UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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Narcomundo: How *Narcotraficantes* Gained Control of Northern Mexico and Beyond, 1945-1985

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

by

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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Professor James W. Wilkie, Chair

Mexico's official history does not properly address the Drug Wars and its effect on the nation as well as the U.S. – Mexico border region, including criminal spillover between the two countries especially since 1911. Drawing from evidence gathered at Mexico's National Archives – specifically declassified documents from Mexico's secret police files – contemporary news accounts from Tijuana, Mexico City, and California, as well as court cases and long ignored political biographies, I trace the historical origins of the Drug Wars in Northern Mexico extending into Mexico City; a history of drugs, dissidence, and violence.

In my view, the problem of drugs in Mexico must be examined in Three Phases, two of which – Phase One and Two – I take up in the volume. The First Phase is from 1911-1945. The Second Phase is from 1945-1985. The Third Phase, since 1985, covers the rise of what I refer to as turf wars between competing drug trafficking organizations

for the control of specific corridors vital for the production and distribution of drugs into the United States.

The First Phase goes back to the year 1911 when General and later Governor Esteban Cantú arrived to defend the Northern Territory of Baja California against incursions from Southern California by the Flores Magón brothers during the start of the Mexican Revolution. This was also a period where the role of vice tourism in Tijuana and Mexicali profited from the Prohibition Era in the United States (1920-1933), setting the foundations for a drug trafficking model– developed for Baja Norte by Governor Cantú. This cross-border smuggling model was later refined in Baja under General and then Governor Abelardo L. Rodríguez (1921-1930), who then took the model to Mexico when he joined President Ortiz as a Secretary of Defense (1932) and Economy (1932) before he became Interim President of Mexico (1932-1934). The model has held to this day.

The Second Phase encompasses Mexico's official start on the War on Drugs from 1945 to 1985 and coincides not surprisingly with the start of the Cold War in the late 1940s. In this Second Phase I analyze the consolidation and metamorphoses of Drug Trafficking Organizations in Mexico's War on Drugs up to 1960. Thus, I explore the connection between East-Coast based Mafia and its incursion and eventual control of the drug trade and organized crime in the West Coast as well as eventually the transborder region. I also analyze the early eradication campaigns carried out by Mexican authorities first on their Baja regional level and subsequently at the national level. I also examine links between "Bugsy" Siegel and his alleged control of the drug trade in Southern California, which stretched easily to Tijuana.

This volume also investigates the War on Drugs and a "hidden dirty-war" against dissidence and peasants in rural Mexico, a span that ranged from 1965 to 1985. Under the pretext of eradicating drug production by *narcocultivadores* or narcogrowers, Mexican authorities also launched an offensive against dissident groups interested in readdressing the land issue in rural Mexico, effectively eradicating dissidence, but not drugs.

The search for the source of drugs soon involved the CIA-Contra-Drug Trafficking connection from the Mexican perspective. By the early 1980s, The Mexican journalist Manuel Buendía had begun to explore the link between the CIA-Contra-Drug Trafficking, and he hypothesized that it needed the complicity of corrupt Mexican and law enforcement officials. In addition to his, Buendía also uncovered the participation of other state actors, such as the Mexico Secret Police (DFS) and the CIA. Buendía was murdered in 1984.

The drug issues came together in the 1985 abduction in Guadalajara and torture-murder of DEA Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena. To unwind this complicated issue, I analyze the official and unofficial versions about this major transnational crisis. The Third Phase in my analysis begins, then, with the grisly murder of "Kiki" by Drug Warriors, which threw down the gauntlet to the United States. The Mexican Government came under great pressure to take drastic action to help U.S. agents that had flocked to Mexico to find the killers.

In this volume I only offer a brief sketch of issues that need full research of this Third Phase since 1985. My on-going investigations call for a follow-up volume to cover the complex rise of full-scale "turf wars" between drug lords, and between the drug lords

and the military/police. This research will lead us into President Calderón's so-called "War on Drug Lords," which in reality had already gotten underway.

In the Epilogue of this volume, I articulate questions that address both the recent and drug history of the region. The analysis I raise presents a deep historical analysis of Mexico up to 1985. It also provides a starting point for future scholarship to be placed in its proper historical context, thus utilizing my historical scholarship as developed in this work as a launching point in order to place Mexico's long-standing major problem: Public Order and Safety, the disorder of which threatens the very being of what is called the "Mexican Nation System of Government."

The dissertation of Carlos Armando Hernández is approved.

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DEDICATION

To my two *Julitas*:

Julia Irene my best friend and life partner, thank you for your unwavering and unconditional support, love, and encouragement while I investigated and wrote my dissertation for the last six years.

Julieta Paz, thank you for the incredible gift of fatherhood, the opportunity to see the world through your eyes and providing me with the inspiration to complete my dissertation.

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Introduction: Contraband and Betrayal

Salieron de San Isidro
Procedentes de Tijuana,
Traían las llantas del carro
Repletas de yerba mala.
Eran Emilio Varela
Y Camelia La Tejana.

"Contrabando y Traición," by Los Tigres del Norte (1974).

Los Tigres del Norte released the song "*Contrabando y Traición"* (Contraband and Betrayal) as part of their album *La Banda del Carro Rojo* (The Red Car Gang). Two years later, this particular song was made into a motion picture. The song chronicles the story of Emilio Varela, a small time drug trafficker, and Camelia from Texas (*Camelia la Texana*) and their successful attempt of transporting marihuana hidden in their car tires through the San Isidro Border crossing.

After successfully negotiating the San Clemente checkpoint and delivering their cargo in Hollywood, Emilio informs Camelia that he is retiring from the smuggling activities, and eventually settling in San Francisco, California, where her love interest is waiting for him to start a new life.

Camelia feels betrayed, and responds violently, killing Emilio and leaving the scene with the money. The authorities arrive to the scene of the crime only to find Emilio's body and the weapon used to commit the crime. Both Camelia and the money were gone without a trace.

This narcocorrido epitomizes the attempt of this investigation, which is to provide a historical perspective on the war on drugs, a history that can be surmised from the title

of the song: "Contraband and Betrayal." Betrayal by local officials that have colluded with drug traffickers; betrayal of law enforcement and military agencies that have become corrupted and colluded with drug traffickers as well and have betrayed public trust. Jorge Chabat, an expert in transborder security issues, offers a possible solution to corruption. He uses the metaphor of a computer affected with a virus. According to Chabat, the problem of corruption is not one that can be solved in terms of uploading software to eliminate the virus; it is necessary to replace the hard drive. How, then, has the war on drugs become an important topic with transnational and global implications?

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide an analysis of the origins of the War on Drugs in Northern Mexico, using the Tijuana-San Diego corridor as a case study. Drawing from institutional sources, secret police files, legal records, and political biographies, this dissertation provides a history of drug trafficking in the region on a local, transborder and transnational context. In this work, I attempt to illuminate the main points that will provide the reader with a historical perspective on the issue from a global, national, regional, and transborder vantage point. The impetus for my investigation started the same way the song from *Los Tigres del Norte* started, in the Tijuana-San Diego corridor.

Research Questions and Impetus for My Work

In 2007, while teaching as a visiting lecturer at the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC), Campus Tijuana, I witnessed first-hand the escalation of violence this city was experiencing as part of President Calderón's militarization strategy in the War on Drugs. As I read the newspaper reports and saw the television coverage, I realized the lack of a scholarly attempt to trace the historical roots of the War on Drugs

and how it fits into the contemporary history of Mexico and the transborder region. This experience led me to select my investigation topic. As part of the inquiry process, I began to formulate a series of questions that I seek to answer through my research.

The central research questions that guide this study involve the historical origins of the Drug Wars in Northwest Mexico. For the purpose of this investigation, particular attention is placed on the Tijuana-San Diego corridor and how Narco traffickers gained control of Mexico's Northeastern region.

In my view, the problem of drugs in Mexico must be examined in Three Phases. The first phase is from 1911-1945. The second phase is from 1945-1985. I take on the first two phases in this body of work. The Third Phase since 1985 requires a follow-up volume covering the rise of full-scale "turf wars" between the drug lords and between the military and the narco traffickers.

The First Phase goes back to the year 1911 when Esteban Cantú is sent to defend the Northern Territory of Baja California against incursions from Southern California by the Flores Magón brothers during the start of the Mexican Revolution.[1] Esteban Cantú governed the Territory of Baja California Norte, first as Chief Executive (1915-1917), then as Governor (1917-1920).

This First Phase ends with the start of the Cold War, which coincides with Mexico's official start on the War on Drugs. In late November 1947, the Mexican Government launched a concerted effort to combat drug production in Sonora, Sinaloa, and the Northern Territory of Baja California. On November 11, 1947, Tijuana's

[1] Lowell L. Blaisdell, *The Desert Revolution: Baja California, 1911*.

newspaper *El Pueblo* publishes an article that announces the creation of a joint task force that will combat the proto drug trafficking organizations in Mexico's Northern Region. [2].

The Second Phase ends with the assassination of DEA agent Enrique Camarena in 1985, when Mexico and the international community became aware of the magnitude and effects of the drug trade in Mexico. This event is the ending point for my investigation.

Mexico's official history does not properly address the Drug Wars and its effect on the nation as well as the U.S. Mexico border region. It also overlooks the fact that Border regions have been witnessing the spillover of the violence into United States' soil.[3]

Moreover, while a segment of the emerging literature from the Mexican perspective treats the War on Drugs as an occurrence that developed in the early part of the 1990s, the media in the United States presents a picture of this long-drawn-out war as one that began in 2006.

My research is unique in scope. I seek to bridge the gap in historical study, which has ignored the origins and underpinnings of Mexico's Drug War, and I focus on Turf Wars –the battles between and within the different drug trafficking organizations in Mexico as well as upon historical policies and actions dictated and shaped by U. S. policy as it relates to Mexico.

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[2]"Implacable batida a los traficantes de drogas." *El Pueblo: Diario Informativo de la Mañana*. Vol. II, 11 November, 1947, pg. 2.

[3] Since 2006, *The Los Angeles Times* has featured the so called War on Drugs in a section titled "Mexico Under Siege." but it is not historically focused. These series of articles have brought the War on Drugs to the forefront of public opinion in the United States.

Although Mexico's Drug War is often seen as a phenomenon that started in 2006 when President took office, I see issues as involving a protracted conflict between *narcotraficantes* and the Mexican State as having been taking place since 1911 on a local, state, regional, national and international scale.[4] The primordial concern of this proposed study is to provide an analytical narrative that presents the historical, social, economic, and political events that made possible the emergence, influence, and power of Drug Trafficking Organizations, especially in the Tijuana-San Diego corridor.

The following research questions will be answered for the first time in this body of research:

1. What are the origins the war launched by Drug dealers (*Narcotraficantes*[5]) who use terror to break the power of the Mexican state? What is the Mexican State's response?
2. How does Tijuana serve as an example for an understanding of the Drug War's effect of Mexico as a nation? In this context, narcotraffickers are employing violence to terrorize civil society in their turf wars and battles with the police and military. In the process, they are undermining the power of the nation as well as those of the state and municipal governments.
3. What is the connection between dissidence and the War on Drugs in Mexico?
4. What are the social and political implications resulting from the rise of violence along the U.S. – Mexico border? What implications pertain uniquely to Mexico?

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[4] From 1916 to 1920, Cantú controlled the opium trade in the Northern Territory of Baja California. Abelardo L. Rodriguez increased his wealth by the sale of licenses and consessions to open and operate casinos, and pressumably, from controllng the opium trade.

[5] In the United States, the word "narcos" refers to the police; in Mexico it refers to drug dealers—a real world problem for those who do not understand the difference. I use the word "*narcotraficantes*" to avoid any misunderstanding.

5. How has the U.S and Mexican government respond to the Drug War on a policy and law enforcement levels?

This research focuses on these five main inquiries in order to understand the present day situation. My investigation researches and analyzes the problems of public safety (violence), economy (informal economy, regional integration), social issues (human rights, transborder policy), as well as legal and political issues (professionalization of Mexican law enforcement agencies).

Most studies focus on one moment in time and do not attempt to understand the larger history of where Mexico is coming from and going. Each offers momentary glimpse of situations in time but lack analysis and perspective, which this study proposes. With this in mind, one important question requires to be addressed: what are the historical antecedents and the structural framework that define the issue of drug trafficking? The following review of the literature illustrates this question.

Review of the Literature

In examining over 80 books and articles related to my work, I dispute that the literature emphasizes the current state of the war on drugs, mainly since 2006. The exception involves research by Luis Astorga and Jorge Chabat. In *Drogas sin fronteras,* and in *El siglo de las drogas: el narcotráfico, del Porfiriato al nuevo milenio,* Astorga presents a comprehensive history of drugs on a national as well as regional scale.

In "Mexico's War on Drugs: No Margin for Maneuver,"[6] Jorge Chabat argues that the war on drugs threatens the Mexican governance due the threat of graft. The Mexican government has been fighting this threat for years in a context of institutional

[6] Jorge Chabat, "Mexico's War on Drugs: No Margin for Maneuver." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol. 582, Cross-National Drug Policy (Jul., 2002), pp. 134-148.

weakness and strong pressures from the United States. The fact that Mexico is a natural supplier of illegal drugs to the biggest market in the world, the United States, puts the Mexican government in a very complex situation with no alternatives other than to continue fighting drugs with very limited institutional and human resources. In this process, Mexico has no margin for maneuver to change the parameters of the war on drugs.

The corpus of literature that tackles this topic from the Mexican perspective analyzes the "emergence" of the war on drugs since 1990. For example, In *El Narco: Inside Mexico's Criminal Insurgency,* Ioan Grillo presents a picture of Mexico's drug cartels and how they have radically changed in the last decade.[7] In *Con la muerte en el bolsillo: seis desaforadas historias del narcotráfico en México*, the authors narrate the escalation of violence related to narcotrafficking from 1990 to 2005 and how the different cartel leaders gained their prominence.[8]

In the United States, "The History Of Mexican Drug Policy" by Diego Esparza, Antonio Ugues Jr., and Paul Hernandez[9] wrongly sees "History" beginning in 2006. The *Los Angeles Times* has a section titled "Mexico Under Siege" in which the reader gets the impression that the War on Drugs was an event that originated in 2006. In this

[7] Ioan Grillo, *El Narco: Inside Mexico's Criminal Insurgency*. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011.

[8] Maria Idalia Gomez and Dario Fritz, *Con La Muerte En El Bolsillo: Seis Desaforadas Historias del Narcotrafico en Mexico.* Mexico: Planeta Publications, 2006.

[9] Paper prepared for the annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association, March 22-24, 2012, Portland, Oregon. Available at http://wpsa.research.pdx.edu/meet/2012/esparza1.pdf. Accessed on May 27, 2013

section, a team of investigative journalists has been reporting about the War on Drugs since 2008.[10]

My review of the literature reveals that works on the topic either deal with the War on Drugs as a recent occurrence or an event that began to emerge in the early 1990s. This contributes to a fragmented knowledge on the subject matter. This fragmentation adds to an uneven understanding of the reach and impact of both the War on Drugs and turf wars in Mexican history and their effects on a transborder level since 1911, given that much of the present literature has as a starting point the year 1990.

The purpose of my research is to bridge the above-mentioned gap as it relates to the Northwest region of Mexico and the Tijuana-San Diego corridor, on a regional scale, and Mexico and United States, on an international level. Although Mexico's President Felipe Calderón took office in that year, and certain parts of Mexico witnessed an escalation against drug trafficking organizations, in this work, I argue that Mexico's War on Drugs did not begin in 2006.

Investigative reporters in Mexico have written about the war on drugs for the last 10 years, with the year 1990 generally as their starting point to explain the current situation. There are several Mexican journalists that have placed importance in the role that the Calderón administration has played in the militarization of contested territories by the Drug Trafficking Organizations, as well as the escalation of the War on Drugs

[10] *Los Angeles Times*, "Mexico Under Siege." Available at: http://projects.latimes.com/mexico-drug-war/#/its-a-war. Accessed on May 26, 2013.

since 2006.[11] There is no scholarly attempt to trace the historical roots of the War on Drugs and how it fits into the contemporary history of Mexico and the transborder region.

The review of the literature reveals three significant topics: the history of contraband and trafficking; journalism as history; and the commodification of drugs along with the emergence of international drug trade networks. The review of the literature also reveals a fragmented knowledge. This fragmentation contributes to an uneven understanding of the reach and impact of both the War on Drugs and turf wars in Mexican history and their effects on a transborder level since 1911, given that much of the present literature has as a starting point the year 1990. It is the purpose of this research to bridge the above-mentioned gap as it relates to the Northwest region of Mexico and the Tijuana-San Diego corridor, on a regional scale, and Mexico and United States, on an international level.

My Intended Contribution to the Field

In reviewing the state of the literature about the Drug Wars, I have found that much of what is known and researched about the trope of narcotrafficking is fragmentary at best. The existing body of literature neither addresses the historical roots of the War on Drugs nor places the history of the region in the proper historical context.

Thus, my research seeks to fill this lacuna, and at the same time, present a history of the region that incorporates my findings into the general scope of modern Mexican history since 1911. My contribution to the existing body of literature is to organize, analyze and expand upon the current economic, cultural, political, and social

[11] Ricardo Ravelo's *Herencia Maldita: El Reto de Calderón y el Nuevo Mapa del Narcotráfico*, and José Reveles's *El Cártel Incómodo: el Fin de los Beltrán Leyva y la Hegemonia del Chapo Guzmán* offer two examples of this investigative effort by the part of Mexican journalists.

understandings. Through use of scholarly method and practice, I will place the current body of research in its proper historical context, on both a regional/transborder and national level.

In regards to economics, the literature fails to address in full force the formal and informal economic activities, both of which are of extreme importance in dealing with drug trafficking in Tijuana. Given its nature, drug trafficking occupies both the formal and informal spheres. In the case of Tijuana, money that is result of the drug trade (informal sector) is invested in legitimate business ventures (formal sector).

In terms of policy, my contribution to the field will address the use of the war on narcotraffickers as a political tool by to combat dissidence, especially in rural areas. By lumping peasant uprisings in rural areas of Mexico with being in collusion with narcotraffickers since the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Mexican government sought to effectively combat resistance movements, as in the case of the period of Mexico's dirty war.

I also analyze Mexico's agrarian policy since 1970, as an expansion upon history of political themes of the Drug War and its social effects. Gradually, as part of the political agenda adopted by Mexico and shaped by U. S. Drug policy, measures were implemented that went in accordance with the interdiction strategy, i.e., attacking drug production at the source. Further, in an attempt to eliminate dissidence in rural areas in Mexico, Mexican authorities developed a two pronged approach in which the eradication of drugs and dissidence were coalesced. The eradication of dissidence was accomplished, whereas drug production continued unabated. This unequivocally had a detrimental effect on poor peasants in rural Mexico. All of those displaced individuals

saw three alternatives that they could pursue in order to improve their situation: (1) abandon their farms and migrate to the United States; (2) abandon their farms and migrate to large urban centers in Mexico; (3) remain on their farms and turn their attention to the only lucrative cash crops not replaced by U.S. subsidized crops, usually associated with the production of commodities linked to narcotrafficking.

These social and economic intersections and inequalities ultimately created migratory flows to border cities comprised of those farmers who chose to abandon their farms and migrate to the United States. Economic measures aimed at modernizing the rural sector in Mexico have consequences that affect the population in different levels. Displaced workers from rural Mexico migrate to urban settings in a transitory fashion or permanently. Those who are unsuccessful in their attempts to cross the Mexico – U.S. border in search for a better life, settle in Tijuana and must find employment in an economy that is highly stratified, gendered, and racialized.

The study will present a history of the region that has not been addressed properly so far, and thus, is not placed in its proper historical context. The work previously produced by Schantz addresses the role of Tijuana and Mexicali within the context of vice tourism from 1910-1965.[12] Benítez presented a social history of Tijuana since World War II and how tourism and industry shaped the image and identity of the region.[13] Further, the work of Paul Vanderwood deals with the vice industry in the region in the early part of the 20th century.[14]

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[12] *From the Mexicali Rose to Tijuana Brass: Vice Tours of the United States – Mexico Border, 1910-1965* (2001).

[13] Juan Manuel Benitez, *A Social History of the Mexico – United States Border: How Tourism, Demographic Shifts and Economic Integration Shaped the Image and Identity of Tijuana, Baja California, Since World War II*.

My contribution to the field, then, is to offer a historical analysis of the origins of the *narcotraficante*s in Mexico from an economic, cultural, political, and social perspective by expanding on them and placing them in their proper historical context. At the same time, this analysis will be done on a regional/transborder fashion, as well as on the national level.

Research Methodology

My dissertation employs various theories for the research methodology. By working from an interdisciplinary theoretical approach, I plan to utilize varied theories necessary to understanding the topic, which requires and calls upon a virtual kaleidoscope of understandings. By its very nature, narcotrafficking touches upon all aspects of society, law, culture and economics. As a result, it too calls for the need to analyze from theories borrowed from the respective disciplines. Throughout this dissertation, I will employ the Commodity Chain Approach, Intersectionality, and Counterinsurgency theories.

For my analysis, I am utilizing the commodity chain approach[15] first presented by Hopkins and Wellerstein. I intend to illustrate the relationship between the producer, distributor, and consumer on a macro level; that is, how the "drug" chain started in Mexico and Latin America, and how it spread into the United States.

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[14] See Paul Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground: Mobsters and Movie Stars at America's Greatest Gaming Resort*.

[15] See Terrence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Commodity Chains in the World-Economy Prior to 1800." *Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 157-170.

Socially and culturally, my research will borrow from the theory of Intersectionality[16] and explore the intersections between class and ethnicity in the war on drugs both in the rural and urban sectors. For my investigation, I will employ this theory in analyzing Mexico's agrarian policy and its effects on the rural sector. I intend to use the Intersectionality theory to analyze Mexico's failed agrarian policy and how it has disproportionately affected the rural, poor indigenous communities in the golden triangle mountainous region.

In the urban sector, the transborder region will be analyzed through the lens of Intersectionality. The U.S. demonization of the border and Mexico at large will be tackled through the use of Intersectionality. The border is now understood as: evil, dangerous, terrorist, illegal immigrant, and drugs. While Mexico is understood as: illegal immigrant, drug traffickers, dangerous and port of entry for terrorist. This is in turn allows both the United States government and people to ignore their role in the drug war in terms of policy. On a social level, people's conception of the border is also warped by not accepting The U.S. market role as the main consumer of drugs under the guise of "they deserve it" and also resorting to hate mongering because of the false demonization they have created.

The U.S. government sees no need to try and remedy a problem, which they had a hand in creating and maintaining by justifying with these understandings, some greatly exaggerated but based on reality and others purely fiction. Rather they work under a

[16] Intersectionality is a theory developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Intersectionality is a methodology of studying "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formations." McCall, Leslie. "The Complexity of Intersectionality." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 1771-1800.

"close the border" policy that allows them to not help in real ways, further racializing and criminalizing issues along the U.S.-Mexico border.

From a foreign policy perspective, I employ the Counterinsurgency theory proposed by Daniel Weimer. In *Seeing drugs: modernization, counterinsurgency, and U. S. narcotics control in the third world, 1969-1975*, Weimer contends that by implementing a policy seeking to suppress or eliminate "drugs at the source" the United States ensured its continual intervention in the Third World.[17] Thus, by masking interventionism under the veil of good governance, the United States can execute foreign policy "in the name of domestic and global security."[18] In addressing issues of democracy and development in Latin America during the cold war era, as well as unilateral or bilateral operations, I use related aspects of this idea to examine the specific case of Mexico.

Throughout my investigation, my methodology utilizes the following sources: governmental archives, court records and trial records in the United States and Mexico, newspaper, periodicals, books, and political biographies. Regionally, the newspaper archives provide valuable information published by Tijuana newspapers during the period of my study. Finally, U.S. Court Records delivered important evidence in the analysis of the operations of Central and South American drug traffickers, as well as Mexican drug smugglers.

To better understand the problem created by the War on Drugs from the perspective of Mexican government officials as well as the official response, the *Archivo*

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[17] Daniel Weimer, *Seeing drugs: modernization, counterinsurgency, and U. S. narcotics control in the third world, 1969-1975*, pp. 1-3.

[18] Ibid*, pg. 2.*

General de la Nación in Mexico City provided important evidence for this dissertation. The archives from the *Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales* (DGIPS), as well as the Dirección General de Seguridad (DFS) were of primordial importance, since it is considered the largest secret police repository in Latin America. The Genaro Estrada Archives (Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs), as well as the *Archivos de la Revolucion Mexicana* presented important information vital in the construction of a narrative that details the emergence of Tijuana as an important strategic city in drug smuggling activities. Also, I utilize the archives of the *Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores*, as well as the Hemeroteca Nacional. The archives of the *Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores* possess reports from the Mexican Consulates of Los Angeles, San Diego, and Calexico. The Hemeroteca Nacional at UNAM houses the *Periodico Oficial de la Federación* and other important regional newspapers.

Organization and Structure of the Investigation

This dissertation is comprised of an introduction and five chapters. The introduction will delve into the historical antecedents of the drug trade, from the colonial legacy to the start of the Mexican Revolution. This section includes not only the review of the literature pertinent to my field and dissertation topic, but it also presents the reader with my contributions to the field. This section presents my topic and contextualizes it from the origins of graft and collusion as they began to appear in the literature of trade and commerce in the colonial period.

Chapter one analyses the Historical antecedents as to how the drug trade developed in the Tijuana-San Diego corridor from 1910 to 1945. In this chapter, I place the emerging opium trade in a transborder manner and the role that Esteban Cantú plays

in the development of the early stages of the drug trade in the Tijuana-San Diego corridor within the context of the Magonista incursions. This chapter addresses also the opium trade within the context of vice tourism in the region, and the role that prohibition plays in laying the infrastructure necessary to continue with the drug trade. This chapter also includes a discussion of strong xenophobic sentiments against Chinese immigrants viewed as responsible for the opium trade, vice and crime in general in the region, as well as early attempts from the part of the Mexican government to drive drug traffickers away from the control of the illicit trade by legalizing drugs in Mexico for a brief 6-month period in 1940.

