entrenchments, federal forces, who possessed far greater numbers and superior artillery, attempted to ford the *Río Lerma*. They faced constant enemy fire; many died in the bloodletting. The fighting quickly escalated leading to three hundred officially reported federal casualties, which the press increased to six hundred; subsequent public and private reports placed the number at a much larger figure. Rebel losses were estimated at four thousand killed, wounded, or made prisoners—and approximately one-thousand rebels deserted to the federal side. “It is now almost universally agreed that the Federal losses greatly exceeded those of the rebels,” claimed the State Department. Train loads of wounded federal troops began to arrive in Mexico City two days later, and continued for several days.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> SD, 812.00/27028, February 16, 1924.



Not long after this decisive victory, the Federal Army went on triumphantly to occupy both Guadalajara and Veracruz. “The rebellion that broke out in the Republic during the first fortnight of December last,” proclaimed the Secretary of War, “can now be considered [...] stamped out [...]the] troops of the three main insurgent leaders, Estrada, Sánchez and Maycotte—for de la Huerta has been nothing but an instrument in their hands—have been practically annihilated by the true National army.”<sup>71</sup> On 13 March 1924 the Ministry of Interior ordered Colonel Martín Bárcenas to transfer himself to the city of Guadalajara to investigate if the “powers” of the state “disappeared” during the recent rebellion led by General Enrique Estrada.<sup>72</sup> This section makes use of that *comisión*,<sup>73</sup> which interviewed approximately four hundred citizens hailing from various classes, ages, occupations, and political views. The *actas* (records) that made it into the final report came from people who “in their immense majority” took part in contemporary events or who were witness to them.

At times, the document reads like a report that has systematically collected, organized, and—to a certain extent—cataloged a myriad of interviews and impressions related to the disruption of the social order. In other instances, the *comisión* allows one to experience a certain level of intimacy with each historical subject. Many of the *actas* bear

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<sup>71</sup> SD, 812.00/27029, February 15, 1924.

<sup>72</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion.” The order emanated from Secretary Enrique Colunga. Additionally, the “*comisión*” entrusted to Colonel Bárcenas as president was comprised of the following individuals: Colonel Gaspar Tellez Girón who had the capacity of speaker and Lic. Don Salvador Mendoza as Secretary. After eleven days, Tellez Girón and Mendoza separated themselves from the *comisión*, leaving Bárcenas to carry out the remainder of the investigation by himself—he completed the task on 8 May 1924.

<sup>73</sup> AGN, DGIPS, Caja: 244, Exp. 9, 313.1-968, Tomo I, March 1924.

a resemblance to formal depositions. The official conducting the session would administer a clear line of questioning and the responses, information, and experience of the declarants, in turn, guided how the interview developed. Other *actas*, however, were either hastily hand-written statements (if the subject was literate) or carefully recorded oral statements delivered in the presence of witnesses, which were then read back to the subject and signed (if the subject could sign). The statements collected in the aftermath of the Estradista Rebellion, nevertheless, provide unique access to a significant and previously unexamined view of how local politics and governance were observed to function in times of unrest and crisis. Equally as important, they allow us to grapple with what citizens thought about the first major challenge to the postrevolutionary order.

Social scientists—and historians, for that matter—have a limited comprehension of what actually goes on inside the minds of individuals; that is, what angers, scares, or pleases, and motivates their actions. As North, Wallis, and Weingast illuminate, individual interests arise from the interaction of preferences, alternatives, and causal beliefs:

What is in the perceived best interest of individuals is a complicated amalgam of their preferences over different outcomes, the alternatives that they face, and their beliefs about how their actions will affect the world around them. People are intentional; they are trying to accomplish the best outcomes with their limited resources and choices, but how they behave depends critically on how they believe the world around them actually works. Because the world is too complicated for human understanding to master fully, no belief system can be a completely accurate depiction of the world around us.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> North, Wallis, and Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders*, p. 28

Similarly, Simon writes, “virtually all human behavior is rational [...people] usually have reasons for what they do, and if asked, can opine what these reasons are [and when] we do not find people’s reasons for their actions to be credible, we do not thereby judge the people themselves to be irrational.”<sup>75</sup> Instead, continues Simon, we come to believe that they were either deceiving us or themselves, and therefore ascribe “other, more plausible reasons to the behavior.” However, when individuals are deemed irrational, it does not mean that there are no reasons sustaining the actions they undertake. Rather, this merely comes down to four conflicts 1) the reasons that motivate their action are different from those individuals “normally” provide; 2) the reasons are based on entirely different assumptions; 3) there are more compelling, sometimes “unstated,” reasons for not taking other actions; and 4) or the individual possess a different value system.<sup>76</sup>

Many of the causal beliefs interviewers/declarants expressed in the *comisión* about how other people behaved during the rebellion can be *both* confirmed or disproved. But the certainty they displayed in their own beliefs being true, and of their explanatory power over causal patterns in human behavior, here, serves as a potential guide to understanding intentional human behavior. For the interviewer/declarant, then, understanding the tumultuous events of the period and their consequences transforms into a function of how close their own experience fit into the prevailing assumptions about the historical moment.<sup>77</sup> The idea of what is going on in politics and war (and the mundane

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<sup>75</sup> Herbert A. Simon, “Rationality in Political Behavior,” *Political Psychology* Vol. 16, No. 1, *Special Issue: Political Economy and Political Psychology* (March, 1995): 45-46

<sup>76</sup> Simon, “Rationality in Political Behavior,” p. 46.

<sup>77</sup> North, Wallis, and Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders*, pp. 28-29.

experiences reflected in the *actas*) are indeed related, but they are not necessarily connected, and this is completely acceptable. I take as a given that contemporaries find it difficult to *see* the temporal organization of the conflict as it unfolded, for example, and that verbal responses cannot fully model it, since multiple scales of spatially extended phenomena came to shape the many local rebellions that occurred during this period. But I am more interested in portraying the reality of citizens who were indirectly or directly caught up in the spasmodic episodes of violence and in interpreting what they thought about local authorities, government, and the violence at large, than in developing a larger explanatory model for understanding the rebellion. I find it important to note that the raw data the *comisión* produced is a social construction in itself; however, it is exactly that *social construction* of contemporary events, irrespective of whether the views were deemed to be true, false, or mundane, that I opted to highlight.

*The Rebellion Ends. The Comisión Begins.*

After the battle of Ocotlán and the triumph of federal troops, Governor José G. Zuno—who had been in hiding since the outbreak of the rebellion—delivered an inflammatory speech to thousands of followers in the plaza, in front of the *Palacio de Gobierno*, in which he asserted: “that once more their lawful representative had recovered power; and once more in the history of their country they witnessed the triumph of the Constitutionalist over the acts of revolutionists.” He called for “revolutionary justice” to be imparted against the church and its priests, capitalist, and *hacendados*. The following morning, armed partisans of the governor began to terrorize the city, “taking automobiles and forcibly entering homes, in search of weapons, [and for]

all of [the individual] they suspected to be political adversaries or favorable to the revolutionary cause.”<sup>79</sup>

It was against the backdrop of this heightened sense of hysteria that Colonel Bárcenas began his month-long investigation in Guadalajara. Evoking many of these difficulties in his final report to the Ministry of Interior, he insisted that an “environment of terror” intensified while he carried out the task: “[Governor] Zuno did not pass up any opportunity to directly harass the individuals who made declarations to the commission.” Notwithstanding these actions, Bárcenas confirmed that he was visited by a great number of individuals during his month-long investigation—in particular, those of the “humble” classes—who presented complaints to him of thefts, assassinations, and persecutions carried out by functionaries or employees of the state government, “by order of the governor.”<sup>80</sup> Zuno’s whereabouts and allegiance during the *Estradista* Rebellion, however, were also extensively debated on floor of the Chamber of Deputies. In particular, labor-boss Napoleon Morones—in what looked to be the start of a longer feud between the two—claimed: “The reports received in Guadalajara by our companions that had the opportunity of leaving after Estrada’s uprising, prove his coexistence with

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<sup>79</sup> SD, 812.00/27035 February 12, 1924; SD, 812.00/27046 February 21, 1924.

<sup>80</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion.” Chapter 2 of this dissertation explores Governor José Guadalupe Zuno and the consequences of this episode in greater depth. In particular, it provides insight into the consequences of such state interventions on the lives of citizens following the Estradadista Rebellion, up until his untimely resignation in 1926. Remarkably, the evidence the commission collected hinted at a widespread cover-up following the insurgency on the part of regional government officials (including Zuno, himself). From the moment, then, when the rebellion broke out and Governor Zuno was once again in charge of the Executive of the State, concluded Colonel Bárcenas, the former had committed abuses to individual guarantees and to property, “which translated to assassinations, imprisonments and persecutions, *robos* (theft) and *raterías* (petty thievery) [...and the] *desincautación* (confiscation) of property has converted it into a *pingue* (plentiful) business that has produced many thousands of pesos.”

Estrada [...] that governor Zuno finds himself in the capital of Jalisco, there is no doubt [...].” The labor-boss even went as far as to imply that the governor was cowardly waiting for the federal forces to arrive in Guadalajara so that he could “simulate that he had been upheld [an] position of honor [in favor of the government]” during the events that happened in the state of Jalisco.<sup>81</sup>

Investigations into the “disappearance of powers” have long been an important point of contention within the Mexican federalist system. Written into the Constitution of 1917, Article 75, Section 5, “mandated that when the powers of a state had ‘disappeared,’ the federal Senate was responsible for naming a provisional governor who would occupy the office until new elections could be held.” In the 1920s these investigations became a common source of controversy and debate among federal and state authorities, given that many state elections often ended in gridlocks. However, Osten has elsewhere argued that “[a]lthough not all disappearances of state powers were the result of a failed gubernatorial election, it was a common cause.”<sup>82</sup> In fact, there existed no regulatory law to establish its boundaries and “it had been exercised in multiple and diverse cases [...] from violations to individual guarantees, to pronouncements of governors against the federal government [...]” The “disappearance of powers,” according to González Oropeza, then, remains one of the most significant political quandaries facing the

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<sup>81</sup> See *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, H. Congreso de la Unión, <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebate/index.html>. Legislatura XXX – Año II – Período Comisión Permanente – Fecha 19240102 (2 January 1924) – Número de Diario 37.

<sup>82</sup> Sarah Osten, “Trials by Fire: National Political Lessons from Failed State Elections in Post-Revolutionary Mexico, 1920-1925,” *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 2013): 253-254.

federalist system in Mexico because of the inherent magnitude which underlies it: “the transcendence that the disappearance of the powers [clause] has is corroborated [by] the consequences that the respective declarative implies [...]”<sup>83</sup> The clause, however, has been frequently misinterpreted immediately to depose state governments that were considered either hostile or contrary to federal politics.<sup>84</sup> Jalisco’s first investigation into the “disappearance of the powers,” which occurred when the *Plan de Agua Prieta* triumphed on 5 July 1920, clearly illustrates this point.

When Military Commander Manuel Diéguez refused to recognize and give credence to the *Plan*, General Enrique Estrada, who had seconded the Sonoran movement, ordered the arrests of the former and Luis Castellano y Tapia (the governor of Jalisco). Estrada then made public his refusal to recognize the powers in Jalisco because they had “committed various crimes against the common order.” After forwarding his formal petition to the executive and legislative branches, General Estrada officially transferred the state’s executive power to Ignacio Ramos Praslow, a native of Sinaloa. Praslow was then elevated to the post of provisional governor “due to the circumstances which the country experienced.” When the larger conflict came to a conclusion, Senators Ancona Allbertos, Amado Aguirre, Luis Pescador, Elías Arias, and Enrique Colunga, formally asked the Senate for the powers of the state to be declared disappeared in Jalisco, and in the states of México, Puebla, Veracruz, Yucatán, and Campeche. A new interim governor was shortly thereafter appointed. A few days later, a short list of

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<sup>83</sup> Manuel González Oropeza, *La intervención federal en la desaparición de poderes* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, 1983), p. 159.

<sup>84</sup> González Oropeza, *La intervención federal*, p. 146.

candidates for interim governor were then offered and were forwarded to a commission for further studies regarding the merits and antecedents of each candidate. The governor that Estrada had appointed, Praslow, was quickly disqualified because according to article 115 of the general Constitution, he could not serve as provisional governor because he was not a native of Jalisco, but rather of Sinaloa. As a result, a new set of candidates were offered up and Francisco Labastida Izquierdo was selected. But the declaration that was made with regard to the disappearance of the powers, however, was not deemed lawful, “since [Jalisco] did not exist [in an] acephalous [state] because the governor imposed by the Plan de Agua Prieta being able to have been authorized to power to convene elections.”<sup>86</sup> But unlike this previous foray, however, the investigation that began in March 1924 was never consummated at the highest levels of the national government. The commission, however, left an impressive written record.

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The Ministry of Interior’s initial inquiry into the Estradista Rebellion served a two-fold objective. On the one hand, it reflected a wider *inquietud* over regional political loyalties—in particular, those of governor Zuno who during one of the darkest moments of *obregonismo* retreated to a house on *Calle Sarcófago* and turned his back on the duties required by his office.<sup>87</sup> On the other, the various declarations also provide us with

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<sup>86</sup> González Oropeza, *La intervención federal*, pp. 186-187, 250.

<sup>87</sup> Much of Governor Zuno’s action (and inaction) during the rebellion produced an impressive array of evidence that would later come form part of a larger discussion regarding him in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. See Chapter 2 of this dissertation and/or “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” H. Congreso de la Unión, <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebate/index.html>. Legislatura XXXI – Año II – Período Extraordinario – Fecha 19260323 (23 March 1926) – Número de Diario 3, or



insight into not only what individuals thought about these contemporary regional and national political developments, and how they behaved, but extends our understanding of how the rural towns and settlements of the state experienced this moment of crisis. As a result, this section grapples closely with what can be more broadly defined as *political culture*—that is, a set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments, which give order and meaning to the political process, and that provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in society.

In particular, I focus on three areas that were of chronic interest to ordinary and prominent citizens alike: 1) how the events of the rebellion unfolded and were experienced by individuals in Guadalajara; 2) the statements that emphasize what citizens interpreted the actions of state officials to be before and during the rebellion; and 3) declarations from agrarian communities, insurgents, landowners, and other individuals who resided in the rural regions of the state. The larger goal here is to shift my analysis away from the actual acts of violence—whenever possible—and instead to interpret how individuals from various social classes felt the reverberations unleashed when the state’s capacity to rule was undermined in the winter of 1923.

### *Mayhem Erupts in Guadalajara*

On either the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> of December 1923, Manuel I. Gómez,<sup>88</sup> a former Colonel turned agriculturalist, travelled to Guadalajara to obtain money for wages—presumably

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AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) “25,” Box 2024, State of Jalisco, Political Situation, 1925-B, Exp: 10, “Local Minority Report to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union,” February 1926.

<sup>88</sup> In March of 1923, nine-months before the rebellion broke out, President Alvaro Obregón discharged Colonel Manuel I. Gómez and the Rural Forces of the State. The mounted municipal policemen were, as a result, increased, which “in fact continued to carry out the labors [that were] before entrusted to

to pay the workers that he employed in the town of Tala. While in the capital Gómez encountered the Head of the Mounted Police and the General Inspector of Police. “Both told me that they knew that General Estrada was going to rebel and that we should go see [the Municipal President of Guadalajara] Lic. Gustavo R. Cristo to see what he ordered,” observed Gómez. Now caught in the developing maelstrom, he accompanied the policemen to the *Lonja Mercantil* (merchant market) where they found Cristo and “he told us that it was necessary to see Governor Zuno.” Gómez subsequently travelled to the *Palacio de Gobierno* to speak with Zuno and said to him: “I know that all the preparations for General Estrada to rebel are already made. I’m at your orders.” The governor responded that he did not have knowledge of anything and they should wait and see if it ended up being true.<sup>89</sup>

Rodrigo Ramírez, aide-de-camp to General Enrique Estrada, asserted he knew that there were no preparations made prior to the rebellion, “given that when the [movement] broke out [...none] of the corps that protected him [Estrada] knew of the movement.” He spoke of an important meeting on the afternoon of the 6 December, following its conclusion Estrada and fellow general, Ramírez Garrido, decided to withdraw recognition of the Government of General Obregón. And that at around 11:00 p.m. in the evening of that same day, they came closer to a table and dictated a message,

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the rural forces.” Gómez was then transferred and appointed Commissioner in the Department of War and Roads, a position he held in Guadalajara until the end of August or September. After leaving his post, the former Colonel returned to the town of Tala and dedicate himself to agricultural work, but travelled weekly to Guadalajara with the objective of obtaining money for wages—presumably to pay the workers under his own employment.

<sup>89</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244. “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 28. “Declaration of Colonel Manuel I. Gómez, 3 April 1924.

“that I wrote [which indicated that they did] not recognize the Government; with a copy for all of the Officer Corps, telling them to wait for orders from General Estrada.”

Ramírez suspected that the governor was aware of the meeting between the generals, given that he noticed Zuno had sent a patrol out to the streets. The following day, Municipal President Cristo and three other members of the *ayuntamiento* arrived to confer with Estrada. The aide-de-camp listened in and heard Cristo tell the General the following: “I have orders that all of those from the mounted Police that you want, [that] they should present themselves in the Colorado Headquarters so that they can be enlisted in the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion and that the cavalry be remitted to the Colorado Grande Headquarters.” Governor Zuno, according to Ramírez, was to be spared because “General Estrada gave importance to the personality of the governor and for that reason he was not persecuted.”<sup>90</sup>

When the rebellion broke out Deputy Ramírez was locked in under seven keys. About thirteen days before the rebellion a friend of his from the Chamber of Commerce forwarded rumors to him of an impending insurgency to be led by General Estrada. Ramírez relayed this to Zuno, to which the governor replied “I already told the President of the Republic and [he] does not want to understand.” About seven or eight days before the rebellion, the deputy once again brought to the attention of Zuno that it had been confirmed that Estrada was going to rise up in arms and that he should call the Deputies together as friends, “not in Chamber.” And since everyone controlled their districts

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<sup>90</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244. “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 56. “Declaration of Rodrigo Ramírez,” 23 April 1924.

Ramírez claimed that “I thought that every one of them could contribute a contingent of 500 men.” As soon as he suggested the idea the governor laughed at it: “Zuno said that he had [made some] preparations in Tequila, and that he had armed men, but they were never to be seen.”<sup>91</sup>

On 7 December, the day after the outbreak of rebellion, Ignacio Hermosillo Gil—a local correspondent of Mexico City’s *El Universal*, saw Governor Zuno arrive in a government automobile near the former’s place of residence on *Calle de Progreso 8* in San Pedro Tlaquepaque. The time was 1 a.m. and Zuno was accompanied by a relative, and two other individuals: one who could not be identified, the other was Local Deputy Manuel Vidrio Guerra. Governor Zuno marched directly to the office of Municipal President Antonio Sánchez to speak with him. When the governor left, Hermosillo Gil proceeded to speak with Sánchez, telling him that “the Municipal President told me that Estrada had rebelled and that Zuno had ordered him [Sánchez] to recognize the rebel movement.” Later that day, at 11:30 a.m., the local correspondent went to the *Palacio de Gobierno* where he was handed the governor’s official declarations to the press, which were to be published in local newspapers. He remembers that “[Zuno said] he did not know where his head was.”<sup>92</sup> Similarly, Local Deputy Lic. Esteban García de Alba noticed that Zuno was extremely intimidated by recent events, “but he intended at all

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<sup>91</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244. “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 41. “Declaration of Regino Ramírez,” 11 April 1924.

<sup>92</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 22. “Declaration of Ignacio Hermosillo Gil,” 31 March 1924.

costs to remain as governor, [and] with that motivation he gave his declarations [to the press].”<sup>93</sup>

A few hours before, at 9:00 in the morning, an employee of the Governmental Palace arrived at the house of Local Deputy José García de Alba to deliver an urgent message from Zuno “so that I [García de Alba] could then attend [the] Governmental Palace [and I admit that] I ignored that the rebel movement had broken out, even though all the Deputies knew that it would break out [...].” After some initial confusion as to why he was there (and after confronting the governor) he was told that it was to find out if the rebellion broke out and to determine what course of action they should take. “I answered that these things would not be deliberated,” firmly responded J. García de Alba, “that it was clear that this movement [had as its goal] to depose the General Government and the local Government of the State, and that before such a situation it would be a waste to deliberate, that what was needed was to act.” The local deputy urged Zuno to telegraph or to notify, through the appropriate channels, the municipal presidents of the towns so that they oppose the rebellion—to which he received a simple “he could not do anything of what [I] indicated.” J. García de Alba made specific mention of President Obregón’s repeated visits to his El Fuerte residence near the town of Ocotlán, claiming to have indicated to Zuno the benefits of having numerous groups of Deputies accompany the governor to ask for the removal of General Estrada as the Chief of Operations “telling him [Zuno] that we [the deputies] did not prejudice his loyalty, but that we only did it

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<sup>93</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 10. “Declaration of Esteban García de Alba and Rodolfo García de Alba,” 25 March 1924.

because he was not a pleasant person to us.” After offering up these ideas to Zuno, he replied “No, man, Estrada works.”<sup>94</sup>

The following afternoon, members of the *Partido Reconstructor Jalisciense* (PRJ) led a major demonstration throughout the major avenues of Guadalajara, in support of the rebel forces and officially to depose Governor Zuno. “There were, I believe, representatives of the A.C.J.M., of the Democratic Party, of the Syndicate of Agriculturalists,” testified Saturnino Coronado (a prominent member of the aforementioned political party), “or at least that was the intention.”<sup>95</sup> The crowds were estimated at anywhere from 50 to 100 individuals. They eventually arrived to the General Headquarters of the Second Division of the Northwest and once in front of the building, the crowd made their desire for a new governor known to all. A group including Coronado, among others, was given passage into the office of General Estrada, where they declared to him their desires and intentions. And in light of that meeting, the representatives again addressed the crowd and told them that it was “they who had to make the decision [of] who would replace Zuno.” The local press claimed that all of the demonstrators “agreed to declare Francisco Tolentino governor” and then headed towards the *Palacio de Gobierno*.<sup>96</sup> When asked if the PRJ had organized a demonstration with the objective of deposing him, Zuno, himself, played coy: “I don’t know [...the] press

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<sup>94</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 29. “Declaration of José García de Alba,” 3 April 1924.

<sup>95</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244. “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 25. Declaration of Saturino Coronado,” 1 April 1924.

<sup>96</sup> *El Informador*, 9 December 1923.

said it, but I was in hiding [...] I knew that the Syndicate of Agriculturalists had participated, the A.C.J.M., the Knights of Columbus [and] one of those members was apprehended by the municipal president.” The governor claimed to have been informed of this by his Secretary of Government Silvano Barba González who was standing on the corner of the *Fama Italiana* (a fine dining establishment) in the moments when the demonstration broke out. And when pressed on whether he had more knowledge of the individuals who participated, Zuno exclaimed “Well I did not know, because I abandoned the city with trusted employees.”<sup>97</sup>

After the demonstration, Juan Espinosa, thirty-six years of age, a pottery-maker by trade, from the barrio of Mezquitán in Guadalajara, also found himself near the *Palacio de Gobierno* between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. in the evening. He did not make mention of the demonstration, but instead chose to focus on an automobile that arrived to the *Palacio*, “in which I saw Governor Zuno with General Estrada, [with] the auto entering into the interior of the *Palacio*.” The following day, on 9 December, he again saw Zuno and Estrada conversing with other people, standing at the plaza, in front of the same building in question. “This happened at [approximately] 10:30 in the morning,” remembers Espinosa, “I stood around [for] like five minutes to see them and then I retreated.”<sup>98</sup> Meanwhile, local debt collector José G. Hernández also alleged to have seen

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<sup>97</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 39. “Declaration of José Guadalupe Zuno,” 10 April 1924.

<sup>98</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 9. “Declaration of Juan Espinosa,” 20 March 1924.

similar propositions earlier that day at 8:00 a.m. when he went to the Military Headquarters of Guadalajara to charge Colonel German Aldaba the rent owed to him. An official informed him of Aldaba's location within the building. When Hernández arrived at the door he proceeded to knock. The door opened and the individual whom he was looking for appeared and invited him to pass. While waiting in the corridor, the debt collector claimed to have seen Zuno and Gustavo R. Cristo—the municipal president of Guadalajara—and overheard the former telling Estrada that “he was a friend of the movement.” Apparently, Zuno also told Estrada that “he would be at his orders and that he could count on contingents of men, and that all of the political parties were in agreement with him.” Cristo was said to have made similar offers. Estrada replied that for the moment he could not accept their services, but that he would keep an eye open to see if he needed them.<sup>99</sup>

Afonso Martínez Sotomayor, who temporarily served as Secretary in the rebel government of Guadalajara, and remained in the city during the rebellion maintained that the “whole world new that [Governor Zuno was here during the rebellion...I] saw him up until the 8<sup>th</sup> [of December]; after that I did not see him, but everyone knew he was hidden.”<sup>100</sup> Local Deputy José García de Alba also confirmed such observations,

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<sup>99</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 25. “Declaration of Saturino Coronado,” 1 April 1924.

<sup>100</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 30, “Declaration of Alfonso Martínez Sotomayor,” 4 April 1924. With regard to his knowledge concerning relations between Zuno and Estrada, Sotomayor could not provide a definitive answer; however, he did link Zuno with rebel General Rafael Buelna: “I understand that there [was] \$90,000.00 [pesos] that were dedicated to the purchase of cattle for [Hacienda] el Jazmín [which Buelna managed].”



declaring that Zuno had gone into hiding in the house of numerous relatives: “When I was able to send him a message, I did it in a forceful manner and condemned his behavior, at the same time I urged him to fulfill his duty.”<sup>101</sup> Even Lic. Mariano Ramírez, who found himself outside of Guadalajara at the start of the rebellion, but returned nine days later, for example, also truly believed to have knowledge of Zuno’s subsequent propositions to Enrique Estrada so that he could stay on as governor, but that they were not accepted nor discarded by the General: “there is no doubt that Zuno was working in the government of Estrada.”<sup>102</sup>

While some of the above accounts overlap—and this could be the result of a simple mixing up of dates or exaggerations—it should be evident that one of the chief concerns expressed in the *actas* relates to the role government functionaries played during the rebellion—in particular, Governor Zuno and Municipal President Gustavo R. Cristo. The alarm bells that both ordinary citizens and fellow politicians rang with regard to the immoral behavior prominent politicians in Guadalajara exhibited did not go

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<sup>101</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 29, “Declaration of Deputy José García de Alba,” 3 April 1924. Specifically, J. García de Alba sent him the number of the fraction of the article of the State Constitution which empowered him to assume extraordinary powers. Additionally, he let the governor know that the Local Congress was not functioning and that the Permanent Commission was dispersed, “but even if it was not like that, he did not have any capacity to move the Powers to another place in the State.”

<sup>102</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista,” Acta 3, “Declaration of José Guadalupe Hernández,” 19 March 1924. Lieutenant Colonel Herculano Valdés, who fought in the rebel army alongside General Rafael Buelna “against the federal forces at the command of General Rafael Cárdeas” (the General in question was most likely Lázaro Cárdenas), was reluctant to answer many questions in his own declaration, but did shed additional insight into Governor José G. Zuno’s role during all the ruckus: “We had knowledge that this man [Zuno] was in agreement with the rebellion, but [because I left Guadalajara] I did not see him again [...]. Valdés cited the common knowledge that circulated among the commanders and officials within the rebel forces as the source of his information; see Acta 38, “Declaration of Lieutenant Colonel Herculano Valdés,” 10 April 1924.

unnoticed by our interlocutors. In fact, it prompted the *comisión* to conduct a thorough investigation into these allegations, delving into whether authorities had prior knowledge of the rebellion, whether they carried out the duties of their office, whether they were complicit in acts of rebellion, and/or if they took the proper steps to prevent or combat seditious activities. Although many of the declarations indeed focus on Zuno and Cristo specifically, others expanded the scope of their accusations and placed the responsibility squarely on the branches of the state government.

The *Partido Liberal Unionista Jalisciense* (PLUJ), for example, placed the blame upon the representatives of the “Powers” that made up the Government of Jalisco because of the “cowardly, negligent, ambiguous and partial behavior” they all demonstrated in the days of the rebellion. The representatives of the political party confirmed that Governor Zuno already knew about Estrada’s rebellion at least twenty-hour hours in advance “because he knew that his brother [Colonel Alberto Zuno] was apprehended.”

Meanwhile, according to the PLUJ, the majority of the local deputies in Jalisco evacuated to diverse places, “some went into hiding and [...] did not think to install themselves all together in one settlement of the state [...]. Therefore, the inactions of both Zuno and the local deputies, according the PLUJ, disqualified them from being able to receive the confidence of the Federal Government since they had not fulfilled the pact to which they were elected to uphold. It was hoped that they be stripped of all trust and be judged so that a future precedent be set and there be no repetition of a similar case. The politicians in Guadalajara had not only betrayed the commitment to watch over the good and sovereignty of an entity, which they swore to uphold, but also turned their back on “an entire people, even though they might not be responsible for everything and all of their

culpability consists in consenting [power...] to cowards and [people who] lack principles.”

Citing Article 41 of the General Constitution of the Republic, wherein it is claimed that the people can exercise their sovereignty by means of the Powers of the Union, when actions are of their own responsibility, and by the State when the issues are related to their interior matters, the PLUJ argued that it was clear that the governor did not comply with his obligations to loyally safeguard the state:

[And] with his cowardliness to not [...] expose [the] anarchy [that] reigned in this entity, of which he did not even attempt to prevent, nor combat, since he was in possession of the real fact that demonstrated that Estrada directly attacked the Federal Government and that [he] had as his only goal to destroy it. Zuno instead of combating [this] with the elements he [...] let the enemy take advantage of the situation; instead of disagreeing with it, he went to the office of Estrada to offer his services; instead of absenting himself to not sanction with his presence an illegitimate government, he limited himself to hiding without being persecuted, because he knew well that they would not persecute him and he abandoned everything, at the mercy of the Estradista mobs, [without] even showing a sign of reproach, but trying to continue carrying out his charge in agreement with the rebels. This [effort committed by] Zuno, to not prevent, nor even attempt to stop the crime from being consummated [rendered him guilty of violating several penal codes].<sup>103</sup>

The PLUJ believed and reiterated that Governor Zuno knew that preparations were being made on the part of Estrada to commit treason, but did not take any measures to prevent the plan from being executed. And that during the sixty days Guadalajara remained occupied by the rebel forces, the governor and the other “Powers” did not show any signs of life. Therefore, argued the PLUJ, “all the previous proves our judgment, that the

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<sup>103</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the dela huertista rebellion,” Acta 45, “Declaration of the Partido Liberal Unionista Jalisciense,” 22 March 1924.

cowardly and partial form in which the representatives of the Government acted, incapacitates them to deserve the confidence of the Federal Government, from the moment that with their behavior they [did] not fulfill the pact they have with said Federal Government.” For the members of this political party these public functionaries did not deserve the trust accorded to them.<sup>104</sup>

Deputy José García de Alba stated that when the rebellion broke out the majority of the members of the Congress of Jalisco remained in the city: “On the day that the rebellion broke out, Manuel Martínez Valadez and J. Rodrigo Camacho [of the Permanent Commission’ were in this [city], but I knew that possessed with panic they left that same day [...].” But only a total of fourteen deputies<sup>105</sup> remained within the limits of Guadalajara. The four elected functionaries who were not present, stressed Deputy García de Alba, had left for Mexico City to seek a meeting with the president “whom they took money from and told him they had armed groups [to resist the rebellion], which resulted as a lie.” The deputy stressed the Local Congress had sufficient numbers to form a quorum, but in order to achieve that they needed to summon the Permanent Commission or the governor of the state, and since Zuno was hidden “in a place I did not know,” they could not promulgate a decree. And when asked if the lack of action was due to the relatively few number of members of the Permanent Commission present within the city

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<sup>104</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 45. “Declaration of the Partido Liberal Unionista Jalisciense,” 22 March 1924.

<sup>105</sup> Enrique Díaz de León, Manuel Martínez Valadez, Manuel Vidrio Guerra, Regino Ramírez, Luis R. Castillo, Marcelino Barba González, Manuel Hernández and Hernández, Florencio Villaseñor, Enrique Cuervo, José Manuel Chávez, Guadalupe Covarrubias, J. Rodrigo Camacho, Victoriano Salado, and José García de Alba.

limits, J. García de Alba curtly responded that the Permanent Commission functions in an irregular manner and does not serve an important role, “given that the Constitution of the State gives very little abilities to the Permanent [Commission] and it is in Jalisco no other thing than a receiving office or mailbox [...] I can assure you that the Permanent [Commission] during this time in which it was constituted did not function.”

J. García de Alba also claimed that he and his fellow deputy colleagues were honorable individuals, and did not abuse their power: [Not like] the large cuts [of money] that Governor Zuno spent on who knows what [...].” He testified to the *comisión* that if by misfortune the deputies of the state who stayed in Guadalajara, “we were not apprehended, it was because we knew how to free ourselves from being [so].” One deputy actually rose up in defense of the Government; as it so happened, it was his brother and fellow deputy, Esteban García de Alba, who he frequently sent arms and ammunition in the areas of Teocuitatlán, Tecolotlán, and Juchitlán. And with regard to the role, if any, that deputies assumed in support of Estrada, J. García de Alba quickly distanced himself and his colleagues from any such connections: “No, I do not have knowledge of any Deputies offering their services to General Estrada.”<sup>106</sup>

While not the primary focus of this section, the military officials within the ranks of the rebel forces were not devoid of their own “perceived” ideological differences and subsequent actions taken to prevent discord among the rebels assumed what could more aptly be described as highly preventative measures. For example, when Ex-Lieutenant

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<sup>106</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 31. “Declaration of Local Deputy José García de Alba,” 8 April 1924.

Colonel Rafael Prado put himself at the orders of the revolution ushered in by the *estradista* forces, he left the Practical Cavalry Military School to take charge of a badly organized regiment. “I went to work there, as I was asked, but because of politics of some officials very close to Estrada, they took the regiment away from me,” lamented Prado, “I was dismissed and passed over then to the 7<sup>th</sup> [regiment], which was commanded by Alvarado.” In the meantime, rebel authorities opened up three previous investigations he had on record “to see if they could take me away from the regiment and they could do nothing.” After seeking an audience with Estrada, which was denied to him, he managed to learn from another General that “they are going to take you away from the 7<sup>th</sup> regiment because you are a *callista*.” Perplexed by the accusation, Prado exclaimed: “I am not a politician and I will not be; I am a soldier.”<sup>107</sup>

The above *actas* reflect the common consensus that the rebel forces did not bother Governor Zuno and local officials during the rebellion. They were all permitted to remain in Guadalajara, if they so desired, and some even went about publicly within the city limits. But the predominant view held among these witnesses was that elected officials either did nothing to prevent the rebellion or did too little in the face of such a menacing threat to the social order. The prevailing belief about what elected officials did or did not do in these moments of crises varied greatly according to the subjectivity of each declarant. And some were indeed in compromised positions when interviewed, as was the case with Governor Zuno; others felt the need to trumpet their colleagues’ immoral

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<sup>107</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 32, “Declaration of ex-Lieutenant Colonel Rafael Prado,” 9 April 1924.

behavior, while slightly elevating their own—hindsight is always twenty-twenty. What these internalizations about the contemporary movement effectively reveal, however, are consistent (almost chronic) *inquietudes* about the insurmountable circumstances that elected officials faced, the professed sanctity of political office, and the repulsiveness of those who did not fulfill the pact they swore to uphold. Let us now focus our attention beyond the urban metropolis of Guadalajara, to the rural towns and settlements of the state, which served as prominent theatres of violence throughout the rebellion.

*Local Governance, Divided Allegiances, and Agrarian Communities*

The day after Francisco Tolentino came into power as provisional governor of Jalisco—that is, on 10 December 1923—he published *Decree Number One*, comprised of three articles directed to the inhabitants of the state. The “First Article” reaffirmed the state’s sovereignty and proceeded (in the same vein as General Estrada had done before him) withdraw recognition from General Alvaro Obregón in his capacity as president of Mexico; the “Second Article” asserted that his administration did not recognize the existing Public Powers of the State (comprised of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial); and the “Third Article” was aimed at reconstructing and reorganizing “public functions” across the entire state, ordering the appointment of Municipal Councils with strict subjection to the “will of the people in those municipalities where it be necessarily.” Tolentino subsequently released a manifesto to the people of Jalisco, which was published in the local press and distributed to municipalities across the state. “Convinced that the will of the people of Jalisco was that I be the one who in provisional manner take charge of the Government of the State, and notwithstanding the difficult circumstances of

the moment,” claimed Tolentino, “I had no qualms about casting over my shoulder the heavy burden of carrying the reigns of one of the most important States of Republic.”<sup>109</sup>

Whereas some *ayuntamientos* were indeed replaced by these “Municipal Councils” during the rebellion, the majority of them actually remained intact and continued to function, or simply remained impartial. A document from 1923 (see Table 1), for example, listed fifty municipalities that did not adhere to the Government during the rebellion. The *Comisión* could only verify that the following eight municipalities actually confirmed receipt of Tolentino’s decree and agreed to support it: Tala, Magdalena, Cocula, Tonila, San Martín, Totlán, Zapotiltic, and Lagos de Moreno; while the municipalities of Aqualulco, Jocotepec, Etzatlán, Cuquio, San Marcos, La Barca, Ocotán, Atotonilco, Ayo el Chico, Chapala, San Juan de Lagos, Jesús María, Arandas, Tepatitlán, Quitupam, San Gabriel, Ixtlahuacán, C. Guzmán, Zacoalco, Atemayac, Santa Ana, and Tapalpa all declared that they had not received any decrees from the provisional governor nor any invitations to recognize the rebellion. Only the following *ayuntamientos* explicitly recognized the rebellion with a telegram directed to Tolentino and another to Estrada: Yahualica, Teoclatiche, and Ameca.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> AHMA, 1923 (Gobernación, 6), “Manifiesto to the People of Jalisco,” 12 December 1923. He subsequently released a manifiesto to the people of Jalisco, which was subsequently published in the local press and distributed to municipalities across the state. “Convinced that the will of the people of Jalisco was that I be the one who in provisional manner take charge of the Government of the State, and notwithstanding the difficult circumstances of the moment,” reiterated Tolentino, “I had no qualms about casting over my shoulder the heavy burden of carrying the reigns of one of the most important States of Republic.”

<sup>110</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 (3.2)/6-I, ff. 204-205, N.D.



**Table 1:** Municipalities that did not adhere to the Government during the Estradista Rebellion

Acatic	Chimalitán
Amacueca	Chiquilistlán
Atengo	Degollado
Atoyac	Ejutla
Ayo el Chico	El Grullo
Arenal	Encarnación
Bolaños	Huejucár
Cañandas	S. Diego de Alejandría
Cihuatlán	El Limón
Concepción de Buenos Aires	Huejuquilla el Alto
Cuautla	Jamay
Jilotlán	Teocuitatlán
La Barca	Tizapán el Alto
San Julián	Tlaquepaque
La Manzanilla	Tolimán
San Martín (8 <sup>th</sup> <i>Cantón</i> )	Tomatlán
Sta. María de los Angeles	Tonaya
Mexticacán	Totatiche
Mezquitic	Tuzcacuesco
Ojuelos	Unión de S. Antonio
Pocitlán	Valle de Juárez
Purificación	Villa Hidalgo
Quitupan	Villa Guerrero
Tecalitlán	Zapotitlán
Techalute	Zapotlán del Rey

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Source: adapted from Llerenas and Tamayo, p. 118. The documentation can be found in the Archivo Histórico de Jalisco, Ramo Gobernación, 1923.

Félix Ramos, the municipal president of Teocuitatlán de Corona, had a recent history of standing up to power. In fact, on either September or October of 1923, he found himself in Mexico City to denounce the express petition of Governor Zuno to disarm the *agraristas* of his region. According to Local Deputy José García de Alba “the *agraristas* [of Teocuitatlán] were disarmed, but to do it, they were beaten, driven away and even hanged.” While Ramos found himself in the nation’s capital to speak to the

Congress of *Ayuntamientos*, he was told by a delegate to the Congress: “do not get involved, these are [Governor] Zuno’s matters.” Ramos was not at all happy with what he was told; as a result, he successfully sought out a meeting with President Obregón. After the president heard him out, he was again told that these “are things of your governor of Jalisco; deal with him.”<sup>111</sup> The declaration given by Colonel Manuel I. Gómez also corroborates part of the story. He claimed that well before the rebellion started, Governor Zuno, in agreement with General Estrada and other troops of the 24<sup>th</sup> regiment under the command of Colonel Alberto Zuno, disarmed the agraristas of Teocuitatlán de Corona: “The same troops persecuted, mistreated said agraristas and established a detachment in the same place and bordering haciendas, helping hacendados against the agraristas until the rebellion broke out [...] I am quite sure that Governor Zuno was not persecuted by General Estrada, but rather on the contrary, he ordered various officers who had various kinds of respect for [him] for being a friend of the cause.”<sup>112</sup>

On the afternoon of 7 December 1923, Municipal President Ramos, received a notice from a government official, Gilberto Godínez, informing him that they [the rebels] intended to apprehend him, “[and] were going to execute him [by firing squad].” Consequently, in the evening of that same day, President Ramos, alongside fifteen [individuals], rose up in arms to defend the Government, “afterwards being able to gather up to 60 [individuals].” During the course of the rebellion, Ramos, the local politician

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<sup>111</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 29, “Declaration of José García de Alba,” 3 April 1924.

<sup>112</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 28, “Declaration of Manuel I. Gómez,” 3 April 1924.

turned pro-state insurgent operated in the Cerro de García, Tuzcueca, Lunas del Refugio (in the municipality of Teocuitatlán de Corona) and in cerro del Chivo, Barranca de San Pedro, Barranca de Soromutal (in the municipality of Tizapán el Alto). He primarily engaged in battles from the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1923 to 28 January 1924. Among the events that he was swept up in, were the burning of railway bridges and skirmishes against the *acordadas* of the haciendas of San Pedro de Gracia; a significant collaboration with General Lázaro Cárdenas in the combat of Teocuitatlán; and a prolonged encounter against General Novoa. Ramos affirmed that he had not received any letters from Governor Zuno that invited him to rise up against the Constitutional Government. While he did not believe Zuno supported the rebel forces, he did feel that Zuno did not comply with his duties as governor of the state and that he “thought [Zuno] was playing with two decks of cards, to look good with anyone who would win, the Government or the rebellion.”<sup>113</sup>

With regard to the functioning of municipal administrations during the rebellion, the above-mentioned Municipal President Ramos gave a well-defined indication of the behavior many of his fellow colleagues demonstrated, which ranged from passivity to indignation: the municipal president of Tuxcueca remained in his post, but he did not receive help of any kind; the municipal president of Cojumatlán left when the *agraristas* [on the federal side] occupied the plaza; and the municipal president of Tizapán rose up in favor of the government. His own administration in Teocuitatlán had even attempted to

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<sup>113</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 11. “Declaration of Félix Ramos,” 25 March 1924.

contact the governor before the rebellion: “[I] told Zuno that the Estrada uprising was rumored and he answered that if [I] saw something suspicious, that [I] should let him know.”<sup>114</sup> In Tonaya, Antonio Mejía, an administrator of an hacienda that was property of the state, for example, claimed that his local *ayuntamiento* did not recognize the rebels and that everyone was against it, “[but] they [the rebels] did not remove it, it kept functioning.”<sup>115</sup> Meanwhile in the town of Tala, Manuel I. Gómez confirmed that, “since they did not receive any counter-order [and] much less from the governor and seeing that everyone was in agreement [with the rebellion], the Ayuntamiento was also in agreement.”<sup>116</sup>

Governor Zuno, himself, who after the rebellion replaced most of the Municipal Governments, declared to have done so because they were “reactionary” and that “those that adhered [to the Estradista rebellion] even though [they did] not act, [their lack of action placed them] in the terrain of usurpation [and for that] I have not recognized their legitimacy.” Zuno proceeded to lambast several *ayuntamientos* for recognizing the rebellion: “in turn [other municipalities], [many] were content with not communicating like those of the region of Mascota; same happened with those of Teocaltiche; there were

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<sup>114</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 11, “Declaration of Félix Ramos,” 25 March 1924.

<sup>115</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 27, “Declaration of Antonio Mejía,” 1 April 1924.

<sup>116</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 28, “Declaration of Colonel Manuel I. Gómez,” 3 April 1924.

other enthusiasts, like ones from a Barca, Ocotlán, Poncitlán.”<sup>117</sup> Many of the *actas*, however, expressed the declarant’s belief that while Zuno was neutral in the conflict, his actions were very much opportunistic. Sotomayor, for example, believed that in early December 1923 the governor ordered dated sheets to be printed with decrees, which were to be delivered on the 15<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of January (presumably when the tide would begin to favor the federal government). In one of these sheets, dated on 19 December 1924, for example, Zuno, “in use of his extraordinary faculties” decreed that “the public functionaries of the State who lend their obedience to the people that currently usurp the public power will lose their position” and that “[all] of the acts carried out by the usurpers will be nullified [...]”<sup>118</sup> The dated sheets, therefore, declared that those who aided and abetted the rebels would be punished with the full rigor of the law. “I have this very much present [in my mind] due to [the fact] that this caused much laughter,” recalled Sotomayor, “because [I knew] that he was in hiding [...]and] he did not make any effort to rise up people with the objective of defending the constitutional army [...]the] only thing he did [during the rebellion] was to discourage his colleagues.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 39. “Declaration of José Guadalupe Zuno,” 10 April 1924.

<sup>118</sup> Tamayo, *La conformación del estado*, pp. 216-217

<sup>119</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 30, “Declaration of Alfonso Martínez Sotomayor.” In one of these sheets, dated on 19 December 1924, for example, Zuno, “in use of his extraordinary faculties” decreed that “the public functionaries of the State who lend their obedience to the people that currently usurp the public power will lose their position” and that “[all] of the acts carried out by the usurpers will be nullified [...]”

Mauricio Meléndrez, a resident of the community of Achío in Amatitán, married, thirty-seven years of age, and an agriculturalist, received a note from the municipal president of Tequila, Malaquias Cuervo, on the evening of 7 December 1923. It was in those moments that he first became aware of General Enrique Estrada’s rebellion against the National Government. Shortly thereafter at 1 a.m. in the morning, Meléndrez decided to rise up in arms to combat the Estradista rebellion, “being able to gather for said objective thirty-five men, whose elements swelled to fifty-eight some days thereafter.” Municipal President Cuervo provided these individuals with some arms and they then proceed to recognized Susano Casteñeda, a colonel, as their *Jefe Superior*. Echoing a similar belief present in many *actas*, Meléndrez claimed not to have received any indication from the governor, nor through any other official, to begin preparations to combat Estrada—the agriculturalist did this of his own accord, after being informed by local authorities. During the course of the rebellion, affirmed Meléndrez, he and the individuals that he gathered up to suppress the rebellion, did not engage in any battles with “rebels,” but spent the majority of their time patrolling the Potrero de los Rivera, Tetzapote, Chiquilstán, San Gazpar, and the Rancho de los Naranjos.<sup>120</sup>

Meanwhile, Tiburcio Carrillo—married, forty-nine years of age, and an agriculturalist—from nearby Los Narajos in Tequila did not directly participate in the armed conflict, however, but felt compelled to put on record that the same Municipal President Malaquias Cuervo “is always discouraging [us] in everything related to

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<sup>120</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 4, “Declaration of Mauricio Meléndrez and Tiburcio Carrillo,” 19 March 1924.

agrarianism, assuring [us] that ‘the rich always win.’ But Carrillo did remember seeing Deputy Enrique Cuervo in Tequila a couple of days before the movement, “ignorant of why [he] had gone to that place, since he did not address the communities or their representatives for any reason.”<sup>121</sup> Other declarations corroborate the assertion that Governor Zuno sent Deputy Cuervo to Tequila on 6 December to gather enough armed people to fight against Estrada. Deputy Esteban G. de Alba testified: “[Cuervo] came here and told Zuno that he had people ready, 100 armed men, but Zuno did not want to go; he thought differently [...]. Cuervo invited him with insistence, telling him that the people were with Zuno, [but] as I said, he did not want to go.”<sup>122</sup> The governor, nonetheless, remembered it differently. When Bárcenas pressed him for an answer, he declared:

I took my car with the intention of going to Tequila, where I had armed people. [Enrique] Cuervo was there: he went to go recruit people and came to tell me that 50 men were ready in the ravine. I was going there when Luis Sauza, an enemy of ours, was leaving his house to drop off his mom in the automobile that waited for them. I thought: ‘Luis is an enemy, yesterday we disarmed him, [it’s] logical that when seeing me pass he would suppose that I will leave, and he would suppose that I’m leaving to Tequila.

According to the governor, his decision to wait was the correct one because a car, which was mistaken as his own, was found completely shot-up with bullets. With regard to the orders given to Deputy Cuervo, Zuno confirmed that he obeyed all orders, disarmed all of

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<sup>121</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 4, “Declaration of Mauricio Meléndrez and Tiburcio Carrillo,” 19 March 1924.

<sup>122</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 10, “Declaration of Deputy Lic. Esteban García de Alba and Rodolfo García de Alba,” 25 March 1924.

the haciendas, “among others the ones belonging to Sauza and stationed Susano Casteñeda in the ravine [...]” The issue at hand was that his emissary should have stayed in Tequila, instead of returning to Guadalajara on 9 December.<sup>123</sup> Fidelina Llerenas has elsewhere contended that when the rebellion broke out Governor Zuno fled to Tequila and afterward to Mascota, “there he organized irregular forces, similar to the guerillas of Veracruz, to face off with the rebels [...Zuno] came to represent the civil resistance to the coup d’état in the entity.”<sup>124</sup> But as Zuno himself declared: “[the unit led by Cuervo] did not have any combats because one of the things that disoriented me was his turn [...] I reproached him for coming [back to Guadalajara]; in reality he was the only one that rose up forces.”

While the governor’s plans to raise troops never fully materialized, he did shed some important insight into the preexisting problems between himself, and the indigenous and agrarian communities of the region:

The agrarista corps [of the region] were well commanded; there was a league of Indigenous communities of which I helped, but [then] Marcelino Sedano started to do politics—he is an individual that belongs to a family that believes, that has the obsession that some of its members are going to become governor of the state.

Sedano, according to the governor, had only joined the league of Indigenous Communities a few months back—in March of 1923—because of the unsuccessful

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<sup>123</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 39, “Declaration of José Guadalupe Zuno,” 10 April 1924.

<sup>124</sup> Fidelina G. Llerenas, “Jose Guadalupe Zuno. Civilismo y Legalidad Revolucionaria” in *José Guadalupe Zuno: vida, obra y pensamiento*, edited by Leticia Ruano (Guadalajara: Editorial Universidad de Guadalajara, 1992) p. 62.



opposition the former had waged against him, Zuno. And that it was only after this occasion that he admitted having denied help to the communities, “because it [the community] had a political end and in my concept the Communities have an economic end as they damage themselves with politics, because it divides the opinions and comes [with] economic disaster.”<sup>125</sup> Zuno, therefore, did not see the benefit of democracy for these local communities (and their agrarian element); that is, they were not capable of debating and formulating their own agendas reflecting their own necessities and desires. Instead, they needed to be told what to do and, perhaps most importantly, they needed to curtail their ambitions and simply focus on farming. But despite the childish contempt Zuno held against these communities, when the rebellion arrived they were among the first elements the state mobilized to combat rebel forces.

The rebellion, however, reminded contemporaries that not all *campesinos* threw their lot in with the state; in fact, Governor Zuno declared that because of the “discordance of the League of Communities, there came a complete separation amongst many of them [...some] of them became delahuertistas, some rose up, like the one from Autlán; the ones from Tequila and others felt great enthusiasm when [General Joaquín] Amaro arrived [at the end of the rebellion].”<sup>126</sup> Zuno claimed that the *acordadas* of haciendas did not exist, because under his administration they had been disbanded. In

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<sup>125</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 39, “Declaration of José Guadalupe Zuno,” 10 April 1924.

<sup>126</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 39, “Declaration of José Guadalupe Zuno,” 10 April 1924.

fact, Zuno alleged that: “they kept calling the peons from the haciendas who [took up] arms that; and [I] did not authorize that.” It was the governor’s impression that those peons were under the command of Estrada and that landowners indirectly helped the movement. Eventually, some truths or half-truths (as surely it is a matter of perspective) started to flow: “Well there were 6 or 7 [acordadas that helped the rebels], I remember the one from Jonacatepec, Zapotitlán, Huexcalapa, Zalamea, in La Barca or Manuel Rios and others.” When asked about whether or not he maintained himself in communication with the agrarian leaders that rose up in arms, Zuno confirmed to have communicated with the majority of them through a rancher named Romualdo Rodríguez or González of Tlajomulco. Specifically, he remembered Casimiro Castillo and when asked about the abovementioned Félix Ramos, he curtly responded “it is possible.”<sup>127</sup>

The particular experience of *agraristas* and politicians from the town of Autlán paints the portrait of a town divided along prior ideological commitments. Brigadier General Casimiro Castillo, a revered champion of agrarian causes, rose up in arms to defend the Government in Autlán on 14 December 1923, “because in that manner I had committed myself at the Agrarista Convention [in Mexico City], and I did [it] because I knew through the press of the rebellion of Estrada.” While Castillo appeared a most honorable individual willing to risk his life to defend the agrarian causes promised to his people, his motivations for fighting on the side of the state appeared to be much more

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<sup>127</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244. “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 49, “Declaration of the Governor of the State, José G. Zuno,” 29 April 1924.

immediate. A week earlier, when local politicians<sup>128</sup> began the talk of forming a Social Defense Unit in Autlán to defend the town against possible attacks from the *agrarista* groups, which already operated in defense of the government, Castillo was approached to join. But not long after he became aware that it was a trap designed to make “me gather [up] my arms [so that they] could take them away, I answered that I counted with 40 men who could take arms, but that they did not have arms in their possession nor ammunition.” Substitute-Deputy Florencio Topete expressed to Castillo that they could not do anything if the followers of Castillo did not have arms. On 13 December, Topete and his associates again invited Castillo to go pick up arms near the area of Cinguñuela, “in which place I think they were trying to assassinate me and where they already had the *Acordadas* of the Haciendas of Ahuacapán and Ayuquila, which operated in favor of the rebellion.”

Fearing for his life, Castillo left that same evening, alone, and headed to the outskirts of town—to an area to the north of Autlán, called “El Digue.” “[Since] I had already warned [my] companions at first notice, up to 60 men gathered [to wait for me] and [we] all left for the mountainous region of Mezcala and San Juan Cacoma around 10 in the evening,” recalled Castillo. He was able to gather around two-hundred and fifty individuals. The following day Castillo and his followers—known as the Syndicate of Poor Agriculturalists of Autlán—released a statement reiterating their commitments to the institutions that support the “Constitutional Articles twenty-seven and one hundred twenty-three” and also the commitments they had taken up during the Second Convention

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<sup>128</sup> These efforts were led by Substitute Deputy Florencio Topete, Alfonso Corona, José Vázquez, and Alfonso A. Villaseñor.

of the *Partido Nacional Agrarista*, which had been celebrated the previous month on 11 November 1923 in the Capital of Mexico. According to Syndicate of Poor Agriculturalists, at the convention General Alvaro Obregón “gave a warning to all the revolutionaries of good faith[,] members of the Syndicate, exhorting us to struggle but this time ‘with arms in hand’ to defend our emancipatory rights, life and honor until now negated by the traitor Adolfo de la Huerta.” And because of all of these prior commitments, the Syndicate proceeded to organize a column, which they verbosely called the *Ejército comunista libertario. Primera Brigada Rojo y Negro. Caballería e Infantería. Columna Exploradora de Occidente*. From 16 December 1923 to February 14 1924, then, they participated in seven distinct battles against the Social Defense of Autlán and El Grullo, and various *Acordadas* from the region’s haciendas.<sup>129</sup>

Carlos Valencia, proprietor of the aforementioned hacienda Ahuacapán near Autlán—in addition to owning the local power plant, and other urban estates—declared that: “the town was armed by a group of men, because they had been recruited by various

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<sup>129</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 6. Casimiro Castillo recalls two battles in 1923: 16 December, in an area called “Los Carrillos” against the *estradista* forces of Homobono Castillo; and on 26 December (approximate date) at the hacienda de Chacaptepec, against the *Acordada* of the hacienda, which was organized by Lic. Silvestre Arias (a resident of Autlán and a member of the Syndicate of Agriculturalists and the Knights of Columbus). Castillo recalled five battles in 1924: 4 January, in Cihuatecán, against the Social Defenses of Autlán, which was comprised of fifty to seventy-five men; between the 18 and 20 January (approximate date), at rancho del Tejocote in the sierra de Perote against the Social Defenses of Autlán and the *Acordadas* of haciendas Ahuacapán and Las Tunas; 23 January, in Cihuatecán against the Social Defenses of Autlán; 23 January, in Potreritos, against the forces of José María Buenrostro, an hacendado from Colima, who also wrote Castillo a letter inviting him to join the rebellion; and on 14 February, when he collaborated with General Cosme R. Adano and fought against the Social Defenses of “El Gruyo” and Autlán, and the *Acordadas* of the haciendas of Ahuacapán, Ayuquila, Chacaltepec, Las Tunas, and from the town of Ejutla. A few weeks after the rebellion, the forces led by Generals Casimiro Castillo and Cosme R. Sedano, which numbered at 350 men were formally discharged on 24 March 1924. The government paid every soldier the sum of \$17.99 “taking from them arms, cartridges, horses, and saddles.

individuals and were assaulting the estates, they lit some on fire and even assassinated an individual from one of them, I think he was a relative of the landowners [...and said] assailants had the banner of Agrarianism.” He confirmed that Casimiro Castillo was indeed the leader of the body of *agrарistas*, but completely denied any wrong-doing and went as far as to claim that the people at the haciendas were not armed.<sup>130</sup> Meanwhile, Juan Presa of San Juan de Ocotán—married, fifty-five years of age, an agriculturalist—spoke of the fear that broke out amongst members of his community when Estrada rebelled: “D. Cirilo told all of [us] that they [the *estradistas*] could now destroy the forest, that they could cut down the forest with impunity, because his party had won. That his boss Daniel Orozco was [a] Colonel of Estrada; that we poor agrарistas, that they were going to hang all of us.” The “forest” that D. Cirilo referred to in his threat were the lands that had been redistributed as *ejidos* to the community of San Juan de Octoán. These were lands that now belonged to Hacienda de la Puerta de la Venta, property of the aforementioned Orozco. Three individuals, Margarito Noguera, Seferino Navarro, and Victoriano Olivares, accompanied Presa and verbally confirmed all of this to be true, but they were unable to sign the declaration because they did not know how to sign their names. All claimed that no officials invited them to defend the Government, which Alvaro Obregón currently presided over.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 14, “Declaration Carlos Valencia and Guillermo Arias,” 28 March 1924.

<sup>131</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 5, “Declaration of Juan Presa,” 20 March 1924.

Silverio de Anda, forty-nine years of age, single, *campesino*, and resident of Tesistán in the Municipality of Zapopan, insisted that the current Municipal Authorities were the same ones that functioned before and after the rebellion, and that no Authority or person invited the local community to defend the Government of General Obregón. While he himself was not physically swept up in the violence, he did note that the Head of the *Acordadas* of Hacienda de Magdalena, Francisco Chávez killed four individuals at the beginning of February of 1924, “with the objective of raising people against the Constitutional Government, taking from them their arms and horses.” The above *acta*, notwithstanding, also points to a salient moral issue that impacted local communities and had the potential to divide towns, entering into the realm of what one might call the divine. Many of the *actas* have provided us with important insight into the behavior of *agraristas*, landowners, and authorities during the rebellion, but they offer very little with regard to the religious sensibilities of these individuals—a gross oversight considering the importance of religiosity in the region, which has elsewhere been dubbed the “rosary belt.” Originally coined by Carlos Monsaivaís, the “Rosary Belt” describes the central-western states of the Bajío, such as: Jalisco, Colima, southern Guanajuato, Michoacán, Nayarit, and southern Zacatecas. Specifically, Ben Fallaw has written that “Catholics in Rosary Belt states like Querétaro and Jalisco are known for their exceptional religious fervor, and they generally followed the orthodox liturgical practices endorsed by the institutional Church, as opposed to the syncretic or fold traditions with strong indigenous and African strains.”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Ben Fallaw, *Religion and State Formation in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), pp. XX and 32.

The few declarations on the matter indicate that parish priests (and in some cases clergy) played an important role in the rebellion. De Anda, for example, in his declaration, also chose to emphasize the role that parish priest Gregorio Rodríguez played during the rebellion, since it was publicly known that he had offered one hundred armed and mounted men to General Estrada, “and that in a Society of the A.C.J.M. [the Mexican Catholic Youth Association] he preached against the Government.”<sup>134</sup> Señora Olimpia Estrada, from the same town Tesistán, also corroborated the claims of de Anda, insisting that the priest of Tesistán “predicated that all the Catholic Party had their people ready to help Estrada which was the Constituted Government [and that] everyone should be one, Indians, neighbors, etc., and that even women should arm themselves to combat the Government, that it was a group of bandits [the government].”<sup>135</sup> And once the rebellion ended, the inclination priests demonstrated over the course of the sixty days, to support and side with the rebels, was commonly utilized by politicians to attack the clergy. When Governor Zuno gave a stirring speech on the day of his return to power—cited in the beginning of this section—for example, he shouted the following: “in spite of the rich, the “cuervos” [insulting word directed at priests] land will be redistributed among the countrymen, and revolutionary justice will be done.” Whereas, another unnamed deputy

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<sup>134</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 7. “Declaration of Silverio de Anda,” 20 March 1924.

<sup>135</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Confidential Report investigating if the powers of the State disappeared because of the delahuertista rebellion,” Acta 8. “Declaration of Señora Olimpia Estrada,” 20 March 1924.

claimed that “Chamula (insulting name for Archbishop Francisco y Orozco) and the reactionary priests will [soon] be dragged through the streets.”<sup>136</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Chapter 1 explored the major political precursors to the Estradista Rebellion and analyzed a set of statements concerning what citizens thought about local authorities, governance, and the social order during this critical moment of crisis that faced an incipient democracy. In the first half of the chapter, I revisited the years following the triumph of the *Plan de Agua Prieta*, contextualized the process of reconstruction, and offered a chronological narrative of the major political events, which led to the mass outbreak of violence in Jalisco, while also paying close attention to both regional and national developments. The second half made use the Ministry of Interior’s *comisión* on the “disappearance of the powers” during the Estradista Rebellion and eschewed the construction of a larger explanatory model for understanding it, in favor of an interpretive approach focusing on how local officials, ordinary citizens, and rural dwellers experienced contemporary events, and struggled over what the insurgency meant to them.

A vocally pro-Obregón governor throughout the first year of his administration, Jose G. Zuno’s pragmatism in the wake of the rebellion prompted suspicion on the part of federal authorities. Colonel Bárcenas’ relentless investigation into the rebellion certainly placed Zuno on the defensive, but it also portrayed a complex and able politician: one forced to atone for his sins and political behavior, and another who when pressed on

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<sup>136</sup> SD, 812.00/27046, 21 February 1924.



matters was willing to completely deny any wrongdoing. The written record left behind, however, highlighted what several contemporaries thought about *both* his action and inaction, and in the coming years provided political enemies with the necessary fodder to continue their impressive list of attacks against him, both warranted and unwarranted—the subject matter which forms the foundation for the next chapter.

## Chapter 2

### Terror and Progress: The Anatomy of Rule and Local Power Structures in the Guadalajara Region

[...The] State of Jalisco has suffered [under] the terrible *zunista* tyranny and [...] the everyday dictatorship, more, much more, than with the revolutions that have moved us. And if that barbarous system of terror created in our State, worries the rich classes, because they have been exploited, the majority of the victims, as it has been seen, belong to the large *campesino* class, the healthiest and most charitable. The tyrant [Zuno] has not respected anything [...] in Jalisco he is seen as a curse.

-Report from the Minority Deputies to the Congress of the State of Jalisco

It was the morning of 7 December 1923. Governor José Guadalupe Zuno spoke to a room full of Guadalajara's most important politicians, who had gathered at the *Palacio de Gobierno* to save the dignity of the State.<sup>1</sup> "I called you together to let you know that [General Enrique] Estrada has rebelled...I desire to know the opinion of the Authorities," asked the governor. Leopoldo Cuéllar, a respected councilman, spoke up and stressed the benefits of marching to the *sierra*, and of moving the Authorities of the City to a safer location. Magistrate Guadalupe Ruvalcaba, however, suggested a diplomatic route in combating the revolutionary movement that had recently begun to take hold of the countryside.<sup>2</sup> Both proposals fell on deaf ears. The governor did not reveal alarm nor did

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<sup>1</sup> Archivo General de la Nación (hereinafter cited as AGN), DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, Acta 1 "Declaration of Ascensión de la Cruz," 19 March 1924. The individuals present at the meeting were the following: Camacho Covarrubias, Martínez Valadez, Jose Garcia de Alba, Victoriano Salado and Manuel Vidrio Guerra, all in the capacity of Deputies; Julio Acero, Jorge Delorme y Campos, Guadalupe Ruvalcaba and Juan N. Cordova, all in the capacity of Magistrates; Gustavo R. Cristo, in the capacity of municipal president of Guadalajara; Leopoldo Cuellar, Rene Hajar, Longinos Casillas, Lic. Juan Cárdenas, José Gómez Cano, Mariano González, Margarito Figueroa, Ascensión de la Cruz, José Radillo, and Francisco Vidrio Pérez—who all served as city councilmen of Guadalajara. All translations in this chapter are my own.

<sup>2</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, Acta 2 "Declaration of Regino Ramírez," 19 March 1924.

he express any anxiety.<sup>3</sup> In those moments, Zuno was handed a sealed document. He opened it and read it, and became aware that the rebel forces wanted the treasure of the State. “Do not oppose, deliver,” barked the governor to Santos Aréchiga—the man who had handed him the envelope. He then accepted a telephone call from General Estrada where it was made clear that they had already taken the city’s Police Department. Unable to come to an agreement with Estrada, Zuno once again addressed the group of local deputies, magistrates, and councilmen: “Now you can see there is nothing that can be done...Let’s go to our houses before they kick us out.”<sup>4</sup>

A few minutes elapsed. Zuno remained in his office and called for a stenographer to dictate a personal series of statements publicly declaring his neutrality in the eyes of the press. With the intention of preventing the press corps from compromising his neutrality, the governor proceeded to distribute the delicately crafted document to the representatives of *El Sol* and *El Informador* with specific instructions to “insert the questions [the reporters] believe to be suitable.”<sup>5</sup> “It is the Mexican people who have to [make a decision] about this grave problem,” read the statement, “[my] duty is to remain in the post to which I was elected and to remain in it in a very peaceful manner [as long as] the circumstances and official dignity permit me.”<sup>6</sup> The following day the *Partido*

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<sup>3</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, Acta 1 “Declaration of Ascencion de la Cruz, 19 March 1924.

<sup>4</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, Acta 2 “Declaration of Regino Ramírez, and Acta 3 “Declaration of J. Guadalupe Hernández,” 19 March 1924.

<sup>5</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-944, Exp. 36, Departamento Confidencial, “J. Guadalupe Zuno. Su participación en el movimiento delahuertista,” June 1924.

<sup>6</sup> *El Informador*, “Mr. Zuno makes declarations,” 8 December 1923. The edited declaration of Zuno appeared in print with these questions: What attitude will you assume [given] the events that [...] have been registered this morning? What [type of] participation will you take in this new problem facing

*Reconstructor Jalisciense* (PRJ) held a political rally between 5-6 in the afternoon, comprised of 50 to 100 individuals. Marching to the beat of a brass band and chanting “down with Zuno,” the truants, porters, and the people of the city that gave life to the manifestation, headed towards the Alameda and paraded in front of the *Palacio de Gobierno*. The demonstrators demanded the immediate resignation of Zuno and asked that Francisco Tolentino be named governor instead.<sup>7</sup> A few hours later Tolentino was officially appointed provisional governor through a popular plebiscite in the name of the rebel forces. With his political future in shambles, Zuno went into hiding and Guadalajara remained under the control of rebel forces for approximately 60 days.<sup>8</sup>

Fearing that the Government of the Center would reprimand his conduct, Zuno walked a political tightrope during the rebellion—and did it well. In the weeks that followed Estrada’s uprising, he had several offers on the table to leave Guadalajara and to establish his government in other places around the State but openly refused them. When the military campaign against the rebels began to turn in favor of General Álvaro

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[your administration]? What is the opinion of the dependencies of your government on the electoral question? Will you remain in charge of the Executive Power? The governor affirmed that the authorities and Government of Jalisco would not be partial in the electoral contests, which had recently swept the nation, nor would they take part in a military problem. Zuno—an astute politician in the making—claimed to have remained foreign to all political matters and emphatically claimed to have dedicated all of his efforts to the intensification of the “noble manifestation” of the State, “such as agriculture, livestock farming, communication channels, etc. [...]”

<sup>7</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, Acta 25, “Declaration of Saturnino Coronado,” Acta 28 “Declaration of Colonel Manuel I. Gomez,” and Acta 39 “Declaration of J. Guadalupe Zuno.” Also reported to be among the crowd were representatives of the Asociación Católica de la Juventud Mexicana (ACJM), the Knights of Columbus, the Democratic Party, and the Syndicate of Agriculturalists.

<sup>8</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, Acta 18 “Declaration of Captain Rodolfo R. Benitez,” Acta 22 “Declaration of Ignacio Hermosillo Gil,” and Acta 30 “Alfonso Martinez Sotomayor.” Zuno, however, was periodically seen during the uprising.

Obregón, however, Zuno began to show some signs of life. Believing that the federal forces would make their entrance into Guadalajara on 11 February 1924, a triumphant Zuno finally emerged from his hiding place, went to the outskirts of the city, “armed himself,” and made plans to take the Palace back; unfortunately, the forces did not make their entrance until the following day.<sup>9</sup> So it was then that a bearded Zuno—accompanied by a soldier and a painter—and armed with nothing but an empty gun holster went on to unite with the deputies who had advanced with the forces of General Joaquín Amaro. And thenceforth gracefully entered Guadalajara, as if he had known all along that the state would reign supreme, to once again seize the governorship of Jalisco.<sup>10</sup>

In the years following the triumph of the Constitutionalist Revolution—under the guidance of President Alvaro Obregón (1920 to 1924)—a national strategy of reconstruction was set in motion, which centered upon four key components: firm restrictions on foreign investment and on social guarantees for the poorest sectors; the backing of agrarian and labor leaders in exchange for their political loyalty; a cultural revolution to promote a set of secular national core values; and the repair and development of the nation’s unkempt infrastructure. The reform program, however, was largely forgotten in the throes of the de la Huerta Rebellion, but was reactivated following the ascent of Plutarco Elías Calles to the Presidency in December 1924. This began a new phase for the Mexican state, “characterized by a greater concentration of

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<sup>9</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, Acta 54 “Memorandum prepared by M. Estrada Magallanes for Enrique Colunga, Secretary of the Minister of Interior.”

<sup>10</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, Acta 10, “Declarations of Deputy Lic. Esteban Garcia de Alba and Rodolfo Garcia de Alba.”

power in the federal executive and greater political centralization [... which was balanced with the] corporatism of popular movements and the elimination of regional caudillos.” In particular, the centralization, fortification, and modernization of the military also meant greater incorporation of peripheral regions that had, up until then, alluded the geographical ambit of the state.<sup>11</sup> “Calles’s reforms demonstrated a greater adherence to the radical provisions of the 1917 Constitution than his predecessor Obregón had displayed,” claim Joseph and Buchenau, “[...all] in all Calles drew on the support of leaders who had grown disaffected with the slow pace of reform under Obregón, most important being that of Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM) leader Luis Napoleon Morones.”<sup>12</sup>

The defeat of the de la Huerta Rebellion and its local manifestation, the *Estradista* Rebellion—explored in the previous chapter—not only reaffirmed Mexico’s process of modernization, but also reconfigured politics at the national and regional levels. In the aftermath of the first significant challenge to the new social order, Governor Jose G. Zuno surfaced from the depths of a political purgatory to reestablish himself as the most powerful politician in the region.<sup>13</sup> Most of the revisionist historiography has recognized

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<sup>11</sup> See Jaime Tamayo’s *La conformación del Estado modern y los conflictos políticos, 1917-1929* (Guadalajara: Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, Universidad de Guadalajara, 1988), p. 257 and *Los movimientos sociales, 1917-1929* (Guadalajara: Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, Universidad de Guadalajara, 1988) pp. 28-29.

<sup>12</sup> See Gil Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico’s Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule Since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), p. 83 and 98-99. The reforms also promoted, among other things, “measures designed to improve the fiscal situation of the state with the professionalization of the army, nationalist efforts to control natural resources, and [...] economic development, education, and social welfare.” Tamayo, *La conformación*, p. 257

<sup>13</sup> Following his resurgence to power, the governor was accused of carrying out attacks against individual guarantees, replacing municipal governments (with loyal followers foreign to local populations), and confiscating the property of presumed rebels—in addition to making a fortune in the process; see AGN,

the governor's contributions to the defense of regional autonomy (at municipal and state levels) and to agrarian, labor, anticlerical, and educational policies; very few studies, however, have attempted to understand the consequences of such state interventions on the lives of citizens and the impact of such efforts on local governance.<sup>14</sup> This chapter showcases the chronic anxieties about state sovereignty that Mexican citizens displayed during this period. I argue that such *disorder* was part of an on-going negotiation over how to govern and rule, and was also part of an extensive debate regarding the limits of local and national power in the first decade of the postrevolutionary era.<sup>15</sup> I ask two questions: How did Zuno's administration reestablish order in the years following the

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DGIPS, Departamento Confidencial, 310(3.2)–3 I, Nombre: Estado de Jalisco, Asunto: Situación Política, "Report authored by Minority Deputies to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union," February 1926. A contemporary reporter, invoking the memory of the Italian republics of the Renaissance to describe the political moment in Mexico, compared Zuno to a Cesare Borgia—the man who had inspired Machiavelli's memorable book, *The Prince*—to illustrate the ephemeral nature of power that is conquered with violence and retained through terror. "Borgia, [a] cardinal, duke, general, *gonfaloniere*, climbed all of the summits [and] drank from the glass of all honors [...]; but was to die [...] without any glory, in complete obscurity, under the walls of Pamplona," forewarned the reporter; see *Excelsior*, "La Guadalajara de Zuno," 17 December 1925.

<sup>14</sup> Fidelina Llerenas, for example, has noted that Zuno carried out diverse actions to give life in Jalisco the new project of the revolutionary state, such as: issuing labor, agrarian, education laws, and sanctioning property expropriations. In this manner, argues Llerenas, "he stimulated popular demands and protected the struggle and social conquests [of the revolution], fulfilling [...] the new tutelary character of the state towards the unprotected classes [...]; see her chapter, "José Guadalupe Zuno. Civilismo y Legalidad Revolucionaria" in *José Guadalupe Zuno Hernández: vida, obra y pensamiento*, (Guadalajara: Editorial Universidad de Guadalajara, 1992), p. 59. See José G. Zuno's *Reminiscencias de una vida* (Guadalajara, n.p., 1956) for a memoir that he authored in 1956.

<sup>15</sup> On 21 August 1923, José G. Zuno acknowledged in a circular that "nobody can ignore [the fact] that currently the most important problem in our Republic consists of the act of renewing democracy" to peacefully transfer presidential power. The governor suggested that this transcendental political problem can and would be solved through this conscious and serene exercise, and with the complete abstention of the authorities from any political-electoral matter. "The public consciousness happily recognizes without [mistake]," affirmed Zuno, "the deep necessity of vigorously fulfilling civil rights, [which] will assure the general well-being of the nation." See Archivo Histórico de Jalisco (hereinafter cited as AHJ), Gobernación, 1923, Sin Clasificación, Caja 25.

first major challenge to it? What were the limits to state centralization of power at both the local and national levels?

### **The Aftermath of the Estradista Rebellion and the Rise of José Guadalupe Zuno**

José G. Zuno was born in 1891 to a rural middle-class family at hacienda San Agustín, near the town of La Barca, Jalisco. Two years later, the Zuno Hernández family moved to Guadalajara and opened a small grocery store.<sup>16</sup> In 1908, a seventeen-year-old Zuno was expelled from the *Liceo de Varones* of Guadalajara—along with his friend, future military general Rafael Buelna—for taking part in student protests against the Dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz and, as a result, went to go live in Mexico City.<sup>17</sup> A confidential report culled from the Ministry of Interior, however, alleges that he was dismissed from school because he did not pass the first year exams, which forced him to abandon his studies a year later. Shortly thereafter, he found work as a butcher’s assistant at the Flea Market of Guadalajara, but was not employed for long because he was caught stealing meat, and was subsequently forced to resign. And that to support himself he spent a good deal of time passing off as a caricaturist in the city’s bars to obtain a “note” or a gift from his customers.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> María Teresa Fernández Aceves, “José Guadalupe Zuno Hernández and the Revolutionary Process in Jalisco,” *State Governors in the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1952: Portraits in Conflict, Courage, and Corruption*, eds. Jürgen Büchenau and William Beezley (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), p. 96

<sup>17</sup> Fernández Aceves, *José Guadalupe Zuno*, p. 96.

<sup>18</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 311(3.2)-1, Nombre: Jalisco, Asunto: Antecedentes y filiación política de gobernadores, Caja 148, Exp. 17, March 1925.



While in the metropolis, Zuno, a budding artist, meddled in the elite circles of painters and befriended iconic figures such as José Clemente Orozco and Gerardo Murillo (Dr. Atl).<sup>19</sup> On his return to Guadalajara in 1914, he founded the *Centro Bohemio* with artists Xavier Guerrero and Carlos Stalh. The *Centro* would later count upon the membership of future literati and artists, among them: Mariano and Salvador Azuela, Agustín Basave, Ixca Farías, Alfonso Gutiérrez Hermosillo, Manuel Martínez Valadez, Guadalupe Marín, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. The *Centro* quickly became the most prolific and vibrant political and cultural center in the city, and served as an incubator to many future social leaders and what would become most important political forces of Jalisco in the 1920s.<sup>20</sup>



**Figure 3:** From left to right: José Guadalupe Zuno, Alfredo Romo, and Carlos Orozco Romero. Circa 1917. Courtesy of *La Jornada Jalisco*.

<sup>19</sup> Fernández Aceves, *José Guadalupe Zuno*, p. 96.

<sup>20</sup> Tamayo, *La conformación*, p. 236.

When a thirty-one-year-old Zuno assumed the governorship of Jalisco for the first time on the last day of February 1923, he was already at the head of a strong political movement that represented the best developed version of *obregonismo*. During these years, the administration of Alvaro Obregón (1920 to 1924) promoted a social pact with the *campesino* and labor movements of Mexico. At the behest of the president of the republic, the social pact established with these sectors was carried out through several important mediums, such as the National Agrarian Party (PNA) and the National Agrarian Confederation (CNA)—in addition to the Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM) and the Mexican Labor Party (PLM).<sup>21</sup> But in many parts of the country—and especially in the conservative state of Jalisco—the successful mobilization of the masses was only achieved through an adherence to traditional local power structures; as a result, the regional caudillo emerged as one of the most important mechanism still available to deliver the postulates of the Constitution of 1917 to the popular masses.<sup>22</sup>

Zunismo, as a political movement, established a broad alliance with the workers and *campesinos* of Jalisco “through [the cooptation of their] organizations and leadership, [and] by means of an active politics that permitted [Zuno] to consolidate [his movement] as the most important political current [...in the region].” The alliance established with

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<sup>21</sup> Tamayo, *La conformación*, p. 244.

<sup>22</sup> Apropos Obregon’s presidency, Jürgen Buchenau has written: “[he] had proven to be a fanatically pragmatic president—one who consistently sacrificed political ideals and principles for practical solutions. More so than strengthening the state by building its institutions, he resorted to the methods that caudillos knew best—military campaigns, violence, and personal deal-making. In his eyes, the ends justified the means;” see Jürgen Buchenau, *The Last Caudillo: Alvaro Obregón and the Mexican Revolution* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 136

popular sectors went beyond the simple subordination or manipulation of social movements and more aptly reflected a symbiotic relationship that demonstrated an effective balance between radical caudillo politics and the demands of workers and *campesinos* in the region.<sup>23</sup> Governor Zuno's brand of politics, however, came at a cost to those deemed outside the purview of the new social order. The end result was the use of strongman tactics to rule and the establishment of a system of attacks against individual guarantees, or as one group of dissatisfied local deputies put it: "against the life of the inhabitants of Jalisco [...]."<sup>24</sup>

In what follows, I focus on citizens who regularly voiced legitimate grievances, but whose anxieties often fell on deaf ears. To achieve this, I explore the aftermath of the *Estradista* Rebellion and focus on five topics: 1) the property confiscation of "presumed rebels" in the wake of the armed uprising; 2) the anxieties and complaints rural (especially agrarian) communities expressed; 3) popular conceptions of local sovereignty; 4) corrupt political practices; and 5) regional labor politics.

#### *Repressing Rebels? The Confiscation of Properties*

Once the smoke began to clear and the extent of the de la Huerta Rebellion became more visible, the Attorney General of the Republic estimated the damages inflicted upon the nation to be in the range of forty million pesos.<sup>25</sup> To punish the

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<sup>23</sup> Tamayo, *La conformación*, pp. 235, 244-246.

<sup>24</sup> AGN, DGIPS, Departamento Confidencial, 310(3.2)-3 I, Nombre: Estado de Jalisco, Asunto: Situación Política, "Report authored by Minority Deputies to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union," February 1926.

<sup>25</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1 (Confiscation of rebel properties), "Letter to the President of the Republic from the Attorney General of the Republic," f. 130, 11 July 1924.

insurgents and their accomplices, the Government of Jalisco circulated an official bulletin informing the public that it had ordered the confiscation of 56 rural and 60 urban properties “to assure the fulfillment of the presidential disposition on the confiscation of rebel properties.”<sup>26</sup> The Government, nevertheless, made sure to point out that these confiscations paled in comparison to the more than 160,000 rural properties that were currently functioning statewide. “I am entirely sure that the agriculturist of Jalisco, principally the *latifundistas*, will think [...] from now [on] before mixing in new political adventures [...]” announced the governor, “since they will have in front [of them] the ghosts of the new confiscations.”<sup>27</sup>

With the end goal of completely smothering any remnants of the uprising and to achieve public order and tranquility, Zuno stressed that he intended to achieve nothing less than the complete destruction of the enemies of the legal institutions: “it [is] logically indispensable and urgent [to] remove all of the elements that have taken advantage [of the rebellion] to attack the Government and foment the criminal disloyalty that has caused many [deaths], much blood and many heartaches.”<sup>28</sup> The confiscation of properties that Zuno and his administration carried out—according to a memorandum addressed to the Ministry of Interior—for the most part, however, had nothing to do with the rebellion, “given that they did not interfere [in] anything [and] that according to rumors, those who

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<sup>26</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1 (Confiscation of rebel properties). “Files of the Federal Agent of the Public Ministry,” f. 110-112. 23 July 1924. In the city of Guadalajara, the scope of such efforts affected 12 individuals; while generals Enrique Estrada and Rafael Buena faced lawsuits, and were accused of the crimes of rebellion and “civil responsibility.”

<sup>27</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1 (Confiscation of rebel properties), ff. 37-42

<sup>28</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1, “Confiscation of rebel properties,” ff. 45-46, 15 February 1924

have given [the] money that was asked for have not been consigned nor have they had their properties confiscated.”<sup>29</sup>

On the matter, the governor conceded that those in charge of opening up investigations in every district had committed some irregularities with respect to the carrying out of the presidential disposition. “In some cases I had knowledge that there have been paid influences by the landowners to obtain the restoration [of properties],” confirmed Zuno.<sup>30</sup> In the month that followed the armed uprising several companies, politicians, and landowners protested the abuses Governor Zuno committed, labeling them unfounded accusations and/or threats. The submission of twenty-three complaints and petitions to the Ministry of Interior for review—in addition to documents found in other repositories—attest to these vindictive actions. The twenty-three petitions filed to the Ministry of Interior, for example, while only representative of a small sample, can be organized into four categories: complaints against Zuno regaining the governorship (two); reported political repression (three); threat of property confiscation (three); and reports of property confiscation (fifteen). If we were to focus on the fifteen reports and the total number of properties confiscated, the total number rises to twenty-eight. Together, the confiscations were aimed at three types of properties: business-related (five); rural estates (seventeen); and unspecified properties (six).<sup>31</sup> Such documents,

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<sup>29</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, Acta 54, “Memorandum for Enrique Colunga from Estrada Magallanes,” March 1924.

<sup>30</sup> Governor Zuno made reference to some concrete cases of landowners who partook in such affairs, such as: Jesús Rosas of San Martín Hidalgo; Gortázar, who had three estates confiscated; the Camarena men from Teuchitlán; Manuel Rivas in La Barca; Uribe Valencia; and the Catarina and Villa Michel men in San Gabriel—among others.

<sup>31</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244.

however, only represented the tip of the iceberg in a systematic purge that intended to restructure power at the regional level, and to repress those deemed to outside the bounds of the new order.

Jesús Álvarez del Castillo, the proprietor of the Guadalajara-based newspaper *El Informador*, for example, noted that not only had his building been confiscated, but so too had the company's offices and printing press.<sup>32</sup> On 15 February 1924, Governor Zuno wrote to Álvarez del Castillo to inform him that, “[as] a result [of] the rebel actions of the Newspaper Company [...that are] publically known, this Executive, in use of its extraordinary faculties [...] agreed to provisionally confiscate said Company [...]”<sup>33</sup> Two days later, Álvarez del Castillo refuted such accusations, attesting to the fact that it was not true that the newspaper had carried out “revolutionary labors.” “Before the movement it [*El Informador*] did not make political propaganda in favor of any candidate, and after, during the occupation of Guadalajara by the rebel forces,” confirmed Álvarez del Castillo, “I limited myself to publishing the censored news and the bulletins to which I was obligated by the force of circumstances.” The proprietor affirmed his belief that his company has always been absolutely independent and “never has it received rewards, gifts, subsidies, public offices or concession from anyone [...]” And that in his seven years as a journalist, never had he belonged to a political party, but rather he believed the Government of the State confiscated his newspaper company

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<sup>32</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Complaint about the confiscation of the Newspaper El Informador,” 16 February 1924.

<sup>33</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1, “Confiscation of rebel properties,” ff. 45-46, 15 February 1924

because his brother is Lic. Juan Manuel Álvarez del Castillo: “[this] repression [is] monstrous because a person can never be responsible or free of the acts of a relative however close they may be.”<sup>34</sup>

Not long after, Alfredo Morfín Silva, a resident of Guadalajara, complained of the government’s confiscation of the *Compañía Telefonica Jalisciense*. On 25 February 1924, American E.G. Purnell also echoed these sentiments in a letter directed to the Ministry of Interior, wherein he communicated that Governor Zuno had confiscated his telephone company without a written order: “without even permitting [that] an inventory of the [present] goods [be made nor] that a public notary carryout the respective act [...] with which the rights of American shareholders were violated.” In response to such actions, the corresponding agency sent a document to the governor of Jalisco expressing the complaints and ordering him to turn in a report justifying the particular matter, and asked for guarantees on behalf of the company. Zuno responded to such pressure with a series of attachments, providing a copy of the appointment made in favor of José Aviña, as auditor, and declaring that the confiscation of the company was ordered because of “the coexistence [between] the people who run the Compañía Telefonica Jalisciense [and] the rebels being notorious and [for] the indispensable [nature] of the complete

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<sup>34</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1, “Confiscation of rebel properties,” f. 8, 17 February 1924. In a similar fashion, the local newspaper *Restauración* was also confiscated “for the same reason that the confiscation of *El Informador* occurred” and an expedited appointment was made by the Executive of the State in favor of an Enrique C. Villaseñor to serve in the capacity of provisional auditor of the company; see AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Complaint on the confiscation of the newspaper Restuaración.”

destruction of the enemies of the legal institutions.” The governor, however, refused to deliver the report that was asked of him in order to justify his actions.<sup>35</sup>

Deputy Dionisio Y. Gómez bemoaned the confiscation of the property belonging to his windowed mother, doña Lorenza Zavala Vda. de Gómez, which Zuno ordered and subsequently requested reports to justify such actions. A worried Gómez even personally appeared before the governor, “who in a rude manner told him to wait [...] and [he] was not provided with a definitive answer.” The deputy concluded that Zuno carried out these efforts in the spirit of revenge and that “the motive for the hostility [toward] him was that he was not a supporter of the politics that Zuno and his *camarilla* have developed in the State of Jalisco [...]” And that he wanted to get rid of individuals who “constitute an affront” to *zunista* politics.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile, Salvador Cortina Solórzano, complained that an hacienda called Citala, property of his mother Soledad Solórzano de Cortina, had also been confiscated after the occupation of Guadalajara by the federal forces. An armed group at the orders of Vicente Soto, who “calls himself municipal president of Tuxcueca,” had apparently taken possession of the estate and in the process impeded its employees from carrying out their labors. “[...*Señora*] Cortina possesses a small shop in the town of Tuxcueca containing seed, sacks, tools and other agricultural implements,” confirmed the complainant, “of which have been confiscated by the municipal authorities of that place.” The petition alleged that due to the sex of *señora* Cortina, it was not

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<sup>35</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Complaint about the confiscation of the Compañía Telefonica Jalisciense,” 21 February 1924.

<sup>36</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Complaint from Deputy Dionisio Y Gomez for the confiscation of the Property from Lorenza Zavala Vda. de Gomez,” 26 February 1924.



possible that she could have had any intervention in the last events that happened in Jalisco, “something that is completely known in Guadalajara.” Additionally, Cortina Solórzano solicited the help of the president of the republic so that justice may be imparted “since they [her three sons] live dedicated to their labor in the fields without any connection to the armed elements that caused the revolt [...]”<sup>37</sup>

All the way from the tequila producing fields of Amatitán, Luz Ornelas de Ontiveros, in representation of her own interests and those of her five children (whom were not of age), complained that the governor decreed and carried out the confiscation of her rural and urban estates—including some lands planted with agave and a factory that distills “Vino Tequila.” The widow claimed the mandate was not carried out with a written order nor was there any detail provided with regard to the motives undergirding such actions. The complainant was, however, able to find out that she was being accused of supplying the rebels with livestock, arms and other resources, and moved to dismiss such accusations as “entirely implausible” on the basis of her sex and of the young age of her children (the oldest not even 12 years of age). “[It] is not possible that [I] would have had any complicity with the actions that have been attributed to [me...],” affirmed *señora* Ornelas de Ontiveros. While Governor Zuno confiscated the property as “an auxiliary of the Federal Government” with the purpose of having an accomplice to rebellion pay for their actions, the Ministry of Interior saw it differently and promptly conceded that articles 14, 16, 22, and 27 of the Federal Constitution had been violated, and, as a result,

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<sup>37</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Complaint from Salvador Cortina Solorzano in his own name and of his brother Jose of the same last name for the confiscation of the Hacienda Citalas of the Municipality of Teocuitatlan and of Tuxcueca, Jal,” 14 March 1924.

ordered him to return the confiscated properties, “giving the necessary guarantees [to the widow], for the benefit of her and of her young children.”<sup>38</sup>

In the nearby municipality of El Arenal, Manuel Ruiz narrated how in a similar fashion his properties were confiscated by a government inspector without a written order demonstrating the legal cause of the “illegal procedure” carried out. “[The] person in charge verbally explained,” detailed Ruiz, “that the confiscation was due to the act of having supplied the [*estradista*] rebels [with] livestock and arms [...]” The petition, however, clarified that the accusations against him, of proportioning resources to the rebels, were not true because the rebels took from his business whatever they wanted, and that they did it through their own authority and with force (with the opposition that his employees put up not being enough). The proprietor closed his petition with a strong critique of the governor: “that when [...] Zuno made [a] public declaration through the press [...] in December [of 1923 wherein he] expressed that in light [of the fact] that he lacked sufficient strength to confront the rebel movement, he would assume a passive character [...] the governor abandoned the important post of which he had obtained in a popular election.” Making no secret of his disappointment, Ruiz called for the illegal procedure to be brought to an end and for an “undoing” of the confiscation that had greatly impacted his financial and personal interests.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Complaint of Luz Ornelas de Ontiveros, about the confiscation of town property and some lands plated with mezcal (agave) and of a factory for the elaboration of Vino Tequila, located in the Municipality of Amatitán, Jal,” 5 March 1924.

<sup>39</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Complaint from Manuel Ruiz for the confiscation of his Industrial Agricultural Property, located in the population of Arenal, Jal,” 4 March 1924.

Outside of the petitions directed to the Ministry of Interior, there were also several personal letters addressed to the president of the republic, which denounced individuals who had actively taken part in the rebellion, but had yet to be sanctioned for siding with the rebel forces. What makes these letters especially revealing, however, are the perspectives they hold with regard to the governor's role in pacifying the region. Juan Martínez, for example, wrote a letter to President Obregón on 12 March 1924 reaffirming his loyalty to the state: "You do not ignore the names of many of those that have contributed to the growth of the revolution that in these regions has finished due to the wise dispositions that you dictated, and of which the current governor of the State, J. Guadalupe Zuno, has not wanted to contribute to [...]." Martínez went on to describe how local landowner Manuel M. Rivas—proprietor of the Hacienda de Zalamea—forced Maximiliano Ortega, Pedro Ortega (administrator and foreman at his hacienda), J. Santos Echeverría (field manager), and others "to second the [estradista] rebel movement." And highlighted other cases to prove that many local landowners also took part in the armed movement but were not punished, such as: Joaquín Aceves, proprietor of Hacienda del Tarengo, who apparently lent his horses to the movement; and Agustín H. Hernández, proprietor of the Hacienda de Margaritas, who helped an esteemed friend in the rebel government of Francisco Tolentino and had not been compromised because of being a relative of Governor Zuno.<sup>40</sup>

On 21 March 1924 Governor Zuno wrote to President Obregón to confirm receipt of his letters whose "content definitively marks the line of conduct that the Government

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<sup>40</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1, "Confiscation of rebel properties," ff. 69-70, 28 April 1924.

of Jalisco should follow with respect to the property of the rebels.” The abusive practices and irregularities committed under the *zunista* administration, in a short-time, notwithstanding, amassed a good amount of pressure from aggrieved parties. To the extent that those actions now warranted a response and a concerted effort made to correct such wrongdoings. The governor expressed the following to Obregón:

I hope to communicate to you very soon, [...] who by my concept were the proprietors whose commitments with the rebels merited the confiscation. I will secure that all restorations be made under the promise that the affected [...]not] make any reclamations for the damages that they could have suffered, since I think that these were not grave because I have established a surveillance that has given good results; and because, additionally, in all occasion I hope to defend the interests of the Federation and of the State.<sup>41</sup>

Zuno closed the letter with an attachment of the “first studies” of the property that Adolfo de la Huerta had returned to the Clergy in Guadalajara during the rebellion—in effect, it was a lengthy report detailing the clerical origins of the School of Arts and Offices of the Holy Spirit, and the College of Catholic Ladies—and that Zuno intended to reclaim for the State. This report not only offered the Government of Jalisco a basis to obtain the nationalization of such properties, but also reaffirmed a commitment on the part of the *zunista* administration to promote an unwavering secularism, which in years to come would escalate to unprecedented levels.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1, “Confiscation of rebel properties,” ff. 88-89, 21 March 1924.

<sup>42</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1, “Confiscation of rebel properties,” ff. 88-89, 21 March 1924. In reference to the religion question, Zuno wrote: “About that related to Archbishop Orozco y Jiménez, I have verbally referred to Ponce de León, the special conditions of the region where said catholic priest searches for protection when he believes himself persecuted. Also, I am making a thorough investigation and will proceed with all the tact and preparation that you advise.”

In a brief addressed to President Obregón—submitted about a week later—a consulting attorney, commissioned to assess the constitutionality of the confiscations carried out in the State of Jalisco, conceded that those responsible for all crimes indeed had the “civil responsibility” to pay for the damages and harm that their criminal act could have caused. For political matters, the attorney advised President Obregón of the highly beneficial nature of establishing a law that would not force a retroactive demand of such responsibilities from those guilty of the crime of rebellion,

since the [original law] was made following the triumph of the Constitutionalist Revolution when the Constitution of 1917 was expedited [...] that empowered the [individual] in charge of the Executive Power to execute the Law of Civil Responsibility [and to apply it] to the authors, conspirators and accessories to the crimes committed against the constitutional order in the month of February of 1913 [...].<sup>43</sup>

Thus, the attorney observed that a confiscation could not proceed in any other manner without violating guarantees established in the Constitution. But if the confiscation of any properties were to have been verified during the alteration of public peace—such as during the outbreak of the *Estradista* Rebellion—and before the suspension of individual guarantees, “all measures dictated against the properties of the rebels would have remained sanctioned by the same events without any room for a complaint [...].” Since the confiscations in Jalisco did not occur in the manner detailed, and because of the fact that the administrative authorities intended to take possession of the properties—of those responsible for the armed movement against the constitutional Government—after the fact, the attorney claimed: “it is undeniable that this conflict would be irregular, against

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<sup>43</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1, “Confiscation of rebel properties,” ff. 98-100.

all law and especially in conflict with the guarantees that the General Constitution of the Republic concedes.” This matter, therefore, fell under the jurisdiction of judicial authorities and it was they who had the power to decided on all issues related to the “civil responsibility” incurred by the individuals who took part in the rebellion.<sup>44</sup> Not the Executive branch of the State nor its administration as had become commonplace following the armed uprising.

*Popular Anxieties and Community*

On 26 January 1924, the people of Teocaltiche filed a petition signed by more than 230 residents and directed it to the president of the republic, energetically asking that José G. Zuno not be allowed to recapture the governorship because: 1) they felt had not been elected by the people, but rather his “so-called election” was due to the intervention of the Municipal Authorities of the State who—with all of the means available to them—prevented the people from taking part in the election; and 2) they claimed that not even in the era of don Porfirio Díaz, “were the interests of the State managed [so closely], justice [as] prostituted, [nor] individual guarantees [as] broken.” The members of the community assured the President Obregón that if the previous rebellion found echo amongst some elements, it was due to the abuses and exactions of all kinds, “suffered by the citizens of all social, political and religious creeds.”<sup>45</sup> Similarly, the predominantly indigenous northern town of Mezquitán also complained

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<sup>44</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1, “Confiscation of rebel properties,” ff. 98-100, 1 April 1924.

<sup>45</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-6, f. 1-3. 27 January 1924; AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, “Complaints from various people of Teocaltiche, because of the taking of possession of the Government of Jalisco, by J.G. Zuno,” 9 February 1924.

about Zuno's return to power "for not having defended [during the rebellion] the legal institutions which Álvaro Obregón presides over." The nine individuals, who authored the petition, put on record that, "[Zuno] DID ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DEFEND THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE [emphasis appeared in the original]." In agrarian matters, the community went as far as to accuse the governor of carrying out a politics diametrically opposed to that of the Federal Executive and cited a specific example to highlight his conniving ways: "that [...when] the town gathered on the 26 of March of the past year [1923] to celebrate a session, Zuno sent some agents to divide them, and [after] achieving his objective, he jailed in the Penitentiary one of the Indigenous [peoples] who had the communal titles of the town of Mezquitán and did not free him, until he obtained the related titles."<sup>46</sup>

The Central Executive Committee of the League of Agrarian Communities of Jalisco wrote to President Obregón "as Mexican citizens in the use of their rights" and in representation of the diverse people "we have been able to assemble" to assert that Zuno had prior knowledge of the military uprising led by Enrique Estrada. And to make matters worse, according to the Committee, when the movement broke out the governor went in search of resources, which could be of use to him if the national government of Alvaro Obregón triumphed. The Committee asked that a provisional governor be named with the goal of forming an administration that complies with the Law. "The people of Jalisco [and] of Guadalajara never had knowledge of Zuno launching a protest or [disavowing] the rebel movement," claimed the *agraristas*, "and if he did formulate some

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<sup>46</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 968, Tomo I, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Exp. 9, Caja 244, "Complaint from the old town of Mezquitán, against Guadalupe Zuno, because of his return to Power," February 1924.

decrees [...] they were probably kept in his pocket for future objectives [to] benefit his interests.” The fourteen communities that supported the petition stressed the need to bring the authors, accomplices, and accessories to the uprising to justice, “even [...] those that now make themselves appear [as] loyal supporters of the Constitutional Government.”<sup>47</sup>

An additional nineteen agrarian communities complained of the conduct of regional authorities, the rural forces, and of the private henchmen sent from the great landed estates—whom all committed numerous killings and atrocities against them to the point that they “were tearing us apart.” When the military uprising arrived to their doorsteps, however, the majority of these citizens did all they could to fight against the “reaction.” “We declared [...] with all fortitude, that in Jalisco we were against *estradiismo*, and in favor of the Government [...],” reaffirmed the *agraristas*. During the rebellion, several communities organized themselves into armed groups to combat the “traitors,” suffered many casualties, and actively risked their lives in support of the Government; yet after the triumph of the national state, the situation grew worse for many. Naïvely believing that the defeat and suppression of the uprising would mean a definitive victory for the ideals and rights they had long fought for in the name of the Revolution, in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, numerous soldiers, loyal to Governor Zuno, were said to have been deployed in many towns throughout the countryside. “We confess [...] our astonishment, that José Guadalupe Zuno has been

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<sup>47</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-6, ff. 10-12, 18 February 1924. The letter sent to president on behalf of the Central Executive Committee of the League of Agrarian Communities was signed by the following communities: the town of Teuchitlán; Rancho Nuevo and San Ignacio (Mpio. De Aqualulco); Tonalá; Zalatitán; Tequila; Aqualulco; Techaluta; Atemajac de Brizuela; Acatlán de Juárez; Zapopan; Villa Corona; the town of Tololotlán; and the town of Teocuitatlán de Corona.



authorized to arm [his] forces [...],” lamented the collective of *agraristas*, “so that they can persecute us with an inexplicable hatred, as if going to the battle field to defend [the state], was a monstrous crime [...].”

The above-mentioned agrarian communities never asked to be compensated for the services they lent to the Government in their moment of need, “given [that] we felt it our duty to sustain it.” But never in their wildest dreams did they believe their recompense would come in the form of hatred and persecution. Protesting the constant atrocities and intolerable and illegal hostility they were subjected to, the nineteen agrarian communities submitted three formal requests to President Obregón: 1) they wanted the disarmament of the *acordadas* of the haciendas to take place; 2) a formal investigation of the abuses committed, to be carried out by Headquarters of Military Operations; and 3) that the *zunista* forces either be subordinated and placed under the control of said Headquarters or be definitively disarmed, so that the federal forces would be able to instead provide the necessary guarantees. “[In] Jalisco there are no other revolutionary elements like the *agraristas*, and [...] they are the only element with which the Government can effectively count on [...] except in the case that you consider us useless,” lamented the agrarian representatives to President Obregón, “and this could be a consequence of the persecution that is carried out against us.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-6, ff. 213-215, 16 April 1924. The petition was signed by thirty-nine individuals in representation of the following communities: Acatlán de Juárez, Zapopan, San Marcos (4o Cantón), San Sebastianito, Atotonilco el Bajo, Catarina (4o Cantón), La Barranca de Santa Clara, Chiquilistlán, San Juan de Ocotlán, Zacoalco de Torres, Los Naranjos, Tescalame (5o Cantón), La Calera (5o Cantón), San Marcos (12 Cantón), Ahualulco de Mercado, Nextipac (1er Cantón), Atemajac de Brizuela, Sindicato de Agricultores de Autlán, and San Martín de las Flores (1er Cantón).

In a letter addressed to Governor Zuno, Cosme R. Sedano, the speaker of the Secretariat of the Local Agrarian Commission, described his visit to Chiquilistlán—one of the communities that signed the above-mentioned petition—and provided significant insight into the specific grievances this particular community expressed. Shortly after taking residence in the community, Speaker Sedano proceeded to interview the municipal president with goal of having this individual call upon the Agrarian Committee of the area. Not long after complying with his request, the municipal president returned with the secretary of the Agrarian Committee—escorted by 30-armed *agraristas*. Sedano proceeded to interrogate the members of the community in order to gather information about the difficulties they were experiencing to which they revealed that they had not faced any difficulty in matters related to the acquisition of their *ejidos*; however, when it came to the ‘political question’ such was not the case. The community claimed that not long ago a representative of the *Confederación de Partidos Revolucionarios* approached them and ordered the *agraristas* to vote for the *zunistas* on the ballot—but the community openly refused to submit to such wishes on the grounds that the “Confederados” of Zuno had previously betrayed them. During this exchange of impressions various community members made use of “the spoken word” in what was described as “a simultaneous manner,” and phrases not all that pleasant for the Government were heard. Sedano continued to push his interrogation tactics upon the community, asking whether the governor, as well as the other competent authorities, had refused support to the community or if their complaints had been adequately addressed. But before he could finish the question, an individual interrupted Sedano’s efforts: “Let’s go [...] Let’s not listen to him, he is a Zunista [...] You all know what our comrade Manzano says that

when Calles comes to power they will elevate our own [people] and the traitors will go down.” In the report’s conclusion, Sedano offered to diagnose the problem present within the community: “With sadness I was able to ascertain the antagonism that exists among the campesino element of that place for the governor of the state and his collaborators, [and it is] the municipal president, the municipal secretary, the president of the Agrarian Committee, and the secretary of the Agrarian Committee (Manzano), in my humble opinion[, who are] responsible for that disorientation.”<sup>49</sup>

Across many municipalities in the state, however, the actions of the *zunista* administration were rumored to have led to bloody and grave conflicts, which the governor was accused of combating with a series of assassinations. In the middle of May 1924, for example, the Political Boss of Cocula, with the help of an armed *zunista* force, carried out the assassination of two *agraristas*. The bodies were subsequently hurled into a waterhole, where they were found a few days later already in a state of decomposition. A half year later, Governor Zuno sent henchman Pedro Flores Grajeda to assume the political leadership of the Atoyac with specific instructions to act “energetically.” Local Deputy Basilio M. Rodríguez was also sent to Atoyac to officially transfer power to the new Political Boss and to direct the political maneuvers agreed upon beforehand. Grajeda and Rodríguez, with numerous individuals from the *zunista* forces, then proceed to apprehend various *agraristas*—among them, Felipe Diego, Donanciano Estrada, and Gilberto Casasola—and locked them up in the Municipal Jail. The *agraristas* were supposed to be taken to Sayula to be processed, but “in reality they took them to

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<sup>49</sup> AHJ, Gobernación, 1924, Sin Clasificación, “Escrito de Cosme R. Sedano al Gobernador del Estado,” 15 November 1924.

Amacueca, where they killed them [and hid] their bodies in a waterhole [and] covered [them] with rocks and dirt.” In Tuxcueca, motivated by personal political conviction, the governor provoked the division of the community and made use of a *zunista* group to assassinate the *agraristas* Jesus González and Rafael González. “The current persecution continues against the father of the González’s and the *agraristas* [that are] not *zunistas*,” confirmed the report. Many political assassinations were also reported to have been carried out by henchmen loyal to Zuno, which included but was not limited to the deaths of: the municipal president of Zacoalco de Torres, Lorenzo Anzaldo; the campesino Andrés Ramos from Citala in Teocuitatlán de Corona; Froilan Rodríguez, president of the *antizunista* political group and councilmen-elect of Tecolotlán; and Brígido Rosas from El Grullo. “All of the bloody crimes have remained unpunished,” lamented the same report, “as if it is not in the best interest that [the assassinations] be clarified [...]”<sup>50</sup>

Numerous agrarian and labor organizations of Jalisco declared that they would not be on the side of Zuno because of his conduct towards the workers who labored in the field and in the city, which they deemed an affront to the revolutionary principals of the country. “We have been victims of his speculative tendencies, [...Zuno] has carried out a politics of appeasement and revenge, which has facilitated opportunities to harmonize with a majority of the reactionaries that satisfy his ambitions for wealth, and only [the] ones who combat him are those who do not fold to his demands.” And to the citizens that the governor could not exploit, he showed hostility towards them to the point that many

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<sup>50</sup> AGN, DGIPS, Departamento Confidencial, 310(3.2)–3 I, Nombre: Estado de Jalisco, Asunto: Situación Política, “Report authored by Minority Deputies to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union,” February 1926.

accused the current administration of simulating an antirevolutionary ideology. The organization of agrarians and laborers affirmed that all of the people could prove that Zuno had exploited them, “snatching the product of their labor,” and that every agrarian procedure had given him some room to do business with the affected proprietors. The time had come, according to these workers, to name a provisional governor since the “powers had disappeared.”<sup>51</sup> Given that the political opposition authored and/or collected many of these types of reports, it might be plausible to detect an element of exaggeration. The sheer number of events—in addition to the discontent voiced by numerous agrarian communities across the State—however, is worthy of consideration and point towards either the presence of local petty political factionalism or a larger systemic attempt to repress agrarians not in line with the official politics of the *zunista* administration.

Zuno complained of the *agraristas* groups left in some regions of the State who were not used to the life of a soldier and that were badly disciplined, which ambitious politicians consistently took advantage of and that frequently caused his Government unease. The governor asserted that: “in some cases [they have] even tried to depose the municipal authorities in Acatlán de Juárez, in which I saw [myself] obligated to reinstate the municipal president by means of armed force [and...without there being] [any] victims, since the *agraristas* fled when they [saw] the presence of the forces of the Government,” asserted the governor. Zuno, nonetheless, warned the president of the republic of General Eugenio Aviña—commissioned by President Obregón to organize “those people”—that “[Aviña] should have some care on the selection of his emissaries

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<sup>51</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-6, ff. 63-64, 24 March 1924.

and officials, since it is notable [...that] at his side [are] the false *agraristas* [who] occupy themselves in stirring up and worrying the Communities [...].” And while General Aviña remained enthusiastic about the “theory” that all *agraristas* should be armed, Zuno cautioned the president of the republic that in specific regions of the State such notions caused concerns.<sup>52</sup> On 24 May 1924, however, Marcelino Cedano telegraphed President Obregón to let him know that the *Segunda Convención Agrarista de Jalisco* agreed to energetically protest the *zunista* abuses carried out the day before against agrarian comrades in Ocotlán, “taking away their pistols and reducing them to prison.” The agrarians in question were said to be members of the first regional agrarian corps that fought against the *estradista* forces in defense of the National Government.<sup>53</sup>

On 10 April 1924 Governor Zuno threw his support behind the activation of the agrarian question to a “high grade” and sought to take advantage of the fallout from the *Estradista* Rebellion to help the former. In a letter addressed to President Obregón, he wrote the following: “I believe that [the] culminating [...] agrarian problem in Jalisco has now been resolved and I am quite sure that through my action, in a short period I will be able to finish the provisional grants that have been solicited from me.”<sup>54</sup> Although continuously denounced as an enemy of the agrarian cause, over the course of his administration a total of 324,740.899 hectares of land were redistributed to more than 54,387 *campesinos*. To place this into context, from 1915 to 1935 Jalisco had a total of

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<sup>52</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1, “Confiscation of rebel properties,” ff. 37-42.

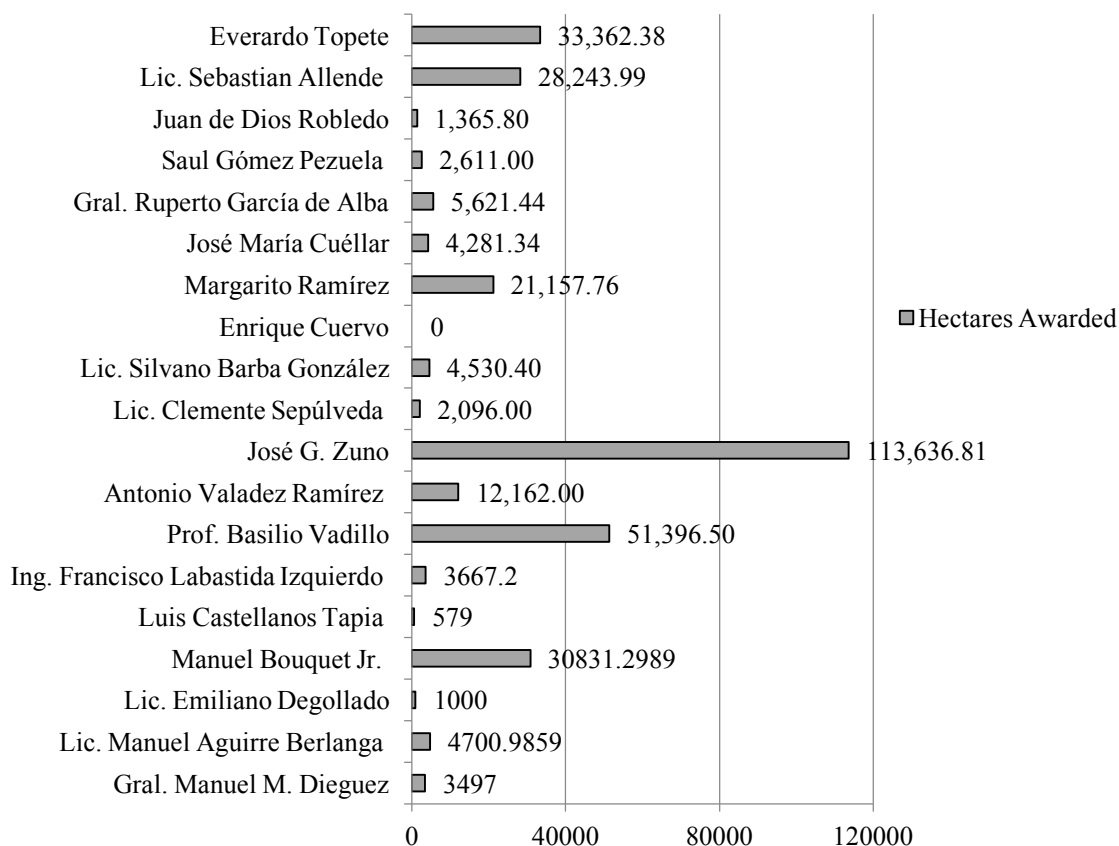
<sup>53</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-6, ff. 181, 24 May 1924.

<sup>54</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1, “Confiscation of rebel properties,” ff. 37-42.

19 different governors with a median tenure of 10 months in power—Zuno had the longest tenure of any governor at 38.25 months. Under his governorship, a total of 113,636.81 hectares of land were redistributed to 22,157 *campesinos*; that is to say, the efforts of the governor represented 34.99 percent of all land redistributed in State and approximately 40.73 percent of all *campesinos* that received land grants during that period (see Table 2). A total of 107 *expedientes* were resolved and only 5 were denied, which in turn comprised 34.74 of all *expedientes* resolved in the dataset, and only 5.49 percent of all those denied.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> AGN, Lázaro Cárdenas del Río, 404.1/140.

**Table 2:** Hectares Awarded by Governors in Jalisco, 1915-1935.

Source: Archivo General de la Nación, Lázaro Cárdenas del Río, 404.1/140.

In a report given to the XXIX Local Legislature at the beginning of 1925, for example, Zuno boasted about the thirty-six files that had already been resolved and claimed that an additional twenty-three communities were in the process of having their files processed.<sup>56</sup> And a year later, at the same venue, the governor declared that during the course of the previous year the Executive of the State, in cooperation with the Local Agrarian Commission, granted fifty thousand twenty-six hectares and fifty centiares of

<sup>56</sup> *El Informador*, “Periodo Congreso. El ciudadano gobernador rindió su informe,” 2 February 1925.



land to seventy agrarian communities.<sup>57</sup> Zuno took full advantage of the defeat of the *Estradista* Rebellion—and also a favorable national decree—to grant numerous citizens land. And while his politics aroused conflicting anxieties among many of Jalisco’s agrarian communities, the measure allowed for an unprecedented amount of citizens to enjoy lands to farm; the decree, however, was subsequently repealed by federal authorities, but not without Jalisco taking full advantage of it. The governor claimed that when the landowners saw themselves dispossessed, “they vigorously presented themselves before me, celebrating favorable arrangements; and so by mutual agreement, I was able to deliver a large number of hectares that today, [even when all the land given by] all governments before and after is totaled, does not equal the amount.”<sup>58</sup>

#### *Popular Sovereignty and The Free Municipality*

When provisional Governor Francisco Tolentino came to power shortly after the outbreak of the *Estradista* Rebellion in December of 1923, he issued “decree number one” that reaffirmed the sovereignty of the State of Jalisco—deciding to not recognize General Obregón as president of the republic, and the public authorities of the State (comprised of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches). Moreover, in an effort to restructure and organize public functions—both in the capital of Guadalajara and in the rest of the population of the State—Tolentino appointed “Municipal Councils with strict

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<sup>57</sup> *El Informador*, “Ante la H. Legislatura rindió ayer su informe el señor Gobernador del Estado,” 2 February 1926.

<sup>58</sup> Llerenas, “José Guadalupe Zuno,” p. 67

subjection to the will of the people [in] the municipalities [...] where it be necessary.”<sup>59</sup> On his return to power in mid-February, however, José G. Zuno published a decree in the *Periódico Oficial del Gobierno* wherein he made use of the extraordinary powers granted to him by the Constitution of the State to “not recognize all of those functionaries that directly or indirectly have contributed to the uprising of a pseudo government.” The decree he enacted affected a total of fifty-three municipalities, immediately suspended their municipal administrations, and designated new representatives to take charge of “the Municipal Power until the responsibility of the suspended functionaries is determined or extraordinary elections are called [for in every one of those municipalities].”<sup>60</sup>

Article 115 of the Constitution of 1917 proclaimed that all States in Mexico “shall adopt the popular, representative, republican form of government, with the *municipio libre* as the basis of their territorial division and political and administrative organization.”<sup>61</sup> Zuno is often remembered as one of the boldest promoters of the recently conquered principal of municipal autonomy and a ferocious defender of federalism. Such descriptions conjure up images of an obsessed individual who walked the streets of Guadalajara with a Constitution in hand spouting, as one historian has noted, “the most complete and consistent civil project of the revolution in defense of legality, against

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<sup>59</sup> Archivo Histórico del Municipio de Autlán (hereinafter cited as AHMA), 1923 (Gobernación, 6), “Decree number one, Francisco Tolentino,” 11 December 1923.

<sup>60</sup> *Periódico Oficial del Estado de Jalisco*, 14 February 1924. The decree was originally authored during the *Estradista* Rebellion (dated on 12 January 1924), but only came to light after the Government of the Center had reestablished control of the region.

<sup>61</sup> For a full text of the Constitution of Mexico, along with the see the “Mexico’s Constitution of 1917 with Amendments through 2007” via Constitute Project, “[http://www.constituteproject.org/constitution.Mexico\\_2007.pdf](http://www.constituteproject.org/constitution.Mexico_2007.pdf)

threats [...] from the ranks from the revolutionary and political apparatus.”<sup>62</sup> Early in his political career Zuno upheld such values and demonstrated an inclination towards defending the principle of the Free Municipality. As municipal president of Guadalajara in 1922, for example, the budding politician convened a meeting with the municipal presidents of Ameca, Sayula, Tepatitlán, Ciudad Gúzman, and Tlaquepaque to “intensify the well-defined idea of municipal liberty and [to] accord the best way this idea [can] be made truth [...] for] the intellectual and material betterment of their comprehension.”<sup>63</sup> These efforts contributed to his ascent, and subsequent appointment, to the presidency of the board within the *Congreso de Ayuntamientos* of Jalisco, where Zuno joined eleven municipal presidents to discuss and debate critical issues regarding the scope and limits of municipal liberty. In a speech to said Congress Zuno declared the following:

All social political action should be fundamentally grounded in municipal power [...] it is the *ayuntamientos* who are responsible for giving education and [providing the facility for] survival of all social classes [...] we want to inaugurate new political pacts [...] and] establish new paths for *jalisciense* politics.<sup>64</sup>

The political opportunism to be had in the wake of the *Estradista* Rebellion, however, proved too much for Zuno to not capitalize on; and as a result, he swiftly spread the tentacles of his movement deep into the municipalities of the state and intervened in municipal-level politics.

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<sup>62</sup> Llerenas “José Guadalupe Zuno,” p. 54

<sup>63</sup> Tamayo, *La consolidación*, p 147.

<sup>64</sup> Tamayo, *La consolidación*, pp. 179-180.

In the months following the *estradista* uprising, the governor was accused of not only replacing all of the municipal councils formed during the uprising, but of also replacing several *ayuntamientos* in the State with individuals “that were foreign to the populations, employees of the Executive, and, therefore, absolutely unconditional [supporters].”<sup>65</sup> For example, from 5 March 1924 to 23 June 1925, for example, the *Periódico Oficial del Estado de Jalisco* reveals that *at least* twenty-seven municipal administrations were replaced—with *at least* five municipalities experiencing multiple changes (Tepatitlán de Morelos, Tecocuitatlán de Corona, Encarnación de Díaz, Juchitlán, and Villa Corona). Among the notifications published, Zacoalco de Torres and Manzanillo expressed specific complaints: the former voiced that no member of its *ayuntamiento* participated in the *Estradista* Rebellion; while the latter asked for guarantees because the governor had not recognized their capacity to rule. Additionally, the residents of Zapotlán proactively asked for the recovery of their town council, whereas the municipal president of Tonila wanted clarification on whether or not he should deliver municipal power to the individual named by the Executive the State.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> AGN, DGIPS, Departamento Confidencial, 310(3.2)–3 I, Nombre: Estado de Jalisco, Asunto: Situación Política, “Report authored by Minority Deputies to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union,” February 1926.

<sup>66</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” Legislatura XXXI – Año II – Período Extraordinario – Fecha 19260323 (23 March 1926) – Número de Diario 3. Román del Campo, the individual in charge of the municipal administration of Tepatitlán de Morelos—also comes to mind. Responding to a circular asking for clarification regarding the municipality’s involvement in the previous rebellion, del Campo claimed that no rebel movement erupted in this municipality; rather, that it was instead occupied by the forces of rebel Colonel Cosme Anaya on 12 December 1923 that hailed from the capital of Guadalajara. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of that same month, the above rebel was said to have dissolved the *ayuntamiento* under the control of President Agripin Navarro and gathered some residents to form a Municipal Council that Dr. Pedro Torres presided over, “notifying [ here in this letter] that none of the people that assisted said *junta* did it voluntarily.” “Except for the Ayuntamiento, all of the employees of the state, federal and municipal, as well as the functionaries continued to serve in their posts, during the period of the rebellion,” stressed del Campo. On 16 February 1924, after the Municipal Council—who published notices declaring that they only carried out the municipal administration, so that it would not remain

The Municipality of Teocuitatlán de Corona, which claimed to have valiantly fought on the side of the state during the *Estradista* Rebellion, provides insight into one of the most egregious examples of unwarranted meddling into municipal politics. On 11 September 1924, the municipal president of Teocuitatlán de Corona wrote a letter to Governor Zuno asking for clarification on why his municipality had been affected by the decree enacted earlier that year—since his administration had valiantly fought with arms in hand in defense of the state:

[This Ayuntamiento], united with the one from Tizapán el Alto, was one of the few Ayuntamientos in this State [that] knew how to [fulfill] its duty during the rebel movement in that region, maintaining itself on the side of the Constitutional Government and lending its vigorous help to the loyal forces of the Federation, we hurriedly declare to you [Zuno] that surely [your] Government has been surprised by bad reports [...].<sup>67</sup>

Municipal President Montaña claimed to be in possession of reports that proved the opposite of what the governor had declared to the Ministry of Interior. He specifically made reference to a meeting in Celaya, between representatives of his municipality and Tizapán el Alto, and President Obregón. “The President of the Republic can, if it be necessary, confirm this fact, since he himself demonstrated his gratitude to the [previously] mentioned Ayuntamientos and additionally gave the Commission [...] pecuniary help to go to Ocotlán to continue lending their services in favor of the constitutional Government [...],” confirmed Montaña. The disclosed information, in the eyes of the municipal leadership, warranted a reconsideration of the governor’s decision

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acephalous—the constitutional *ayuntamiento* once again took possession of their posts and assumed their duties; see AHJ, Gobernación, 1924, Sin Clasificación, Caja 4.

<sup>67</sup> AHJ, Gobernación, 1924, Sin Clasificación, Caja 2, Exp: 2.

to not recognize the legality of the local government, on the grounds that such actions were “entirely unjust.” President Montaña, nevertheless, warned that if such a decree and the subsequent sanctions remained intact, it would be “one of the biggest injustices that could be committed and that as a result [it would] forcibly lead to the demoralization of the [community] and their absolute indifference in [whatever would happen next] when he would most need their help.”<sup>68</sup>

In an effort to “guarantee” effective suffrage at the local and national level, Zuno claims to have expedited extensive instructions to the municipal presidents of the State, warning them to completely abstain from any actions during elections beyond what the laws strictly assigned to them.<sup>69</sup> A complaint lodged by the minority deputies of the Chamber of Jalisco, however, provides a different perspective with regard to the instructions individuals sent to take power were to follow:

[they] were in charge of preparing the election of *Ayuntamientos* for the year of 1926, since during all the previous [year] they functioned in charge of the municipal power and naturally, these [individuals] in charge were included in the election ballots and currently assume the respective Municipal Presidencies, with marked displeasure from the residents, especially in the most important cities of the State.<sup>70</sup>

In some cases—and mostly through the actions of maverick local deputies—independent ballots achieved some noticeable success, “which, the governor, naturally, saw with utmost displeasure and [made] use of his power [to] prevent that these independent

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<sup>68</sup> AHJ, Gobernación, 1924, Sin Clasificación, Caja 2, Exp: 2.

<sup>69</sup> *El Informador*, “Periodo Congreso. El ciudadano gobernador rindió su informe,” 2 February 1925.

<sup>70</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) “25,” Box 2024, State of Jalisco, Political Situation, 1925-B, Exp: 10, “Local Minority Report to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union,” February 1926.

ballots take possession of their posts.”<sup>71</sup> An anonymous group of popularly elected councilmen, for example, complained that a representative of the governor confronted them shortly after assuming their posts and “demanded that we resign from our posts [...] since the governor did not trust us.” The councilmen rejected the illegal advances of the *zunista* administration and their calls to go see the governor in Guadalajara, largely due to that fact that they were aware “that various *Ayuntamientos* of the State were made to appear at his office at the *Palacio de Gobierno*, and there [at the same] place were made to sign their resignations.” The refusal on the part of the councilmen to succumb to such immoral tactics led to Zuno nullifying the verified elections that took place in that particular municipality: “[going] against all rights and flagrantly violating the popular vote.” This was none other than a dirty political maneuver, claimed the councilmen, since this was the only municipal government in the State that the governor could not eliminate.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) “25,” Box 2024, State of Jalisco, Political Situation, 1925-B, Exp: 10, “Local Minority Report to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union,” February 1926.

<sup>72</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 2024-B, Exp. 10, “Estado de Jalisco. Situación Política.” February 1926. A report authored by the minority deputies from the Congress of Jalisco, a few months before, offered some interesting insight into some of the tactics deployed by the *zunista* administration. In the Municipality of San Pedro Tlaquepaque, Police Chief Juan D. Quintero was sent to San Martín de las Flores to head an armed group. They entered the population and opened fire upon the *agraristas* of the town—two of them died in the process. The assassin, Quintero, however, was rewarded by Zuno and sent to Teocuitatlán de Corona in the capacity of political boss to depose Municipal President J. Félix Ramos. The henchman then proceeded to assassinate *agrarista* Atanasio Martínez and not much later *agrarista* Francisco Villalobos experienced the same fate “for the only crime of not wanting to be a *zunista*.” On the fulfillment of his mission in the area and now “at the orders of the bloodthirsty *cacique hacendado* Ramón Villarreal,” Quintero was then sent to San Marcos and continued committing similar crimes until the *agraristas* of the town, “in defense of their lives and of their interests, killed him.” See AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) “25,” Box 2024, State of Jalisco, Political Situation, 1925-B, Exp: 10, “Local Minority Report to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union,” February 1926.

During the annual report presented to the Congress of Jalisco, on February 1925, Zuno reiterated the specific actions taken after the *Estradista* Rebellion and presented a slightly modified version of the original decree drafted in the throes of the rebellion: “[...since] a great part of the constitutional *ayuntamientos* in fact recognized the so-called authorities emanating from the rebellion, [I saw myself] in the imperious situation of breaking in the absolute the political and administrative relationships with said *ayuntamientos* [...]” The modified decree removed six municipalities from the list of targets—Jalostotitlán, Sayula, San Gabriel, El Grullo, Unión de Tula, and Pihuamo—and added twenty-two municipalities to the original list. This brought the total number of targeted municipalities accused of recognizing and lending a helping hand to the *Estradista* Rebellion to a total of sixty-nine municipalities. Additionally, Zuno claimed to have appointed provisional municipal presidents to take charge of those respective administrations “as the reformed article 23 of the Organic Law of the Executive Power and of Public Administration warns.” Throughout the duration of 1924 and beyond, nevertheless, municipal authorities were freely removed by the governor, “all the times [that] the administrative needs demanded it.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *El Informador*, “Periodo Congreso. El ciudadno gobernador rindió su informe,” 2 February 1925. The following *ayuntamientos* were affected by said decree: La Barca, Ocotlán, Jamay, Poncitlán, Atotonilco el Alto, Tototlán, Arandas, San Miguel el Alto, Unión de San Antonio, Zapotitlán, San Juan de los Lagos, Lagos de Moreno, Villa Hidalgo, Colotlán, Santa María de los Angeles, Hostotipaquillo, Etzatlán, San Marcos, Magdalena, Aqualulco, Tequila, Ameca, San Martín Hidalgo, Cocula, Tecolotlán, Ayutla, Ciudad Guzmán, Zapotiltic, Purificación, Cihuatlán, Jocotepec, Chapala, Acatlán de Juárez, Zacoalco, Tlajomulco, Concepción de Buenos Aires, Atemajac de Brizuela, Tlaquepaque, Zapopan, Tonalá, Tala, Quitupan, Manzanillo, Arenal, Valle de Juárez, Tamazula, Amatitán, Autlán, San Cristóbal de la Barranca, Chiquilistlán, Ejutla, Encarnación, Jesús María, San Sebastián (ex. 9° Cantón), Tecalitlán, Tepatitlán, Teuchitlán, Valle de Guadalupe, Yahualica, Zapotlán del Rey, Ayo el Chico, Atoyac, Teocuitatlán, San Diego de Alejandría, San Julián, Tapalpa, Amacueca, Tonila and, Cuautla.