Chapter two analyzes the consolidation and metamorphoses of Drug Trafficking Organizations in Northwest Mexico, Mexico's official start on the War on Drugs from 1945-1960. I explore the connection between East Coast based Mafia and their incursion and eventual control of the drug trade and organized crime in the West Coast and eventually the transborder region. This chapter also includes an analysis of early eradication campaigns carried out by Mexican authorities, as well as the response from the proto-drug trafficking organizations. I also analyze links between "Bugsy" Siegel and his alleged control of the drug trade in Southern California, which stretched all the way to Tijuana.

Chapter three analyzes the period from 1960-1970. This chapter scrutinizes the emergence of a transborder War on Drugs from 1960-1970. This chapter is situated within the context of the Cold War and analyzes Nixon's official promulgation of the War on Drugs from the perspective of the United States, as well as the most notorious and infamous unilateral measure, Operation Intercept. In addition to analyzing the

international historical context, this chapter also delves into the regional context, by analyzing political and social struggles, such as the elections of 1968 and the dispute over attempts to urbanize Tijuana. Also, a discussion of the assassination of Tijuana journalist Carlos Estrada Sastré as a result of drug trafficking violence is presented in this section. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the response of Mexican society in the form of their own operation, Operation Dignity (*Operacion Dignidad*).

Chapter four analyzes the War on Drugs and a "hidden dirty war" against dissidence and peasants in rural Mexico, a period that ranged from 1965 to 1985. The intersection between Mexican peasants and drug trafficking production emerged in the historical record in 1971. As a result, Mexican authorities issued an Agrarian Reform Law in 1971 that attempted to address the increasing situation of peasants engaging in the production and/or distribution of illicit narcotics, such as opium and marihuana. This resulted in a historical juncture in Modern Mexican history that saw the Mexican State fight a war against dissidence and escalate their efforts to eradicate drugs at the source. This shift in tactic is predicated by defoliation campaigns championed by the United States. However, drug production was not the only thing being eradicated in rural Mexico. Under the pretext of eradicating drug production by *narcocultivadores*, Mexican authorities also launched an offensive against dissident groups interested in readdressing the land issue in rural Mexico.

In Chapter five, I offer an examination of the CIA-Contra-Drug Trafficking Triangle from the Mexican perspective. The Mexican journalist Manuel Buendía began to write about the presence of the CIA in Mexico since the mid-1970s. By the early 1980s, Buendía began to explore the link between the CIA-Contra-Drug Trafficking and

hypothesized that it needed the complicity of corrupt Mexican and law enforcement officials. The abduction, torture and murder of DEA Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena is presented in the proper transnational context. Both the official and the unofficial versions of this event in 1985 are presented in this Chapter, and how the terms of cooperation and trust were forever changed.

Finally, in the Epilogue I present the relevant themes of my investigation and how these past events are affecting the present, as well as a discussion of future research lines.

Chapter 1: From the Tijuana Border Revolution to the Onset of the World's Cold War, 1910-1945

Introduction

Our analysis begins in early 1911. In Mexico City, as word reached the Federal District of the capture of Ciudad Juarez by *Maderista* forces, Jorge Vera Estañol, Diaz's Ministry of Education, wrote a letter to Francisco León de la Barca, Mexico's Minister of Foreign Affairs. In his statement, Vera Estañol wrote that two kinds of revolutions were taking place in Mexico. In Vera Estañol's opinion, one revolution was a political revolution led by members of the northern states that demanded the implementation of "effective suffrage, no reelection" principles. The other kind of revolution that was taking place in the rest of the country, Vera Estañol further opined, is one that it could only be described as anarchy.[1]

But that same month, Vera Estañol's fear of a revolution characterized by anarchy is already beginning to take place in the U. S. Mexico border. On January 29th, 1911, the Consul General of Mexico in Calexico, California informs Mexico's Minister of Foreign Affairs Enrique C. Creel, that a group of approximately 30 *revoltosos* or revolters led the capture of the border town of Mexicali. At 6am that morning, Mexicali's postmaster informs the Mexican diplomat of the events. The Consul General mentions in his missive that he proceeded to inform Calexico's Sheriff and Marshall of Mexicali's take over, to insure the neutrality laws were observed. After capturing members of the Mexican Customs, these *revoltosos* confiscated all the weapons available, as well as the money in

[1] Jorge Vera Estañol, *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana: Orígenes y resultados*, pp. 148-152.

the treasury chest. The *revoltosos*, the communication further elaborates, organized patrols, liberated six or seven prisoners, and killed Mexicali's mayor.[2]

Meanwhile, a different situation begins to develop in this same region, one that involves the traffic of narcotics. In a letter dated September 11, 1913, Special Agent in Charge of the Port of San Francisco, W. H. Tidwell sends a letter to Special Agent James F. McConnochie in Los Angeles. In the missive, Special Agent Tidwell warns Special Agent McConnochie of the activities of a Chinese national by the name of Yon Shing. Yon Shing is suspected by the United States Customs to be involved in the smuggling of opium at the border in San Diego. Mr. Yon Shing, the letter reads, used to work for the firm Hop Yick and Co. This firm, according to U. S. Customs intelligence reports, is believed to long have been opium dealers in San Francisco.[3]

In a separate dispatch dated September 25, 1913, the Deputy Collector of San Diego advises the office of the Deputy Collector in Los Angeles of the arrival of the S/S Benito Juarez. This vessel had arrived at San Diego on the 21st of September with 25 cases of opium. This craft had departed earlier from Ensenada and the opium was entrusted to various persons on board. Undoubtedly, the epistle continues, "attempts will be made to smuggle a large portion of this across the border [into San Diego]; and I have to again urge that a sharp lookout be kept to prevent any such work being done."[4]

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[2] *Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Histórico Genaro Estrada*, LE-630 (2), pp. 82-84.

[3] *U. S. National Archives* at Riverside, California. Records of the U. S. Customs Service, Record Group 36, Tia Juana Customs Office, Letters Received from The San Diego and Los Angeles Customs Collectors, Feb. 6, 1894 – July 29, 1922, Box 1, 9L-62.

[4] *U. S. National Archives* at Riverside, California. Records of the Bureau of Customs Los Angeles Collection District, Letters Sent: 1882-1918, Box 13, 9L-1, pg. 473.

These letters illuminate a complex relationship that cuts across borders, classes, regions, and ethnicities in the Tijuana-U. S. corridor at the turn of the 20th century. It is also a tale of the region's complex history, a history intercalated with struggle, conflict, opportunity, and criminality.

This Chapter discusses the historical underpinnings of the war on drugs, one that in its initial stages was intercalated with Revolution, nation building, a nascent hemispheric hegemony by the United States in drug foreign policy, and deeply rooted nativism. The nascent war on drugs and Mexico's initial attempts to combat drug production and distribution from a legislative perspective will be addressed as well. Finally, this chapter also analyzes how the U. S. starts to exert an influence through historical policies and actions dictated and shaped by its policy as it relates to Mexico as it attempts to dictate the terms of the War on Drugs in accordance to the U. S. Government.

Let us begin with a brief history of the Tijuana-San Diego region, from Pre-Contact to the onset of the Revolution, or in the case of the transborder region, the *Magonista* incursions. Finally, this chapter concludes with an exploration of topics such as anti-Chinese movement and the emergence of organized crime and their eventual control of the traffic in narcotics in the transborder region, as well as an attempt from the part of the Cárdenas administration to eliminate drug traffickers through an attempt to legislate the use of drugs by addicts, placed in its proper historical context.

Background: Tijuana-San Diego During Pre-Contact and Colonial Periods

The transnational link between San Diego and Tijuana dates back to Pre-Colombian times, and stretches well into the colonial period. The Kumeyaay people were native to this area. The Kumeyaay territory stretched from present day San Diego

to Tijuana, Rosarito, and part of Ensenada (North to South); and from the Coast of the Pacific Ocean to Tecate (East to West).[5] The Kumeyaay, or Kumiais were the most numerous Indigenous group in the region. Upon European contact in the mid-1530s, Spaniards referred to them as *Diegueños*.[6]

The origin of the name Tijuana is believed to have Indigenous roots. During the Mission period (1769-1834), the San Diego de Alcalá Mission served the Indigenous population of Tijuana.[7] The Jesuits, beginning in 1697, carried out the evangelization of the present day San Diego-Tijuana corridor. The European presence was further established through the Presidio system. The Mendicant presence in the region also saw Franciscans and Dominicans sending expeditions and further evangelizing the region.[8] Under the auspices of the Bourbon Reforms, the Spanish crown created in 1776 the Commandancy General of the Internal Provinces of the North, establishing the first political division of the Californias.[9]

Independence Period

After the consummation of Mexico's Independence from Spain in 1821, the inhabitants of the region began to establish small rural settlements known as Rancherias. This process paved the way for the secularization of the Missions, and consolidation of small ranches or *Rancheria* properties. As part of the colonization process in the North, land began to be distributed by Mexico's newly established government. Omitted from

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[5] David Piñera, *Tijuana en la historia: del escenario natural a los inicios del siglo XX*, pg. 25.

[6] Marco Antonio Samaniego López, *Breve historia de Baja California*, pp. 13-14.

[7] David Piñera, *Tijuana en la historia: del escenario natural a los inicios del siglo XX* , pp. 34-35.

[8] Marco Antonio Samaniego López, *Breve historia de Baja California*, pp. 27-42.

[9] Ibid, pg. 46-48.

this process were the Indigenous people from the region. At the time of the Mexican-American War (1845-1847), the region saw important cities such as San Diego and Los Angeles being occupied by American troops. The signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo effectively ends the war with the United States and establishes the region's current political division.[10] The Presidential decree of 1887 created a new political division with the establishment of the two Districts. In 1931, the two districts became Territories.[11]

After the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that put an end to the war with the United States, the feeling in Baja California was that of isolation and abandonment. This helps to explain the actions taken by the Political Chief of Northern Baja, Coronel Francisco Palacios Miranda. When U. S. Naval forces invaded the southern port of the Baja California Peninsula, Col. Palacios Miranda received no support from the Federal government. In light of the situation, Col. Palacios Miranda declared neutrality.

Next came desertions to Alta California by a group of 300 families tired of neglect and injustice from the part of the Mexican government. Struggles over loyalty to the Mexican government in the region continued, and in 1849, Interim President José Joaquín de Herrera appointed Rafael Espinosa as the region's political chief. Espinosa's instructions were to secure the territory from future U. S. led incursions, promote

[10] Ibid, pp. 52-62.

[11] Max Calvillo, *Gobiernos civiles del Distrito Norte de la Baja California, 1920-1923*, pp. 11-12.

economic development and growth, to further establish the region's existing population, as well as to promote immigration to the region.[12]

Despite these attempts at curtailing U. S. expansionism, the region experienced a brief occupation led by William Walker in 1853. Sonora and Baja California Norte became potential attractive additions for such filibusters. In an attempt to continue expanding the riches of the Gold Rush Fever of the period, Sonora became a very attractive territory.[13] Further, what made this situation more attainable from the part of the United States' filibusters was the sparsely populated Northern territory of Baja California. On October 15, 1853, a contingent of 45 men led by William Walker set sail from San Francisco.

William Walker and his men had as an objective to liberate Baja California and Sonora from Santa Anna's dictatorship to set up an independent republic. Walker declared himself President of the "Twin-Star Republic." As Walker continued with his expedition from the tip of the Baja California peninsula to the Northern frontier, his short lived Twin Star Republic saw his demise in the armed resistance led by Antonio Melendrez, a *ranchero* that lived 20 miles outside of Ensenada. [14]

By 1885, the region began to experience an intense period of new colonization sponsored by the Porfirio Díaz regime. Díaz and his *cientificos* advanced the notion of colonizing vast regions in Mexico with European immigrants that would bring with them labor and technical knowledge to economically develop these regions. In the case of

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[12] Ibid, pp. 64-65.

[13] Ibid, pp. 68-69.

[14] James Mitchell Clarke, "Antonio Melendrez: Nemesis of William Walker in Baja California." *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pg. 318-322.

Baja California, this colonization campaign had the purpose of creating urban centers based on new agricultural centers that were seen as vital to the economic development in the region, and at the same time, to act as deterrents to the perennial threat of U. S. incursion to Baja.[15]

In 1883 under the presidency of Manuel González, a puppet of Porfirio Díaz, set in motion the colonization campaign. Part of the Modernization drive under the *Porfiriato*, the 1883 Law of Colonization allowed foreigners to acquire, through concessions, huge extensions of land with the purpose of settling in and develop its resources. Throughout this process of colonization and modernization, the Indigenous population of the region experienced a period of displacement, because neither the Spanish nor the Mexican Governments had properly registered their ancestral lands. [16]

This period of colonization and economic development in Mexico benefited the transborder region. This in turn, allowed for the development of the region's vice tourism infrastructure led by the Border Barons.[17] The Border Barons' period of greatness coincides with two important historical junctures in the transborder region: the Mexican Revolution and the Prohibition era.

The Mexican Revolution at the Border: The *Magonista* Incursions

Lesley Byrd Simpson's work *Many Mexicos* presents a vivid picture of Mexico's diverse geography, troubled topography, and deeply rooted regionalisms, illuminating the

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[15] Marco Antonio Samaniego López, *Breve historia de Baja California*, pp. 99-101.

[16] Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama, *Historia del agrarismo en México*, pp. 490-492.

[17] Paul Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground: Mobsters and Movie Stars at America's Greatest Gaming Resort.*

complexity of a nation, its history and its people.[18] Like Simpson's *Many Mexicos*, the study of the Mexican Revolution also reveals Many Revolutions, or at least two: political and social. A caveat in looking at the historiography of the Mexican Revolution involves re-considering the event as a uniform experience that shocked the entire country equally, whether it was witnessed in the center or the peripheries. Further, looking at the Mexican Revolution only through the centralized lens of important battles and treaties discounts the complexity of the historical juncture on a regional level. Moreover, when the interpretation of the Mexican Revolution is analyzed as an uprising of urban upper middle classes seeking access to power denied by the *Porfiriato*, it becomes clear that "many revolutionary uprisings were not always popular or spontaneous in nature, but rather, mobilizations from above."[19]

The Mexican Revolution in Baja California is a perfect example of this dilemma. The Northern Territory of Baja California did not experience a *Maderista* uprising. Instead, what the region experienced was a series of incursions from Los Angeles and San Diego led by Ricardo Flores Magón and members of the Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies), based in the U. S. western mines. These incursions were of brief duration and had the intent of launching a social revolution, as envisioned by Ricardo Flores Magón. Ricardo Flores Magón argued that Madero was no friend of the poor; rather, he represented the nouveau rich middle class that benefited from Benito Juarez's privatization of land campaign. Madero's real goal, Ricardo Flores Magón opined, was

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[18] Lesley Byrd Simpson, *Many Mexicos*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.

[19] Heather Fowler Salamini, "Caciquismo and the Mexican Revolution: The Case of Manuel Peláez," Roderic A. Camp, Charles A. Hale, and Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, eds., *Los intelectuales y el poder en México*, pg. 189.

to replace the Díaz's urban based *científico* capitalists with his own faction of capitalists. Madero was not a true social revolutionary: he was the "idol of the idiots."[20]

The *Magonista* incursions involved an alliance comprised of a diverse group of four contingents: the Mexican Liberals, the Wobblies, privateers, and Indigenous groups from the region. The privateer element was backed by the historical desires of William Randolph Hearst to annex Baja California, thus being associated with a *filibustero* or filibuster movement.[21] With important victories in Mexicali and Tijuana, the Magonista incursions had as its next target the occupation of Ensenada, the territory's capital at the time. But this campaign was short lived. The Federal Army still under the control of Porfirio Díaz elaborated a successful strategy that contained the *Magonista* incursions. After the capture of Ciudad Juárez by Pascual Orozco in May 11, 1911, the same day Tijuana fell under the control of the *Magonistas*, Porfirio Díaz resigned as president of Mexico on May 25, 1911 under the terms of the Treaties of Ciudad Juárez.

Despite this development, Ricardo Flores Magón and his cadre declared that there was no difference between Díaz and Madero, and that their campaign would continue. After the fall of Díaz, the Baja campaign fell into disarray, prompting most Mexicali troops and residents to become *Maderistas*.[22] The heterogeneity of the movement's membership accounted for the short-lived success of the *Magonista* campaign.

In a simultaneous fashion, an attempt to topple the Díaz's regime was underway in Mexico City led by Madero. The *Maderista* coalition was comprised of a group of dissident elites that felt excluded from the political process that represented the *Porfiriato*

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[20] Lowell L. Blaisdell, *The Desert Revolution: Baja California, 1911*, pp. 3-20, 94.

[21] Claudio Lomnitz, *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón*, pp. 319-321.

[22] Ibid, pp. 322-323.

and believed the solution to the country's many ills was a political one.[23] Led by Franciso I. Madero, these dissident elites whom had benefited from the Juárez reforms that allowed them to acquire land and wealth, demanded to be part of the political process.

This *Maderista* uprising represented the many manifestations of discontent by a growing upper middle class that had been excluded from the political process in Mexico. Although the efforts led by Madero and Ricardo Flores Magón had the same intention of overthrowing Díaz, the political platforms espoused by these two factions of the Revolution were fundamentally different. Madero saw this attempt to overthrow Diaz as an opportunity to increase the upper middle class's political participation. The agenda of Ricardo Flores Magón was more socially just in nature. These *Magonista* incursions were the antithesis to the *Maderista* uprising.

The nature of the *Magonista* movement is a topic of controversy in the regional historiography of the Mexican Revolution. On the one hand, there is a group of historians that see this event as a manifestation of filibustering interests in the region led by Ricardo Flores Magón. On the other hand, there is a selected group of historians that see the Magonista incursions as a struggle between those who considered themselves *Porfiristas* who opposed the *Magonistas*.[24] The following section presents a brief historiographical selection that addressed the above-mentioned controversy.

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[23] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution*, pp. 37-40.

[24] Marco Antonio Samaniego López, "Las luchas políticas en Baja California durante la Revolución, 1910-1920," *Frontera Norte*, Vol. 6, No. 11, 1994, pg. 59.

Historiography of the *Magonista* Rebellion

In *Tijuana en la Historia, Tomo II*, Piñera and Rivera present the *Magonista* incursions as an expression that represented a divergent view from the *Maderista* struggle. They place the alliance forged between the *Magonistas* and members of the Industrial Workers of the World as an evolution from liberalism to anarchism, reaching a more universal socialist posture that went beyond nationalisms; a true transnational revolutionary movement.

Piñera and Rivera explain that in early 1911, irrigation work that had been done by an American investment company with the permission of the Mexican Government in the Mexicali Valley led many Mexican residents to the belief that the expansionist tendencies demonstrated earlier by the United States in 1847 and 1853 were once again a real possibility. Rivera and Piñera continue by writing that after a brief occupation by the *Magonistas* in Mexicali, Dick Ferris, a Los Angeles promoter, declared himself President of the Republic of Lower California amidst the chaos of the *Magonista* experiment on June 2, 1911 in Tijuana.[25] Richard Griswold del Castillo credits the chaos and failure of the Magonista Revolution in Baja California to the lack of participation and recruitment of Mexican soldiers and to the belief that the transborder population was convinced of the filibustering nature of the movement.[26]

In *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón*, Claudio Lomnitz also presents a transnational perspective of the *Magonista* incursions, one that had the participation of

[25] David Piñera and Gabriel Rivera, *Tijuana en la Historia, Tomo II: de los sucesos de 1911 a la segunda guerra mundial*, pp. 13-18.

[26] Richard Griswold del Castillo, "The Discredited Revolution: The *Magonista* Capture of Tijuana in 1911," *The Journal of San Diego History*, Vol. 26, no. 4, 1980.

Mexican nationals along with U. S. citizens and recently arrived immigrants from Western Europe, whom were well versed in class struggles. According, to Lomnitz, during his incarceration in the Los Angeles County Jail in 1908, Ricardo Flores Magón – along with Librado Rivera, Antonio I. Villareal, and Manuel Sarabia – met a group of individuals that became the core of the group known as the American Circle, individuals that proved to be fundamental to the "Mexican Cause".[27] Further, Lomnitz points out to the complexity of the Baja California campaign and contends that there was a disconnection between the Magonista's "ideological work and the everyday practice of Revolution in Mexico."[28] The Baja California military campaign of the Magonistas was only successful for six months. Their military campaign proved to be short lived, but it is also the clearest indication of the *Magonista's* intentions of carrying out a social revolution.

Beyond the above-mentioned brief historiographical study, one must consider the history of the Tijuana-San Diego corridor as closely associated with events that transpired in the early 20th century on a transnational fashion. While the Mexican Revolution was taking place in most of Mexico further isolating the Northern Territory of Baja California, a different set of events were taking place that would pave the road for the emergence of the business of narcotrafficking.

The Volstead Act (1919) began to shape business practices in Baja California. The District's government officials gave business permits for casinos, hotels, and bars to American investors. These American investors began to build and finance the vice infrastructure that later also would prove to be very profitable for local, state, and federal

[27] Claudio Lomnitz, *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón*, pp. 19-26.

[28] Ibid, pg. 319.

elected officials. In order for this economic development and transborder investment to take place, American financers would need the complicit assistance of public corrupt officials in Mexico willing to provide the necessary incentives to make investments in territorial Baja California not only appealing, but also profitable for all parties involved. Thus, Esteban Cantú and Aberlardo L. Rodríguez enter in the history as Governors of the Northern District of Baja California.

Esteban Cantú: Baja Revenue and Illicit Enrichment

The existing research on both Esteban Cantú Jiménez and Abelardo L. Rodríguez present a picture of two fundamental benefactors to the development of Baja California. However, one must see their legacy through the lens of the emerging trafficking of narcotics in the region, as well as within the context of the Mexican Revolution.

According to Francisco Cruz, Rodríguez (Mexico's interim President from 1932-1934) learned the drug trafficking business from Esteban Cantú. Prior to stepping in as interim President for Pascual Ortiz Rubio, Rodríguez was governor of the Northern territory of Baja California from 1923 to 1930. It is at this time that he took to the "national level" the system that had been established by Cantú.[29]

Esteban Cantú had arrived to the Northern District of Baja California in 1911 to defend the incursions led by Ricardo Flores Magón and the Wobblies. On May 22, 1911, Porfirio Diaz signed the deployment order for Esteban Cantú, but the confirmation was issued by Francisco León de la Barra one month later.[30] Esteban Cantú served first as

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[29] Marcos Muedano. "El presidente que aprendió el negocio de las drogas". *El Universal*. 25 de junio de 2011. Available at: http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/186543.html. Accessed on September 14, 2011.

[30] Max Calvillo Velasco, "Indicios para descrifrar la trayectoria política de Esteban Cantú," *Historia Mexicana*, vol. LIX, no. 3, enero-marzo, 2010, pg. 988.

the Chief Executive of the North District of the Federal Territory of Baja California from 1915-1971, and then as the Governor of the North District of the Federal Territory of Baja California from 1917-1920.

Mexico's political instability was also reflected in the Northern territory of Baja California from 1911-1914. However, starting in 1914, Baja California experienced six years of political stability that had a great impact on the region's economic development. Baja California's geographic isolation prevented the region from being occupied and controlled by any of the many revolutionary factions. This geographic isolation also made allowed Cantú to lead an independent government that permitted him to develop a sound financial base that kept his troops loyal, happy, and disciplined, as he paid them with U. S. currency.[31] Given the above-mentioned circumstances, it is very possible that this sound financial base that Esteban Cantú developed during his time as Governor was made possible by the control of the opium trade he exerted on the region.

In an attempt to generate revenue for the District, Cantú demonstrated a very pragmatic approach to administrative matters. In addition to charging monthly fees to businesses that sold alcoholic beverages in 1915 Cantú legalized the opium trade. This regulation of illegal opium dens that were operating in a clandestine fashion by Chinese nationals, allowed Cantú to collect revenues that made possible for him to meet the payroll demands of his troops, purchase weapons, and thus operate independently from the Federal government. Further, some of these opium dens were believed to be

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[31] José Alfredo Gómez Estrada, *Gobiernos y casinos: el origen de la riqueza de Abelardo L. Rodríguez*, pg. 41.

involved in the processing of the drug to be sold illegally in the United States.[32] During this time, large volumes of opium were brought to Tijuana via San Francisco from Macao, according to Linda Hall. Once in Baja, it was processed, packaged, and smuggled back into the United States for its distribution.[33]

Cantú also developed, through a decree, a three-tier classification system of home factories for refining and repackaging opium that began to emerge in territorial Baja California, which were managed and operated by Chinese immigrants. The so called "first class" factories, those that processed more than 250 kilos a month, were charged a 1,000 pesos a month fee. "Second class" factories, which processed monthly less than 250 kilos, would pay a $500.00 pesos monthly fee. Finally, the trickiest part of this classification involved the opium dens. These "recreation saloons" had to pay an additional $250.00 pesos monthly fee.[34] This official decree by Esteban Cantú is contradicted by evidence presented by Luis Astorga, as we see below.

Cantú's life and contributions that forged the history of Baja California are usually described in adulatory terms, such as in the writings of Gabriel Luján. Luján presents a picture of Cantú as an intelligent, patriotic military leader who cleared the region from the Magonista incursions and filibustering campaigns, thus pacifying the Territory and paving the way for future economic growth and development.[35] Max Calvillo Velasco presents a work that chronicles the political trajectory of Cantú and his

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[32] Ibid, pg. 46.

[33] Linda B. Hall, "El liderazgo en la frontera." *Boletín*, Fideicomiso Archivos Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca, no. 21, enero-abril 1996, pp. 13-14.

[34] Ibid, pp. 14-15.

[35] Gabriel Luján, *Coronel Estaban Cantú Jiménez: Benefactor de Baja California, Mexico. Vida y Obra*, pp. 12-27.

ascension to power in Baja California as well as the reasons that prompted his self-exile into the United States.[36] Joseph Richard Werne's places Cantú's contributions to Baja California's sovereignty within the context of a filibustering campaign. In chapter 3 of his dissertation, Eric Schantz discusses Cantú's political ascension and role in the development of vice tourism in Baja California.[37]

There are four works that discuss Cantú's role in the emergence of trafficking of narcotics in early 20th century U. S. – Mexico border.