The “legally elected councilmen” from the *ayuntamiento* of San Juan de los Lagos, for example, were forced to travel to Guadalajara and to present themselves at the office of Zuno’s Sub-Secretary, Gonzalo Amezcua. And once in said office, the councilmen claimed: “[we were told] that Governor Zuno would willingly welcome [the] presentation of our resignations with an irrevocable character as Members of the *ayuntamiento* of this place [San Juan de los Lagos].” The councilmen asserted their displeasure with the order, but Amezcua “insisted in his unjust demand, and went to the extent of threatening us if we did not fulfill his desires.” After taking into account the pressure exerted over the councilmen, they all agreed to present their resignations; Amezcua, however, wanted the councilmen to make it seem as if the impetus for the resignations originally came from them, which would require the councilmen to write up and sign their own documents. The councilmen refused to write up their own resignations. After a light discussion, they were given a document that a government employee drafted, “which we were forced to sign, in light of the pressure they exercised against us.” This pressure did not end at the office, but also travelled back with them to San Juan de los Lagos. A few weeks later, colonel Susano Castañeda presented himself and showed González Romo—the then municipal president—a message from Guadalajara, signed by Governor Zuno, “ordering him [Castañeda] to take charge of the Presidency, with the excuse that the components of the *ayuntamiento* had VOLUNTARILY resigned from their posts [emphasis in the original].” The councilmen colorfully described the administration of Castañeda: “The terrorist regime that survived in this Municipality during the ephemeral REIGN of CACIQUE Castañeda, was easily destroyed due to the power of public opinion that saw itself irritated [by] the oppression

that the cited cacique carried out over the people [emphasis in the original].” After the arrival of Sub-Secretary Amezcua to the population, substitute councilmen José L. Padilla was elevated to the post of municipal president who “was by any reckoning partial to the *zunista* administration [...]”<sup>74</sup>

Zuno commonly cited the extraordinary powers granted to him by the Constitution of Jalisco as sufficient grounds to justify the actions his administration took; but a deeper exploration of the articles contained in the Constitution of Jalisco reveals a slightly different picture. On the constitutionality of said actions, article 35, fraction X, certainly authorized the Executive to suspend municipal administrations, but as the *Diario de Debates* asserted: “[...] precisely for its unconstitutionality this precept was repealed, striking said fraction down by means of [a] reform of the Constitution of Jalisco, which with all legal formalities was decreed and was promulgated in the official newspaper of that State [...] on the date of 16 September 1922.” The Organic Law of the Public Administration of Jalisco in effect also ordered that *only* in the complete absence of proprietary councilmen or substitute councilmen of an *ayuntamiento* “will the Congress of the State name a Municipal Council or the Executive [name] someone to take charge of the [Municipal] Administration.” In many cases, Governor Zuno even went as far as to dissolve *ayuntamientos*—including the municipal councils—that had not yet entered into functions, “which for the same [reason] could not have committed a fault

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<sup>74</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) “25,” Box 2024, State of Jalisco, Political Situation, 1925-B, Exp: 10, “Letter from the legally elected councilmen of San Juan de los Lagos,” 30 June 1926. The councilmen that originally comprised the *ayuntamiento* of San Juan de los Lagos were: Ezequiel Alba, Benedicto González Romo, Benjamín R. León, Francisco Campos, José Padilla Rodríguez, José López González, Enrique González, and Pablo Esqueda. Benedicto González Romo, Vice-President of the *ayuntamiento* and, at the orders of the governor, was the only one to stay behind and assume control of the Municipal Presidency.

or official crime.” Suffice it to say that following the *Estradista* Rebellion, the governor deposed councilmen without cause and without legal authority and named individuals to take over the functions of a great number of *ayuntamientos*, “with attributes analogous to political bosses.”<sup>75</sup>

### *Sowing the Seeds of Political Corruption*

The wealth Zuno accumulated by the latter stages of 1925 was not only quite impressive, but also provides insight into how corrupt practices made their way into the political culture of the period. A confidential report from the Ministry of Interior, for example, confirmed that the governor “acquired the thousands of pesos with which he sustained his political [agenda...by] taking advantage of the fact that many of Guadalajara’s rich residents [were] sympathizers of the de la Huerta movement.” While some supported the uprising out of conviction and others to defend their own personal interests, Zuno, nonetheless, confiscated an “infinite amount of properties” and was said to have auctioned them off for a profit. On 14 February 1926, the governor’s worth was estimated to be in the vicinity of no less than three million pesos, with much of the

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<sup>75</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” Legislatura XXXI – Año II – Período Extraordinario – Fecha 19260323 (23 March 1926) – Número de Diario 3. Governor Zuno appeared to make a habit of deposing municipal governments at a whims notice, but his efforts did not just stop there and he also intervened in deputy elections. On 17 Mayo 1924, for example, Deputy Elías F. Hurtado sent an urgent message to President Obregón notifying him of the “era of terror” that had been inaugurated in Autlán and the panic this caused among the residents of the region, after the “cowardly assassination of Isauro Godoy, president of the Progressive Party of the South, which was the regional party that supported General Calles for president of the republic and the undersigned as deputy to the Congress of the Union. “[...]It is nothing but the start of a series of crimes announced with an effrontery that embarrasses, since the list is already given of those that have to pay with their lives, the audacity of opposing the whims of the Governor [Zuno...], who [is] determined to impose in the District of Autlán, the candidacy of an unanimously repudiated individual that has already been legally and completely defeated in elections for the XXIX and XXX Legislatures of the same district,” decried Deputy Hurtado. The message emphasized that this was no longer a case of political intrigue, but rather these actions were now the only recourse available to their enemies—since those in power had abused it to such an extent that the elements that once believed in them had abandoned them; see AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-6, ff. 177-178, 17 May 1924.

money deposited in foreign banks—in addition to owning various properties that “in their totality are worth a fortune.” “Likewise those that know the history of all those matters inform me that Zuno has spent in buying supporters and protégés to back his labors, no less than a million and a half pesos,” revealed the confidential report. These hired supporters allowed him to continue to deploy the “dirty tactics” that many attributed to his administration, such as the intervention, confiscation, and management of business’ such as the *Compañía Hidroeléctrica*, and the selling of products and cattle from Hacienda Bellavista.<sup>76</sup>

Another report, forwarded to Gilberto Valenzuela, Secretary in the Ministry of Interior, corroborates—in great detail—the amount of capital that Zuno, in his short-tenure, had already amassed. With regard to his real estate, for example, the governor owned a house in Colonia Reforma, specifically on *Avenida del Bosque* (\$150,000.00 pesos); two pilot boats taken from the *Compañía Hidroeléctrica* (no value listed); the Hacienda Santa Catarina located near Ciudad Guzmán (\$125,000.00 pesos) registered under the name of a relative, Paulino Sánchez; two houses in the Portal Matamoros (\$100,000.00 pesos), again under the name of the same relative; various urban properties with about thirty deeds distributed to family members, along with spare part material from the *Compañía Hidroeléctrica* that was taken when it was confiscated (\$400,000.00 pesos); and miscellaneous accounts collected in cash (\$105,000.00 pesos)—apparently used as “hush money.” The collection of the miscellaneous accounts implied no

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<sup>76</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 311 (3.2) 25, Nombre: Edo. de Jalisco, Asunto: Elecciones de poderes locales, ff. 50-53, 14 February 1926.

reclamation of past actions or activities; notwithstanding, Zuno did enforce a “new condition” on these accounts:

For Public Works of the State-----	\$50,000.00 pesos
For Public Works of the City-----	\$25,000.00 pesos
For the Zoo Park-----	\$10,000.00 pesos
For Lic. Hernandez (his brother-in-law) -----	\$30,000.00 pesos

The Municipality of Guadalajara had an outstanding balance of \$190,000.00 pesos charged under “other trifles,” which were not going to be paid. Additionally, the report indicates that through the use of third parties, Zuno channeled from various proprietors of rural estates in the State of Jalisco a sum of \$500,000.00 pesos. Not all proprietors who were approached complied; however, those who did were said to have been offered protection from *ejido* encroachments. And the honorariums the governor and his men charged under many of the above agreements were described as nothing short of “exorbitant.”<sup>77</sup>

Over the course of his short political career, Zuno had already stockpiled the following automobiles for his personal use and that of his family: a 12 cylinder Packard (gift from Sr. Andrés Somellera, so that his estates would not be affected by the agrarian reform), a Studebaker (special edition), a Rickenbacker, and a Dodge. The governor also

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<sup>77</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) ‘25’, Caja 139, Estado de Jalisco, Situación Política, Año de 1925. According to the report, the third parties that Zuno used were Lic. Gustavo R. Cristo, Juan Aviña, Guadalupe Rivalcaba, Constancio Hernández, Raymundo Hernández, Fernando Martín del Campo, and other Deputies to the Local Congress. One of the more disturbing accusations against Zuno present in the report, was the following: “[h]e frequently orders [the] carrying out of assassinations because [of] his personal ambitions [of] individuals that he believes oppose his political ends, giving as a case [that] he has inquisitorial torture [chambers], having some people various days without food to obtain what he wants.” The same report claims that, “[when] the Government triumphed over the last revolution [the de la Huerta Rebellion], Zuno confiscated without any legal authority, a great number of Haciendas, having ransacked from them cereals, cattle, [and] farming tools that were worth various millions of pesos, greatly hurting the agriculture of the State.”

took large amounts of money—although it is unclear where he took this money from—under the pretext of forming Guadalajara’s first Zoo Park, and “charged every merchant of the city [anywhere] from one peso up to two thousand [...] to buy the said animals for the Park [...]” On 25 June 1925, the *zunista* administration boasted about completing the construction of the second largest observatory in the entire republic and of the establishment of the first Zoo Park in all of Mexico at the famous site named “El Agua Azul.” “We saw, among others, a lovely black panther from Java, of which there are few examples in the United States,” claimed *El Demócrata*, “a pair of legitimate tigers from Bengal, which has caused the admiration of those who see them; a pair of African leopards, an orangutan, two polar bears, two emus, two ostriches, a collection of pheasant pigeons, rabbits, deer, monkey and in general an innumerable amount of animals that not even Chapultepec Park [in Mexico City] possesses.” Zuno, proud of the accomplishment, was reported to have given money from “his own pocket” for the establishment of this park.<sup>78</sup>

The *zunista* administration also dedicated a great amount of attention and effort to the construction and opening of public roads, declaring to *El Demócrata* that “[...] nobody escapes from [this] since the indispensable condition for material progress of the people is to be able to count on good communication channels.”<sup>79</sup> Among the modern roads, which at the beginning of 1925 were in the process of being constructed, were the following: from Guadalajara to Puerto Vallarta; from Guadalajara to Aguascalientes;

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<sup>78</sup> *El Demócrata*, “La gestión del Gobernador del Edo. de Jalisco Sr. José G. Zuno,” 25 June 1925.

<sup>79</sup> *El Demócrata*. “La gestión del Gobernador del Edo. de Jalisco Sr. José G. Zuno,” 25 June 1925

from Guadalajara to La Barca; and from Guadalajara to Chapala. To fully see out the construction of the above roads, the Executive acquired modern machinery (worth approximately sixty thousand pesos) comprised of: seven steamrollers, three tractors, five bulldozers, four watering trucks, a rock breaker and grinder, two dirt elevators, six large trucks and ten smaller ones, seven motorcycles for inspectors to use, and a construction scraper. Additionally, the administration purchased a cement truck and another truck that would be able to deliver steel for the construction of bridges.<sup>80</sup>

The governor and the municipal president of Guadalajara, José María Cuéllar—along with other individuals, such as the Director of Public Works Engineer Manuel Lagarreta and Engineer Juan José Barragán—continued to enriched themselves through the construction and improvements carried out in the city. Cuéllar, for example, was said to have worked with Zuno to defraud private residents and to impose fines of up to two thousand pesos for “supposed infractions of water services.” The two individuals also purchased “with abuse of their power, the Pavement and Asphalt Company and will probably force the residents to pay the asphalt of a large part of the city”—claimed the report sent to Secretary Valenzuela. The accusations did not end there. The administration was reported to have opened many streets without practical objective and also of renovating *calzada de Agua Azul*, which destroyed urban properties worth more than a million pesos without making payments to those affected: “[and] one of them is

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<sup>80</sup> *El Informador*, “Periodo Congreso. El ciudadno gobernador rindió su informe,” 2 February 1925.

Manuel Alderete who through expropriation had various acres of land [taken] without having received not one cent.”<sup>81</sup>

*The Zunista Pet Project: The Confederation of Libertarian Worker Groups of Jalisco*

After the defeat of the de la Huerta Rebellion, the Mexico City-centric Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM) found itself in a stronger position than before the uprising.<sup>82</sup> When President Plutarco Elías Calles came to power in late 1924, he owed much of his ascent to the support given to labor during his electoral campaign; that said, his support of labor was not general, but was instead confined to the CROM and the Mexican Labor Party.<sup>83</sup> In Jalisco, Governor Zuno directly opposed the CROM’s goals of organizing and of dominating the local labor movement and, as a result, “the clash between the center and local political power expressed itself with more virulence and force in Jalisco than in other States [...]”<sup>84</sup> The Confederation of Libertarian Worker

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<sup>81</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) ‘25’, Caja 139, Estado de Jalisco, Situación Política, Año de 1925.

<sup>82</sup> The CROM was conceived in the mold of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and its leader, Luis Napoleón Morones—appointed by Calles shortly after taking office, to the post of Minister of Industry, Commerce, and Labor— “believed that the relative smallness of Mexico’s industrial proletariat demanded ideological flexibility and a willingness to cooperate with the government in order to win political concessions for workers.” The practices of European anarchism also very much influenced the formation of the labor organization and provided it with the flexibility needed to forge deals with the Government of the Center, “something that [in subsequent administrations] brought the CROM to powerful positions [...]” The base of the CROM were unionized local groups, of the same trade or establishment that were united into local federations; local federations then joined into state federations, of which then formed the national group. Since its inception in 1918, at a congress of labor delegates called forth by Venustiano Carranza, the organization grew quickly and in 1924 the CROM claimed, “a (no doubt inflated) membership well in excess of a million workers.” This was enough to make it the most important labor organization in the country; see Christopher Boyer’s “The Threads of Class at La Virgen: Misrepresentation and Identity at a Mexican Textile Mill, 1918-1935,” *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 5 (December): 1589.

<sup>83</sup> Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato, *Industry and Revolution: Social and Economic Change in the Orizaba Valley, Mexico* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 168; Tamayo, *Los movimientos sociales*, p. 28.

<sup>84</sup> Tamayo, *Movimientos sociales*, p. 29



Groups of Jalisco (CAOLJ), for example, was founded on 7 September 1924 to provide workers with more autonomy and to counteract the intrusion of the CROM.<sup>85</sup> Comprised of syndicates that at one time belonged to the Federation of Worker Groups of Jalisco (FAOJ)—a subsidiary of the CROM—from its formation the CAOLJ counted upon “a radical direction and the strong support of the regional caudillo [Zuno].” The newly formed CAOLJ, based in Guadalajara, promoted independent unions, strikes, and struggles against the CROM, and also directly opposed the policies of union boss Luis Napoleon Morones.<sup>86</sup>

The rise of the National Catholic Confederation of Labor (CNCT), founded in April 1922, also served as a bulwark for many social groups in Mexico to resist the increasingly centralist policies of the *callista* administration. In mid-1925, the CNCT already counted upon the support of least 19,500 members and 384 groups across the country—whose National Committee was in Guadalajara.<sup>87</sup> The CNCT was organized as a federation of catholic worker groups, each with the ability to maintain a certain amount of autonomy and to unionize workers from various professions. As a result, it was comprised of catholic artisans, textile workers, miners, women and children syndicates, and a great number of campesinos. The heterogeneous character was not unique to the

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<sup>85</sup> Tamayo, *Movimientos sociales*, p. 43

<sup>86</sup> Fernández Aceves, “José Guadalupe Zuno,” p. 99. Of note, Zuno also attempted to form a coalition with women “[j]ust like men, working women [also] demanded the implementation of their labor rights under the Constitution of 1917.” On this matter, Fernández Aceves claims that Zuno’s laws “derived from the Constitution of 1917, which benefitted women workers by granting them the rights to have child care centers, a minimum wage, maternity leave, and equal ages to those of men.”

<sup>87</sup> Manuel Ceballos Ramírez, “El Sindicalismo Católico en México, 1919-1931,” *Historia Mexicana* (XXXV: 4, 1986): 646.

CNCT, “since the CROM [...also] had very special characteristics with regard to its internal constitution, [but] it [the CROM] responded [more] to the development of [an] incipient national industry than to the characteristics of [local] workers.” And with the establishment of the CNCT, “the clergy fortified its influence in the heart of society [...and] prepared itself for an assault on power.”<sup>88</sup> To combat the influence of conservative forces into labor, Governor Zuno attempted to close off the “confessional syndicalist” path for many of the regions laborers and attempted to orient organizing efforts towards the libertarian cause his administration supported.

On 13 May 1925, after a short period of relative peace in which the political climate of Jalisco began “to breathe and to carry out its [normal] activities,” *El Universal* reported that the region returned to a new level of disarray due to the “restless” and “long-standing governor.” “Yesterday it was the agriculturalists,” denounced *El Universal*, “today workers are the victims.”<sup>89</sup> The reputable newspaper outlet was not shy in publicly favoring syndicalism as a means of organizing and defending workers; but the recent actions of Zuno forced one editorial to take an outright position on this particular matter. The anonymous reporter affirmed that the daily he represented had always combated, and would continue to combat, whoever used the cause of the worker as a recourse to make a fraudulent politics. The dismissal of more than three hundred operators who lent their services to the *Compañía Hidroeléctrica* of Chapala, nonetheless, led them to openly accuse the governor of:

[Mixing] syndicalism with politics in an intimate and extremely [illicit] cohabitation [and] immobilizing the worker elements in “zunismo”

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<sup>88</sup> Tamayo, *Movimientos sociales*, p. 95

<sup>89</sup> *El Universal*, “Una Política Partidarista,” 13 May 1925.

networks, in such a way, that, to make a living in those abundant lands [of Jalisco], the workers are obligated to join [his] army of followers, said functionary is organizing, with evident [ends].<sup>90</sup>

The basis of such accusations were buttressed on claims made by a commission of tram workers and electricians (in representation of the dismissed workers at the Chapala-based company) who travelled to Mexico City with goal of speaking with the president of the republic. These workers specifically referenced an accord previously dictated by Governor Zuno, which promptly led to the dismissal of said employees for having “lent their services to the rebel movement that general Enrique Estrada led.”<sup>91</sup> The editorial that appeared the following day believed the justification and explanation Zuno provided to be absurd, and thought it odd that it took him more than a year to find out there were more than three hundred accomplices to the military uprising. “Are the police information systems so bad over there [in Jalisco],” asked the editorial, “that not two nor three, nor four nor six, but rather an entire mass of three hundred ferocious and unsettling enemies of the order, were so calm and still [for] months and months [that] nobody bothered them?”

The newspaper outlet was not defending nor legitimizing the act of rebellion; on the contrary, they agreed that “proven rebelliousness [...] is a crime of which the tribunals have to recognize,” but that it was never a motive for taking bread away from workers that, “on the one hand, say and certify their innocence.” The lack of proof led *El Universal* to claim—as the commission of dismissed workers reported to them—that the

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<sup>90</sup> *El Universal*, “El Sindicalism del Goberador Zuno,” 14 May 1925.

<sup>91</sup> *El Universal*, “Una Política Partidarista,” 13 May 1925.

separation of those workers was due to them not wanting to be a part of the “worker federation” that Zuno preferred: “[and because] they preferred [...] to continue working as organized workers based solely as a pure syndicate without any political derivations nor relationship to it [...].” Many of the dismissed workers counted upon more than thirty years of service, which could have explained their unwillingness to change and the governor’s willingness to appeal to the recourse of accusing them of the crime of rebellion. If there was any crime, or rebellion for that matter, claimed *El Universal*, it was that they refused to integrate themselves “to the tentacles with which the alluded leader wants to assure his preponderance.” The governor had, therefore, according to the news outlet, the desire and determination of disturbing the social tranquility of the region through “however many means come into his imagination [...].”<sup>92</sup>

A little over a month later, Governor Zuno granted an interview to *El Demócrata* of Mexico City wherein he declared “the truth about the obstruction of the workers.” When asked about the charge directed towards him, of persecuting workers that did not want to unionize under the group favored by this administration, he responded with the following: “Believe me that there are many [charges] and so absurd is the slander of my enemies [towards me] that these provoke laughter instead of ire.” To prove his point, the governor made specific reference to the confiscation of the *Compañía Hidroeléctrica* of Chapala after the *Estradista* Rebellion, and to the events that followed. Under the Government’s administration, the majority of the independent personnel at the Hydroelectric Company joined the favored union—except for the catholic element—

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<sup>92</sup> *El Universal*, “El Sindicalism del Goberador Zuno,” 14 May 1925.

claimed the governor. The catholic element, then, apparently mobilized and carried out significant propaganda against the Government to such an extent that “the first thing they did was to break down trains in the middle of the street, leaving the passengers [stranded], with the purpose of [demonstrating that the] train service was bad, since the Government administrated it.” As a result of those actions, Zuno gave them a deadline to adhere to his so-called liberal unions, and since they did not follow through they were promptly dismissed. “Do not believe that the dismissal [of the workers] was for the motives that they expose, but [rather] because it was indispensable since those elements were intentionally destroying trains,” affirmed Zuno. When the Government returned ownership of the hydroelectric plant, it was apparently in better condition than when it was confiscated. “The company was so satisfied with the administration that the Government carried out,” affirmed Zuno, “that it accepted to not dismiss any of the people that were working [at the company].”

The governor claimed that he was not making any “politics” nor did he have to make it, since elections were very distant and also because they counted on the support from workers and *campesinos* and thus had “more than enough votes to beat any party.”<sup>93</sup> *El Universal*, however, printed a story that same day reporting the imprisonment of 600 workers in Juanacatlán, Jalisco. The CNCT denounced the governor “as the Soviet Leader in Jalisco” and subsequently exposed his crimes against the catholic workers of the “Río Grande” factory in Juanacatlán. “[...A] slanderous crime against six-hundred families has been committed,” reported *El Universal*, “[...and] the families of the six-

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<sup>93</sup> *El Demócrata*, “La gestión del Gobernador del Edo. de Jalisco Sr. José G. Zuno,” 25 June 1925.

hundred captured laborers have remained persecuted and helpless [...to the point that they are] threatened by hunger [...].” The conflict was said to have taken root because the catholic workers openly declined to organize under the syndicate the governor favored. Zuno gave them a deadline of eight days to unionize. And when they refused the olive branch, the municipal forces—supported by the Red Guard—prevented access to the factory to the six hundred workers who refused to fulfill the requirement and subsequently arrested them. In response to Zuno’s tactics, the Executive Labor Committee of the Archdiocesan in Guadalajara circulated an urgent message to Mexican laborers requesting complete solidarity for the six hundred families, “that are in danger of dying of hunger.” The public outrage led to demonstrations against the local municipal president and Governor Zuno, which police detachments eventually quelled, but not until resulting in four deaths, and several injuries.<sup>94</sup>

On 20 October 1925, *El Universal* reported a “great exodus” of workers from Jalisco due to the terrible persecution carried out against members of the CROM. Obeying instructions from the governor—to pursue all the workers not in agreement with his procedures—municipal authorities forced the majority of labor groups affiliated with the CROM from their offices and jailed those that they considered “dangerous.” “More than two hundred individuals find themselves in jail,” lamented the reporter, “and it is rare [that] a group has not suffered the closure of its offices and [the] destruction of its furniture and archives [...].”<sup>95</sup> The following day, *Excelsior* reported that workers from

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<sup>94</sup> *El Universal*, “600 Obrereos en la Prisión,” 25 July 1925

<sup>95</sup> *El Universal*, “The workers of the C.R.O.M. complain about Governor Zuno,” 20 October 1925.

Jalisco had gathered at the Congress of the Union in Mexico City to ask for the excesses Governor Zuno committed towards the workers, who adhered to the CROM, be put to an end. Since there was no legal reason for the detention of the “hordes of laborers” in Jalisco, the article claimed that the procedure of inventing crimes of common order had become the active policy of the administration and was a tool that kept them locked in a perpetual cycle.<sup>96</sup> To resolve the issue, a delegation of labor corporations from Mexico City were to be sent to Guadalajara—and from there to various parts of the State—with the goal of collecting data about all of the attacks that had been committed, and “to demonstrate that Governor Zuno was persecuting the worker classes.” And that Zuno needed to think twice before proceeding against the delegation.<sup>97</sup>

Meanwhile, a day later, Governor Zuno asked *El Universal* to rectify the reports related to the closure of the offices of the CROM. The article published the governor’s viewpoint as follows:

Governor Zuno said that he ordered the said closure as a corrective measure, in virtue that he is sure that from the balcony which the workers occupy [that] they threw some explosives when he passed [...] accompanied by prominent foreigners, and that the closure was carried out without the intervention of the American consul, nor with any indication from the First Magistrate of the Nation or from a judicial authority; but that the following morning he ordered the reopening of the cited offices to avoid interpretation on the part of his enemies. The governor adds that it is false that the workers belonging to the Confederation are [the] object of persecution by the local authorities and less that they are being assassinated.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> It was not uncommon for the *zunista* administration to jail individuals on frivolous charges and keep them locked up indefinitely—the case of Alfonso Noyola comes to mind. See AGN, Obregón-Calles, 408-J-10. 12 February 1926.

<sup>97</sup> *Excelsior*. “Protestaron en contra de Zuno,” 21 October 1925.

<sup>98</sup> *El Universal*. “Cargos que rechaza el Gobernador Zuno,” 22 October 1925.

The stern opposition against labor unions with a national and/or regional character, such as the CROM and the CNCT—and the clear support the *zunista* administration threw behind the CAOLJ—represented a type of populist politics that endeavored to create and control an ample social base of supporters. On closer inspection, however, the tensions between the *zunista* administration and the above labor unions reveal much about the anxieties of laborers during a period in which many citizens found themselves outside the prevailing power structures.

### **Debating Democracy and the Fall of José Guadalupe Zuno**

[By] virtue of democracy, the majority rules over the minority but it does not destroy it, it does not deny its right to exist as [a] minority [...] The precedent of the Congress of Jalisco, if it is accepted, since [it is] widely known as being politically immoral, will not take us towards democracy, but rather to tyranny.

-The Instructive Commission of the Grand Jury

Let's start to punish those bad revolutionaries that have made their source of wealth [from] the governments of the States; because it is not only Zuno, there are many Zunos, but we have to start with one [named] Guadalupe [Zuno]. If we do not punish this man, all of the others will [say] 'if Zuno who robed and has committed so many diverse crimes, is absolved, us, with even more reason [will be absolved].'

-Senator Maqueo Castellanos

On 23 March 1926, the XXXI Legislature of the Chamber of Deputies formally charged José G. Zuno with violations against the General Constitution of the Republic and for crimes against the Federation. The extent of such accusations ran the gamut: attacks against the democratic institutions of Mexico, the concept of the Free Municipality, and individuals guarantees—in addition to the charge of rebellion against



the federal authorities.<sup>99</sup> Zuno resigned that same and released the following statement to the local press:

[...] have become [the subject] of attacks and accusations that the Chamber of Deputies of the Congress of the Union wrongfully continues in the form of [a] trial [...] Since I continue to tolerate this it could be supposed in the public opinion that my silence authorizes these attacks, and not desiring [for] it to be a pretext so that the sovereignty of the State of Jalisco can be hurt, I [submit] my resignation to separate myself from the post of Constitutional Governor of the State of Jalisco [...].<sup>100</sup>

Shortly thereafter Zuno sent a telegram to President Calles providing insight into his decision: “I have [decided] that I should not put the public institutions of Jalisco that are revolutionary in danger, just to maintain myself in an undue defensive attitude, because with my personal defeat the principal of the sovereignty of the States will [be] vulnerable [...].” And stressed his desire to be judged fairly “and not under the passionate considerations of the centralists [in the Chamber of Deputies].”<sup>101</sup>

What follows is an inquiry into how elected-officials debated democracy and the limits to state intervention—and of regional autonomy—during a period of rapid social and political change. To examine these ideas, I focus on the impassioned and precedent-setting exchanges regarding *The Case of Jalisco* that occurred on the floors of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate in Mexico City, which garnered national press and

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<sup>99</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” H. Congreso de la Unión, <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebates/index.html>. Legislatura XXXI – Año II – Período Extraordinario – Fecha 19260323 (23 March 1926) – Número de Diario 3. Zuno was officially accused of violating articles 6, 7, 9, 14, 16, 19, 21, 22, 39, 41, 49, and 115 of the General Constitution, in addition to violating chapter I, title XIV of the Penal Code of the Federal District and Territories.

<sup>100</sup> *El Informador*, “Presentó ayer su renuncia el Gobernador del Edo. D. José G. Zuno,” 24 March 1926.

<sup>101</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-13, ff. 252-253.

captivated the attention of the nation from late March 1926 to late May 1926. These debates not only put into perspective the scope of the Legislature's power during these formative years, but also provided insight into whether it had the ability to meddle in local affairs; a matter that, up until then, resided solely within the purview of local and regional governments.

*Act I: From Regionalism to Centralism and the Case of Jalisco*

In the fall of 1925, Zuno made his proposed successor—José María Cuéllar—known to the political circles of Guadalajara and not long after rumors began to circulate indicating that the Alliance of Socialist Parties and CROM labor leader Luis N. Morones had already offered up federal Deputy Alfredo Romo, the leader of the federal deputy delegation from Jalisco, and a close collaborator of Zuno, as the opposition candidate. The deal negotiated with Romo provided the aspiring candidate with all the necessary resources for his proposed campaign through the treasury of the Congress of the Union and other government agencies; in exchange, he was to defect from *zunismo* and create “a strong group of federal and local *antizunista* deputies to achieve the destruction of the governor before the celebration of the elections.”<sup>102</sup> According to at least one historian, Romo was able to gather the support of the eight minority deputies to the local Congress of Jalisco, turn them in favor of *callismo*, and convince said local deputies to create their own legislature with the objective of not recognizing the governor.<sup>103</sup> The eight minority deputies, however, described a different narrative:

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<sup>102</sup> Tamayo, *La conformación*, p. 270.

<sup>103</sup> Tamayo, *La conformación*, p. 270.

[that during] the previous meeting with only eight proprietary Deputies and four substitutes that [took place on] the grounds of the Congress [the majority deputies] prohibited us [the minority deputies] from entering, [and because of that] we decided to install ourselves in another place in Guadalajara, in the house number 575 of Avenida.<sup>104</sup>

The minority deputies cited their obligation as representatives of the people of the Jalisco to oppose by any lawful means available to them that the local Executive “keep causing so many victims and so many violations to satisfy the personal political interest of his ally Cuéllar [...]” Lacking the guarantees necessary to even initiate an opposition to the politics of Zuno, the local minority deputies claimed to have suffered grave threats to their lives on the part of the governor’s henchmen and had even travelled to Mexico City to have their grievances heard.<sup>105</sup>

On their return to Guadalajara, they faced challenges from twelve *zunista*-majority deputies, who “behaved in an uncontrollable manner” and motioned to separate them from their elected offices on the charge of the crime of rebellion.<sup>106</sup> “It is not only barbaric and immoral [...that] a majority of the governing leaders prosecute, impeach and expel in the short time of three days the oppositional minority, en masse,” lamented the eight deputies, “but rather this atrocious procedure fundamentally attacks the essence of our republican, representative, [and] democratic institutions [...]” Denouncing these

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<sup>104</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) “25,” Box 2024, State of Jalisco, Political Situation, 1925-B, Exp: 10, “Local Minority Report to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union,” February 1926.

<sup>105</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) “25,” Box 2024, State of Jalisco, Political Situation, 1925-B, Exp: 10, “Local Minority Report to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union,” February 1926.

<sup>106</sup> The twelve *zunista*-deputies were Manuel Hernández y Hernández, Silvano Barba González, Marcelino Barba González, Miguel Mayagoitia, Luis R. Castillo, Esteban Loera, José de Jesús Cuellar, J. Guadalupe Covarrubias, Enrique Cuervo, Salvador Zuno Hernández, Francisco Espinosa, and Basilio Rodríguez.

menacing efforts as a detrimental blow to the popular sovereignty of the people, the minority deputies feared this would forever set a fateful precedent—since it would signify the annihilation of “all liberties” and would be the consecration of a tyrannical regime over the principals of democratic republicanism. “We have not committed any crime [...we] were accused by the Justice Attorney of Jalisco of the crime of rebellion for having intended to usurp the functions of the Congress of the State [...and this lacks a legal basis],” complained the minority deputies.<sup>107</sup>

In defense of the legality of their actions, the minority deputies claimed to have originally formed a legal quorum of eleven deputies (which would have allowed them to claim majority status), but that Zuno and Cuéllar sent their henchmen, captained by local deputy and brother of the governor, Salvador Zuno, and the Chief of the Mounted Police, “to attack the house where we constituted ourselves, and said house was shot at and we were insulted.” All of these efforts resulted in the corruption of three deputies with threats and gifts.<sup>108</sup> The remaining eight deputies labeled Zuno a disgrace to the Revolution and colorfully described the significance of the political repression he and his supporters systematically carried out in Jalisco. In expanding upon its significance, they claimed:

Zuno has caused more ills to the Revolution than the impenitent reactionaries [and he] has perverted the great revolutionary ideals of justice for the proletariat and has moved away from our cause, of the good

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<sup>107</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) “25,” Box 2024, State of Jalisco, Political Situation, 1925-B, “Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union,” The minority deputies also complained of the numerous cases in which Governor Zuno intervened in matters deemed the responsibility of the judicial power of the State to the point of having the influence to name the Judges and employees that he desires and “imposing his instructions on judicial matters.”

<sup>108</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) “25,” Box 2024, State of Jalisco, Political Situation, 1925-B, Exp: 10, “Local Minority Report to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union,” February 1926.

cause of numerous workers and *campesinos*. [...The] *zunista* regime in Jalisco is a disgrace for the Republic, an inexplicable anachronism. It dishonors us abroad.

Much of the political clamor that supported such accusations stemmed from the governor's deliberate objective of imposing his good friend and partner in crime, José María Cuéllar, as his successor to the governorship, and to this end spent a great deal of effort promoting the agenda. "Our strict obligation as representatives of the people of our State is to oppose by any lawful means available to us," affirmed the deputies, "[...the] many constitutional violations to satisfy the personal political interest of his ally Cuéllar [...]." <sup>109</sup>

On 1 February 1926 President Calles wrote to the Zuno to inform him of his office's knowledge of the division that existed between members of the Legislature in the State of Jalisco and also to dispel any notion the governor might have with regard to his role in the conflict. "[This Federal Executive...] makes it known to you that the versions you refer to are completely inaccurate," affirmed Calles, "since this Executive has never desired nor desires [the] frequent clashes [...] produced between the Constitutional Powers of the States [...]." Moreover, the president stressed that his administration had never nor would it take part in matters that would bring lamentable consequences to the federal entities of the country. <sup>110</sup> Five weeks later, on 13 March, Zuno wrote a letter to the Personal Secretary of President Calles—Fernando Torreblanca—lamenting the crisis

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<sup>109</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 7/310 (3.2) "25," Box 2024, State of Jalisco, Political Situation, 1925-B, Exp: 10, "Local Minority Report to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union," February 1926.

<sup>110</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-13, "Letter to General V. Madrigal with an excerpt and transcription of a letter that Governor Zuno received from President Calles." f. 101, February 1926.

that he and his administration were facing, and to openly declare where his loyalty resided: “The sentiments that animate myself in these moments, should be known by those that loyally serve the president of the republic [...]” Conceding that many of his political actions and policies—such as reforms to the Laws of the State, public works, and moralizing efforts—had at times been met with the disapproval of friends and enemies alike, the governor sternly believed that this backlash did not serve as a strong enough pretext to completely nullify the benefits and progress which had been achieved under his watchful eye. “When I have believed that I could help the Federal Government in something, I have done it with some sacrifice and [have] overcome great difficulties [to do so],” declared Zuno.<sup>111</sup> Two days later, the governor decided to voice his concerns to his fellow governors.<sup>112</sup>

In a telegram dated on 15 March, Zuno made it known to the governors of the Republic of the impending acts that the Congress of the Union intended to execute, with which the sovereignty of Jalisco would be greatly injured: “[in] effect, a very irregular process has been initiated for supposed official crimes of the common order, against myself and against twelve [majority] Deputies to the Local Congress of this Entity [...]”

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<sup>111</sup> In a letter he directed to President Calles on 27 February 1926, Zuno complained about the former's lack of receptiveness to his previous letters. Calles responded to that accusation on 14 March 1926 in what could be interpreted as an annoyed tone: “I am thankful for the information that in said card you have provided me about the diverse activities of your government in benefit of the State. And I permit myself to make the clarification that in said archives of my Personal Office there appears no correspondence from you that has not merited due attention, and since you, in the letter that I am [now] replying to[,] say that I have not responded to your previous [letters], I declare to you that I don't know which one you refer to, since the latest ones that appear are: one from last 5 January [...and] another on 20 of last month [...]. Of both letters [I] opportunely [...gave] instruction to my Personal Secretary so that he could tell you it was received.” See AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-13, f. 204-206, 27 February 1926 and 14 March 1926.

<sup>112</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-13, “Telegram to the President regarding what Governor Zuno informed the Governor of the Country.” f. 206, 16 March 1926.

The governor claimed that the accusations were none other than slander and libel promoted by his enemies. He expressed never having run away from his political responsibilities of implementing social reform, which he had been devoted to for many years, but did stress the gravity of the accusations:

Even more so [now] before the possibility that some traitors [from Jalisco have] achieved starting an illegal resolution [in the] Chamber of Deputies which appears to be directed [against] myself that would in reality kill the federative spirit of the United Mexican States[,] infringing upon the constitutional precepts that establish the sovereignty of the Entities of the Federation to judge their functionaries for crimes of the common order.<sup>113</sup>

With no other recourse, Zuno appealed to his fellow governors and hoped that the Federal Executive would, as it had in other occasions, carry out its disposition as the “jealous guardian” of the Constitution and Public Institutions. If such an assault on the pillars of democratic rule occurred, lamented the governor, “it would set a fatal precedent.”<sup>114</sup>

*Act II: The Chamber of Deputies*

On 22 March 1926 the Instructive Commission of the Grand Jury commenced proceedings on the floor of the Chamber of Deputies in Mexico City with the presentation of an official document emanating from the Local Congress of Jalisco. Secretary Cersiola read the document to the one-hundred and ninety-one eligible federal deputy voters, brought everyone up to speed on the twelve majority deputies’ decision to impeach the minority block of local deputies—comprised of J. Rodrigo Camacho, Enrique Díaz de León, Napoleón Orozco, Victoriano Salado, Joaquín Vidrio, J. Trinidad

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<sup>113</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-13, “Telegram to the President regarding what Governor Zuno informed the Governor of the Country.” f. 206, 16 March 1926.

<sup>114</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 428-J-13, “Telegram to the President regarding what Governor Zuno informed the Governor of the Country.” f. 206, 16 March 1926.

de la Torre, J. Manuel Chávez, and Manuel V. Guerra—and of their choice to consign them to the local authorities. The twelve majority deputies of the Local Congress were said to have provoked a quick judgment in order to render the opposition responsible for the crime of rebellion, all because the local minority deputies carried out the functions of a Congress in a different building outside of the normative bounds their office dictated. The decision to impeach the minority, however, was in direct violation of numerous constitutional articles.<sup>115</sup> It was now up to the Commission and the deputies to decide on the matter.

The Commission stressed that the eight minority deputies had been deprived of their rights, “which they acquired legally as deputies” and that they were not even consulted nor afforded the opportunity to respond to the accusations brought before them. Instead, the Commission insisted that the majority rushed to a hasty judgment: “[this] is the result of a majority parliament banishing from the [local] Congress a minority en masse, and such procedure at its base attacks the institutions established by the constitution and ridicules the sovereignty of the people [...]” In nullifying the rights of the representatives of the people, without recourse to a formal procedure (and without legal justification), the actions of the majority were interpreted as a formal attack. This matter was seen as a case where the majority had run afoul and “bastardized the public vote”—which the Commission claimed to be at the core of democratic rule. “[By] virtue of democracy, the majority rules over the minority,” continued the Commission, “but it does not destroy it, it does not deny its right to exist as [a] minority [...] The precedent of

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<sup>115</sup> The Commission claimed that the twelve majority deputies violated the following Constitutional Articles: 14, 39, 40, 41, and 115.



the Congress of Jalisco, if it is accepted, since [it is] widely known as being politically immoral, will not take us towards democracy, but rather to tyranny.”<sup>116</sup> With those words, the formal accusations and the elocution of evidence came to a halt. It was now up to several statesmen to deliver persuasive speeches to sway the popular opinion of those present.

Deputy Villaseñor Mejía opened deliberations in defense of the majority, that is, the twelve deputies of the local Congress of Jalisco, with the following:

[...] a dictum has been presented for our consideration that accuses twelve deputies of the local Congress of Jalisco [of] impeaching, in use of its faculties, eight members of the same Congress that separated themselves from their duty [and] installed themselves in a building separate from the official [one], committing the crime of rebellion, which in the State of Jalisco is punished by our laws.

The deputy lamented that in certain circles it was being said that the impeached local deputies were not notified nor were they given the opportunity to mount a defense against the actions of the majority. Villaseñor Mejía vehemently asserted that the individual guarantees of the minority deputies had not been violated and cited the *amparo* emanating from the expelled deputies, which the judge from the district of Guadalajara denied them; that is, “they [the majority] have not committed one fault, nor have the deputies of Jalisco been judged[,] leaving them [the minority] without the right to return to their posts.” The deputy once again echoed the fact that the eight minority deputies had been accused of the crime of rebellion, “which they committed by installing themselves in a house outside the official grounds, wanting to commit what they were not able to

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<sup>116</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” Legislatura XXXI – Año II – Período Extraordinario – Fecha 19260322 (22 March 1926) – Número de Diario 3.

commit: the crime of usurpation, but, yes, they were functioning in open rebellion.”

Using the same logic the opposition had used, the deputy reminded all those present just how inconsistent it would be to punish one impeachment with another: “...we accuse the [majority] deputies of Jalisco of not having heard the impeached, but do not also forget that the deputies you intend to impeach now, have not been notified so they can come defend themselves here.”<sup>117</sup>

Deputy Cuén, on the other hand, thought it wise to clarify Article 942 of the Penal Code of the State of Jalisco, specifically faction V—the precept upon which the Justice Attorney of the State based his accusation—that expressed the following: “They are guilty of rebellion, those that rise up publicly and in open hostility [...] to deprive of its attributes one of the powers, impeding the free exercise of them [through a usurpation].” Deputy Cuén rhetorically asked those present to meditate upon all of the consequences that this frightful precedent, which the twelve *zunista* deputies intended to establish, would set. “They subvert all of the social and political order of a country, because in the name of political passion and licentious ambitions of a governor,” claimed Deputy Cuén, “[they] condemn a minority parliament to the dictatorship of silence or [to be] devoured by majority, [labeling] them as rebels against the law and the well-being of a people, the enemies of all tyrants.”<sup>118</sup> Responding to the scope of such allegations, Deputy Díaz Soto y Gama, a respected statesman and the leader of the *Partido Nacional Agrarista* (PNA),

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<sup>117</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” Legislatura XXXI – Año II – Período Extraordinario – Fecha 19260322 (22 March 1926) – Número de Diario 3.

<sup>118</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” Legislatura XXXI – Año II – Período Extraordinario – Fecha 19260322 (22 March 1926) – Número de Diario 3.

agreed that it would indeed subvert all of the political order of the country, but he differed considerably with regards to its consequences: “Where are we going to end up if a minority of the Legislature brings down the majority of the Legislature, that is to say, the legally constitutive Legislative power [...] and a governor?” In a calculated move, Soto y Gama shifted the direction of the debate to whether or not the Chamber of Deputies was actually qualified to hear the matter, stressing that the Commission was trying to make a conflict juridical and Constitutional, which is “clearly of a local character.”<sup>119</sup>

Counting himself among those that sustained the defense of Zuno, Deputy Díaz Soto y Gama, in an attempt to guide the general wisdom of those present by criticizing the Commission’s handling of the matter, claimed that it should have instead presented “an unclothed truth, [...] presenting the case as is, not the accusation against a governor who might have acted wrong or right.” To further illustrate his point, Díaz Soto y Gama reiterated that “nobody believes it, there is not one individual in the Republic [...] there is not one child of ten years of age in the Republic, of seven years, that believes that here we are trying to punish José G. Zuno’s abuses of power.” The matter at hand, then, was not about Zuno per se; it was about, all of the governors, present and future—stressed the deputy. A clear signal would be sent if such a charade were allowed to continue and it would make it known to all that you only need the support of a few to bring down a majority. Soto y Gama rhetorically asked:

Where does the sovereignty of the States reside if we [the Chamber of Deputies] are going to be authorized to destroy every Power and meddle

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<sup>119</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” Legislatura XXXI – Año II – Período Extraordinario – Fecha 19260322 (22 March 1926) – Número de Diario 3.

[in the affairs] of the governments of the States [...]. Let's cut the bad out from its root. That is why I asked for the word, not to defend Zuno; Zuno for me, is just like any other revolutionary: a unit at the head of an enormous revolutionary mass. I come here to avoid the [establishment] of the precedent, to defend the sovereignty of the States [which] is well understood; I come to defend a governor [that was] truly elected and already recognized by all of the federal and local powers.<sup>120</sup>

Díaz Soto y Gama, however, reiterated that he did not believe Zuno to be a saint, but that it did not matter to him, “his fellow country men [over in Jalisco will judge him] and if they are so upset, they should promote a local revolution.” The scope of the debate had thusly been made clear—this was no longer a local conflict that merely engulfed the Congress of Jalisco and implicated Governor Zuno in the events leading up the impeachment of the minority deputies. The case had the potential to redefine the role of the Legislature and to interpret, and put into practice what democracy now meant to this generation of politicians—who were very much conscious about the importance of their decision-making and of its impact for years to come.

What became abundantly clear, nevertheless, was that *The Case of Jalisco* had become the case of the Republic. Deputy Covarrubias claimed: “We, [in response to] gentlemen Díaz Soto, come with the Constitution of [19]17 [in hand, and in] article 108 it is absolutely clear that: the governors of the States and the deputies to the local legislature are responsible for violation[s] to the constitution and the federal laws.” And to address any concerns regarding the jurisdiction of the Chamber to take up such matters, Deputy Covarrubias made reference to article 111, which states that “the Senate will try official crimes, set up as a Grand Jury; but it will not be able to open the

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<sup>120</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” Legislatura XXXI – Año II – Período Extraordinario – Fecha 19260322 (22 March 1926) – Número de Diario 3.

corresponding investigation without prior accusation from the Chamber of Deputies.”

The deputy stressed that if in the State of Jalisco there is no respect for the Legislative Power and if the local deputies of that federal entity are taken away from power “only for a convenient cause [...the] harmony [between all of the powers] is broken.” “Let it be known once [and for all],” affirmed deputy Covarrubias, “that the entire Republic know, that all breaches to the Federal Pact, that all breaches to the general Constitution of the Republic fall under [constitutional sanctions].” The deputy challenged the “satraps” of the States to rise up in arms against the Federal Pact instead of blatantly undermining the Constitution. With a not so subtle dig directed towards Governor Zuno, Covarrubias conceded that it is at least braver to proclaim:

[The] De la Huerta plan [as others did in December of 1923], than to be hidden in your personal address when the fatherland calls for your service! [...] The case of Jalisco is a moral case, [it] will have a repercussion over all of the men of the States who believe themselves supreme electors, obliging them to respect the vote of the people.

The deliberations were now brought to a halt and the Chamber of Deputies voted as follows: 132 votes in favor of passing to motion to accuse the majority deputies; while 59 deputies voted against accusing the local majority of misconduct.<sup>121</sup>

The following day, on 23 March, the XXXI Legislature proceeded to examine the specific crimes attributed solely to Zuno and his administration, which (as mentioned above) focused on three areas: attacks against the democratic institutions of Mexico; attacks against the Free Municipality; and attacks against individual guarantees. Deputy Anaya Ramón opened discussion with a concise description of the efforts the

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<sup>121</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” Legislatura XXXI – Año II – Período Extraordinario – Fecha 19260322 (22 March 1926) – Número de Diario 3.

Commission had up until then carried out, which he believed devoid of any political agenda. “The case is clear, it is as transparent as the light of day,” avowed Anaya Ramón, “a fatal precedent would be set if the Chamber of Deputies consented, tolerated, that the general Constitution of the Republic, the supreme law of the country, be violated in such a flagrant manner by the governor of the State.” Deputy Valadez Ramírez, on the other hand, attempted to get to the bottom of all the ruckus and made evident to all that the oppositional efforts promoted against Zuno revolved around two main points of contention: 1) he was accused of having been in agreement with the de la Huerta Rebellion and of being in coexistence with Enrique Estrada; and 2) he was accused of deposing many of the *ayuntamientos* of Jalisco. “All of those *ayuntamientos* were suspended, new municipal presidents were named[,] very well,” sarcastically remarked Valadez Ramírez, “but it is convenient that the Republic know, not this honorable Assembly, because this Assembly, I refer to the majority block, has already [come up] with a resolution on this matter; they will vote in favor of the dictum [to accuse] and the governor will be tried before the Senate, without regard to [any] argument said here.” Deputy Valadez Ramírez reiterated Zuno’s loyalty to former President Obregón and even cited a specific letter that was sent to him—on behalf of Obregón—that cleared the governor of any wrong-doing during said rebellion. With regard to Zuno’s conduct toward the *ayuntamientos*, Valadez Ramírez deemed it a jocular matter; that it was true that many *ayuntamientos* were deposed, but that this was only done because many of them took part in the rebellion and recognized the administration of Tolentino.

Deputy Orozco David, however, reminded the honorable Assembly to seriously consider the evidence collected on the series of atrocities committed against many

constitutional *ayuntamientos* and suggested Zuno's direct implication and responsibility for several of those unjust practices. After a long and drawn out debate, another deputy, José F. Gutiérrez, cautioned and concluded that while Zuno had already renounced the governorship of Jalisco on the previous day, he had not done it out of altruistic ideals; rather, it had been because of the efforts undertaken by the parliamentary majority within the Chamber of Deputies. "[It] has been the energetic attitude of the men that, considering their true roles as representatives of the people," vividly described Gutiérrez, "have made their lamentations [and] all of their pains echo, and [have] attempt[ed] to apply the cautery on the wound that we are signaling with a sign of fire."<sup>122</sup> The session closed much like the day before, with a vote: one-hundred and forty-four votes in favor of prosecuting Zuno to forty-eight votes against—the case was now forwarded to the Senate.

### *Act III: The Senate*

The stage was now set. On 25 May 1926, two dictums of vital importance for the State of Jalisco were on the table for deliberation (and voting) by members of the Senate—the accusation against Zuno and the accusation against the Local Legislature. In a surprising turn of events, the accusation against the majority deputies of the Chamber of Jalisco, which dominated the halls of the Chamber of Deputies, took a back seat (but was by no means forgotten). The crux of the debate heard on this day oscillated between the fate of a man who had elicited a maelstrom of commotion and criticism from many of the nation's most well-respect public servants, reporters, and citizens, and the consequences

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<sup>122</sup> "Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados," Legislatura XXXI – Año II – Período Extraordinario – Fecha 19260323 (23 March 1926) – Número de Diario 3.

that all of this entailed for defining the scope and reach of national power. The contemptuous ridicule within the Senate was such for the embattled politician that they were unable to initially convince a fellow senator to mount a defense. “[Without a] defender it is not possible to continue this matter since it is about obeying a constitutional mandate and, additionally, it is a primordial right that all [the] accused have,” interjected Senator Cisneros Canto. After many failed nominations, Senator Aguayo stepped up to the plate to accept the defense of Zuno, and promptly asked to be brought up to speed on all matters related to the *expediente*.<sup>123</sup>

Abundantly aware of the important role he would come to play in the ensuing debate, as the opposing council—even if he was to face an uphill battle from the start, to clear the name of Zuno—Senator Aguayo challenged those present to honestly contemplate the stakes of what was to be debated on the floor on the Senate:

Great questions and questions of transcendence are being debated, gentlemen; on one side, the pure and correct existence of the Constitution of the Republic and of our system of Government; on the other, an infinite small matter, but in the end a matter, and it is how we are going to integrate the Chamber of Deputies in the following exercise; this is the truth. [...] But what we the senators of the Republic attack with all energy[,] what we try to save and establish, is the institutional question of the legitimate and pure life of the Constitution, of the Constitutional Pact of [19]17 launched in Querétaro, among the hymn of many consciences that understood one another [as] libertarians [...] with just and sublime desires.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Senadores del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Año II—Período Extraordinario. XXXI Legislatura. Tomo II.—Número 3. 25 May 1926, p. 11.

<sup>124</sup> Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Senadores del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Año II—Período Extraordinario. XXXI Legislatura. Tomo II.—Número 3. 25 May 1926, pp. 18-19.



Senator Aguayo warned of the consequences that would be produced if they accepted the “guillotining” of the Legislature of Jalisco, which was well within their power, given their capacity as central powers. And if loudest voices prevailed and had their way, and centralism triumphed over the federative spirit of the country, such decisive actions would additionally lead to the “guillotining” the constitutional system for the simple convenience of “making” favorable elections in the State of Jalisco. This was not a case to be decided with due diligence to the law, but rather it had become one motivated by “political passions,” or as one senator frankly remarked, “Zuno will fall because his friends of yesterday abandoned him in the precise moment [of need] and, in turn, they now come with tricks and shields apparently with the law to wrap and sink him [Zuno].”

Those in favor of prosecuting, however, decided to stress what they deemed to be one of the clearest violations of the Constitution that Zuno committed while in power and focused their efforts upon how the former governor had undermined the concept of “the Free Municipality.” For Senator Alvarez y Alvarez, for example, they were debating the fate of the republican institutions of the country of which the Free Municipality “was the origin from [which] the public power emanates from, since it is the embodiment of the popular will.” Making reference to the numerous cases that filled the pages of the official *expediente*, Senator Alvarez y Alvarez stressed that they should demand responsibilities from the Legislative Powers of the country and orient it in favor of the great moral and ethical interests of the Revolution. Meanwhile, Senator Aguayo denied that there was clear evidence Zuno had actually violated the concept of the Free Municipality and actually used the opportunity afforded to him as a platform to denounce it “as a very old institution, very conservative [...] because it was not invented by the Mexicans, [it] was

previously invented by the Italians, and much later adopted by the Spanish, and we introduced it in the Constitution of [18]24.” The declaration provoked an animated response from Senator Alvarez y Alvarez, wherein he reminded those present of the vital importance of article 115 of the Constitution, which declared and enshrined the Free Municipality as the base of administrative and political organization of the country.

Senator Araujo recalled that when when Zuno assumed the governorship of the state of Jalisco, he believed him to be a true revolutionary, a man animated by goodwill in favor of his State; but that somewhere along the way, after the numerous acts he committed, the Senator realized that the governor had bamboozled the Revolution. Following a similar line of inquiry, Senator Maqueo Castellanos pointed to the great fortune Zuno had accumulated in such a short time and the magnificent palace he dwelled in, “when he should have just enjoyed his salary as governor,” and asked everyone to consider whether they actually believed Zuno had constructed his palace and prince lifestyle in Jalisco with just that salary. “Let’s start to punish those bad revolutionaries that have made their source of wealth [from] the governments of the States; because it is not only Zuno, there are many Zunos, but we have to start with one [named] Guadalupe [Zuno],” decried Senator Maqueo Castellanos, “If we do not punish this man, all of the others will quietly and contently continue [...] saying ‘if Zuno who robbed and has committed so many diverse crimes, is absolved, us, with even more reason [will be absolved]’.”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Senadores del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Año II—Período Extraordinario. XXXI Legislatura. Tomo II.—Número 3. 25 May 1926, pp. 20, 25, and 35.

The Senate appeared to be ready to vote on the matter; however, just before the motion was signaled, Senator Robledo chimed in to clarify that Zuno had created a political apparatus of control in the region comprised of workers and *agraristas*. And that this was, in his own opinion, the most serious part of his attacks. He conceded that the former governor was “magnificent” with all of the workers and his unconditional supporters, but was terrible and persecuted all of those who opposed his politics. For Senator Robledo, this constituted the worst sin of the period and was reflective of the corruption they had all started to notice in the Republic, “in which the principles of the Revolution have become the political arms [for] profit in almost all of the country [...]” After calling for an official vote, forty-three individuals voted in favor of prosecuting, while four voted against the measure. Zuno was officially found guilty of the charges leveled against him and, as a result, was handed a sanction of seven years and six months, which prevented him from taking part in any office or employment in the Federation—essentially this crippled any national-level political aspirations he might have had.

With regard to the twelve minority deputies of the Chamber of Jalisco, the popular sentiment appeared to back them in the face of the judgment previously rendered by the Chamber of Deputies. The *Secciones Instructoras del Gran Jurado* handed down a positive dictum claiming that they could not legally prove the existence of violations committed against the Constitution and subsequently deemed the local deputies not responsible for said crimes. The Senators quickly promoted a motion to vote and

unanimously accepted the dictum by a majority vote of forty-five.<sup>126</sup> The decision to not prosecute the local deputies sent a clear message across the entire nation. In this case, the legislature would champion the sovereignty of the States and protect state autonomy, but their actions promptly reminded all that if the foundational principle upon which the system was premised upon found itself threatened—or a rogue politician overstepped the bounds of their office—nobody was immune to the new popular political currents that dominated national-level policy.

### Conclusion

José G. Zuno's meteoric rise into the ranks of the political elite captivated both the imagination and disdain of contemporaries, friends and foe alike; his downfall, nevertheless, teetered on the brink of the fantastical and garnered national attention. Chapter 2 displayed the chronic anxieties about state sovereignty that Mexican citizens displayed under the *zunista* administration in years that were formative to the political and social history of Jalisco. I argued that such *disorder* was part of an on-going negotiation over how to govern and rule, and was manifest in the extensive debates that took place regarding the limits of local and national power following the first significant challenge to the established social order (the *Estradista* Rebellion). The first half of this chapter explored the anatomy of rule in the Guadalajara region and focused on the power-laden relationship that comprised *zunismo* as a political movement; however, special attention was given to citizens who regularly voiced legitimate grievances, but whose

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<sup>126</sup> Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Senadores del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Año II—Período Extraordinario. XXXI Legislatura. Tomo II.—Número 3. 25 May 1926, pp. 38-43.

anxieties frequently fell on deaf ears. The second half of this chapter focused on the impassioned and precedent-setting exchanges concerning *The Case of Jalisco* and the prosecution of Zuno that followed, which occurred on the floors of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate from 22 March 1926 to 25 May 1926. I specifically inquired into how elected-officials debated democracy and sovereignty, and placed into perspective the scope of national power during a period of rapid social and political change.

### Chapter 3 The Road to Perdition: Seditious Activities and Political Disorders

[The] rebels only wait for the clerical regulation [to take effect] to once again raise a new banner, which will be the religious question, [and] it appears that many of the region's priests are interested in this matter.

- Informant González<sup>1</sup>

[It] is not tolerable for Zunismo [in Jalisco] to be prolonged across many epochs and administrations as a hereditary accident in the midst of the grief and anxieties of a people which wishes, that needs, that demands good government, liberty, and integrity.

-*Excelsior*<sup>2</sup>

On 15 June 1926, ex-Governor José G. Zuno invited American Consul Dudley Dwyre to his lavish new residential palace in Guadalajara. Not more than three months had elapsed since the politician spectacularly resigned the governorship of Jalisco, purportedly to safeguard the sovereignty of the state. Dwyre was escorted by Consular Inspector James Stewart and together the men spent the better part of an hour-and-a-half inspecting the premises while listening to Zuno boastfully lecture about the building's novel artistic features, which he himself had painstakingly designed and helped to construct.

The American Consul noted in his report to the State Department that the relationship between his office and the former governor had, in recent weeks, become more cordial and friendly "since the pressure seems to have been lifted from his [Zuno's] shoulders and there seems to be no doubt as to his position." Dwyre, however, stressed

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<sup>1</sup> Archivo General de la Nación (hereinafter cited as AGN), Obregón-Calles (hereinafter cited as O-C), 101-R2-A1, "Confidential report prepared by González and addressed to the personal secretary of the president of the republic."

<sup>2</sup> *Excelsior*, "The Latest Victory of Zuno," 29 September 1926.

his desire to continue working on behalf of American interests and property through Zuno “who continues to be, without [a] doubt, the controlling force in this state.” The report also emphasized that efforts needed to be made not to lose sight of the likelihood that the former governor might soon become a very influential figure in the national political field: “[Zuno] is unquestionably, a most remarkable person, and shrewd almost beyond comprehension [...and] has gone through many very strenuous political conflicts, and has always come up smiling and on top.”<sup>3</sup>

In the previous chapter I examined the development of a regional power structure in the Guadalajara region and dissected the anatomy of rule following the Federal Army’s defeat of the de la Huerta Rebellion. Zuno’s widely publicized fall from grace earlier in the year and the subsequent sanctions levelled at his person by the Mexican Senate temporarily depriving him of his civil rights and precluding him from holding any political office for seven-and-a-half-years, marked a significant coup for the administration of Plutarco Elías Calles in Mexico City.<sup>4</sup> As the reader will recall, stark divisions began to crystallize in the aftermath of the de la Huerta Rebellion between the supporters of former-President Obregón and current-President Calles.<sup>5</sup> It was in this

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<sup>3</sup> State Department (hereinafter cited as SD), 812.00/27823, 11 June 1926. Dwyre also suggested the following: “While it may have been the desire of the Federal Government to eliminate him, it is now becoming the opinion that the administration may consider it wiser to use him as an ally rather than permit him to be an opponent.”

<sup>4</sup> During its first two years, the Calles administration reignited a reform program that had largely been abandoned in the throes of that armed uprising and moved towards concentrating greater power into the hands of the federal executive.

<sup>5</sup> The politics of *callismo* were largely seen as a departure from those of his predecessor, Obregón, and not only demonstrated a closer adherence to the most radical provisions enshrined in the Constitution of 1917, but also strategically “drew [up]on the support of leaders who had grown disaffected with the slow pace of reform” under the previous administration. Specifically, the Calles administration actively pursued the corporatism of social movements, the elimination of regional caudillos, and the modernization of the military; see Gil Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico’s Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and*

context, then, that Zuno—a close collaborator of the former, and a professed enemy of latter—rose to power, only to be unceremoniously ousted.

This chapter focuses on two great problems the Calles administration faced in Jalisco: 1) the specter of another armed uprising in the countryside; and 2) a local political crisis over effective control of the state. A mass uprising with a distinctly religious character, in fact, began gradually to take shape during the second half of 1926. While the Cristero Rebellion, as the conflict came to be known, presented a significant obstacle to the Calles administration, it will not directly occupy the attention of this chapter.<sup>6</sup> Instead, this chapter continues to interrogate the aftermath of de la Huerta Rebellion and the renewed conflict between Zuno and Calles, “two external factors that conditioned the composition and activity of the Mexican state on the eve of the Cristero [rebellion].”<sup>7</sup> In the first part, I explore through an analysis of secret agent reports the Ministry of Interior’s anxieties regarding the possibility of another widespread insurgency. Following the suppression of the de la Huerta Rebellion in March 1924, the *Departamento Confidencial*—the Ministry’s intelligence services—began systematically to engage in the surveillance of Jalisco’s countryside. The agents and informants tasked

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*the Challenge of Rule Since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), pp. 83 and 98-99. The reforms also promoted, among other things, “measures designed to improve the fiscal situation of the state with the professionalization of the army, nationalist efforts to control natural resources, and [...] economic development, education, and social welfare;” Jaime Tamayo, *La conformación del Estado moderno y los conflictos políticos, 1917-1929* (Guadalajara: Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, Universidad de Guadalajara, 1988), p. 257.

<sup>6</sup> The Cristero Rebellion and its aftermath will be the subject matter of the next chapter.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Curley, ““Avanza el desierto”: espacio público y suicidio político en el imaginario cristero,” in *Los guachos y los mochos: once ensayos cristeros*, edited by Julia Preciado Zamora and Servando Otrill (Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico: Red Utopía: Jitanjáfora Morelia Editorial, 2009), p 50.



with carrying out this espionage made up the state's first line of defense against real and/or perceived domestic seditious activities. Largely housed in the collections of the *Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales* (DGIPS), these agents' reports focused on relaying to supervisors what they deemed relevant information about rebellious and social activities that could potentially affect the state's interests. I contend that the de la Huerta Rebellion, despite these anti-sedition efforts, greatly transformed the manner in which the central state interacted with, and produced knowledge, of the countryside.

The second part of the chapter analyzes how *zunistas* attempted to survive politically after Zuno was "toppled" in March 1926. I focus on how federal intervention into labor politics and state elections affected the existing local power structure of the region. I argue, however, that the supporters of Zuno were not merely reactors to official policy emanating from Mexico City, but were also "political initiators" who themselves exercised an important role in limiting the impact of the national government in the region. The chapter as a whole asks three questions: What role did the de la Huerta Rebellion and its local manifestation, the *Estradista* Rebellion, play in transforming the Ministry of Interior's relationship with, and knowledge about, the countryside on the eve of another mass insurrection? What does the clash between *zunismo* and the federal government in Jalisco reveal about Mexico's practices of democratic inclusion and exclusion? And to what extent did the Calles administration's centralist policies transform the federalist system of governance established by the Constitution of 1917?