The first one is a book authored by Antonio Ponce Aguilar. In his work, Ponce Aguilar offers a brief glimpse of Cantú through the lens of the emerging traffic of narcotics in the region. According to Ponce Aguilar, Cantu's decision to legalize the production and consumption of opium in the state was done in an attempt to halt U. S. expansionist interests, as well as an attempt to safeguard access to water and water rights that were being courted by U. S. companies.[38]

The second work that discusses Cantú's role in the opium trade in territorial Baja California is Linda Hall's article published through the *Fideicomiso Plutarco Elias Calles y Fernando Torreblanca*. In this work, Linda Hall makes reference to Cantú's 1915 decree of legalizing the opium trade as a source to generate revenue in the territory. During his time, the territory of Baja California was, for the most part, isolated from the *Maderista* uprising that took place in the central part of Mexico. Aside from the 1911

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[36] Max Calvillo Velasco, "Indicios para descrifrar la trayectoria política de Esteban Canú," *Historia Mexicana*, vol. LIX, no. 3, enero-marzo, 2010, pp. 981-1040.

[37] Eric Schantz, *From the "Mexicali Rose" to the Tijuana Brass: Vice Tours of the United States-Mexico Border, 1910-1965*, pp. 149-243.

[38] Antonio Aguilar Ponce, *El Coronel Esteban Cantú en el Distrito Norte de Baja California, 1911-1920*, pg. 68.

Magonista incursion and an attempted invasion by troops loyal to Venustiano Carranza, the territory experienced a relative period of peace and tranquility. As a result of this isolation, Cantú enjoyed unparalleled liberty to govern the territory by drafting and executing laws, appointing his own public officials, and by devising ways to generate revenue. Cantú's approach to governing the territory was predicated by U. S. economic interests, attract more public and private investment, and to make money for himself and for the state.[39] Cantú's approach to generate both private revenues and for the territory is discussed by Luis Astorga.

The third work that discusses Cantú's role in the trafficking of opium in the region is by Luis Astorga. In *Drogas sin Fronteras: los expedientes de una Guerra permanente*, Astorga chronicles Cantú's ascension to prominence in the opium trade and his role in the traffic of narcotics during his time as Military Commander and Governor of the Northern Territory of Baja California in a more extensive and expansive fashion than previous works. In some instances, Cantú used to sale of opium on the U. S. market to purchase weapons and ammunition for his troops, as well as to meet payroll demands for his subordinates. U. S. authorities had Cantú under surveillance for possible opium and arms trafficking.

Based on this surveillance by U. S. officials, Astorga paints a different picture of the "Defender of Baja California." According to Astorga, Cantú sold concessions to open opium dens to Chinese nationals for $45,000.00 with an additional $10,000.00 monthly operational fee. Further, Cantú "grants" the concession to distribute and sell opium to a Chinese national from Ensenada, for an $11,000.00 monthly operational fee.

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[39] Linda B. Hall, "El liderazgo en la frontera." *Boletín*, Fideicomiso Archivos Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca, no. 21, enero-abril 1996.

Astorga also explains that Cantú was a morphine addict. Perhaps for this reason, and the high margin of profit that the opium trade represented, Cantú had no real intentions of enforcing a ban on opium issued by then Mexican President Venustiano Carranza in 1917.[40]

José Alfredo Gómez Estrada's *Gobierno y casinos: El orígen de la riqueza de Abelardo L. Rodríguez* is the fourth work which discusses both Cantú's and Rodríguez's roles in drug trafficking in the transborder region. In the case of Cantú, Gómez presents Cantú's source of illicit enrichment backed by his "innovative" tax measures to generate revenue for the territory that involved taxing the legal trade of opium and also sent a percentage of the proceeds of human trafficking to the territory's treasure chest. In the case of Rodríguez, the author devotes Chapters 3 and 4 to divulge the origin of his enrichment, which was through legitimate investments in the private sector, the sale of licenses associated with vice tourism, as well as illicit enrichment through the sale of alcohol during the Prohibition era in the United States and his involvement in the traffic of drugs.[41]

From 192 to 1923, Cantú was involved in a conspiracy that included the participation of Manuel Peláez and Albert B. Fall against Presidency of Alvaro Obregon, a conspiracy that also included oil interests.[42] After assuming the presidency of Mexico on an interim basis in 1920, Adolfo de la Huerta demanded that Cantú stepped down

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[40] Luis Astorga, *Drogas sin fronteras*, pp. 17-20.

[41] José Alfredo Gómez Estrada, *Gobierno y casinos: El orígen de la riqueza de Abelardo L. Rodríguez*.

[42] For a more detailed description of Manuel Peláez's control of the Huasteca region during the Mexican Revolution and his relationship with U. S. oil interests, please see Heather Fowler Salamini, "Caciquismo and the Mexican Revolution: The Case of Manuel Peláez," in *Los intelectuales y el poder en México*; See also Jonathan C. Brown, *Oil and Revolution in Mexico*.

from the post of Governor of the Northern territory of Baja California. This action prompted Cantú to openly revolt against the Mexican Federal troops sent by de la Huerta.[43] During this same period, Albert Bacon Fall spearheaded the Republican Party's efforts for US intervention in Mexico that mainly involved oil interests. In 1919, the Senate named fall chair of a committee to investigate American losses in Mexico, namely in the oil industry.[44] The findings were published as the *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*.[45]

Albert Fall had a vested interest in Mexico's political affairs, particularly in Alvaro Obregón's administration and how this situation could potentially have an effect in US oil interests. Publically, Fall worked for a comprehensive global oil policy that would assure the U. S. control of the largest possible portion of the world's petroleum supply. Privately, Fall supported plots to overthrow Obregón's government. Fall's opposition to Alvaro Obregón found in Esteban Cantú a willing and able supporter, mainly based on Cantú's opposition to Mexico's emerging strong centralist government.[46] Thus, Cantú sought to reclaim the governorship of the Northern District of Baja California.

According to information provided by Charles E. Jones, a newspaper reporter and United States double agent, there was a concern from the part of United States intelligence that Cantú was even planning to form a separate republic. Reports of

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[43] "Declares Secession In Lower California," *The New York Times*, August 3, 1920, pg. 11.

[44] Michael Stone, "The Fall Committee and Double Agent Jones," *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1999, pg. 45.

[45] United States Congress, Senate, *Investigation of Mexican Affairs.* Washington Government Printing Office, 1920.

[46] Linda B. Hall, *Oil, Banks and Politics: The United States and Post-Revolutionary Mexico*, pp. 54-56, 166-167.

Cantu's intentions to form a breakaway state go as far back as 1916, with the alleged protection of the Japanese government.[47] In 1918, Cantú had indicated to the US Consul in Ensenada his intentions of separating territorial Baja California from Mexico and annexing it to the United States.[48] During his testimony, Jones produced copies of his Bureau reports on Baja California Governor Cantú's revolutionary activity in late 1918, at which time Cantú had ruled Baja California autonomously for several years. Agent Jones alleged that Cantú led the Northern District as a puppet for his father-in-law, Pablo Dato, Sr.[49] After failing to recapture the political control of Baja California, Cantú went into self-exile to the United States, where he purchased a ranch in Mira Loma. During this time while in the United State, he continued with his seditious activities.

Under his capacity of both the Governor of Territorial Baja California and Military Commander from 1921 to 1930, General Abelardo L. Rodríguez ordered in 1925 Cantú's name be removed from the list of seditious individuals living abroad in a series of official letters in December of 1925. These letters were sent to the different immigration inspectors in the ports of entry throughout Mexico and the Ministry of Interior. [50] This action allowed Cantú to re-enter Mexico in 1926. Cantú returned to

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[47] Gerald Horne, *Black and Brown: African Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920*, pg. 177.

[48] Joseph R. Werne, "Esteban Cantú y la soberanía mexicana en Baja California," pg. 26.

[49] Michael Stone, "The Fall Committee and Double Agent Jones," *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1999, pg. 47.

[50] Archivo General de la Nación, Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales, (hereafter AGN IPS), Box 247, 7/011.3(722) 1 2-313.3.21.-A Nos. 637, 97, 17.

Mexicali, where he ventured into private business and continued to serve as a public official. He died in Mexicali in 1966.[51]

Baja California's isolation, as well as social and political conditions of Mexico at the onset of the Revolution made it possible for Baja rulers to govern independently with very little to no oversight from the central government. This geographic and political isolation allowed territorial governors, specifically Cantú and Rodríguez to become wealthy individuals through the proceeds they secured from prebends and bribes. History tends to shed light into not only changes and continuities, but also ironies.

One of these historical ironies is the case of Esteban Cantú and his denouncement of Tejedor Pedrozo's administration for corruption and irresponsibility.

In 1914, Cantú accused Enrique Tejedor Pedrozo of protecting individuals who owned businesses that were profiting from the nascent vice tourism industry. The accusation of Tejedor Pedrozo being irresponsible stems from the fact that public officials who served in the border town of Mexicali for the Mexican government, lived in Calexico. As a result, they would depart Mexicali early to go their homes, leaving the town in the hands of gamblers and pimps. Further, the number of tourists that crossed from Calexico into Mexicali searching for fun and entertainment outnumbered the local law enforcement officers, and even the Federal soldiers that were present in the town, making it difficult to provide adequate police protection to their residents.[52]

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[51] Antonio Ponce Aguilar, *El Coronel Esteban Cantú en el Distrito Norte de Baja California, 1911-1920*, pg. 160.

[52] José Alfredo Gómez Estrada, *Gobierno y casinos: el origen de la riqueza de Abelardo L. Rodríguez*, pp. 52-53.

As early as 1914, Cantú was receiving payouts from an owner of an opium den. In addition to having a stake in the traffic of opium, Cantú also had the collaboration of his family in human trafficking. Cantú, along with his father in law and brother in law, developed a human trafficking network that stretched from Baja California all the way to San Francisco.

The Cantú network provided undocumented Chinese labor to the Imperial Valley region, specifically, to the newly founded Colorado River Land Company. Pablo Dato had developed the extensive human trafficking network. According to intelligence reports included in Gómez's writing, the going rate for each Chinese individual smuggled into the territory was in the range of $135-140 USD, with $100 USD going to the district's "treasury," and the rest of the money (up to almost 30% of the total) to Cantú's private coffers. The large presence of Chinese nationals also meant the possibility of an additional business venture for the Cantú-Dato clan, and that is the traffic in opium.[53] Cantú's brother in law, Fred Dato, was involved in the smuggling of weapons and ammunitions from the United States into Mexico.[54]

Mexicali witnessed in 1919 the early stages of what eventually became the "sinophobic aggression" by Mexicali unemployed workers who demonstrated their opposition of the presence of Chinese labor in the city. Chinese workers were blamed for taking the very few employments left in the city. Further, there were also complaints of the noise in the red light district. As a result, *El Tecolote* or The Owl, property of Carl

[53] Ibid, pp. 53-54.

[54] Joseph R. Werne, "Esteban Cantú y la soberanía Mexicana en Baja California," pg. 14.

Withington, was closed. However, *El Tecolote* reopened one year later, only after Cantú was paid a $100,000.00 bribe.[55]

Cantú's source of wealth is difficult to ascertain with certainty. Based on the available historical evidence, it can be established that Esteban Cantú's money came from several sources: human trafficking, the opium trade, investments in the vice tourism, and the cotton industry.[56] Cantú laundered the money he received from the proceeds of the control of the opium trade by investing in legitimate business ventures in association with other businessmen of the region. These legitimate business investments included agriculture, commerce, mining, fishing and gaming industries. Esteban Cantú was one of the investors in the Lower California Jockey Club.[57]

In 1919, Cantú was pressured to leave the governorship of the Northern District by Plutarco Elias Calles, governor of Sonora. To make sure this happened, Calles named Abelardo L. Rodríguez to lead the military detail that forced Cantú to peacefully step down from office. Cantú agreed, and left into self-exile to the United States.

But, in late 1921, Cantú organized from abroad an attempt to reclaim the control of Baja California, by launching two separate attempts, one to capture Tijuana and another one attempting to capture Tecate. Cantú's attempts to capture Baja were swiftly suffocated by the forces led by Rodríguez, who had been promoted to Military Chief of the Northern District.[58] The irony of Cantu's rebellion is palpable: the same individual

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[55] José Alfredo Gómez Estrada, *Gobierno y casinos: el origen de la riqueza de Abelardo L. Rodríguez*, pg. 53.

[56] Joseph R. Werne, "Esteban Cantú y la soberanía mexicana en Baja California," pp. 14-15.

[57] José Alfredo Gómez Estrada, *Gobierno y casinos*, pp. 54-59.

[58] Ibid, pp. 59-61.

who ten years earlier was sent to the region to defend territorial Baja California from the *Magonista* incursions was now attempting to regain control of the territory he once governed in an independent fashion. For this endeavor, Cantú has the financial support of Carl "Carlie" Withington, the U. S. King of Border Vice.

Carlie was a native of Bakersfield California where he had built his empire and obtained his gaming experience by establishing a string of bordellos that profited from the needs of oil workers. It is precisely in this city that he built his original rendition of The Owl, the famous Casino he opened in Mexicali in 1914, *El Tecolote*. As the reformist fever swept through the State of California by the 1910s, Carlie had decided to try his fortunes in a new, more promising venue: Baja California.[59]

By the summer of 1914, Carlie already owned a casino in Mexicali. Eager to exert complete control over the regions' vice industry, Carlie meets with Cantú. The result of this meeting was that Carlie agreed to pay Cantú a monthly fee of $8,000.00 for exclusive rights to gambling and prostitution activities in Mexicali's sporting section, where he opened *El Tecolote*, a much more grandiose and lavish establishment that his original conception in Bakersfield.[60]

Based on intelligence gathered by U. S. Customs Agents, Cantú's personal wealth was at 9 million dollars, deposited in banks in the cities of San Diego, Los Angeles, and other important U. S. cities. It is very likely that a big part of Cantú's personal wealth was lost in his attempts to recapture the control of Baja California to exercise control

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[59] Paul J. Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground*, pp. 80-81.

[60] Ibid, pp. 82-84.

over the opium.[61] We can speculate that another reason that helps to explain how Cantú lost his personal wealth was the fact that he was believed to be a morphine addict. According to reports gathered by the Department of the Treasury, one arm and one leg of Cantú was partially blackened due to all of the morphine track marks.[62]

Abelardo L. Rodríguez (ALR)

Another important member of the emerging "Revolutionary Family" who believed himself to be the great benefactor of the modern state of Baja California was Abelardo L. Rodríguez (ALR). Rodríguez distinguished himself as an important military leader in the Mexican Revolution. As we have seen, Cantú refused to recognize the Presidency of Adolfo de la Huerta in 1920, ALR had been sent on a military expedition to Baja California to remove the rebellious Cantú from power.

In a matter of weeks, ALR began his ascension to political power unparalleled among the members of the Sonoran dynasty. Over the next decade, he became the unchallenged cacique in Baja California, serving as governor from 1923-1929, and in the process, amassed a considerable personal fortune that by the time he became President in 1932, he was a millionaire.[63] As a Governor of the Northern District of Baja California, ALR was vital in the economic development of Baja California through his support of the business sector.

Once in power in Baja California, ALR witnessed how Cantú met his troops' payroll by using money that came the opium profits. In the political arena, Abelardo L.

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[61] Ibid, 62-63.

[62] Luis Astorga, *Drogas sin fronteras*, pp. 19-20.

[63] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule Since the Late Nineteenth Century*, pp. 87-88.

Rodríguez distinguished himself as a savvy political leader, having been Governor of his home state Sonora, Governor of the Northern District of Baja California, and interim President of Mexico. He also had a tremendous success as a private businessman.

ALR, considered a peripheral member of the Sonoran dynasty, distinguished himself as a true revolutionary caudillo in the defense of Sonora from a Yaqui uprising and in fighting against the Zapatista army during the violent phase of the Mexican Revolution. In 1921, he was named the military chief of the Northern District of Baja California. Alvaro Obregón appointed ALR as the Governor of the Northern District of Baja California, an appointment ratified a year later by Plutarco Elias Calles.[64]

After stepping down from the governorship and military command of Baja California, ALR spent much of 1929 in Europe receiving training in aviation and industrial organization. In 1932, President Ortiz Rubio named ALR the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Labor. That same year, he is appointed by Pascual Ortiz Rubio to head the Ministry of Defense. After the resignation of Pascual Ortiz Rubio, ALR became Mexico's interim President from 1932-1934.[65] In 1943, he was elected Governor of Sonora. Finally, ALR retired from politics in 1948 and returned to the private sector where he continued to be successful. He died in San Diego in 1966.[66]

In the historiography of the Mexican Revolution, ALR's contributions to the political and economic history of Mexico are presented in adulatory terms. The same contributions figure prominently in the regional history of Baja California. An initial examination of the corpus of literature that deals with ALR reveals works that highlight

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[64] Joaquín Piña, *Abelardo L. Rodríguez, su vida pública*, pp. 3-10.

[65] Ibid, pp. 11-13.

[66] Abelardo L. Rodriguez, *Autobiografía*.

his many accomplishments both as a public and private figure. There are the works that illustrate his accomplishments as a politician and business entrepreneur both on a regional and national level.

For a description of ALR's contributions in public office, see Archivo General de la Nación México, *Fondo Presidente Abelardo L. Rodríguez, Serie: atropellos de autoridades*. This work catalogues a series of documents that attest to violations of individual and organizational guarantees under the Mexican Constitution that occurred during his presidency. In *Fondo Presidente Abelardo L. Rodríguez, serie: confederaciones, uniones y organizaciones,* a work that compiles a list of labor conflicts and strikes while General Rodríguez was president. In *Fondo Presidente Abelardo L. Rodríguez, serie: conflictos obreros y huelgas,* we find an account of grievances, complaints against employers, labor determinations, and attempts to form labor unions.

In *Obra económica y social del General de División Abelardo L. Rodríguez*, Francisco Sánchez González, enumerates and comments on the accomplishments of General Rodríguez in industries such as fishing, shipping, mining, telecommunications, cattle, and insurance companies while serving as a public elected official. Finally, Mexico's Department of Labor – a dependency that ALR had created during his presidential term- published in 1934 the work by the title *La obra social del Presidente Rodríguez*. This book is a compendium of the accomplishments during his two-year presidency. These include a minimum wage, the creation of social services, protection of Mexican workers abroad, and public health.

In ALR's *Autobiografía* de Abelardo L. Rodríguez, published in 1962, we find a semblance of his life and work as a public figure and successful businessman. Further, in

Aquel hombre: Abelardo L. Rodríguez published in 1985, Carlos Moncada highlights the political accomplishments of an individual that transformed the state of Sonora and had a profound impact as a pro business Governor in Northern District of Baja California.[67]

There was also a dark side to ALR. In *Gobierno y casinos: el orígen de la riqueza de Abelardo L. Rodríguez*, José Alfredo Gómez Estrada provides an account of the practices, policies and business ventures that allowed Rodríguez become a successful political leader and savvy businessman. This work centers on the life and accomplishments of ALR and his role as the main benefactor of the sale of business licenses and permits for the emerging vice tourism in the early stages of the Revolution and the Prohibition era in the Tijuana-San Diego corridor.

Beyond ALR's successful career in the private sector, he also profited from the emerging vice tourism in the region and had a vital role in the creation of Agua Caliente Casino and Hotel in 1927. First as the Military Chief of the Northern Territory of Baja California, and then as Governor, Abelardo L. Rodríguez had gotten an exclusive inside look as to how Cantú engaged in graft, reached deals with the mafia and became wealthy from the proceeds of controlling opium trafficking, prostitution and gaming in Baja California.[68]

In order to account for the origin of ALR's wealth, two sources helps us understand where the money came from. One source of the money was through ALR's legitimate business ventures that he had access to as afforded to him by the privileged position of governor of the district. These legitimate business ventures that account for

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[67] Carlos Moncada O., *Aquel hombre: Abelardo L. Rodríguez*.

[68] Marcos Muedano, "El presidente que aprendió el negocio de las drogas". *El Universal*. 25 de junio de 2011. Available at: http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/186543.html. Accessed on September 14, 2011.

part of ALR's wealth are covered through an analysis of his autobiography and other official publications that highlight his accomplishments as a public servant as well as a private investor.

The other source is associated with dark business ventures along the border connected to profits from the prohibition era in the United States. From 1925 to 1928, ALR was able to amass a large fortune through corrupt means in a very short period of time. ALR benefited from the money he obtained either directly or indirectly from payouts he received from the protection he offered to individuals engaged in the drug trade and vice tourism industry during his time as governor of Baja California.

The money that came from illicit ventures came mainly from the proceeds in alcohol and opium trade. The evidence is a bit obscure when it comes to account for the money that came into Mexico from the prohibition era, but it is nonetheless interesting to mention. In November of 1923, just a few months as Governor of territorial Baja California, W. D. Madden, a British diplomat, approached ALR. Madden's business proposal called for the use of the port of Ensenada as a storage and distribution center for whisky that was processed in British distilleries and was distributed through Canada.

This proposal was beneficial for both the district's treasury chest, as well as ALR's personal coffers. The British diplomat benefited from this business enterprise. W. D. Madden benefited tremendously from the implementation of the Volstead Act. It did, however, cost him his diplomatic career with the British Empire.

Judging from the existing historical evidence, a less obscure source of illicit enrichment for ALR was through the opium trade. As the historical record indicates, Chinese nationals consumed opium and controlled the traffic in territorial Baja California

at the turn of the 20th century. However, U. S. nationals also used it, and controlled the distribution of opium in the transborder region during ALR's years in power. ALR's link to opium trafficking and source of wealth is traced to his association with a Mexicali politician by the name of Otto Möller. In an attempt to convey to the central government his commitment to combat drug trafficking, ALR intimated the press and its reporting on opium dens instead of taking a more energetic approach against the traffic of opium in general in the region by prosecuting opium distributors. ALR had also vested interests in the Foreign Club and *El Tecolote*. According to confidential reports sent to President Pascual Ortiz Rubio in 1932, Rodríguez's personal fortune was estimated at $12 million dollars deposited in banks in Los Angeles, New York, and London. [69]

Prohibition and Vice Tourism in the Transborder Region

Simultaneously, while Cantú and Rodríguez sowed the seeds of drug smuggling by trafficking with influences and narcotics, U. S. organized crime began to exert their power by controlling bootlegging and "rum-running" in big cities like Chicago, Cleveland, and New York.[70] This coincided with Esteban Cantú's increase in influence and wealth through the sale of business licenses vital to the development of vice industry.[71] In Los Angeles and San Diego, bootlegging and rum running operations[72] were taking place, benefiting those individuals involved in the illicit trade.

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[69] José Alfredo Gómez Estrada, *Gobierno y casinos: el orígen de la riqueza de Abelardo L. Rodríguez*, pp. 101-102, 131-137, and 141-143.

[70] Paul Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground: Mobsters and Movie Stars at America's Greatest Gaming Resort*, pg. 12.

[71] Ibid, pp 119-120.

[72] California had passed a dry law in 1916 that "sought to conserve alcohol for military industrial purposes." John Buntin, *L. A. Noir: the struggle for the soul of America's most seductive city*, pg. 27.

The passage of the Volstead Act made bootlegging and rum running a big business in many parts of the United States. According to John Buntin,

> "…high speed motorboats were unloading Mexican and Canadian booze onto beaches from San Diego to Santa Barbara… Meanwhile, convoys of trucks, many with hidden compartments, made their way up the so-called Bootleg Highway from Tecate to Tijuana to San Diego and thence to L. A… [A]uthorities estimate that the most sophisticated bootleggers were also bringing about 150,000 cases of Scotch a year into Los Angeles. The markup of the Scotch was $35 a case, meaning that the bootleggers were grossing more than $5 million a year – about $50 million in today's dollars – on Scotch alone."[73]

During Prohibition, the population of Los Angeles and San Diego played an important role in the development of the vice industry in Baja California.

Establishments like the Owl Night Club in Mexicali, the Playa Ensenada Hotel and Casino, and the Agua Caliente Casino in Tijuana, catered to an American crowd seeking to openly engage in those leisure activities banned by the Volstead act. As a result, Tijuana prospered into an important border town in Northwest Mexico. Thus, one sees the emergence of a tourism industry in Tijuana eager to cater to the needs of their neighbors to the North.

During the 1910s and 1920s, tourist attractions were opened in the Northern Territory of Baja California. Tijuana boasted a temperate climate and a geographic location that made it accessible to Californians and quickly became a preferred destination for the Southern California elite. In the early 1890's, Southern California visitors were lured by seemingly exotic bullfights held in Tijuana.[74] Soon, bars and nightclubs began to emerge, catering to the entertaining needs of the visitors, wealthy and

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[73] Ibid, pg. 27.

[74] José Alfredo Gómez Estrada, *Gobierno y Casinos: el orígen de la riqueza de Abelardo L. Rodríguez*, pg. 37.

working-class alike. By 1909, the cross border enterprise became evident. Petitioners from both sides of the border began to request for building permits for the construction of racetracks, hotels, bars, and casinos. [75]

The Mexican elite benefited and prospered with the popularity of casinos in Tijuana.[76] Prominent businessmen from Tijuana secured the necessary permits, allowing Tijuana's tourism infrastructure continue its development without any setbacks. For example, Abelardo L. Rodríguez was one of the original investors in the creation of the *Compañía Mexicana de Agua Caliente*, precursor to the Agua Caliente Casino. The other investors were Wirt Bowman, Baron Long and James Crofton. [77] Paul Vanderwood refers to Bowman, Long Crofton collectively as the "Border Barons."

In a similar fashion to the Anti-Saloon League in the United States, Mexican governmental authorities began to attack the nascent tourism industry and allied occupations in Tijuana under the guise of moral and health related grounds. In the 1920s, Mexican authorities launched a moralizing campaign to attack gambling as a vice and a moral problem that required immediate eradication.[78] Despite these efforts to derail the budding vice industry, Tijuana continued to prosper as a tourism destination.

By the 1920s, Tijuana emerges as an attractive destination for California's elite in search of entertainment and libations, now deemed illegal by Volstead Act in the United

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[75] Ibid, pg. 36.

[76] Ibid, pg. 119.

[77] Ibid, pg. 37.

[78] Ibid, pp. 66-69.

States.[79] In 1928, the Casino Agua Caliente opened in Tijuana[80], immediately attracting affluent Southern Californians and Hollywood celebrities. The likes of Clark Gable, the Marx brothers, Jean Harlow, Jimmy Durante, Glen Ford, Spencer Tracy, and Bing Crosby are amongst the distinguished names that at one point or another visited the Agua Caliente Casino. One of these future Hollywood celebrities, Rita Cancino, also known as Rita Hayworth, saw her beginnings in the Casino Agua Caliente.[81] Al Capone visited the Casino and played in its Golden Room. The Golden Room used golden chips and it is believed to have a minimum wager of $500.00. Paul Vanderwood argues that Bugsy Siegel got the idea for the Flamingo Casino in Las Vegas after his visit to the Casino Agua Caliente.[82] The Agua Caliente Casino in Tijuana remained a lucrative enterprise and popular destination until 1935. As Lázaro Cárdenas took over the presidency of Mexico one of his first acts was to declare gambling illegal, ordering the closure of the casino. [83]

Political and Economic Consolidation after the Revolution, 1920-1940

The period from 1920-1940 saw important events that shaped Mexico's political and economic development. This period is marked by attempts to build the Mexican state and consolidate the Mexican Revolution into a political one. This period also saw the Cristero Rebellion and the emergence of what became known as the one party system

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[79] Paul J. Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground: Mobsters and Movie Stars at America's Greatest Gaming Resort*, pp. 105-109.

[80] Ibid, pg. 47.

[81] Ibid, pp. 39-40.

[82] Ibid, pp. 228, 310.

[83] Ibid, pp. 305-310.

(PRI). The administration of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) placed the foundations for a strong presidential system, as well as moving Mexico into the path of industrialization.

After the violent phase of the Mexican Revolution, the country experienced a period of nation building and economic structuring. This period saw the emergence of the Sonoran dynasty. These military leaders and subsequently political figures from the state of Sonora shared a set of common beliefs, beliefs important for understanding the nation project they were about to implement. These common beliefs were also important in understanding the popular resistance to that nation-building project.

The military and political leaders from Sonora preferred individualism to collectivism, family farms over communal lands, and a secular society. They generally agreed on the need for a different type of modernization that the one promoted during the *Porfiriato* period. They also believed in the importance of organizing *campesinos* and workers, even though this meant organizing them in a corporativist fashion.[84]

The Sonoran dynasty was comprised of Alvaro Obregón, Adolfo de la Huerta, and Plutarco Elias Calles. Obregón was believed to be the leader. Adolfo de la Huerta was the diplomat of the group. Plutarco Elias Calles was considered the administrative brain of the Sonoran dynasty. Of the three, Obregon and Elias Calles "considered the ends of politics more important than the means and were willing to use violence to achieve their objectives." [85]

Alvaro Obregón brought peace to the country by including dissident generals into the regular army. Obregón also began the process of land reform slowly in part because

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[84] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution*, pg. 89.

[85] Ibid, pg. 89-91.

his administration did not receive the diplomatic recognition from the Untied States until 1924. Obregón supported the formation of peasant leagues throughout the country to petition for land in an organized fashion. This fact helped him remain in power in 1923 when he mobilized the peasants against dissenting members of the military. The peace made possible by Obregón permitted his successor, Plutarco Elias Calles to embark on a series of actions to rebuild Mexico, as well as to frame new institutions.[86] Obregón carefully implemented the Constitution by concentrating his efforts in issues pertaining to education, labor, and land.[87] During the years in power of the *Jefe Máximo*, the country experienced a period of political amalgamation that culminated with the creation of the one party system.

The transition from the *Maximato* to *Cardenismo* represented a break from the *Jefe Máximo's* policies. Lázaro Cárdenas administration represented the most progressive phase of the Mexican Revolution. Toward the end of the *Maximato*, it was clear that the Revolution in Mexico was acquiring political tendencies, ALR passed a series of measures that went against the pro-business nature of the administration. The land reform program was continued by ALR's administration, and Congress passed the *Código Agrario*.[88]

When Lázaro Cárdenas assumed the presidency of Mexico in 1934, the perception was that he continued to be a protégé of Plutarco Elias Calles. It did not take Cárdenas long to assert his own brand of rule, and he embarked on a series of measures and

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[86] James W. Wilkie, "Six Ideological Phases of Mexico's 'Permanent' Revolution," in *Society and Economy in Mexico*, pp. 5-6.

[87] Meyer, Sherman, and Deeds, *The Course of Mexican History*, pp. 425-433.

[88] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution*, pg.118-121.

political maneuvers to replace loyal *Callista* politicians with public officials that are loyal to Cárdenas, and the *Jefe Máximo* was exiled to San Diego in 1936.[89] Cárdenas is perhaps best known for his reforms impacting land, labor, the ruling party, the oil industry, and the established of corporativist measures that co-opted the four pillars of society: the popular sector, labor, peasants, and the military. A fifth group, the business sector was grouped into chambers of commerce and they reported directly to President Cárdenas, since he believed Mexico needed to move into an industrial phase.[90]

The Presidential term of Lázaro Cárdenas distinguishes itself from being the most socially progressive administration in the history of Mexico. Important social gains were made in terms of land redistribution and social programs. This period is also known for laying the foundations of what became a strong presidential system, as well as deep institutional loyalty.

During this period of nation building and economic uncertainty, xenophobic sentiments were being manifested against sectors of society considered to be culpable for the economic downturn that Mexico was experiencing. This time also witnessed the attempts from the part of organized crime to infiltrate into the highest spheres of Mexican government, as well as the emergence of organized crime in the transborder region. The following pages discuss these two concomitant events. The following selection will address the Sibophobic aggression in Baja California against Chinese nationals. This will be followed by the emergence of the Cosa Nostra in the transborder region.

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[89] Ibid, pp. 122-125.

[90] James W. Wilkie, "Six Ideological Phases of Mexico's 'Permanent' Revolution," in *Society and Economy in Mexico*, pp. 11-15.

Sinophobic Aggression in Baja California, 1928-1940

The anti-Chinese discrimination movement of the 1920s to 1930s was a byproduct of not only xenophobia and an economic downturn of the period, but also as a result of Chinese nationals being associated with the trafficking of opium and the existence of a "Chinese Mafia" that controlled the trade in Northern Mexico (Sinaloa, Sonora, and the Northern Territory of Baja California.)

At the epicenter of Mexico's attempts to bring economic prosperity to the nation, was a very liberal colonization policy that required the participation of foreigners. According to leading theorists of the turn of the 20th century, individuals from civilized European nations will bring their industrial and agricultural knowledge to Mexico's countryside. This industrial and agricultural knowledge will miscegenate and transform the native Indigenous populations living in the peripheries, thus, allowing Mexico to reach the levels of a civilized nation.[91]

Manifestations of anti-Semitism in Mexico begin to appear in the historical record in 1934. This is a time that the world saw the emergence of the potential threat of Nazis and Fascists in Europe, influencing the flow of history in Mexico. In *Camisas, escudos y desfiles militares: Los Dorados y el antisemitismo en México, 1934-1940*, Alicia Gojman de Backal analyses the numerous displays of anti-Semitism by fascists groups in Mexico. According to Gojman de Backal, Jewish people were not the only targets of discrimination and exclusion.

[91] Moises Gonzalez Navarro, *La colonización en México*, 1877-1910, pp. 95-140.

Mexico's Ministry of the Interior and the Department of Immigration in Mexico also expressed the need to curtail immigration into Mexico of people of Jewish decent, as well as Black and "Yellow" people.[92] Further, the Mexican immigration law of 1908 attempted to regulate Chinese and Turkish immigration, since it was believed that these immigrants were arriving to Mexico with the ultimate goal of entering into the United States.[93]

The Gold shirts (*Camisas Doradas*), was a paramilitary fascist group founded in Mexico City in the 1930s by a former military leader that deserted the Pancho Villa troops, General Nicolás Rodríguez Carrasco.[94] The *Camisas Doradas* drew inspiration from the Blackshirts and Sturmabteilung in terms of their anti-communism, authoritarianism and anti-Semitism approach. However, they lacked the fascist mission, being essentially, according to Stanley Payne, counterrevolutionary and reactionary and more prone to be employed by the existing state.[95]

The *Camisas Doradas* had violent confrontations with supporters of the Mexican Communist Party. The *Camisas Doradas*, under the auspices of the *Acción Revolucionaria Mexicanista*, also demanded the immediate deportation of all Jews and Chinese from Mexico. It is under this xenophobic climate that Chinese immigrants experienced xenophobic sentiments in the northern states of Sonora, Sinaloa, and Baja California.

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[92] Alicia Gojman de Backal, *Camisas, escudos y desfiles militares: Los Dorados y el antisemitismo en México, 1934-1910*. 11-12.

[93] Ibid, pg. 96.

[94] John W. Sherman, *The Mexican right: the end of revolutionary reform, 1929-1940*, pg. 62.

[95] Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*, pg. 342.

Chinese nationals settled in Sonora, Sinaloa, and Baja California by a combination of events. The presence of Chinese nationals in Mexico dates back to 1864, when they arrived to work in the construction of the National Central Railroad that connects Ciudad Juarez with Southern Mexico, as well as to work in the cotton fields of Mexicali.[96] Further, the anti-Chinese federal immigration legislation and the subsequent xenophobic sentiments in California pushed Chinese to settle in Sonora to work in the mines and Sinaloa and Baja California to work in agricultural endeavors.[97] As new Mexicans, Chinese immigrants brought with them cultural practices such as the cultivation of poppy plants. Once settled in Northern Mexico, Chinese immigrants also experienced xenophobia just like they did in California. This historical event in the United States coincided with the modernization campaign started by Porfirio Díaz in Mexico.[98]

Push and pull factors such as work in the construction of the Mexican Railroad system, colonization efforts along the U.S. – Mexico border, and U.S. immigration policy, served as antecedents in the creation of a fertile cultural breeding ground to complement the fertile soil in which the opium industry would blossom. In 1882, U. S. Congress approved the Chinese Exclusion Act. The Chinese Exclusion Act was one of the most significant restrictions on free immigration in U.S. history. The Act excluded Chinese "skilled and unskilled laborers and Chinese employed in mining" from entering

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[96] Luis Astorga, *Drogas sin fronteras*, pg. 23.

[97] Alicia Gojman de Backal, *Camisas, escudos y desfiles militares: Los Dorados y el antisemitismo en México, 1934-1910,* pp. 48-51.

[98] Ibid, pp. 47. See also op. cit. 11.

the country for ten years under penalty of imprisonment and deportation.[99] By the end of the 19th and early 20th century (1880-1930), there was significant Chinese immigration to Sonora and Sinaloa.

The xenophobia against Chinese immigrants was manifested in the creation of Anti-Chinese leagues throughout the peripheries in Mexico. Sinophobic aggression was mainly based on the perceived notion that Chinese immigrants had a monopoly over economic activities in Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, Sonora and the Northern territory of Baja California. All of these states and territory had Anti-Chinese leagues, and in the cases of Sonora and Sinaloa, it led to the expulsion of Chinese immigrants in the early 1930s.[100]

The Mexican Journalist Diego Osorno has chronicled the xenophobia directed at Chinese immigrants in the State of Sinaloa. In 1924, through the formation of Anti-Chinese committees, a campaign spearheaded by the State's Chamber of Commerce called for the expulsion of Chinese immigrants on xenophobic grounds. Many of these Chinese nationals brought with them agricultural traditions that were considered a threat to local businessmen in Sinaloa. Using the cultivation and the tradition of smoking opium as a pretext, powerful and influential business owners in Sinaloa managed to discredit and eventually expel scores of Chinese nationals.[101]

Julia Maria Schiavone Camacho has analyzed the expulsions of Chinese Mexican families from Sonora and Sinaloa in the early 1930s.[102] This *antichinismo* was a vitriolic

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[99] Robert Chao Romero, *The Chinese in Mexico, 1882-1940*, pp. 25-28.

[100]Julia Maria Schiavone Camacho, *Chinese Mexicans: Transpacific Migration and the Search for a Homeland, 1910-1960*, pg. 47.

[101] Diego Osorno, *El Cartel de Sinaloa: una historia del uso político del narco*, pp. 57-60.

[102] Julia Maria Schiavone Camacho, *Chinese Mexicans: Transpacific Migration and the Search for a Homeland, 1910-1960*, pp. 48-49.

manifestation that began on a regional level in Sonora, and was subsequently taken to the national stage by Plutarco Elias Calles and the Sonoran dynasty. Plutarco served as Governor of Sonora from 1915 to 1919. As he becomes the President of Mexico from 1924-1928, and the de facto *Jefe Máximo* (*Maximato*) from 1928-1932, he took the anti-Chinese campaign on a national level. His son, Rodolfo Elias Calles served as Governor of Sonora from 1931-1934. It is under Rodolfo's term that the removal of Chinese Mexicans from Sonora takes place. Despite the attempts of making these removal efforts part of a national campaign, the anti-Chinese activity was most significant at the local and regional levels rather than at the national stage.[103]

In the case of the Northern territory of Baja California, this anti-Chinese campaign failed. By 1927, Sonoran *antichinistas* began to develop a special relationship with their counterparts in territorial Baja California, thus the efforts to remove Chinese nationals from the territory began under the pretext of moralizing campaigns.[104] The case of Baja California had in mind the same outcome of the Sinaloan and Sonoran anti-Chinese campaigns, which was the removal of people of Chinese descent regardless of their immigration status. Benefiting from the experiences of the *antichinismo* campaigns in Sonora and Sinaloa, Chinese immigrants organized to defeat the Chinese removal campaign in territorial Baja California.

Further, the national and transnational implications of this anti-Chinese violence in Baja California required diplomats and government officials to deal with Chinese

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[103] Julia Maria Schiavone Camacho, *Chinese Mexicans: Transpacific Migration and the Search for a Homeland, 1910-1960*, pg. 48-49.

[104] Ibid, pg. 51.

demands for equal treatment in the U. S. – Mexico border.[105] Based on archival evidence from the National Archives in Mexico City that cover the period from 1928 to 1940, business owners from the Northern territory of Baja California sent missives to the Mexican Government asking for the expulsion of Chinese nationals. Their rationale for removal was based on claims of culpability against people of Chinese descent for Mexico's societal ills.

Mexico's Anti-Chinese campaigns cannot be analyzed monolithically, since each campaign had different motives. The 1889 anti-Chinese campaign attempted to prevent Chinese immigrants from entering Mexico.[106] In 1924, the creation of "Pro-Raza" Committees was an attempt to prevent Chinese immigrants from marrying Mexicans, the ethnic purity argument. In 1929, sinophobia was justified in economic terms. In 1932, sinophobia aggression was a function of Fobic Nationalism, an attempt to consolidate the new revolutionary groups that wanted to overcome the institutionalization stage led by the Sonoran dynasty.[107]

This anti-Chinese campaign had also as a justification the alleged control of the opium trade by the "Chinese Maffia [*sic*]." The historical record reveals several instances of the trafficking of opium being under the control of Chinese nationals. As an element of anti-Chinese rhetoric, proponents of removal campaigns against people of Chinese descent criticized the Chinese immigrant community for being a major source of

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[105] Fredy González, "Chinese Dragon and Eagle of Anáhuac: The Local, National, and International Implications of the Ensenada Anti-Chinese Campaign of 1934." *Western Historical Quarterly*, No. 44, pp. 49-50.

[106] Catalina Velázquez Morales, *Los inmigrantes chinos en Baja California, 1920-1937*, pg. 265.

[107] Catalina Velázquez Morales, "Xenofobia y racismo: los comités antichinos en Sonora y Baja California, 1924-1936." *Meyibó Nueva Época*, No. 1, 1990, pp. 47-48.

vice and crime. *Antichinistas* described Chinese immigrant organizations such as the Cheng Kung Tong and the Lung Sing Tong as "mafias." These Chinese societies, according to anti-Chinese rhetoric, were believed to be in control of illegal immigration from China, gambling, and to be involved in a turf war over control of the Mexican opium trade.[108]

U. S. drug officials had knowledge of Mexico's role in the production and trafficking of opium since 1926. On May 7 of that year, a dispatch from Consul Henry C. A. Damm in Sonora to the Department of State sheds light to issues that are relevant to a nascent drug trade that is beginning to reach a transborder dimension. The report discussed the existence of extensive illicit cultivation of poppy fields and trafficking, irregular law enforcement, and the possibility of graft inside Mexico's antidrug bureaucracy. These were issues that historically had led American officials to question Mexico's commitment concerning drug control. The dispatch also mentions that the opium's final destination was the United States, "although it would seem that the very large Chinese population of Sonora would absorb a considerable proportion of the narcotic, if actually produced in the state."[109]

In territorial Baja California, the business community also manifested the view of Chinese nationals controlling the opium trade and drug distribution. In an epistle dated December 8, 1934 Zenaido A. Rojo the Secretary-General for Ensenada's *Comite Anti-Chinista del Territorio de la Baja California* informed President Lázaro Cárdenas of the creation of Ensenada's *Comite Anti-Chinista* on December 4. This letter also sought to

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[108] Robert Chao Romero, *The Chinese in Mexico, 1882-1940*, pp. 161-163.

[109] William O .Walker III, *Drugs in the Western Hemisphere: An Odyssey of Cultures in Conflict,* pg. 59.

secure the President's support in the efforts to start an anti-Chinese campaign that would result in the removal from territorial Baja California of people of Chinese descent "an undesirable race that in giant leaps, harms commerce in general."[110] In a follow up letter dated January 17, 1935, Zenaido Rojo requested once again the support of President Cárdenas to eliminate the "evil, undesirable Chinese element" from the territory of Baja California that under the pretext of operating a neighborhood convenience store, only serves as a front to sell drugs.[111]

In Sonora, the so-called "Chinese Maffia [*sic*]" was believed to be in control of the illicit trade.[112] A series of confidential reports by Mexico's Secret Service proved the existence of an alleged Chinese Maffia that was waging a turf war for the control of the States of Sinaloa, Sonora, and territorial Baja California.[113] This mafia was identified by the name of *Chee Kum Tong*.[114] Opium dens were believed to be processing centers for opium that was arriving from Macao to San Francisco.[115] As stated before, Cantu assumed control of the trafficking in opium from Chinese nationals, and began to charge an operational fee for both the trafficking of opium, as well as the issuance of a license to operate an opium den and a monthly fee to continue with the operation. As late as 1941,

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[110] AGN IPS, Box 12, File 2.360(7) Record 3, 04592.

[111] AGN IPS, Box 12, Files 2.360(7), Record 3, 14838.

[112] Jose Angel Espinoza, *El ejemplo de Sonora*, pp. 25-27, 46, 227-232.

[113] AGN IPS, Box 1, 7.010.25. pg. 8.

[114] AGN IPS, Box 6, 7.010.201-55, pp. 10, 17-18, 27, 36, 42-43, 57, 69-71.

[115] See Op. Cit. pg. 9, note 23.

there were reports of opium dens in operation in Casinos owned and operated by Chinese nationals in Tijuana.[116]

Efforts to remove people of Chinese descent from Mexicali date back to 1927 in the form of a moralizing campaign.[117] The cause of the anti-Chinese campaign in Baja California was the economic displacement that native Mexicans were suffering in the hands of businesses owned by Chinese immigrants, just like it happened in Sonora and Sinaloa. This event coincided with the 1929 great global economic depression.[118] Based on correspondence between representatives of Labor Unions, anti-Chinese leagues, and the Ministry of the Interior of Mexico and China, there were efforts underway of business owners from Mexicali, Tijuana, and Ensenada to remove Chinese immigrants from the country, a situation that prompted a transnational diplomatic response to these plans.

The *Liga Nacionalista Anti-Asiatica* in Tijuana was formed on August 26, 1930. This organization called for limiting or eliminating the issuance of naturalization cards to Chinese nationals. CROM (*Confederacion de Sindicatos y Uniones Obreras de Tijuana, B. C.*) and the *Sindicato de Empleados de Cantinas y Restaurants* joined the effort. On February 18, 1932: Governor Olachea made official his support for the *Liga Nacionalista Anti-Asiatica*, by declaring in a letter addressed to the Minister of the Interior the intentions of his government to exercise preference to Mexican born nationals for jobs over naturalized Mexicans.[119]

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[116] "Es halldo un fumadero de opio en el casino chino," *El Heraldo de Tijuana*, November 8, 1941, pg. 1.

[117] See Op. Cit., pg. 23, note 66.

[118] Catalina Velázquez Morales, *Los inmigrantes chinos en Baja California, 1920-1937*, pp. 265-267.

[119] AGN IPS, Box 12, Record 3, File 2.360 (30) 1.

On April 29th, 1932, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a letter addressed to CROM (*Federacion de Sindicatos y Uniones Obreras de Tijuana, B. C.*) and the *Sindicato de Empleados de Cantinas y Restaurants* explaining their position in the matter. Citing issues of Constitutionality, they deny their petition of putting a stop to the issuance of Naturalization Cards to Chinese nationals.

Further, Mexicali's *Comite Pro-Raza Rodolfo Elias Calles*, founded in 1924 supported the removal of Chinese nationals under the pretext of Racial Depuration (Purification)." The *Comite* sent a letter dated August 8, 1932 demanding an end to Chinese immigration and seeking approval for an Anti-Chinese campaign.[120] In a letter dated December 9, 1929 Senior Officer Manuel Colledo from the Ministry of the Interior informed the Governor of the Northern District of Baja California to immediately stop the anti-Chinese propaganda organized by the Labor Union of Bar and Restaurant workers in the city of Mexicali.[121] However, the anti-Chinese sentiment continued without abatement.

On July 15, 1930 Heriberto Solan and Aurelio García Pérez, Secretary-General and Secretary of the Interior of the Labor Union of Bar and Restaurant Workers in the city of Mexicali sent a letter accompanied by a pamphlet and a newspaper advertisement to Mexico's Minister of the Interior in which they demanded justice by the eminent threat of what they refer to "yellow danger" and the "tentacles of a fateful yellow octopus." This missive suggested putting a halt to Chinese immigrants from obtaining Mexican citizenship. The implication of this situation was that by becoming Mexican citizens,

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[120] Ibid.

[121] AGN IPS, Box 12, 2.360 (30), Record 7 File 8, pg. 2.

Chinese immigrants displaced Mexican born workers. As a consequence, a protectionist requirement is suggested that compels business owners to have their workforce being comprised of 80% Mexican nationals, a similar approach implemented in the Sonoran campaign.[122] In a letter addressed to the Under Secretary of the Interior dated November 2, 1932, Governor Olachea acknowledged the existence of Nationalistic, Anti-Chinese associations. He also states in this letter that his Government guarantees the wellbeing of naturalized Chinese nationals.[123]

Mexicali's *Comité Pro-Raza Rodolfo Elias Calles* was also active in Baja California's anti-Chinese campaign. Named after the son of Plutarco Elias Calles and Governor of Sonora who led the successful removal of people of Chinese descent in that state, this committee encapsulated the anti-Chinese sentiment of the time: Fobic Nationalism. In a letter addressed to then President Pascual Ortiz Rubio dated August 8, 1932 Juan Licón, the Committee's President informed him of the Pro-Raza committee's decision to begin a campaign that will lead to the removal of people of Chinese descent from the Northern territory. The determination also called for the colonization of the Northern territory of Baja California to be spearheaded by Mexicans only.[124]

The local press in Mexicali also assisted in this Sinophobic aggression. A front-page article of the newspaper *El Regional* of Mexicali from August 1, 1929 chronicled the strike called by members of Mexicali's Labor Union of Bar and Restaurant Workers in protest of what they consider attempts to curtail the 80% Mexican workforce

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[122] AGN IPS, Box 12, 2.360, Record 8, File 8, pp. 4-7.

[123] AGN IPS, Box 12, 2. 360 (30), Record 7, 1-13406.

[124] AGN IPS, Box 12, File 2.360, Record 8, pp. 34-35.

requirement by Chinese business owners. This article also criticized the diplomatic intervention of China's Consul General and their attempts to circumvent this requirement.[125]

In Tijuana, efforts to remove Chinese Mexicans began in 1930. Tijuana's *Liga Nacionalista Anti-Asiática* was founded on August 26, 1930. This league, according to a letter addressed to Mexico's President and dated September 20, 1930, had the objective of carrying out throughout Baja's Peninsula, the nationalistic agenda of an anti-Asiatic campaign. This letter described the Chinese as an undesirable race with "retrograde customs, corrupted vices, and with alarming intromissions into our Mexican families." This missive contained a copy addressed to the Governor of Baja California from a representative of the Office of the President of Mexico instructing the Governor of Baja California to officially recognize the *Liga Nacionalista Anti-Asiática de Tijuana*.[126]

The transnational indignation and subsequent intervention to this sinophobic aggression came swiftly. The Chinese minister received information that anti-Chinese committees in Mexicali, Baja California and in Los Mochis, Sinaloa had resumed their activities against Chinese nationals that resided in the above-mentioned cities. The Chinese minister also made an appeal on behalf of Chinese nationals to Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to instruct the proper authorities to suppress such alleged

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[125] "La Acción Directa: Toda represión origina un desbordamiento. El Sindicato de Empleados de cantinas y Restaurantes planto hoy a las 9:30 la bandera del proletariado en las puertas de varias negociaciones que descaradamente se burlan de nuestras leyes." *El Regional: Verdad y Justica*. Año VII, Número 12, 21 de agosto de 1929, pg. 1.