### **Conspiracies and Rebellious Activities in the Countryside**

The date was 11 September 1924. It had been nearly six-months since the federal army defeated the rebel forces of General Enrique Estrada. On this day, *Agente de Segunda* Enrique Alcaraz Díaz found himself in Guadalajara to investigate seditious activities. The mission entrusted to him by the *Departamento Confidencial* consisted of befriending locals in order to gather intelligence about matters of interest in the countryside. In a letter to his department head, Alcaraz Díaz wrote that “a few days ago I learned that in Jalisco an armed movement against the local Government is [in the midst] of being prepared, [and said] movement is being organized by political groups that were defeated in the last political campaign [. . . and the rebellion] will break out in this current month of September.”<sup>8</sup> A week later, the agent informed his department that he had also learned that in various towns in the southern part of the state—near areas such as Pihuamo, Tecalitlán, and Ahuijullo, among others—rumors swirled regarding the presence of at least five-hundred armed men belonging to groups that former General Enrique Estrada once commanded. But after a careful investigation into the matter at hand, Agent Alcaraz Díaz assuaged any fears that the Ministry of Interior might have had about the rumors of the state government rebelling against central state authority: “The political groups that were ousted in the previous campaign will not prepare an armed movement against the Government of the State, nor in a general [sense] because with the exception of the *florista* group all of them are loyal to the Federal Government.”<sup>9</sup> But at

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<sup>8</sup> AGN, Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales (hereinafter cited as DGIPS), Estado de Jalisco, Propaganda Sediciosa, 11 September 1924, f. 190

<sup>9</sup> *Floristas* were the supporters of General Angel Flores, the individual who had recently lost his bid for president of Mexico to Calles by a count of 1.34 million votes to 250,000; see Lyle C. Brown, “The

this moment, even the *floristas* remained dormant in the countryside. If a general movement were to breakout, however, warned the agent, this political group would be willing to support it. In addition to this incident, the agent also reported an upsurge in rebellious activities and pointed out several instances in which local politicians had begun to supply the rebels in the countryside with arms and munitions.<sup>10</sup>

In the wake of the *Estradista* Rebellion hundreds of these reports containing information about contemporary seditious rumors that gained currency in the countryside—such as those submitted by Agent Alcaraz Díaz—began to arrive with greater frequency to the offices of the *Departamento Confidencial* (an agency under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior). The origins of this agency dated back to the regime of Venustiano Carranza who established the *Servicios Confidenciales* in 1918 to gather “information on his friends and enemies in order to maintain political control.”<sup>11</sup>

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Calles-Cárdenas Connection,” in *Twentieth-Century Mexico*, edited by Dirk Raat and William Beezley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 148.

<sup>10</sup> AGN, DGIPS, Estado de Jalisco, Propaganda Sediciosa. 18 September 1924, f. 187.

<sup>11</sup> Arron Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938-1954* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), pp. 6-7, 153. During the next two decades the intelligence service underwent several reincarnations and name changes, successively becoming: The *Departamento Confidencial* (1924), the *Oficina de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales* (1925), the *Departamento de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales* (1938), and finally the DGIPS in the late 1940s. In its early stage the intelligence service largely remained under the command of military officials because “[i]ntelligence was [deemed] too important to be trusted to civilian chiefs, although agents could be—and often were—civilians.” The army remained powerful enough to run intelligence services up until the late 1930s. For a discussion about the development of the intelligence services during and after the Alemán administration, see Tanalis Padilla and Louise E. Walker’s “In the Archives: History and Politics,” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 19:1 (2013), pp. 1-10. There have been recent and concerted efforts on the part of historians to examine critically the reports generated by spies from 1947 to 1985, “which includes thousands of boxes collectively containing millions of pages [...]” Many of the reports that I utilize resemble the contents of those reports generated for later periods, but for all the similarities, the cold-war context and the consolidation of Mexico’s one-party system greatly changed the type of surveillance carried out. For example, Padilla and Walker note that “[agent] reports detail public political meetings, private conversations of leaders and members of the rank-and-file [of the PRI], transcripts of illegal wiretaps, as well as speculation about political sympathies and affiliations.”

After Obregón was elected president in 1920, he began to centralize power through the establishment (and strengthening) of connections with governors and regional bosses, congress, the military, and popular organizations. Crucial to this process was the formation of an impressive cabinet (*consejo de ministros*). Among those appointed to his cabinet was General Calles, a close friend, long-term collaborator, and fellow Sonoran, who was assigned the post of Secretary of the Ministry of Interior. The latter managed successfully to transform this office into an increasingly important position through the creation of the *Departamento Confidencial* “from the remnants of similar agencies that Carranza had employed.” As Stout has noted:

Once ensconced in Gobernación [the Ministry of Interior], he [Calles] contributed significantly to Obregón’s efforts to centralize authority. Calles could now deploy all the tools of the national government to accomplish his ends, and he was determined to employ an internal agency that monitored political and social activities as one method of centralizing power.<sup>12</sup>

The agency began modestly, with relatively few funds and few agents (no more than twenty), many of whom were deployed across the country to monitor political and social activities, and would “later [submit] reports to the agency.” In its infancy this department was characterized as an inefficient organization, where agents received only minor training in intelligence gathering; however, over the course of Calles’s tenure the department began slowly to improve “the quality of its agents and its methods.” Under Calles’s leadership resources were poured into reorganizing and strengthening the

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<sup>12</sup> Joseph A. Stout Jr., *Spies, Politics, and Power: El Departamento Confidencial en México, 1922-1946*. (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2012), pp. 33-34.

department, and towards reorienting its focus to “the importance of knowing the social and political conditions of the country.”<sup>13</sup>

In 1923, Calles established an archive for the *Departamento Confidencial*, which permitted the agency not only to organize their reports better, but also to “keep relatively good records of its activities.” The establishment of these formal channels allowed agents to submit and classify reports according to the type activities they carried out.<sup>14</sup> Agents were also renamed (and reclassified) into two categories: *Agentes Confidenciales de Primera* and *Agentes Confidenciales de Segunda*.<sup>15</sup> During this same period Calles also appointed the agency’s first director, Gilberto Valenzuela. The position would later be taken up by General Paulino Navarro and then Colonel Martín Bárcenas<sup>16</sup> (after the death of the former in the throes of the de la Huerta Rebellion).<sup>17</sup>

The experiences that Calles gained as Secretary and during the previous uprising—and the persistent violent skirmishes in the countryside against federal forces—led him to believe strongly “that [the] recurring rebellions against the

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<sup>13</sup> Stout, p. 34

<sup>14</sup> Stout, p. 34

<sup>15</sup> Stout, p. 40. The author notes that the “former received fifteen pesos per day plus expenses, as before, and the latter were paid twelve pesos daily, along with expenses.”

<sup>16</sup> The name Martín Bárcenas should be familiar to the reader, as this is the same individual who carried out the investigation into whether the “powers” of the state had disappeared during the *Estradista* Rebellion in Jalisco; see Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>17</sup> General Paulino Navarro died in one of the premiere battles that took place during the *Estradista* Rebellion in late December 1924, where the forces commanded by General Lázaro Cárdenas were decimated at the hands of General Rafael Buena. This outcome led the latter to express: “It is my opinion that very few times [in history] has such a complete triumph been obtained;” see AHMA, 1923 (Gobernación, 6), “Telegrama del General Enrique Estrada al Jefe Supremo de la Revolución Adolfo de la Huerta,” 27 December 1923.

government clearly [demonstrate] the importance of knowing the social and political conditions of the country.”<sup>18</sup> If there was to be another rebellion, then, the department wanted to know about it well in advance; that is, uncovering challenges to the social order and efforts to undermine the legitimacy of the presidency were now to be privileged efforts for the agency. As a result, when Calles became president in December 1924, the agency became a priority to his administration. Under the leadership of Bárcenas, the director from January 1, 1924 to January 11, 1925, the agency pushed to augment the scope of its activities and sought to reorganize itself into a political and administrative division because the director felt “that political problems in the various states often did not come to the attention of the central government until they were almost too serious to resolve.” The director, however, spent the majority of his time in Jalisco—away from the office in Mexico City—coordinating efforts on the part of the agency to bring the de la Huerta Rebellion to an end.

In particular, Bárcenas spent the better part of March-April 1924 carrying out an intensive investigation in Jalisco after de la Huerta Rebellion, where he uncovered several inconsistencies with regard to the actions of the state governor and other elected officials during and after the upheaval. To avoid these problems in the future, advised Bárcenas, in his recommendations to Calles, the agency needed to station permanent agents in each state to allow them to carry out more thorough investigations “where the agents could monitor [the] daily activities of state officials.” It was also during this period that Lt. Colonel Ignacio Jiménez, the *de facto* director when Bárcenas was away

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<sup>18</sup> Stout, p. 40.

conducting investigations, significantly transformed the methods and procedures agents utilized in their investigations:

He [Jiménez] insisted upon more complete documentation of departmental investigations, held agents reporting to work to strict schedules, established rules and guidelines to assure that agents provided valid information, and in essence established the structure that transformed the department into a true intelligence operation. Finally, he [continued to organize] the agency's archive with a document numbering system so information could be stored and retrieved easily from an index.<sup>19</sup>

After Bárcenas left to become the General Police Inspector of Mexico City in January 1925, his successor Lt. Colonel Eufrasio Ortega, introduced additional improvements to the agency's methods. For example, agents began—if they had not already not done so—to conduct their investigations in secret and were instructed “to be discreet, treat people properly, be diligent in their work, read the newspapers in order to be informed about public issues, and obey the orders of superiors.”<sup>20</sup>

It should be noted that the reports these agents produced have clear limitations, given their conditional and tentative nature; that is, the agents themselves may have presented “information without the benefit of context or even specific knowledge of the persons involved [...]” In utilizing these documents, we are presented with a double-edged sword of sorts: on the one hand, the documents reflect a certain degree of self-selection on the part of supervisors in positions of power at the *Departamento Confidencial*, who themselves privileged certain tidbits of information over others deemed extraneous; while on the other, we *too* as historians in the archive cherry-pick

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<sup>19</sup> Stout, p. 41

<sup>20</sup> Stout, pp. 42-43.

and self-select from the pool of already self-selected documents that made it into the dusty bins and boxes of a repository.<sup>21</sup> The use of this documentation as a source base, then, requires us not only to direct some serious thought at critically interrogating their content, but also to the nexus of networks which produced this knowledge. But as Navarro makes clear: “[T]he tremendous advantages gained from these reports are the opportunities to read the considered analyses of interested Mexican officials writing about their own political reality and to see the variety of opinion feeding into the intelligence bureaucracy of the federal government.” The decoding of these rumors in the countryside can indeed reveal a lot about the popular beliefs of those who were the targets of surveillance. My interest here is not so much on the actual creation or inception of the rumors, however, nor on their truth-content or on the subsequent impact they had on communities from which they originated. Rather, in what follows my object of inquiry shifts to what agents in Jalisco deemed important enough to report and send to their

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<sup>21</sup> There has been a good amount of healthy debate on the accessibility of these types of sources at the AGN. See Tanalís Padilla and Louise Walker, eds., “Dossier: Spy Reports: Content, Methodology, and Historiography in Mexico Secret Police Archive,” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, Vol. 19 (2013): 1-103. In particular, Padilla and Walker note that, “the collections of the DGIPS records are much more loosely organized” than the *Departamento de Fiscalía Especial para Movimientos Sociales y Políticos del Pasado* (DFS) collection. On the one hand, the collections of the DGIPS are organized into numbered boxes, identified only by years and state or federal district; on the other, the collections of the DFS have “a detailed card catalogue searchable by subject, but to our knowledge no scholar has had access to the catalogue itself.” Padilla and Walker continue: “Instead, it is mediated by the archive workers who tend the service counter in Gallery One [...] Historians, therefore, depend on the goodwill of those in charge to entertain a keyword guessing game. The results are not always fruitful, but the dialogue can often be productive and archivists do at times suggest helpful leads or connections.” In my own experience, the DGIPS archive in Gallery Two is indeed more accessible and I concur with Padilla and Walker’s view that the research here “involves going through significant amounts of extraneous material in hopes of finding something pertinent to the topic.” My own strategy consisted of casting a wide net and ordering all the boxes on Jalisco and accidentally stumbling upon the agent reports and other investigation conducted by the Ministry of Interior. What initially struck me about the reports, however, were their granularity and the tremendous amount of information they contained about the social, cultural, and political lives of contemporaries; see Padilla and Walker (“In the Archives”), pp. 4-5.



supervisors and, similarly, the content that actually made it into state archives in Mexico City.

This section makes use of an extensive corpus of documentation gathered from the DGIPS Archive, largely produced by agents or informants in the countryside—reports then turned over to the *Departamento Confidencial* in Mexico City. The first set of reports, authored by Agents 15 and 115, focused on documenting the presence and activities of rebel groups that were again up in arms in the countryside (months after the previous mass uprising ended); and also on the prospect that many of these groups were working in collusion with the state government to undermine the central state's capacity to rule. The second set of reports originated from the detailed investigations Agent 24 carried out in southern Jalisco. I highlight two examples: the first directs our attention to the Jalisco-Michoacán border and emphasizes the continuance of de la Huertista networks, consisting of local and regional propaganda campaigns, and transnational links with exiled rebel leaders; while the second comes from the *Sierra de Quila* region—near the central part of the state—and concentrates on the neighboring towns of Juchitlán and Tecolotlán. I underscore the experiences of individuals in the countryside who were supporters of these latest rebellions, most of whom had direct links to the previous uprising and expressed a clear antipathy towards the central government. The idea here is not only to highlight what was actually being reported to the state's intelligence offices in Mexico City, but also to shift our attention to what ordinary folks in the countryside were thinking.

We begin our inquiry in the months that followed the defeat and suppression of the local *Estradista* Rebellion, when the countryside continued to be a fertile hotbed of

sedition activities against the central state and reported incidents of violence were on the rise. In fact, for the remainder of 1924 and beyond, the federal army continued to pursue rebels at a surprisingly high rate.<sup>22</sup> It was also around this time that rumors of a mass insurrection in Jalisco began once again to reach the offices of the *Departamento Confidencial* and the Ministry of Interior with greater frequency. The state government, which following the previous uprising formed an impressive power structure in the Guadalajara region and rallied behind *Zunismo*, also began to distance itself from the central state. Consequently, the specter of rebellion in the countryside and political revolt in Guadalajara became a manifest reality to the area's citizens. This greatly conditioned the manner in which government agencies—and the intelligence services, in particular—came to understand the region as an object of inquiry. Let us now turn our attention to the years 1924 to 1926.

#### *Agents 15 and 115*

On 11 October 1924, *El Demócrata* reported on a plot that had recently been uncovered in Jalisco against the central government, which implicated several rebel groups across the entire state of Jalisco. The potential uprising was brought to the attention of General Lázaro Cárdenas—the Head of Military Operations in the region—who proceeded to investigate the matter. The investigation yielded the arrests of the presumed leaders of the movement, “as they headed to diverse places in the State with the

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<sup>22</sup> While the military continued to deny in official reports that rebels were up in arms, Agents 115 and 15, and Alcaraz Díaz reported on the military's response to these uprisings; see AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 (3.2) – 6 – II, Estado de Jalisco, Propaganda Sediciosa and AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-13 (3.2), Tomo I, Estado de Jalisco, Partes diarios sobre novedades, Exp. 4.

objective [of growing] and intensifying the movement.” Ex-Colonel Vargas, president of the *Partido Liberal Revolucionario* and pegged as the principal *florista* leader, was accused of carrying out “active seditious propaganda” at military centers and private locations “where military men who were [previously] under the orders of ex-General Enrique Estrada [resided].”<sup>23</sup> About two months later, on 16 December 1924, the town of San Cristóbal Zapotitlán (Municipality of Jocotepec) was assaulted and ransacked by a group of bandits at three in the morning. As soon as Municipal President Teodoro Gaitán received word of the event, he gathered up a group of men and took to the nearby hills in pursuit of the attackers. An exchange of gunfire followed, lasting fifteen minutes. The ruggedness of the terrain, however, made it impossible for the defenders of the town to capture anyone, and they quickly lost sight of the attackers.<sup>24</sup> The following day, the spokesperson for General Lázaro Cárdenas declared to the press that “the small bands of rebels that maraud through various parts of the state, have been completely defeated [...] and that [...] all of the state finds itself in complete peace.”<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, earlier that month the *Departamento Confidencial* in Mexico City had sent Agents 15 and 115 on assignment to investigate seditious activities in Jalisco. The official position taken by military officials, nevertheless, took the agents by complete surprise. Their investigations into the matter had revealed an upsurge in rebellious activities over the course of December. And before the above declarations were made to

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<sup>23</sup> *El Demócrata*, 11 October 1924.

<sup>24</sup> *El Informador*, “Un Alcalde rechazó la acometida de unos bandidos,” 18 December 1924.

<sup>25</sup> *El Sol*, “Jalisco se halla en la paz más absoluta. Desaparecieron ya las gavillas que había,” 17 December 1924.

the press on behalf of General Cárdenas, the agents claimed to have met with him face-to-face to inquire about the current state of the countryside, a meeting of which they reported that “[General] Cárdenas told us that ‘In Mexico [the people] are highly emotional and scandalmongers.’”<sup>26</sup> The agents were taken aback by the dismissive nature of the comments voiced by the General, since their preliminary forays into the countryside revealed many seditious activities.

The rumblings of rebellion had been in the air since 1 December, when José G. Palos—the self-proclaimed Second Chief and Colonel of the Armed Forces of Jalisco, made his way to Teocuitlán de Corona with a group of fifty men and sent another group to the Jocotepec area. In these days, Palos circulated a manifesto calling upon the people of Jalisco to rise up in arms against the national government. It read as follows:

Armed rebellion is a legitimate right of oppressed peoples, when bold imposters assault the Public power and take it over to commit all types of violations and attacks upon the guarantees[,] which the Law fundamentally grants citizens born in a free country. All armed movement, for it to be legal should have as its objective the implementation or defense of elevated principles of patriotism and of justice[. In] the present case the entire Nation has felt how the supporters of Gral. Plutarco Elías Calles, in heinous conspiracy with the [...] Government of General Obregón[,] has mocked the most noble aspirations of the people [...]. Obregón and Calles have betrayed the revolution. They will be responsible before the history [and] blood that will be shed in this new struggle that the true Mexican public [will] undertake to reconquer their rights.<sup>27</sup>

Echoing similar sentiments that the *Estradista* Rebellion upheld earlier in the year, the Palos revolt reflected a continuance of the endemic struggle against the central state and a profound disdain for regional authorities that many in this region had. This uprising not

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<sup>26</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo I, Exp. 4, f. 12.

<sup>27</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo I, Exp. 4, f. 14.

only reflected how violence had become a necessary recourse for many of the state's rural population, but also highlighted a new lexicon of rebellion that became popular in these years. The political act of rebellion for citizens, here, was to be understood as a "legitimate right." And their willingness to pay the ultimate sacrifice in order to be included in the new democratic life of the country meant that many rebel groups actively began to translate the language of the Revolution and appropriated it into their own worldviews. This political act, therefore, shaped and would continue to transform the region throughout the 1920s and beyond.

The Mexican intelligence service was absolutely aware of the threat (and actuality) of rebellion in the regions of Jalisco, as hordes of reports attesting to this fact made their way into the hands of supervisors at an alarming rate. And the Palos revolt, as we will see, was not an isolated incident, nor was Jalisco the peaceful region that General Cárdenas had made it out to be, where rumors gained wide currency and filled the imaginations of *chismosos*, only to die away. "The conduct of [General] Cárdenas, appears to [us] more and more suspicious," confirmed the agents.<sup>28</sup> In fact, Agents 15 and 115 reported and identified to the *Departamento Confidencial* at least seven other distinct rebel groups that were still up in arms in Jalisco, in addition to the Palos revolt: near Tlajomulco, there were at least 100 men up in arms; in Tapalpa, the Manzano brothers had gathered no less than seventy men; and near Ocotlán and La Barca, Rutilio Enxiástigia and his band patrolled with impunity. Meanwhile in Tequila, ex-Colonel Pablo González operated with about seventy supporters; just outside of Guadalajara, the

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<sup>28</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo I, Exp. 4, f. 21

Tolentino brothers controlled the area near La Barranca; Ciro Tovar operated in Villa de Purificación with a group of around forty men; and another individual, popularly referred to as “El Malacate,” controlled another band of rebels rumored to have been given ammunition by the state government and the clergy.<sup>29</sup> Over the course of December the agents identified a great many more such groups.<sup>30</sup>

The two agents claimed to be in possession of evidence confirming that many of the rebels apparently enjoyed impunity, especially in the region controlled by General Alberto Zuno, the brother of José G. Zuno, and that the “inactivity of Governor Zuno can be interpreted as [his being] complicit with the rebels.” Both agents were also surprised at the fact that Governor Zuno learned they were in the state watching over the acts of the local government, given that the agents had only told General Cárdenas (per instructions of the Ministry of Interior). The agents sent to investigate these seditious activities, nevertheless, were not only themselves aware of being under the surveillance of General Cárdenas, but also of the fact that false stories were consistently planted in newspapers in order to mislead them in their efforts: “[T]he local press of the state has published news [stories] related to the rebellion that is being prepared in Jalisco, but [we] have been able to find out that it is not true [and] that [the military] is persecuting the rebels,” confirmed the agents, “but as we have said, in previous reports, those who are up in arms are not being bothered, and it has only been about six days in which the [...] Head of Military Operations assured us that in Jalisco there is not one rebel band.” The agents, however,

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<sup>29</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo I, Exp. 4, f. 13

<sup>30</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo I, Exp. 4.

felt that not enough was being done to truly pacify the countryside. All of this negligence, according to the agents, had led to Guadalajara becoming a hotbed of rebel activities, where *delahuertistas* could patiently and precisely plan their next moves[,] perhaps with the complicity of the authorities[, and] prepare a movement that will break out next January.’’<sup>31</sup>

The following day, on 15 December, Agent 15 continued to shed light onto the seditious movement that was developing in the state. “Ex-Colonel Manuel Gómez, ex-Head of the Rural Corps of the State, who rose up in arms with General Manuel M. Diéguez last December [during] the delahuertista rebellion, as well as his assistant Leandro González, are carrying out seditious activities,” confirmed Agent 15.<sup>32</sup> The agent had also been in contact with individuals in Gómez’s hometown of Tala and reported that “this man has a great number of arms in possession of a *compadre* of his, and that said arms belong to the men he commanded during the [previous] rebellion.” This was significant, according to the report, because during that rebellion, almost half of the residents of Tala rose up in arms in support of ex-Colonel Gómez. Through an informant, Agent 15 had also come to learn that Juan Pérez, who rose up in arms during the de la Huerta Rebellion under the command of General Natalio Espinosa, was now in Mazamitla and counted upon the support of Governor Zuno and Local Deputy Victoriano Salado. Apparently, Pérez had gone to the area to lead rebel holdouts from the previous uprising who had been refashioned by the state into “agrarian forces.” “Through people

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<sup>31</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo I, Exp. 4, f. 22

<sup>32</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo I, Exp. 4, f. 24

in Mazamitla,” reported agent 15, “I have learned that [Deputy] Salado had given orders to Juan Pérez [to be] ready with all of his people because they [might] need him at any minute.”<sup>33</sup>

One of the emerging trends reflected by these reports is a tendency for agents to highlight the collusion—whether real or not—between former and current rebels, and officials belonging to the state government. Agent 15, for example, claimed that during the rebellion the Mounted Police in Guadalajara rose up in arms against the Government and that “the officials from the Mounted Police are all ex-rebels [who fought for General] Enrique Estrada, who [are now] protected [by] Governor Zuno and Municipal President of Guadalajara José María Cuéllar.” This accusation, however, was not made out of thin air, but rather reflected the findings of a carefully calculated investigation into the matter. Earlier in the month, Agent 15 took a trip with Sánchez Aldana, an informant working as a civilian within the *Ayuntamiento* of Guadalajara (who would later himself become an agent), to the town of Zapopan to interview Police Chief Arturo Campos, “who during the conversation we had told me, that his colleague ex-Captain Heredia who had been arrested on the charge of rebellion in Ocotlán during the previous uprising, was being protected by Governor Zuno [...]” To prove collusion between the rebels and state officials, the agent claimed he was told of an incident that occurred about a month and a half before, when rebel General Félix Barajas found himself in close proximity to the aforementioned town, which resulted in a skirmish and led to the deaths of three rebels. As they searched the dead, they were able to find in their pocket credentials granted to

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<sup>33</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo I, Exp. 4, f. 24.



them by the state government. This ultimately meant, according to the agent, that Governor Zuno, and even the municipal president, were in agreement with the rebel Barajas, “as well as the others that are up in arms against the state.”<sup>34</sup>

Agent 15 also observed that the conduct of Zuno towards his employees and, specifically, towards Local Deputy Luis Castillo was “completely suspicious” on the grounds that the deputy was a brother of Colonel Castillo (who presumably supported the previous uprising), and that the governor had several former supporters of Enrique Estrada carrying out important roles within his own government. As an example, he cited Benjamín Contreras, a sympathizer with the previous uprising, now chosen by the governor to become the new manager of the *Compañía Hidroeléctrica e Irrigadora del Chapala* after his administration confiscated it from its rightful owners.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, in a separate report Agent 15 claimed that several other current civil employees of the state “had distinct roles [within] the Government of the *Estradista* Rebellion.” Among these men were Tomás Vidrio, who before and during the rebellion served the municipal administration of Guadalajara and edited “El Radio,” a pro-rebel newspaper, but was now an employee of the state government; and Angel Moreno, who during the rebellion served as a confidential agent to provisional Governor Tolentino, but now worked for the municipal administration of Cuéllar and privately served as an agent for Zuno.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 (3.2) 6, Nombre: Estado de Jalisco, Asunto: Propaganda sediciosa, Exp: 2, ff. 156-157.

<sup>35</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 (3.2) 6, Nombre: Estado de Jalisco, Asunto: Propaganda sediciosa, Exp: 2, ff. 156-157.

<sup>36</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo I, Exp. 4, ff. 25-26.

The agent's distrust of the state government reached an even higher pitch in the days that followed. On 31 December 1924, Agent 15 claimed that Governor José G. Zuno had recently informed the municipal presidents of the state that the new rebellion "would break out on the first days of the month of January." The agent thought it opportune to report this because he not only thought it interesting, but also to prevent this seditious movement, "which according to [the] information given to us by people who helped us in Guadalajara [...] will be led by Governor Zuno." Surprised by this and because of the sensitive nature of the intelligence, Agent 15 went out of his way to forward the information immediately to his supervisors, leaving his partner Agent 115 in Guadalajara to collect more intelligence. The Agent 15 boarded a train to La Barca, where he turned in the hand-written reports and also managed to exchange impressions about this matter with *agraristas* that were on their way out of the state. In the meantime, Agent 15 confirmed that Agent 115 had also received a notice from a friend in Acatlán de Juárez, "who through various sources that merit absolute trust [claimed] that the governor of Jalisco, prepares a seditious movement [and] is in cooperation with his Political Bosses that are found in every town of the state." All of these reports ultimately led Agent 15 to conclude that the matter could be resolved if General Lázaro Cárdenas, who repeatedly turned a blind-eye to this evidence, was removed from his post as Head of Military Operations in Jalisco, because "even if he is not in agreement with the seditious movement, he at least [ignores it]."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo II, Exp. 2, ff. 81-83.

When Agent 15 left Guadalajara, his partner Agent 115 wrote to their supervisor to inform him of how they had infiltrated the “revolutionaries.” To do so, the agents pretended to be “revolutionary agents” and befriended *señora* Olivera—a partisan of the movement, who maintained close links with the rebel leadership. According to an informant who reported to the aforementioned agent, *señora* Olivera was one of the principle leaders of the movement in Guadalajara and that “[she can] count upon many elements from the railway- and tramworkers [...]” After briefly vetting the two agents and “asking that if I was an agent I not jeopardize her,” she took the agents to a meeting at a local *cantina*, where they learned more about the seditious movement. “[The individuals from the *cantina*] had [later] realized that they committed a grave [error and were] reckless,” reported Agent 115, “in identifying themselves as revolutionaries and letting us know about all of the matters related to the movement [brewing] in Jalisco.” Shortly after that incident, as *señora* Olivera received a letter from General Manuel G. Nuñez, she commented to him that two “revolutionary agents” had been in talks with their group. General Nuñez then asked *señora* Olivera if the agents had properly identified themselves as true revolutionaries to which she responded “no.” “The [previously cited General] was exceedingly upset, telling her that if the movement in Jalisco failed [it would be because] of her recklessness and Colonel Jesús Valdéz [...who] had presented us to the other people who were in charge of the movement,” reported Agent 115. The agent in question attempted to get a meeting with General Nuñez to prove his credentials as a rebel. This did not happen, but in the process he was able to meet with Colonel Valdéz, and after gaining his trust proceeded to ask the Colonel if he had any knowledge about when the movement would break out, to which the

Colonel responded that the exact date had not been set. The idea was that it would break out in the month of January, but that they would at least be given eight days' notice in advance and that the movement would be carried out simultaneously with uprisings in Zacatecas and other states.

The uncovering of these networks led Agent 115 to conclude that in Jalisco there existed two different seditious movements. He wrote:

“[O]ne that [is led by] officials of the State Government and the other by *delahuertista* rebels; [but] I could not find anything in common among these movement, if there is in fact an agreement among both. [There] is especially great alarm in various towns of the State, both because within the course of a month the governor of the state has been sending arms and munitions to various places in the State, [and] because on 30 December he ordered almost all of the current Municipal Presidents who [...] have been functioning as *Jefes Políticos*, not to turn over the municipal power to the [new] town councils that had recently been elected [...].<sup>38</sup>

In great detail, Agent 115 reported that this process began on 15 December, when Governor Zuno suddenly began to call upon the state's municipal presidents and political bosses not to turn over their power to the new authorities, and also “began to [move] authorities from one town to another.” Additionally, in agreement with the municipal president of Guadalajara, the state government had also recently named a new loyal Police Chief in Guadalajara “who had the reputation [of being] an assassin and killer [...]”

On the eve of his departure from Guadalajara, Agent 115 met with Antonio Medina, an accountant within the state government, to converse about the governor's recent disposition with regard to the local governments around the state. “This [order]

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<sup>38</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo II, Exp. 2, ff. 74-79.

was due to the governor's fear that when Lic. Gilberto Valenzuela would take charge of the Ministry of Interior," Medina informed the agent, "he would intervene in [the] matters [of] Jalisco to remedy the situation that prevails in that state." The same individual declared to the agent that as a precaution, in case President Calles decided to "reconsider the performance" of the governor of Jalisco during the *Estradista* Rebellion, "he [Zuno] had organized, and currently was ready to face-off with the Central Government, and that that was the reason for all of the warlike activities of the governor."<sup>39</sup> This new information was significant because the previous tendencies reflected in the intelligence reports were to conflate all seditious activity in the countryside, labeling them as part of a single, larger conspiracy between rebel groups and the state government.<sup>40</sup> Although the network uncovered by the agents revealed that these presumed links were not entirely clear, their reports did concede that both seditious movements were a threat to the interests of the central state in this region.

In separate reports, both Agents 15 and 115 made reference to smear campaigns sanctioned by Governor Zuno against President Calles, which consisted of the planting of false stories in local newspapers. For example, *El Machete* a local newspaper with circulation in Guadalajara, had now gained wider distribution among the state's agrarian communities through the Local Agrarian Commission of Guadalajara. "[This] was not

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<sup>39</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo II, Exp. 2, ff. 74-79.

<sup>40</sup> Up until at least January 1925, however, the *Departamento Confidencial's* agents continued to express very similar anxieties about the specter of rebellion and the prospect of regional authorities undermining the interests of the central state. "With respect to local matters, everyday I observe greater agitation on the part of elements [loyal] to the governor," confirmed Alcaraz Díaz, "and precisely last night I was with some friends at the *Cantina de la Fama*, and after a few moments some deputies that belong to the current [state] Legislature arrived and were making strong comments [about] Gral. Calles [...]." See AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 (3.2) 6, Estado de Jalisco, Propaganda sediciosa, Exp: 2, f. 18

strange, except for the fact that this newspaper consistently attacked the president of the republic, Calles,” reported Agent 115. On this matter, the agent was able to find out that these articles were not only penned with the consent of the governor (and in particular authored by the leader of the Local Agrarian Commission), but were also financed by the State Government, which directly paid the newspaper company.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, Agent 15 also reported on the publication of false newspaper articles with regard to the revolt led by José Palos:

[...An] article that was published by the Press of Guadalajara said that when José G. Palos attacked Teocuitatlán, Jal., the political boss of that area, Alberto González, had pursued the rebel Palos, but this was not true because this article was published by order of Governor Zuno, to [make people] believe that the political boss is a supporter of the general Government.<sup>42</sup>

In fact, the reality was actually quite to the contrary. Agent 15 reported that at the beginning of December, José G. Palos was indeed bent on attacking the town, but found himself too distant. After an arduous march, the rebel leader stopped by Hacienda San José de Gracia, where they rested and were provided with fresh horses in order to continue their march. When they finally entered Teocuitatlán de Corona, the local political boss “went to go hide at the house of Dionisio Velazco, a *delahuertista* supporter, and that [it was the] residents of that town [who] were the ones that actually pursued the rebel José G. Palos [...]” But instead of thanking the residents of the town for their service, the political boss persecuted the people of the town, “threatening them with death to the extent that the majority of residents [that helped pursue] the rebel

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<sup>41</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo II, Exp. 2, f. 70

<sup>42</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo II, Exp. 2, f. 66.

[leader] have had to abandon their residences [...].”<sup>43</sup> What is demonstrated here with the above two examples, then, is a larger anxiety about the diffusion of information to important constituencies. These efforts reflected the state government’s efforts to control news about what it deemed most important, even if that meant the rewriting of events as they occurred on the ground, or reorienting public opinion to reflect the state government’s position. Such activities not only peaked the interest of the agents, but also raised some serious concerns about the dangers of letting these behaviors continue.

*From Local to Regional to International Networks*

At the end of 1924 to the first half of 1925, Sánchez Aldana was entrusted with specific instructions to carry out a political investigation. He claimed to lack many of the necessary resources successfully to carry out the task and even admitted, at times, to dedicating himself to “other activities.” But despite his apparent difficulties in completing the mission, he felt a moral obligation, however, to bring attention to the superiors “some new aspects about the revolutionary activity which the discontented ‘delahuertistas’ continued developing in Jalisco.” In the process of his investigation, Sánchez Aldana befriended many “revolutionary propagandists” in Guadalajara, among them Joaquín Méndez, Gustavo Valencia, Serapio Estrada, the secretary of the group (who went by the alias “Leaño”), and María Refugio Olivera. He believed that the seditious movement would occur in December 1924 and even claimed that he *too* was invited to incorporate himself into the rank and file of the upcoming rebellion. The “conspiracy,” as the agent

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<sup>43</sup> AGN, DGIPS 313.1 – 13 (3.2), Tomo II, Exp. 2, f. 66.

labeled it, involved several important *ex-estradista* officials and prominent loyal federal generals, such as General Lázaro Cárdenas. “I pretended to be in agreement with everything,” noted Sánchez Aldana. The agent continued to collect more information about the conspiracy and, while the uprising appeared imminent, he tried his best not lose to sight of the conspirators. The rebellion had, up until then, not come to fruition, but he remained vigilant because “the matter is serious and they [the conspirators] do not want to fail again [...and as a result] they have not stopped making ‘delahuertista’ propaganda’ [...].”<sup>44</sup>

During the second half of 1925, Sánchez Aldana began signing his reports as “Agent 24” and consistently found himself in the southern parts of the state. On 26 August, for example, Sánchez Aldana (hereafter referred to as Agent 24) wrote to the *Departamento Confidencial* to inform it about the recent trip he had undertaken to Yurécuaro, Michoacán, located near the southwest border separating Jalisco with Michoacán. While in that town he met up with Aurelio Alcalá, an individual purporting to be a colonel who enjoyed a great deal of sympathy from the majority of the region’s residents, people whose political dispositions ran counter to the central government. “Alcalá informed me that he had a lot of people [and] that he was just waiting for orders [announcing] that matters were serious [enough] to begin to organize his people,” wrote Agent 24. The prevailing opinion among the people the agent interviewed was that the movement would break out at the beginning of October because General Nuñez had told them so in a letter. In these years, the *Departamento Confidencial* deemed the border

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<sup>44</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-968 Tomo II, Exp. 10. Caja. 244, “Informe de las actividades sediciosas que se estan elaborando en Jalisco,” 17 July 1925.



region of Jalisco-Michoacán an important area of inquiry because it was a center of rebellious activities. This surveillance, however, also points to an important understanding about violence that this government agency had learned over the course of the last few years. Rarely were rebellions cooked up in epicenters of power; rather, it was in the peripheries of power where the ground-work began to be laid and networks flourished.

On this trip, the agent also met Francisco Villalobos, a major who had previously served with Alcalá, but was now the police chief of Yurécuaro. The agent pointed out that both men were greatly enthusiastic about the prospect of the “Revolution” because there were many sympathizers in the area ready to fight at a moments notice. Additionally, the agent reported that he was told of a letter General Nuñez sent to the border town of Tepalcatepec to a man named Carlos Casillas. “This man,” claimed the agent, “supposedly [can] count on the support of quite a lot of people who [are] sympathizers of the Revolution [who] possess elements of war that were left behind by the people of ex-General Enrique Estrada and Diéguez [...] after their defeat as they were fleeing the Government of General Obregón.” If the men of Casillas had not risen up in arms in 1923, claimed the agent, it was only because he was taken prisoner early, and remained jailed throughout the entire conflict. On his return to Guadalajara, Agent 24 also met an individual (alias “El Gringo”) who was extremely happy about the daily meetings he had been having with certain members of the clergy “who have offered

assistance [to the cause] and to date have [already carried out] propaganda [and] that the same clergy already counts upon [the support] of a lot of people in this city.”<sup>45</sup>

Over the course of the previous year, Agent 24 had gone from working as an informant in the *Ayuntamiento* of Guadalajara to serving as an *Agente Confidencial de Primera*. While largely based in Guadalajara, he increasingly became involved in the rebel movement to the point that he managed successfully to infiltrate the revolutionary network controlled by General Nuñez. Portraying himself as a sympathizer of the movement, he was able to gain access to inside information that was normally not made public. For example, he was well aware of the propaganda campaigns carried out in the border regions of the state. On 28 August, when he met up with revolutionary Reinaldo Esparza, for example, Agent 24 was informed of the propaganda the former made in the sierra of Mazamitla (which was comprised of Mazamitla, La Manzanilla, Pueblo Nuevo, Tizapán el Alto, and Tuxcueca). In the first town, Esparza recruited an individual named Santiago Díaz—a sympathizer of the revolutionary movement, who had already given a lot of money to those involved—and entrusted him to carry out “revolutionary propaganda” and the distribution of manifestos.<sup>46</sup>

The propaganda machinery of the rebels, however, was not just limited to the border region of Jalisco nor to the capital city of Guadalajara. Reports such as those submitted by informant “G.E.A.,” for example, noted that the region near Ciudad Guzmán, specifically at haciendas el Rincón and Santa Cruz and in the towns of

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<sup>45</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 -- 968 Tomo II, Exp. 10. Caja. 244, 26 August 1925.

<sup>46</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo II, Exp. 10, 28 August 1925.

Zapotiltic, Tamazula de Gordiano, Tuxpan and Tecalitlán, there existed “[an epicenter] of conspirators” who continuously had meetings and allegedly counted on the support of a deputy, and the municipal president of Zapotiltic.<sup>47</sup> This area, in particular, had already been on the radar of the *Departamento Confidencial* for a few months when a report made its way to the Ministry of Interior warning of a “Rebel Center” in Ciudad Guzmán. According to the report, the center was led by Martín Ramos (meat dealer), Manuel Corona (from Zacoalco), and Bernardino Tapia. The last individual was deemed the lead propagandist and organizer of the towns in this area, known as the *Sierra del Tigre*. The report went on to describe an extensive network comprised of at least eighteen other individuals from the above-mentioned haciendas, who helped distribute propaganda against the state.<sup>48</sup> Bernardo Tapía made also trips to the *sierra de Mazamitla* to the *rancherías* of Las Cuevas, Los Corrales, Las Verdolagas, Rosa Amarilla, and La Lobera, where his companions worked under his orders to spread propaganda.

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<sup>47</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo II, Exp. 10, Without date.

<sup>48</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo II, Exp. 10, “Informe relative al centro rebelde C. Guzmán, y sus actividades,” August 1925.



the federal government, and was tasked with forwarding that information to Concepción de Buenos Aires. The report also warned of an active propaganda campaign recently begun by a priest aimed at the Peasant and Labor Syndicates of the region organized under Zuno's union, which had already made significant headway in the area of Teocuitatlán. “[The priest] makes his trips to other *rancherías* [of this municipality and] in his various sermons tells [the groups] that the Federal Government is an enemy of their religion,” confirmed the report, “[and] that they should defend [their religion] at all costs, and if it is possible to give their lives to save their faith.”<sup>49</sup>

Many individuals in the countryside came to understand the political world they lived in not only from the information and resources that intrastate networks provided, but also through international networks that provided mutual support and organization, and distributed propaganda. This in turn fueled imaginations and dreams of locals in the small towns and hamlets of Jalisco. Reinaldo Esparza, for example, informed Agent 24 of the existence of a *Junta Revolucionaria* located in the United States, which was comprised of exiled former de la Huerta supporters. Bragging to the agent, at one point Esparza claimed that “he had asked the *Junta* [...] for various blank sheets with signatures [of the leadership so that] he could extend appointments here to all of his friends [...]” What should be clear is that preparations were well underway for a mass uprising; that is, a second attempt to overthrow the central state government. Esparza

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<sup>49</sup> This priest—who was named Jesús Flores or Sahagún—was an individual who during the previous rebellion roused the *Grupo de las Damas Católicas* and led some members of the *Grupo Católico* to revolt. Two brothers of the priest actively participated in the Social Defense of the town, usurped public posts, and fought on the side the rebels. In their escapades they had committed a multitude of atrocities and assassinated many peasants and *agraristas*.

claimed that everything was in place for the revolution to breakout during the first days of October 1925, but that at the moment everything was silent because they did not want the government to become aware of their plans, “since they had already finished the majority of their plans and were only waiting [for the] end of the rainy season.” The agent himself confirmed that Esparza had a legitimate appointment from the *Junta* and was authorized to ask for loans. He also attested to the fact that he had been able to sneak a peak at a document in Esparza’s possession (but was unable to read it fully ), but did notice that it said “Revolutionary,” and that it had the signature of Adolfo de la Huerta.<sup>50</sup> A week later, Esparza went to go see Agent 24 to show him a letter his son, an exiled revolutionary living in El Paso, Texas, had sent to him, in which he was informed that a woman was on her way to Mexico in possession of “the code” that all of the revolutionaries would use.<sup>51</sup> The *Junta* frequently sent letters and propagandistic materials to this region, which were then sent elsewhere around the state.

Not long after this encounter, the agent surprisingly wrote that many people in these areas believed that the “revolution is now recognized by the United States” and that the White House had secretly committed itself to transporting weapons in American ships to ports chosen by the *Junta Revolucionaria*.<sup>52</sup> While the veracity of such rumors could not be verified, they do attest to the tense relations the Calles administration maintained with the Coolidge administration. Earlier in the year, on 12 June 1925, Secretary of State

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<sup>50</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo II, Exp. 10, 4 September 1925.

<sup>51</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo II, Exp. 10, 10 September 1925.

<sup>52</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo II, Exp. 10, 27 September 1925.

Kellogg went on record to the press stating that his government's positive attitude toward the Mexican government continued because Mexico fulfilled its previously established agreements (i.e. the Bucareli treaty), but that the Calles administration's new policies unjustifiably targeted American interests and property. Secretary Kellogg continued:

I have seen the statements published in the press that another revolutionary movement may be impending in Mexico. I very much hope this is not true. This Government's attitude toward Mexico and toward threaten[ing] revolutionary movements was clearly set forth in 1923 [during the de la Huerta Rebellion], when there was such a movement threatening the constituted Government of that country, which had entered into solemn engagements with this Government and was making an effort to meet those obligations at home and abroad.<sup>53</sup>

Secretary Kellogg maintained that the policy of the American government was to use its influence and apply support on behalf of stability and orderly constitutional procedure, "but [that] it should be made clear that this Government will continue to support the Government in Mexico only so long as it protects American lives and American rights and complies with its international engagements and obligations." "The Government of Mexico is now on trial before the world," announced Secretary Kellogg.<sup>54</sup>

On 1 October, Agent 24 met with another revolutionary, Guadalupe Hernández, who informed him that all of the preparations for the movement were ready and that they only waited for their leaders in the United States to give the order to begin it, and for their subsequent entrance into the country. The upcoming rebellion, then, was to be national in scope. "[We are just waiting] for the Generals [...] of each Division to enter the country [and] operate in their respective zones," declared Guadalupe Hernández, "and let's have

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<sup>53</sup> *New York Times*, 13 June 1925.

<sup>54</sup> *New York Times*, 13 June 1925.

faith, that the Revolution [...] will not fail [this time], because of how well it is organized all throughout the country.”<sup>55</sup>

*The Sierra de Quila: Juchitlán and Tecolotlán*

On 28 October 1925 Agent 24 temporarily shifted his area of inquiry from the Jalisco-Michoacán border to a region near the *sierra de Quila*—specifically to the neighboring towns of Juchitlán and Tecolotlán. Upon his arrival in the area, the agent had come to learn that when Local Deputy to the Congress of Jalisco Nicolás Rangel Guerrero visited Juchitlán earlier in the month, to prepare the upcoming municipal elections, the municipal president of the town denounced both Dr. Jesús Degollado and the local priest to Rangel Guerrero because “he [the municipal president] had [walked in] on a secret meeting [they were having] with a seditious character [and] took from them a list that had many names of individuals who had committed to rising up in arms, as well as other documents [of great importance].” The municipal president of Juchitlán drew up an official report of the incident and attached the documents collected from the “conspirators,” forwarding them to the lower court of the town. But no judicial action had been undertaken. “[This is because] the Judge is an old reactionary and [is] inept [and because the Secretary] of the same court is also a well-known reactionary [and is the] brother-in-law of the same Judge,” wrote the agent, “[...both] are sympathizers of the so-called Revolutionary movement and are active members of the *Guadalupana* group [...]” This negligence on the part of the judicial authorities thus allowed the group to continue to carry out its activities with the intention of rising up in arms at some point in

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<sup>55</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1 – 968, Tomo II, Exp. 10, 1 October 1925.



the near future. Meanwhile, Dr. Degollado was allowed “mysteriously to disappear” from Juchitlán, reported the agent, “but I have been able to find out that he is in Guadalajara perhaps working [on] more activities.”<sup>56</sup>

As result, Enrique García Ruesga, a resident of Juchitlán with a house on *calle Reforma No. 2*, was left as the leader of the “conspirators” and also as president of the *Guadalupana* group, which had religious undertones and counted upon the support of at least 150 active members. Specifically, Agent 24 described García Ruesga as a very repulsive man of bad faith, excessively prideful. This was an individual, according to the agent, who had directly lent his services to the de la Huerta “Revolution” and had done so through contributions in the form of cash, guns, and ammunition, in addition to making propaganda to recruit people to the side of the revolutionaries. “He [still] has many guns inside his home and while [my informants] were not able to precisely specify the place where he hides them, they assured me that he hides them in a hole he dug near [a] frame of his door,” reported Agent 24. Meanwhile, Salvador Covarrubias, an ex-colonel with a residence on *calle Juárez No. 10*, was also singled out as a conspirator. Describing Covarrubias as a quarrelsome man of very bad antecedents and an avowed enemy of the current Government, the agent reported that the ex-colonel had publicly expressed himself in a very bad manner towards General Calles and all of the members of his presidential cabinet, “hurling serious threats at those that sympathize and serve the Government [...and] that the authorities of that place have not done anything to defend the [...] Government to which they [supposedly support...].” Agent 24 attributed the

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<sup>56</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-968 Tomo II, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Asunto: Propaganda Sediciosa. Exp. 10. Caja. 244. “Agent 24 reporting from the populations of Juchitlán and Tecolotlán,” 6 November 1925.

inactivity of local authorities to the fact that they feared this man because he was deemed very dangerous and a seasoned criminal. It should be noted that Agent 24 himself was a clear sympathizer of the revolutionary government and his descriptions, while quite possibly true, innately reflect his own bias and distrust of country folk in areas that had traditionally resisted the social order since the days of the Constitutionalist Revolution. The not so distant de la Huerta Rebellion, perhaps, did not do much to dispel these prejudices and resentments.

The telegrapher of Juchitlán, Honorato Castillo, was also earmarked as an individual very active in the *Guadalupana* group, who regularly attended the processions the group sponsored on the twelfth of every month. Agent 24 reported that “in the process of [punctually attending] all of those [...] *fiestas* [he consistently] neglected his job [in the] telegraph [office] as well as the post office because those offices are united and he is at the head of both of them.” When Castillo was actually in the office, however, he evidently accepted mail only from those he favored, and not from certain other individuals; that is, *agraristas* in this town were refused service and had to go to the neighboring town of Tecolotlán. The agent cited the particular example of a case when the municipal president attempted to send a telegram and pickup some mail, and was refused service on the grounds that office hours were suddenly over: “[A] good source informs me that it is always like this because he has bad will towards working people [and also due to the fact] that he is almost always drunk, finding himself in this state [since I arrived in the town].”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-968 Tomo II, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Asunto: Propaganda Sediciosa. Exp. 10. Caja. 244. “Agent 24 reporting from the populations of Juchitlán and Tecolotlán,” 6 November 1925.

Castillo had allegedly begun his recent drinking binge on 31 October and was still inebriated when Agent 24 left for Tecolotlán on 2 November. In fact, when Agent 24 arrived to Juchitlán he was greeted by a theatrical scuffle between Castillo and the local policeman, where the former raised a ruckus and threatened to fire his gun at the officer. “[To] repel the aggression [the officers] had to give him a blow avoiding in that manner that he [fire] his gun since he already had the gun in his hand,” narrated the agent, “[...and] on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the current [month] he is still plastered in the company of the *Empleado de Rentas* and is [still] forming a major scandal [...]” Castillo himself was not only well-placed amongst local society—he was married to a daughter of one of the most important families in town—but also consistently boasted about his connections and access to high-ranking “influences.” This boastful behavior was on clear display when the agent surreptitiously walked by Castillo and the *Empleado de Rentas* as they were drinking, and overheard the former threatening another passerby, telling him that he had already contacted a general in the Federal Army “so that he can come [to the town], since they arrive at my disposal and will do what I order them.” Additionally, Castillo was the brother of Manuel Castillo, who held an important position in the General Telegraph Offices of Mexico and frequently helped him out. Castillo claimed that nobody could do anything to him because he had a lot of “influence” with people in that office. Agent 24 determined that Castillo “is an intimate friend of all the Conspirators [and this is known because] he brags [about] the sympathies [that he holds] with the other reactionaries, [and it has become] publicly known what they all intend to do [...next].”

Many of Juchitlán’s residents were indeed active supporters of the previous de la Huerta Rebellion. The proprietors of Hacienda Colotitlán, José María Covarrubias and

his son Trinidad, for example, were labeled as current enemies of the government, since they had wholeheartedly backed and aided the “revolutionaries” during the uprising. As a result, the owners of Colotitlán could not reside at their landed estate, but instead found themselves settled in the town of Juchitlán. The administrator of their property, however, had guns and ammunition hidden in Colotitlán, and continued tenaciously to carry out propaganda on behalf of the “conspirators” because according to the areas residents “the Revolution would break out very soon.” The few days that the agent spent in Juchitlán were enough to lead him to conclude that the above-mentioned individuals, in addition to others mentioned in his report, were all extremely active members of the *Guadalupana* group and were the principal leaders of the conspiracy against the government in this town.

On 2 November 1925, Agent 24 travelled to the neighboring town of Tecolotlán where he encountered another de la Huertista stronghold and more active members of the *Guadalupana* group. The Priest of Tecolotlán, José María Robles, for example, continued to carry out an intense anti-government propaganda from the comfort of his pulpit. Agent 24 reported:

He frequently speaks of Bolsheviks [supports of the government] and incites various residents to harass them any way they can, telling them that whoever sends their children to Government Schools will be [left] out of the Christian Religion and [that] he will personally excommunicate them[,] warning them that the Official Schools are the Devil’s [work] because they only teach children [troublesome information].<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-968 Tomo II, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Asunto: Propaganda Sediciosa. Exp. 10. Caja. 244. “Agent 24 reporting from the populations of Juchitlán and Tecolotlán,” 6 November 1925.

Father Robles had apparently fanaticized the entire town of Tecolotlán and its environs so that the majority of these people blindly believed whatever he preached. The elites of the town were described as his most loyal followers, maintaining him in his position despite previous efforts on the part of government partisans to remove him. Agent 24 described one of the instances in which an effort was made to remove Father Robles from his position. These efforts were met with much resistance from the local population, which subsequently formed a commission that travelled to Guadalajara to speak with Archbishop Orozco y Jiménez, who kept the priest at the helm of the parish. And so strong remained his influence in the area that Robles managed to use his weight to replace the recently departed parish priest of Juchitlán with one of his loyal followers. This led Agent 24 to conclude that: “his [Father Robles’s] residency is dangerous because he now counts upon the [support] of a majority of the important residents of Juchitlán as well as Tecolotlán, and it will take a long time [to completely reestablish control of this area] since there is a very pronounced Fanaticism in these municipalities [...].”

Over the course of a few days, the agent stumbled upon another colorful cast of conspirators in the town. Juan Manuel Villaseñor, who resided on *Calle Constitución* No. 39, was observed to be a diehard enemy of General Obregón’s government who personally lent his services to the “de la Huertista Revolution.” He had also recently ordered the assassination of a poor laborer, simply because he was an *agrarista* who supported the constitutional government with arms in hand—actions that were not punished by the local government. “[To] this date he is an irreconcilable enemy of the current Government [and] counts upon the support of some war elements,” observed Agent 24, “as he is always armed with a pistol and carbine [and] has assured [everyone]

that he has rifles [and ammunition] hidden [...].” This man was an individual of means who held “influence” before the local government, and because of this any complaint against him fell on deaf ears. Another wealthy resident, Francisco L. Preciado, a previous de la Huerta colonel, owned at least fifty guns with ammunition in abundance, and also had the support of many people in the town. He had also not been bothered nor denounced to the local government, mainly due to an agreement he had previously reached with Governor Zuno, to whom he had delivered a great amount of money. Meanwhile, Salvador Villaseñor, an individual working very hard to disseminate revolutionary propaganda “assured [...people] that this time the Revolution would triumph because now they have what is needed [and] that they should not fear that it will fail because [...] they have in their possession arms and munitions [...].”<sup>59</sup>

**Table 3:** List of the residents who have guns and ammunition (Tecolotlán, Jalisco).

<u>Name</u>	<u>Number of Guns</u>
Francisco L. Preciado	50
Salvador Villaseñor	20
Leopoldo Sauza	6
José García	6
David H. esposo de Carlota García	5
Eutiquio García	4
Juan Manuel Villaseñor	2
Santiago Lepe	2
Ynocencio	2
Ygnacio Gómez Medina and 5 sons.	1

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Source: AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-968 Tomo II, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Asunto: Propaganda Sediciosa. Exp. 10. Caja. 244. 6 November 1925.

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<sup>59</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-968 Tomo II, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Asunto: Propaganda Sediciosa. Exp. 10. Caja. 244, “Agent 24 reporting from the populations of Juchitlán and Tecolotlán,” 6 November 1925.

When Agent 24 departed from this region, he observed that the conspirators from both Tecolotlán and Juchitlán, whom he mentioned numerous times throughout in his lengthy report, were all “revolutionaries” and “fanatics” who blindly obeyed the parish priest of Tecolotlán and that they all were active members of the *Guadalupana* group headquartered in Juchitlán.<sup>60</sup> Rebellion was on the horizon, preparations were in progress, and those defeated in the previous uprising were now on the mend—actively recruiting individuals once again to rise up against the federal government. And while the rebellion never came to fruition as the conspirators envisioned it, the clash between President Calles and the Church that occurred in mid-1926 would once again provide many groups in the countryside with a new rallying cry. As Agent González wrote in a confidential report to the personal secretary of the president of the republic on 17 May 1926: “[The] rebels only wait for the clerical regulation [to take effect] to once again raise a new banner, which will be the religious question, [and] it appears that many of the region’s priests are interested in this matter.”<sup>61</sup> This rebellion will be addressed in the next chapter, but first let us turn to an important political clash between President Calles and former governor Zuno, which preoccupied the minds of contemporaries and also reminds us that, even during moments of mass upheaval and political revolt, someone still has to govern.

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<sup>60</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-968 Tomo II, Nombre: Estado Jalisco, Asunto: Propaganda Sediciosa. Exp. 10. Caja. 244, “Agent 24 reporting from the populations of Juchitlán and Tecolotlán,” 6 November 1925.

<sup>61</sup> AGN, O-C, 101-R2-A1, “Confidential report prepared by González and addressed to the personal secretary of the president of the republic.”

### *El que pierde gana: Zuno's Last Stand*

For the residents of Guadalajara, the first two months of 1926 were marked by a great feeling of anxiety, paranoia, and uncertainty. As “revolutionary activities” lessened noticeably in the countryside, the topic of conversation in the capital city began to turn towards the actions of the government against religious institutions, and toward political gossip.<sup>62</sup> A much publicized federal investigation into the alleged immoral actions committed by Governor Zuno in office also gained traction, even dominating national headlines. But from the vantage point of Guadalajara, the political battles taking place in Mexico City seemed remote and did not do much to disrupt local matters terribly—all continued as it had before the scandal. “It is the opinion here that Governor Zuno will serve out his term in office,” confirmed Dwyre, “notwithstanding the charges against him in the Federal Congress [..and this] opinion is based more upon the fact that he has weathered so many political storms than upon his genuine popularity.”<sup>63</sup>

Over the course of March 1926, however, both Governor Zuno and the local *zunista* deputies (who comprised the majority) in the Chamber of Jalisco became mired in a significant political controversy. After much deliberation and debate, on 23 March the

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<sup>62</sup> SD, 812.00/2735, “Monthly Report concerning Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, Political and General conditions in the Guadalajara Consular District for the Month of February 1926.” There was a great belief expressed by the Catholic element of the city that the government was determined to wipe out any distinguishable Catholic influence upon the social life of the region. “Of course, the influence upon business has been almost as detrimental as that exerted last month on account of revolutionary outcroppings,” reiterated Dwyre, “and merchants and the general public feel is that there is not one thing there will be another to disturb and to interfere with trade and industry.” During the second half of 1926, a mass upheaval with a distinct Catholic influence would begin to take hold of the countryside—and this forms the subject matter of the next chapter.

<sup>63</sup> SD, 812.00/2735, “Monthly Report concerning Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, Political and General conditions in the Guadalajara Consular District for the Month of February 1926.”



Chamber of Deputies of the XXXI Legislature in Mexico City proceeded formally to charge Zuno with violations against the Constitution of 1917 and with crimes against the Federation. Although the local deputies were spared, Zuno resigned the next day.<sup>64</sup> The writing on the wall was clear to all in Guadalajara: Zuno stood in the way of President Calles's plan to centralize power further. In the 1920s, Mexico did not have the proper institutional conditions to produce limited government in both the federal and local spheres. As a result, in Mexico "federalism multiplied the opportunities for predatory behavior by state elites rather than creating more veto players or limited government," contends Díaz-Cayeros: "[To] be sure, federalism allowed regional strongmen to place constraints on the federal government, but predatory behavior trumped any beneficial effect veto players might have had on the system."<sup>65</sup> With the governorship of Jalisco up for grabs in September 1926, it was in President Calles's best interest to depose Zuno before the election. This became a priority for his administration because *zunistas* already favored the candidacy of Jose María Cuéllar, a close collaborator of the former governor who was himself the former municipal president of Guadalajara and now served as a federal deputy.<sup>66</sup>

In Guadalajara, Zuno's resignation was considered by many as merely a temporary solution to a political conflict that had spiraled out of control. Clemente

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<sup>64</sup> See Chapter 2 of this dissertation for a very detailed overview of the conflict.

<sup>65</sup> Díaz-Cayeros, Alberto. *Federalism, Fiscal Authority, and Centralization in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 42.

<sup>66</sup> José María Muriá, *Breve historia de Jalisco* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1988), p. 492.

Sepúlveda, in the meantime, was elevated to the post of governor after Zuno's resignation. But the American Consul in Guadalajara confirmed that: "[It] was clear [for all] to see that there has been no actual change in control [...in] fact, the man who has been substituted is no more than a messenger of the governor [...]"<sup>67</sup> A few weeks later, this was once again confirmed by the same source: "[Zuno] remains in absolute control of the State Government and is acting through a substitute governor [...]" Zuno continued to assert himself as the authority in Guadalajara with regard to any matters of political significance; meanwhile, Sepúlveda, the new governor, dealt only with matters of lesser importance, but "was instructed to carry out Zuno's wishes."<sup>68</sup> While the charges levelled at Zuno were indeed justified, many continued to ascribe Zuno's elimination to his unwillingness to cede ground to Mexico City. The ramifications of this were clear: federal intervention dramatically altered the political arena in Guadalajara and forced the hand of *zunistas*, who then proceeded to maintain a delicate balance of power. *Zunistas*, therefore, had to walk a very thin political tightrope, for any misstep could spell disaster for the federalist spirit in the region.

The Mexican federalist system was established a century before the events described above, a product of both a triumphant popular revolution for national liberation against a colonial overlord, and a failed attempt at reestablishing a new form of governance in the wake the disastrous reign of Emperor Agustín de Iturbide (1822-

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<sup>67</sup> SD, 812.00/27744, 26 March 1926. In this particular report, the American Consul noted that pessimism reigned among all the classes regarding the "deplorable situation" and that if a change came the entire government would need to be retired, from the governor down to the lower employees.

<sup>68</sup> SD, 812.00/27753, 10 April 1926.

1823).<sup>69</sup> The imperial legacy of Mexico's colonial period, however, was formative of the type of federalism that emerged in the young republic and beyond. Two important concepts must be identified from the colonial system of governance, which formed a significant element of federalism in Mexico after the Revolution of 1910: regionalism and *municipalismo*. These played a tremendous role in differentiating Mexico's strand of federalism from that of its northern neighbor, and in providing the ideological and political basis for the modern system adopted after the Mexican Revolution. When the empire dissolved, the local leaders of Jalisco were the first in Mexico to promote virtually complete autonomy from Mexico City and began an "intense" campaign in favor of federalism.<sup>70</sup> What should be clear, however, is that Jalisco was the first state in the young republic to proclaim federalism and, as a result: "the local powerful groups assumed the responsibility of defending it, [and] the rest of the federal entities [bestowed upon] it the duty to head their defense and, for that [reason] they were considered by the Center as the most rebellious state in the Mexican Federation."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> For an excellent overview of the local struggles faced by rural peoples during the War of Independence, see Eric Van Young's *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821* (Stanford University Press, 2001).

<sup>70</sup> Muriá, *Historia de Jalisco*, Vol. 3, pp. 215-216. Even before the signing of the *Plan de Casa Mata* (1822)—which did not recognize the new empire, and called for a convening of a Constituent Congress—the provincial deputation of Jalisco, for example, reiterated that "Mexico [City] should not impose its will over the others, nor adjudicate another title that was not 'simply the capital of the Province of Mexico'." The governor of Jalisco, Luis Quintanar (1822-1824), also echoed these sentiments when he sent a file, containing letters signed by the state's *ayuntamientos*, to the Supreme Executive Power under the name *Voto General de los Pueblos de la Provincia Libre de Xalisco, denominada hasta ahora de Guadalajara, sobre construir su forma de gobierno en República Federada*.

<sup>71</sup> Muriá, *Historia de Jalisco*, Vol. 3, p. 219.

Zuno himself commented extensively on the conflict between federalists and centralist in the days following his resignation. During a public discourse in late March, for example, he declared:

The recent political events have a profound *raison d'être*, a great *raison d'être*: The defense of the National spirit [was] created [and] made into Law at the Constitution of Querétaro [in 1917]. [This] spirit is essentially federative [and] it is based upon respect for the Sovereignty of the States that comprise the country; and [it] is that spirit [which] the Capital of the Republic wounded through the centralists, [and it is] the hateful centralist group that has attempted to besmirch Jalisco [...].<sup>72</sup>

In the same speech, Zuno claimed that he and his supporters were representatives of the true Mexican spirit and not the centralists who simply ignored the will of the people.

“[We] do not tolerate [being] yoked to the cart of the centralists,” declared Zuno: “Jalisco has always been free, and it is proud of having absolute freedom [...] and it has always defended the government, the Institutions and [the] public opinion [of our people].”

*Zunismo* as a political movement, then, came to embody the federalist spirit of the region’s past and present struggles against Mexico City—and *zunistas* showed no signs of backing down to those they deemed the “traitors” to the Constitution of 1917.<sup>73</sup>

The political fallout over Zuno’s resignation continued to carry over into the month of April 1926. But at some point along the way, the politician once again began to adopt a policy “of sacrificing everything and everybody to further his own personal interests [...]” After news reached Guadalajara in late May about the Senate’s definitive

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<sup>72</sup> “Discurso de Jalisco sobre la autonomía de Jalisco,” quoted in Muriá, *Historia de Jalisco, Vol. 4*, p. 304.

<sup>73</sup> “Discurso de Jalisco sobre la autonomía de Jalisco,” quoted in Muriá, *Historia de Jalisco, Vol. 4*, p. 304.

verdict regarding his fate, Zuno released a statement to the local press expressing his displeasure at the verdict:

For me it is a new triumph, the act of having been able personally to defend Jalisco, for which I have always had veneration and for whose rights I have suffered on so many occasions. I could very well have prevented the attacks upon me; and also could have continued occupying the position of Constitutional Governor of Jalisco, by simply paying a sum of money to some of the Senators of the majority; but I preferred the sacrifice of today and the resignation of yesterday, rather than contribute to the greatest immorality with which the Federal Legislative Power, in both chambers, is imbued, which are like harlots, attentive only to their material interests, and devoid of all moral sense and of all respect for the Country.<sup>74</sup>

Zuno reiterated that he need not occupy any public office to serve his state, “nor did I need any judicial power whatsoever to defeat and to make known the enemies of the [Jalisco].”<sup>75</sup> The thinly veiled threats aimed at the legislature were purposeful, not only intended to cause outrage in the public, but to expose an unspoken truth that everyone already knew—that public officials could be bought. But even more significant was the fact that the efforts to remove Zuno from the governorship led, within certain sections of the local press, to denunciations of federal intervention into local affairs. The U.S. State Department, for example, observed and commented on the prevailing opinion of the latest press reports, claiming that the press was of the opinion that: “[...] the Federal Congress, in occupying itself with the cases of various state governors, has given far more attention to these questions of personal politics than to its proper duties as a Legislature.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> SD, 812.00/27808, 27 May 1926.