[126] "Liga Nacionalista Anti-Asiática." AGN IPS, Box 12, File 023-E-29 and 30, pp. 10-15.

aggressions and to extend the necessary guarantees provided by the Mexican Constitution to Chinese nationals.[127]

The diplomatic intervention continued in Ensenada in early 1934. China's Minister of Foreign Affairs requested to its Mexican counterpart information regarding the suspected closing of businesses owned by Chinese nationals. Immigration officials from Tijuana and Ensenada confirmed the allegations. Starting on February 5, 1934, the above-mentioned municipalities had plans to execute a boycott against commercial establishments owned and operated by Chinese nationals.[128] On March of that same year, Eduardo Vasconcelos, Minister of Foreign Affairs, instructed the Governor of the Northern territory of Baja California, General Agustin Olachea to prevent by any prudent means within his reach any more planned anti-Chinese demonstrations.[129]

The consular mediation in this anti-Chinese campaign in territorial Baja California was also manifested in Mexicali. In a communication exchange that took place in April of 1934, a series of letters between Chinese diplomats, Governor Olachea, members of the Ministry of the Interior, and representatives of anti-Chinese organizations in Mexicali and Ensenada further illustrated the transnational ramifications of this sinophobic aggression.

A letter from General Agustin Olachea, territorial Governor of Baja California addressed to China's vice-consul, exemplified how the situation was addressed bilaterally. The missive informed the Chinese vice-consul of a meeting with the attorneys of the Ministry of the Interior regarding the activities of the "*Liga Nacionalista*

[127] AGN IPS, Box 12, File 2.360, Record 8, pg. 42.

[128] AGN IPS, Box 12, File 2.360, Record 8, pp, 67-72.

[129] AGN IPS, Box 12, File 2.360, Record 8, pg. 137.

Mexicana" and their actions against the Chinese colony. The letter also served as a reiteration of the Governor's commitment to extend the constitutional guarantees to both foreign and national citizens of the territory. The Governor also demanded that Chinese nationals observed Mexican laws and for them to stop exercising a monopoly over commerce and jobs in the territory.[130]

China's vice-consul's reply centered on the perceived resentment by Mexicans against the formation of "collectives" or "cooperatives" that were believed to leave the Mexican native labor force in a competitive disadvantage by effectively preventing them from getting jobs. The Chinese diplomat expressed his gratitude to Governor Olachea for allowing Chinese nationals to work in Mexicali's cotton fields. The vice-consul also wished to continue with diplomatic ties between the two countries, and not allow what he calls a "minor misunderstanding" such as the anti-Chinese campaign stand in the way of these diplomatic ties.[131]

This exchange of missives continues with China's vice-consul's letter to Governor Olachea reassuring him that Chinese "collectives" or "cooperatives" in territorial Baja California will follow Mexican laws and will employ native born Mexican workers.[132] Finally, Governor Olachea sent a letter to the members of Ensenada's Nationalist Committee reminding them to act according to what it was agreed in the

[130] AGN IPS, Box 12, File 2.360(30) 7, Record 3, Annex 3.

[131] AGN IPS, Box 12, File 2.360(30) 7, Record 3, Annex 4.

[132] AGN IPS, Box 12, File 2.360(30) 7, Record 3, Annex 5.

meeting that took place early in April with members from the Ministry of the Interior's special commission and China's vice-consul regarding the anti-Chinese campaign.[133]

The diplomatic intervention culminated in the sale and the proper compensation and liquidation of businesses owned by Chinese nationals in the municipality of Ensenada. Further, the swift diplomatic intervention of China's Minister of Foreign Affairs impeded the removal of Chinese nationals from Baja California and prompted the Mexican Government to order direct instructions to "desist from the anti-Chinese programme that has been carried out there for the past sixteen months… As a result, many Chinese are again opening stores in Ensenada and other Mexican cities."[134] The internal aggression that people of Chinese descent experienced in Baja California, prompted them to organize in order to combat the sinophobic aggression and requested the diplomatic intervention that gave this problem a transnational dimension, a different approach and outcome from the cases in Sonora and Sinaloa.

As Mexico began to emerge from a very violent and volatile stage in their quest to nation building after the revolution, the country experienced a political and reconstructive phase that, in the opinion of Lázaro Cárdenas, needed to follow the path of industrialization. As this situation developed, the historical record reveals efforts to undermine the control of the illicit trade in narcotics by drug traffickers with a legislative attempt to legalize drug use. The following section analyses the work of a true iconoclast, Dr. Leopoldo Salazar Viniegra, as well as efforts from the part of the Mexican

[133] AGN IPS, Box 12, File 2.360(30) 7, Record 3, Annex 6.

[134] AGN IPS, Box 12, File 2.360, Record 8, pp. 343-344.

Government to abandon the Prohibitionist model favored by the United States, as well as the legislative start of the War on Drugs.

Leopoldo Salazar Viniegra and Mexico's Legislative Start on the War on Drugs

As we have seen since the time of Esteban Cantú's independent rule of the Northern District of Baja California in 1915, the region began to witness the historical underpinnings of the transnational drug trade.

By the 1930s, the police model of combating drug trafficking in Mexico substituted the public health model. Pressures from the United States unequivocally influenced this shift in strategy, laying the foundations for interdiction campaigns. Harry J. Anslinger, commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, spearheaded these efforts. Mexican efforts to combat the illicit trade of narcotics were predicated in an attempt to control the influence of drug traffickers. From the late 1800s to the early part of the 20th century, opium based products had been legal and used for medicinal purposes. This led to an increase in drug addiction. By the 1930s, these products began to be controlled by the Mexican government.

Abandoning the police enforcement or prohibitionist model of combating the traffic of drugs, Lázaro Cárdenas authorized the sale and distribution of narcotics to addicts for a period of 5 months in 1940. This measure was an attempt to combat both addiction and drug trafficking simultaneously. The measure attempted to conceptualize the addict as a sick patient in need of an effective treatment for his/her addiction(s), instead of being criminalized and subjected to punishment for his/her rehabilitation. The *Reglamento Federal de Toxicomanias* (Federal Regulation for Addicts) approved on February 17th, 1940, called for the authorization of previously registered doctors to

prescribe small dosages of the substance individuals were addicted to in order to treat their addiction at affordable prices. This measure was also approved in an attempt to prevent the illicit traffic of drugs. By controlling the distribution of drugs at an affordable price to addicts, the Mexican government hoped to prevent addicts from obtaining the drugs from traffickers.[135]

After pressures from the part of U. S. Drug authorities, and using the pretext that World War II had made it difficult to for the Mexican government to obtain opium-based products, on July 3, 1940, the Cárdenas administration suspended the validity of the legislative measure they had previously approved on February 17th 1940.[136] This was a clear example of how US drug foreign policy was taking shape. Harry J. Anslinger spearheaded the criminal or police model. He was appointed commissioner in 1930 of the newly created Federal Bureau of Narcotics. The pugnacious first drug czar was a firm believer of uncompromising law enforcement at home combined with a strict control at the source abroad as the bases for an effective drug policy.[137] After the passage of the Marihuana Tax Act of 1937, it became clear for the United States Government – in their view – that it had the necessary moral authority to enforce issues of drug trafficking on a hemispheric level, and thus began to flex their muscle in drug policy on Mexico. This view allowed the United States to assert their hegemony on drug policy in the region by pressuring the Mexican government into stopping drug production and trafficking.[138]

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[135] *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, Tome CXVIII, Núm. 40, February 17, 1940, pp. 5-6.

[136] *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, Tome CXXI, Núm. 3, July 3, 1940, pg. 12; Luis Astorga, *El siglo de las drogas,* pp. 43-46.

[137] William O. Walker III, *Drugs in the Western Hemisphere*, pg. 46.

[138] Ibid, pg. 58.

Mexico's attempt to implement a State Drug Monopoly was based on research performed by Dr. Leopoldo Salazar Viniegra during the Cárdenas administration. Salazar Viniegra was the Director of Mexico's Department of Public Health. He studied medicine in Spain. While in Madrid, he was a disciple of Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora, famous for describing the Lafora disease. After completing his psychiatry work in France, Salazar Viniegra returned to Mexico as the director of *La Castañeda*, Mexico's psychiatric hospital. Salazar Viniegra also founded the Clinic in Zacatecas, site of the first epilepsy clinic in Mexico. He was also a medical pathology professor for Mexico's National Autonomous University (UNAM).[139]

Dr. Salazar engaged in a series of experiments in which he tested the effects of marijuana on individuals. These experiments had the peculiarity of distributing cigarettes that contained marijuana amongst his subjects and were performed over a fourteen-year period. The participants in the experiment were public officials, diplomats, doctors, students, schoolteachers, and sex workers – people from all walks of life. The subjects were asked to smoke cigarettes that contained tobacco versus marijuana. Dr. Salazar recorded his observations and compared them to those experiments he performed with habitual marijuana smokers.[140] He presented his results in 1938, scandalizing Mexico's public opinion and scientific community.

In his presentation to members of the National Academy of Medicine, Dr. Salazar shocked Mexico's public opinion with a paper titled "The Myth of Marijuana," published in the criminological journal *Criminalia*. In his paper, Dr. Salazar argued that the

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[139] Laura Luz Suárez y López Guazo, *Eugenesia y racismo en México*, pg. 224.

[140] Luis Astorga, *El siglo de las drogas*, pg. 50.

common assumptions of both public and scientific opinion about marijuana use were inaccurate. Marijuana was a relatively harmless substance, he claimed. Dr. Salazar's article was published in conjunction with a 1931 piece by Gregorio Oneto Barenque, which offered a far more conventional and frightening picture of marijuana.

Moreover, stories linking this substance with psychosis, violence, and crime were based on myth propagated by a sensationalist press and the drug enforcement authorities of the United States. Accroding to Dr. Salazar, those ideas secured policies that had turned marijuana users into over 80 percent of Mexico's drug law violators. Dr. Salazar argued that Mexico should repeal the prohibition of marijuana both to undermine the illicit traffic in the substance and to facilitate action on the more serious drug problems of alcohol and the opiates.[141] Dr. Salazar also expressed criticism against international agreements on narcotics by declaring them practically without effect. In his opinion, illegal drug traffic was secretly tolerated, if not encouraged, by those same countries that have agreed to suppress it. Thus, in an attempt to reduce smuggling and control the domestic drug situation, Mexico would experiment with a relatively untested measure of control, the national narcotic monopoly.[142]

As imagined, the U. S did not see such assertions in a positive light. In a clear case of damage control, by early November of 1938, there were efforts underway to undermine Salazar Viniegra's findings and reputation as a scientist, as well as to exert pressure on Mexico's liberal drug agenda. A series of newspaper articles published in the Mexican media criticized Dr. Salazar's methods and reputation. On November 15, U. S.

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[141] Leopoldo Salazar Viniegra, "El Mito de la Marihuana," *Criminalia*, Año V, Núm. 4, diciembre 1, 1938, pp. 206-237.

[142] William O. Walker III, *Drug Control in the Americas*, pg. 124.

officials sent Norman L. Christensen, U. S. vice-consul in Mexico, to meet with Dr. Salazar and discuss the Doctor's methods. After his conversation with Dr. Salazar, Christensen confirmed the intelligence reports on the Doctor's methods and findings, and sent his report to Harry J. Anslinger.

Eventually, Anslinger began to formulate an international plot that would result in the fall of Dr. Salazar and his findings regarding the effects of marijuana. Dr. Salazar was scheduled to present his findings on the 24th reunion of the International Advisory Committee of Traffic of Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs on June of the following year. Dr. Salazar was scheduled to be the keynote speaker for the Mexican delegation. He was going to present to the world his idea of marijuana's innocuous effects.

As a result, Anslinger increased the pressure being exerted on Dr. Salazar and convened a group of experts that believed in his views on drugs to start drafting a series of critical articles on the negative effects of smoking marijuana in hopes to enrage and further polemicize public opinion. These articles were widely distributed the weeks prior to the summit. A couple of days prior to Dr. Salazar's participation in Geneva, he was invited to the U. S. Consulate in that same city.

To this day, it is still unclear what the outcome of that meeting was. But after that meeting, Dr. Salazar returned to Mexico without presenting his findings. Months later, Dr. Salazar resigned as the Minister of Mexico's Public Health and director of *La Castañeda*, and became a firm believer of prohibitionist measures on drug abuse policy. Dr. Salazar resurfaced in the historical record on November 1939. He wrote a letter to Harry Anslinger asking him for his assistance in helping him with a series of marijuana

experiments he was conducting at Harvard University.[143] One can only surmise that perhaps Dr. Salazar, after his meeting with the US diplomats in Geneva on the eve of his keynote address, agreed to some sort of deal. It is ironic that Dr. Salazar wrote a letter asking assistance to the person that was responsible for his damaged reputation and credibility as a researcher and public official.

The United States had experimented with a similar clinic program as the one Mexico attempted to implement some twenty years earlier and found out that it created more problems that it solved. The central question for the disagreement in this instance is, and it is one that would recur regularly, whether production in Mexico or consumer demand in the United States provided the greater motivation for drug problems. Differently stated, authorities on both sides of the border blamed their counterparts with lacking the political will to control drugs.[144] This marks the official period in which the United States' vision on the War on Drugs began to be "suggested" to its Mexican counterparts.

By the late 1930s, U.S. drug enforcement agents began to operate in Mexico.[145] Thus, the nascent war on drugs in the hemisphere was beginning to feature Mexico prominently. According to Isaac Campos, Mexico's Department of Public Sanitation's "Dispositions on the Cultivation and Commerce of Products that Degenerate the Race" (1920) constitutes the first law in Mexican history to ban the cultivation and commerce in

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[143] Victor Hugo Michel, "Conspiró EU contra doctor mexicano que abogaba por legalizer mariguana," *El Diario MX*, 5 de mayo 2013, available at: http://diario.mx/Nacional/2013-05-05_8f431afb/conspiro-eu-contra-doctor-mexicano-que-abogaba-por-legalizar-la-mariguana, Accessed on December 18, 2014.

[144] William O. Walker III, *Drugs in the Western Hemisphere*, pg. 64.

[145] Ibid.

marijuana nationwide. It also imposed significant restrictions on the sale and distribution of the opiates and cocaine. It was, in short, a landmark in Mexican drug history and the true starting point of Mexico's nationwide war on drugs.[146]

It is important to point out that this is indeed a landmark legislative accomplishment. In terms of whether this legislation represents the true start of Mexico's war on drugs that depends on how the concept of the war on drugs is defined. If it is defined as a series of legislative measures dictated by U. S. foreign drug policy, then, it behooves us to acknowledge this landmark legislation as the true start of Mexico's war on drugs. However, a true plan to combat drug trafficking in Mexico that involves eradication campaigns does not materialize until November of 1947.

Although Mexico's federal sanitary authorities had been restricting the distribution of "dangerous drugs" for decades in the capital, the federal territories, and the nation's ports, the 1920 legislation was novel in three ways: first, by applying a ban on a specific drug—marijuana—to the entire nation; second, by elevating the "big three" drugs of twentieth-century drug wars—marijuana, the opiates, and cocaine—to a special, fixated domain; and third, by positioning illicit drugs within a framework that invoked the overall security of the Mexican nation.[147]

Cooperation between the United States and Mexico in matters of drug trafficking has not always been ideal. From the part of the United States, there has always been the concern that corruption of Mexican public officials put anti-drug operations in peril. By 1941, U. S. drug agents started to work in Mexico in a concerted fashion. In a dispatch

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[146] Isaac Campos, *Home Grown: Marijuana and the Origins of Mexico's War on Drugs*, pg. 181.

[147] Isaac Campos, "Degeneration and the Origins of Mexico's War on Drugs," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, Vol. 26, No., 2, 2010, pg. 380.

dated February 12, 1941, Consul George P. Shaw requested permission to maintain representatives in Mexico of U. S. Customs Service agents to Mexico's Chief of the Department of Public Health, Dr. José Siurob.[148] By mid-1943, U. S. – Mexican relations over drug policy and eradication were as tense as they had been for three years. U. S. drug authorities expressed very little faith in the willingness of their Mexican counterpart to combat drug production.[149] It is at this point that the historical record demonstrates a more active pressure from the part of U. S. drug authorities that Mexico conformed with the U. S.'s vision of drug enforcement.

The Salazar Viniegra affair and Mexico's subsequent crushed attempt to implement a clinic program for treating addicts made relations over drug control highly hostile. It also made clear to Mexican authorities the U. S. position. Anslinger and Department of State officials made a mistake by generalizing from their previous experience and denouncing Mexico's plan both privately and publically. In doing so, they stripped Mexican authorities from any possibility of finding a solution that was in tune with Mexico's realities and abilities.[150] This also sent a very loud and clear message to Mexican officials: in the event of disagreements over drugs and drug policy, the United States would be more than willing to force its notion of fighting the war on drugs on Mexico.[151]

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[148] William O. Walker III, *Drugs in the Western Hemisphere*, pp. 120-121.

[149] Ibid, pg. 124.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Isaac Campos, *Home Grown*, pg. 226.

La *Cosa Nostra* in the Transborder Region

By the mid-1930s, the Baja California drug trade that in the early part of the 20th century was run by Cantú and his father in law Pablo Dato, whom in turn wrestled it away from Chinese control, was by then under the control of a group of Jewish gangsters based in Los Angeles with Cosa Nostra connections as we will see in Chapter 2. Moreover, the tentacles of organized crime also reached the highest spheres of the Mexican government. This section discusses the interest form the part of organized crime in the trafficking of narcotics in the transborder region, and their attempts to infiltrate the highest spheres of Mexican government.

Organized crime started to control the transborder drug trade and infiltrated the highest spheres of the Mexican government. In the Unites States, infiltration by organized crime at the local, regional, and state level dates back to the Prohibition era. As the Prohibition era comes to an end, the traffic in narcotics becomes a highly lucrative occupation that requires many participants and an extensive payroll. In the context of the transborder region, this graft and collusion goes beyond political boundaries.

World War II prompted the closing of the European opium buying markets, opium trade routes were blocked and the flow of opium from India and the Middle East is cut off. This created a shortage of opium-based products for medicinal purposes, not to mention the use for illicit trade on an international scale. In the United States, the medical sector witnessed an increase in thefts on pharmacies and hospitals, as well as falsification of drug prescriptions.[152] This historical juncture played in the favor of

[152] Luis Astorga, *El siglo de las drogas*, pg. 59.

organized crime that allowed for the development of a complex dynamic that had Tijuana at the epicenter of the distribution portion of the commodity chain.

During World War II, Mexico became the main source of narcotics to the United States. In 1942, Bugsy Siegel arrived to Mexico with the intent of obtaining large quantities of opium and morphine. According to FBI reports, Siegel established his base of operations in Tijuana, where he set up his distribution operations to the United States. Siegel's business associate in Tijuana was Max Cossman. Known as the King of the Opium, Cossman purchased opium from Rodolfo Valdez (el Gitano) a leader of the Sinaloa opium trade.[153] The connection between Bugsy Siegel and Max Cossman will be further analyzed in more detail in chapter 2.

Mobsters of the caliber of Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel and Mickey Cohen were sent to Los Angeles to control bootlegging activities. Mickey Cohen, leader of the Combination, a criminal organization whose membership was comprised of half of its members being of Jewish descent and the other half being of Italian descent, was Bugsy Siegel's right hand man. Bugsy Siegel visited Los Angeles for the first time in 1933, which coincided with the end of national Prohibition. This event made Bugsy Siegel an overnight millionaire and virtually a "legitimate" businessman.

By the time Bugsy Siegel settled in Los Angeles in 1937, the Combination was no longer relevant as a crime organization, providing Bugsy Siegel an opportunity to exercise control over the narcotics trade in the transborder region.[154] So the Baja California drug trade that in the mid to late 1910s was run independently by Cantú and

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[153] Juan Alberto Cedillo, *La cosa nostra en México, 1938-1950: los negocios de Lucky Luciano y la mujer que corrompió al gobierno mexicano*, pp. 24, 45.

[154] John Buntin, *L. A. Noir: The Struggle for the Soul of America's Most Seductive City*, pp. 22-25, 59-63.

his father in law Pablo Dato, whom in turn wrestled it away from Chinese control, now was under the control of a group of Jewish gangsters based in Los Angeles with Cosa Nostra connections. But the tentacles of organized crime also reached the highest spheres of the Mexican government. This topic will be further elaborated in the following chapter.

Chapter Summary

Vera Estañol's fears of an anarchic revolution materialized along the U. S. Mexico border. The *Magonista* incursions in territorial Baja California were also a prime example of how the region experienced the Mexican Revolution differently from the rest of the country. Ricardo Flores Magón, in alliance with members of the Industrial Workers of the World, attempted to carry out a social revolution in the region. This short-lived 6-month rebellion raised suspicions from the part of residents of the territory, mainly because they still had fresh in their memories William Walker's filibustering campaign and his failed attempt to create the Republic of Lower California. This event was pivotal in the history of the region, since it represented the arrival of Esteban Cantú and Abelardo L. Rodríguez to the territory. These two individuals had fundamental roles in not only the economic development of the territory, but also in the development of drug trafficking as well in the transborder region.

The region also experienced and benefited from Prohibition. Vice tourism in the region made possible the economic development of territorial Baja California, as well as the illicit enrichment of prominent military and political leaders. Baja California's isolation, as well as Mexico's social and political conditions at the start of the Revolution made it possible for territorial rulers to govern in an independent fashion, with no

oversight from the central government. This geographic and political isolation allowed territorial governors, specifically Esteban Cantú and Abelardo L. Rodríguez to become wealthy individuals through the proceeds they secured from bribes and participation in both illicit and legitimate business ventures.

As the *Maderista* uprising culminated in a political revolution, territorial Baja California begins to see a shift in the control of the traffic of illicit substances. The territory's Chinese population was the target of an aggression, the same type of aggression that resulted in the removal of Chinese nationals from Sonora and Sinaloa. The swift diplomatic intervention of China's Minister of Foreign Affairs prevented the removal of Chinese nationals from Baja California and pressured the Mexican Government to stop anti-Chinese campaigns in the territory. As a result of the internal aggression Chinese immigrants were experiencing in Baja California, they organized in order to combat the sinophobic aggression and requested the diplomatic intervention that gave this problem a transnational dimension, a different strategy and result from the cases of Sonora and Sinaloa.

Infiltration by drug traffickers took places at a time when the Mexican state began with the process of political consolidation. Plutarco Elias Calles and the Sonoran dynasty makes possible this process of political consolidation, culminated by Lázaro Cárdenas and his actions that established a strong presidential system. Perhaps deeply concerned with the infighting and destruction that had taken place from 1920 to the start of his presidential term, Cárdenas flirts with a possible re-election, but decides to lead Mexico to an industrialization phase by backing Manuel Avila Camacho as his successor.

This period also saw a short-lived legalization campaign by the Mexican government in order to confront addiction to narcotics and to undermine drug traffickers. Through the experiments and views of an iconoclast, Mexico moves toward the adoption of a clinic model that attempted to undermine the role of drug traffickers in the illicit trade. This experience resulted to be detrimental in the career of Leopoldo Salazar Viniegra, as his reputation suffered the consequences of a defiant stand on marijuana use and drug policy in Mexico, by pointing out the hypocrisy of international agreements that attempted to put a stop to drug production and distribution but that tolerated the illicit trade, and the United States' pressure to degenerate and criminalize marijuana use.

This policy resulted in Mexico's abandonment of the police model or prohibition model of combating the early stages of the war on drugs by treating the addict as a sick individual that required medical assistance, not punishment for his/her rehabilitation. Eventually, Mexico succumbed to the pressures by the United States' first Drug Czar, and the United States began to exert their hegemony on drug control and interdiction in the region. The United States, armed with the passage of the Marihuana Tax Act of 1937, believed it had the moral authority to dictate world drug policy, and thus began to pressure the Mexican government into impeding drug production and trafficking.

In the 1930s the transborder drug trade, which in the early part of the 20th century was operated by Cantú and his father extended family, whom in turn wrestled it away from Chinese control, was by now being run by a group of Jewish mobsters based in Los Angeles with Cosa Nostra connections. These same individuals arrived to the West coast to control bootlegging, gambling, and prostitution. After the Volstead Act was rendered unconstitutional in 1933, these mobsters began to concentrate their efforts in the control

of the drug trade in the transborder region, eventually extending their jurisdiction to all of Southern California, including Tijuana.

As a result, Tijuana and the transborder region took on an important role in the distribution of narcotics into the U.S. consumer market. Given its strategic location as a border town and distribution center, Tijuana continued to be an important plaza in the introduction of narcotics into the United States consumer market. Just like it did at the turn of the 20th century, Tijuana continued to play the same important role in the traffic of opium, adding other narcotics into its distribution list.

By 1945, one begins to see in the literature the emergence of Proto international drug trafficking organizations and their attempts to control the flow of drugs into the United States through Tijuana.[155] It is this precise historical juncture that marks the starting point for Chapter Two.

[155] Joaquín Aguilar Robles, "Siniestro conclave de hampones en México". *Detective Internacional*. No. 63, September 7, 1946, pg. 1.

Chapter 2: The Emergence of Proto Drug Trafficking Organizations, 1945-1960

Introduction

In an editorial published on June 8, 1946, Joaquín Aguilar Robles wrote about the cross border killing of Enrique Diarte who was the individual in charge of opium trafficking in Tijuana and Mexicali. In late October of that same year, Max Cossman, the "King of Opium," killed Diarte. Diarte's badly decomposed body was found on the side of a road in the outskirts of the border town of Tijuana on November of 1944. In Aguilar Robles' view, Diarte's putrid body was infecting Tijuana with corruption and lawlessness, two characteristics that the town had been attempting to eradicate since the end of the Prohibition era.

Aguilar Robles pointed out in his editorial that American criminals such as Crossman escaping U. S. justice would eventually secure refuge in Tijuana. Once established in Tijuana, these individuals would continue with their nefarious activities on Mexican territory with the support of their international criminal ties. Since criminals and criminal activities do not respect any international boundaries, Aguilar Robles called for closer transborder collaboration between law enforcement agencies at the regional level on both sides of the border.[1]

Diarte's association with Cossman brought to Tijuana negative publicity, fueling tales of an ill-gotten reputation earned during the Prohibition era. The San Diego press ran stories where corruption and lack of institutional control were reinforcing the black legend of Tijuana. Described as an "asymmetrical relationship between American and

[1] Joaquín Aguilar Robles, "La Carroña de Diarte aún Inficiona a Tijuana," *Detective Internacional*, No. 51, June 8, 1946, pp. 1-2.

Mexican border regions," the development of the black legend was something that began at the turn of the twentieth century. In the perception of most Mexicans and Americans, the border was still a frontier.

In the early part of the 20th century, differences in development of infrastructure and urbanization began to widen the gap on both sides of the frontier, thus, changing perceptions as well. During the Prohibition era of the 1920s, Tijuana was transformed into sin city for Americans eager to succumb to the pleasures that were being strictly legislated by U. S. Congress. Tijuana's reputation as sin city was possible by the complicity of corrupt officials that profited from the passage of the Volstead Act. The U. S. media reinforced this contrasting perception of a sinful Tijuana and a clean and wholesome San Diego.[2]

The Cossman-Diarte case placed Tijuana in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons. A new chapter in Tijuana's black legend was starting, one in which drug trafficking, corruption and murders were changing the nature of the city. An ill-gotten reputation of sin city based on the profits of vice tourism were replaced by a new reality in which Tijuana was now the launching point of narcotics into the United States drug consumer market. The TJ's black legend was experiencing a change in the *Dramatis personae*; drug traffickers now replaced bootleggers and rumrunners.

The above-mentioned editorial encapsulates the history of the Tijuana-San Diego corridor during the period from 1945-1960. Joaquín Aguilar Robles, Director of the weekly police magazine *Detective Internacional* was the first chronicler of not only police issues in the region, but also the traffic in narcotics and its transborder elements.

[2] Ramón Eduardo Ruíz, *On the Rim of Mexico: Encounters of the Rich and Poor*, pp. 42-43.

From the perspective of a *tijuanense*, Aguilar Robles captured the sentiment of a city attempting to shed that reputation that was a legacy of the Prohibition period. But, he was also aware of how this black legend was perpetuated by a new set of circumstances, that is, the nascent international traffic in narcotics.

In Chapter one, we saw the origins of the drug trade along the Tijuana-San Diego corridor. The emerging drug trade was situated within the context of important historical transborder events. This origin is directly tied in with the effect of the passage of the Volstead Act. I also addressed the role played by two individuals that reaped the benefits of the Mexican Revolution in their own unique way, as well as legislative efforts from the part of Mexican authorities to address addiction and drug production.

In this chapter I analyze the consolidation and transformation of narcotraffickers into the present day conception of Drug Trafficking Organizations in Northwest Mexico framed in an anti-communist rhetoric, as well as Mexico's official start on the War on Drugs from 1945-1960. An analysis of early eradication campaigns carried out by Mexican authorities, as well as the response from the proto-drug trafficking organizations, and regional campaigns between state of California and the Northern territory of Baja California are also analyzed. This Chapter also explores the connection between East Coast based Mafia and their incursion and eventual control of the drug trade and organized crime in the West Coast and eventually the transborder region. An analysis of "Bugsy" Siegel's alleged control of the drug trade in Southern California and Tijuana is also presented. The following section presents the reader with an analysis of Mexico's political amalgamation situated within the context of World War II, the onset of the Cold War.

Political transformation and the consolidation of the "*Dictadura Perfecta*."

Politics in twentieth century Mexico were dominated by two complimentary visions: the rhetoric of the Mexican Revolution and the existence of an "official" party.[3] As one of the many rebellions Mexico experienced in the early part of the twentieth century, the political amalgamation of the country made possible the establishment of a strong presidential system that allowed the "one party" system to rule the country for over 70 years. Emilio Portes Gil founded the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR) in 1929, during Plutarco Elias Calles' *Maximato* while in Europe. The convocation allowed for the different political factions present in Mexico at the time to fall under one umbrella, thus, allowing the country's political galvanization.

In 1938, President Lázaro Cárdenas re-structured the party and named it the *Partido de la Revolución Mexicana* (PRM). This political entity was rooted in the corporativist strategies that were in vogue at the time. Through the implementation of the corporativist model President Cárdenas co-opted the worker, popular, peasant, and military sectors into what became as the "four pillars" of Mexican society. These four sectors each had a leader that reported to President Cárdenas. A fifth sector, Industry, was organized into chamber of commerce, and they reported directly to President Cárdenas. President Cárdenas felt that México had lost precious time since 1920, and the almost 20 years of infighting and political displacement had gotten in the way of the country's desire to reach the industrialization path.

Finally, in 1946, President Ávila Camacho transformed the PRM into the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI). Structurally, the party eliminated the military sector

[3] Aaron W. Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938-1954*, pg. 1.

that by this time was no longer considered a threat to rebel against the country, since economic and political stability prevailed in the country, unlike the rest of Latin America.

The struggle for the presidency delivered a unique opportunity every six years to look keenly inside the political machines and electoral alliances in an attempt to understand the direction of the country. In the presidential elections of 1940, 1946, and 1952, through opposition campaigns, loyal members of the Revolutionary family decided to challenge the very system that they had once supported. The presidential election of 1940 clearly illustrated these challenges to the soon to be Party of the Revolution.

The 1940 presidential election was a confrontation between the radical sector of Cardenismo against the growing Catholic and conservative opposition represented by the *Partido Acción Nacional* (National Action Party) or PAN. The Cárdenas administration had managed to alienate and anger a sizeable sector of domestic constituencies with actions such as land reform and reducing the role of the church.[4]

During the process of what perhaps constituted the first "*destape*," Cárdenas had two candidates to select as his successor or two "*tapados*," Francisco Múgica and Manuel Avila Camacho. Francisco Múgica was considered the representative of the party's radical faction. Múgica intended to continue expropriating private land holdings and foreign owned property and he also called for an aggressive campaign in favor of the working class. The second "*tapado*" for Cárdenas was Manuel Avila Camacho a moderate conservative within the PRM. Unlike his brother Maximino, Manuel had a reputation as a somewhat honest politician, but at the same time, rejected Cárdenas' populism and anticlericalism. In demonstrating Cárdenas' political pragmatism, *El*

[4] Ibid, pp. 14-15.

dedazo in this process of *destape* went to Manuel Avila Camacho. The PAN's candidate, Juan Andreú Almazán along with other opposition groups – among them the *Camisas Doradas*, the *Sinarquistas*, the PAN and Joaquín Amaro's *Partido Revolucionario Anti-Comunista* (PRAC) – joined forces against Cárdenas' official candidate, Manuel Avila Camacho. Avila Camacho enjoyed the support of both the incumbent Party and the President Lázaro Cárdenas. This allowed him to win the election by a sizeable margin, prompting allegations of electoral fraud by Andreú Almazán, thus making the possibility of a rebellion very clear. In the end, Andreú Almazán withdrew his intentions of launching a rebellion.[5]

These fractures within the party evidenced the weakness at an early stage and its failure to accommodate strongly dissenting political views. These challenges provided the impetus for structural changes of the party. Thus, the threat of electoral opposition from renegade high-level operatives forced the leadership of the Party of the Revolution to clarify its internal discipline, deal with the military once and for all, and create a force of political control that would all but guarantee the party leadership's continuation in power.[6]

As the Revolution was institutionalized, it allowed for Mexico to "resist" the temptations of establishing authoritarian governments of far left or right tendencies that emerged during World War II and at the outset of the Cold War. All this was accomplished without the need of relying on military governments, thus making the

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[5] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule since the Late Nineteenth Century*, pp. 137-138.

[6] Aaron W. Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938-1954,* pg. 3.

emergence of governments headed by civilians a reality trusting a process voided of confrontations and fissures.

Once on its way to industrialization, an economic strategy implemented as a result of the global economic depression of 1929 proved to be the cornerstone of the Mexican Miracle. It also proved to be the foundation for the cycles of rebellion and repression Mexico experienced from 1958-1983, a process further analyzed in chapter 4 of this investigation. The following section illuminates this economic strategy that set in motion Mexico's economic development from 1940-1970.

The Mexican Miracle and Statist Development

Under an active state, the power of the central government steadily increased to "guide" national development. To end the chaos caused by roving rebel bands, it also deputized criminals as police, who agreed to limit their corruption. As under Porfirio Díaz, political and economic power was decentralized to rich regional elites, with the President serving as ultimate arbitrator of disputes. The idea eventually came to encourage joint economic ventures linking domestic capital with foreign investment and technology.[7] This led to the emergence of a statist economic development generally known as the Mexican miracle.

The Mexican miracle refers to the country's implementation of Import Substitution Industrialization as a development strategy that produced sustained economic growth from the 1940s until the 1970s. This inward looking economic strategy was a response to the global economic events that derived from the Great Depression 1.0 of 1929. Many well-known economists and researchers praised the performance of the

[7] James Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure and Social Change since 1910*.

Mexican economy as a "miracle." From today's viewpoint it seems more like a fiction in which each time Mexico seemed ready to take off into sustained high growth, the process was interrupted and the economy fell into periods of persistent stagnation and even decline.

Mexico changed from a rural society into a predominantly urban one. Through an uncommonly fast, profound and violent process of social mobilization, Mexico became a complex nation. Nevertheless, the manifestations of traditional society still tenaciously permeated every aspect of social, economic, political, cultural and religious life. From this, a disturbingly dual country emerged. Between 1929 and 1933 the Great Depression had a negative impact on the economic growth of Mexico as the markets for primary exports were limited.

This situation created the incentives for the first attempts after the revolutionary period to develop Mexico's manufacturing industry. This was just the beginning of a relatively long period of industrialization. Between 1933 and 1944 Mexico experienced a period of high economic growth. Real GDP per capita increased at an average annual rate of 4.0 percent.[8]

There were two factors behind this process. First, it was a period of reconstruction after the damage caused by revolutionary violence. The capital-output ratio had increased from 1.19 in 1925 to 1.76 in 1933 and, although it declined again throughout the late 1930s to 1.01 in 1944, the lagged effects of this accumulation on productivity contributed to GDP growth during the 1933 - 1944 period. Per employee output increased at an average annual rate of 3.8 percent, the highest for any period during the

[8] Fausto Alzati, *The Political Economy of Growth in Modern Mexico*, Dissertation, pp. 20-23.

twentieth century, from $713 per worker in 1933 to $1,042 per worker in 1944.[9] Second, even before the U.S. entered World War II much of its industrial capacity was assigned to support the defense buildup, a trend that became even more acute after 1941 and lasted until the initial years of the post-war period. This created an opportunity for Mexico to export low-quality manufactured goods to supply U.S. consumer markets, thus establishing Mexico's post-revolutionary industrialization.[10]

When the opportunities for export-led growth created by the war began to disappear after 1945, Mexican industry turned inwards to substitute for imports to its own domestic markets. This was the beginning of the longest period of uninterrupted and relatively high economic growth in twentieth century Mexico. From the late 1930s and until the late 1970s, Mexico came to experience a period of more than four decades of sustained economic growth, at rates that at the time were considered remarkable.

Thus, "stabilizing development" coupled annual growth rates of GDP averaging above 6 percent per year and price stability. But unfortunately the "miracle" turned out too be too good to true. Behind the apparent successes, profound imbalances and vulnerabilities began to emerge. During the 1940s and 1950s growth had been fueled largely by investment opportunities created by Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI).[11] During this period of economic development the state became an active participant in the economic development of the country. The Active State yielded to the private sector in business and industry in order to dedicate government activities to

[9] Ibid, pg. 23.

[10] Ibid, pg. 24.

[11] Ibid, pp. 24-25.

providing the traditional governmental services, building public infrastructure, and developing the social sphere. The state moved from a passive role to an active one as it sought to solve problems not resolved by the private sector; and thus it subsidized and/or invested in new and needed industry, often by providing high tariff protection. To make the Active State function, Emilio Portes Gil established in 1929 the "Official Party," but gradually it became more authoritarian during the 1960s, culminating in the murder of many hundreds (perhaps thousands) of persons who protested against it in the autumn of 1968 and during 1969.[12] On the domestic front, Mexico was attempting to move forward into an industrial era in a global environment where the shadow of a second world conflict was casting a long shadow. The following selection discusses Mexico during World War II, placing it in its proper regional, transborder context.

World War II and the Threat of a Japanese Invasion

The Tijuana-San Diego region experienced World War II in a unique way. At the onset of World War II, the possibility of Japan attacking the United States through Baja California and the intentions to annex Baja California by the United States, further accelerated the colonization process. The Mexican government had made its intentions known of colonizing the northern territory of Baja California. To accomplish this, land was given to those individuals that decided to settle in Baja California. This project was set in motion by the Lázaro Cárdenas administration in 1936, and it included the establishment of the free zone, as well as to develop the communications and transportation infrastructure. But the governor of territorial Baja California, Rafael Navarro Cortina gave in to the pressure exerted by members of CROM in Tijuana to open

[12] James Wilkie, *Mexico Schema 5.0: Recurring Cycles of 'Revolution' From Pre-Colonial Times to Mexico's Ongoing World Context*, pp. 15-19.

casinos. As a result, Navarro Cortina was removed from the governorship of the territory in February 1937 and replaced by Col. Rodolfo Sánchez Taboada who had a direct mandate from Cárdenas to execute his colonization plan. There had been attempts to colonize Baja California prior to Cárdenas' plan. Mexican nationals returning from abroad, specifically from the United States had formed "*colonias agrícolas*" or agricultural settlements. As the redistribution of land continued, these agricultural settlements became "*ejidos*" or communal lands.

Further, there were also proposals to organize settlements populated by Mexican residents living in the United States. To address these concerns, Cárdenas adopted two models for redistributing land: colonization contracts and the creation of "*ejidos.*" The colonization process began formally in 1936. By 1941, territorial Baja California witnessed the arrival of the first wave of agricultural settlers and their families coming from central Mexico to populate the region.[13] Various factors accelerated the colonization process in the northern territory: the continued interest from the part of the United States to annex Baja California; commercially, the possible emergence of two economic blocks at the time led by the United States and Japan; and the one dealing with water rights from the Colorado River.[14]

From the onset of the twentieth century, American politicians and entrepreneurs advanced the argument that Japan was poised to invade California through the peninsula of Baja California. True to the propaganda of the time, Cárdenas colonization plan attempted to "*hacer patria*" or construct a homeland by populating the region and defend

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[13] "Llegan a Mexicali los Colonos: Se Trata de Contingentes de Campesinos Enviados por el Departamento Agrario," *de Baja California*, Spetember 6, 1941, pg. 1.

[14] Marco Antonio Samaniego López, *Breve Historia de Baja California*, pp. 172-175.

the country from a potential Japanese invasion. This also provided the United States with the necessary arguments to continually express their intentions to annex Baja California, adding fuel to an already contentious history between the two countries and the transborder region that dated back to the Mexican American war. On the national front, the end of the Cárdenas presidency was marked by the nationalization of the oil industry. When Avila Camacho succeeded Cárdenas in 1940, not only did he have to address the nationalization of the oil industry, but Avila Camacho also was confronted with the unresolved issue of compensating U. S. oil companies that lost their assets as a result of the nationalization, leaving him with a very complicated foreign affair agenda to start his presidential term.[15] This period also replicated in Baja California an unfortunate situation that played out from California and the Pacific Northwest: the internment of Japanese Mexicans. The following section discusses this action carried out in territorial Baja California during World War II.

Japanese Removal from Baja California During World War II

Japanese immigration to Latin American began at the onset of the twentieth century. Restrictive immigration policy limiting the entry of Japanese nationals into the United States was in large part the cause for Japanese immigrants to settle and work in the mines and in agricultural fields of territorial Baja California. Japanese immigrants settled in Mexico during the Revolutionary period, some of them serving as soldiers in the federal or revolutionary armies during the conflict. They often enlisted because they had no other means of survival. Through diplomatic intervention, Japanese immigrants were able to secure employment in cotton fields owned by Americans that operated in the

[15] Ibid, pp. 175-178.

Mexicali valley. After the end of the violent phase of the Revolution, Japanese immigrants began to establish roots primarily as small business owners, retail managers, and small farmers in territorial Baja California.

The Japanese community in Baja California Norte was the largest and most cohesive group in Mexico before World War II. They continued to work in the cotton fields in Mexicali leased to them by the American owned Colorado River Company and the *Jabonera del Pacifico*. They began to settle in larger numbers along the Baja California region after 1925. By the mid-1930s, the Issei community was largely concentrated in Mexicali establishing strong commercial and business ties in the region, allowing them to develop an insular community. Agrarian measures implemented by Cárdenas in 1934 dislocated the Issei from the lands in which they previously worked. Just as they were recovering from the Cárdenas reforms, the Issei community faced an even greater challenge of World War II relocation.[16]

As a result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the Issei community in Baja California was targeted as a potential threat to national security by the United States government. The United States declared war on the Axis powers. Mexico remained neutral in the conflict, however, this did not prevented them from following instructions that came from Washington in dealing with the Issei population in the territory. As a result, the Mexican government froze all of the financial operations of Japanese immigrants.

Further, immigrants of Japanese, German and Italian descent were prevented from becoming Mexican citizens. Mexico's Ministry of the Interior confiscated short wave

[16] Daniel M. Masterson, *The Japanese in Latin America*, pp. 4-5, 58-62.

radios and high frequency transmitters. This was done in an attempt to avoid any possible communication to coordinate efforts in a presumed Japanese plot to invade the United States through Baja.

On January 2, 1942, the Mexican government issued an order to the Issei community to abandon their homes. They were given an eight-day period to comply. Japanese immigrants that had been able to become Mexican citizens were able to keep their property. Those who were not naturalized Mexican citizens lost their property or had to sell it in order to obtain the necessary money for the trip. Mexican military personnel, along with agents from the Ministry of the Interior carried out the displacement of Japanese nationals to Central Mexico. One group was transported on train first to Santa Ana, Sonora and then to Guadalajara, while another group was transported directly from Mexicali to Mexico City. The displacement of Japanese immigrants from Baja California to Central Mexico was traumatic and shameful episode in the history of the region.[17] To this day, there has been no official apology issued by the Mexican government to the surviving victims of the removal of Japanese descent from Baja to the interior of Mexico.

To add more fuel to an already volatile disposition against people of Japanese descent, a situation that developed in Mexico City involving a Japanese diplomat further confirmed American fears of a possible invasion through Mexican territory. On February 21, 1942, the Mexican Secret Service seized a large cache of 38 machine guns, 10 rifles and several handguns from a venue associated with the Japanese legation in Mexico. According to information provided to the Mexican press, the former Minister of Japan in

[17] Gabriel Trijillo Muñoz, *La Otra Historia de Baja California: Seis Siglos de Tragedias y Desastres, Escándalos y Leyendas*, pp. 315-322.

Mexico, Yoshaki Miura, intended to use the above-mentioned arsenal to resist his eminent removal from Mexico.[18] The report did not specify the reason for Miura's deportation, but judging from the large weapons cache, it can be speculated that this information could only work against the Japanese community on both sides of the border. That same year, in February 23-25, there were a series of alleged attacks from Santa Barbara to Long Beach that were carried out by Japanese forces. In more recent times, the literature refers to these attacks collectively as the Battle of Los Angeles.

There are conflicting accounts regarding these events. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on February 26, 1942 in the font page of the newspaper that the attacks and sightings of unidentified aircrafts on the Pacific Coast that caused a five-hour blackout in the region. An official statement made by Secretary of the Navy, William Franklin in which he attributed the Raid to "Jittery Nerves", also accompanied this information. Despite the official denial of an attack from Washington, the Army's 4th Interceptor Command based in San Francisco confirmed the blackout and the sighting of unidentified aircraft, as well as the ensuing heavy and long continued anti-aircraft firing was carried out on official Army orders.[19]

The Tijuana newspaper *El Heraldo* reported that at least 15 unidentified aircrafts were sighted over Los Angeles airspace and were engaged by elements of the 37th Artillery Brigade of the Pacific Coast.[20] The newspaper also provided an account of the

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[18] "Se Fraguaba un Serio Motín Japones En La C. De México," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, February 21, 1942, pg. 1.

[19] "Army Says Alarm Real: Roaring Guns Mark Blackout;" "Knox Indicates Raid Just 'Jitery Nerves';" Editorial, "Information, Please," *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1942, pg. 1.

[20] "Hubo Varios Aviones el Día 25 sobre Los Angeles," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, February 27, 1942, pg. 1.

shelling in the refinery in Goleta, off the Coast of Santa Barbara,[21] as well as attempts to attack Los Angeles.[22]

In 1942, after German submarines sank two Mexican ships, Mexico declared war against the Axis powers. As result, Mexico and the United States coordinated their efforts to prevent an attack and a possible invasion by Japan along the Pacific Coast. Gen. Lázaro Cárdenas was named by President Ávila Camacho minister of defense and was appointed as Chief in Command of the newly created military region of the pacific. Gen. Cárdenas was coordinating efforts with Gen. John L. De Witt. Gen. De Witt had the intentions to enter territorial Baja California to assume tactical control of the joint operation. Gen. Cárdenas, stationed in Ensenada, mobilized his troops and confronted the forces led by De Witt at the international border by Colonia Libertad. As a result, a meeting between the two Generals took place in the grounds of the former Agua Caliente Casino in Tijuana. In this meeting, it was agreed that Gen. De Witt's forces would not enter Mexican territory; instead, they would send personnel to offer technical support to the Mexican army to operate radar equipment.[23]

Civilian defense forces were also organized as a result of a possible Japanese invasion. Members of Tijuana's Chinese community received military training to defend the territory from a potential invasion.[24] The irony of these civilian defense forces was that they were more concerned with a possible invasion by the United States, the country

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[21] "Ataque a California Por Un Sumergible Japones," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, February 24, 1942, pp. 1, 4.

[22] "Los Japoneses Intentaron Atacar L. A. : Otros Dos Barcos-Tanques Bombardeados," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, February 25, 1942, pg. 1.

[23] Miguel León-Portilla and David Piñera Ramírez, *Historia Breve: Baja California*, pp. 162-163.

[24] A. Ybarra, "Los Miembros de la Colonia china de Tijuana B. C. Estan Recibiendo ya Instrucción Militar," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, April 3, 1942, pg.1.

they were coordinating efforts with, than a potential Japanese invasion. Just as it happened during the Prohibition era, Tijuana continued to be the destination of choice for Americans, especially servicemen that flocked to the city during their leave time, thus fueling a very lucrative vice tourism industry.

Tijuana and Baja California benefited from the extension of the railroad that connected Baja California with Sonora and the rest of Mexico that started in 1937 and it was completed by1948. This was followed by the construction of a national highway, events that contributed in the increase of the region's population. Taking advantage of an era of cooperation fostered by their participation in World War II, the United States and Mexico signed two treaties that addressed water rights and labor. In 1944, both countries signed the Treaty for the Utilization of Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande in 1944, giving Mexico a guaranteed amount of water that they could use for agricultural purposes.[25]

The Bracero Program

That same year, the Bracero program came into effect. From 1942 to 1964, the agreement permitted Mexican workers to work in the United States. During World War II, laborers from Mexico filled jobs vacated by people that enlisted in the U. S. armed forces. The Bracero Program was in reality a set of programs over the course of its twenty-two year existence. From 1942 to 1943, it was governed solely by a diplomatic agreement between Mexico and the United States; from 1943 to 1947, Public Law 45 supplemented diplomatic agreements. After the expiration of PL 45 in 1947, the program was operated by U.S. agencies on an unplanned basis.

[25] Marco Antonio Samaniego López, *Breve Historia de Baja California*, pp. 179.

In 1951, the program was placed back on statutory basis with the passage of PL 78, a Korean wartime emergency measure, a measure that had to be renewed every two years. With glitches it was thus renewed regularly until 1964, when it was finally defeated by a coalition of "anti- bracero" forces.

Professor Don Mitchell argues that it is appropriate to refer to a single bracero program both because "that is how contemporaries understood it over its life course and because there were strong continuities across each of its iterations."[26] Given its diverse economy, the state of California attracted a large number of braceros.

The Bracero Program played an important role in the rapid population growth that the territory experienced during this period. In addition to the colonization project initiated by the Cárdenas administration and accelerated by the prospects of the dual threat of a possible Japanese invasion of California through the territory and continued annexation interests fueled by the U. S media, the Bracero Program also acted as a pull factor to the region.

The combination of a strong diverse economy in California, and an increasing displacement and proletarization of a rural peasantry in Mexico provided a constant supply of workers for the Bracero Program. This allowed for Tijuana to become the port of entry into California for these migrant workers from throughout Mexico, arriving to the territory hoping to be recruited to work in the United States. Those that were unsuccessful in their efforts to secure employment as Braceros, remained in Tijuana and established their permanent residency in this border town.[27]

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[26] Don Mitchell, *They Saved the Crops: Labor, Landscape, and the Struggle Over Industrial Farming in Bracero-Era California*, pg. 1.

[27] David Piñera and Gabriel Rivera, *Tijuana en la Historia, Tomo II*, pp. 99-102.

In 1954, potential Braceros began to concentrate in Tijuana along the border with San Ysidro hoping to gain employment. Tijuana police used force to dissuade these potential Braceros to desist from their intentions and return to their places of origin. Further, Tijuana's Urban Police intensified their patrolling of the border to prevent any further congregations of individuals with the intent to cross into San Ysidro and be hired as agricultural workers.[28] This situation prompted Tijuana authorities to block the International Border to Mexican nationals wishing to enter the United States without the proper documentation.[29] This constituted a unilateral measure implemented by the United States that was part of the 1951 amendment to the Agricultural Act of 1949. This amendment was renewable every two years.

The Bracero situation was also used for political purposes in Tijuana by organizations associated with the PRI. Members of the *Colonia Revolución* and *Unión de Diversos Gremios Lázaro Cárdenas*, part of the PRI's popular front would recruit members from the aspiring Braceros waiting to cross into the United States. Under false pretenses, representatives from these two popular fronts associated with the Official Party would issue membership cards that would allegedly secure the Braceros employment in the United States in exchange for political support to the cause of the above-mentioned organizations.[30]

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[28] "Concentración de Braceros en la Frontera: Intentaban Cruzar Hoy a E. U. Para Ser Contratados," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, January 22, 1954.