<sup>75</sup> SD, 812.00/27808, 27 May 1926.

<sup>76</sup> SD, 812.00/27745, 24 May 1926.

The following section focuses on how federal intervention into local labor politics and state elections altered the existing local power structure of the region, which had already been refashioned after the *Estradista* Rebellion. I analyze local political negotiations between *zunistas* and the national government, which often yielded important accommodations—both partial and contingent—to the central state; while also stressing the values and political evaluations that undergirded such adaptations. In particular, I focus on two disputes: 1) the Cinco Minas Company strike in March 1926; and 2) the gubernatorial election of September of 1926. Ultimately, I argue that the supporters of Zuno were not merely reactors to official policy emanating from Mexico City, but also “political initiators” who themselves exercised an important role in limiting the impact of the national government in the region during a period of massive social upheaval in the state. And as the rumblings of rebellions once again began to be heard, Guadalajara itself became immersed in its own critical battle against the country’s capital.

### *The Cinco Minas Strike of 1926*

The Calles presidency elevated the Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM) to its zenith of influence and power—unquestionably leading to its ascendancy as the most powerful Mexican union of the 1920s. In Jalisco, however, Zuno presented a significant challenge to Calles’s plan for organized labor since he (Zuno) made considerable progress in halting the influence and reach of the union’s leader Luis N. Morones’s.<sup>77</sup> The rivalry between Zuno and Morones dated back to at least 1924, when

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<sup>77</sup> Jurgen Buchenau, *Plutarco Elías Calles and the Mexican Revolution*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2007), p. 116. Labor boss Luis N. Morones played an important role in securing for Calles the support of the Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM) during the

the latter denounced the former on the floor of the Chamber of Deputies for his cowardly behavior and neglect during the occupation of Guadalajara by rebel forces.<sup>78</sup> These personal as well as professional conflicts played a significant role in what would become a larger political struggle between the federal government and the Zuno state government. Ambassador James R. Sheffield, for example, observed that:

[The] interpretation generally given to the fate of Governor Zuno is that he has become another victim of the present ascendancy of *Señor* Morones and his partisans in the Mexican administration. In this connection it may be pointed out that Governor Zuno, who has had an important following of distinct labor tendencies in his own state, has not been willing to allow his organization to be affiliated with the C.R.O.M. [...] controlled by Morones. Although, to be sure, there may not have been any essential differences in the tenants of Zuno laborites and the Morones elements, the source of conflict has undoubtedly been the purpose of Morones to acquire control of Zuno's labor organization against the wishes of the latter.<sup>79</sup>

The labor organization controlled by Zuno, the Confederation of Libertarian Worker Groups of Jalisco (CAOLJ), founded in 1924, counted largely for support on miners, textile workers, and bakers, among others. After its founding, the syndicalist group

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former's bid for the presidency. In return for this loyalty, Morones became part of Calles's *Consejo de Ministros*. As Buchenau notes: "[...] Calles] brought Morones into the national government as secretary of industry, commerce, and labor, and members of the CROM's political wing, the PLM (Partido Laborista Mexicano), served as governors and in the federal and state legislatures."

<sup>78</sup> See "Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados," <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebate/30/2do/CPerma/19240102.html>. Legislatura XXX - Año II - Período Comisión Permanente - Fecha 19240102 - Número de Diario 37. There were at least two instances—on 2 January 1924 and on 29 August—where Morones (when he served as a federal deputy) lambasted Zuno's actions. The first, for example, reported that: "The information received in Guadalajara by our companions who had the opportunity to leave [the city] after the Estrada's coup, proved [a connection between] Governor Zuno and a great number [of] estradistas rebels [...] and] that Governor Zuno [only hid during the rebellion]." Morones continued: "[...] I do not consider it dignified, nor honorable to remain at the margin of a matter [of such great importance for the state]."

<sup>79</sup> SD, 812.00/27745, 24 March 1926. Stout has also claimed that the "primary reason for his [Zuno's] concern [about Mexico City] was that [labor boss] Morones sought to bring regional workers under his control [in Jalisco...and in] fact, Zuno had warrant for his concern, for Morones was gradually expanding his influences within all states of the Republic for a future bid for the presidency;" see Stout, p. 44.

overtook the CROM's local affiliate, the Federation of Worker Groups of Jalisco (FAOJ), as the most powerful union in the state. "From then on," wrote Muría, "the disputes [between] the Government of Zuno with the *callista* administration, with the CROM and with large companies, such as the Hydroelectric Company and the mining companies began to take on greater importance and significance for the autonomy of the region."<sup>80</sup>

In March 1926, with the full support of Zuno, miners went on strike at the American-owned Cinco Minas Company. Over course of the next few months, Zuno faced considerable pressure from Consul Dwyre over this matter, which affected American interests. "In the case of Cinco Minas the situation no longer is a conflict between labor and the mining company," observed Consul Dwyre, "but is purely a conflict between the Zuno Government of the state of Jalisco and the Cinco Minas company." Complicating matters was the fact that the company's lawyer had to deal with Zuno and not with the actual governor of the state, Sepúlveda. While Zuno maintained himself in absolute control of the state government, the consul found that direct access to him became ever more difficult as he noted that for several weeks he had been unsuccessful in his own efforts to gain access to Zuno. In fact, Dwyre described Zuno in the following manner: "[Zuno] has continued his policy of coldness and aloofness [...with his] condition [being] one of intense mental agitation [...]." The situation was described as a deplorable one because the American company realized that it could no longer continue operating in the state, "unless it can throw off the clutches of the labor syndicate, which is ruled and controlled by the Zuno Government." As a result, Consul

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<sup>80</sup> Muría, *Historia de Jalisco*, Vol. 4, pp. 425-426



Dwyre warned that if this matter were not dealt with in an expedient fashion and “the influence of the Zuno Government and the syndicate” crushed, it would spell disaster for the entire industry.<sup>81</sup> Over the course of March, Zuno became more involved in labor politics and even purportedly assumed a position as head of labor organizations of Jalisco, “and these are now so strong that they control the state.”<sup>82</sup>

On 5 April, Zuno contacted the attorney representing the Cinco Minas Company and demanded that the matter be settled on that day because the federal authorities were preventing him from implementing his measures, as he desired to force the American company to accede to worker demands. The former governor even resorted to clear threats, vowing personally to drive the consul and the manager of the mine from Mexico if the matter were not resolved, and that he “would put the foreign employees of the mine out of the state and on the road to Tepic.” An hour after the threats were made an intimate friend of Zuno, Agustín Bassave, once again approached the Consul and told him “that Mr. Zuno wished to again assume friendly and cordial association [...] and that he hoped I would be willing to be friends.” Bassave made sure to stress that while it was indeed the case that Zuno had resigned from the governorship, he was still in absolute control and was the only real governor of Jalisco.

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<sup>81</sup> SD, 812.00/2756, 24 March 1926. Consul Dwyre also described the political situation in Jalisco as “unique and dangerous,” but stressed that the federal government would not allow this condition to continue unless it could deal with Zuno. Additionally, he stressed that Zuno’s strong position with the former president is also looked upon as very significant and that situation in this state may be summed up “as having reached a stage where pessimism reigns to a greater extent than it has since the revolution of two years ago.”

<sup>82</sup> SD, 812.00/27791, Monthly Report concerning Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, Political and General conditions in the Guadalajara Consular District for the Month of April 1926.”

This encounter led Consul Dwyre to comment extensively on Zuno's hostile and anxious attitude: "[This] was prompted by his desperate desire to find a solution to the Cinco Minas difficulty which would be satisfactory to him [and] I believe that when he was informed that it would not be becoming for me [...] to take part in the negotiations [...] he lost interest in resuming cordial relations."<sup>83</sup> In due course, the federal government also began to take action in the matter, which further intensified the already existing animosity between the federal and state governments. Morones eventually sent in strikebreakers to replace the CAOLJ affiliated workers at Cinco Minas. "In effect, the company [was] using strikebreakers and with the support of the military detachment stationed in the region tried to break the strike," writes Jaime Tamayo, "to which Zuno responded with the arrests of foreigners 'that damaged the workers' of Cinco Minas [...]." Such efforts did very little to appease the American company, and after repeated protests Calles and the minister of interior, Adalberto Tejeda, directly intervened in the conflict.<sup>84</sup>

But the gradual involvement of the federal government in this conflict was not lost on the *de facto* state government. The former governor continuously maintained that the on-going strike was due largely to the the American company's poor treatment of workers. With regard to the Cinco Minas Company's treatment of its employees, Zuno was insistent in his views: "[They] were pernicious foreigners who did not lose out on any opportunity to reduce the Mexican worker and to evade official regulations." Consul

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<sup>83</sup> SD, 812.00/27753, 10 April 1926.

<sup>84</sup> Jaime Tamayo, "Siqueiros, los orígenes del movimiento rojo en Jalisco y el movimiento minero." *Anuario* III (1981): 84.

Dwyre noted, however, that with no legal authority the state labor board dictated what the mining company had to pay its workers. He noted that the highest state court had declared such a procedure to be illegal. On the matter, Consul Dwyre opined the following:

[T]he labor board (personally urged on by Zuno) states that it will not respect the decision of the court, and has embargoed all of the company's stores to force the payment to the workmen of wages during the time they have been on strike, and to force the compliance with the labor board's illegal demand.

The case had even made it all the way to the Supreme Court. Dwyre lamented the fact that since the company was on the verge of ruin because of the labor dispute, there appeared "nothing to do but for the company to strike the best bargain it can with Mr. Zuno, realizing that it is absolutely in his power, as there is no authority here to compel adherence to the decision of the state district court."<sup>85</sup>

On 9 May 1926, after a month and a half of drawn out negotiations, the strikers and the company reached an agreement. The agreement involved a "reasonable" increase in wages for the miners in addition to back-pay for the time they had spent on strike.<sup>86</sup> "The final settlement was made suddenly and was influenced almost wholly by the action of ex-governor Zuno, who determined to bring the conflict to a close," observed Consul Dwyre. The Cinco Minas case, on the one hand, was of vital interest to all industry in the Guadalajara region for it not only demonstrated the power that the state labor boards held

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<sup>85</sup> SD, 812.00/27791, Enclosure No. 5. "Monthly report concerning the commercial, industrial, agricultural, political and general conditions in the Guadalajara consular district for the month of April 1926," 7 May 1926.

<sup>86</sup> Tamayo, "Siqueiros," p. 85

in forcing companies to comply to the demands of labor syndicates. It clearly showed also that while these syndicates had become powerful and could successfully ward off the influences of the CROM and federal authorities, they still remained under the control of Zuno. But as Consul Dwyre himself warned: “[Although] they were under the dominion of one man, [...] if the power of this man has been weakened or rendered impotent, the result may be either a benefit or a detriment, depending whole upon the policy of the new control over the political destinies of the state.”

While the Cinco Minas strike showcased the strength Zuno still retained in the region, in coming months the federal government would continue to intervene in local affairs. At the beginning of April, after the strike had been resolved, the American consul remained less than hopeful that the political situation in Jalisco would improve any time soon: “It is clear to see that a strong, honest and conscientious man is needed to take charge of the state, but the names which have been mentioned as possible timber for the governorship, if any of them is selected, indicate that such a man is not to be designated.”<sup>87</sup>

#### *The Gubernatorial Elections of 1926*

It had been acknowledged by many in the known that Zuno and ex-President Obregón were extremely close. For this reason, Obregón had apparently taken a trip to Mexico City in an effort to save his *compadre* Zuno from his fate. Ambassador Sheffield claimed that it was indeed difficult, at least from the perspective of Mexico City, to gauge what the permanent political effects the Senate’s decision regarding Zuno’s impeachment

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<sup>87</sup> SD, 812.00/27819, “Monthly report concerning the commercial, industrial, agricultural, political and general conditions in the Guadalajara consular district for the month of May 1926.”

case would be, but that it was well-known “that the Federal administration was fundamentally opposed to him [Zuno] and that, notwithstanding the intervention of General Obregón on Zuno’s behalf during the former’s recent visit to Mexico City, the administration would bring its full weight to bear against the ex-governor of Jalisco.” As a result, the Ambassador only saw two clear paths for the former governor: either to accept his current situation with good grace or openly to resist Federal authority.<sup>88</sup>

On 27 May the previously impeached eight minority members of the Chamber of Jalisco finally returned to Guadalajara from Mexico City to take their places once again at the Legislative Chamber. They waited for three hours in anticipation of the local legislature’s meeting, but left once it became clear that the majority was not going to be in quorum. The following day, the members of the majority met “at the appointed hour and went into regular session,” deciding that it would not be proper to allow the minority to join the proceedings given that “they had been accused of rebellion, and that while the lower court had absolved them and the Federal Senate had cleared them, the local Prosecuting Attorney had appealed the decision of the lower court [...] to the State Supreme Court [...].” The members of the *zunista* majority, however, knew very well that such a decision would arrive much later, after the close of their present session. They also knew that this particular session would be their last as they figured to adjourn until September, when the gubernatorial election was to be held.<sup>89</sup> As this event makes clear,

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<sup>88</sup> SD, 812.00/27809, 26 May 1926.

<sup>89</sup> SD, 812.00/27813, 31 May 1926. When the state legislature adjourned, it left a “permanent committee” at its helm in case any urgent matter needed to be deal with.

then, despite hearing about the Senate's formal decision regarding his own impeachment case the day before, Zuno still appeared to have cause for optimism.<sup>90</sup>

Two weeks later, the American consul in Guadalajara clarified Zuno's role in Jalisco: "At the writing of my last dispatch I expressed the opinion that Zuno appeared not to have lost his influence and power [...] I now beg to inform the Department [...] that there appears to be no doubt of Mr. Zuno's position, which is believed by me to be as strong or stronger than ever." With regard to the current administration of Jalisco, not much had changed. In fact, Zuno remained in power through Sepúlveda, who was characterized "as a rubber stamp man;" his secretary and department heads remained in office; and another supporter of his had recently assumed the municipal presidency of Guadalajara. Consul Dwyre observed:

[It] would be difficult to be able to discover in what particular Mr. Zuno has lost ground [...] and Mr. Zuno's candidate for governor [former Municipal President of Guadalajara José María Cuéllar] has the nomination for the election in September [and many] people whose opinions are to be valued, are now expressing the opinion that Zuno will in the future play an important role in the national political arena, and I have heard several express the opinion that the restrictions placed upon Mr. Zuno by the Federal Senate, withdrawing his civil rights for seven and one-half years, will probably soon be lifted.<sup>91</sup>

The following day the American consul invited Zuno to dinner at his home, claiming that he first extended the invitation through a close mutual friend, "who informed me that

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<sup>90</sup> Consul Dwyre stressed that because the twelve deputies are in his favor and if the Chamber of Jalisco has indeed adjourned until September, "it shows that there will be no legally constituted body in session to appoint a new governor, all of which will be taken to indicate that Zuno's control will continue;" see SD, 812.00/27808, 27 May 1926.

<sup>91</sup> SD, 812.00/27823. Political Situation in the State of Jalisco, and the Connection Between it and Ex-governor Zuno." 11 June 1926.

Zuno made it a point never to dine out.” Ex-governor Zuno agreed to join Dwyre at his home in the company of Emilio Puig (an American citizen, president and general manager of the Hydroelectric Company of Chapala); Consul General James Stewart; Agustín Bassave (the close mutual friend); Edward H. Hall (Vice-Consul); and Raymundo Hernández (Zuno’s personal secretary). The dinner lasted about two and a half hours, and was described as “merely a gathering of friends.” Before departing Zuno privately informed Consul Dwyre that he would personally be able to resolve any matters that the latter desired to address. “These circumstances may appear trivial, but they indicate to me clearly the desire of Sr. Zuno to impress himself favorably upon the United States Government,” wrote Dwyre, “and it is no more than natural to gain the impression that this may be prompted by his aspirations toward national political prominence.”<sup>92</sup>

The first major federal election of 1926 was that for senators and deputies, which was to be held on 4 July. Largely seen as a dress rehearsal for the September poll that would elect a new governor, this election pit the supporters of Zuno against those of Alfredo Romo, a federal deputy who in two months time intended to run for governor. In the lead up to this contest “almost daily shooting encounters” took place between *zunistas* and *romistas* (the supporters of Federal Deputy Alfredo Romo), escalating to the point that federal troops were needed to restore order in Guadalajara. Because of these pre-election disorders, an executive order was issued for violations of existing election laws and, as a result, an immediate investigation was ordered to punish all authorities who had violated said law. “As one competent attorney puts it, the Federal Government will, of

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<sup>92</sup> SD, 812.00/27826, 21 June 1926.

course,” observed Dwyre, “have authority to take action against the governor and the local Congress, but it has no legal basis upon which to take action against the Municipalities, as the latter would come directly under the local Congress and the governor.” Many speculated that despite the action of the federal government, the election would continue as planned but would then be declared illegal, and new elections would be called for “with perhaps the Federal troops [called in] to insure a compliance with the Federal Government’s program.”<sup>93</sup> Notwithstanding these minor disturbances, the elections were successfully carried out, despite the federal government’s having put pressure on, and even cited, local authorities. The elections, however, were deemed a clear victory for the *zunista* faction and strengthened their control of the state. The success of *zunistas* also meant that “under ordinary circumstances” nothing would be able to break Zuno’s power unless the federal government decided to intervene in the matter. But according to Consul Dwyre, this remained highly unlikely because “had the Federal government decided to take action, the opportune moment would have been just before the recent elections.” Such was the former governor’s influence now, then, that the consul observed that only “personal violence” against Zuno would change things.<sup>94</sup> In fact, the victory had been so overwhelming that *zunistas* swept all of the state’s electoral twenty-three districts. Among them were included two remote districts, which were normally out

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<sup>93</sup> SD, 812.00/27831, 29 June 1926.

<sup>94</sup> SD, 812.00/27837, 6 July 1926.



of his control and were usually given “to the cats” but had now been brought into the fold.<sup>95</sup>

On 5 September 1926, three candidates were to contest the gubernatorial election of Jalisco: José María Cuéllar, Alfredo Romo, and Daniel Benítez. The first candidate, Cuéllar, a federal deputy, was supported by the Zuno party and appeared to be the most popular and would “no doubt receive the support of the state administration at the election to be held the first Sunday in September.” Meanwhile, Alfredo Romo, also a federal deputy, counted upon the support of labor boss and Secretary of Labor Luis Morones, and the support of the federal congress. The election was to be a hotly contested affair; in fact, recent confrontations between *zunistas* and *romistas* had escalated in recent days “with Romo’s brother recently [stabbing] and almost [killing] Zuno’s brother.” The third party was led by political outsider Daniel Benítez who counted upon the support of the current Minister of Interior, Adalberto Tejeda. Even though Benítez was a native of Jalisco, he had been living outside the state (in Mexico City) for many years, and as result was practically unknown to many in the state. “His campaign is not particularly active, due perhaps to his being somewhat unknown in the state,” commented Dwyre, adding: “It is the opinion of many that he has been sent up here by the Federal Government merely as an observer, and with the probable support of the president.”

Over the course of the summer the political situation in Jalisco, therefore, developed into what could be described as a triangular affair. And while under normal

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<sup>95</sup> SD, 812.00/27838, 10 July 1926.

circumstances, without any inference, the *zunista* faction could legitimately expect to win the election, it had become a well-known fact in Jalisco that the political party controlling the booths on election day would win the election. In the lead up, there were several disturbances and shootings between *zunistas* and *romistas*. On the eve of the contest, there were two incidents of note: a fight in which one Cuéllar supporter was killed and a Romo supporter (a member of the federal congress) gravely wounded; and another involving an unnamed politician who shot into a voting booth and killed the election timekeeper of the precinct. To prevent further hostilities, the federal government sent in federal troops to patrol the streets of Guadalajara and subsequently banned residents from carrying guns. On the day of the contest, the streets were visibly deserted as the general public hid in their houses, “as they do not care to sacrifice themselves upon the alter of [a] ‘democracy’ of knives, sticks and stones.” Even with these preventative measures in place, four voting booths were attacked.<sup>96</sup> After the election, both *zunistas* and *romistas* declared victory. The American consul, however, predicted that it seemed apparent that Benítez’s third party “will play some mysterious but important [role].”<sup>97</sup>

The gubernatorial contest of 5 September has been considered one of the most fraudulent in Jalisco’s history. On 12 September the election board of the state, which remained under the control of the Zuno faction, met and declared the results in Guadalajara as follows: Cuéllar, 8,333 votes; Romo, 228 votes; and Benítez, 371 votes. The supporters of Romo, not to be outdone, also convened and claimed victory: Romo,

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<sup>96</sup> SD, 812.00/27925, 8 September 1926.

<sup>97</sup> SD, 812.00/27906, 27 August 1926.

7,098 votes; Cuéllar 274; and Benítez, 286 votes. With the dominant parties at an impasse and also refusing to acknowledge each other's versions of the election, the American consul remarked that "it seems probable that the election will be decided by the Federal Government and present indications would seem to favor Señor Benítez, but the entire situation is very uncertain." This observation was not made on a mere whim, but rather was supported by a meeting the Consul himself had with Benítez, who showed the former a letter from Calles indicating that he was to press criminal charges that were on file against Cuéllar for an alleged homicide and robbery he previously committed. Muriá, for example, has also noted that the *romistas*, under the protection of Calles and Morones, the parliamentary blocks in the federal congress, and the majority of cabinet ministers, also pursued the criminal accusation against Cuéllar. While Cuéllar's path to the governorship appeared to be the clearest, the charge against him presented a significant obstacle. Although these charges, which had been previously "lost," now mysteriously reappeared, it is clear that they were not simply trumped up by political enemies on a whim; rather, they grew out of an incident that occurred on 19 December 1920 at a voting precinct. On that day, Cuéllar and Zuno, at the time serving as federal deputies, arrived at the premises in the company of ten followers to demand access to the voting precinct. After the individuals running the booth refused to meet their demands, they left. "The booth was closed according to law, at two o'clock," claimed an individual in charge, "[...] a few minutes after two, *señor* Zuno and *señor* Cuéllar again returned demanding entrance." They were eventually let in and after a struggle with Gudelio Jiménez (a political enemy), they ended up beating him and eventually fired upon the

man, killing him.<sup>98</sup> Jiménez's body presented two wounds: the first a blow to his cheekbone, the second a gunshot to the left shoulder.<sup>99</sup>

The incident caused considerable public outrage and many in the Chamber of Deputies called for Zuno's and Cuéllar's impeachment.<sup>100</sup> But these demands never came to fruition because in Guadalajara the two stole documents from the court proceedings and in the Chamber "they made all the antecedents disappear."<sup>101</sup> In the days that followed the election of 1926, a warrant was issued for the arrest of Cuéllar, which then incapacitated him to hold any political office. "That the Federal government is going to such lengths to bring about the arrest of the accused man," wrote Dwyre, "would seem to indicate its determination to crush him and the Zuno faction [...and Cuéllar] is now reported to have left Guadalajara to escape arrest."

The belief in Guadalajara, as a result of this development, was that the election would be decided by the federal government. With Cuéllar now out of the running, the attention of *zunistas* turned towards salvaging what remained of their political power. After a short trip to Mexico City, Silvano Barba González—the substitute governor of Jalisco, a stern *zunista* supporter, who had only begun serving two months ago—called

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<sup>98</sup> SD, 812.00/27946, 18 September 1926.

<sup>99</sup> *El Informador*, 21 December 1920. The gunshot was determined as the primary cause of death as it completely destroyed the left carotid artery.

<sup>100</sup> In fact, the mother of the slain Jiménez actually wrote President Obregón to ask for justice and to complain that nothing been done about the death of her son. Instead, both Cuéllar and Zuno continued unmolested in their political ventures; see AGN. O-C, 428-J-21, 15 October 1922.

<sup>101</sup> AGN, DGIPS, Departamento Confidencial, 310(3.2)–3 I, Nombre: Estado de Jalisco, Asunto: Situación Política, "Report authored by Minority Deputies to the Permanent Commission of the Congress of the Union," February 1926.

for a special session of the state congress to declare Benítez the new governor. As the Consul Dayle McDonough reported:

It is reported that he [Barba González] acted under order of the Federal Government. The deputies in Congress who attended the session belong mainly to the Zuno faction which had supported Señor Cuéllar. There may have been a political bargain between Señor Benítez and the followers of former Governor Zuno.<sup>102</sup>

While the actions of the state congress were not set in stone, *zunistas* clearly preferred to negotiate in order to have what they deemed a lesser evil in power, rather than to allow the *romistas* to assume control of the governorship. On 29 September, Benítez was officially declared as the governor of Jalisco for the period of 1 March 1927 to 1 March 1931.<sup>103</sup>

That same day, the Mexico City daily *Excelsior* published an editorial entitled: “The Latest Victory of Zuno,” which in colorful prose presented readers with an insightful analysis of “the restless and astute politician of Jalisco, who as they say in his district, ‘when he loses wins.’” In the article Zuno was likened to a master fox who in the recent elections had outmaneuvered the three candidates: Cuéllar, Romo, and Benítez. And that while Zuno himself did not figure in the election, he turned out to be the sole victor in the contest. When Zuno “with lynx eyes discovered that his protégé Cuéllar was incapacitated for the Government” and that Romo was an unreconciled enemy “of those who give neither truce nor quarter,” he converted to “Benitismo.” In the process, the former governor apparently delivered all of Cuéllar’s support to Benítez. “It was easy,

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<sup>102</sup> SD, 812.00/27966, 27 September 1926.

<sup>103</sup> SD, 812.00/27966, “Review of Political, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, and General Conditions for the Month of September 1926,” 30 September 1926.

very easy, likewise for Mr. Zuno to conquer the Central government for the candidacy of Señor Benítez,” continued the editorial, “who always had [the] official [support of the central government] and good ‘connections’ in the Department of Interior.”

While tone of the editorial suggested a disdain for Zuno, it did concede that it was a well executed plan, admirably conceived, “because while Señor Romo was in the capital stirring up the Central Government from parliamentary tribunals and Señor Cuéllar was in his hiding place, Zuno ‘organized’ and convoked the Chamber of Jalisco, persuaded General Ferreira to give the Deputies a respectable guard and caused the governorship of the state to be given to Señor Benítez.” The editorial acknowledged that Benítez might be a man of integrity and he might fact turn out to be the ideal governor for Jalisco, but the facts remained: he did not work for the candidacy because he was a virtual unknown in the state, and thus it was materially impossible for him to have been elected. “The victory in the last analysis fell to Mr. Zuno, who will continue to govern in Jalisco, through Señor Benítez [...],” lamented the editorial, but stressed that Jalisco indeed wanted and needed better “because it is not tolerable for Zunismo to be prolonged across many epochs and administrations as a hereditary accident in the midst of the grief and anxieties of a people which wishes, which needs, which demands good government, liberty and integrity.”<sup>104</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The de la Huerta Rebellion and its local manifestation in Jalisco, the *Estradista* Rebellion, continue to be viewed as mere glitches in the larger history of

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<sup>104</sup> *Excelsior*, 29 September 1926.

postrevolutionary Mexico. The convenient airbrushing of this rebellion out of the prevailing narratives on the period, perhaps, has a lot more to do with the fact that it was not a genuine “popular” movement, but rather a military uprising. Scholars have continued to affirm, however, that its defeat and suppression reorganized politics at the national and regional levels, and legitimized the new state that emerged in its wake. The reverberations set in motion by the rebellion greatly transformed the manner in which the central state interacted with, and produced knowledge of, the countryside.

This chapter focused on two great problems the Calles administration faced in Jalisco during the first two years of its rule (1924 to 1926): 1) the specter of another armed uprising in the countryside; and 2) a local political crisis over effective control of the state. The first part of this chapter utilized secret agent reports from the *Departamento Confidencial* to explore the Ministry of Interior’s anxieties regarding the possibility of another widespread insurgency in the countryside. In particular, the reports authored by Agents 15 and 115 not only documented rebel groups that were again up in arms, but also expressed the genuine belief that rebels were working in collusion with state authorities to circumvent and undermine the national government’s capacity to rule in the area. The second part of this chapter analyzed how *zunistas* survived politically after their leader was “toppled.” Through an analysis of the Cinco Minas Company strike and the gubernatorial election of 1926, I argued that the supporters of Zuno were not merely reactors to official policy emanating from Mexico City, but were also “political initiators” who themselves exercised an important role in limiting and negotiating the impact of the national government in the region.

At the close of September 1926 disorders began once again to spill over from Guadalajara into the countryside, where “extreme Catholics seem to be hoping that a successful revolution will be started against the Calles Government.” The election of Benítez to the governorship was expected, at least temporarily, to curtail tensions. This period, nonetheless, was described as the most unsettled in Jalisco since the time of the de la Huerta Rebellion of 1923-1924. Consul McDonough, in particular, noted that “[there] is a general feeling of uneasiness caused by political strife [and the] religious quarrel between the Church and the State[, which has] tended to make conditions unstable and to cause uneasiness among all classes of society.”<sup>105</sup> Let us now again turn to the countryside, where the federal army had been kept busy maintaining order in the outlying districts of the state.

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<sup>105</sup> SD, 812.00/27966, 27 September 1926 and 30 September 1926.



## Chapter 4 Political Order in the Cristero Rebellion

[My informant] states that the movement is all in the name of the church with the battle cry “Viva Cristo Rey” (Long live Christ the King). He states that priests in that district have received instructions to take up arms [and] that the overwhelming sentiment of all [in] that country is for the revolution, and against the Government.

-Guadalajara, consular district report.<sup>1</sup>

[This] celebration [on 20 November 1930...is] no longer one that preaches violence[,] division[,] and hatred, we have arrived to the reconstructive phases of the revolution and what better manner to commemorate its [twentieth] anniversary than to erase old resentments and parties[,] and to forget the divisions [that were once] created by personal struggles [and] the already spent phases of agitation and violence [...].

-President of Mexico Pascual Ortiz Rubio.<sup>2</sup>

An *agrarista*<sup>3</sup> named Leandro Cayetano, Tenamaxtlán’s self-proclaimed local ‘son of a bitch’, who over the years had built up a reputation as a *matón*, was charged with orders to guard the military headquarters located in front of the town church. The locale resembled an inn with a porch and had a corridor lined with railings on both sides, where arms rested. In the early months of 1927, Cayetano swapped allegiances, decided to steal arms from the town, and rode into the hills to join the Catholic rebel forces. The day of his return, at eight in the morning, the federal soldiers of the town marched to Cayetano’s house and arrested him. After a quick trial he was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death by hanging at a sour orange tree in the central *plaza*. Cayetano himself put the rope around his own neck, whereupon two soldiers mounted on mules pulled so

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<sup>1</sup> State Department (hereinafter cited as SD), 812.00/28260, 18 February 1927.

<sup>2</sup> Archivo Histórico del Municipio de Autlán (hereinafter cited as AHMA), Sección 6, 1930, 20 November 1930.

<sup>3</sup> An *agrarista* was an individual who was in favor of the state’s agrarian reform project.

hard that his head hit the branches immediately above him. His body shuddered in jolts. The soldiers armed themselves and decided to finish the job off at point-blank. The first shot missed, but the second was on target. He gave one last painful moan as his blood ran down the small street. The soldiers dragged his body towards the sidewalk with his mother following behind, her wails heard all across the town square.<sup>4</sup>

This gruesome but finally inconsequential episode in the throes of the Cristero Rebellion (mid-1926 to 1929) in many ways is emblematic of the local divisions that came to express themselves during these years. That the federal soldiers struggled to finish the job off at point-blank might actually say slightly more about their incompetence, but only serves to further highlight—in a metaphorical sense—the difficulties that representatives of the state faced in enforcing submissions of certain sectors of the countryside to the prevailing social order. It also showcases the lives of common people trying to adapt to these circumstances, while making their own history.

In the previous chapter, I focused on how the Calles administration came to understand the specter of another armed uprising in the countryside and confronted a local political crisis over effective control of Jalisco from 1924 to 1926. During this period the Calles regime made remarkable progress in developing the nation. By the end of 1925, for example, it had successfully achieved the elimination of the federal deficit, founded the Bank of Mexico, and reestablished the country's credit abroad, among other accomplishments.<sup>5</sup> The second half of the Calles presidency, after around mid-1926,

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<sup>4</sup> José Luis López Cárdenas, *Noticias de la Revolución y La Cristiada en Tenamaxtlán* (Tonalá, Jalisco, México: José Luis López Cárdenas, 2005), pp. 293 & 318.

<sup>5</sup> John W. F. Dulles, *Yesterday in Mexico: A Chronicle of the Revolution, 1919-1936* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), pp. 285-288, and 290. Examples of others accomplishments included the

however, began to confront serious structural problems such as: an economic crisis that anticipated the Great Depression; a long-drawn-out dispute with the United States over the Bucareli Treaty; a decisive faceoff with the Church; and several renewed uprisings in the northern and central-western areas of the country, which required the mobilization of regular and irregular forces to combat and suppress them.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter focuses on the Cristero Rebellion that broke out in central-western Mexico and again greatly challenged the prevailing social and political order of the period. The conflict officially had its origins in a law President Calles issued on 14 June 1926, which fixed a limit on the number of priests in Mexico, ordered the deportation of foreign priests, and decreed the closure of Church schools and convents. In response to these anticlerical reforms promoted by the central state, the Mexican episcopacy met, organized, and decided swiftly to suspend public worship and rally popular support behind an economic boycott of the government. Ordinary people in the countryside, nevertheless, took matters into their own hands. Armed uprisings soon broke out in the

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formation of the *Banco Nacional de Crédito Agrícola*, which did much to bolster the country's agrarian communities that had recently seen their ranks swell at a rate more than twice that realized under the previous administration; and the *Comisión Nacional de Caminos*, which provided jobs for nearly 10,000 men to work on three significant roads (an investment of approximately 23 million pesos).

<sup>6</sup> Martha Beatriz Loyo Camacho, *Joaquín Amaro y el proceso de institucionalización del Ejército Mexicano* (México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas: Fideicomiso Archivos Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca: Instituto Nacional de Estudios de la Revolución Mexicana: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003), p. 150. "National product and income, which had increased 14 percent during Calles's first two years in office, declined 4 percent over the next three years," claims Buchenau. The national government proceeded to reduce expenditures "from 325 million pesos in 1926 to just 288 million pesos in 1928" to save face and eventually tried to stabilize the peso by reducing the money supply. The overproduction of petroleum in the United States, coupled with increased competition from Venezuela and Colombia, also proved an important factor, as it led to lower revenues from taxes on petroleum, which Mexican finances heavily relied upon as a source of income.<sup>6</sup> As a result, and when combined with the consequences of the Great Depression, "between 1926 and 1932, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) fell 30.9 percent;" see Jurgen Buchenau, *Plutarco Elías Calles and the Mexican Revolution* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2007)

central-western states of Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacán, rapidly swelling to great numbers and spreading like wildfire. Within months the ragtag insurgents, who came to be known as *cristeros*, amassed around twenty-five thousand troops, placing them on par with the federal army.<sup>7</sup>

The first part of this chapter narrates the events at federal and state levels that led to the eruption of a mass uprising with a distinctly religious character in the countryside of Jalisco. It embraces the period from the establishment of several anticlerical provisions in the Constitution of 1917 to the Calles administration's efforts to implement them in mid-1926. The second part of this chapter, which is divided into two sections, frankly abandons any effort at formulating a larger explanatory framework for understanding the rebellion as a copious amount of scholarship exists on this rebellion, explaining causality, partisanship, and even transnational links.<sup>8</sup> Current studies, however, continue to gloss

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<sup>7</sup> Buchenau, p. 130

<sup>8</sup> The Cristero Rebellion has captivated the attention of historians for the past four decades and, unlike the de la Huerta Rebellion, has produced a great amount of scholarship. Two discernable approaches to understanding the Cristero Rebellion have emerged since the publication of Jean Meyer's *La Cristiada*, trans. Aurelio Garzón de Camino (Mexico, D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno, 1991) in 1973. The first approach to emerge emphasized the rebellion's regional character, claiming that it affected the central-western states of the Mexico with greater intensity than elsewhere. According to Meyer, this was due in large part to these areas being deemed more "Catholic," and therefore more hostile to a secular state; as opposed to the other peripheral areas, which were largely "indifferent" about religion. Recent studies have challenged this binary interpretation of the rebellion. The "new" historiographical trend, as Butler has called it, adopted a local perspective and rejected "synthetic history" and "big history;" see Mathew Butler, "'Cristeros y agraristas en Jalisco': una nueva aportación a la historiografía cristera," *Historia Mexicana*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Oct. – Dec. 2002), pp. 493-530. The new focus of analysis shifted to subaltern actors, adopted microhistorical approaches, and highlighted the plight of not just *cristeros*, but also *agraristas* and more recently *pacíficos*; see Ramón Jrade, "Counterrevolution in Mexico: The Cristero movement in sociological and historical perspective," (PhD diss., Brown University 1980); José Díaz Estrella and José Román Rodríguez, *El movimiento cristero: sociedad y conflict en los Altos de Jalisco* (Mexico: D.F.: Centro de Investigaciones Superiores del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1979); Agustín Vaca, *Los Silencios de la historia: las cristeras* (Zapopan, Jalisco: Colegio de Jalisco, 1998); Jennie Purnell, *Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico: The Agraristas and Cristeros of Michoacán* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of Moisés González Navarro, *Cristeros y agraristas en Jalisco* (Mexico, D.F., Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos, 2000-2001); and Julia Zamora Preciado, *Por las faldas del Volcán de Colima: cristeros, agraristas y pacíficos* (Mexico:

over the deeply entrenched patterns of local violence and the regional political cultures that predated (and survived) the Cristero Rebellion. We still know very little, for example, about how this latest cycle of violence impacted the state's ability to rule effectively in both the countryside and Guadalajara. The first section provides an overview of agrarian reform and political identities, and examines the anxieties that agrarian communities expressed in the early phases of the rebellion. In the second section, I explore how local governance and politics functioned in times of unrest and crisis. Specifically, I accord importance to letters or reports that reflect the apprehensions of municipal administrations and government employees, and also to the complaints they expressed to state authorities. I draw attention ultimately to the state government's acquiescence to the newly formed *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR) in 1929. I contend that this process, in addition to the suppression of the latest rebellion, ended a prolonged conflict over effective political control of the region and finally brought Jalisco—at least temporarily—within the central government's sphere of control.

### **Anticlericalism and the Path to Armed Resistance**

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D.F.: CIESAS, Colima; Archivo Histórico del Municipio de Colima, 2007). But these studies continued overlooking the varying degrees of religiosity present among peasants, taking religion as a given. The work of Butler is an exception, however, as he has reminded us that “religion mattered as peasants negotiated a path between the conflicting agents of Church and state [...]”; see Mathew Butler, *Popular Piety and Political Identity in Mexico's Cristero Rebellion: Michoacán, 1927-29* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 3. For recent works that have begun to stress the importance of transnational links and networks during the rebellion, see Julia Young's *Mexico Exodus: Emigrants, Exiles, and Refugees of the Cristero War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) and “Un obispo cristero en Estados Unidos: El exilio de José de Jesús Manríquez y Zárate, 1927-1932,” in *Los Guachos y Mochos: Once Ensayos Cristeros*, eds. Servando Ortoll and Julia Preciado (Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico: Red Utopía: Jitanjáfora Morelia Editorial, 2009), pp. 61-80.

The Constitution of 1917 provided a clear roadmap for the extirpation of the Church's influence over the state and society through the elimination of its institutional autonomy. Unlike the previous *Magna Carta*, the 1857 Constitution, which, as amended in 1873, ordered the separation of Church and state, the new constitution called for the complete disestablishment of the Church in Mexico.<sup>9</sup> When Venustiano Carranza became president of Mexico (1917 to 1920), however, he never introduced the enabling laws that would have required the implementation of the articles associated with religious restrictions; instead, this matter was left to the discretion of state governments.

In Jalisco regional efforts to implement these articles gained wide currency throughout 1918. During the month of May, for example, a deputy in the State Congress proposed a law complementing Article 130 of the Constitution to “determine the number of ministers that could officiate in the State.” The matter led to some significant debate and, after several reformulations, the proposal was approved, published, and enacted as Decree 1913. After the dispersal of a violent protest on 22 July in Guadalajara, the decree, which officially placed a cap of one priest per 5,000 citizens, was amended and reclassified as Decree 1927. Largely containing many of the same elements as its precursor, the revised Decree 1927 “specified fines of 10 to 200 pesos and [the] imprisonment of one to eleven months for priests who did not comply,” and required priests to obtain licenses in order to officiate in the state. From August 1918 to February 1919, then, the decrees emanating from the state government directly attempted to limit

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<sup>9</sup> Jrade, pp. 4-5. That is, if the articles contained therein were actually implemented. The articles deemed most restrictive were the provisions giving the state control of the internal functioning of religious associations, found in articles 27 and 130.

the number of priests in Jalisco and ordered them to register with authorities. These efforts were met with decisive action by ecclesiastical authorities as they “countered with the suspension of religious services and an economic boycott, until the state government reversed itself and revoked the objectionable legislation.”<sup>10</sup> In his farewell address in February 1919, Governor Manuel Diéguez reflected on the incident:

[...T]he clergy, far from submitting itself to the mandates of the civil authority, assumed from [that moment on] a rebellious attitude and not one Catholic priest fulfilled what was ordered: Far from it, [in fact] the ecclesiastic hierarchy suspended Catholic services in this city [Guadalajara] and in the rest of the State, [and] they made the faithful believe that the Government restricted the freedom of worship and excited a public religious sentiment against [the Government], which, [finding itself] inflamed, was susceptible to translate itself to armed rebellion against the constitutional authorities.<sup>11</sup>

Robert Curley has noted the significance of this episode because it involved many of the same issues that triggered the Cristero Rebellion some years later, “with the difference that the Church and State were able to come to a political solution” in the earlier crisis.<sup>12</sup>

When Governor José G. Zuno came into office in 1923, he revived an anticlerical program that was largely abandoned by previous state governments. Cognizant of the Church’s power and influence over Catholics in the region, Zuno consistently demonstrated an intense distrust of ecclesiastical authorities. In May 1923, for example, he attempted to apply elements of constitutional Article 123 in an effort to ban Catholic

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<sup>10</sup> Jrade, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> “Informe rendido el día 1º de febrero de 1919 ante la XXVI Legislatura del Estado de Jalisco por el C. Gobernador Constitucional Gral. Manuel M. Diéguez,” in *Jalisco, testimonio de sus gobernantes*, edited by Aída Urzúa Orozco and Gilberto Hernández Zaragoza (Guadalajara: Gobierno de Jalisco, 1987), p. 237-238.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Curley, “Slouching towards Bethlehem: Catholics and the political sphere in revolutionary Mexico” (Phd diss., University of Chicago 2002), p. 258

unions and began a concerted campaign aimed at shutting down “Catholic schools, convents, seminaries, union offices, and ACJM [Catholic Association of Mexican Youth] centers.”<sup>13</sup> Over the course of July 1923, Zuno continued to hassle ecclesiastical authorities and even found himself engaged in a much publicized spat with the Archbishop of Guadalajara Francisco Orozco y Jiménez.<sup>14</sup> The quarrel involved, among others things, the role of priests in Jalisco allegedly obstructing the state government efforts. As a result of these accusations, the governor began to recall priests located in various populations around the state.

In the numerous letters they exchanged, Orozco y Jiménez, on the one hand, claimed that Zuno’s intervention in this matter was outside the purview of his power, given that it was not fitting for “one authority to impose orders to public employees that do not belong to their sphere of action [...]” On the other hand, not one to back down from a public feud, Zuno found the archbishop’s comments to border on the ridiculous, claiming that as a government official in charge of the executive he was justified in his acts:

I believe that you should abstain from meddling in the acts of [my government in] a definitive manner [...]. I have no obligation, personal or official, [to establish] peace and harmony with the clergy, if it is not based upon obedience and respect for the laws; since before the official entity of the Government [there only] exist citizens with rights and all of their obligations. I find it very strange that you would suppose that I have recalled priests in some places of the State, for the simple act of doing it; if I have recalled them, it is because as residents of some populations, they

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<sup>13</sup> Curley, p. 527. Chapter 3 of this dissertation also provides a brief overview of the clashes between Catholic and pro-Zunista CAOLJ unions—in addition to showcasing how Zuno confiscated properties belonging to the Catholic Church in the aftermath of the de la Huerta Rebellion.

<sup>14</sup> AHMA, 1923, Sección 6.



have committed inconvenient and dangerous acts [that have disrupted] the public order.<sup>15</sup>

Zuno continued to stress that he did not distinguish between catholic priests and those of other religions, and that he would continue to recall those that infringed upon the laws or did not fulfill the dispositions of his government. “I don’t need you to tell me that it is my duty to protect the interest of all of the inhabitants of Jalisco, without [discrimination against] their religious ideas,” retorted Zuno, “since [...] I believe to have always respected the religious sentiments of the society at large.” The governor did stress that if an armed movement were to break out in Jalisco, the responsibility would fall upon the shoulders of the archbishop. Orozco y Jiménez, taken aback by the accusations, responded that he was absolutely certain no religious armed movement was brewing in the state, but did concede that “if there was, I would be just as responsible, as you would be [...]” The archbishop reiterated that these actions clearly indicated to him that Zuno was not only separated from the Church, but also suggested he was someone who abused his power.<sup>16</sup>

Governor Zuno’s anticlericalism continued to manifest itself well after the *Estradista* Rebellion was defeated, and allegedly he even publicly blamed Archbishop Orozco y Jiménez for the uprising. While the rumor did not take, Zuno reprimanded Catholic organizations for taking part in the rebellion, which led to the closure of two Catholic newspapers, *Atalaya* and *Restauración*. On 1 March 1924, the governor ordered municipal presidents to prohibit the Catholic Association of Young Mexicans (ACJM),

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<sup>15</sup> AHMA, 1923, Sección 6.

<sup>16</sup> AHMA, 1923, Sección 6.

Knights of Columbus, and the *Unión de Agricultores* from conducting meetings, and “charged them with conspiracy to rebel against the established government.”<sup>17</sup>

Additionally, in December 1924 he ordered a police raid on Guadalajara’s seminary, deemed not to have adequate hygienic standards and, as a result, was confiscated by the state government. These anticlerical efforts were also manifest in the closing of Catholic schools in Guadalajara and in the various towns and hamlets of Jalisco.<sup>18</sup>

This renewed anticlerical zealotry in Jalisco again forced the hands of Catholics in the region. “The immediate Catholic response was to organize defense committees,” claims Curley, “but these would turn out to constitute the first step toward larger scale organizations.” Finding inspiration in a series of lectures that a German Catholic priest, *Padre Neck*, gave in Guadalajara, in which he explained how seventy years earlier German Catholics had mobilized against Otto von Bismark’s *Kulturkampf* with the formation of a *Volkesverein* (People’s Union), Catholics in Jalisco discovered a parallel between the on-going persecution in Mexico and that which occurred in Protestant Germany.<sup>19</sup> The first of these organizations to emerge was the *Unión Popular* (UP), founded by Anacleto González Flores, which had no formal membership but established itself as an important propaganda organization linking Guadalajara with the urban outposts of the countryside through the distribution of its newsletter *Gladium*, which by 1925 reached a circulation of one hundred thousand.

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<sup>17</sup> Curley, pp. 341-342.

<sup>18</sup> Curley, p. 351

<sup>19</sup> Francis Patrick Dooley, “The Cristeros, Calles and Mexican Catholicism” (Phd diss., University of Maryland, 1972), pp. 62-63.

*The Conflict Escalates*

President Calles had long maintained a contentious relationship with the Catholic Church. During his stint as governor of Sonora (1915-1919), for example, he expelled all the priests residing within the state—a feat that was undone by the next governor.<sup>20</sup> This protracted enmity continued well into his presidency. In early February 1925 he circulated a memorandum to state governors reminding them that “it was the responsibility of state and municipal authorities to oversee Church activities and ensure that they remained confined within the narrow limits allowed by the Constitution.”<sup>21</sup> The governors were specifically instructed to take the immediate steps necessary to enforce the anticlerical provisions of the Constitution, particularly those pertaining to religious education, the suppression of convents, and the expulsion of foreign priests.<sup>22</sup> Despite Zuno’s reluctance to cede any political ground to Mexico City, as the Calles administration began to show its anticlerical tendencies they found a willing and unlikely collaborator in Zuno, who, as we have seen, maintained a strained relationship with the Church in the Guadalajara region and had in fact shown himself to be pugnaciously anticlerical.

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<sup>20</sup> See Michael Monteón, “The Child is Father of the Man: Personality and Politics in Revolutionary Mexico,” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 10:1 (2004): pp. 43-61, for an excellent article that utilizes modern psychological theory to understand Calles’s leadership of the revolution, and how the stigma of his origins as an orphan born out of wedlock affected the development of his political outlook and personality.

<sup>21</sup> Purnell, p. 74; Dooley, p. 78.

<sup>22</sup> Marta Eugenia García Ugarte, “Los Católicos y el presidente Calles,” *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*. Vol. 57, No. 3 (Jul. – Sep. 1995): 138.

The drama continued later that month, when on 21 February 1925 a hundred men—under the leadership of Ricardo Treviño, the secretary-general of the CROM—stormed the church of La Soledad in Mexico City. Present among the dissidents were members of the Knights of Guadalupe, the order the CROM had created to replace the popular Knights of Columbus. After gaining control of the premises, they handed it over to Fr. Joaquín Pérez. Jean Meyer has claimed that this incident, arranged by labor boss Morones, “marked the birth of the Mexican Catholic Apostolic Church, which, with the support of the Government, took possession of half-a-dozen churches.” In direct response to this particular incident, however, the parishioners of La Soledad, who held the distinction of belonging to a “real barrio bravo,” started a riot and managed successfully to reoccupy the church. President Calles closed the grounds in retaliation.<sup>23</sup> The Soledad incident and other similar occurrences in Guadalajara in early 1925, writes Curley, have come to represent the first instances in the postrevolutionary era, in which anticlerical action was transformed into a discernable state policy.<sup>24</sup> Fifteen days later Catholics in Mexico City established the National League for the Defense of Religious Liberty (LNDLR) to combat and protest similar actions.<sup>25</sup>

On 4 February 1926 Ignacio Monroy, a reporter from the Mexico City daily, *El Universal*, asked Archbishop José Mora y del Río to state his opinion regarding the

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<sup>23</sup> Curley, p. 528.

<sup>24</sup> Curley, p. 527. The author specifically claims that “after the creation of the Mexican Catholic and Apostolic Church, a schismatic body parallel to the Roman Church but characterized by its rejection of the papacy and support for Calles’s nation-building project.”

<sup>25</sup> Meyer, *La Cristiada*, p. 34.

Constitution of 1917 on the occasion of his article commemorating the ninth anniversary of the document's promulgation:

The protest that the Mexican prelates have against the articles in the Constitution of 1917, which are opposed to liberty and religious dogmas, are firmly maintained. It has not been modified, but instead strengthened because it derives from the doctrine of the Church, which is invariable, because it is the divine truth revealed; moreover, the Episcopate, the Clergy, and Catholics do not recognize and will combat articles 3, 5, 27, and 130 of the Constitution in force. This opinion will not for any reason change without betraying their Faith and their Religion.<sup>26</sup>

Upon reading this response, Minister of the Interior Adalberto Tejeda ordered the arrest of the Archbishop, who was shortly thereafter acquitted by a court. The following week Mora y del Río wrote a letter to all of the major newspapers of the country to clarify that “the religious matter, which has occupied the attention of newspapers during the past couple of days, does not have the importance that *El Universal* has wanted to give it, since they have only reproduced expressions that were contained in a document published in the United States by the Mexican Episcopate in 1917.” The archbishop stressed the desire of the Church to cooperate with the Government for the prosperity of the fatherland. “We hope that these declarations,” continued Mora y del Río, “serve to orient the general opinion and thus avoid interpretations that could bring about [problems] to Catholics and our Clergy.”<sup>27</sup>

President Calles, however, interpreted the original statement attributed to the archbishop as a declaration of war and quickly seized upon this opportunity to crack down on the Catholic Church. He called upon congress to grant him extraordinary powers

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<sup>26</sup> *El Universal*, 4 February 1926.

<sup>27</sup> *El Informador*, “La Iglesia no está en pugna con el estado,” 12 February 1926.

to suppress worship and subsequently ordered the closure of church schools and convents, the deportation of foreign priests, and the placing of a limitation on the number of priests in Mexico. A week later, Minister Tejeda gave a scathing interview to the *New York Times*, in which he leveled charges of superstition against the Church and pointed out the utter failure of the Church in the sphere of educating the masses. The Catholic Church, he asserted, had accomplished nothing in Mexico, “except to extract money from its poor followers [...]” The minister specifically condemned the education given by the Church to the “Indian” and claimed that it kept him from developing by forcing him to believe in miracles. “Even in this enlightened day you may see Indian farmers who refuse to start spring planting until the priests bless the ground,” commented Tejeda, adding that “the farmers lose much time until they can rake up enough money to pay the priests to bless the coming crops.” This type of superstition, according to Tejeda, was against all modern progress and only prevented people from advancing and from finding out the truth, “because, when people begin to think and inquire, then sham religious political organizations fall.”<sup>28</sup>

The Rev. Francis C. Kelley, Catholic bishop of Oklahoma and head of the Catholic Extension Society of America, speaking under the auspices of the Columbus Council, Knights of Columbus, charged that the Mexican state’s agitation against Catholic priests and nuns was merely a device on Mexico’s part to draw attention away from their proposed theft of American owned properties. “This tirade on the church is to cover up something else,” he said, “and this time the something else is the theft of the

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<sup>28</sup> *New York Times*, “Tejeda Denounces Priests in Mexico,” 28 February 1926.

capital of Americans in Mexico.” Moreover, the bishop also responded to the comments previously made by Tejeda, which claimed that priests had failed in their work of education. In a fiery declaration of his own, the American bishop showed no reservations in criticizing the actions taken by the Calles regime: “If Mexico is worrying about education, why has it closed the seminaries where educational work is carried on? It is not foreign priests they are worrying about—it is all priests.”<sup>29</sup>

### *The Ley Calles*

Not more than a week later, President Calles signed a decree consisting of thirty-three articles relating to the application of the constitutional provisions governing religion. The *Ley Calles*, as it popularly became known, reformed the Federal Penal Code by virtue of the full powers which had been previously granted to the president to deal with infringements on Article 130. To go into effect on 31 July 1926, the law not only expanded upon clerical provisions contained in the code, but also established penalties for their violation, among other things, and charged local authorities with implementing them. Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department consulted its own experts with regard to the legality of such clauses in the Constitution and found that the scope of the new Calles law presented a few glaring inconsistencies. After having a conversation with a member of the Mexican bar, who was the translator of the Constitution of 1917 as reprinted by the Government Printing Office, Washington, an official in the State Department reported

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<sup>29</sup> *New York Times*, “Catholic Bishops denounces Mexico,” 1 March 1926.

that “he stated that if the law were literally interpreted it would appear that a foreigner saying his prayers in the privacy of his own room would commit a felony [...]”<sup>30</sup>

The Mexican episcopate soon met as a committee and decided to suspend religious services in Mexico, but reassured Catholics that churches would remain open, carefully guarded by the faithful.<sup>31</sup> “Since 1917 in which we elevated a protest [...] until these last months, our conduct was one of silence,” claimed the Mexican episcopacy in their collective pastoral letter, “because the antireligious articles were not applied to the extent of making life impossible for the Church.” In the lapse of those years, however, the committee felt that the governments that had occupied power “without a doubt placed grave obstacles” threatening the survival of the Church in Mexico, since “they dictated against it some excessively rigorous administrative and often anti-constitutional measures.” But never had they actually made it impossible to preach, administer sacraments, and worship. The letter continued:

[...The] law from the Federal Executive promulgated on the second of July of the present year, [...] makes the divine rights of the Church vulnerable [...] and] is so contrary to natural right, which not only situates religious liberty as a primordial base of civilization, but that positively prescribes worshipping God as an individual and social obligation; [even] the opinion of our eminent Catholic and non-Catholic legal experts [affirm that the law] is opposed to [the] Mexican constitution; [and] in the face of such violation[s] to our sacred morals, there is no room for any compliance on our part. It would be for us a crime to tolerate such a situation [...]. For this reason [...] we protest against that decree [and] with your help will work so that that Decree and the antireligious articles

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<sup>30</sup> SD, 812.00/27879, “Political and economic conditions in Mexico during July, 1926.”

<sup>31</sup> Jean Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between Church and State, 1926-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 44.



of the Constitution be reformed, and we will not give up until having achieved it.<sup>32</sup>

Due to the conditions and hostile atmosphere created by the decree, the committee decided that it had become impossible to continue practicing the Sacred Ministry. On 31 July it ordered, until otherwise notified, the suspension of public worship requiring the guidance of a priest in all churches across the entire republic.<sup>33</sup> As we have seen above, these efforts were in fact not new; they had simply adopted on a national scale the tactics that in 1918 had been successful in Jalisco.

The day this decision came into effect, President Calles published a piece in the *New York Times* stating his case to the American public regarding the laws Mexico was enforcing. In reference to the pastoral letter published a couple of days before, which claimed that his regime was making it impossible to preach, administer sacraments, and carry on with religious practices, Calles affirmed that “it is completely false that any disposition of the Federal Government, let us not say hinders, but even limits, religious preaching, within the churches or the places destined for worship [...]” Calles stressed that not only had the clergy failed to justify their attitude, but that a careful reading of their pastoral letter revealed three motives. He identified these motives as follows:

First, the fear of losing that which they call sacred property and which since the reform laws, sealed with years of struggle, every Mexican knows and feels to be the property of the nation; second, the demand of the Government upon the priests before the authorities of the Government, and, third, the belief that the purpose of the Government is to make the

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<sup>32</sup> Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Guadalajara (hereinafter cited as AHAG), Sección: Gobierno, Serie: Cartas Pastorales, Edictos y Circulares, Años: 1900-1935, Caja No. 5.

<sup>33</sup> AHAG, Sección: Gobierno, Serie: Cartas Pastorales, Edictos y Circulares, Años: 1900-1935, Caja No. 5.

country non-Catholic or to give preference, as they think, to some other religious creed.<sup>34</sup>

In order to stop these selfish proceedings and to elevate the character of the Government and the people, Calles justified the need adequately to modify the proper laws so that the fulfillment of the Constitution might not be translated into the personal benefit of any one individual, but rather into the enrichment of the country by the collective use of clerical property.<sup>35</sup>

A week later Bishop Pascual Díaz, Secretary General of the Catholic Episcopate of Mexico, accused Calles of fettering faith and vehemently backed the pastoral letter of the Mexican Episcopate. Indicating that the president clearly denied limiting religious functions, Díaz was quick to point out that these were limited because the Government has reduced the number of priests. The interview continued highlighting the position of the Church, which amongst other things included a fundamental respect for Mexico and the Constitution. “But in order not to be traitors to ourselves,” observed Díaz, “we must oppose those secondary precepts which would curtail our liberty of conscience.” The bishop reminded the American readership that the Church had not provoked this conflict, but rather it was “General Calles” who was responsible for the tirade caused by the implementation of his sanctimonious provisions, “which are against religious liberty [and

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<sup>34</sup> *New York Times*, “President Calles States the Case for the Laws Mexico Is Enforcing,” 1 August 1926.

<sup>35</sup> *New York Times*, “President Calles States the Case for the Laws Mexico Is Enforcing,” 1 August 1926.

are] rejected by the people of Mexico.” According to Díaz, Mexican Catholics should no longer be deprived of the rights enjoyed by the Catholics of other civilized nations.<sup>36</sup>

On 19 August, Díaz declared that the episcopate of Mexico was ready to accept mediation talks to resolve the religious conflict; stressing that the only thing the Clergy wanted was to resolve the differences in a decorous and legal manner.<sup>37</sup> Two days later Díaz and Bishop of Michoacán Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, accompanied by their attorney Mestres Guigleaza, arrived at the *Castillo de Chapultepec*. President Calles immediately attended to the individuals and directed them to his office, where they discussed the matters at hand for two hours. Upon leaving the deliberations, the prelates appeared to be satisfied, but abstained from making any declarations, as they deemed them of the utmost importance. Afterwards, *El Informador* reported that, “as of now, everything indicates that the differences between the Catholic Church and the Government will cease in a couple of days.”<sup>38</sup> A sudden negative turn of events hit the presses. On 23 August, Díaz accused Calles of altering the episcopate’s statement. The president, reiterated Díaz, had assured them that the registration of the priests was entirely administrative in purpose, but he later discovered that Calles gave a statement to *El Universal* saying that returning priests would be “subject to the laws.” As a result negotiations broke down and the

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<sup>36</sup> *New York Times*, “Reply of Church Accuses Calles of fettering Faith,” 9 August 1926.

<sup>37</sup> *El Informador*, “El Señor Presidente Calles dio contestación a la carta que le envió El Episcopado,” 20 August 1926

<sup>38</sup> *El Informador*, “Nuevas probabilidades de que se llegue a un acuerdo entre el clero y el gobierno,” 22 August 1926

episcopate had dropped its tentatively considered project for resuming services in the churches.<sup>39</sup>

Minister Tejeda, however, took precautions to assure the successful implementation of the *Ley Calles* and sent a memorandum to all municipal presidents in Jalisco, indicating that:

[...Priests] of the Catholic religion should not be allowed to officiate again in the temples without previously fulfilling the requirement of the eleventh clause of Article 130 of the Constitution and promise in writing [to obey] the laws of reform [...] Municipal Presidents shall in turn monitor the strict fulfillment of said laws, warning them [Priests] of the punishment that they can incur if they do not observe them and should also give notice to the Ministry of the Interior of cases so that they can be brought to the attention of this Government.<sup>40</sup>

In Guadalajara, the Catholic clergy responded by abandoning the churches and leaving them in the custody of Catholic committees, while in other parts of the state some federal soldiers were reported to have forced inventories and/or taken possession of many churches. “It is apparent that in outlying sections of the state [and Guadalajara],” reported Consul Dwyre, “the authorities have abandoned an attempt to molest or take possession of the church property [...]”<sup>41</sup>

Over the course of the remaining five-months of 1926, armed disturbances in Jalisco began to occur with increasing frequency. In October, the U.S. State Department noted that in Mexico “all of the elements necessary to bring about a revolution” were in

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<sup>39</sup> *New York Times*, “Peace hope fades as Mexican Bishops reject compromise,” 24 August 1926

<sup>40</sup> Secretaría General de Gobierno, *Cristeros: textos, documentos y fotografías* (Guadalajara, Mexico: Gobierno de Jalisco, Secretaría General de Gobierno, 2007), p. 166.

<sup>41</sup> SD, 812.404/590 “Political and Economic Conditions in Guadalajara District, Mexico,” 18 August 1926.

place, but did concede that “conditions which in any other country would provoke an upheaval may be considered as approaching normal in this Republic.” Nevertheless, the report highlighted some developments of note: 1) there was a systematic effort on the part of the Government to destroy the political power of the Catholic Church; 2) an economic boycott, which had been declared by the Church in retaliation was in effect; 3) heavy damages to crops had been caused by storms and floods in various states; 4) there existed a significant rebellion led by the Yaqui in Sonora; and 5) there was a general uneasiness regarding the possibility of Obregón seeking an unprecedented return to the Presidency.<sup>42</sup> Let us now turn to how partisans of the state, such as *agraristas*, local authorities, and government employees, experienced the outbreak of the rebellion

### ***Agraristas in Times of Crisis***

A banquet was held at Lake Chapala on 27 February 1927 in honor of Jalisco governor-elect Daniel Benítez, who was to take office in two days time. The ceremony was attended by approximately five hundred people, which included several federal deputies and officials who had arrived from Mexico City to take part in the festivities. Benítez created a favorable impression on those in attendance. Among those present was the American consul who noted that the governor-elect’s brilliant speech showed him to be better educated, poised, reasonable, and more conservative than former Governor Zuno; however, he still believed Zuno shrewder and more astute than Benítez. “The new Governor, Lic. Daniel Benitez, is the selection of President Calles,” wrote Consul Dwyre:

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<sup>42</sup> SD 812.00/28056, “Political and Economic Conditions in Mexico during October 1926.”

“It will be remembered that three factions presented their candidates for election [last September...and while he] received, officially, the smallest number of votes, the election was declared illegal and Benitez was declared [as] the new Governor of Jalisco.”<sup>43</sup>

When Governor Benítez came into office on 1 March 1927, he was shocked to learn that his administration inherited only 952.80 pesos in the state treasury. But what made this discovery even more surprising was the fact that the day before, the account had shown a balance of 43,124.91 pesos.<sup>44</sup> With the number of Catholics up in arms on the rise, the governor also inherited a countryside that found itself in full-blown rebellion.<sup>45</sup> An informant of Consul Dwyre’s, an individual employed in the mining sector who was well acquainted with the state, for example, claimed that the insurgents held the entire region: “[My informant] states that the movement is all in the name of the Church with the battle cry “Viva Cristo Rey” (Long live Christ the King) [...and] that the overwhelming sentiment of all [in] that country is for the revolution, and against the Government.”<sup>46</sup> Countless other reports confirmed that rebel forces were gaining strength

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<sup>43</sup> SD, 812.00/28268, Enclosure: 4, “Review of Political, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, and General Conditions for the Month of February 1927, Guadalajara Consular District, Mexico,” 28 February 1927.

<sup>44</sup> AGN, O-C, 428-J-10, 8 March 1927.

<sup>45</sup> Jalisco represented the epicenter of what would come to be called the Cristero Rebellion, as “both Cristeros and Revolutionaries regarded this state as the nucleus of the violent struggle, and it is there, in effect that the roots of the peasant rebellion and the counterrevolution are found.” Jade gave two reasons: 1) that the state experienced the strongest manifestation of rural resistance to the established political authorities; and 2) the state became the primary center of the rural-urban alliance, which transformed the conflict into a counterrevolution; see Jade, pp., 59-60.

<sup>46</sup> SD, 812.00/28260, “Renewal of Revolutionary Activities in the Guadalajara Consular District,” 26 February 1927.

in numbers, with arms and ammunition making their way into their hands.<sup>47</sup> Despite lacking the necessary funds to establish a state militia, Benítez proceeded to sign an agreement to sanction the Social Defense of the State. This new corps was to “cooperate in the campaign that the Federal Government has undertaken against the rebel movement which operates in the state [...]”<sup>48</sup> In a letter written to President Calles, Benítez wrote:

[G]iven the difficult circumstances which the state is experiencing, [with regard to the] rebellion, I propose to [be allowed to] lead the social defenses that I [have] organized in the State, [with] each Defense having as a direct commander an official designated by the Head of [Military] Operations: In that manner, [we] would be able to punish the bandits, which have begun to assault [many areas in the state], [and] roads and towns; [as a result,] I would be able to enforce my orders and avoid that subordinate authorities disobey the Executive, and [instead] cooperate with the campaign developed by this Office.<sup>49</sup>

A week later, Benítez provided an update to Calles informing him of the progress he had made, revealing that his contingent now numbered one-hundred and fifty men, something quite short of the social defense group of up one thousand men he had been authorized to recruit.<sup>50</sup> The governor had been resourceful in his recruitment tactics in large part because he lacked the necessary budget to support such a contingent. The Head of the Confidential Office in Mexico City, for example, claimed that to create his contingent “Benítez [simply] dissolved the police [and] organized them into a Defense to protect the

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<sup>47</sup> SD, 812.00/28266, “Continuance of revolutionary activities in the Guadalajara Consular District,” 5 March 1927.

<sup>48</sup> Secretaría General de Gobierno, p. 54.

<sup>49</sup> AGN, O-C, 428-J-10, 8 March 1927.

<sup>50</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 413.2 (3.2) 1, Nombre: Lic. Daniel Benítez, Asunto: Su desafuero como Gobernador Constitucional del Estado de Jalisco, March 1927.

city.” As of 10 April, the converted police force had yet to see any real action or even confront anyone: “[N]ot even real highway robbers or bandits.”<sup>51</sup>

It is important to note here that during the turbulent 1920s the federal army tried to distinguish among the reservists they deployed to quell rebellions in the countryside. These included “state police forces, local self-defense forces (*defensas sociales*), and armed peasants either defending or seeking land (*agraristas*).”<sup>52</sup> But even the available sources on this matter make it difficult to identify consistently and distinguish among the social groups that participated in and comprised each militia. In Jalisco, for example, the *defensas sociales* varied in their organization and composition, with some being led by *agraristas*. What is certain is that in early 1927 President Calles had already begun the process of attempting to arm agrarian communities to suppress the recent rebellion that had taken hold of the countryside in central-western Mexico. With much of the federal army engaged in putting down a Yaqui uprising in the northern part of the country, Calles urged state governors to take all necessary measures to resolve agrarian reform petitions pending before state-level Local Agrarian Commissions “in order to counteract the discontent being sown among peasants by enemies of the current regime.”<sup>53</sup> The *agraristas* of the state were again to be deployed as local defense forces in much the same capacity that they served during the de la Huerta Rebellion (1923 to 1924).

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<sup>51</sup> AGN, O-C-, 428-J-10, 10 April 1927, f. 63.

<sup>52</sup> Thomas Rath, *Myths of demilitarization in postrevolutionary Mexico, 1920-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), p. 36.

<sup>53</sup> Purnell, pp. 68-69 and 82.



On 15 January 1927, the state government organized a convention in Guadalajara to decide on a plan to oppose the rebellion and to put the orders of President Calles into effect. With many *agraristas* from around the state in attendance, Zuno, and now former governor, addressed the convention on the gravity of the situation, stressing that *agraristas* “oft-repeated cries of ‘we have no arms’ could now be dispensed with” because two-thousand carbines and large quantities of ammunition were to be distributed to the agrarian communities.<sup>54</sup> Yet even state authorities themselves remained divided over the matter of whether to arm rural people who, to them, appeared indistinguishable from their Catholic counterparts. The American consul touched a similar nerve, when he informed Washington that the policy of arming the *agrarista* groups was a poor one because he claimed that they were simply “country people and, while they follow a few leaders, they are fanatical Catholics like 95 per cent of the population in the country districts, and arms in their hands will probably work against the interests of the state government.”<sup>55</sup> But the promises of guns and ammunition, for the most part, remained unfulfilled. This directly placed the state’s agrarian communities in a precarious position in light of the rising violence *cristeros* directed towards *agraristas*.

In what follows, my interest is not so much focused on the outcome of the rebellion, nor on the internal logic of the conflict, but rather shifts to agrarian communities during the conflict. Through an analysis of letters written by community

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<sup>54</sup> SD, 812.00/28199, “Arming of Agrarian Groups for Defending Government against Revolutionaries,” 18 January 1927.

<sup>55</sup> SD, 812.00/28199, “Arming of Agrarian Groups for Defending Government against Revolutionaries,” 18 January 1927.

representatives to government officials, I analyze the anxieties *agraristas* expressed during the early phase of rebellion, from about mid-1926 to mid-1928. I am much more interested in highlighting how these communities wrote about and reacted to the threat (and actuality) of violence, and in giving voice to the religious divisions occurring within their towns, than in narrating the numerous battles they participated in or the extent to which they adhered, or did not adhere, to the state's revolutionary project. But first let us now take a step back to see how agrarian reform functioned after the Mexican Revolution in order to understand why most *agraristas* positioned themselves as they did.

#### *Agrarian Reform and Political Identities*

In the years leading up to the Mexican Revolution, the principal cause of unrest and strife in the rural population was the loss of communal landholdings through sales, concessions, outright theft, and adjustments made by local authorities. When the Constitution of 1917 was adopted, the decree of January 6, 1915, which established that the rights of villages had been violated because they could not sue over lands at law, was raised to the status of constitutional provision and incorporated into Article 27. Through this now-enshrined right, municipalities and settlements with a communal character regained the legal capacity to own real property, which had been done away with in the liberal Constitution of 1857. The government's right to eminent domain was extended to include the division of large landed estates taking from them the necessary lands and waters in order to endow villages and other communities. Owners were to be indemnified

for the property taken, and, if they considered themselves despoiled, had recourse to proper tribunals.<sup>56</sup>

During the 1920s agrarian reform was generally designed to integrate peasants into the reform bureaucracy in a manner which allowed them to embrace the new revolutionary values espoused by political elites. The imparting of these new rational, nationalistic, and anticlerical attitudes, which became central tenets of the revolutionary project, often required peasant communities to go against the prevailing cultural norms of the countryside. “Since villages, which accommodated official norms were more likely to receive land,” claims Butler, “agraristas were effectively obliged to build schools where they were taught new working practices and exposed to secular cultural influences [...and above] all it required local agrarian leaders to reinterpret revolutionary tropes creatively in village contexts so that they became meaningful to a peasant audience.”<sup>57</sup> First promoted by federal functionaries at the local level, over time the task of promoting the *ejido*<sup>58</sup> began to be taken on by local teachers, veterinarians, agrarian functionaries, and even *campesinos* themselves. Such work had to be carried out in secrecy, with much it done at night, and with great caution to avoid reprisal on the part of local *hacendados*.

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<sup>56</sup> Ulices Piña, “Lords of Agave: Agraristas, Eladio Sauza, and the Struggle for Land in Tequila, Mexico, 1932-1937,” *UCLA Historical Journal* (Vol. 23, Issue 1, 2012), pp. 13-14.

<sup>57</sup> Butler, pp. 53-54.

<sup>58</sup> The term *ejido* was imported from Spain and has its roots in the name given by the Spaniards in the colonial period to common Indian livestock grounds. Gradually, the meaning of the word expanded to encompass all agricultural lands claimed by a village. In the post-revolutionary period the word took on a completely different meaning and refers to the land grants given to individuals under the official agrarian reform; it is also used as a term for a landholding village endowed by the agrarian reform. An *ejidatario* refers to a recipient of a land-reform grant, restitution, or amplification, who is entitled to individual or collective use of commonly assigned lands.

Adopting an *agrarista* identity, then, became a display of subordination and political loyalty to the new state, inasmuch as it was also a significant display of defiance to the cultural norms of the countryside.

Agrarian communities had to follow a strict legal procedure comprised of several important stages in order to be granted land by the federal government. The process was initiated through a formal petition submitted by an agrarian community to the state governor. The petition specified whether the land grant in question was for a grant, restitution, or amplification of an existing *ejido*. Each land grants required certain specifications be met: a restitution petition obliged a community to have proof of a Spanish royal grant to an Indian community; dotation grants, were only awarded on the basis of either not being able to have proof of a previous grant or to a community that was composed of landless agricultural workers; and amplification grants were awarded to existing *ejidos* that lacked sufficient land to maintain the total number of eligible *ejidatarios*. After the community met the initial requirements for the requested action, a census was recorded to register all eligible members of the community and extensively to survey each property. But in order for a community or village to be endowed by the state, they needed to have been in existence for at least six months prior to submitting their petition.<sup>59</sup> Agricultural workers who resided on an *hacienda* were ineligible for agrarian reform because of contractual reasons until 1934 (provisionally) and (definitively) in 1937.<sup>60</sup> What should be acknowledged, however, is that local communities had to wait

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<sup>59</sup> Piña, p. 29

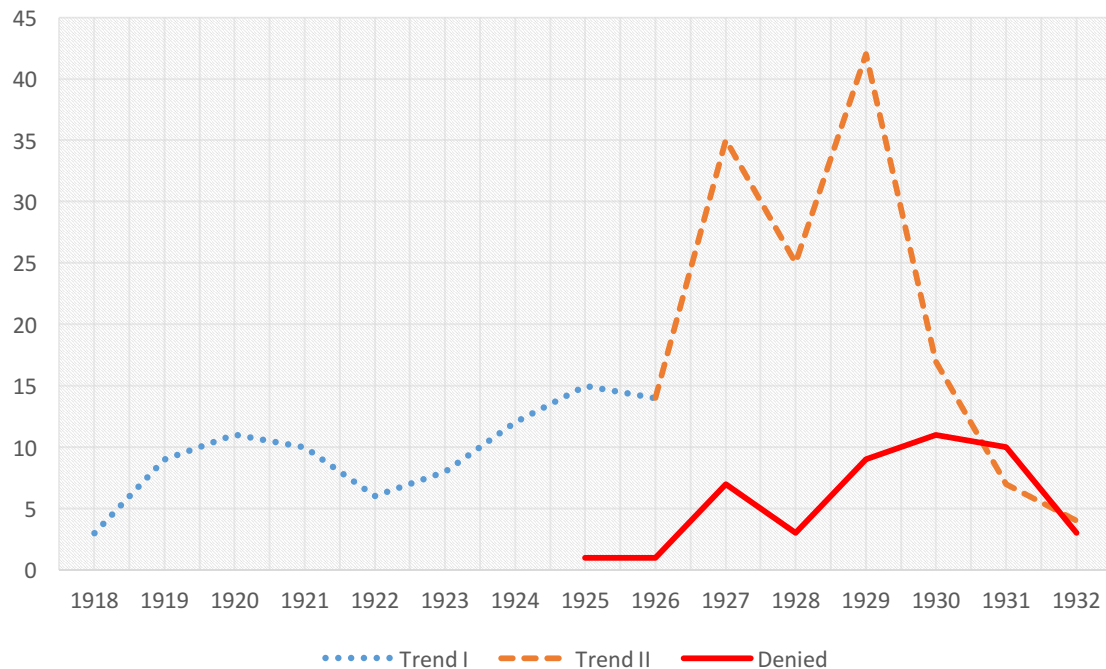
<sup>60</sup> Piña, p. 17. In 1934, an autonomous agrarian department was created along with a new Agrarian Code that allowed for this change.

years for their petitions finally to be resolved. And having thrown in their lot with *agrarismo*, many such communities continuously faced intimidation tactics from those opposed to agrarian reform aimed at pressuring them into abandoning their petitions.

Between 1918 and 1932, a total of 263 communities in the state of Jalisco had their petitions for *ejidos* forwarded to the Agrarian Department for definitive resolution, 218 petitions (82.8 percent) of which were approved, while 45 (17.2 percent) were denied. The successful petitions were divided into three categories: grants, 203 petitions (93.1 percent); restitutions, 3 petitions (1.4 percent); and amplifications, 12 petitions (5.5 percent). Based upon data gathered from the *Primer Censo Ejidal de 1935*, the land grants awarded to communities during these years formed two trends—referred to here as *Trend I* and *Trend II*—that indicate the number of resolutions resolved during the years 1918-1926, and 1927-1932 (see Figure 5). *Trend I* averaged a distribution rate of approximately 8 *ejidos* per year, whereas *Trend II* saw a noticeable upsurge in resolved petitions, which placed it at a resolution rate of just over 21 *ejidos* per year.

The upsurge of armed rebellion in Jalisco from 1926 to 1929 coincides remarkably with the rise of resolved petitions demonstrated by *Trend II*. Moreover, throughout the fifteen years that comprise the data set, a total of 301,404 hectares of land were reallocated in the following forms: grants (282,657 ha.), restitutions (2,512 ha.), and amplifications (16,235 ha.). *Trend I* averaged a redistribution rate of approximately 16,122.7 hectares per year, whereas *Trend II* averaged 26,049 hectares per year. During the early period, a community could expect to receive a grant, restitution, or amplification of 1,649 hectares, while in the latter years a community could expect an award of 1,102 hectares. Although *Trend I* saw a lower number of favorably resolved petitions,

communities on average received 547 hectares more per grant, restitution, or amplification when compared to the *Trend II*, the later period (see Figure 5).



**Figure 5:** *Definitive Resolutions of Petitions in Jalisco, 1918-1932.* Source: *Primer Censo Ejidal de 1935 (Jalisco)*

Jean Meyer has used a similar source to conclude that at a national level one-third of the land grants from 1917 and 1930 were made between 1926 and 1929; that is, during the Cristero Rebellion. The purpose of this accelerated distribution, according to Meyer, was “to recruit new adherents and restrict popular support for the Cristeros [...] particularly in the zones where the rebellion was the strongest.”<sup>61</sup> His analysis, at least for the case of Jalisco, however, is misleading and does not take into account local dynamics,

<sup>61</sup> Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion*, pp. 107-108.

nor does it reflect an understanding of the petitioning process. The picture that Meyer paints here is one of a deeply desperate central government signing off on land grants left and right to create new supporters when in fact many of these agrarian communities already existed in Jalisco. As the reader will recall, Governor Zuno (1923 to 1926) redistributed a total of 113,636.81 hectares of land to 22,157 *campesinos*, which represented 34.9 percent of all land redistributed in the state between 1915 and 1935.<sup>62</sup> While the land grants awarded under the Zuno administration were considered provisional, “since a Governor’s decision was subject to review by federal agrarian authorities who assisted the President in reaching a final solution,” in most cases agrarian communities were usually allowed to take possession of the land and begin to farm their *ejidos*.<sup>63</sup> In 1925 Governor Zuno provided insight into the unique dilemma facing Jalisco with an update regarding the redistribution of lands to agrarian communities, which he claimed had different land tenure patterns as other states. Though much progress had been made, Zuno claimed that:

[the agrarian question] is not really on the eve of resolving itself [here in Jalisco], as has already done in San Luis Potosí, due to an infinite number of causes, and one of them is that the *ejidos* in Jalisco [need] be given lands from many owners [and properties] and in San Luis there is greater facility [to do this because] there are a great number of large populations found [within the limits of] one property with rights to land [in that region]. Additionally, the number of [...] communities [in San Luis Potosí] is much less than the Communities that already exist in Jalisco [...]. However, circular 37 [that] the Government of Jalisco decreed about a year ago, practically resolved the crucial agrarian problem, since in accordance with it all of the agrarian groups that had urgency for lands, were able to take possession of them. In the present [time] it is only about resolving the more technical [aspect] of the problem, given that only

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<sup>62</sup> See Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>63</sup> Jrade, p. 109

communities [with] large industrial and commercial populations are left to be granted. The Government of Jalisco considers the desires of the President of the Republic, consisting in making the Agrarian Communities producing centers, already a reality in Jalisco [...].<sup>64</sup>

In fact, many of these agrarian communities had been previously armed and mobilized to suppress de la Huerta Rebellion (1923 to 1924).<sup>65</sup> Zuno himself displayed a certain level of apprehension with regard to arming *agraristas* and pushed to disarm them after the conflict because many were “badly disciplined,” which allowed for ambitious politicians to take advantage of them.<sup>66</sup> Taking into account the regional power structure Zuno had developed during his time as governor, and the contentious relationship he had with many communities, this had more to do with his fear that an “armed peasantry would have incurred grave political risks for the state and renewed the chances for another outbreak of civil war, with an uncertain outcome.”<sup>67</sup>

What should be made clear is that the data in Figure 5 and the analysis promoted by Meyer’s study only reflect agrarian petitions that were *definitively* resolved. While the data do indeed tell an interesting story about the importance that federal authorities ascribed to *definitively* resolving agrarian petitions during these years, perhaps to reward (and/or even to a degree, incentivize) *agraristas* to take up arms, this should in no way be

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<sup>64</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 243-J1-L5.

<sup>65</sup> See Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

<sup>66</sup> AGN, Obregón-Calles, 101-R2-B-1, “Confiscation of rebel properties,” f. 37-42. Additionally, there also exists evidence to suggest that many village residents also met the arming of *agraristas* with great skepticism “because the deceitful behavior and trickery to which they were continually exposed by opportunistic middle-class politicians encouraged peasants to be quite distrustful of such efforts;” see Luis Cuevas, *Forsaken Harvest: Haciendas and Agrarian Reform in Jalisco, Mexico: 1915-1940* (Xlibris Corporation, 2013), p. 209.

<sup>67</sup> Cuevas, p. 209.



interpreted as “a kind of blackmail” used to coax peasants into fighting for the state, as Meyer has proposed, nor should *agraristas* be viewed “as mere cannon-fodder [who] played no part in politics [and who were] incapable of exerting pressure on the Government.”<sup>68</sup> Petitioning for land was inherently a political act requiring years of organizing, sacrifice, and the deployment of pressure tactics upon landowners and authorities. Agrarian communities were not pulled out of thin air, nor were they simply created through the President’s blessing—there was a process to be followed and requirements to be met. Meyer’s interpretation, perhaps, has more to do with his understanding of the rebellion as a conservative and widespread response to an unfavorable, hostile, and authoritarian state, which, as Butler has noted, “exaggerates the ideological transparency of the *cristeros* and oversimplifies the relationship between the peasantry, Church, and the state.”<sup>69</sup>

In economic, social, and cultural terms, *agraristas* hardly differed from their counterparts—many were practicing Catholics just as devout as the *cristeros*.<sup>70</sup> As Purnell has noted, there was indeed nothing inherent to Catholicism that determined opposition to agrarian reform, nor did support for the latter imply an assault on the Church.<sup>71</sup> What then led to Catholics being so antithetical to the agrarian reform? While the postrevolutionary state made great advancements in convincing *campesinos* to

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<sup>68</sup> Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion*, pp. 18 and 108

<sup>69</sup> Butler, *Popular Piety*, p. 6

<sup>70</sup> Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion*, p. 106

<sup>71</sup> Purnell, p. 3.

petition for land, what remains clear is that a great amount of individuals still resisted these efforts. A possible explanation regarding this division is the role that wealthy landowners played in halting state advancements in the countryside. In the uprisings that we have analyzed so far rural elites consistently sided against the state. In fact, in almost all those instances, parish priests supported the actions and interests of the wealthy over the interests of *campesinos* and, perhaps, this has much to do with the fact that they were traditionally the Church's biggest benefactors. As Alan Knight has reminded us, Catholics "defended private property rights" and always took the side of landowners in disputes against *agraristas*.<sup>72</sup> And as we seen (and will seen in the next chapter) parish priest played important roles in shaping public opinion in the small towns of Jalisco. That said, where *agraristas* and *cristeros* differed, however, at least during this rebellion, was in their political identities:

[M]any agrarista peasants explicitly defined themselves as anticlerical, and their personal and political enemies, both elite and popular, as Catholics. Other peasants, in turn, accepted and adopted this Catholic political identity. It came to express their opposition to [the] anticlericalism of the new state, and in many cases to revolutionary agrarianism, which, though it sometimes increased access to land, also involved a significant increase in the state's role in the regulation of community resources and a subsequent loss of local political autonomy.<sup>73</sup>

Therefore, being a political Catholic in the 1920s went beyond simply repudiating the state's anticlerical reforms. It came to embody stern resistance to the state's capacity to meddle in the local affairs of the countryside. And while many of those who rose up in

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<sup>72</sup> Alan Knight, "La última fase de la Revolución: Cárdenas," in *Lázaro Cárdenas: modelo y legado*, Vol. 3 (México: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Historicos de las Revoluciones de México, 2009), p. 196.

<sup>73</sup> Purnell, p. 3.

arms against the state were indeed political Catholics, it also should be made abundantly clear that the vast majority of such did not rise up “even as they continued to contest the agrarian and anticlerical projects of the emerging state.”<sup>74</sup> The reports of Agent 17 (Amalia Díaz) clearly illuminate these forces at play, when she described how ordinary people in the town of Teocuitatlán viewed *cristeros* in relation to federal troops. On 2 January 1928, for example, Agent Díaz revealed that the town was “plagued” with rebels, numbering around fifty to one hundred, but that this was not what caught the attention of locals, rather it was instead the federal troops that struck fear in the hearts of these locals. On the one hand, the federal troops would enter the town “not hear[ing] reason,” and simply take what they wanted “leaving frightened families” without food; while, on the other, the *cristeros* would first ask for food and if they were denied sustenance, they would then steal a cow, kill it themselves, leave the area, and not terrify locals, “but in the event that there were *agraristas* [present] they would seek them out and disturb their families.”<sup>75</sup> Let us turn to how agrarian communities responded during the first two years of the uprising; that is, in the lead up to, and immediately after, the state’s attempt once again to mobilize and arm *agraristas*.

### *Agrarian Communities at the Start of the Rebellion*

Not long after the rebellion broke in mid-1926, Fernando Basulto Limón organized the first rural defense unit in the town of Zacoalco de Torres, successfully

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<sup>74</sup> Purnell, p. 8.

<sup>75</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-13 (3.2), “Confidencial” Caja 215, Exp. 3, “Se transcribe informe sobre situación sediciosa en el Estado de Jalisco,” 2 January 1928, ff. 180-182.

gaining control of the area from Acatlán de Juárez to Atoyac. Often described as a prototypical agrarian cacique, Basulto Limón counted upon the support of the federal government to organize and supply his troops with arms. Although these defense units were in theory subordinate to the federal army and did not share its formation or discipline, such *agrarista* reinforcement groups would come to play an important role in the government's struggle against *cristeros*. Basulto Limón alleged, for example, that those who rose up in arms against the federal government, more than combating the forces of the national army, attacked *agraristas* "preferably in cowardly ambushes [...and] whoever fell under their control, alive, was assassinated with the greatest cruelty and viciousness."<sup>76</sup> He continued: "A little while after the furious Cristero Rebellion was unleashed, whatever having been its religious character, its most passionate and violent attacks were against *agraristas*."<sup>77</sup> In this same town, the *cristero* cause counted with the sympathy and help of landowners and their numerous workers, who were associated with the clergy and were supported by a multitude of "fanatics." An indigenous resident, Don Tomás, stressed that parish priest Francisco Alcalá exerted a powerful influence over the local population: "[H]e would say that whoever accepted lands from the rich was excommunicated, [...and] many people believed that so we did not get any lands." He recalled that many individuals who ended up receiving land from the state in that era

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<sup>76</sup> Lourdes Celina Vázquez Parada and Federico Munguía Cárdenas, *Protagonistas y testigos de la Guerra Cristera* (Guadalajara, Mexico: Universidad de Guadalajara), pp. 192-193. The agrarian leaders Alberto and Amado Madrigal of the community of Sayulapan (municipality of Zacoalco de Torres), for example, had their feet skinned and were made to walk barefoot until the point of exhaustion. "The *ejidatario* Ramón Lira was dragged and hung in this same manner," recalled Basulto Limón. And using the same cruel methods, many others of the region were also assassinated by *cristeros*.

<sup>77</sup> Vázquez Parada and Cárdenas, pp. 192-193

were also close to the Catholic religion, but were already too committed to the taking of lands to turn back: “[A]s the saying goes, once the cow has gone to water, it has gone to the water.”<sup>78</sup>

While many of the state’s agrarian communities encountered similar hostile environments and were also divided along internal lines, the majority of them actually lacked the necessary arms and munitions to protect themselves. In this regard, Basulto Limón remained an exception to the rule. There was indeed a concerted effort at mobilizing *agraristas* into defense units during the Cristero Rebellion, but arms and munitions did not always arrive to agrarian communities in a timely manner, especially during the early phases of the rebellion. Indeed, up until at least February 1927, even the state government itself was divided on the issue of whether it should place arms into the hands of *agraristas*, and was fearful that such efforts might backfire, sometimes opting instead to arm “radical labor groups.”<sup>79</sup> The stark reality of these agrarian communities, perhaps, more closely resembles the experience of *agrarista* Enrique Rosales—the president of the administrative committee of the agrarian community of El Arenal—and that of his two brothers, who counted themselves lucky to escape death in their hometown at the hands of a “fanatic mob” led by the priest and *beatas* of the town. “[One] of [my brothers], let himself fall from a height of 5 or 6 meters [from a building],”

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<sup>78</sup> Vázquez Parada and Cárdenas, p. 175

<sup>79</sup> SD, 812.00/28225, Review of political, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and general conditions for the month of January 1927, Guadalajara Consular District, Mexico,” 1 February 1927.

wrote Rosales, “[while] me and my other [brother were] saved because of the intervention of a female cousin.”<sup>80</sup>

The attack began on 21 September 1926, when the forty armed men led by Asencio Villegas impetuously fell upon the town, yelling “Viva Cristo Rey” and “Viva Romo” at the top of their lungs, assaulting the municipal presidency. This assault appeared to have been a response to the actions of the local *ayuntamiento*, which was allegedly going to implement the law regarding religious worship. Once at the municipal presidency, the rebels fired their guns at the building and destroyed its doors, furniture, and other objects, including a portrait of President Calles.<sup>81</sup> As a result, the municipal president, the secretary, a brother of the president, two policemen, and the police chief quickly surrendered, and subsequently dispersed. Among the casualties were the following: the secretary of the *ayuntamiento*, shot four times in the face and eight times in the thorax; Sixta Sáldate de Aldana, killed on account of a stomach wound, 3 to 4 centimeters above the umbilical area; the municipal treasurer, whose left hand was superficially wounded by a projectile emanating from a rifle; the brother of the municipal president (left hand wound); and the municipal president, who was spared serious injury because a shot intended for his head missed, and instead destroyed his *sombrero*, but who was still beaten with a rifle butt.

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<sup>80</sup> AHJ, Clasificación, G-4-1926, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, Asunto: “Se piden garantías y que se metan al orden a los causantes de atropellos,” 28 October 1926.

<sup>81</sup> The rebels ended up stealing a Winchester rifle, two Marlín rifles, a Colt gun, a Hamit gun, and a black blanket worth \$1750 pesos.

A month later, Rosales wrote to the governor to inform him that Villegas, one of the perpetrators of the attack, was said to be allied with “those who call themselves” the *agraristas* of Amatitán. The so-called *agraristas* were supported by Don Aurelio López, the owner of the Hacienda San José del Refugio. While the *agraristas* of San José del Refugio claimed to be guardians of the order and public security, Rosales described them as nothing more than wild animals: “[They] come to [our town] with the goal of disarming us [taking away the guns] that we have been able to obtain through much sacrifice for our personal defense [...]” Rosales was surprised at the persecution faced by his community, given that they had an unblemished record of service in the eyes of the National Agrarian Commission. In fact, he wanted to know from the “sensible residents” of the area what had precipitated such hatred towards him and his companions. He even demanded some official insight into the crimes they had supposedly committed: “[B]ecause if we are subjected to the opinion of the fanatic Catholics, we are criminals for having [supported] the implementation of the [religious laws].” Rosales claimed that the agrarian community he belonged to had formed its administrative committee in 1924 when it was comprised of twenty or thirty *ejidatarios*, which by 1925 had ascended to a little over seventy members, and by 1926 counted upon one hundred. While they consistently asked regional authorities for a detachment of armed men because of the ill-will that Catholics and the aforementioned *agraristas* expressed towards his community, their demands had fallen on deaf ears. Rosales reiterated to the governor: “[... We] need a

detachment that will give us guarantees and [allow] the municipal presidency to fulfill the disposition of [...the government with regard to the religious law].”<sup>82</sup>

In another illustrative incident, during the previous month, on 19 August 1926, the agrarian community of Tototlán directed three complaints to the substitute governor: 1) that the community currently found itself in difficult circumstances because of the hostile attitude that prevailed in the town against the government (federal and state); 2) that municipal authorities played an active role in suppressing *agraristas*; and 3) that many of these efforts were organized by the *Unión Popular*, which made use of its wider network that stemmed from Guadalajara. In the eyes of the community president, the popular opinion in the town was not only visibly against the national and state governments, but also directed against everything that “aspired to be a legitimate emancipation of the workers, within the Constitutional Laws of the Republic.” When it came to receiving the necessary guarantees from the local town government to enact their citizenship, the agrarian community of Tototlán faced an uphill battle as both the municipal president and the chief of police “were not only against [us] but also [engaged in] pernicious efforts to take away the [lives of] the *agraristas* and [the] sympathizers of the government [...]” And to nourish a hostile environment for supporters of the revolutionary government, the wealthy class and the clergy of the town had jointly organized a local chapter of the *Unión Popular*, which carried out an “exaggerated and perfidious” campaign not to sell them staple foods “if [we] did not have a voucher issued by said organization.” In this town, the persecution organized by the *Unión Popular* was

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<sup>82</sup> AHJ, Clasificación, G-4-1926, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, Asunto: “Se piden garantías y que se metan al orden a los causantes de atropellos,” 28 October 1926.



most exaggerated in the evening. While the *Unión Popular* claimed to be a defense organization, the president of the community underscored that he thought it nothing more than an organization whose sole goal was to go against his community. The organization even went as far as to prevent the *agraristas* from farming the lands to which they already held provisional possession, and had physically received two months before.<sup>83</sup>

They ultimately asked the governor to make the necessary guarantees so that the members of the community might be able to become receive justice under the Law:

The situation in which [we] find ourselves is truly serious and demands prompt, efficient, and energetic action so that the Government is not mocked by a group that [finds itself committing] one of the biggest mistakes [and who uses] the closure of the churches, as a pretext to fuel their fanaticism and ignorance.<sup>84</sup>

Three months later, the members of the same community—now residing in Ocotlán—revealed that they were forced to flee their town because of the persecution led by parish priest, Francisco Vizcarra, and the municipal president. “We have also been informed that the parish priest [...] intends to gather the few people who reside in Tototlán as well as those in the surrounding area,” warned the *agraristas*, “with the goal of revolting against the Supreme Constitutional Government.” They not only bemoaned the fact that Father Vizcarra had destroyed the agrarian community’s archive, but that they also continuously feared for their lives because the municipal president publically supported

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<sup>83</sup> AHJ, G-4-1926, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, “Letter to the substitute governor from the Agrarian Community of Tototlán,” 19 August 1926.

<sup>84</sup> AHJ, G-4-1926, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, “Letter to the substitute governor from the Agrarian Community of Tototlán,” 19 August 1926.

the rebels of Los Altos (vocally and materially) so that they could “come to our houses to assassinate us.”<sup>85</sup>

In the late evening hours of 10 March 1927, 150 men from the Los Altos region invaded the town of Aguatlán (municipality of Zapotlán del Rey) shouting “Viva Cristo Rey” and “Death to the Agraristas.” In a letter to the governor, the residents of the town affirmed that almost all of them town were members of the agrarian community, and that because of this they had always been targeted and persecuted—in this rebellion and the previous one—by groups attempting to destroy the conquests of the Revolution. While the rebels from Los Altos remained in the town, they proceeded to assassinate Rita Flores and Pilar Díaz—both 14 years of age (presumably raped though explicitly not stated)—and committed other violent acts towards defenseless individuals, “taking advantage of the darkness of the night and the circumstances of the moment.” Many of the *agraristas* were able successfully to escape to the nearby hills, but their houses remained targets of the *cristeros*. As a result, they lost various personal property, horses, and saddles. “Since this situation leaves the groups that [benefit from] the triumphs of the [revolution and who] have been sustaining and enjoying these benefits as *agraristas* without guarantees,” affirmed the members of the community, “we attentively [...ask] that you [governor] employ your respectable influence [so that we may] obtain the guarantees to which we believe [we] have a right [...].”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> AHJ, G-15-926, Gobernación, Seguridad Publica, Inventario: 32720, Caja: 448, “Carta de originarios de Tototlán dirigida al Gobernador Constitucional Substituto del Estado,” 20 November 1926.

<sup>86</sup> AHJ, G-4-1927, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, Caja 12, “Carta de los originarios y vecinos de Aguatlán al Gobernador del Estado,” 17 March 1927.

Meanwhile, on 20 April 1927 the Central Executive Committee of the “League of Agrarista Communities of Jalisco” informed Governor Benítez that they had received an inordinate amount of complaints from member communities about the difficult circumstances they dealt with on a daily basis. “The facts communicated [to us] demonstrate that the reactionary movement in Jalisco is launched principally against the Agrarian Communities,” wrote the Committee, “because of the revolutionary nature of these [communities] who in Jalisco have always been loyal supporters of the revolutionary Governments [...]” The ascent of Governor Benítez to power not only brought consequences for those in Guadalajara, but also to those in the countryside. *Agraristas* who favored Benítez, for example, additionally had to deal with armed groups organized by pro-*zunista* municipal presidents, and/or local and federal deputies that opposed the new governor.

The Committee of *agraristas*, then, thought it a contradiction that functionaries who espoused a “revolutionary radicalism” (without so much as having a track record of service and sacrifice for the cause, nor antecedents, which could confirm them as revolutionaries) were encouraging the development of groups that would present serious problems to the government of President Calles. These political radicals who supposedly fought the “reaction” had instead slowly but surely turned their attention to assassinating individuals that supported the Benítez governorship, “whom they painfully classify as boycott-supporters and clericalists.” But the members of the agrarian league boisterously protested this label that political enemies had thrust upon them since they had, in fact, made up their minds in 1909 long before anyone knew revolution would triumph. They specifically reminded state authorities that when the de la Huerta Rebellion broke out in

December 1923, they volunteered and went to the Ocotlán front (the bloodiest theatre of the uprising) not because they wanted to ingratiate themselves with Military Officers or obtain earnings, but they did so out of personal conviction, and to combat what they interpreted as a menace to the government of Alvaro Obregón. The Committee asked the governor to use his influence to ask the President of the Republic to authorize “the *agraristas* who identify with your government” to be allowed to “organize a raid against the disorders in Jalisco, requesting the necessary arms that we would loyally return [once] the campaign ends, which we believe could happen in three months.”<sup>87</sup> The *agraristas* asserted that if such requests were met they would be able once in for all to destroy the perverse machinations that continued to motivate “radical” politicians “who do not count upon the support of the people.”<sup>88</sup>

The agrarian community of Magdalena similarly wrote to the governor to remind him of their previous involvement in the de la Huerta Rebellion, but also to express how this conflict had shaped municipal politics and life in the years that followed. When that rebellion broke out, for example, members of their community were killed by a contingent led by Colonel Juan Pablo Aldasoro, “and in that movement truly barbarous acts were carried out [as] many families of our comrades were left helpless.” When the de la Huerta Rebellion failed in March 1924, many of the individuals who rebelled against the state eventually left the town, but then returned after a brief period of time. Specifically, the community mentioned an individual named Aurelio Díaz, who

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<sup>87</sup> AGN, O-C, 428-J-10, f. 65.

<sup>88</sup> AGN, O-C, 428-J-10, f. 65.

maintained a long-standing feud with the *agraristas* of Magdalena. In the ensuing years, Díaz managed to take advantage of the municipal president's bad management of the town to persecute the existing *agraristas*. “[We] were denied all [our] request for justice because [Díaz] had bribed the Municipal President, who did not pay attention to the trust we placed in him [...],” complained the community. Díaz had apparently helped the municipal president with his reelection campaign, which to them meant that they would continue to experience harassment. Over the past month events had begun to escalate. One day Díaz armed himself and went to the house where the agrarian community conducted its affairs, claiming that he had been appointed as Commander of the Social Defense unit of the town, a position allegedly extended to by Governor Benítez. Díaz announced to the agrarian community that: “[The] day had come in which agraristas or bandits would be hanged since he believed that [the latter] was the appropriate word [to describe] all of those who belonged [to those types] of groups and [that after] forming his guard not one would be left [alive...].”<sup>89</sup>

According to the *agraristas*, the persecution carried out against them was mainly due to the community's inability to pay the fees that Díaz had imposed upon them for use of the pasture where their cows grazed, in the fields that actually belonged to them. The changing political climate in Guadalajara, however, directly impacted Díaz's influence in the town. The *agraristas* stressed that after his political boss Benítez was deposed as governor in May 1927, the municipal presidency began closely to monitor the activities of the Díaz. They reported that the latter frequently left town and headed to the

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<sup>89</sup> AHJ, G-15-927, Gobernación, Seguridad Publica, Inventario: 32754, Caja: 449, “Carta de los miembros de la Comunidad Agraria de Magdalena al Gobernador Interino del Estado,” 6 May 1927.

surrounding *ranchos* to attract people to the Cristero Rebellion. While he proved unsuccessful in this effort, the community thought it pertinent to label Díaz as a “proven fanatic” who was only waiting for rebel groups to come closer to Magdalena to join their ranks. Their assumptions were not unfounded, however, because when he was eventually arrested and jailed a search of his house revealed a small stockpile of guns and ammunition. As a result, the community asked the state government to punish this individual “as he truly deserves.” They premised this demand upon the fact that if the state government honored their request, it would be eliminating with concrete actions an active threat to the pacification of the town “[w]ith the goal of teaching a lesson to men that have always been against the Government.”<sup>90</sup>

In the fall of 1927, Feliciano Morán, president of the administrative committee of the agrarian community of Ayutla, wrote President Calles to inform him of the current affairs of his community. As of mid-January, it had found itself dealing with a “subversive movement led by Catholic Clergy and the landowners of the country [all of whom had] the objective of overthrowing the Government [...] and destroying the Conquests obtained by the Mexican people [...]” While Morán praised the efforts of the Federal Government in helping to disperse the *cristeros* into smaller groups, he lamented the fact that many of them still dedicated themselves solely to assaulting small villages and targeting those populations where agrarian communities resided. Morán continued:

[And] they surely do this because of the affinity that exists between the *campesino* groups of the country and the revolutionary Government of the Republic, [and as a result they] continue pursuing and assassinating [agrarias] with an irrational hatred (*odio africano*) without there being

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<sup>90</sup> AHJ, G-15-927, Gobernación, Seguridad Pública, Inventario: 32754, Caja: 449, “Carta de los miembros de la Comunidad Agraria de Magdalena al Gobernador Interino del Estado,” 6 May 1927.

no [just cause], [and] when we have the misfortune of falling into the hands of those popularly called ‘cristeros’ [they never] pardon the life of an agrarista.<sup>91</sup>

With regard to his own town of Ayutla, Morán claimed that the town was overtaken by a group of “fanatics” since September 1926. These individuals comprised a contingent of approximately two hundred men and remained unmolested by the federal army. This region, in particular, had become a rebel stronghold sympathetic to the Catholic cause, to the point that the *agraristas* of Ayutla, Cuautla, Tepantla, Puerta Colorada, Tepospisaloya, Juchitlán, Tenamaxtlán, and Tecolotlán had to emigrate from their towns and seek refuge in other parts of the state because it became nearly impossible to remain in their homes: “[W]e have lost our crops [and] as a result we have been reduced to the most painful misery, wandering through the fields of many of our companions, as if we were wild animals and harmful to those who tenaciously pursue [us].” While Morán’s letter implored President Calles to impart guarantees to the agrarian communities of the region, he reiterated that promptness in this matter was of utmost importance because many children and women continued to perish due to the “outlandish savagery” committed by the defenders of the Catholic religion. These individuals were described as “nothing more than bandits disguised as sacristans and misguided ignoramuses that want[ed] to install a new regime [which] in these moments is impossible to [install].” The “reaction” in this region, according the Morán, worked tirelessly to destroy all the liberal laws that had been dictated by previous and current administrations. Much of their effort

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<sup>91</sup> AGN, O-C, 428-J-10, f. 65.

was dedicated to betraying the government, apostatizing revolutionary principles, and disrupting the established social order.<sup>92</sup>

Well into the following year, the terror *agraristas* faced in this region had not dissipated, nor had they received arms from government officials to combat the *cristeros* effectively. In May 1928, for example, Severiano Hernández from Tepospisaloya, near Ayutla, expressed frustration over the lack of weapons and protection that had been afforded to his community:

The Cristero fanatics do not let us exist in our homes or at work. We campesinos find ourselves fleeing to the hills for lack of weapons, and we want to know if we have any real guarantees of security or not? Because we can no longer endure these assassinations, and therefore everybody in this community asks you if in fact we have been tricked by the [state] militia organizer? Or was this a government conspiracy for the [religious] fanatics to finish us off and exterminate our defenseless families?<sup>93</sup>

That same month, individuals from the Lagunillas area (municipality of Autlán) also complained to authorities that it was impossible for *campesinos* to work in their fields due to the frequency with which rebel bands interrupted them: “[And] as a result they are forced to move to Autlán and abandon their fields [because] they lack the arms they need to defend themselves [and to] help the Supreme Government combat the fanatic rebels, [which] is their desire.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> AHJ, G-4-1927, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, Caja 12, Carta de Feliciano Morán, Presidente del Comité Particular Administrativo de la Comunidad de Ayutla, al Presidente de la República, 11 October 1927.

<sup>93</sup> Cuevas, p. 207.

<sup>94</sup> AHMA, Sección 6, Año 1928, 1 May 1928.



The larger takeaway here is that while *agraristas* continued to be willing and able supporters of the postrevolutionary state and wanted to defend its advancements in the countryside, they frequently lacked the means and weapons to actually defend themselves or coordinate any meaningful attacks. This reflected a paradox of sorts; that is, while the state needed *agraristas* to fight their political adversaries, the *cristeros*, they were at the same time also mistrustful of the *agraristas* themselves because state authorities feared they might join the Catholic cause. As the reader will recall, the opening anecdote of this chapter, which narrated the hanging of *agrarista* turned *cristero*, Leandro Cayetano, does much to illustrate these fears in action. While not a common occurrence, the threat of *agraristas* betraying the state existed and this was enough in the eyes of the state to initially delay arming some partisans at the start of the rebellion. But when the rebellion began to pick up steam and the government found itself embroiled in another rebellion in the north of the country, such fears had to be abandoned. The fact that in May 1928 some weapons had still not arrived to agrarian communities, perhaps, has more to do with a lack of supplies and man-power to deliver them, than with an unwillingness on the part of the state to take a chance on *agraristas*.

### **Governance in Times of Crisis**

From the moment Daniel Benítez won the September 1926 election, to when he officially assumed the governorship on 1 March 1927, the opposing faction led by former Governor Zuno remained overwhelmingly in control of the state legislature, the municipal government of Guadalajara, and a significant number of municipal administrations in the countryside. In fact, Benítez himself complained to President Calles on several occasions about the difficulties of effectively governing in the face of

the current political climate. On the occasion of his election, for example, he claimed that several commissions from the countryside had visited him: “[W]hen they returned to their towns the commissions that came [to Guadalajara] to greet me, were, in many places received with gunshots by their [own] Municipal Authorities, abuses that I have not been able to [deal with] because the State lacks forces and funds [with which] to organize them [...]” Consequently, Governor Benítez feared that the municipal administrations loyal to the previous regime would turn on him, begin an uprising, wreck havoc in Guadalajara, and retreat to Tequila “where there exists more than eighty armed Zuno supporters.”<sup>95</sup>

The governor admitted that he would not be able to carry out any of his proposed reforms and programs without first having definitively defeated the difficulties facing his administration: “Once I achieve this, I will again initiate tours [around the state] to acquaint myself with the needs of the communities, workers, and people in general.”<sup>96</sup>

Despite Benítez’s good intentions his stint as governor lasted only a month and three weeks before the State Legislature impeached him on 21 April 1927 and named Margarito Ramírez as substitute governor. “[H]e [Benítez] could accomplish nothing because of the tremendous opposition to everything he undertook,” noted Consul Dwyre, and that all of the present indications pointed towards the new regime imposing new taxes to replenish the already depleted.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> AGN, O-C-, 428-J-10, ff, 6-9, 10 April 1927.

<sup>96</sup> AGN, O-C-, 428-J-10, ff, 6-9, 10 April 1927.

<sup>97</sup> SD, 812.00/28422, “Review of Political, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, and General Conditions for the Months of April, 1927, Guadalajara Consular District, Mexico,” 30 April 1927.

Over the course of the rebellion, Jalisco continued to experience a great deal of political turmoil at the state level. But the ascent of Ramírez to the governorship greatly altered the prevailing power structure of the region as a public split between him and Zuno soon materialized.<sup>98</sup> The municipal elections slated for December 1927 provided the appropriate theatre in which Ramírez was hoping to turn his new found independence from Zuno into an electoral victory for his supporters. With regard to the sudden turn of events, the American consul observed that the election at first glance had but little importance beyond that of a local struggle, given that both Zuno and Ramírez were ardent supporters of Obregón, who earlier in the year decided to seek an unprecedented second term. Dwyre wrote: “[I]t is the feeling of the keenest observers in this locality [...] that the apparent perfect accord at Mexico City between President Calles and General Obregón fails by far to represent the true situation between them and their individual ambitions.” And if such a break were to happen, Zuno’s influence in the region and support be much more useful to Obregón. The municipal election in Guadalajara, however, spelled defeat for Zuno and his supporters since Governor Ramírez gained a tremendous amount of political strength in the course of the proceedings, while Zuno “lost strength with such rapidity that he gave up the active campaign [...] and retired to the city of Tequila sometime before the actual elections took place.”<sup>99</sup> Over the course of the next year Ramírez did something that Zuno refused to do, actually engaging President

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<sup>98</sup> SD, 812.00/28630, “The Political situation in the State of Jalisco,” 12 August 1927.

<sup>99</sup> SD, 812.00/29048, “Political affairs; Movements in the selection of a Mayor for Guadalajara,” 20 December 1927; SD, 812.00/29074, “Political Affairs; Elections of Mayor of Guadalajara,” 3 January 1928.

Calles, making frequent trips to Mexico City, regularly informing him on matters in Jalisco, and discussing the state of the Cristero Rebellion with him.

In what follows, I observe how local governance functioned at the outbreak of the Cristero Rebellion. In this section I am much more interested in underscoring what municipal administrations and government employees complained and worried about, than in providing a comprehensive narrative of the rebellion in the countryside. I have chosen to give credence to letters or reports that for the most part were addressed to state authorities. I must admit that the documents selected, perhaps, present a partisan view of the rebellion given that they reflect the apprehensions and concerns of only a privileged few; however, it is exactly those individuals, who exercised state power at the most basic level on the totem pole, that I am most interested in analyzing. Governance here, then, is understood as evoking a more pluralistic pattern of rule than government; that is, I am not as interested in highlighting how state institutions enact it, but rather with the “processes and interactions that tie the state to civil society” in moments of crisis and unrest.<sup>100</sup>

Below, I emphasize three categories, which continuously appeared in my sources and that concerned supporters of the state: 1) the prevalence of the *Unión Popular*; 2) the role of tax collectors in the countryside; and 3) how municipal authorities and their constituents processed and reacted to the rebellion.

### *The Unión Popular*

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<sup>100</sup> Mark Bevir, *Democratic Governance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 1

A priest from Huejucar named Ventura Montoya frequently visited the hamlet of Tlacosahua, near the northern outpost of Mezquitic, on Sundays and during the week. His stated goal was to organize a local chapter of the *Unión Popular*, which in recent years had established itself as an important propaganda organization linking Guadalajara with the urban outposts of the countryside. These efforts had been on-going since February of 1926, but once local authorities got wind of Montoya's activities, the priest began to change his tune and claimed that his visits simply had the intention of collecting information regarding the number of Catholics that existed in the country. Not content with the priest's claim, the commissioner of the hamlet reported to authorities that the priest had actually preached to residents about the government being an enemy of their religion, branding those individuals serving the government as adversaries of the Church. The priest made clear that partisans of the state should be shunned and not included in his organization:

[T]he employees and supporters of this town, should not take part in this *Unión* because they are enemies and have to be combatted, not with arms but by isolating them [...that is] who ever is a merchant, do not buy [from] him, the artisan[,] do not use [his services], [and] the boss[,] do not serve him.<sup>101</sup>

The priest consistently referred to the Constitution as a hodgepodge created by a bunch of brutes, who simply attack “our Holy Religion and prohibited us from religiously teaching our children [...]” Montoya had recently doubled down on his attacks, stressing that there should be no government schools and that the residents of Tlacosahua should prepare for war against the enemies of the Church. Additionally, the commissioner

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<sup>101</sup> AHJ, G-4-1926, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, 29 May 1926.

claimed that the members of this organization consistently engaged in slander and attempted publicly to defame authorities. The commissioner thought it pertinent, therefore, to point out that these threats should not be ignored because there were very few people in the local *Unión Popular* that were genuinely good people.<sup>102</sup>

The prevalence of the *Unión Popular* in a small remote hamlet near the northern limits of the state was no accident. As Jrade has noted, the *Unión Popular* played an important role linking the urban areas to the countryside, fundamentally serving to transform what had previously been isolated rebellions into a larger mass upheaval with an incipient organizational network.<sup>103</sup> Prior to the outbreak of violence, this organization primarily served as the propaganda mouthpiece of Anacleto González Flores and concentrated its efforts around the distribution of its newsletter, *Gladium*. After the *Ley Calles* went into effect (31 July 1926), religious services were suspended and the rebellions broke out, the organization relied on its existing propaganda network to mobilize support in urban outposts and in remote rural communities against the government's anticlerical reforms. "This course of action, adopted by associational contenders who sought to regain Catholic participation in the public arena," writes Jrade, "proved to be an inadequate outlet of protest for rural communities that were rapidly losing control over traditional bases of power [...and] as local groups resolved to express

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<sup>102</sup> AHJ, G-4-1926, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, 29 May 1926.

<sup>103</sup> Jrade, pp. 59-60.

their grievances with bullets, local representatives of the Popular Union often joined the mobilization efforts.”<sup>104</sup>

The increasing visibility and presence of the *Unión Popular* in the countryside began to worry local authorities and officials. The municipal president of Tepatitlán de Morelos, in the Los Altos region—an area that would later become an epicenter of the rebellion—displayed an uneasiness about the *Unión Popular*, “whose motto is not to comply with government dispositions.” Consequently, those belonging to the defense league did not pay taxes to the *Receptoría de Rentas*; fueled the boycott against the authorities and some businesses; and pushed for parents not to enroll their children in government-run schools. In September, when classes began for the year no students showed up in school. To convince parents to send their children, the municipal president of the town threatened to fine residents if they did not send them. While some acceded to the wishes of the mayor, the majority did not, which forced him to take the following actions: “In light of this I imposed a fine within the limits that the Constitution establishes, which they also refused to pay, preferring to remain detained for four days [...]” And in an effort to make sure these individuals neither paid their fines nor sent their children to official schools, the *Unión Popular* offered food and funds to support their families. The municipal president of the town, nevertheless, remained concerned about the recent reports he had received regarding the intention of various individuals from the town who planned to overthrow his administration, which forced him to implement strict surveillance over the town in order to avoid a surprise.

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<sup>104</sup> Jade, p. 187.

Federal Deputy Ascención de la Cruz wrote to the Ministry of Interior on 28 December 1926 to disclose that Catholics in Zapotlán del Rey continued freely to carry out propaganda against the federal government, and to report that the interests of the revolutionary *campesinos* were greatly threatened. Moreover, he maintained that at the helm of these efforts was the parish priest, who led the *Unión Popular* in the town and enjoyed impunity because he was in agreement (inaccurately, as it proved) with local authorities.<sup>105</sup> In this particular case Municipal President Narcisco Soto did not take kindly to accusations labeling his administration sympathetic to the Catholic cause. On 8 January, Soto reassured the governor that he had in fact maintained order in the zone under his management and that in Zapotlán del Rey there existed no propaganda against the federal government. Soto claimed that since 31 July 1926—that is, when the *Ley Calles* came into effect—all the Catholics of his region had complied with the law, and that within the municipality of his charge there had been no specific cases registered of persecution against *campesinos*. The accusations were brushed off as nothing more than mere slander promoted by a small group of discontented politicians who because of their “unpopularity and their delirium to come to power, try to surprise the superior authorities [in order] to create difficulties for the administration I preside [over].” Soto pointed out that there were five agrarian communities in the municipality and that none of the *agrarista* commissioners had expressed complaints to him; rather, each one of them backed the action of his administration. “Those who have resorted to complaining to the Ministry of Interior are false revolutionaries,” emphasized Soto, “as well as false

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<sup>105</sup> AHJ, Clasificación, G-4-1926, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, “El C. Ascención de la Cruz, Diputado al Congreso de la Unión, se dirige a esta Secretaría,” 28 December 1926.



*agraristas*, who were expelled from [their respective communities] for being drunks and exploiters of the *camepsino* [and continue to hold resentment] because their ambitious were not satisfied [...].”<sup>106</sup> A few month later, members of the agrarian community of Aguatlán (located in Zapotlán del Rey), however, continued to complain about the actions of the municipal administration, specifically denouncing Soto as an accomplice to the actions of the agitators in the area.<sup>107</sup>

### *Tax Collectors*

In the second half of the 1920s and beyond, Mexico increasingly (and with added zeal) sought a centralized form of governance, where local politicians were willing to empower the central government and forgo fiscal authority in return for appealing political careers.<sup>108</sup> And as we have seen, in Jalisco the process of centralization encountered strong resistance from regional politicians who themselves championed a federalist system of governance and argued for local institutional sovereignty. The Constitution of 1917 established a federalist system of governance, which, as Díaz-Cayeros has noted, is defined by two necessary and sufficient categories: 1) provincial jurisdictions functioning independently from the center; and 2) that the provinces enjoy inherent fiscal authority. “This definition highlights, however, the conditions of representation and taxation found in federal systems,” write Díaz-Cayeros, “[t]o the

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<sup>106</sup> AHJ, Clasificación, G-4-1926, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, “Carta escrita por el Presidente Municipal Narcisco Soto,” 8 January 1927.

<sup>107</sup> AHJ, G-4-1927, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, Caja 12, “Carta de los originarios y vecinos de Aguatlán al Gobernador del Estado,” 17 March 1927.

<sup>108</sup> Díaz-Cayeros, Alberto, *Federalism, Fiscal Authority, and Centralization in Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp 1-2 and 9.

extent that state executives are the product of state elections and, once in office, possess an independent tax base, one case say they reside in a federal regime.”<sup>109</sup> It was in this milieu, then, that tax collectors in the countryside became important cogs in the machine for the state government, especially during the period of economic instability that predated the Great Depression. But tax collectors, as we shall see, experienced greater difficulties with regard to carrying out the duties required of their positions in light of the economic boycott underway in the countryside, and because of their association with the state. The histories of these individual reveal much about daily life in times of unrest, and their anxieties illustrate concerns over how power was exercised within the towns where they worked. Let us briefly turn to the representative experiences of the *subreceptor de Rentas* in Ayo el Chico and Puerto Vallarta, and the *receptor interino* in Unión de San Antonio.

On 10 September 1926, the *subreceptor de rentas* of Ayo el Chico, in the Los Altos region, wrote the head of military operations to express his dissatisfaction after learning that the municipal president attempted to distort facts, making it appear as if the “fanatic clergymen” and citizens of the town had not incurred in any wrong doing. The tax collector wanted to put on record a detailed history of what actually transpired in the town with the goal of revealing that the municipal president of Ayo el Chico was sympathetic to the Catholic cause. When the *Ley Calles* came into effect a religious league was formed and a boycott was implemented. This led many residents to abstain from buying good and paying taxes. The municipal president publicly supported their

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<sup>109</sup> Díaz-Cayeros, pp. 9-10.

efforts and also the actions of the clergy. He even went to great lengths to suspend the concert including salaries that the local municipal band performed every week. Not long after these initial incidents, a scandalous manifestation with a deeply religious character began gathering and eventually poured out into the streets of the town. The *subreceptor* made clear that this was not a one-time occurrence in the town: “[Last week on Sunday] at around six in the afternoon, after numerous [rumors] circulated about a possible uprising [...] about three hundred men with banners, accompanied by 15 individuals armed with rifles, marched and chanted [in the direction of] the temple.” During the course of the demonstration, the *subreceptor* was sought after and signaled out as the only individual in the town who was an enemy of their religion and defense league. As a result, he was immediately to abandon the town. The *subreceptor* lamented the fact that circumstances were such that the municipal president had to subject his acts to the approval of the clergy. But he remained positive that the situation prevailing in the town could change if a military detachment was deployed to maintain order and protect the employees of the state that actually backed the orders of government in this conflict: “[B]ecause I doubt that the [municipal] president [of Ayo el Chico] can obtain approval from the clergy to impart them to us [government employees].”<sup>110</sup>

Francisco Ayala, a parish priest in the coastal town of Puerto Vallarta, also held considerable clout, but actually rose up in arms and attracted a group of “fanatics” to support his actions. According to the *subreceptor* such actions resulted in considerable damages to general commerce and led to the theft of 2,530.00 pesos of revenue, which

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<sup>110</sup> AHJ, Clasificación, G-4-1926, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, “Al C. Jefe de Operaciones Militares en el Estado,” 10 September 1926.

had been collected in the form of taxes. The *subreceptor* claimed that the parish priest owned two urban properties in Puerto Vallarta (which he denied). The properties were instead registered in the cadaster under J. Refugio Gutiérrez, but it was publicly known that Father Ayala financed their construction. It was perhaps the accumulation of the abuses committed by the bold parish priest that drove the *subreceptor* of Puerto Vallarta to write the governor, but his annoyance over the manner in which municipal authorities dealt with the matter clearly underscored his complaints. The tax collector made his criticism of municipal authorities quite clear: “[I]t is truly impossible to support the tolerance that municipal authorities have for everything that happens, since they [municipal authorities all had] knowledge that the uprising was being conceived and that seditious propaganda was being printed.”<sup>111</sup>

On March 1927, *Receptor Interino* Isidoro Morales Palafox reported a vivid encounter with three hundred rebels in Unión de San Antonio. Under the command of the famed “El Catorce” and another individual named Miguel, the rebels entered the town at the precise moment Palafox conducted his office hours. He was informed at 13:30 p.m. that the rebels were a mere three blocks away; he managed successfully to close the door, and gain entrance to a house across the street. In the process, however, he left behind several important documents, including: two volumes of the cadaster; eight property deeds, which had yet to be processed and taxed accordingly; and other essential books that were used to settle tax issues and write reports. In the ensuing moments, Palafox overheard that the rebels were after him and, as a result, changed hiding places three

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<sup>111</sup> AHJ, Clasificación, G-4-1927, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, Caja 12, “Transcribe oficio del Subreceptor de Rentas de Puerto Vallarta, en que informa bienes que posee un Cura rebelde,” 4 May 1927.

times until he felt safe at the house of José de Jesús López “[who] showed himself to be more than kind to the person who speaks and offered him whatever he could so that he could be calm.” After repeatedly being assured of the rebels’ departure from the town, Palafox returned to his office in the company of the municipal president and his secretary, only to find it completely destroyed. The door had been unhinged and several important documents destroyed, including those containing fiscal data. They also ran off with at least nine hundred pesos in federal tax receipts and several revenue-sealed sheets of paper belonging to the *Registro Civil*.<sup>112</sup>

While at the time of writing the letter to the state government, the tax collector had only been on the job in Unión de San Antonio for two months, his “ten or twelve” years of experience made him realize that order in this town would not be reestablished any time soon. Given this close encounter, he felt obliged to offer some concrete suggestions about how the government could make his job easier. First and foremost, he deemed it necessary to establish a competent armed detachment in the region so as to inhibit the boycott, which had affected the amount of revenue he collected because many Catholics refused to pay taxes, making his job “unsustainable.” According to the tax collector, the rebels insisted that any tax payments made to him would be void and because the town largely supported the rebellion, residents believed the rebels. Second, he suggested that his position in Unión de San Antonio be converted into a permanent post in order effectively to gain the respect of town’s residents: “I have placed my life in

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<sup>112</sup> AHJ, Clasificación, G-4-1927, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, Caja 12, “El C. Isidoro Morales Palafox Receptor Interino de Unión de San Antonio en oficio sin número,” 11 March 1927.

danger several times [and because of this] I ask you to [...] act in my [favor] since I believe to have the right [...] to be taken into account for a job where I have sufficient guarantees to [safely] work [...].” If such an agreement could not be reached, the *receptor interino* asked that he be sent back to his old post in Teocuitatán de Corona. The tax collector proceeded to warn the government of the former *Receptor* Aurelio Pérez Muñoz, a sympathizer of the Catholic movement, who was in agreement with rebel leaders. Palafox warned that if he was indeed replaced, his successor should know that Muñoz served as a rebel conduit and used his previous experience as a tax collector to collect funds from the residents, which were then given to rebel groups in order to aid the triumph of the “sacred cause.”<sup>113</sup>

#### *Municipal Administrations*

When the Constitutionalist Revolution triumphed in 1914, Venustiano Carranza granted the municipalities of Jalisco political and administrative autonomy, a practice later enshrined in principle in the Constitution of 1917. “The consequences of municipal self-government in Jalisco were as far-reaching as those of revolutionary agrarianism and religious segmentation,” argues Jade, “[...the] consolidation of Revolutionary power depended upon the control of municipal governments, but political rivalries among Revolutionary factions assured that municipal politics were shaped, at least initially by internal community developments.”<sup>114</sup> While Guadalajara remained an important site of political contestation in the years that followed, Zuno, in his time as governor, knew this

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<sup>113</sup> AHJ, Clasificación, G-4-1927, Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, Caja 12, “El C. Isidoro Morales Palafox Receptor Interino de Unión de San Antonio en oficio sin número,” 11 March 1927.

<sup>114</sup> Jade, p. 151.

principle all too well: that real political power in fact resided in controlling the countryside. To this end, after the de la Huerta Rebellion Zuno replaced the majority of officials in municipal administrations in the countryside with loyal supporters.<sup>115</sup> By the same token, the imposition of *zunista* supporters into municipal posts also led to internal community struggles for control of the municipality. But as we shall see, regardless of whether municipal authorities were imposed or not, they still had to govern—or at least provide the illusion of doing so—and, at some point, had to confront the on going violence of the countryside.

In October 1926, the municipal administrations of San Marcos and Etzatlán were both troubled by the recent actions undertaken by rebel groups. On 10 October 1926, in a letter to state authorities the municipal president of Etzatlán reported that his town had been attacked by a group of Catholics who shouted “Viva Cristo Rey.”<sup>116</sup> The following day, Alberto Rodríguez, the municipal president of San Marcos (which borders Etzatlán) wrote to the governor to shed greater insight on the incident, specifically revealing that the intended target of the assailants was the municipal building of Etzatlán. The San Marcos municipal president reported that Catholic groups not only violently wrestled weapons from the municipal police force, but also left various officers gravely wounded. “[I] fear that any minute now due to the excitement of the fanatics of this place the same thing will happen again,” feared Rodríguez, “even though the precautionary measures [with respect to] the case have already been taken [...] I respectfully entreat you *señor* to

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<sup>115</sup> See Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>116</sup> AHJ, Clasificación, G-4-1926 Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, “El C. Presidente Municipal de Etzatlán dice lo siguiente,” 10 October 1926.

interpose your valuable influence, to the effect that this town be granted a [military] detachment.”<sup>117</sup> Meanwhile that same month, the municipal president of Tuxpan, Luis Reyes, reported that four hundred women took possession of the local church, which had previously been closed, broke the seals, and unlocked doors. They proceeded to storm the streets of the town to beat the drum of rebellion, bellowing “death to the constituted Government,” attacking agraristas, and assaulting public employees at their private residences. Reyes complained that he lacked the necessary assurances to reduce the disorders currently taking place in his municipality. He, too, asked state authorities to send in a federal force, but with the objective of “imposing an order to evict the people who have seized [the churches] and proceed to apprehend those responsible.”<sup>118</sup>

Near the northern shores of Lake Chapala, the municipal presidents of Ocotlán and Jamay wrote a joint letter to the state government to defend their respective administrations from what they deemed false accusations that detractors had recently leveled at their administrations. First, they claimed that it was simply not true that the *ayuntamiento* of Jamay was comprised of individuals with religious sympathies, but rather that they had in fact done all they could to enforce the laws “which govern us.” The mayors continued emphasizing that it was false that the *Presidente del Comité Administrativo* of the agrarian community of Jamay had 50 armed men under his command. While they hoped this to be true, they admitted that he only counted upon the

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<sup>117</sup> AHJ, Clasificación, G-4-1926 Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, “Carta escrita por el Presidente Municipal Alberto Rodríguez al Gobernador,” 12 October 1926.