[29] "Bloqueo en la Frontera Local: Todos Los Automoviles Son Registrados Al Cruzar La Línea A Los E. Unidos," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, January 25, 1954, pg. 1.

[30] "Turbia Labor de Políticos: Prometieron a los Braceros Pronta Contratación a Cambio de Disciplinarse a sus Ideales," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, January 26, 1954, pp. 1, 2.

The unilateral nature of this portion of the Bracero Program caused great strains on resources in Baja California. California's agricultural industry only required a limited amount of Braceros. In one example, the San Diego County Farmers hired 400 Braceros. [31] The next day, only 222 were employed.[32] The inability and growing discontent of thousands of individuals waiting to secure employment prompted authorities in Calexico to take measures to prevent possible disorders in Mexicali. Calexico law enforcement agents were concerned that aspiring Braceros waiting anxiously along the international border to secure a contract that would allow them to work in the agricultural fields in California could incite tumults.[33]

Finally, on March 11, 1954, a bilateral agreement was reached between Mexican and U. S. authorities that extended legal protections to Braceros being offered contracts to work in agricultural fields. The agreement was to expire on December 1, 1955. This agreement secured competitive salaries offered to the Mexican workers, as well as unemployment benefits in the event they would lose their jobs. The agreement also created a mixed commission of Migratory Labor that would oversee the enforcement of the treaty, as well as to deal with undocumented Braceros in the United States. The agreement also stipulated the creation from the part of the Mexican Government of a hiring center in Mexicali, Chihuahua, and Monterrey. The agreement also included a clause in which those Braceros that secured employment during the unilateral recruitment

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[31] "Ya Pueden Salir Los Braceros: La Contratación Empezo Hoy en San Ysidro, a las 2 P. M. Solo 400 Trabajadores Van A Ser Admitidos Este Día," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, January 27, 1954, pg.1.

[32] "No Contratan Braceros En S. Y. : Esta Completo El Numero de Trabajadores Que Se Necesitan En San Diego, Cal.," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, January 28, 1954, pg. 1.

[33] "Temense Tumultos De Braceros: La Policia de Calexico se prepara para Hacer Frente a Cualquier Emergencia," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, February 3, 1954, pg. 1.

campaign launched by American growers, could, if they wished, receive new contracts under the terms of the new bilateral agreement once their original contracts expired.[34]

This period also saw the revitalization of Tijuana's tourism industry, an industry that grew out of the Prohibition period. This was possible in large part to the Blitz-Boom period that was characterized by a strong military presence in San Diego in the form of the Naval Base and Marines Depot, NASSCO and Consolidated Aircraft Corporation leading the way in generating employment in the area.[35] After Prohibition was repealed, Tijuana's tourism industry languished until the start of the World Conflict. During this time, bars, "Mexican Curios," restaurants, hotels and restaurants were thriving along *Avenida Revolución*. On Sundays, there were three main tourists attractions that drew large crowds both local and from San Diego: the Agua Caliente Race Track, *Toreo de Tijuana* for bullfights, and the *Frontón Palacio Jai Alai* or Fronton Palace Jai Alai. [36]

Baja California and Statehood

Perhaps the most important political development in the history of Baja California took place in 1952: statehood. The inclusion of Baja California as a state was the culmination of desires expressed by different civic sectors of the region since the 1930s. In November 1951, President Alemán presented the idea of incorporating northern Baja California as a state. The incorporation of Baja California as the 29th Mexican state became official on January 16, 1952. In 1953, Braulio Maldonado Sández became the

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[34] "Se Firmó El Pacto de Braceros: Durará en Vigor Hasta Fines De 1955, Los Braceros Irán Asegurados Contra el Desempleo," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, March 11, 1954, pp. 1, 8.

[35] Lucinda Eddy, "War Comes to San Diego," *The Journal of San Diego History, San Diego Historical Society Quaterly*, Spring 1993, Volume 39, Numbers 1 & 2. Available at: www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/93spring/warcomes.htm. Accessed on February 21, 2014.

[36] David Piñera and Gabriel Rivera, *Tijuana en la Historia, Tomo II*, pg. 103.

first governor of Baja California. The next year in May, the first "*ayuntamiento"* or city council in Tijuana initiated its activities when Gustavo Aubanel Vallejo was elected mayor of Tijuana.[37]

The important political development that allowed Baja California to become a State provided the impetus to take the necessary steps to create a state educational system, one which started to function side by side with the already existing federal educational system. Responding to an increase in population in the state, the *Dirección General de Acción Cívica y Cultural* was created. This governmental entity became the foundation for the State's Educational System. An increase in population also meant an increased demand for more schools to educate the state's population, as well as teachers. In 1953, a Teacher's College in Ensenada and another one in Mexicali were founded, bringing the total Normal Schools to three. There was one Normal School that had been previously founded in 1947 in Mexicali.

In 1955, the *Club Universitario Tijuanense* (CUT) publicly expressed the need for the creation of an institution of higher learning in the state. The CUT was an organization comprised of students from Tijuana that were studying in the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in Mexico City. The CUT took as a model the laws that created UNAM and actively sought the support of important civic organizations in Tijuana, as well as to creating a Committee in Support of the Creation of a University in Baja California (*Comité Pro Universidad*.) Thanks to their efforts, the Governor of Baja California submitted a legislative measure calling for the creation of an institution of higher learning in Baja California. The measure was approved, and on

[37] Miguel León-Portilla and David Piñera Ramírez, *Historia Breve: Baja California*, pp. 163-170.

February 28, 1957, the *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California* or Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC) was created.[38]

The 1959 Gubernatorial Elections

At the end of the Braulio Maldonado Sández Governmental administration (1953-1959), a controversy emerged around the urbanization project of the property known to locals as the *Zona del Río*. These were lands located in the riverbed of the Tijuana River. After the construction of the Abelardo L. Rodríguez Dam in 1941 was completed and the subsequent channeling of the river, residents took possession of these lands in the hopes that they can secure their lawful ownership. This resulted in the construction of improvised communities that housed working class families.

Maldonado Sández ordered the relocation of the residents, and a conflict ensued. As the state and local electoral season approached, the issue became further politicized, the occupants of these lands found the assistance of Salvador Rosas Magallón. Rosas Magallón was the most representative figure of the opposition party, the National Action Party or *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN). As the occupants of the *Zona del Río* properties organized and fought their removal, tensions and violence escalated. As a result, many residents were arrested. Rosas Magallón represented these individuals earning him the nickname of "*el abogado del pueblo*" or the people's lawyer.[39]

The situation became further politicized when the PAN named Rosas Magallón as its gubernatorial candidate for the 1959 elections. PAN organized demonstrations in

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[38] David Piñera and Abdiel Espinoza González, "Las Repercusiones de la Segunda Guerra Mundial y el Estado 29," in David Piñera and Jorge Carrillo, eds., *Baja California: A Cien Años de la Revolución Mexicana, 1910-2010*, pp. 118-119.

[39] Antonio López Samaniego, *Breve Historia de la Baja California*, pg. 215.

Tijuana, Ensenada, and Mexicali. The PRI accused the PAN of organizing a rebellion and claimed that some of the PAN sympathizers were found in possession of weapons.[40] With this tense atmosphere, the elections took place on August 2, 1959.

Two versions attempted to explain the outcome of the elections. PAN claimed they were victorious by a large margin. However, through intimidation tactics during voter registration, and the utilization of members of the Federal Judicial Police and the Military who stole the ballots and intimated citizens to cast their vote for the Official Party during Election Day, the incumbent party defeated the PAN.[41] The PRI argued that although the elections were contested, they were able to win in large part because they were able to secure the vote in Mexicali and the surrounding *ejidos*, which at the time had a larger population than Tijuana.[42] This political challenge to the hegemony of the PRI would resurface once again for the local elections in Tijuana and Mexicali in 1968. I will address this particular instance in chapter 3 and the prominent role that women played in this election.

At the same time Baja California emerged from World War II and reached statehood, the region also witnessed the emergence of proto drug trafficking organizations. At the onset of this development, the historical record illustrates the role played by organized crime in making the region a strategic launching point to introduce narcotics into the West coast. The following pages examine the emergence of proto drug trafficking organizations in a transnational context.

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[40] David Piñera and Abdiel Espinoza González, "Las Repercusiones de la Segunda Guerra Mundial y el Estado 29," in David Piñera and Jorge Carrillo, eds., *Baja California: A Cien Años de la Revolución Mexicana, 1910-2010*, pp. 119-120.

[41] Carlos G. Ortega, *Democracia Dirigida… Con Ametralladoras*, pp. 163-173.

[42] Milton Castellanos, *Del Grijalva al Colorado: Recuerdos y Vivencias de un Político*, pp. 231-237.

Development of Mexico's Secret Police: DFS

During the Alemán administration, the *Dirección Federal de Seguridad* (DFS) was created. The original intent of the DFS was to act as a secret police that protected and served the Official Party of the Revolution. As the PRI-Gobierno succeeded in the institutionalization of the guiding principles that made possible the Revolutionary movement of 1910, the need to keep friends and foes alike under constant surveillance was required to continue legitimizing their power. As the state grew more conservative in nature, secret police activities carried out covert operations to make sure dissidence was dealt with accordingly before the possibility of a full-blown rebellion or leftist revolution crystalized.

Established in 1946, the DFS was created as a secret political police at the service of the PRI. Like other intelligence services, the DFS gathered information for the president in the interest of national security. Prior to World War II, Mexico's domestic intelligence infrastructure was not a professional entity at the service of the State. It was characterized by a lack of organization and lack of sufficient funding. The agents were a mixture of local police, regional informants, and federal agents. By 1947, Mexico created a professional intelligence infrastructure molded after the FBI. Miguel Alemán played a key role in the professionalization of the intelligence services in Mexico, first as the Minister of the Interior (1940-1945) and subsequently as President of Mexico (1946-1952).[43]

The blueprint for DFS, and for that matter the rest of intelligence services created in Post-Revolutionary Mexico, could be traced back to a 1934 presentation given by José

[43] Aaron W. Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938-1954*, pp. 150-151.

de la Luz Mena also known as "Agent 2." This presentation had as an objective improving the training of agents that served the *Departamento Confidencial* or Confidential Department headed by Joaquín de la Peña. Agent 2, perhaps as a precautionary measure, wrote the text of his presentation. In his presentation, Agent 2 stated that the mission of the *Departamento Confidencial* was to investigate the truth in order to assist the government and in that manner collaborate in the perfection of the revolutionary government.[44]

The collaboration that resulted between the United States and Mexico during World War II enabled Mexico to obtain technical and logistical support from the United States intelligence apparatus. Alemán's government capitalized on this cooperation that resulted from World War II and requested the FBI's guidance and training when the professionalization of Mexico's domestic intelligence service began. DFS began to gather internal information on political and criminal surveillance operations. The implementation of surveillance tactics obtained through FBI training was put into use to pacify labor unrest between 1948 and 1951. Moreover, an internal purge of the PRI took place under Alemán that involved the removal of individuals affiliated with other political parties, and Communists.[45]

Another important aspect that DFS brought to Mexico's intelligence services was stability at the helm of the intelligence dependency. Prior to the creation of the DFS, most directors of the *Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales* (DGIPS) only held the position for a short period of time. Under the DFS, the director was in

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[44] Sergio Aguayo Quezada, *La Charola: Una historia de los servicios de inteligencia en México*, pp. 35-38.

[45] Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth Century Mexico*, pp. 145-148.

charge of the intelligence dependency for a six-year period, dominated by the appointment of military as Directors.[46]

Anslinger & the Development of the Prohibitionist Model

As analyzed in chapter one, the pressure exerted by Anslinger proved to be fundamental in persuading Mexico to end their five month experiment that legalized opium consumption in 1940. Anslinger's experience with the illicit trade of alcohol while he served as Consul in Nassau influenced his approach in combating the traffic in narcotics. The following pages examine the creation of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and the influence this anti-drug agency played in the development of first a bilateral cooperation between the United States and Mexico, and how it influenced the creation of Mexico's secret police, the DFS. But first, a discussion of Harry J. Anslinger and his ascension to Director of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics follows below.

Harry J. Anslinger was the first Director of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics was founded in 1930 to act independently from the Treasury Department in the matter of narcotics. Anslinger's approach to dealing with the issue of narcotics was unequivocally shaped by his experience in combating rumrunners and bootleggers during the Prohibition era in the Bahamas. It is this same kind of thinking that served him as a point of reference when he was appointed Director of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN).

In the 1920s, Anslinger had been appointed as a diplomat in Germany, Venezuela, and Barbados. While serving in Germany in 1921, Anslinger was first exposed to the problem of narcotics. Ansliger believed that Germany was the global epicenter for the

[46] Aaron W. Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938-1954*, pg. 155.

distribution of illicit drugs. In 1923, Anslinger was sent to La Guaria, Venezuela. Upon arriving with his family to La Guaria, Anslinger immediately longed for the days when he worked in Germany. Anslinger felt that Germany offered him and his family an environment with all the social and cultural necessities he desired. In his view, his reassignment to La Guaria was going to be bleak and overall a negative experience. His fears and trepidations were confirmed once he arrived to Venezuela; he hated the place since it did not offer what he and his family enjoyed during his time in Germany.

In a letter to the State Department, Anslinger requested a transfer only five months after arriving. A State Department official recognized that La Guaria was not a desirable post and explained to him that it was not always possible to assign consular personnel to the most attractive locations. Consular work in the coastal town of La Guaria proved to be monotonous and tedious for Anslinger. Anslinger continued to request a transfer. Finally, in 1926 he was reassigned to Nassau in the Bahamas. This move would prove to be very influential in his career.

As a Consul in Nassau, Anslinger played an important role in getting Great Britain to recognize the fact that more cooperation in the matter of rum running was needed. Anslinger convinced British officials to take a more vigorous role in the enforcement of Prohibition laws. He reached a diplomatic agreement with the British in which ships departing from Nassau had to specify their final destination. The Anslinger Accord proved to be effective and cemented his reputation as a consummate negotiator. As a result of this accord with the British, Anslinger began to work with the Treasury Department and was able to negotiate similar accords with the governments of Canada, France, and Cuba.

After successfully negotiating the above-mentioned series of accords, Anslinger was appointed as chief of the Division of Foreign Control in the Prohibition Unit. In this capacity, Anslinger duties included the collection of information and harmful evidence to be applied through diplomatic means to dismantle the international contraband of liquor. In 1929, Anslinger was promoted to Assistant Commissioner of Prohibition to supervise the Narcotics Control Board. In this post, Anslinger demonstrated he was a loyal prohibitionist by calling for stringent punitive measures in enforcing the Eighteenth Amendment. Another of Anslinger's responsibilities as the supervisor of the Narcotics Control Board was to examine the international aspects of combating the smuggling of narcotics. On July 1, 1930 Harry Anslinger was appointed acting Commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics by his uncle by marriage, Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon. President Hoover officially appointed Anslinger as Chief of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics.[47]

As Chief of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, Anslinger was responsible for the enforcement of the narcotic and marihuana tax provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, the Opium Poppy Control Act of 1942. Further, Anslinger cooperated with the State Department and several states concerning the traffic in narcotics and the abuse in their respective jurisdictions, as well as representing the United States on the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Anslinger also explained the duties of the Bureau which they included the investigation, detection, and prevention of violations of the Federal narcotic laws.[48]

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[47] John C. Williams, *The Protectors: Harry J. Anslinger and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, 1930-1962*, pp. 30-44.

[48] Harry J. Anslinger, *The Traffic in Narcotics*, pp. 148-149.

Under the leadership on Anslinger, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics proved to be an influential force in the development of Mexico's secret police, as well as shaping Mexico's drug policy. DFS's primordial goal was not to combat drug trafficking, but to keep any communist threat under control.[49] During this time, the United States embassy in Mexico City began to use DFS and drug traffickers to combat the threat of communism. The State Department and military attaché denounced the DFS for its involvement in the traffic of drugs.[50]

As the Tijuana-San Diego corridor gained importance as a strategic region for the introduction of narcotics into the United States, closer scrutiny and mistrust dictated the way in which United States authorities shaped their drug foreign policy toward Mexico and the rest of the so called third world countries. These policies and attitudes only became more vitriolic as the anti-communist rhetoric that resulted from the Cold War era began to dictate relations between the United States and developing nations seeking alternative formulas to achieve democracy and development.

The Emergence of Proto Drug Trafficking Organizations: a Transnational Context

After the end of World War II, a new world order emerged from the conflict that was defined along ideological lines. This new world order pitted two opposing ideologies headed by the main victors of World War II. As the United States and the Soviet Union began to battle for ideological supremacy and control of developing countries, at the time referred to as third world countries, a new kind of conflict began to take shape, one in which we see the gestation stages of the War on Drugs used as a

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[49] Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, pg. 145.

[50] Peter Scott, *American War Machine: Deep Politics, the CIA Global Drug Connection and the Road to Afghanistan*, pg. 50.

political instrument as it was illustrated above. For the next 45 years, the Cold War shaped and combined U. S. foreign policy and drug policy in attempts to eradicate the dual threat of communism and the war on Drugs.

To fully understand the origins of the current narcotraffickers placed within the anti-communist framework, an analysis of their development is essential. Two events were instrumental in the development of *narcotraficantes*. First, during World War II (1939-1945) the use of opium-based products for medicinal purposes for the U.S. market was regulated and sanctioned by the United Nations. The majority of these opium based products originated from European countries. World War II made it impossible for the United States to meet their opium based demands from the European market. The United States turned its attention to Mexico's Western region (Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Durango) to meet this demand. With the knowledge of the Chinese growers and the fertile soil of the Sinaloan mountainside, the poppies bloomed and so did the burgeoning industry. By the late 1930's and the onset of World War II, local Sinaloan wealthy land owners, saw the potential to make huge profits with the large scale poppy plantations.

The second instrumental development in the rise of *Narcotraficantes* occurred in Mexico, as the State of Sinaloa witnessed the emergence of "criminal entrepreneurs."[51] These individuals saw the opportunity for prosperity by supplying heroin to this nascent market of consumers in the United States. At the same time, cocaine trafficking was controlled by networks of smugglers whose prominence coincided with the demand for recreational drugs in the United States. This transformed the organization of these

[51] Diego Osorno, *El cártel de Sinaloa: una historia del uso político del narco*, pp. 95-108.

networks of smugglers into a more sophisticated enterprise. These events laid the groundwork for the emergence of the modern system of drug storage and distribution.[52]

Giving credence to the real state maxim of "location, location, location," the border area became a strategic point in the distribution of drugs into the United States market.[53] In post-World-War II United States, the U.S.- Mexico border was wide open to the smuggling operations of a series of gangs that that functioned in a loosely fashion for much of the 1960's and a good part of the 1970s.[54]

Further, the end of World War II in 1945 ushered in a huge demand for drugs in the United States. U. S. servicemen coming back from overseas had developed an addiction for opium and opium-based products. This coincided with the emergence of the international drug trade organizations. These organizations realized that heroin was a gold mine for them in the informal market. In the United States, heroin soon became a recreational drug rather than its former medical use. The demand for the drug increased, paving the way for the emergence of individuals in Mexico willing to engage in the production and distribution of opium based products. Thus, began the large-scale production and distribution of drugs, namely heroin, on an international scale.

The Traffic in Narcotics as a Political Tool: The Case of Enrique Diarte

Narcotics – mainly opium – were reaching the United States through Mexico. During this time, the more pressing need from the part of the United States was preventing the spread of communism, or the propagation of the "red menace." This was

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[52] Interview with José Z. García, New Mexico State University, expert on issues of transnational cooperation against crime, conducted on June 17, 2008 in Ensenada, Baja California.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Anabel Hernández, *Los señores del narco,* pp. 120-125

part of the nascent anti-communist framework that involved the alleged U. S. support of the Kuomintang (KMT) to combat communism in China. This racket involved members of the Cosa Nostra: Bugsy Siegel, Lucky Luciano, Joe Adonis, Frank Costello, Meyer Lansky, and Charlie Fischetti.[55]

Due in large part to the work of French clandestine services in Indochina, the opium trade survived a government repression campaign. Through CIA activities in Burma the Shan States became the largest opium-growing region in the world. The collapse of the Nationalist Chinese (Kuomintang or KMT) government in 1949 persuaded the Truman administration that it had to stem "the southward flow of communism" into Southeast Asia.

In 1950 the Defense Department extended military aid to the French in Indochina. That same year, the CIA began to reorganize those fragmented factions of the defeated KMT army in the Burmese Shan States for a planned invasion of southern China. Thus, the KMT army failed in its military operations. However, it they were able to effectively monopolize and expand the Shan States' opium trade. The KMT shipped large quantities of opium to northern Thailand, where they were sold to a Thai police officer who was a CIA asset. The Truman administration feared that Mao Tse-tung was determined to control Southeast Asia. The first sign of direct CIA aid to the KMT appeared in early 1951. In 1952, with the apparent support of the CIA, the KMT began a full-scale invasion of eastern Burma.[56] Thus, the War on Drugs began to be utilized as a political instrument by a network of clandestine operatives.

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[55] Harry Anslinger, *The Murderers*, pg. 54.

[56] Alfred McCoy and Cathleen Read, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*, pp. 126-135.

As part of the Cold War context and with the complicity of the U. S. Government, the proceeds from the traffic of narcotics was used to finance campaigns that would eventually topple armed groups attempting to establish communist regimes. This network of clandestine operatives was vast and involved individuals with connections with the mobster.

One individual that developed and controlled the narcotics trade in the Tijuana-San Diego-Los Angeles corridor was Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel. Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel settled in Los Angeles in 1934 as the East Coast Mafia attempted to gain control of the nascent illegal narcotics market on the West Coast. By that time, the Combination's power had declined, and eventually both the Combination and Jack Dragna – Joseph Ardizonne's successor – fell under Siegel's and the Cosa Nostra's control.[57]

According to intelligence information gathered by the FBI's Los Angeles Division dated July 12, 1946, Bugsy Siegel purchased a ranch on behalf of Lucky Luciano close to the Mexican border near California. Although the informant did not know the exact location, he declared it was not near Tijuana. The purchase took place in January or February of 1946 for $100,000.00 while Luciano was still in Italy.[58]

In September of that same year, a meeting took place in Mexico City between Lucky Luciano, Bugsy Siegel, and Max Cossman. Lucky Luciano had been deported as part of a deal he struck with the U. S. government. Luciano agreed to serve as an informant and gather information on Mussolini for the United States government. In a similar fashion as he did while in prison in the United States in the late 1930s, Luciano

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[57] John Buntin, *L. A. Noir*, pp. 59-61.

[58] A. Rosen, "Charles "Lucky' Luciano Parole: Reported Interest of Racketeers in Purchase of Hotels Miscellaneous Information Concerning," July 12, 1946. *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, File 62-81518, section 1, pg. 49.

continued to run operations for the *Cosa Nostra*. The objective of the meeting was to establish Tijuana as an important strategic point for purposes of trafficking in opium and exert control over prostitution as well, given the involvement of Cossman.[59] Bugsy Siegel was eventually murdered. Some accounts indicate that the Mafia murdered Bugsy Siegel for squandering the mob's money on the Flamingo Hotel.

The Mexican Connections had its origins in 1944 when Lansky started a drug smuggling operation with the assistance of Harold "Happy" Meltzer. Described by Alfred McCoy as "an obscure but diligent Jewish drug dealer," Harold Meltzer was an active drug supplier throughout the 1930s. In the 1940s, Meltzer failed miserably in his attempt to make Mexico a major supplier of opiates for the American market. This operation involved the moving of drugs to the Dragna organization in California, and it had Meltzer making frequent trips between Mexico City, Cuba, Hong Kong and Japan.

Meltzer teamed up with Salvatore Duhart, consul general of Mexico in Los Angeles to assist him in his operation. Duhart identified suppliers and bribed border guards, as well as supervised the quality of the opium that was being delivered. Once Duhart was substituted with Max Cossman, and Meltzer started to smoke more opium, profits started to decline and the quality of the opium containers was compromised. As a result, Max Cossman killed Enrique Diarte as Diarte decided to break away from the Cossman-Meltzer operation and attempted to establish his own distribution network.[60] Cossman served an 18-month sentence for his participation in the assassination of Diarte.

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[59] Joaquín Aguilar Robles, "Siniestro Conclave de Hampones en México," *Detective Internacional*, September 7, 1946, pg. 4.

[60] Alfred McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade*, pp. 41-44.

Enrique Diarte Escobar was in charge of the distribution of narcotics in Tijuana. According to Alfred McCoy, "El Gitano" was believed to be Cossman's opium provider in Sinaloa. Originally from Chihuahua, Diarte Escobar was described as a charismatic individual from a relatively wealthy and well connected family. Diarte's wife was the cousin of Col. Rafael Loaiza, the former governor of Sinaloa assassinated while in office by Rodolfo "El Gitano" Váldes in 1944. Marcos Márquez raised important interrogations regarding the possible motive for assassinating Diarte, inferring a possible connection between Diarte's familial ties with Loaiza and perhaps drug dealings gone astray with "El Gitano." Diarte arrived to territorial Baja California approximately in the mid 1920s. Shortly after arriving at the territory, he became a "beat cop" for the Mexicali Police Department [61]

Diarte's decomposing body was discovered in late October 1944. The investigation aided by U. S. authorities led to the arrest of two individuals, Francisco Orbe Galeana and Melesio Alvarado Sánchez. After being questioned about the murder, Orbe Galeana and Alvarado Sánchez identified Max Cossman as masterminding the murder of Diarte. Cossman was arrested in a bank in Mexicali as he attempted to exchange $23,000.00 dollars for Mexican currency.[62]

The Cossman-Diarte case had transnational implications. As such, the case was used by Anslinger to highlight the Federal Bureau of Narcotic's "thorough investigational methods."[63] The facts that surround the case were as follows. In late 1944, the

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[61] Marcos Márquez, "El Caso Diarte: Reportaje de uno de los casos más sensacionales que registra la delincuencia en Tijuana," *Detective Internacional*, No. 59, August 10, 1946, pp. 4-5.