<sup>118</sup> AHJ, Clasificación, G-4-1926 Gobernación, 4-Iglesia, “El Presidente de Tuxpan, en mensaje fechado el día de ayer,” 9 October 1926.



cooperation of four or five members to safeguard the interests of the community and, if need be, lend a hand to protect the town. Second, the municipal presidents claimed it was not true that resident Francisco Franco's defense force was comprised of individuals disloyal to the government. On the contrary, Franco sought and had been granted special permission by military and municipal authorities for the task, and had a few men under his orders. The mayors doubled down on their support for Franco: "His work at the head of said men has been approved by said authorities from the moment in which he has dedicated himself, not to harass liberal individuals, as they falsely affirm, but rather to combat the bands that assault the roads and [those] who are hostile to the Government."<sup>119</sup>

The municipal presidents jointly argued that their word should be trusted because they had for nine years, more or less, unwaveringly identified with liberal individuals and "also revolutionaries with advanced ideas" and, as a result, had consistently struggled against the clergy and the rich landowners. "[We] repeat that it would please us if a meticulous investigation be done [to verify] our conduct [...] to the effect that it can be proven that we are very far from being defenders of the interests of the clergy, whom we have combatted [...]."<sup>120</sup> The following month Agent Amalia Díaz specifically investigated the municipal president of Ocotlán, Indalecio Ramírez, to find out if his administration had indeed developed any actions against current Governor Benítez. Díaz

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<sup>119</sup> AHJ, Gobernación, 1927, S.C., Caja 15, "Al Srío. de Gobernación procedente de Ocotlán y Jamay, y firmados por los C.C. Presidentes respectivos," 17 March 1927.

<sup>120</sup> AHJ, Gobernación, 1927, S.C., Caja 15, "Al Srío. de Gobernación procedente de Ocotlán y Jamay, y firmados por los C.C. Presidentes respectivos," 17 March 1927.

reported that the area remained a steadfast bastion of support for former governor Zuno, that Ramírez himself was nothing more than an illiterate simpleton who was a puppet of *zunismo* in Guadalajara, and that members of the municipal administration took advantage of many of these connections to further themselves.

This example from the Lake Chapala area, however, offers us additional insight into local competing political factions that *both* supported the national government and *both* opposed the *cristeros*. *Ayuntamiento* Secretary Manuel Muñoz, the ex-municipal president of La Barca related by kinship with Zuno falsely represented himself as a major in the army, and turned a secretarial position into a leadership role in the *defensa social*, “which is comprised of *agraristas* that are unconditionally affiliated with *zunismo* [...]” In order to maintain such a group, the municipal administration imposed a daily tax on all establishments and proprietors and which aggravated many residents of the town.<sup>121</sup> While the members of the municipal administration in Ocotlán showed no sympathy for the reactionary and conservative forces, as their letters to Governor Benítez make clear, they did demonstrate an affinity for making money on the side. Secretary Muñoz and his associates, for example, had recently entered the cattle rustling business: “They currently slaughter stolen livestock [and] the leader of this operation is an individual named Luis who has the best meat establishment in the [local] market.” Agent Díaz emphasized that the municipal authorities of Ocotlán were handpicked and imposed by Nicolás Rangel Guerrero, ex-municipal president of Guadalajara, with the intention of securing individuals loyal to Zuno’s political movement. These loyalists were in turn provided

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<sup>121</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-13 (3.2), “Confidencial,” Caja 215, Exp. 3, ff. 9-10, 2 April, 1927.

with orders on how they should run their administrative affairs. This proved to be especially alarming since Díaz also claimed that Rangel Guerrero's efforts were prodigious as he played an equally decisive role in other municipalities around the state.<sup>122</sup>

The municipal administration of Autlán was kept especially busy throughout the duration of the conflict. On 24 May 1927, the municipal president wrote to Governor Benítez to reveal the presence of an armed "defense" group comprised of individuals "that I do not consider supporters of the Supreme Government of the Republic." The municipal president warned that in forming themselves into a defense group, they had not taken municipal authority into account as the law ordered but were instead acting on their own accord. What worried the mayor, however, was that the defense group was manned by some members of the municipal police force, which was supposed to remain under his command, who had ceased carrying out their evening patrols. This caused the municipal administration many problems, since disorders the police would normally deal with went unattended, such as the robbery of the small shop "La Media Pila." As a result of the recent crime wave, the municipal president wanted clarification from authorities: "If the [aforementioned] Defense or group of people is acting in accordance with Federal Authorities [...] it should also operate in accordance with me so that I can [adequately] organize [the public order] and make use of patrol service in the town." The mayor continued, revealing that if he expressed ignorance over whether this defense was working with the federal army, it was because he had been previously told that a place

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<sup>122</sup> AGN, DGIPS, 313.1-13 (3.2), "Confidencial," Caja 215, Exp. 3, ff. 9-10, 2 April 1927.

like Autlán, which was classified as a city, had a sufficient number of inhabitants to mount a defense in case of an attack; therefore, it required no official defense group.<sup>123</sup>

In addition to dealing with what appeared to be a revolting police force, the municipal president also received complaints from many constituents in the municipality of Autlán. The letter he received from the elder indigenous residents and representatives of Telcruz, for example, was especially revealing. On August 29, they wrote to the municipal president to complain of unjustly being rounded up by the Heads of the *Acordadas* of Ayotitlán, Arnulfo Elías and José Roblada, and transferred to the city of Autlán. “[They] do not afford us guarantees as citizens and are threatening us [as if we were] enemies,” complained the representatives, “and we are suffering with our small animals in a field that is very reduced [and we have] also left our fields without cultivating them [...]” They had taken all of their arms away and promised to protect them, but never fulfilled their guarantees. After detailing the numerous exchanges and abuses they had encountered over the year, they asked the municipal president not to allow Elías to return to their town, requesting that his weapons be taken away because his followers were not men who afforded guarantees to peaceful and hardworking residents. Rather, men like Elías only acted on their own accord, only bringing harm upon the community: “[His] soldiers are very disorderly[,] commit abuses with their arms, [and] sweep women away [...]” The municipal president, perhaps, could not do much to alleviate the struggles the indigenous peoples of Telcruz faced, but he at least attempted

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<sup>123</sup> AHMA, Sección 6, Año 1927, 24 May 1927.

to bring this matter to the attention of competent authorities, subsequently sending a transcript of what had transpired to General Manuel Ávila Camacho.<sup>124</sup>

The municipal president continued to write state officials well into the fall. On 21 October 1927, for example, he claimed that about six-hundred armed men assaulted the *rancherías* of Rincón de Luisa, Bellavista, and Lagunillas, located in his jurisdiction. To the cry of “Viva Cristo Rey,” the attackers ransacked the houses and proceeded to burn a majority of them, leaving the *campesinos* who resided in these areas in “complete misery.” The populations did not suffer any deaths because they had enough time to leave their homes, however, but did complain that the rebels knocked down several of their corrals, which allowed cattle to invade the fields of several *ejidatarios*. “I believe it my duty to let you know that the federal forces that protect the region are not sufficient to battle [...the] rebels [...],” observed the municipal president, “[and] I see the need for sending more forces to this zone.” To prevent such an occurrence, the municipal president claimed already to have organized a defense under his own command in the most populated area of Autlán, consisting of about twenty five or thirty-men, in addition to counting upon the help of government employees and some members of the agrarian community.<sup>125</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the Cristero Rebellion in Jalisco, which again greatly challenged the prevailing social order of the period. I specifically analyzed it within the

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<sup>124</sup> AHMA, Sección 6, Año 1927, 15 September 1927.

<sup>125</sup> AHMA, Sección 6, Año 1928, 21 October 1927.

context of deeply entrenched patterns of local violence and the political cultures that predated (and survived) the rebellion. In the first part of this chapter, I narrated the major events that led to the outbreak of a mass uprising with a distinctly religious character and focused on the establishment of several anticlerical provisions in the Constitution of 1917 and on the Calles administration's efforts to implement them beginning in mid-1926. The second part was divided into two sections and turned attention to how *agraristas*, municipal authorities, and tax-collectors experienced the outbreak of the rebellion. The first section provided an overview of agrarian reform, political identities, and explored the anxieties that agrarian communities expressed to officials; while the second section, attended to letters or reports that reflected the apprehensions of municipal administrations and government employees, and what they complained about to state authorities. Ultimately, I showed how this latest cycle of violence impacted the state's ability to rule effectively in both the countryside and Guadalajara.

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On 12 July 1929 the prelates Ruiz y Flores and Díaz arrived at *Castillo Chapultepec* and were directed to the personal office of President Emilio Portes Gil (1928 to 1930). A lot had changed since the *Ley Calles* had gone into effect three years before. Plutarco Elías Calles was no longer officially president, Álvaro Obregón had been assassinated a couple of months before taking office, and countless country folk had been killed in defense of a way of life. The meeting lasted three hours and forty-five minutes. Both prelates said their goodbyes and were escorted to the park below, where their automobile awaited. National and international journalists attempted to interview the

prelates about what they had discussed with the president, but both refused to make any declarations. Monsignor Ruiz y Flores, as he posed for a picture amidst the multitude of photographers, surreptitiously remarked, “If only you guys could take a picture of the heart, because then you would see and know what we feel in these moments that we cannot say.”<sup>126</sup>

Ten days later, the bells of Catholic churches across the nation, which had remained silent for 1,158 days, once again began to sound, because a solution to the religious conflict had finally been reached.<sup>127</sup> At least 100,000 devout Catholics were reported to have knelt in prayer between daybreak and noon that day at the shrine of the nation’s patroness, the Virgin of Guadalupe. “On entering the church one could see thousands of men, women and children on their knees,” reported a special correspondent to the *New York Times*, “There are no seats or pews [...and each] held a lighted candle as a prayer, in many instances audible, was offered.” Military airplanes were rumored to have dropped printed announcements of the Church-state accord over the state of Jalisco and other regions where religious rebels were still in arms. The insurgents were notified that safe conduct to their homes would be granted to them if they surrendered at once.<sup>128</sup>

In the aftermath of Obregón’s assassination and the Cristero Rebellion, Calles’s presidency was coming to an end but he began to take steps to form the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR), which in years to come would become the national ruling party.

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<sup>126</sup> *El Informador*, “Quedó Solucionado ayer el conflicto religioso,” 13 June 1929.

<sup>127</sup> *El Informador*, “Las campanas de los templos de México se echaron a vuelo en señal de jubilo por arreglo del conflicto religioso,” 23 June 1929.

<sup>128</sup> *New York Times*, “100,000 Mexican kneel at shrine in thanks for peace,” 24 June 1929

Beginning in 1929, the PNR began to propagate a new official historical interpretation of the Revolution, one that combined all the heroes of the revolution into one family: “[T]he revolutionary family combined all those who had fought for the revolution, and particularly leaders such as Madero, Carranza, Obregón, Villa, and Zapata [...but conveniently] for Calles, all five of these leaders had died by assassination.”<sup>129</sup> President Pascual Ortiz Rubio (1930 to 1932) continued elaborating the trope when he wrote a message to municipal presidents in Mexico regarding the celebrations to be held across the entire republic on 20 November 1930 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the start of the Mexican Revolution. “[T]he Government of my charge has endeavored to make sure that the customary festivities now have greater splendor,” read the message, “and to suggest that you dictate provisions as deemed appropriate to ensure that in the whole [municipality] the ceremonies surpass in solemnity those of previous years [...]”<sup>130</sup>

President Ortiz Rubio stressed that despite two decades of constant threats and dangers posed to the revolutionary project, the great majority of citizens should feel a great sense of pride in having contributed to its moral and social conquests, and to the transformation of the nation. “[The celebration that today is imposed is no longer the one that preaches violence[,], division[,], and hatred,” underlined Ortiz Rubio, “[...and] the best way to commemorate its anniversary is to erase old resentments and parties[,], and to forget the divisions [that were] engendered by personal struggles [and] the already spent

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<sup>129</sup> Buchenau, p. 156.

<sup>130</sup> AHMA, Sección 6, 1930, 20 November 1930.



phases of agitation and violence [...].” The old habits of Mexico were to make way for national unity, work, and confidence in the definitive triumph of the Revolution.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> AHMA, Sección 6, 1930, 20 November 1930.

## Chapter 5 Socialist Education and the Second Cristero Rebellion

Children are taught in the government schools that there is no God. They are taught to despise their parents and to look upon the state as the supreme authority in their home life and morals. The persecution grows worse. Many of our fine young sons have been killed. They are being killed, secretly, silently. No man knows when his time may come next . . . . It is of the children [that] we must think. We cannot abandon the children to this program from Moscow. The fires of Bolshevism are burning in Mexico. . . . Men are dying for this now [ . . . ] Men are dying for their faith as Christians died in early Rome. Mexico has become a land of martyrs.

-Archbishop of Guadalajara, Francisco Orozco y Jimenez<sup>1</sup>

On 20 July 1934 former President Plutarco Elías Calles arrived at the Governor's Palace in Guadalajara to deliver a national radio broadcast in front of ten thousand supporters, announcing the dawning of a new era:

[the] revolution has not ended; its enemies are in ambush seeking to turn its triumphs to defeat; it is necessary that we enter the new era of the revolution, which I will call the era of the psychological revolution; we should enter [and] take possession of the minds of the youth, because the youth and children should belong to the revolution.

The *Grito de Guadalajara* as this speech came to be known called upon the “men of the revolution” to rise up and attack its enemies with decisiveness. “[I]t would be sinful [ . . . ] if we did not snatch the youth from the clutches of the clergy, of the clutches of the conservatives [ . . . ],” avowed the general: “[T]he future of the fatherland and of the revolution cannot be placed into enemy hands.” Calles maintained that it was the duty of all governments of the Republic, all authorities of the Republic, and all revolutionary

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<sup>1</sup> State Department (hereinafter referred to as SD), 812.404/1784, “Comment on magazine article,” 24 August 1935.

elements to carry out this definitive battle, “because the youth should belong to the Revolution.”<sup>2</sup>

Not long after Calles delivered his speech in Guadalajara, two federal deputies submitted a bill to reform Article 3 of the Constitution.<sup>3</sup> The proposed amendment intended to bestow upon the state at all levels (federation, states, municipalities) the duty to impart primary, secondary and normal instruction as a public service—with primary instruction being free and obligatory for all citizens. The instruction at these new schools, however, was to be socialist in its orientations. This reform sought, on the one hand, to eliminate “religious dogmatisms and prejudices” in all schools; while, on the other, to put an end to the Church’s role in educating the youth of Mexico.<sup>4</sup> Believing they had been deprived of their rights as citizens, many ex-cristeros<sup>5</sup> once again rose up in arms and retreated to the hills to wage a military campaign against the Mexican state. Come hell, high water, insurmountable casualties, or offerings of peace, these ardent Catholics refused to surrender to what they deemed an unjust federal government that had stolen the riches of the nation and intended to corrupt the souls of their children.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *El Informador*, “Palabras de Calles al Pueblo de Jalisco,” 21 July 1934.

<sup>3</sup> SD, 812.42/269, “Mexican Educational Program.”

<sup>4</sup> *Excelsior*, “El Otro Dogmatismo,” 25 July 1934.

<sup>5</sup> The term, ex-cristeros, refers to the insurgents who fought on the side of the Church during the first Cristero Rebellion; that is, the Church-State conflict of 1926 to 1929. These individuals were known to shout “¡Viva Cristo Rey!” just before they were executed before firing squads. This led to them being called ‘Cristo-Reyes’, which was then subsequently shortened to *cristeros*.

<sup>6</sup> SD, 812.00-REVOLUTIONS/198, “Developments Indicating Possible Revolutionary Activity in the Los Altos Region of Jalisco,” 1 April 1935.

The previous chapter explored how the Calles regime (1924-1928) implemented several anticlerical measures that led to the eruption of a massive upheaval in central-western Mexico with a distinctly religious character, the Cristero Rebellion. It went on to engulf the state of Jalisco for nearly three years, pitting partisans of the state (*agraristas*, local authorities, and government officials) against Catholics defending their way of life. As the reader will recall, I explored how local governance and politics functioned when the prevailing social order was disrupted and violence once again became a feature of everyday life for rural dwellers. The Church and state eventually reached a peace agreement in mid-1929, officially putting an end to the bloodletting. Nevertheless, during the rebellion, as the violence raged on in the countryside, the capital city of Guadalajara also found itself in a critical battle of its own against Mexico City. In the ensuing melee, the political fiefdom of José G. Zuno gave way to the centralizing force of the Calles regime. But it was the assassination of President-elect Alvaro Obregón at the hands of a Catholic militant a year earlier, however, that proved to be the most decisive event in the political development of postrevolutionary Mexico. This tragedy not only consolidated the status of Calles as the new patriarch of the Mexican Revolution, but also afforded him the opportunity to restructure politics on a national level. The creation of the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR) soon followed suit and over the course of the next six years, three leaders—Emilio Portes Gil, Pascual Ortiz Rubio, and Abelardo Rodríguez—served brief terms as president, in a political system in which Calles retained power behind the scenes and ruled the country as *Jefe Máximo*.

This chapter focuses on the implementation of federal schooling policy and explores the rebellions that emerged in its wake, collectively known as the Second

Cristero Rebellion (1934-1940) or colloquially as *La Segunda*. The historical literature on this episode classifies the ensuing violence as a guerilla movement comprised of ragtag bandits who aimlessly besieged the countryside, without a plan or the support of locals.<sup>7</sup> More recent studies, however, have begun to explore the local manifestations of this rebellion in greater depth, revealing a much more nuanced portrait of the mass upheaval and its participants. On the one hand, Adrian Bantjes' regional study on Sonora, for example, understood this conflict as a three-month struggle that occurred within the backdrop of changing and uncertain national politics (e.g. the power struggle between Calles and Cárdenas)—claiming that such violence was symptomatic of just how closely both national and regional politics “intertwined and interacted in unpredictable ways.” This, in turn, according to Bantjes, led to political openings at the local-level in which opposition groups took advantage of to promoted specific agendas.<sup>8</sup> While, on the other, Enrique Guerra Manzo has argued that the rebellion more closely approximated a social movement led by rebels promoting specific political plans, which intended to establish alternative social orders founded upon catholic principles and civil liberties.<sup>9</sup> Yet very

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<sup>7</sup> See Ortoll, “La batalla del cerro” p. 6; Serrano Álvarez, *La batalla del espíritu*, p. 98. Jean Meyer has written that the rebels of the Second Cristero Rebellion, “were no different than the ‘primitive rebels’ that Eric Hobsbawn [writes] of given that they organized [their] protest in a pure state, in a country where protest was now not possible since Calles had organized the new state apparatus [...]” See Hobsbawn, *Primitive Rebels*, p. 5 and Meyer, *La Cristiada*, p. 381. Gil Joseph, however, has provide us with some food for thought noted that the modalities of peasant resistance were not spontaneous or unthinking as Hobsbawn suggested: “they were often inchoate and diffuse [...]and] they frequently aimed to destroy or undermine, actually or symbolically, the dominant class’s authority but proposed no blue print for its replacement.” See Joseph, “On the Trail of Latin American Bandits,” p. 8. We need to go beyond the basic assumption that the insurgents of the Second Cristero Rebellion were mere social bandits: “Indeed, peasant resistance was all about politics—but popular, rather than elite, politics.”

<sup>8</sup> Adrian Bantjes, *As if Jesus Walked on Earth: Cardenismo, Sonora, and the Mexican Revolution* (Wilmington, Del: Scholarly Resources, 1998), pp. 43-56.

<sup>9</sup> Guerra Manzo, “El fuego sagrado,” pp. 514-515.

few studies have actually attempted to analyze the impact of a progressive national reform in a conservative region where Catholics generally followed the orthodox liturgical practices endorsed by the institutional Church, as opposed to the syncretic or folk tradition with strong indigenous strains.<sup>10</sup>

The first part of this chapter explores the debates over the national government's Six-Year Plan on Education during the administration of President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940).<sup>11</sup> Specifically, I look at ideological sites of affirmation and contestation, that is in documents such as editorials and speeches, where elected officials articulate and enact their political beliefs and positions. In the second part I look at how state led efforts to eradicate religious education, at the heart of village life, affected rural communities. I argue that local community grievances, political divisions, and varying degrees of religious sensibilities directly molded the manner in which rural people understood the

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<sup>10</sup> Fallaw, *Religion and State Formation*, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Socialist education in Mexico has been well-studied by national and foreign historians, whose works highlight the relationship between this educational project and forms of resistance to state projects; see María Ann Kelly, "A chapter in Mexican church-state relations: socialist education, 1934-1940" (Phd diss., Georgetown University, 1975); Gilberto Guerra Niebla, ed, *La Educación socialista en México (1934-1945): antología* (Mexico City: Ediciones El Caballito: Secretaría de Educación Pública, Dirección General de Publicaciones, 1985); Susan Quintanilla and Mary Kay Vaughan, eds, *Escuela y sociedad en el periodo cardenista* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997); Mary Kay Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997); Elvia Montes de Oca Navas, *Protagonistas de la educación socialista en el Estado de Méico, 1934-1940* (Zincatepec, México: El Colegio Mexiquense, 1999); *Lázaro Cárdenas: modelo y legado, Vol. 3* (México: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Historicos de las Revoluciones de México, 2009); and Jesús Adolfo Trujillo Holguín, *La educación socialista en Chihuahua 1934-1940: una mirada desde la Escuela Normal del Estado* (Chihuahua, México: Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, 2015). But very few specific studies exist for the important case of Jalisco. The work of Pablo Yankelevich represents one of the few exceptions. With regard to socialist education Yankelevich claims that at the highest administrative levels, the reform was meant to effectuate an absolute subordination of the population to the central state: "however, if that evaluation is extended strictly to [the implementation of the program,] it resulted in a disaster;" see Yankelevich, "La batalla por el dominio," in *Escuela y sociedad en el periodo cardenista*, eds. Susan Quintanilla and Mary Kay Vaughan (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997), pp. 112-113 and 138-139 and *La educación socialista en Jalisco* (Zapopan, Jalisco: El Colegio de Jalisco, 2000).

state's cultural revolution of the 1930s. In what became increasingly a hostile working environment for supporters and representatives of the postrevolutionary state, as rebels and parish priests worked together to undermine federal schooling policy, violence against partisans of the state again became a central story. This ultimately determined whether locals accepted, disregarded, or altered the Six-Year Plan on Education.

### **The National Discourse on Public Education**

The Six-Year Plan, presented at the second national convention of the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* in December 1933, attempted to address what lawmakers considered the four most important problems facing the country: 1) public education; 2) agrarian reform; 3) labor; and 4) communications in the nation's interior. Originally the idea of Calles, the Plan called for "a formulation of a detailed program of action based on reason, statistics, and the lessons of experience."<sup>12</sup> It was officially approved on 3 December and immediately served as the new political platform for the PNR and the government of Mexico. The Plan called for more federal control over schools and the opening of 12,000 new rural schools, providing the following timetable: 1,000 in 1934; 2,000 in each of the years 1935, 1936, 1937, and 1938; and 3,000 during the year 1939. To these were to be added an additional 3,000 rural schools that the federal government would not financially support, but only direct technically and administratively.<sup>13</sup> The education imparted in these schools, however, was to be socialist and secular. And it was

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<sup>12</sup> Dulles, *Yesterday in Mexico*, pp. 551 and 567.

<sup>13</sup> *El Universal*, "Programa de educación que desarrolla el gobierno," 20 July 1934.

precisely this last point that on July 1934 motivated Calles publicly to announce in Guadalajara the dawning of a new era.

After a formal bill was submitted to amend Article 3 of the Constitution, debates surrounding the socialist education program began to gain added importance and traction. On 25 July 1934, in the days following Calles' *Grito de Guadalajara*, both *El Nacional* and *Excelsior* of Mexico City published editorials presenting the pros and cons, respectively, of the education reform. *El Nacional*, the official organ of the PNR, lauded the proposed reform as a means of modernizing the old traditional school system, departing from the dominance of the private Catholic type. It agreed with the view that extending the progressive socialism of the present government to penetrate the thought of the schools was in keeping with "the general tendencies of our present legislation and of our administrative practices [...]." The Revolution was in need of a complete overhaul, according to *El Nacional*, and the great social and political struggles of the past were to be integrated into a concrete ideology that would not only undergird the principles of governmental actions and maintain constitutional order, but would also impart those values onto the younger generation, "which the Fatherland will need in the future."<sup>14</sup>

*Excelsior*, however, took a much more pragmatic view of the recent developments. The editorial presented a series of thought-provoking questions which sought to challenge the hegemony of the state-sponsored initiative: "How are we going to prepare thousands of teachers, [to] all [be] socialists of the same school, in order not to fall into disastrous educational anarchy? How can dogmatism be destroyed with another

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<sup>14</sup> *El Nacional*, "Lo que significa socializar la enseñanza," 25 July 1934.



dogmatism?” The journalist complained that the legislator “must tell us precisely to which socialism he refers, for this is of great importance to the success of the reform.” The socialism to be adopted, therefore, needed to be not of a contradictory or divergent nature, so that the socialism taught in one school would not be different from that in other schools. “To establish another sectarianism is not the way to go about it,” decried the editorial: “[...It] is as logical as committing crime to stop crime; as using alcoholism to put an end to drunkenness; as expecting sensuality to develop chastity; as preaching robbery to do away with thieves [...]” “It would be wise to think of these things,” warned the journalist, “before converting ourselves into pontifices of an infallible dogma.”<sup>15</sup>

On 10 October 1934, the secretary of the chamber presented an objection to the project to reform Article 3 of the Constitution written by a group of deputies and senators, themselves also affiliated with the PNR, who wished not to be judged as undisciplined individuals for not agreeing with the reform, but rather insisted that their actions reflected a desire to debate the issue and make sure that the educational reform aligned more closely with the “historical reality of Mexico.” Echoing many of the sentiments expressed in *Excelsior*, the chief concern of these senators and deputies was confusion over what socialist education actually meant for the country: “[B]ecause the concept that was presented to us about the school is vague and [intellectually] of little substance [since] it limits itself to saying that ‘The education that will be imparted will be socialist...it will provide a culture based on scientific truth...’ [...]”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Excelsior*, “El Otro Dogmatismo,” 25 July 1934.

<sup>16</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” H. Congreso de la

Later that week, Senator Ezequiel Padilla delivered a charged address to the Mexican Senate in response to the critiques leveled at the socialist education program: “The opposition is right,” conceded Padilla, “[the] importance of this reform is not pedagogical [...but has] enormous ideological importance in connection with the Revolution itself.” With the aim of silencing detractors of the reform, Senator Padilla defined Mexican socialism as “an outcry, a protest against [...] social injustice [...] which does not discuss a political, nor uphold a religious[,] banner; the Revolution is a struggle against the condition of exploitation in which the working masses live.” The speech concretely laid out the ideological underpinnings and justification for the intended reform, which among other things included the elimination of intermediaries—that is to say, non-state officials—in order to deliver the dispositions of the Constitution directly to the workers and producers. Additionally, the clergy was singled out as a political faction that all throughout Mexico’s history had controlled “the hearts of the masses.” “Fanaticism must be combatted, religion must be combatted with the book, with education, [and] with persuasion,” declared Padilla. The senator affirmed that the nation was in the midst of a revolutionary dawn and that Mexican socialist doctrine was advancing by gigantic steps.<sup>17</sup> Three days later, the *Jefe Máximo* met with members of the Mexican Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in the city of Cuernavaca to reinforce in them the importance of the socialist education program. Calles lamented that the

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Unión, <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebates/index.html>. Legislatura XXXVI – Año I – Período Ordinario— Número de Diario 17, 10 October 1934.

<sup>17</sup> *El Nacional*, “Discurso del Senador Ezequiel Padilla dado en el Senado Mexicano,” 20 October 1934.

coming generation “to whom we must deliver the sword of the Revolution” was not yet properly prepared. Calles ended the meeting with some sound advice to his fledging *políticos* and insisted that state governors should be stimulated into action “in order to link them with the far-reaching measures which may have to be adopted by the federal government.”<sup>18</sup>

On 30 November 1934, President-elect Lázaro Cárdenas addressed the Chamber of Deputies in Mexico City regarding the education problem facing Mexico and signaled out three changes that had been initiated by the Mexican Revolution. The first centered on the added importance of education and this was reflected by the increased funding apportioned to it in the general budget approved by Mexican Congress.<sup>19</sup> The second change was manifest in the growing number of teachers now present in the country that allowed the government to widen access to popular education considerably; while the third maintained that the revolutionary government had figured upon the most effective manner in which to provide an education to children so that they may understand life within a scientific point of view. Cárdenas continued:

[T]he Socialist School, which my Government will [spur], [will] make education appropriate to the needs and legitimate aspiration [of] the Mexican people [...] not only [by] multiplying and improving educational institutions in the countryside and in the city, but also by specifying its social purpose [and by creating a Socialist School that will allow students to identify with the [struggles] of the proletariat [and] in [that] sense strengthen ties of solidarity [...]. This will create [in] Mexico [...] the

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<sup>18</sup> *Excelsior*, 25 October 1934.

<sup>19</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” H. Congreso de la Unión, <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebate/index.html>. Legislatura XXXVI – Año I – Período Ordinario—Número de Diario 30, 30 November 1934.

possibility of integrating [our] revolutionary [ideology] within a strong economic and cultural [framework].<sup>20</sup>

The socialist school, then, was to step out of its traditional mold and become an active agent of change. These new schools were now to be collaborators of the labor unions, cooperatives, and the agrarian communities of the nation, “and were to combat until destroyed, all of the obstacles that oppose the liberating march of the workers.”<sup>21</sup>

Cárdenas’ rhetoric was not mere ostentatiously chicanery aimed at swaying popular perception in favor of the government proposed program, but was actually put into practice by the Mexican state. At the close of 1935, for example, the Mexican Congress set aside 48,595,000.00 pesos out of a total budget of 287,197,105.15 pesos for ‘Education’ (16.9 percent). ‘Education’ was the second most important expenditure the Mexican state expected to incur that year and was only exceeded by the amount allocated to “War,” which amounted to 69,542,614.59 pesos, or approximately 24.2 percent of the entire budget—hardly surprising, considering the reported increase in hostilities, violence, and rebellion plaguing the countryside of Mexico. The amount apportioned to ‘Education’ becomes even more impressive when it is compared to the other non-war categories funded by the Mexican state, categories more commonly thought to be pillars of postrevolutionary state rule, such as agrarian reform. For example, 6.9 percent (20,000,000.00 pesos) was allocated to ‘Agricultural Credit’ to fund the recently opened

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<sup>20</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” H. Congreso de la Unión, <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebate/index.html>. Legislatura XXXVI – Año I – Período Ordinario—Número de Diario 30, 30 November 1934.

<sup>21</sup> “Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados,” H. Congreso de la Unión, <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebate/index.html>. Legislatura XXXVI – Año I – Período Ordinario—Número de Diario 30, 30 November 1934.

*Banco Nacional de Crédito Ejidal*, 5.2 percent (14,862,056.00 pesos) for ‘Agriculture’, and 2.7 percent (7,857,416.00 pesos) for ‘Agrarian’ matters. And even if one were to combine all three of the agricultural allocations, funding for ‘Education’ still surpasses that category by 5,875,528 pesos.<sup>22</sup>

The socialist education program attempted to remedy what the PNR saw as an enormous ideological and doctrinal divide among the popular masses and the rest of Mexico:

[T]he children, youth and workers of the country, do not receive nor have the social, economic, and political preparation [to] sufficient[ly] and capab[ly] face the harsh problems of our current world. These [individuals] today need, more than ever, to know, in order to orient themselves after the diverse sectors of contemporary social thought. [...] Thus, the socialist character of our teaching obeys the historical transit of the Mexican Revolution, in which the economic and social interests of the great masses of the population, constantly and decidedly struggle for their liberation [against the] exploiters that, in possession of the only property and wealth [of the nation], have made and will [continue to] make their cultural demands impossible.<sup>23</sup>

On this issue former president of the republic—and the then-current president of the PNR—Emilio Portes Gil, in a published discourse on education, echoed these sentiments: “I believe that the school [of] the socialist reform contains two fundamental ideas [...] one idea of an entirely *rationalist, scientific* character [...] and the second] aspect [...] to my understanding, is that it tries to create more human hearts and minds [...].” The socialist pedagogy promoted, therefore, attempted to provide students with the “reason” for all physical and social phenomena. In the process this would rid the youth, men, and

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<sup>22</sup> S.D, 812.00/30327, “Transmission of Resumé of Conditions in México during December 1935.”

<sup>23</sup> Archivo Histórico de Jalisco (hereinafter cited as AHJ), IP-1-936-46-1145, “Prologo general de las obras,” January 1936.

women of all “falsehood,” and instil in the minds of children “the idea that a tenacious labor is necessary for cultural and economic rehabilitation [...in order to] forge *a new society*, more attune to [...] the reality of things [...].” The task of the “good” teacher was now to plant seeds for the blossoming of “good” ideas and, with the necessary scientific explanations, to remove from children and the *campesino* element the prejudices of which they have been victims for many years.<sup>24</sup>

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On 12 December 1934, the reformed Article 3 was officially enacted into law and state-sponsored socialist education was officially established to combat religious “fanaticism.”<sup>25</sup> An earthquake had struck: “[S]easoned by years of protest, Catholic groups [again] took to the streets and sparked boycotts in the cities and countryside.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, this “explosion” led to the destabilization of national-level politics. And

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<sup>24</sup> AHJ, IP-1-936-46-1145, “La escuela y el campesino,” January 1936.

<sup>25</sup> Article 3 of the Constitution, amended in December 1934, now read as follows: “Education imparted by the state will be socialistic, and furthermore will exclude all religious doctrines and [will] combat fanaticism and prejudices, and toward this end the school will organize its teachings and activities so as to imbue in the young a rational and exact conception of the universe and of social life. Only the state—Federation, States, Municipalities—shall impart primary, secondary or normal education. Authority may be granted [to] private individuals who desire to impart education in any of these grades, but [will] always [be] subject to the following norm: I.—The activities and teachings of private schools must follow, without any exception whatever, the precepts of the first paragraph of this article [...].” The article, furthermore, stressed that teaching in official educational establishments, as well as primary, secondary, and normal instruction, cannot be administered nor supported by religious corporations, religious ministers, and associations or societies, directly or indirectly, tied to the propaganda of a religious creed.

<sup>26</sup> Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, pp. 34-35. In Guadalajara, for example, the Red Guard of Women of the Left (ARMI) decried that “in these moments [...the clergy is] carrying out a clerical ‘Boycott’ against socialist education.” These women subsequently asked for the seditious labor of the clergy to not go unpunished and for the actions of the clergy to be suppressed with all the rigor of the Law. See Archivo Histórico del Estado de Jalisco (hereafter cited as AHJ), Instrucción Pública-1-935-43-1079, Legajo 1, “Letter from the Red Guard of Women of the Left to Governor Sebastián Allende,” ff. 50-52.

caught in the throes of a critical battle between Mexico's longtime strongman, Calles, and the new president, Cárdenas, the *Maximato* began to show signs of splintering. In fact, political tensions between the two had begun to simmer over a steady fire for months on end; however, in June 1935 the political dispute reached its boiling point. President Cárdenas was rumored to have given Rodolfo Calles, minister of communications, a message for his father that read: "Tell your father, the General [Calles] that I cannot agree with him on [what he said about me] which was published in the newspapers [...] and I will continue my labor program in the present form ... If the General can follow in line with me on this program[,] we can work together." Calles subsequently spoke harshly of Cárdenas' vanity and widened the breach even more with a public statement released on 12 June, in which he made reference to the Presidency of Ortiz Rubio (1930-1932). If not so intended, the reference to the fate of Ortiz Rubio—who apparently did not follow the advice of Calles and was subsequently forced to resign—offended Cárdenas, who acted promptly and vigorously to strengthen his position.<sup>27</sup> But unlike Calles, Cárdenas showed an inclination to conciliate in the religious question and sought not to permit socialist education to assume a radical or offensive form.<sup>28</sup>

The implementation of new federal schooling policy in Mexico, however, had many untended consequences—especially in areas where the state remained unable to fully claim the political loyalty of a large part of its citizenry. While Guadalajara had

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<sup>27</sup> SD, 812.00/30225, "Personal correspondence between Josephus Daniels and 'Mr. Secretary'," 18 June 1935. Therefore, the flare-up between Calles and Cárdenas was entirely due to the refusal of Cárdenas to accept the advice of Calles—whose word had been the final and decisive one for a long time.

been brought into the fold of the PNR in recent years, in many regions of Jalisco it could make only incremental gains in its efforts displace local and regional cultures of resistance.

### **The Reform in Action and the Struggle for the Countryside**

In early 1935 the Archbishop of Guadalajara, Francisco Orozco y Jiménez, granted an interview to *Liberty*, a popular American magazine, in which he denounced the recent educational reforms undertaken by the national government. “Our Church [and] our children are under terrible persecution,” complained Orozco y Jiménez: “[b]ehind the mask that the government turns on the world today is hatred of God, hatred of everything that is good and decent and that we hold dear.”<sup>29</sup> The Archbishop had never been one to back down from publicly stating his opinions to media outlets regarding the ongoing persecution of the church; however, the imprisonment on the night of 18 October of thirty-one priests charged with the crime of rebellion would force him into hiding in the town of San Pedro Tlaquepaque. Many of the newspapers in different parts of the republic launched sensationalist attacks against the Catholic clergy, while reporting that a plot on the part of priests in Guadalajara had been uncovered. Much of the ink spilled focused on depicting Orozco y Jiménez as the “head of the rebel bands in Jalisco.” On a public relations front, this approached the level of catastrophe for the Mexican clergy.

On 10 November 1935, in response to recent events, the then Vicar General of Guadalajara, José Garibi y Rivera made an effort to distance the High Clergy from all

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<sup>29</sup> SD, 812.404/1784, “Comment on magazine article,” 24 August 1935.



radical elements: “[...I] wish to state in the most explicit and definite manner that neither his Excellency [Orozco y Jiménez], nor I, nor the clergy of Jalisco have anything to do with any armed activities.” In fact, Garibi y Rivera specifically referenced a circular—under the date of 11 October 1932—prohibiting any priest from taking part directly or indirectly in such activities, “even threatening them with penalties for disobeying orders [...]” “[A]lthough strictly speaking it might be possible that some individual disobeyed this order,” lamented Garibi y Rivera, “I nevertheless have the satisfaction of stating that in recent years all have complied with the order [...]” The Vicar General closed his plea with a request directed to the president of the republic. Promoting a politics of conciliation but not necessarily acceptance of the new state project, Garibi y Rivera asked President Lázaro Cárdenas to use his influence to prevent a precipitous judgment of the thirty-one imprisoned priests and to terminate of the series of attacks leveled against the high clergy, “since we are not outside the law and since it is not fair that we be treated as outcasts in our own country.”<sup>30</sup>

The Second Cristero Rebellion cannot be fully understood without an analysis on the key role that the implementation of the socialist education program played in inciting the widespread popular rebellion of the period. Despite the conciliatory attitude the high clergy held towards the state, many rebel groups and parish priests interpreted socialist schools as state instruments to suppress, and in certain cases to eradicate, their traditional belief systems. In what follows, I provide an overview of how the state attempted to implement socialist education in the countryside. The first section focuses on the more

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<sup>30</sup> *El Informador*, “Carta Abierta,” 10 November 1935.

technical aspects of the project and analyzes the spatial distribution of schools on the eve of the reform, and after its first year. The remaining sections explore the scope of the violence rebel groups exercised against teachers and *agraristas*, which frequently took the form of harassment, persecution, and torture.

### *Putting Ideology into Practice*

A total of 177 new schools opened statewide in 1934 (100) and 1935 (77).<sup>31</sup> The location of every single school founded during these two years is available, and when they are organized under the twelve administrative regions of the state (see Figure 6), their spatial distribution is as follows: Norte, 33; Altos Norte, 17; Altos Sur, 19; Ciénaga, 13; Sureste, 22, Sur, 18; Sierra de Amula, 20; Costa Norte, 0; Sierra Occidental, 11; Valles, 10; Centro, 11; and Costa Sur, 13.<sup>32</sup> Over the course of those next two years, 202 new teachers were hired (31 males to 69 females in 1934; 35 males to 66 females in 1935). The spatial distribution of these new hires was the following: Norte, 27; Altos Norte, 10; Altos Sur, 14; Ciénaga, 18; Sureste, 18; Sur, 22; Sierra de Amula, 18; Costa Norte, 0; Sierra Occidental, 13; Valles, 16; Centro, 36; and Costa Sur, 10. The three regions, however, with the greatest percentage increase in hired teachers, from 1934 to the end of 1935, were: Norte (50 percent), Altos Sur (73 percent), and Altos Norte (33 percent). These figures are significant because the above-mentioned three regions were

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<sup>31</sup> Secretaría de Educación Pública (hereafter cited as SEP), G-29 Sección: Depto.-Escuelas-Rurales, Serie: Dirección Educación Federales, Años 1935-1936, Lugar: Jalisco, No. de Expediente: 24.

<sup>32</sup> Instead of organizing the distribution of schools under “zonas escolares,” I opted to use the “Regionalización administrativa” established in 1998 by the Government of Jalisco in order to have a constant upon which to build the analysis. The redistricting, shifting, and creation of new zones during this period made it difficult to conduct any meaningful spatial analysis. For example, in 1926, the SEP created six school zones and during the 1930s there appeared to be many more changes to these zones. In 1934, for example, there were at least eight—while the following year saw the school zones increased to twenty-four.

the areas in Jalisco where the Cristero Rebellion had the most partisan support. As such, these represented renewed efforts on the part of authorities to impart new revolutionary ideas in areas where they traditional have had much difficulty or failed.



**Figure 6:** Map of Administrative Regions in Jalisco by Jpablo Cad, Creative Commons.

One of the biggest hurdles facing lawmakers was actually coming to an agreement about what socialist education meant. *How were they going to have thousands of teachers on the same page?* In 1935 President Cárdenas established the *Instituto de Orientación Socialista*, which did much to lay out the scope of the reform and make the postulates of the socialist school more comprehensible to the masses. The institute consistently designed programs, textbooks, pedagogy, and taught Marxism to teachers. It became important to have teachers on the same page because they were now the intermediaries between the government and the people; as such, they were not only responsible for

making communities in the countryside aware of their rights and obligations as citizens, but they too assumed responsibility to help support agrarian reform, labor organizations, and to defeat “parasitical” groups and institutions.<sup>33</sup>

The teachers were regularly trained in *Centros de Estudio* located in the larger towns, such as La Barca, Guadalajara, Atequiza, Tizapán, Ameca and Autlán. The training centers had the objective of preparing the teachers in the region to acquire the corresponding diploma. Professor García Ruíz, however, lamented that it still was not possible to extend these efforts to other places around the state due to a lack of “absolute cooperation with the Inspector or because of a real physical impossibility, given the lack of communication [in more remote areas].” The department instead focused most of its efforts to promoting an orientation campaign to introduce the socialist school to the countryside. “[I’ll] continue attending [...] conferences about the technical aspects of it,” affirmed the García Ruíz, “[...to be able] to make a simple presentation to the Campesino Communities [in order] to dispel the erroneous opinions that the enemies of the scholastic reform keep planting in the campesino element.” The Professor closed his report with a firm warning, insisting that the work left to be carried on in the state of Jalisco was extremely difficult and required the absolute loyalty of all, decided enthusiasm, and intense activities.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Engracia Loyo, “El Instituto de Orientación Soelista y la formación del maestro revolucionario (1935-1937),” in *Lázaro Cárdenas: Modelo y Legado*, Tomo III (México: INEHRM, 2009) pp.209-213

<sup>34</sup> SEP, G-30 Sección: Depto.-Escuelas-Rurales, Serie: Dirección Educación Federales, Años 1935, Lugar: Jalisco, No. de Expediente: 9.

As of 31 January 1935, the Director of Public Education in Jalisco, Professor Ramón García Ruiz, confirmed that a total of 607 schools in the state were dependent on his department to function in the state (with a total of 772 teachers assigned to them).<sup>35</sup> The public schools were represented by the following types: Rural, Article 123, Kindergarten, Semi-Urban, Communal, and an Evening Center (see Table 4).<sup>36</sup> Out of all these, the 393 Rural Schools and the 209 “Article 123” type comprised the bulk of all schools functioning in the state (see Table 4). Designed to organize the *campesino* and indigenous masses under new leadership structures at the communal level, rural schools aimed at displacing the “old intellectuals” and served as an important medium through which the ideology of the Revolution could be widely and effectively transmitted to citizens. Article 123 schools, established under article 123 of the Constitution of 1917, placed the onus on local bosses to “establish schools, infirmaries, and all of the other necessary services to communities [...],” obliging them to construct and maintain said schools in addition to paying teacher salaries.<sup>37</sup> Over the course of 1934 the administration of Article 123 schools passed over to the *Secretaría de Educación Pública*, which then attempted them to enforce compliance with the socialist education reform much to the chagrin of rural elites that “already resented the minimal costs

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<sup>35</sup> SEP, G-30 Sección: Depto.-Escuelas-Rurales, Serie: Dirección Educación Federales, Años 1935, Lugar: Jalisco, No. de Expediente: 9. The total number of schools present in the state, which were not necessarily under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Education, are as follows: State Schools, 723; and Federal and Article 123 Schools, 481. This brings the total number of schools present in the state of Jalisco to 1,004; see *El Informador*, “Nueva División de Zonas Escolares en el Estado de Jalisco,” 27 July 1935.

<sup>36</sup> SEP, G-30 Sección: Depto.-Escuelas-Rurales, Serie: Dirección Educación Federales, Años 1935, Lugar: Jalisco, No. de Expediente: 9.

<sup>37</sup> Martínez Moya and Moreno Castañeda. *La escuela de la Revolución*, p. 246.

associated with sustaining schools [and who] reacted viscerally to the federalized Article 123 schools, which they rightly feared to be hotbeds of social mobilizations.”<sup>38</sup>

**Table 4:** Schools under the Department of Federal Education in Jalisco (January 1935)

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Evening Center</u>	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Rural</u>	<u>Communal</u>	<u>Art. 123</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	1	2	--	46	--	22	71
2	--	--	1	42	--	45	88
3	--	--	--	51	--	22	73
4	--	--	--	41	--	51	92
5	--	--	--	38	--	5	43
6	--	--	--	59	--	24	83
7	--	--	--	73	--	0	73
8	--	--	--	43	1	40	84
Total:	1	2	1	393	1	209	607

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Source: SEP, G-30 Sección: Depto.-Escuelas-Rurales, Serie: Dirección Educación Federales, Años 1935, Lugar: Jalisco, No. de Expediente: 9.

At the beginning of 1934, a year before socialist education was officially put into practice, “Jalisco already began to make a big push [towards the] strategy [of socialist education when Governor Sebastián Allende] made reference [to] the need [to] dismiss conservative teachers [...]”<sup>39</sup> The actions of Governor Allende, however, brought up an important point of contention; that is, teachers themselves were not an ideologically homogenous group. In mid-1935, the *Frente Único de Maestros Revolucionarios* wrote to the governor of Jalisco to inform him that conservative teachers [in some areas have made] impossible [for socialist education] be implemented [in the state of Jalisco...and

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<sup>38</sup> Stephen Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution: Forging Nation and State in Chiapas, 1910-1945* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), p. 157.

<sup>39</sup> Armando Martínez Moya and Manuel Moreno Castañeda. *La escuela de la Revolución*. (Guadalajara: Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, Universidad de Guadalajara, 1988, p. 203.

that it be] proved that said elements have taken part in attacks [and] that they are pretending to be [on the side of] the Government and that they are in reality its worst enemies.”<sup>40</sup>

*Placing the Violence into Perspective*

The violence against teachers varied from outright murder to several instances of kidnapping, extortion, and terror. On the evening of 1 September 1935, for example, an armed group of “outlaws” arrived in San Jerónimo—a hamlet with no more than a few hundred people—and marched to the private residence of Professor Guadalupe Rico Garza, who lived there with her sister, Elena. The two sisters opened the front door “full of terror” and were forced to leave the house, half-dressed, to undertake a painful trek on foot through the surroundings hills. Rico Garza somberly described what happened next: “My sister and I did not separate for a single moment, because given the threats from our kidnapers we expected [to be] killed [at] any minute, and the fear, together with the fatigue from a night of walking, had us beside ourselves.” They continued the long walk for another day until darkness came upon them. The “outlaws” then proceeded to stab Elena, fourteen times whom they mistook for her sister the rural teacher, killing her. “That horrendous sight drove me mad and [...] started to run between the hills, without knowing if I was followed or not,” recalled Professor Rico Garza, “perhaps [the desire for] self-preservation made me pause and attempt to guide myself.” In those moments, the Professor came upon a recently plowed field, dropped to the ground, covered herself

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<sup>40</sup> AHJ, Instrucción Pública-1-935-43-1079, Legajo 1, 14 May 1935.

with dirt, and remained there until the following morning, when federal soldiers found the rural teacher alive and well.<sup>41</sup>

Professor J. Jesús Cisneros, Director of the Economic School for Children, also decried the kidnapping of three teachers in the area complaining that “there are [no] more than 13 teachers and [...] there is a party of cristeros that marauds in that region.”

Cisneros begged the president of the republic to equip the teachers with arms, or at least to give them the necessary protection so that they be able to effectively carry out their educational tasks.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, in the nearby town of San Cristóbal de la Barranca, Professor J. Cruz García declared that the “fanatics” had recently kidnapped him, and what was more, they had even stolen his prized typewriter and other objects in addition to the the school funds he had.<sup>43</sup>

In the town of Totatiche, for example, a group of five individuals armed and mounted on horseback stormed into the classroom of local schoolteacher J. Dolores Iñiguez. He was taken about 300 meters from his school, *La Cementera*, whereupon the rebels demanded a pistol and money from the teacher. Since he was unable to provide the attackers with what they wanted, the defenseless teacher was executed and the rebels continued onwards to join others marauding in the area.<sup>44</sup> The tragic death of Iñiguez

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<sup>41</sup> *Las Noticias*, “Como fue el atentado en San Jerónimo,” 23 September 1935.

<sup>42</sup> Archivo General de la Nación (hereinafter cited as AGN), Lázaro Cárdenas del Río (hereinafter cited as LCR), 533.3:16, “Telegrama del Prof. J. Jesús Cisneros M. dirigido al Presidente Cárdenas,” f. 36, 23 September 1936.

<sup>43</sup> AGN, LCR, 533.3:16, “Telegrama del Prof. J. Cruz García dirigido al Presidente Cárdenas,” f. 35, 25 September 1936.

<sup>44</sup> AGN, LCR, 533.3:16, “Official transcription of the C. Attorney General,” f. 45, 25 May 1936. It appears that the death of J. Dolores Iñiguez occurred the month before.



sparked a lively debate at the Fifth Grand Convention of Mexican Teachers, where the topic of conversation revolved around the great number of similar events said to have taken place in different parts of the country “since the implementation of socialist education.” The convention unanimously demanded from President Cárdenas that he order effective guarantees to the rural teachers, “enforcing immediate punishment to the perpetrators of the crimes” and also sought reparation from the government for the damages suffered by widows and orphans.<sup>45</sup>

Shortly after the educational reform was carried out in Jalisco, Professor Silviano Robledo, Director of the Superior School for children in Arandas, wrote to General Director Alberto Terán to denounce the tenacious propaganda that the “fanatics” of the population had too openly directed against his school. “[It affected the school] to such a degree,” lamented Robledo, “that the parents who had their children in the school of my charge, do not send [them] because of the mere fact that it is a socialistic school.” The propaganda locals undertook was so successful that it had completely decimated student attendance. “On this date they count [on only] two or three children in each group, and because the majority of the inhabitants of this locality are fanatic enemies of the revolution [...they] attack the socialist school,” complained the Professor. However, the recent threats leveled at Robledo went beyond the realm of the professional and into the

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<sup>45</sup> AGN, LCR, 533.3/16, “Transcription of the *Quinta Gran Convención Mexicana de Maestros*,” ff. 57-58, 7 May 1936. On 6 December 1935, *The New York Times* reported that Cárdenas had promised 16,000 guns to rural teachers “to protect their lives as they spread socialist education throughout the country.” The demonstration was apparently led by two women teachers whose ears had been cut off who “coupled their call for protection with a request for higher wages and a pledge of support to President Cárdenas and the program of socialist education.” The president made no answer to their demands, but did make arrangement to distribute arms to teachers.

domestic: “[T]hey [the rebels] threaten us with death, and they give us an example; that they will do to us what was done to the [municipal] president of Jesús María; if I do not depart from this population in eight days, with all of my family.”<sup>46</sup> Like a soldier on the frontlines who just had passed beyond the point of return, the Professor held his ground and subsequently asked Terán to give the municipal authorities of Arandas orders to intervene in matters so that they could carry out the law in reference to scholastic attendance. This man was not one to be intimidated by the ‘fanatics’ and appeared intent on carrying out the dictates of the Revolution.

School Zone Inspector Professor Gilberto Ceja Torres, after listening to the opinions of rural teachers and individuals identified with the government of the Revolution, also signaled out the Catholic clergy as the primary group responsible for the widespread agitation that reigned in the area, and for the hostile propaganda many locals promoted against the socialist school, “as well as [for] the attacks against teachers.” Over the past month the “fanatic” rebels, to the war-cry of “Viva Cristo Rey,” had committed all sorts of atrocities: they burned school materials belonging to Tenasco de Abajo (municipality of Santa María) and Dolores (municipality of Colotlán); threatened a female teacher with death if she continued at the helm of the school; and forced many teachers to flee from their posts. “In general the teachers during the evenings,” confirmed Ceja Torres, “have to seek refuge in the woods or places near the school [that] they judge to be safe [...]” The difficult situation continued to worsen “everyday,” to the extent that

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<sup>46</sup> AHJ, Instrucción Pública-1-935-43-1079, Legajo 9, 25 February 1935.

the Professor was obliged to demand guarantees from Governor Everardo Topete—complaints that fell on deaf ears.<sup>47</sup>

The town Degollado also complained of declining school attendances due to the “fanaticism fomented by the Clergy.” The use of “spiritual suggestions,” which the Clergy exercised through religious practices, among other methods, contributed to a drastic decline in attendance to the point that not even 10 percent of the children attended the local schools. To remedy this situation Engineer Alfredo Félix Díaz E. directed his efforts to the Municipal Authorities, but was unable to move them to intervene in matters. And since the Engineer believed “that education is [extremely] important to achieve the progress of the Country and should not be neglected in any entity, I have continued my efforts with the objective of increasing school attendance in the aforementioned schools, to the effect that I met with the heads of household of this place to make them understand the moral responsibility that incurs in unjustifiably opposing the education of their children, since these [children], [are now] developing in ignorance, [and] instead of being useful [to] the Fatherland they will turn into social parasites [...]”<sup>48</sup>

In the northeastern region of Los Altos, a surveyor noted that pressure against rural teachers, by the “cristeros” was mounting every day and that they did not count upon the necessary elements to combat the detrimental actions of the Church, “since there are very few teachers that venture to go to work in those places, and those who go cannot

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<sup>47</sup> SEP, Sección: Escuelas Rurales, Serie: Inspección Educación Federal, Años: 1935, Lugar: Jalisco, Exp. 5, No. de Folios: 4, ff. 3-4, 15 November 1935.

<sup>48</sup> SEP, G-30, Sección: Depto.-Escuelas-Rurales, Serie: Dirección Educación Federales, Años 1935-1936, Lugar: Guadalajara, Jalisco, No. de Expediente: 34, ff. 28-29, 2 November 1936.

develop any [effective strategies], due to the lack of children and the excessive risk to their lives.”<sup>49</sup> A SEP report claimed that the problem of this region—and specifically School Zone XI—were twofold: there was widespread fanaticism and an economic problem, which prevailed in all of the surrounding towns. Specifically citing his own experience in Jalostotitlán, the inspector wrote the following:

[...I] was able to find out of the ridiculous state of the people and the state of slavery that the campesino [is subjected to by] the clergy and other capitalists, who do [not] allow [them to have] free will, to the extent [that they have used] the implementation of [the] Socialist School as a pretext to provoke very dangerous agitations against the Government [...And its] first victims are our Rural Teachers who [find themselves] alone and without the protection of any Authority nor of any person [...while they] have been boycotted, persecuted and disliked by all of the residents of the towns and hamlets, our teachers [still] go to great pains to lend true social services to the Communities.<sup>50</sup>

The report stressed that various rebel groups operated in the surrounding areas of the countryside and have the teachers in a constant state of anxiety. And when they entered these populations, for example, the only person they would look for is the “Rural Teacher,” stressed the report, “and they then go to our humble schools to look over the documentation and the books of the school to assure themselves [...that] the “bad” Socialist Education books have not arrived to the region [...].”

Director of Federal Education, Professor Ramón García Ruíz, echoed similar sentiments regarding the effects of the campaign that the Catholic Clergy and conservative elements promoted against local schools: “[I]n some regions school

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<sup>49</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Observations collected in Los Altos, Jalisco,” ff. 132-138, 13 April 1936.

<sup>50</sup> SEP, G-26, Sección: Depto.-Escuelas-Rurales, Serie: Inspección Escolar Federal, Años 1935, Lugar: Jalisco, No. de Expediente: 13.

attendance has greatly suffered [and this has] become more notable in the Zones of Colotlán and in the so-called region of Los Altos [...].” Nevertheless, he maintained that teachers valiantly remained in their posts, “counteracting with decided action, the campaign against the enemies of the Revolution.” Professor García Ruíz, however, lamented the recent death of rural teacher Apolonio González, who had been serving the indigenous town of San Sebastián in the municipality of Mezquitic, the northern Huichol region of the state, which he also deemed the result of the “perverse conduct of clerical elements [...]”<sup>51</sup>

Local parish priest’ opposition to the socialistic school not only took the form of open hostility, but also demonstrated a propensity to align itself with local rebel groups. For example, in the town of Mezquitic, Father Norberto Reyes was said have advised parents from his pulpit to abstain from sending their children to government schools. Often described as the most formidable agent with which the “reaction” counted, Father Reyes even went as far as to organize an attack in collusion with “fanatic” rebels near the *Monte Escobedo* region of Mezquitic. Romualdo Avila Vázquez, director of the Huichol and Cora indigenous boarding school,<sup>52</sup> carefully described how a conniving Reyes informed the local *cabecilla* (rebel leader) about the impending departure of Professor

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<sup>51</sup> SEP, G-30 Sección: Depto.-Escuelas-Rurales, Serie: Dirección Educación Federales, Años 1935, Lugar: Jalisco, No. de Expediente: 9.

<sup>52</sup> The indigenous boarding school appeared not to have been functioning for very long. For example, Prof. Romualdo Avila Vázquez commented on 18 September 1935 that they had just acquired a “magnificent locale in the town of Mezquitic, wherein we will be able to establish the Boarding School, in virtue that we count upon a good number of classrooms and the departments [that are] necessary to provide housing for the students, whom will count upon all of the comforts.” The boarding school hoped to start its work in the last days of September—a month before the attacks which I have narrated; see *Las Noticias*, “Se Establecerá en Mezquitic Internado Indio.”

Ceja Torres from the area, “so that he may be one of the individuals assaulted.” The professor appeared to have escaped; however, the same could not be said for the six members of the rural defense unit accompanying him. All were said to have perished in the ensuing *mêlée* except for one individual, who, as he lay on the ground, was reported to have yelled following at the top of his lungs: “[D]eath to the priest and death to all *cristeros*.” Vázquez implored the *Jefe Militar* of the zone to make a visit to the *Monte Escobedo* so he might become aware of the prevalent situation and proceed to exterminate the “*cristero*” parties that marauded the area.<sup>53</sup>

To place these above examples into context, historian David L. Raby documented a total 139 incidents of violence committed against teachers in Mexico from 1931 to 1940. These figures, however, represent only a general snapshot of the violence given that it is impossible to say with certainty how many teachers died during the decade, since many went reported.<sup>54</sup> Raby postulated that a meticulous review of all the newspapers of the provinces would place the figure closer to 200 or perhaps much higher. In my own research, I have come across at least 46 instances of violence committed against teachers in Jalisco from early 1935 to late 1939—31 of which I personally

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<sup>53</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Telegram from Ávila Vázquez addressed to President Cárdenas,” ff. 190-191, 29 October 1935.

<sup>54</sup>David L. Raby, “Los maestros rurales y los conflictos sociales en México (1931-1940).” *Historia Mexicana*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Oct. – Dec., 1968), p. 190-226. Raby relied mainly on Mexico City-centric newspapers and documents from the SEP and identified the following cases: 15 in Jalisco; 14 in Veracruz; 13 in Puebla and Michoacán each (the author admitted that the figure for Michoacán was inflated because of his research focus); 9 in Guanajuato; 8 in Campeche; 7 in Guerrero, Morelos, and Zacatecas; 6 in Querétaro; 4 in Nayarit, Sinaloa, and Tamaulipas; 3, in Baja California Sur, Durango, Hidalgo, México, Oaxaca, and San Luis Potosí; 2 in Aguascalientes, Colima, Sonora, and Tabasco; and 1 in Coahuila, Chiapas, and Yucatán.

documented. These incidents were either reported by government agencies, local newspapers, or mentioned in personal correspondence.

The collections of the AGN, newspapers, and the U.S. State Department records showcase at least 21 documented instances of violence carried out against socialist teachers. For example, in the collections of the AGN, Professor Luis F. Rodríguez Lomelí, inspector of federal education in Chapala, wrote to President Cárdenas to denounce the municipal commissioner of San Luis Soyaltán, who brutally beat Federal Rural Teacher José Dueñas Castellón; in Sayula, eight federal school teachers were shot at by a group of twenty individuals sent by the *guardias blancas* of Hacienda Amatitlán—however, they were fortunate enough to escape unscathed. The problem of teacher assassinations appeared to garner some national attention to the point that the syndicate of teacher workers from Cordoba, Veracruz, wrote to President Cárdenas to demand justice against the assassins of a teacher in the state of Jalisco and to ask for guarantees for their other companions; while from Hermosillo, Sonora, Juan G. Oropeza from the majority congress of teachers of the state and peasant workers, expressed the organizations indignation about the assassination of teacher José Dolores Medina of Jalisco. They subsequently asked the president to arm teachers and *campesinos* “in order to repeal [the] aggression of reactionary groups.”<sup>55</sup>

Additional instances of violence were found in the Guadalajara-based newspaper *El Informador*, which reported the following incidents: Prof. Jesús Rosales, victim of an assault in Atoyac (21 April 1935); Prof. Neri Mejía, gravely hurt as he traversed the road

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<sup>55</sup> AGN, LCR, 533.3/16, ff. 19, 28, 40, and 55.

from La Guitapa and Lagos de Moreno (13 February 1936); Carlota Dorado, kidnapped by a group of armed individuals in Mezquitic (23 March 1936); an assault of the local school in Paredones, which led to the death of one student (23 March 1936); and Prudencia Barba, beat up by elements that are enemies of the revolutionary program (30 October 1936). Meanwhile, *The New York Times* also reported the mutilation of two teachers, whose ears had been cut off (6 December 1935). In addition to the above-mentioned, the State Department made note of the following four incidents: the schoolmistress at Mechoacanejo was kidnapped by the followers of Lauro Rocha; a band of armed men burned the school house and wounded the teacher at Corralitos; a female teacher was attacked by a group of men near Cinco Minas, which led to her death; and that an unnamed teacher was kidnapped by rebels at Mexiticacan.<sup>56</sup>

At face value, what these instances of violence make clear is that there was a concerted effort on the part of rebels groups and priests to halt the educational advancement of the state in the countryside and that many teachers were assaulted, maimed, and even murdered by the former. But what the numbers do not reveal, however, are the subtler forms of violence aimed at teachers, such as intimidation tactics, insults, or even the news of a fallen comrade, that were even more prevalent and widespread, and must have directly impact rural teachers' ability to carry out the socialist reform.

### *The Huichol of Northern Jalisco*

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<sup>56</sup> See SD, specifically 812.00/30394, 812.00, 812.00/30433, 812.00/30368.



The regime of Lázaro Cárdenas adopted the official ideology of *indigenismo*, which promoted a range of paternalistic developmentalist policies that aimed to integrate ethnic groups and assimilate them into the national whole. *Indigenismo* not only sought to secure collective welfare for particularly poor and marginalized regions, but also aimed to achieve a process of ‘acculturation’ which would, in theory, convert indigenous peoples into citizen-bearers of a mestizo ‘national culture’. While many radical *indigenistas* advocated for more than just the incorporation of assimilated indigenous peoples—and many indeed sought to adopt a true cultural pluralism—the official policy never departed from a position that saw indigenous peoples as “members of a social class taking part in the collective task of production.”<sup>57</sup> Reflecting contemporary *indigenista* thought, an essay from *El Maestro Rural* titled ‘Los Huicholes’ described them as “an isolated, primitive group which maintained the same ‘pristine’ life that their ancestors had known [and as such] they were not viewed as a part of the national culture, and were destined [to be the] recipients of the benefits of the Revolution and civilization.”<sup>58</sup> The Huichol, according to the article, lacked “a spirit of initiative, they are lazy or indolent, they have no forethought.”<sup>59</sup>

Agustín Mijares Cossío, a full-blooded *indígena* of Huichol ancestry, submitted a “Petition for benefit of the Huichol Tribe” to President Lázaro Cárdenas. Adopting the

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<sup>57</sup> Joseph, Gilbert M. and Jurgen Buchenau. *Mexico’s Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule since the Late Nineteenth Century*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013) p. 189.

<sup>58</sup> Alexander S. Dawson, “From models for the Nation to model citizens,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1998): 280.

<sup>59</sup> Marjorie Becker, *Setting the Virgin on Fire: Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán Peasants, and the Redemption of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 67.

*indigenista* ideology, Mijares Cossío wanted to better the condition of the indigenous peoples of the region, which he claimed the the socialist program intended to do. “[The] situation presented [within] the conglomerate of indigenous peoples is nothing short of sad [because] they remain (a great number of them) until today,” grieved Mijares Cossío, “as they were before the conquest with their same ancestral customs and traditions, whose state[,] because of their [heterogeneity] needs specific models, [and] precise and well-defined plans [for social] incorporation [...]” The plan submitted by Mijares Cossío to President Cárdenas was divided into two parts: the first insisted on the general recognition as theirs of all of the territory the Huichol inhabited; and the second, asked for the establishment of rural schools within the indigenous communities of Santa Catarina, San Andres Cohamiata, Guadalupe de Octoán, and Tuxpan. The latter demand, however, required the newly established schools not only to be granted sufficient schooling material, medicines, and sports equipment, but also stressed the need to have professors who truly understood what the “transformation of [the] disenfranchised masses” meant. Lastly, Mijares Cossío informed President Cárdenas that the people of the region had been under fire by the insurgents for “nearly five years” and that this problem did not receive the necessary attention from officials. As a result, he claimed that: “[It] is a grave problem for my Race brothers, all the more so [because] during the period [I] signaled out more than fifty indigenous men have succumbed [to attacks].” Mijares Cossío begged for the execution of an all-out plan to exterminate the insurgents

(that is, those who resisted the government), so that the indigenous peoples of the region could live in peace.<sup>60</sup>

The predominantly indigenous region of the north, however, presented administrators and authorities with a unique set of barriers that prevented the successful implementation of socialist education.<sup>61</sup> The municipal president of Mezquitic, Francisco Gaeta, for example, complained to the headquarter of the military zone, accusing the state government of clearly forgetting the indigenous people of the remote northern region, since the average distance between Guadalajara and their population prevented Governor Topete from thoroughly getting to know their needs and desires. Francisco Gaeta continued:

[We] have been armed for more [than] twelve years [and] many of our residents have sacrificed their lives in defense of their personal interest [and those] of the Supreme Government, since we are whole heartedly pro-government and this has aroused the hate of those that with a false banner like that of Cristo Rey [rose up in] arms against the Revolutionary Governments [...] of our Country; they have burned our houses, and we have nevertheless remained undaunted; we have continued fighting so that one day the old peace will shine for us, but a peace without compromises with the bandits [...rather one] founded upon progress and work [...] we need to work [in order] to live and [...] we are not free to go a [...] league because we are victims of the cristero assassins [...].<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> AGN, L.C.R, 503.11/259, "Peticiones en beneficio de la tribu Huichol," ff. 27-30

<sup>61</sup> The region of the north presented formidable obstacles for officials due to the perceived backwardness of the indigenous people. Professor Valle, who toured the region in 1933, revealed that: "the ancestral indolence of the Huichol, whom have persisted in their primitive customs, with a tendency towards hunting, more so than the raising of animals and [are] averse to cultivation, to which they only dedicate themselves to in a rudimentary manner on a small scale, makes all of the hope of carrying out the idea [of creating a boarding school difficult] which [I had previously undertaken] with much enthusiasm;" see *Las Noticias*, "Los Huicholes, al magen de toda la civilización, 25 March 1933.

<sup>62</sup> SEP, Seccion: Escuelas Rurales, Serie: Dirección Educación Federal, Subserie: Establecimiento de Escuelas, Años: 1935-36, Lugar: Jalisco, Exp. 24, No. de Folios: 190, 11 December 1935.

Gaeta lamented that while the citizens who had risen up in arms to defend the state government were offered guarantees and protection, the multitude of individuals from the area of Mezquitic that actively risked their lives had not. As a result of this, many did not have the means to feed themselves because of mounting debts, which they acquired in the process of sustaining the prestige of the government. The municipal president, in addition to soliciting repair money for the schools that rebels burned to the ground, also submitted a request to elevate the local elementary school in status. There were many children present in the municipality of his charge who finished their education, but whose parents did not have the necessary money to transport them to other places to continue their studies.<sup>63</sup>

Meanwhile, Francisco Montoya, a representative of the indigenous peoples of Santa Catarina, a town located in the municipality of Mezquitic, continued complaining well into 1938 about the lack of schools, the lack of effective guarantees for the teachers safety, and the “thousands of sufferings” people living in the area had to endure: “[W]e all want to be educated, to be protected, to have in place in our town a detachment that can provide us [with] guarantees, [one] that does not exploit us in the same manner as the armed insurgents, who are finishing us off, they kill peaceful [residents], they steal our cows [...]” In an effort to repel the rebel forces, a federal general had apparently armed five residents of the community, but these individuals could not defend the surrounding towns. “[The five individuals] have only compromised us, since [because of them] the rebels rob us[,] kill [our people], and have silenced us,” affirmed Montoya: “[W]e want

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<sup>63</sup> SEP, Sección: Escuelas Rurales, Serie: Dirección Educación Federal, Subserie: Establecimiento de Escuelas, Años: 1935-36, Lugar: Jalisco, Exp. 24, No. de Folios: 190, 11 December 1935.

the five residents from our town who took up arms and who are with [the general, to] not be permitted to return armed to our town [...].” The individuals from the community who were armed lacked discipline and only spent ammunition. In the process, they made such a fuss that it caught the attention of the marauding rebels, who would then take it out on the peaceful residents of the town. “We [the peaceful residents] all have the will to serve the Government,” affirmed Montoya, “but [in order for us] to take up arms we need there to be detachments in our towns [to actually convince] the majority of the residents to taken [arms].”<sup>64</sup>

*The Masks of Hypocrisy and the Clergy in the Field*

One of the biggest obstacles teachers faced was the opposition posed by local town priests. On 20 May 1938, for example, Professor Luis N. Rodríguez, director of the Federal School in Tonalá, described in great detail the retreats (*ejercicios de encierro*) that the Church was accustomed to celebrate in the town:

[T]he priests, during these retreats, inspect [the people of the town] before [they go] to sleep, and [following this the priests tell] the one who d[o] not have lashes identified on their back or in any other part of their bodies [that they] should not sleep in company of those who have completed their penitence, and they would [be] lock[ed] up in a separate room[. But] late into the night the priests themselves come disguised and drag and scratch [the] trusting ignorants [in the room...The] next day [those individuals] would give the horrifying and terrifying account to the rest, who like a dogma believed that event.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Escrito de Francisco Montoya, vecino del pueblo de Santa Catarina del Estado de Jalisco,” ff. 30-31, 27 January 1938.

<sup>65</sup> AHJ, Gobernación-4-7129, 20 May 1938.

In many rural areas, these types of *ejercicios* appeared to be especially pronounced during the Lent season. About three years earlier, for example, the federal school director in Jalisco described a similar occurrence in the area of Encarnación de Díaz:

As [a] concrete fact I will show to this Superiority that the agitation in this Zone has begun with all its vigor and strength from the arrival of the religious celebration called ‘Lent,’ because with impunity the priests of all of these towns have been celebrating acts in the churches that they call ‘ejercicios espirituales’ which during a week [they] dedicated to women, other mature men, other young people, and other children, etc., whose reunions were carried out behind closed doors with the strictest censure so that no foreign elements can penetrate and in [said] meetings [they] anathematized mothers who sent their children to the schools as well as the fathers, and harshly threatened children and the young [people and told them] that in no form should they pay attention to the Socialist Education that the Government in imparting.<sup>66</sup>

Returning to letter written by Director Rodríguez, when the first teachers arrived on the scene in Tonalá to take charge of the local school, “an angry mob of *beatas*” (especially pious women who wore religious habits) unexpectedly encountered them, and then proceeded to stone the teachers. The priests had allegedly organized the entire town—the young women, the youth, fathers, and mothers. And catechism was taught to children and adults, and activities were held at the town church in the morning, at mid-day, afternoon, and at nighttime. Everyone engaged in the offering of the fruits, paid a tithe, and paid fees to enter retreats. And as a result of the campaigns carried out by the priests, more than 60% of the *agraristas* who then years before had organized themselves to obtain *ejidos* had given up their plots of land. “[T]he worst of it all,” protested Rodríguez, “is that the priests have made the heads of family believe that it is best that children enter

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<sup>66</sup> SEP, G-26, Sección: Depto.-Escuelas-Rurales, Serie: Inspección Escolar Federal, Años 1935, Lugar: Jalisco, No. de Expediente: 13.

stupid into heaven [rather than] wise into hell [and] that the current schools belong to the devil.”



**Figure 7:** Government Propaganda. Source: AHJ, IP-1-936-46-1145

When Rodríguez arrived in the town of Tonalá to take over the post of Director, there were only 42 students enrolled in the local schools out of a total student population of about 500 to 600 children. After waging a propaganda campaign against the local opposition, Rodríguez was able to increase enrollment to 93 students for daytime courses and 36 students for the newly opened evening courses. When schools arranged festivals or meetings with parents, however, priests would organize outings with children or adults at the same time to obstruct the effort of the school. Although the professor appeared to be making some headway, the harsh realities of life in a town controlled by parish priests stifled any true progress made. “[T]his place has always been a protector of cristeros, [and it was] here [that] Lauro Rocha, leader of the rebel movement of this State, was

hidden,” bewailed Rodríguez. And so strong was the power and influence local priests wielded that the Professor acknowledged: “Here [the] Municipal and State authorities are not in charge, [here] we fully live in the XVIII century [...and] in this town there are periods of the year when the poor only eat once or twice a day; but they do have [money] for the ‘alms’ of the vampires [...].”<sup>67</sup>

The Leftist Block of Teachers of Jalisco, from the town of Amatitán, also denounced the lower clergy’s role in inciting people into open rebellion against the socialist school, and affirmed their role in deceiving the people with their “masks of hypocrisy.” In a letter to President Cárdenas, they wrote that: “...the Catholic Clergy of this entity are the first that have been inciting the people against the Socialist School which your government has established regulations for, which they sometimes do publicly with insults to [authorities...].” The teachers attested to having experienced the influence of the clergy in the field, “seeing as this is where all the priests carry out their insatiable campaign against us the revolutionary teachers to the end of avoiding that the children attend the official schools [...].” The teachers, however, declared that an assault against the school was an assault against the revolutionary teachers, and therefore against the government of the republic.<sup>68</sup> If the rural teachers were truly the “soldiers of the revolution,” as former President Calles had once remarked, then these individuals needed to ready themselves for an unconventional war against an enemy that did not obey a code of ethics.

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<sup>67</sup> AHJ, Gobernación-4-7129, 20 May 1938.

<sup>68</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “*Bloque Izquierdista de Maestros Jaliscienses*, Member of the C.R.O.C.J.,” f. 167, 19 November 1935.



The situation at hacienda La Quemada in the Municipality of Magdalena had escalated to the point that it began to affect the everyday lives of peaceful individuals—innocent people merely caught in the crossfire. So dire was the situation for this particular community that it sent Francisco Mercado all the way to Mexico City to seek an audience with the president of the republic. In a hastily hand-written letter, a worried Mercado informed Cárdenas:

Finding myself here in this [city] since a few days ago, I would really thank you Sir if you could receive me in your office or wherever you may order to deal with some matters that I have in representation of the people of La Quemada [...] and I cannot return without dealing with anything [since] my trip was made with much sacrifice [and] for that reason I beg that you concede me the meeting I solicit.<sup>69</sup>

The pressing matter Mercado sought to resolve pertained to the declarations of the local parish priest of Magdalena in his sermon: “[He said] that [we] should have the courage to defend [our] religion [and that we] should learn to die for it, that if [we] did not have [the] courage to be Catholic, [we] much less [had the courage] to be martyrs, that to be a martyr you need a lot [of courage], that [we] did not know how things were, that the country is preparing for a great movement [...]” The representative of the community confided in Cárdenas that it was well-known that the parish priests of the region—in San Marcos, Etzatlán, Aqualulco de Mercado, Tequila, San Andrés, and Magdalena—were all having periodic meetings in the *Cerro Grande* of San Andrés, near a place called “Agua Fria,” and that a *gavilla* (band) of 15 men, equipped with “almost new 7mm Mausers and

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<sup>69</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Hand written letter authored by Francisco Mercado and addressed to President Cárdenas,” f. 43, without date.

automatic 45 caliber pistols,” also marauded the same hills and therefore the threat of violence against those in favor of the state existed. Mercado confirmed this, along with the influence of the priest decimated the enrollment of the official school.”<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the influence priests wielded over communities in the countryside, rebel violence (and the reality of death) was also reflected in the preoccupations of ordinary people, in particular women. Many such letters, addressed to President Cárdenas, varied greatly in their content, but showcased similar themes, concerns, and anxieties. In the municipality of Tecolotlán, Ventura Cueva Vda. de González, for example, described how her husband Apolinar González and his brother Natividad Cueva were attacked and murdered by a band of rebels under the command of Jesús González. As a result of the attack, the letter writer was left a widow with several young children. From the village of El Chante in Autlán, Anita Guzmán, Matilde Aragón, and others signees, also wrote to President Cárdenas to denounce how Jesús Gutiérrez and others were assassinated by the rebels led by Matías Villa Michel and others, who subsequently burned their houses and harvests.<sup>71</sup>

*“El [maestro] sembraba la verdad entre los campesinos...”*

Over the course of the 1920s, the state increasingly began to incorporate *campesinos* into the postrevolutionary bureaucracy, while also seeking to enforce the anticlerical provisions contained in the Constitution of 1917. Schools in the countryside

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<sup>70</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Typed letter authored by Francisco Mercado and addressed to President Cárdenas,” f. 42, 20 December 1937.

<sup>71</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, ff. 79 and 82.

became crucial tools to transmit this new ideology and culture to the peasantry. As a result, two distinct political identities emerged: *agraristas* and political Catholics. The previous chapter made clear that both became bitter enemies with much of this hatred coming to the forefront during the Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929). The origins of this division, however, is more difficult to discern; that is, nothing inherent in Catholicism denounced land reform. While the postrevolutionary state made significant headway in educating *campesinos*, many still resisted government efforts to do so. As I have noted in Chapter 4, one possible explanation regarding this division that consistently appears in letters and reports is the role that wealthy landowners played in halting state advancements in the countryside. The parish priests, in turn, consistently supported the actions and interests of the wealthy over the interests of *campesinos*. Ultimately, this has much to do with the fact that they were the Church's biggest benefactors in the countryside and always "defended private property rights."<sup>72</sup>

What the sources I have analyzed make clear, however, is that many—not all—parishioners listened to their priests and were willing to risk their lives under the guise of religion. In claiming this I do not mean to question whether Catholics themselves truly believed they were doing the work of God, nor do I mean to disparage their worldview. Rather, what I do want to make evident is that the archival evidence suggests that priest's manipulated their parishioners to protect their own streams of revenue. It therefore comes to no surprise, then, that landowners made life in the countryside impossible for teachers

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<sup>72</sup> Alan Knight, "La última fase de la Revolución: Cárdenas," in *Lázaro Cárdenas: modelo y legado, Vol. 3* (México: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Historicos de las Revoluciones de México, 2009), p. 196.

and *agraristas*, but then found a mass of people (from the same socioeconomic class of the latter) willing to support their actions.

In the municipalities of Lagos de Moreno, San Juan de los Lagos, Encarnación de Díaz, Jalostotitlán, Unión de San Antonio, and Ojuelos de Jalisco, the director of Federal Education, Professor Ramón García Ruiz, for example, complained of the area's hacendados who, for various reasons, began "sending people sometimes disguised as soldiers to [...] threaten the teachers of the Federal Schools of the surrounding areas"—forcing them to flee from the "Article 123" schools located within the compounds of haciendas. The landowners apparently engaged in these acts with the objective of arguing to authorities that teachers had abandoned their employment. As we learned in an earlier section, the owners of large estates were to fund Article 123 schools, including the salary of teachers, but the schools themselves had to maintain a certain number of students. The tactics therefore were implicitly used to lessen their financial burden on the part of landowners, but also to reduce enrollment. "If this Secretariat [of Public Education] does not take sides on this matter and obtain firm support from the Ministry of Interior and the Department of Labor [...]," warned García Ruíz, "the Department [of my charge] cannot be held responsible for the reduction of school[']s attendance and] every time that it is physically unable to stop the dispersal of the *campesino* element in the aforementioned region of Los Altos."<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> SEP, G-30, Sección: Depto.-Escuelas-Rurales, Serie: Dirección Educación Federal, Años 1935, Lugar: Jalisco, Observaciones: 2-Recortes Periódicos, No. de Expediente: 17, 25 Abril 1935.



Figure 8: La Escuela Socialista. Source: AHJ, IP-1-936-46-1145

The Regional Organizer of *Ejid*os, Emilio Guzmán Andrade, also complained of the same hacendados, clarifying the composition of the rebels:

[...T]hey are laborers from the different Haciendas who [following the] orders of their owners and to the cry of Viva Cristo Rey, impede the carrying out of [the] Socialist Education [program] and [...] try to impede employees [from] carry[ing] out the missions they have been entrusted with, setting out to additionally scare to the ejidatarios driving them from the population centers to hinder the labors that they carry out in said populations.<sup>74</sup>

Encarnación de Díaz provides a noteworthy and illustrative example in which hacendados were said to have ordered their peons to yell “viva el agrarismo,” carry a red and black banner, and commit all types of atrocities so that the landowners could blame the *agraristas* of the region. These efforts led to the kidnapping of a member from the Agrarian Community of Los Gallos, which confounded Guzmán Andrade: “[I]f the rebels

<sup>74</sup> Archivo Histórico de la Defensa Nacional de México (hereinafter cited as AHDNM), Operaciones Militares, XI/481.6/, Estado de Jalisco año de 1935, f. 7, 27 April 1935.

were truly agraristas they would have not kidnapped[,] for any natural reason[,] a comrade but rather would have imparted protected them.”<sup>75</sup> The *ejido* of Las Cruces also reported similar experiences, since a band of fifteen rebels passed through the area and were recognized by *ejidatarios* of the community as peons from the local hacienda. In Teocaltiche, the School Inspector also confirmed suspicions that some of the rebels were actually individuals paid and armed by the landowners, with the goal of extorting the professoriate of the region. The school inspector established that they too carried red and black banners, “and ran off a professor [and] threatened him that if he continued they would assassinate him[,] and yelled down with agrarismo and socialist education.” This prompted the School Inspector to diagnose the problem: it was symptomatic of the educational-religious question and of the efforts of landowners to keep their lands, which they did by taking advantage of the “ignorance” of the people.<sup>76</sup>

The *agraristas* masses, however, were on the side of the teachers and vehemently defended socialist education. On 2 October 1935, for example, gathered at the local elementary school in the town of El Limón, the municipal president, Fermín González; the president of the commissariat *ejidal*, Francisco Piña; the president of the municipal committee of the P.N.R., Ramón Solórzano; and the director the school, Professor Justo Santana, proceeded to read a signed letter circulated by the president of the committee (on education) of the State of Jalisco, Manuel F. Ochoa, which read as follow:

The executive of the State has been carrying out [an] intense labor in favor of [the department of] Public Education [...] but unfortunately the

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<sup>75</sup> AHDNM, Operaciones Militares, XI/481.6/, Estado de Jalisco año de 1935, f. 7, 27 April 1935.

<sup>76</sup> AHDNM, Operaciones Militares, XI/481.6/, Estado de Jalisco año de 1935, ff. 5-7, 27 April 1935.

reactionary elements, enemies of the Revolution, [have] put up obstacles to the praiseworthy efforts of the Government. The Committee of the State[,] deeming that it is its duty to cooperate with the Government [...urges] this [local] Committee, so that by all means at its disposal, it insure that attendance at the schools established in that Municipality be abundant, denouncing before Municipal Authorities the parents or tutors reluctant to send their children to the schools, to the end of applying the corresponding sanctions to them.<sup>77</sup>

Because “some fanatic elements” had openly carried out propaganda against the socialist pedagogy—to the point that they had infiltrated the rank and file of the P.N.R., the agrarian community, and the local town government—the Committee unanimously agreed, among other things, that “those who belong to the Agrarian Community, and whose children are not in school because of [the threat of] excommunication, [...] should be the first to lose their rights to their lands for palpably demonstrating that they are not in agreement with the Six-Year Plan of our current President Gen. Lázaro Cárdenas [...].” The representatives of El Limón intended to unmask “for once and for all those hypocrites” with the goal of having Cárdenas realize who in reality were “the real *agraristas*”—whose efforts, were dedicated to the economic betterment of the people.<sup>78</sup>

Sworn loyalty to the state, however, did not necessarily equate with widespread protection for all of the law abiding citizens of Jalisco. There was a price to pay for the fulfillment of the promises of the Revolution and that debt, more often than not, was

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<sup>77</sup> AGN, LCR, 533.3/16, “Acta que se levantó, con motivo al acuerdo que se tomó para contrarrestar la labor clerical [...]”, f. 81, 2 October 1935.

<sup>78</sup> AGN, LCR, 533.3/16, “Acta que se levantó, con motivo al acuerdo que se tomó para contrarrestar la labor clerical [...]”, f. 81, 2 October 1935. In the course of that meeting, the representatives of El Limón also agreed upon the following: “[T]he parents, [who] belong to the P.N.R., who have children of school age and do not have them [enrolled] in the socialist schools, should be disowned [by] the Party”; and that “any councilman in function that has not fulfilled the above requirements, should be removed from the office that they unworthily carry out, for being the first to attack the orders emanating from the Supreme Government.”

collected by rebel forces. From the nearby municipality of Tonaya—municipal president and commander at arms—Abraham Uribe wrote to President Cárdenas to report a party of *cristeros* “that were up in arms” and who had penetrated the Agrarian Community of Los González. Uribe claimed to have offered resistance with five comrades, but was overwhelmed by rebel forces “[...and] not being able to resist the pressure of the mentioned rebels, because [they numbered] greater than forty individuals, we were forced to disperse ourselves leaving two of my comrades dead at enemy hands.” Additionally, the letter tells of the *cristeros* who devoted themselves to the shameful acts and burned down houses, and destroyed “whatever crossed their paths.” The municipality found itself in dire circumstances, “without homes, without anything to eat and without clothes.” Uribe thus sought the help of the president of the republic so that he might provide the community with adequate support to secure for itself the definitive possession of its lands—lands that community members had spent four years struggling to acquire and that were now in rebel hands.<sup>79</sup>

The townsmen of San Luis Soyatlán (Municipality of Tuxcueca) complained that their *agraristas* did not have any arms with which to defend their own interests and guarantee the safety of teachers. This was never more evident than on the night of 7 October 1937, when sixteen individuals armed with their rifles whose faces were covered with bandanas entered the respective town “firing their arms and sowing panic among the residents [...].” They arrived at the store located in front of the Federal Rural School, robbed it, and then went in search of the three teachers who lent their services to the

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<sup>79</sup>AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Carta escrita por el Presidente y Comandante de la Comunidad de los González al Presidente de la República”, f. 93, 21 November 1936.



school, “as well as the *ejidatarios*.” The teachers were able successfully to hide, but remained in imminent danger: “[since] it is about individuals who are hostile to the Government [and are] enemies of Socialist Education, [given that] their war-cry is ‘Viva Cristo Rey’ and ‘Death to Socialist Education’ [...]” In response to such actions, Professor Luis Rodríguez Lomelí wrote to the Head of the 15<sup>th</sup> military zone in order to ensure arrangements be made so that the *agraristas* of the neighborhood, where the Federal Rural School was located, be granted armaments, “since these [individuals] are the only ones who can guarantee the peace of the region, for being of revolutionary thought and loyal to the Government.” As a result, the Department of Federal Education provided the *agraristas*, who were deemed “friends of the Socialist School,” ten guns to protect the lives of the teachers fulfilling their commissions.<sup>80</sup>

In some cases, however, *agrarista* support for socialist education was not enough to guarantee its successful implementation. And local conflicts between *agraristas* and landowners showcase another important point of contention among agrarian politics, conservative groups, and teachers. On 29 August 1936, for example, *El Informador* published an article accusing the *agraristas* of the town Techaluta of not providing local teachers with guarantees for their security: “Yesterday the [professors] María de Jesús Villaseñor and María del Carmen Quiñones, directors respectively of the elementary schools for boys and girls, [...] have] fled the violent acts committed by a group of

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<sup>80</sup> SEP, Sección: Escuelas Rurales, Serie: Dirección Educación Federal, Subserie: Nombramiento de Personal. Años: 1935-37, Lugar: Guadalajara, Jal., Exp. 25, No. de Folios: 310, 10 October 1937.

*agraristas*.”<sup>81</sup> A month later, the *ejidatarios* of that particular agrarian community wrote to the governor to set the record straight with regard to the role their members played in preventing the two teachers from carrying out their duties. In particular, they accused the teachers of “emphatically lying,” explaining that community members “[have] exhausted all of the resources that are within [their] reach to impart the [necessary] protection [...and especially] to the professoriate of the region.” Despite their efforts to secure the arrival of the postulates of reform to the town, the *agraristas* claimed that the good faith shown to teachers was not taken into consideration because the “Reactionaries”—led by Felipe Cortés, a bandit who since the “past Cristero Rebellion” dedicated himself to that profession—had already subvert the professoriate of the region. Thus, according to the members of the community the *agraristas* of the town did not bother the teachers whatsoever. On the contrary, some of the teachers were accused of collaborating with local landowners to “satisfy their [the landowners] appetites”—who are “the most fervent enemies of socialist education [...]”<sup>82</sup>

The *agraristas* of Jalisco also challenge us to rethink our assumptions regarding *agrarismo*—in particular that *campesinos* shared a sense of solidarity because of their subordinate status in society. Ten agrarian communities from the region of Ahualulco, for

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<sup>81</sup> *El Informador*, “Piden su reconcentración los maestros de Techaluta por carecer de garantías.” 29 August 1936.

<sup>82</sup> SEP, G-30, Sección: Depto.-Escuelas Rurales, Serie: Inspección Escolar Federal, Años 1935-1936, Lugar: Guadalajara, Jal., No. de Expediente: 23, f. 24. Rafael Pila, Secretary of the League of Agrarian Communities and Campesino Syndicates of Jalisco, also complained the influence that landowners possessed and of the intense labor they carry out against *agraristas*: “the hordes of cristeros, comprised of elements paid by landowners affected by their ejido grants, [have] begun to assassinate ejidatarios.” The Secretary specifically made reference to the assassinations of Nicolás Santana, Sabino Morán and other, and asked for the intervention of President Cárdenas in such matters. See AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Telegrama de Rafael Pila al Presidente,” f. 22, 29 July 1938.

example, demonstrated the dilemma that faced many communities of this region in a complaint sent to President Cárdenas. In a telegram the ten commissioners denounced the “so-called *agraristas*” from the Agrarian Community of Arroyo Hondo in the municipality of Ameca, “who have assumed a frank rebellious attitude against the Constitutional Government.” The members comprising the community in question were said to be individuals with dreadful backgrounds, a marked “fanaticism,” and an anti-agrarista agenda in addition to supporting systematically the reactionary movement and engaging in banditry. The commissioners complained of the frequent cattle thefts, and threats levelled against their homes and collective interests.<sup>83</sup> In an effort to counteract this type “fanaticism,” present in a number of cases across the state, many residents of Jalisco submitted information concerning secret plots to state agencies aimed at infiltrating rebel forces. The goal of these plots was to strengthen the position of the federal government and to establish federal schools in the Los Altos region, which over the last ten years had seen a great deal of insurgent activity.”<sup>84</sup> Federal Teacher Victor Contreras noted that the region of Los Altos, which had always put up resistance to the

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<sup>83</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Telegrama de los Presidentes Comisariados Ejidales de las Comunidades de Agrarias de la Región de Ahualulco al Presidente de la República,” f. 98, 4 November 1936.

<sup>84</sup> AGN, LCR, 551.3:60, “Se pide autorización para ingresar a filas de núcleos rebeldes, a efectuar a exterminarlos,” f. 26. 22 April 1935. The most comprehensive scheme hailed from the town of Santa Rita, Municipality of Ayo el Chico (Ayotlán) in which federal teacher Victor Contreras suggested using a mixture of *agrarista* elements from local communities and residents of *alteño* origin to establish camps adjacent to Los Altos. They were to covertly “educate the consciences of the poor *alteños* [and to teach them] what [it meant to be a] modern worker [...]” In a similar fashion, Eulogio Narváez of Lagos de Moreno also sent a hand written letter to the President of the Republic to offer his services in order to “suffocate those party of bandits that are said to be part of the Liberating Party of Religious Beliefs.” Narváez claimed he had assurances that the leaders of the local rebel forces would accept him into their ranks, whereupon he would be able to infiltrate the group and provide valuable information to the federal forces. The main motivations for Narváez appeared to be his desire to teach the bandits and those that protect them a “lesson in the most definitive manner” and to assure peace in the region.

liberal laws of Mexico, could be one of the most valuable and prosperous areas of the country, if the presidential measures were effectively applied.<sup>85</sup> Let us now turn to the region of Los Altos—the hotbed of the rebellion—and how the region responded to educational reform.

### **The Rochista Rebellion in Los Altos de Jalisco**

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

-Romans 5:19

The previous section presented a bird's-eye view of rebellion during this period, without emphasizing differences among rebel groups. In this section, I specifically focus on the rebellion led by ex-cristero Lauro Rocha in the conservative region of Los Altos, which one contemporary labeled as “the last bastion of clericalism in Mexico.”<sup>86</sup> I ask three central questions: Who were the men who followed him? Why did they rise up in arms? What was their ultimate fate? I argue that the rebels who participated in this armed struggle were not simply holdouts from the first Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929), but instead were citizens who promoted an active political platform shaped by adverse responses to state interventions, the right to local autonomy, and preexisting religious sensibilities, which had become incompatible with the modern vision for the nation promoted by the postrevolutionary state.

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<sup>85</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Documents from Victor Contreras intended for President Lázaro Cárdenas,” f. 100-104, 13 October 1936.

<sup>86</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Observations collected in Los Altos, Jalisco,” ff. 132-138, 13 April 1935.

After spending a year compiling data for the establishment of a school, J.D. Durand observed that in “the region of Los Altos [...] the clergymen are congregated in great numbers and believe it is their duty to assure that the Government maintains itself away from their domain.” Moreover, in describing the spirit of the people in this region, he reported the following:

As a human element the *Alteño* can be considered a product of the highest quality. They are individuals of immense mental possibilities. They are noble in their sentiments, proud, brave, hard-working, lovers of the home and everything that this institution involves, friends of order, conservative with their mental conceptions, they love the good life, music, art, and they know how to live happy, they like to experiment with plants and animals to find the best varieties to cultivate, they are fond of the good breeds of racing horses and have created with that activity an industry and art, they love to travel; a lot of the men especially speak English, because of having lived periods of diverse length in the United States. They maintain a lot of the practices and customs inherited from their ancestors [and] some of their indigenous forefathers. They conserve the architecture, some of the dress, the language and the Catholic religion which dominates much of their actions and controls their consciences, and in some occasions it even affects their vital interests [...].<sup>87</sup>

The surveyor, J.D. Durand, himself a native of Chihuahua, additionally submitted a “plan” on how to solve the issues of the region. He specifically provided three primary suggestions: that the federal forces of the region completely retreat, since they have proved their inability to pacify it, and a rural police force, comprised of individuals from the same region, be established instead; that the existing system of propaganda for the socialist school (primarily carried out through radio, the press, and “ignorant individuals contracted by the Government”) be abandoned and that less offensive methods be adopted that are aimed at awakening the interest of the people instead of instilling fear,

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<sup>87</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Observations collected in Los Altos, Jalisco,” ff. 132-138, 13 April 1935.

hatred and mistrust; and, lastly, that officials needed to find a better method of putting into practice the existing laws pertaining to worship, “since Los Altos is the Mecca of Catholic Priests expelled from other places.” The surveyor also stressed that while the priests of the region continued to roam around in Los Altos:

Children will continue to be distant from the official schools, [and this] represents a serious problem for the nation, since the present generation is growing in the most complete ignorance under the tutelage of the clergy, which is maintaining it not only distant from the educational establishments but also instilling a profound hatred towards civil authorities in particular those of the State and federal, in general [...the] level of ignorance is bigger to the extent that [as] time passes [...] the power of [the] Church augments in that proportion, because their spiritual power precisely rests on the ignorance of their adepts.<sup>88</sup>

Many of the region’s citizens had emigrated to the United States in the wake of the First World War in search of better living conditions and had, over the course of those years, heavily invested their savings in the purchase of land and houses in their respective home communities. Several of these individuals also brought back with them their funds, undertook entrepreneurial activities, and established diverse businesses on a small scale—such as, electric plants, transportation services, factories, bakeries, clothing and grocery stores, and merchandizing. But when many were forced to return permanently to their homeland during the depression-era repatriation raids of the early-1930s, they came home to “an economic and social situation entirely distinct from that which they enjoyed in their neighboring country.” Durand on the resilience and character of *Alteños*:

...[their] mental and spiritual struggle is clear, and it is enough to just be in the region some two or three days to become aware of it. Some express their feeling openly and even criticize the laws and practices of our nation [...] it is not difficult to observe a profound hurt in their souls when they

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<sup>88</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Observations collected in Los Altos, Jalisco,” ff. 132-138, 13 April 1935.

realize they are fighting against the impossible. The way in which they are living suffocates them, it deprives them, [and] it limits the free manifestation and spontaneity of their mental aptitudes and nullifies their capacities as producers of wealth. [...] They are beings that prefer death in the battlefield [instead of] dying prisoners to the claws of misery and hunger. They are men and women of all type that do not easily submit themselves to unfavorable conditions and who know how to accept a struggle when this is the only alternative [...].<sup>89</sup>

### *A Leader Emerges*

In early 1935 General Carlos Martín del Campo, Secretary of War and Navy declared that in the Republic there were no rebels.<sup>90</sup> In the spring of 1935, however, a worried Governor Everardo Topete could no longer deny the discontent and disorder brewing in the Los Altos region. In a letter to the personal secretary of President Cárdenas, the governor decried the lack of protection afforded to the region, “the *Región Alteña* is currently completely unguarded [and I] consider it very dangerous [if] it continues in this way [...]” Topete stressed that an immense problem would be created if the region were neglected, “since the war the individuals known as ‘alteños’ waged in the past [cristero] rebellion is too well known.” The governor acknowledged that the mere presence of federal forces in simple detachments, in the settlements of greatest importance, would be sufficient enough to prevent any uprising.<sup>91</sup>

A month later, that is to say, on 15 May, the military headquarters of Los Altos voiced its first public warning against the rebels in opposition to the Government of the

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<sup>89</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, “Observations collected in Los Altos, Jalisco,” ff. 132-138, 13 April 1935.

<sup>90</sup> *El Informador*, “No hay rebeldes en la República.” 15 January 1935.

<sup>91</sup> AGN, LCR, 559:6, “Letter from Governor Topete to Luis I. Rodríguez,” f. 125, 19 April 1935.

Republic, published in local newspapers across the region. In the statement, General Antonio A. Guerrero called upon those who had taken up arms to put behind them all resentment and differences, and to dedicate themselves exclusively to their work: “[I] assure them that this military zone under my command will afford them [all] guarantees, [...] so long as their conduct is in strict accordance with this principle,” announced the general: “I make the same promise to the small armed groups who are still [...] operating in different parts of the State, [who are bothering] the real *campesinos* [peasants] and keeping their defenseless families in anxiety.” Guerrero unequivocally made it known to all the rebels that if they did not heed the call to surrender, the full forces of the zone would energetically pursue and punish any insurrectionist.<sup>92</sup>

On 1 April 1935, Lauro Rocha called upon the “valiant” and “suffering” sons of Los Altos to renew their previous undertaking, “which was terminated by Destiny just when the clear light of the SANTA LIBERTAD was shining in the East.” The *rochista* movement had a considerable historical evolution behind it, for they belonged to a world that had long known conflict with the state’s representatives. The implementation of

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<sup>92</sup> SD, 812.00-REVOLUTIONS/198, “Developments Indicating Possible Revolutionary Activity in the Los Altos Region of Jalisco.” 15 May 1935. Of note, about two weeks before the declaration, on 3 May 1935, the Director of Federal Education in Jalisco, Professor Ramón García Ruiz, described “an anguishing situation for teachers.” This had continued to prevail in Los Altos “because of the attitude that diverse groups of fanatics have taken [and] in some cases [they] have begun to take on a rebellious attitude against the National Government, operating in many cases with the utmost secrecy and in others openly taking advantage of any opportunity that is presented to them to persecute the teacher, whom they consider the most addicted defenders of the Revolution.” Two days prior to the declaration, on 13 May, Jesús Pérez, municipal president of Degollado, wrote a letter to the general secretary of government in Guadalajara complaining about the increasing number of rebels groups that marauded in Los Altos. “[They] constantly raid in all the municipalities [of the area] and then pass over to Michoacán,” complained Pérez, “where they return, when they have felt the persecution of the federal force [...] and in that manner these individuals always endanger [teachers], like the ones that are established [and] imparting instruction to children in the ranches of this municipalities.” The municipal president assured the offices of Guadalajara that in any case, even if it with the help of the same federal forces, that they would pursue those rebels to prevent further danger. See AHJ, IP-1-935-43-1079, Legajo 10, ff. 357, 351.



socialist education—in addition to other state projects such as agrarian reform, and the worsening economic conditions that afflicted the region—reignited once again the desire among people of the region to fight for the greater glory of God and to protect the youth and their women from what Rocha called “the disgraced revolutionaries of the present who, perfidious and begging, usurp power with the audacity of the serpent which offers the venom of its fangs with the brilliance of its eyes.” The manifesto Rocha circulated, which relied heavily on religious rhetoric and allegory, provides great insight into the motivations, grievances, and ideological trajectory behind the movement: “[Y]ou know lies are the favorite weapons of our enemies...hypocrites and dissemblers, they deny that there is religious persecution when everyone knows that in Mexico it is a serious offense to be a Catholic, and that for this single offense we are condemned to live as outcasts and sentenced to death.”<sup>93</sup>

In the eyes of the rebel leader, the government wished to take possession of the souls of their children in order to make of them hordes of hardened criminals, “taught to kill women, children, and peaceful old people.” The *rochistas* feared forever losing “the souls of our children, the virtue of our women, the honor of our youth, the dignity of the home; and, what is even more sacred [...] the destruction of the Mexican soul [...]” And much like previous rebel movements in Mexican history, Rocha also fought in the name of the Holy Mother of Guadalupe and appealed to the “ardent and self-denying and happy love we all feel towards [her, which] is the jewel and glory and honor of our forefathers and the only noble inheritance for those who follow us in life.” Rocha called upon all

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<sup>93</sup> SD, 812.00-REVOLUTIONS/198, “Developments Indicating Possible Revolutionary Activity in the Los Altos Region of Jalisco,” 1 April 1935.

men, women, and children, without regard to sex, age, or condition, to “cooperate in bringing to an end as soon as possible this campaign which need to last only long enough to regain our lost liberties.”



**Figure 9:** General Lauro Rocha. Courtesy of *El Museo Cristero* in Encarnación de Díaz, Jalisco.

The continual degradation of living conditions in Mexico was also cited by Rocha as another grievance that motivated rebel demands:

Thieves and rabble, they have enriched themselves in such a manner that all our people are in hunger and misery, business paralyzed, industries bankrupt, agriculture unprofitable, while they, the great bandits of Mexico, export tons of gold for deposit in the vaults of banks in Europe and the United States in order to enjoy, some day not far distant, their profit when the furious wave of this seas provoked by them overcomes.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> SD, 812.00-REVOLUTIONS/198, “Developments Indicating Possible Revolutionary Activity in the Los Altos Region of Jalisco,” 1 April 1935. It should be noted that in addition to fighting against the

The rebel leader also called for the overthrow of the “tyrants” who had stolen the wealth of the nation; that is to say, politicians such as Calles, Cardenas and “all those packs of dogs and treasury robbers.” According to Rocha, these politicians were to be delivered into the hands of the people who would then exact strict justice on each of them. For Rocha and his men, this was the supreme movement, the occasion when they either saved themselves or were forever defeated, “If we heed the call of duty we shall be free, but if we withdraw as cowards, the maledictions of God and the Fatherland will be upon us.”<sup>95</sup>

A contemporary report regarding the situation in Los Altos describing the rank and file of *rochistas*, which were comprised of one-hundred and twenty-six rebels. It is important, however, to highlight that these calculations represent conservative estimates and did not take into account inroads on the movement of the growing number of deaths due to an increasingly effective military persecution. Place of birth was only available for twenty-six of these individuals, which represents approximately 20.4 percent of the enlisted troops. The rebels came from five municipalities located in Los Altos: Arandas, Jesús María, Tepatitlán de Morelos, San Miguel el Alto, and Atotonilco el Alto; and twenty-three of these individuals (85.1 percent) hailed from the municipality of Arandas; while the remaining rebels were equally distributed among the remaining four municipalities. Rocha appeared to be the principal *cabecilla* (leader) of the movement and his immediate forces were comprised of seven additional *cabecillas*. Every *cabecilla*

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socialist education program and widespread poverty, *rochistas* also fought against agrarian reform and to regain the liberties granted to them in the 1929 *Arreglos*.

<sup>95</sup> SD, 812.00-REVOLUTIONS/198, “Developments Indicating Possible Revolutionary Activity in the Los Altos Region of Jalisco,” 1 April 1935.

was in command of a *gavilla* (band) comprised of an average of approximately eighteen subordinates. The report indicates that four of the seven *gavillas* marauded in Los Altos and the surrounding areas; and of those four groups, three received specific orders to carry out. The men of *cabecilla* Arredondo served as escorts for Rocha, while the men of Macías had the specific task of marauding near the principal road, near El Josefina, which permitted continuous assaults on military trucks that patrolled near León, Guanajuato. *Cabecilla* Concepción Rizo was assigned the similar task of assaulting cars that toured from Atotonilco. These conservative figures represent a snap shot of the rebels during their decline and, therefore, they do not account for the possibility that at one point the number of people involved in the movement could have been significantly larger. However, what the figures do effectively demonstrate is that even during this time, when *rochistas* saw their numbers drastically reduced at the hands of increasing military attacks, they retained a great deal of organization and discipline.<sup>96</sup>

The leaders of the movement all held regular meetings with Lauro Rocha at Picacho de Ayo or at the ranches of La Mesita, Cierro Gordo, Palmitos, and Támara to distribute cartridges amongst the *gavillas*. And to be up to date with the movement of federal troops, the *rochistas* had spies at the peaks of Cerro de Ayo, Cerro Gordo, Cerro de San Judas, Cerro del Viborero, and Cerro del Caracol. Many of the rebels were supplied with arms and munitions through the use of informal networks that reached Guadalajara to Los Altos and, at one point, to Veracruz. Various women, among them

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<sup>96</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:23, f. 118, 10 March 1936.

Doña Luisita Ruiz Velasco and Josefina Ruiz Velasco, for example, reported to have acquired much ammunition and guns for the rebels.<sup>97</sup>

*A Portrait of a Battle*

On 22 September 1935, *El Informador* reported that *rochistas*, “dissatisfied with the current state of the Republic,” raided the population of San José de Gracia in the Los Altos region.<sup>98</sup> The rebel fighters quickly overwhelmed local authorities, defeated the rural defense unit (comprised of *agraristas*), and proceeded onward to commit various abuses and kidnap numerous individuals in the township. Among those into to the clutches of *rochistas* were *licenciado* Enrique Ramírez, who later obtained his freedom and returned to Guadalajara; señor Gabriel González Tizareño, executed and abandoned on the battlefield; and *licenciado* Lorenzo Reynoso Padilla, the Judge Counsel of Tepatitlán, who had travelled to San José de Gracia to assist the High Court of Guadalajara, and whose fate remained unclear. What is atypical about this incident, however, is that the violence was directed towards local officials and judicial representatives. The actions of *rochistas* went well beyond simply engaging in acts of collusion with parish priests and landowners, and offers additional insight into the arsenal of tactics that rebel forces utilized.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *El Informador*, “En la Metrópoli Hicieron Más Aprehensiones de Católicos,” 24 November 1935. They both put on record how they acquired some Thompson guns and machine guns for the movement, which they claimed to have acquired them from various ex-deputies. One of them specifically expressed having acquired from the Arsenal of Veracruz about 18,000 cartridges for the rebel cause.

<sup>98</sup> *El Informador*, “Fusilamientos y Secuestros en el Pueblo de San José de Gracia,” 22 September 1935.

<sup>99</sup> *El Informador*, “Fusilamientos y Secuestros en el Pueblo de San José de Gracia,” 22 September 1935.

The violent acts of protest committed by rebels, conversely, did not go unpunished at the hands of federal forces and were met with sophisticated retaliations. These *cristeros* of *la Segunda* were no longer fighting a guerrilla campaign against an undertrained and ill-equipped army; they were now fighting a war against a federal army that had prepared for the possibility of a renewed insurrection and intended to severely cripple, and suppress, the rebel bands as quickly as possible. To achieve this goal, the federal army established military garrison detachments in all of the former “*cristero*” towns effectively to combat the rebels’ ability freely to maneuver over rugged terrain that favored cavalry units instead of a European-style army.<sup>100</sup> The deployment of aviation, the use of radio, the construction of new roads and trails, and the laying of telephone lines also dramatically improved the military’s capacity to coordinate better attacks, and allowed for greater efficiency in the transmission of knowledge regarding enemy positions and tactics.<sup>101</sup>

Nine days after the raid of San José de Gracia, Brigadier General Florentino García Carreón released the following statement: “Yesterday one of the columns that operates in the region of Los Altos and that Brigade General Antonio A. Guerrero personally directs, [...came upon] a party of bandits lead by Lauro Rocha [and with] our troops obtaining marked success[,] a serious defeat was inflicted on them, causing them

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<sup>100</sup> AGN, LCR, 559.1:123, f. 118, 10 March 1936. A report on the situation that prevailed in the region of Los Altos, for example, concluded that with the establishment of detachments in Río Sánchez, La Gloria y Rincón de Molino, Cerro de Ayo, El Josefino, Cabrito, Santiaguito, Santa María de Valle, San Ignació, Cerro Cordo, and Viborero, “they would quickly be able to localize the bandits and give them a decisive blow.” See Jean Meyer, *La Cristiada*. (Mexico, D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno, 1991), p. 365. See Jean Meyer, *La Cristiada*, p. 365.

<sup>101</sup> Meyer, *La Cristiada*, p. 365.

to completely disperse.” The Military lamented the death of one corporal and six other casualties, “all of the 33<sup>rd</sup> regiment, who today were brought to [Guadalajara] to be treated.”<sup>102</sup> The following day *El Informador* published a detailed vivid account of the battle that had taken place. Upon clearing the field, federal forces came across twenty-one dead rebels, and among them was Jacinto Angulo, who was said to have served as Rocha’s second in command, in addition to “other leaders.” Angulo was previously suspected of being the individual who just days before had assassinated several policemen of San José de Gracia and law-intern González Tizacareño.<sup>103</sup>

*The politics of conciliation and the fall of Rocha*

On 12 April 1936, the newly appointed Archbishop of Guadalajara, José Garibi y Rivera, wrote his first pastoral letter to the clergy and faithful of the region’s archdiocese. This letter advised all Catholics who desired to make a difference and “participate in the crusade against the terrible persecution carried out by the state,” to leave aside the gun and in its place pick up the bible. Any Catholic who refused to pay attention to his call, according to the Archbishop, would not be fulfilling their duty as children of the Church. The duty of all the faithful was to join *Acción Católica*, an organization that would provide individuals with a peaceful alternative to counteract the unfavorable policies of the government. Garibi y Rivera declared explicitly that he would carefully guide the organization so that it would not, under any pretext, take part in political or war-like activities.

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<sup>102</sup> *El Informador*, “La Persecución a los Rebeldes,” 2 November 1935.

<sup>103</sup> *El Informador*, “Fuerte Derrota a los Rebeldes de Lauro Rocha,” 3 November 1935.

In regards to the countryside, however, a very serious problem had arisen in recent months; worried about the matter, His Excellency said the following:

[A]t this time, a great many Catholics are without any kind of organization or discipline in our unfortunate country. The fact that they are without leadership fills me with anxiety, especially when I am painfully aware that some of them have reached the point where they believe that the Catholic cause of the Church in Mexico can only be saved on the condition that efforts [be] disassociated [...] from the bishops themselves[,] and when I say this I pray to God that no one gets the impression that I believe that Catholics should undertake the defense of their rights by violence or arms.

At a time when *rochistas* were fighting an uphill battle against an army that had effectively reinvented itself, the words of the Archbishop signaled the beginning of the end for the “valiant” and “suffering” sons of Los Altos. “I pray to God to safeguard me against inciting anyone to such action [rebellion] because without discussion[,] whether or not such action be licit [...] it is not my mission and I cannot nor do I desire to meddle in anything which lies beyond the field of my proper activities,” cautioned Garibi y Rivera. “[T]his is the order of the Holy Church [...] and] the Roman Pontiff [who] has prohibited priests from taking part in anything resembling an armed movement.”<sup>104</sup>

On 3 July 1936, a morally defeated Rocha wrote: “I believe that I will not last a long time [...On] my return to this region [of Los Altos], I will find the peaceful people completely changed [...] we are [now] living in a completely hostile environment.” Rocha attributed the fate he foresaw to several reasons, among them: the great poverty that reigned in the area due to the loss of harvests of 1935; the changing attitudes present among government of officials and the clergy; the open efforts some parish priests

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<sup>104</sup> SD, 812.404/1912 1/3, “First Pastoral Letter Addressed by The Most Excellent and Most Reverend Dr. José Garibi Rivera to The clergy and Faithful of the Archdiocese of Guadalajara on 12 April 1936,” 14 August 1936.



carried against the rebels; and Archbishop Garibi y Rivera's first pastoral letter, "which has caused us more damage than the government itself." These were no longer the words of a rebel leader who sought the reclamation of lost liberties, local autonomy, and the overthrow of the "tyrants" controlling Mexico. Rocha posed a set of rhetorical questions: "What should we do in this case? Should we confront the ecclesiastical authorities? Scandalize the people? Should I keep pushing towards a sterile sacrifice...or do I convert myself to a chief of bandits? What do I do with those that I have [led] into arms in Los Altos?" Gone were the days when the population regarded him as 'honorable' and non-criminal. "The entire world denounces us," lamented Rocha, "and the ones who do not dare to, even deny us a tortilla."<sup>105</sup> A half-year later, the *cabecilla* (rebel leader) fell before the blazing guns of three army officers while hiding at the home of a friend in Mexico City.<sup>106</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This chapter explored the initial debates over the national government's Six-Year Plan on Education and subsequently analyzed the nature of political violence during the Second Cristero Rebellion (from mid-1934 to 1940). I approached the topic from three distinct, but ultimately interrelated, lenses. The first focused primarily on ideological sites of affirmation and contestation, such as editorials and speeches given on the senate floor, to highlight what politicians and officials thought about the socialist education reform. The second showcased how federal schooling policy was implemented in the countryside.

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<sup>105</sup> Meyer, *La Cristiada*, p. 382.

<sup>106</sup> *The Washington Post*, "Mexico's Robin Hood is Slain After Gun Battle in Hideout," 1 January 1937.

In the process, I argued that community grievances, political divisions, and varying degrees of religious sensibilities shaped the manner in which rural people understood the state's cultural revolution of the 1930s. Despite efforts on the part of the high clergy to maintain a neutral attitude towards the state, I showed that many rebel groups and parish priests interpreted socialist schools as state instruments of domination, deliberately designed to suppress, and in certain cases to eradicate, the traditional belief systems of their parishioners. The actions of locals in the face of escalating violence in the countryside ultimately determined whether they decided to accept, disregard, or alter the socialist education program.

The third lens sought to isolate the *Rochista* Rebellion in the Los Altos region, add context, highlight their reasons for fighting, and offer a social profile of the rank and file that comprised the movement. In highlighting the rebellion led by Lauro Rocha, I contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how rebels operated, yielding greater insight into their worldview and motivations for fighting. As a result, these findings challenge the assumption that the ideology of rebels was archaic (in the sense of being antiquated or pre-political) as the historiography has proposed. Instead, the insurgents of the Second Cristero Rebellion were rural people who actively participated in armed struggles in defense of a sacred way of life, which in the eyes of the new post-revolutionary state had already disappeared, never to return.

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## Epilogue

On 28 August 1974, José Guadalupe Zuno left a printing shop affiliated with the *Universidad de Guadalajara*. He proceeded to walk towards a green Ford Galaxie, where his chauffeur and trusted friend, Miguel González, awaited. Zuno was now an old man, aged eighty-three, who suffered from diabetes. But Father Time had been, for the most part, good to him. Following the events portrayed in this dissertation, he had gone back to school and managed successfully to reinvent himself as a lawyer and *maestro*, and went on to make significant contributions to public life in Guadalajara as an intellectual, popular historian, and author of many works. Before Zuno stepped into the Galaxie, however, if he were to have paused for a moment to contemplate just how much his surroundings had changed from the time he was governor, he would have seen a city in the midst of dramatic growth and transformation.<sup>1</sup> The population of Guadalajara had swelled from 147,575 residents in 1921 to at least 1,999,391 by 1970, whereas the population of the state had almost tripled in size during that same period. Foreign investments too had become more visible in the region as twenty-four enterprises had recently moved in, among them General Mills, Ingersoll Rand, Kodak, Phillip Morris, Pepsicola, and Ralston Purina.<sup>2</sup> But the violence that came to characterize the countryside of Jalisco, however, had long become but a distance murmur. And Guadalajara itself was

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<sup>1</sup> See “Censo General de Habitantes 1921,” Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (hereinafter cited as INEGI), accessed May 13, 2017, <http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/ccpv/1921/> and “IX Censo General de Población 1970,” INEGI, accessed May 13, 2017, <http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/ccpv/1970/default.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Jon Shefner, *The Illusion of Civil Society: Democratization and Community Mobilization in Low-Income Mexico* (Penn State Press, 2012), p. 53.

now a hotbed of guerrilla warfare nourished in large part by the radical student movement that emerged in those years.

On an international stage Mexico had recently staged the Games of the XIX Olympiad. While this represented a significant investment on the part of the Mexican government and was to be the country's coming-out party as a modern nation, it quickly turned sour. Ten days before the Olympics kicked off, the Díaz Ordaz administration attempted to suppress on-going student protests in an effort to portray a stable and peaceful Mexico to the international community. This resulted in the government attempting to evacuate five thousand student protesters from the *Plaza de las Tres Culturas* in the Tlatelolco neighborhood of Mexico City. When the attempt failed to yield results government forces fired upon the protesters, killing and subsequently arresting many. The Tlatelolco Massacre, as it came to be known, ushered in a new era of confrontation between the ruling party and civil society.

In the wake of these unfortunate events, the ruling party nominated Zuno's son-in-law, Minister of Interior Luis Echeverría Álvarez, for president of Mexico. And to rehabilitate the image of the PRI, Echeverría embarked on a public relations tour covering more than thirty-five thousand miles and nine-hundred municipalities.<sup>4</sup> Tracing his own political genealogy back to the recently departed Lázaro Cárdenas, whom he called his mentor, Echeverría's efforts became a symbolic opportunity for the ruling party

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<sup>4</sup> Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule Since the late Nineteenth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), p 168.

to reconstruct a diverse support base that could cut across socioeconomic class lines.<sup>5</sup> When Echeverría came into office in December 1970, his administration attempted to enact the social reforms he had campaigned on: reviving land reform (to some extent); lowering the voting age to eighteen; implementing significant housing and food subsidies for citizens; and releasing several political prisoners. Echeverría endeavored once again to make the legacy of the Mexican Revolution relevant to a new generation of young people, but this president faced a new and more difficult social, political, and economic reality than his predecessors.<sup>6</sup>

In 1973 an economic crisis wrecked havoc around the world and Mexico was not spared; consequently, the demand for Mexican products plummeted. The previous infusion of billions into the economy to help pay for the president's social programs, in turn, led to runaway inflation. And the following year, credit became constricted and interest rates soared "raising the cost of the government's foreign loans that helped pay for the new social programs." Echeverría countered by taxing the wealthiest Mexicans at higher rates. The elite refused to pay and massive capital flight ensued—consumer prices increased and the peso gradually devalued.<sup>7</sup> While the president continuously offered support for leftwing and nationalist movements in Latin America (throwing his support behind Allende in Chile, for example) and publicly espoused what would become known

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<sup>5</sup> María L. O. Muñoz, *Stand Up and Fight: Participatory Indigenismo, Populism, and Mobilization in Mexico, 1970-1984* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016), p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Muñoz, *Stand Up and Fight*, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph and Buchenau, *Once and Future Revolution*, pp. 172-173.

as *Third Worldism*,<sup>8</sup> he also poignantly and brutally repressed left-leaning groups in his own country. After the shock of Tlatelolco, the student movement radicalized and many of its followers joined urban guerrillas or engaged in rural rebellion.<sup>10</sup>

The student movement in Guadalajara, however, had its origins as a rebellion against the *Federación de Estudiantes de Guadalajara* (FEG), which controlled the *Universidad de Guadalajara* (UdeG). The FEG would go on not only to exercise authority over the student body of the UdeG, but also to reproduce the structures of control that the PRI used to govern. On the one hand, the FEG professed itself an anticlerical group, extolled the virtues of a university education, and outspokenly identified itself as anti-imperialist; while on the other, “it employed violence and corruption to keep students submitted and rewarded with impunity those [...] who did the dirty work of the organization.”<sup>11</sup> As a result, the student movement did not take off in 1968 as it had in Mexico City; rather, the FEG remained loyal to the government. Even after the events at Tlatelolco, the FEG “organized armed groups to patrol all of the centers [on campus] and to [prevent them from] making communist propaganda or [be in] favor of the student body in Mexico City.”<sup>12</sup>

But as a new generation of recent arrivals from the countryside began to come of age in the Guadalajara of the 1970s and enroll at the UdeG, they began to contest the

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<sup>8</sup> See Luis Echeverría, “The Struggle against Colonialism,” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Jan. 1974): 64.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph and Buchenau, *Once and Future Revolution*, pp. 169 and 171.

<sup>11</sup> Sergio Aguayo Quezada, *La charola: una historia de los Servicios de inteligencia en México* (México, D.F.: Grijalbo, 2001), p. 151.

<sup>12</sup> Aguayo Quezada, *La charola*, p. 156

power of the FEG. Guerrilla organizations such as the *Partido Revolucionario Obrero Clandestino Unión del Pueblo* (PROCUP), the *Liga Comunista de 23 de Septiembre*, and the *Frente Revolucionario Armado Popular* (FRAP) soon emerged and demanded a voice in the political world that had been shaped by the PRI and its instruments. Clashes eventually ensued in Guadalajara, and from 1970 to 1976 at least ninety-five deaths were recorded, while another one-hundred and twenty-seven individuals were at some point wounded.<sup>13</sup> The guerilla organizations also began to adopt the practices of similar organizations around the country, kidnapping prominent authorities or politicians. On 4 May 1973, for example, the FRAP kidnapped Terrance George Leonhardy, the American consul in Guadalajara, demanding and successfully receiving the release of thirty political prisoners and one-million pesos in exchange for his freedom.<sup>14</sup>

In was in this context, then, that Zuno decided to get into the Galaxie chauffeured by his good friend. When the vehicle reached the intersection of *Avenida Revolución* and *Calle Constancia*, it was intercepted by a grey 1968 Ford. Four men armed with guns and a hammer hurriedly stepped out and descended upon the Galaxie. They subdued the chauffeur with an unidentified gas, momentarily blinding him. The assailants snatched Zuno from the Galaxie, transferred him to the other vehicle, and sped away.<sup>15</sup> The kidnapping of Zuno in Guadalajara soon turned into a national crisis, garnering significant media attention in large part because of his relation to President Echeverría,

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<sup>13</sup> Aguayo Quezada, *La charola*, p.176.

<sup>14</sup> “Leonhardy Kidnapping,” *Wikileaks*, accessed on May 13, 2017, [https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1973MEXICO03082\\_b.html](https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1973MEXICO03082_b.html).

<sup>15</sup> *El Informador*, 29 August 1974.

but also because of his local standing. In a briefing to the press, the governor of Jalisco, Alberto Orozco Romero, declared:

I profoundly lament that such a worthy *jalisciense* has been the object of an attempt that [has] upset our entire entity. Personally, this event has affected me, since my *maestro* Lic. Zuno Hernández has been an example for me to follow because of his remarkable collegiate, revolutionary, and patriotic trajectory, and he has served as a guide to those of us who have [gone on] to govern the state of Jalisco.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, the Guadalajara-based daily *El Informador* published a great number of letters showing support and solidarity. One such letter came from the agrarian community of Zapotiltic, which claimed “to be willing to personally lend our collaboration to safely and soundly rescue such an illustrious *jalisciense*.”<sup>17</sup> That same day, the Mexican Attorney General Ojeda Paullada informed the press that the government of Mexico would not negotiate with criminals. But he took time, however, publicly to lavish praise on the old man’s impeccable career and credentials: “[Zuno] is widely known for his honesty, his revolutionary trajectory [and] ideology and his struggles in benefit of the people, which he has sustained all of the days of his life.”<sup>18</sup> The passing of time had done much to rehabilitate the image of Zuno. In fact, he had come to represent a Mexico riddled with contradictions, one in which politicians publicly embraced progressive views, but in practice behaved just as any other powerful *cacique* would.<sup>19</sup> His illicit

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<sup>16</sup> *El Informador*, 29 August 1974.

<sup>17</sup> *El Informador*, 29 August 1974.

<sup>18</sup> *El Informador*, 30 August 1974.

<sup>19</sup> Aguayo Quezada, *La charola*, pp. 146-147



behaviors and corrupt practices had been forgotten, simply relegated to the dusty boxes of the national archive in Mexico City.

The demands of the kidnappers were made public on 31 August. The operation to kidnap Zuno, and allegedly called “Operation Tlatelolco, 2 October 1968,” had been successfully carried out by members of the FRAP. Addressed to Zuno’s family the letter not only professed responsibility for sequestering of the old man, but claimed that the FRAP had done so in order to punish a representative of the corrupt and exploitative bourgeoisie:

[As] a response to the permanent repressive campaign that [many] repressive corps carry [out] throughout the country against the proletarian people fighting against misery, exploitation, and all of the evils that the [...] bourgeoisie provokes to seize the wealth [that] the proletarians produce, [we] categorically declare that he [Zuno] will only obtain his freedom as soon as the bourgeoisie [meets our] demands.<sup>20</sup>

They subsequently demanded twenty million pesos, the release of ten prisoners, and an airplane, but the government publicly refused to negotiate. There was talk, however, of a discrete agreement having been reached, which would have required the government to release a group of detained political prisoners.<sup>21</sup> He was released unharmed after ten days. Speaking to a group of reporters, Zuno claimed that he did not hold resentment towards his captors because they were healthy boys, good people, that they were simply misguided “because they wanted to change the world without knowing how to do it.” And with regard to the supposed inaction of his son-in-law, President Echeverría, Zuno believed it the right decision but lamented the weakness of current day politicians,

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<sup>20</sup> *El Informador*, 31 August 1974.

<sup>21</sup> Aguayo Quezada, *La charola*, pp. 180-181.

including his own son-in-law, who did not honor the Mexican Revolution “because they have been letting themselves be influenced by the reactionary forces of the world, who have put reactionary ideas [into their heads].”<sup>22</sup>

But buried amidst these sensational headlines, there was another story unfolding in Mexico. The day of Zuno’s kidnapping, the general director of the National Company of Popular Subsistence (CONASUPO), Jorge de la Vega Domínguez called upon the *campesinos* of the country to produce more food in order to lessen their dependence on foreign nations. Addressing the *Confederación Nacional Campesina*, de la Vega hoped that peasants would respond by abandoning old egalitarian ideas in favor of petty capitalist enterprise because the current situation was now about “real” and “daily” issues—it was about trying to construct a new modern society, and the only way this could be achieved, according to the director, was to be in solidarity with the “popular” government: “There is a crisis and there is hunger [around] the world [. . .in] Mexico, surely, there are difficult situations which [. . .] we are resolving.”<sup>23</sup> These situations were never resolved, nor did they get any better in the years to come. In 1976 the peso lost half of its value, taking the dollar to twenty-five pesos.<sup>24</sup> As a result, what began as a promising period soon turned into one of the most critical in recent Mexican history.

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<sup>22</sup> *El Informador*, 9 September 1974.

<sup>23</sup> *El Informador*, 29 August 1974.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph and Bucheanu, *Once and Future Revolution*, p. 173.

This dissertation has explored the political history of Jalisco during the turbulent decades that followed the Mexican Revolution of 1910. This was as much a history of state power in Mexico as it was an account of agency, resistance, and accommodation in the countryside. Along the way three interrelated stories emerged, showcasing how state power was understood at various levels of society. The first was concerned with how individuals came to see their place in the social order, especially during and after moments of disruption and crisis. The second narrated the struggle between regional authorities in Guadalajara and the central government in Mexico City over effective political control of the state. And the third studied how political projects—such as agrarian reform, anticlericalism, and educational reform—came to intersect with the social and cultural contexts of life in the countryside. I have argued that anxieties over (the threat and/or actuality of) violence shaped the manner in which citizens in Jalisco understood their rights and ultimately contested the presence of the state. *Rebellious Citizens* also examined the impact of three significant rebellions that shook the established social order: the de la Huerta Rebellion (1923-1924), the Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929), and the Second Cristero Rebellion (1934-1940). Together, the long-term effects of these recurring upheavals were not only formative to the new regime that emerged in the postrevolutionary period, but also challenged our understanding of local participation in the political process, often seen as a closed sphere dominated by powerful state agents ruling with unquestioned authority, where ordinary people rarely made their voices heard. Instead, these episodes revealed how local officials debated the limits of national power and struggled with how to govern, while simultaneously consenting to the demands of citizens.

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