[62] "Más sobre el tráfico de drogas," *Detective Internacional*, No. 43, April 13, 1946, pp. 9, 12.

[63] Harry J. Anslinger, *The Traffic in Narcotics*, pg. 148.

decomposed body of Enrique Diarte was found in the outskirts of Tijuana. Diarte was an individual who had ties with organized crime. Diarte was working with Max Cossman or Max Webber (the King of Opium), whom in turn had ties with members of the Cosa Nostra. When Diarte attempted to break away from Cossman and operate on his own, Cossman ordered the assassination of Diarte.

Anslinger associated Cossman with members of the 107th Street Mob of New York. West coast boss Salvatore "Sam" Maugeri. Maugeri was a member of an international organization that smuggled large amounts of morphine and opium from Mexico to be distributed to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, and New York City. This trans coastal investigation led to the arrest of thirty-one mobsters from the 107th Street Mob Gang involved in the drug racket. After the arrests in New York, authorities noticed that the drugs continued to arrive from Mexico via California. At this moment, the authorities decided to shift their attention to the West Coast, where a joint investigation between narcotics and customs agents was launched.

The New Yorkers, Anslinger continued, were also dealing with an individual by the name of William Levin. William Levin, in turn, was securing drugs from a person by the name of Jack W. Morse and his wife Sally Elsie Morse of Santa Monica, California. Enrique Diarte supplied the Morses with the opium they were trafficking. Diarte was also supplying Levin with opium. Enrique Diarte controlled the opium distribution in Tijuana and Mexicali and was supposed to supply the Morses with a large quantity of opium in San Diego. Diarte's accomplices were arrested in San Diego in possession of prepared opium and pure heroin. Diarte escaped to Tijuana.

Without revealing too many details, Anslinger wrote that Diarte's body was found on a Tijuana roadside. Frank Orbe – known in the underworld circle by Step and a Half – and Max Webber were arrested in connection with the slaying of Diarte. Webber was identified as the brains of the Diarte drug racket. In connection with this case, 106 individuals were arrested in Mexico. The territory's Inspector General of Police considered it as one of the biggest arrests made in the history of his country. Anslinger concluded his version of the Cossman-Diarte case by asserting that the traffic of narcotics was mainly in opium grown in the state of Sonora.[64]

Overall, regional sources from this period concur with Anslinger accounts. They do provide more nuances than the ones offered by the "Protector." On May 1945, Tijuana authorities carried out a reconstruction of the killing of Diarte at the scene of the crime. In this reconstruction, both Francisco Orbe Galeana and Melesio Alvarado Sánchez declared that "an American" intervened in the kidnapping and assassination of Diarte. However, neither Orbe Galeana nor Alvarado Sánchez could positively identify Cossman as being the American that arrived at the time of Diarte's killing. Moreover, Orbe Galeana and Alvarado Sánchez consistently contradicted each other's initial testimony.[65]

Perhaps such contradictions were part of a deal that Orbe Galeana hoped to negotiate with U. S. authorities in exchange for information that would lead to solving the crime of Bugsy Siegel, a crime that officially remains unsolved. Based on intelligence information gathered by the U. S. Department of State, Orbe Galeana met with Raymond

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[64] Harry J. Anslinger, *The Traffic in Narcotics*, pp. 148-153.

[65] "Reconstrucción del Asesinato de Diarte: Max Cossman no fue Reconocido por Alvarado," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, May 10, 1945, pp. 1, 4.

F. McCarthy in August of 1947. Orbe Galeana had been sentenced to 30 years in prison. McCarthy, with the DA's office from California, had some questions for Orbe Galena regarding the assassination of Bugsy Siegel in Beverly Hills in June of that same year.

Orbe Galeana declared that he had only met Siegel once in 1944 in a narcotics transaction that took place in a motel in Tijuana. Orbe Galeana worked for Diarte by securing transactions and holding the money of the narcotics sales for him. He did believe that Siegel was ordered killed by the former Los Angeles' District Attorney Fred N. Howser, who became California's Attorney General in 1946, because Howser was afraid that his involvement in the traffic of narcotics would become known.

Fred N. Howser served as Los Angeles District Attorney from 1943-1946 replacing John F. Dockweiler. Howser worked to clean up Los Angeles' image. His tenure as the city's District Attorney was characterized as among the most fiery in the county's and state's political history. His public life was marked by disputes in and out of court with former Governor Earl Warren and newspaper columnist Drew Pearson. As District Attorney he had disputes with then-Mayor Fletcher Bowron over what he said was an extensive gambling and vice infrastructure in Los Angeles. Howser voiced his discontent with gambling activities that flourished at the old Long Beach Pike. Four years later, Howser found himself on the other side of the gambling issue. Governor Warren charged that Howser had refused to investigate what Warren considered an alleged takeover by the old Al Capone gang of bookmaking and racketeering in the state.

Howser was also prosecutor in the controversial "Sleepy Lagoon" murder case in which 12 youths were charged with the 1942 killing of Jose Diaz during a fight at an outing in the Montebello area. An appellate court overturned their convictions and the

racially charged case served as the basis years later for the play "Zoot Suit." Howser also served as State Attorney General from 1946-1950. After retiring from public office, Howser was in private law practice for 37 years until his death in 1987.[66]

Orbe Galeana wrote to Siegel from prison in 1946 hoping to recover $65,000.00 that Siegel owned him. If Siegel refused to pay him, Orbe Galeana stated that he was prepared to go public with Siegel's role in drug trafficking to the press. Siegel sent Orbe Galeana a message warning him to stay quiet and that many public officials were on his payroll.[67]

In December of 1946, Anslinger visited Orbe Galeana in the Tijuana prison to also talk about Bugsy Siegel. Orbe Galeana affirmed to Anslinger that Siegel was not the leader in the traffic of narcotics on the West Coast. He volunteered his services to Anslinger and suggested placing a phone call to the real leaders of the drug racket and set up a meeting in Tijuana. In exchange, Orbe Galeana asked Anslinger to negotiate his release from the Tijuana prison on bail.[68] In 1949, Mexico's Supreme Court Justice denied Francisco Orbe Galeana a parole.[69]

Based on the available sources, it remains unclear what happened to Francisco Orbe Galeana and Melesio Alvarado Sánchez. As for Max Cossman, the historical record provides us with sufficient material to reconstruct his criminal activities. Cossman had a long criminal record that stretched back to 1933. In that year, Max Cossman, who

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[66] "Fred N. Howser, Fiery, Controversial Ex-Prosecutor, Dies," *Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 1987, Section A pg. 22; also, "Howser Libel Suit," *The Stanford Daily*, January 18, 1950, Section A pg. 1; see also, "Howser Says He Had Met Bugsy Siegel: At Racetrack," *The Washington Post*, February 28, 1950, pg.4.

[67] Luis Astorga, *Drogas sin fronteras: Los expedientes de una guerra permanente*, pp. 50-53.

[68] Luis Astorga, *Drogas sin fronteras: Los expedientes de una guerra permanente*, pp. 50-53.

[69] "Enervantes, Responsabilidad en el Delito de Tráfico de," *Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación*, *Primera Sala*. *Quinta Época*. *Semanario Judicial de la Federación*. *Tomo CI, pg. 2545.*

also went by the aliases of Max Webber and Phillipi Martini, was sentenced to a two-year term for trafficking with heroin. In 1935, after his release from prison, Cossman was sent back to prison for apparently violating the terms of his parole and for trafficking with heroin. He was released on probation, and in 1938 he was imprisoned once again for violating the terms of his parole.[70]

Even after his arrest and conviction of the killing of Enrique Diarte, Cossman continued to control the drug trade in Baja California.[71] Cossman was imprisoned in 1949 for his involvement in the Diarte killing and drug trafficking racket in Tijuana. He escaped and was recaptured in 1950. Cossman escaped from prison again in 1951 and recaptured in 1952. In Federal Court in the United States in 1951, Cossman was named in an indictment listing him along with twenty-one individuals involved in an international drug smuggling ring that trafficked in raw opium into the United States from Mexico. On August 15, 1960, Max Cossman died in a prison cell in Mexico City of a liver ailment while serving a twenty-four year sentence.[72]

The *Cosa Nostra*, the CIA and the Cold War

In Mexico, the American Mafia or *Cosa Nostra* began to control the illicit trade with the complicit participation of the Mexican government as part of the Mexican Connection. Through Virginia Hill, the East Coast based mafia managed to infiltrate the Office of Gobernación during the presidency of Miguel Alemán (1946-1952). Carlos I.

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[70] "Estrecha Vigilancia Sobre Max S. Cossman: Encuentrase Estrictamente Incomunicado, Y Le Negaron Hasta Ver A Su Defensor," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, February 24, 1948, pp. 1, 4.

[71] "Max Cossman Todavia Trafica con las Drogas: Desde La Penitenciaria De México Dirige A Sus Secuaces en Este Estado," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, November 22, 1958, pg. 1.

[72] United Press International, "U. S. Felon Dies Abroad: Cossman, Narcotics Dealer, Was in Mexican Prison," *New York Times*, August 21, 1960, pg. 8.

Serrano and Luis Amezcua, Alemán's close collaborators, were engaged in the traffic of heroin and opium. In the process, they used Government resources to transport drug to the United States, even using the President's official aircraft.

Carlos I. Serrano was Miguel Alemán's closest friend and collaborator. Serrano's friendship with Alemán went back to their days in Veracruz. In Alemán's gubernatorial campaign, Serrano served as his chief of security. During Alemán's Presidential term (1942-1946) Serrano served as Congressman for the Federal District and the leader of the Senate. By 1946, Serrano is promoted to coronel in the Mexican army, and in 1947, he creates the *Dirección Federal de Seguridad* DFS (Federal Security Directorate).[73] In Chapter three, I will discuss more information about Miguel Alemán alleged control of a continental drug empire.

The Mexican connection gave way to the French Connection. According to evidence given at a Congressional Hearing, at the onset of the Cold War there was a connection between the development of proto drug trafficking organizations and the alleged, complicit role of the CIA in an ever-increasing anti-communist framework.

According to testament given at a Hearing on Congress, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), the CIA's parent and sister organizations, cultivated relations with the leaders of the Italian Mafia, recruiting heavily from the New York and Chicago underworlds. The underworld characters that were recruited by the CIA included Charles `Lucky' Luciano, Meyer Lansky, Joe Adonis, and Frank Costello. These individuals

[73] Juan Alberto Cedillo, *La cosa nostra en México,* pp. 45, 90, 102.

helped the above-mentioned agencies maintain contact with Sicilian Mafia leaders exiled by Benito Mussolini.

Domestically, the goal was to prevent sabotage on East Coast ports, while in Italy the goal was to gain intelligence on Sicily prior to the allied invasions and to crush the expanding Italian Communist Party. Luciano earned a pardon for his wartime service and was deported to Italy, where he proceeded to build his heroin empire, first by diverting supplies from the legal market, before developing connections in Lebanon and Turkey that supplied morphine base to laboratories in Sicily.

The OSS and ONI also worked closely with Chinese mobsters who controlled vast supplies of opium, morphine and heroin, helping to establish the third pillar of the post-world War II heroin trade in the Golden Triangle, the border region of Thailand, Burma, Laos and China's Yunnan Province.

In its first year of existence, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) continued with U.S. intelligence community's anti-communist rhetoric and efforts. Agency operatives helped the Mafia seize total power in Sicily and it sent money to heroin-smuggling Corsican mobsters in Marseille to assist in their battle with Communist unions for control of the city's docks.

By 1951, Luciano and the Corsicans have pooled their resources, giving rise to the notorious “French Connection.” The “French Connection” would dominate the world heroin trade until the early 1970s. The CIA also recruited members of organized crime gangs in Japan to help ensure that the country stayed in the non-communist track.

Several years later, the Japanese Yakuza emerges as a major source of methamphetamine in Hawaii.[74]

This period also saw the intensification of secret police surveillance and espionage activities. The argument that intelligence services were evolving as times changed can be advanced, especially if we take into consideration the developments that transpired in the late 1930s during the end of the Cárdenas presidency. As the state began to resemble a dystopian society through the actions of an ever-increasing police state, any type of activity deemed subversive begins to be closely scrutinized. This era ushered a period on counter intelligence and saw the emergence of state sponsored violence for the preservation of the status quo.

Joaquín Aguilar Robles, *Detective Internacional*

At the onset of the Cold War, the Tijuana-San Diego corridor began to experience a continuation of the drug trade that was initiated at the turn of the century by Esteban Cantú. The literature begins to expose a more sophisticated network of drug traffickers with mob connections. These connections were based on what is known as the American Mafia or the Cosa Nostra on the East Coast. As the National Prohibition Act is repealed by the passage of the 21st amendment, organized crime began to procure a new racket, and that was the traffic in narcotics.

The Prohibition era made possible the development of a network and infrastructure that proved fundamental in the transnational illicit trade of opiates. As the Cosa Nostra continued to exercise its control over gambling, procurement of the heroin

[74] "A Tangled Web: A History of CIA Complicity in Drug International Trafficking," *Congressional Record*, *Proceedings and Debates of the 105th Congress, Second Session*, Vol. 144, No. 56, May 7, 1998, pg. H2955-H2956.

trade proved to be important, especially during the period from 1939 to 1945 as the international opium market in Europe was closed due to World War II. Opium based products were used for medicinal purposes, but U. S. authorities continued with further restriction on opium production and consumption. Thus space was created for organized crime to take this opportunity and control a new source of opium production that substituted the European source. Mexico emerged as the ideal: close opium production site for a market experiencing an increase in the number of opium and heroin addicts

In the Tijuana-San Diego corridor, an individual emerged, becoming the chronicler of this historical juncture in the transnational efforts to combat drug traffickers: Joaquín Aguilar Robles. Joaquín Aguilar Robles has the distinction of being the first individual to write about crime and drug trafficking along the Tijuana-San Diego corridor and perhaps in all of Mexico. Born in Hermosillo, Sonora in 1897, Aguilar became a judicial technician at Washington D. C.'s Police Academy. In 1928, Aguilar moved to San Diego California to work as Mexico's Chief of Game and Fishing.

Aguilar's law enforcement career began in 1930. Upon his arrival to Tijuana, he distinguished himself by becoming actively involved in important civic organizations. He was also an accomplished writer, as his collaborations to local newspapers and the publications of three books can attested. That same year, he joined the Agua Caliente Tourism Complex's Department of Safety and Security.

In 1931, Aguilar was named the first Chief of Police. In 1933, Mexico's ministry of foreign affairs placed him in charge of the territory's juvenile court.

Interested in combining his passion for journalism and law enforcement, Aguilar published in February of 1934 the monthly journal titled "*Detective Internacional*."

Detective Internacional was published from 1934 to 1960, initially on a monthly basis and subsequently on a weekly basis. This publication had the distinction of being the first magazine that specialized in topics relevant to law enforcement, with particular emphasis placed on articles and stories that dealt with drug trafficking in the national as well as regional arena. Aguilar also began to provide private investigation services to Tijuana's population.

Aguilar also served as an informant for Mexico's ministry of the interior during World War II as the United States planned to send troops to prevent a possible Japanese invasion off of Baja California's coast. He also served as the first Inspector General of the Northern Territory of Baja California in 1944, as well as Tijuana's Chief of Police in two separate occasions, the first in 1945, and the second in 1954 after Baja California became a state.[75]

Joaquín Aguilar was the Director of *Detective Internacional*, which was published from 1934-1960. *Detective Internacional* dealt with the topic of drug trafficking in a transnational fashion, placing it in its proper global and regional context. In 1946, *Detective Internacional* published a series of articles chronicling the arrest of Max Cossman, the leader of the opium trade in Tijuana after Cossman allegedly killed Enrique Diarte. The assassination of Enrique Diarte is first reported in January of 1945 as part of a drastic campaign by then Governor of territorial Baja California, Gen. Juan Felipe Rico Islas to combat drug trafficking in territorial Baja California in conjunction with

[75] José Gabriel Rivera Delgado, "Joaquín Aguilar Robles: Policía y Detective con Alma de Escritor y Periodista." *El Sol de Tijuana, sigue tu camino hacia la historia* supplement, December 8, 2014, pg. 1.

territorial law enforcement agencies.[76] Known as the "king of opium," Cossman had ties with Mickey Cohen.

As early as 1934, Aguilar wrote about the challenges that the illicit trade of narcotics presented for the transborder region, as he warned in one of his articles the perils of drug trade as being more dangerous than trafficking with weapons.[77] In December of that same year, Aguilar wrote about the importance of being diligent in policing borders and developing a transnational cooperation to combat crime. He mentioned how international borders are ideal places where crime can develop, as well as the traffic of narcotics, weapons, hiding grounds for escaped convicts, and even the gestation of subversive activities.[78]

In an article published in 1946, Aguilar discussed the challenges presented by an increasingly corrupt cadre of public officials and how there were great expectations in the region for Avila Camacho's crusade against drug trafficking. Aguilar also pointed out the efforts on a regional level led by him and Lt. Col. José Escudero Andrade to combat drug trafficking in territorial Baja California. The hope was, to have support from the federal government as they continued with their attempts to eradicate the illicit trade. Aguilar further opined that the illicit trade of opium and heroin in the region was still under control of what he referred to as "*repugnantes asiáticos,*" or repugnant Asian people that, ideally, should be removed from Mexico, but since they have become

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[76] Rafael Quijano, "Energica Campaña Contra los Traficantes de Drogas: Encomiable Actuación del Inspector General de Policía del Territorio, Coronel José Escudero Andrade," *Detective Internacional*, No. 38, January 1945, pp. 7-15.

[77] Joaquín Aguilar Robles, "Las Drogas Pueden Más que las Armas: Sensacionales Revelaciones en Estados Unidos," *Detective Internacional*, Vol. 1, No. 3, July 1934, pg. 12.

[78] Joaquín Aguilar Robles, "La Delincuencia en la Frontera," *Detective Internacional*, Vol.1, No. 7, December 1934, pg. 10.

Mexican citizens, their final destination instead should be the federal prison in Islas Marias.[79]

There had been efforts underway at the national level to combat drug trafficking during this time, but not a concerted effort that incorporated the ongoing regional attempts from the part of territorial Baja California authorities. In the case of territorial Baja California, beginning in the mid 1940's, efforts to eradicate narcotraffickers are carried out regionally, and in a bilateral fashion in conjunction with the state of California. The hope here was to coordinate campaigns at the national as well as regional levels as we will see later.

Aguilar was also concerned about the increase of opium and morphine consumption in the United States, and the role drug producing countries in Europe and Asia played in the international trade, as well as efforts from the part of the United States to combat and eradicate drug use through the implementation of a prohibitionist model.[80] Aguilar also cautioned about the dangers that collusion and graft represented in the illicit traffic of narcotics. Given the very nature of illegality and how the trade was set up within the confines of an informal economy, the amount of money it generates has the potential of corrupting public officials and the possibility of employing hired assassins to carry out executions of individuals that do not want to be part of the trade.[81]

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[79] Joaquín Aguilar Robles, "El Tráfico de Drogas en la Baja California," *Detective Internacional*, March 1946, pp. 10-12, 19.

[80] Ibid, pp. 11, 31.

[81] Joaquín Aguilar Robles, "El Tráfico de Drogas en la Baja California," *Detective Internacional*, No. 41, March 1946, pp. 10-12, 19.

La Gran Campaña and Regional Efforts in Drug Eradication

The Tijuana-San Diego region had witnessed efforts to combat drug trafficking in the region that date back to the 1940s. Territorial Baja California and Tijuana had established cooperation on a regional level with their counterparts in the state of California to eradicate drug trafficking. These regional campaigns from the part of the territorial authorities resulted in the arrest and conviction of individuals involved in the illicit trade of narcotics, mainly opium. The most notorious example of this cooperation was the investigation that led to the arrest of Max Cossman in 1945, an arrest with transnational implications.

Mexico's first national drug eradication campaign, *La Gran Campaña*, was announced in late 1947. On November 11, 1947, Tijuana's newspaper *El Pueblo* published an article that announced the creation of a joint task force that would combat the proto drug trafficking organizations in Mexico's Northern Region. Mexico's Public Health Agency in conjunction with the Mexican Military would conduct activities in the States of Sinaloa, Sonora and territorial Baja California. Further, members of the Federal Judicial Police would gather in territorial Baja California to target activities by drug traffickers in Tijuana and Mexicali.[82]

La Gran Campaña involved the military as a permanently assigned eradication force, since such a task seemed beyond the capabilities of both local law enforcement agencies and the federal police. According to Maria Celia Toro, annual reports from Mexico's Justice Department from the period of 1945 to 1946 do not mention drug law

[82] "Implacable Batida a Los Traficantes de Drogas." *El Pueblo: Diario Informativo de la Mañana*. Vol. II, November 11, 1947, pg. 2.

enforcement activities such as eradication programs and the apprehension of traffickers and drug pushers as significant.[83]

In November 1947, Alfredo Briseño, Assistant District Attorney of territorial Baja California, announced a regional campaign. The campaign had three components and it targeted delinquency in general terms. The first consisted of a prevention campaign disseminated through the regional media. The second component involved an educational campaign aimed at members of the local law enforcement agents to make sure human rights violations would not occur. Finally, the third component called for a comprehensive campaign against prostitution, drug traffickers, vagrancy, and corruption of public officials.[84]

This regional campaign categorized drug trafficking in the same type of illicit activity as prostitution and graft, making the connection between the illicit trade and a complicit regional bureaucratic apparatus. It is, however, a very broad and comprehensive campaign that perhaps was an indication of the authorities' naiveté of a much more serious international drug trafficking operation. It could also be considered an indication of their incompetence in dealing with a very serious problem of drug trafficking. Finally, this could be considered a terse and tacit effort from the part of regional public officials to marginally deal with a problem that privately was being beneficial to some corrupt politicians and public officials.

The success of both *La Gran Campaña* and the regional efforts to eradicate drug production and distribution was difficult to ascertain. Defense Department annual reports

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[83] Maria Celia Toro, *Mexico's "War" on Drugs: Causes and Consequences*, pg. 12.

[84] "Guerra Declarada a los Delincuentes: Será Atacado el Vicio en General," *ABC, El Diario de Baja California*, November 23, 1947, pg. 1.

for those years show that growers seemed to have better intelligence networks than the military. As soon as Mexican soldiers discovered some of the poppy or marihuana fields, these had been already burned and the owners or producers had already fled. Ultimately, *La Gran Campaña* did not reduce production of narcotics. Instead, it probably helped increase production as growers suborned or killed enforcers or simply relocated their activities to neighboring states that were not under the purview of the Great Campaign.[85]

Francisco González de la Vega offered an initial assessment of the success of *La Campaña* in February 1948. After the United Nations commended the Mexican efforts to combat the production, distribution, and consumption of narcotics in Mexico, González de la Vega reiterated Mexico's commitment to eradicate drug trafficking. He declared that due to the success of the campaign, drug consumption in Mexico "was comparatively small but smuggling to America was large."

Therefore, de la Vega continued, the production of narcotics in Mexico continued and was fomented by international bands of smugglers committed to providing drugs to a consumer market [the United States] in need of satisfying vices out of the control of Mexican authorities. González de la Vega brought up the need to sustain the combined efforts between Mexican and United States authorities to prevent drug production in Mexico, this way preventing the transportation of drugs into the United States.[86]

Further, the United Nations' Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) concluded that the production and traffic of narcotics along the Mexico-U. S. Border was fomented by criminal organizations based in the United States. Officials from the UN's CND

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[85] María Celia Toro, *Mexico's "War" on Drugs: Causes and Consequences*, pg. 13.

[86] "Será Más Energica La Campaña A Las Drogas: México Cumple Fielmente Sus Obligaciones," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, February 11, 1948, pp. 1, 4.

therefore absolved Mexican authorities from any responsibility in the traffic of narcotics and commended them for demonstrating a firm commitment in their eradication campaigns. The UN's report also mentioned that Mexico had launched an eradication campaign since spring of 1947 that involved the support of air and ground forces to identify and destroy poppy fields. The report concluded by stating that powerful criminal organizations with bountiful monetary resources would corrupt both Mexican public officials and farmers to continue with the production and distribution of narcotics for sale in Hollywood and New York, the principal consumer markets in the United State.[87]

The United States had a different opinion in this matter. In March 1948, Harry Anslinger questioned the supposed early success of *La Gran Campaña* in a Senate hearing. Anslinger testified that the production of opium had been increasing every year. He further stated that the contraband of narcotics from Mexico constitutes the United States' most grave problem, and if Mexico would destroy the poppy fields the problem would decrease sensibly. Anslinger also pointed out that the eradication campaign started in late 1947 by Mexico's Attorney General had yielded poor results, as well as to acknowledging the continued involvement of certain members of the U. S. mob being in charge of financing the cultivation and distribution of opium. Anslinger declared that according to very reliable sources, they had knowledge of the existence of at least twelve clandestine laboratories.

Anslinger continued to express his concern over the production and distribution of narcotics that eventually reached the United States market, as well as expressing his wishes that Mexican authorities intensified their eradication activities without delay.

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[87] "México Ha Quedado Absuelto Sobre las Drogas: El Tráfico es de Hampones de E. Unidos," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, February 24, 1948, pp. 1, 6.

Anslinger categorically denied that the United States shared in the responsibility of addressing the consumption side of the commodity chain, given the fact that Mexican nationals finance the illicit trade of narcotics and Mexicans foment this type of activity. Therefore, Anslinger concluded, the United States Government does not share the responsibility to the same degree as their Mexican counterparts.[88]

The response from Mexican authorities came immediately. Two days after Anslinger's statement to the U. S. Senate, on March 12 Mexico's Attorney General, Francisco González de la Vega, categorically denied Anslinger's assertions, describing them as absurd. González de la Vega stated that Anslinger only mentioned the campaign that Mexican authorities launched in late 1947. He also denied assertions made in the sense that certain public officials and members of local law enforcement agencies in the states where *La Gran Campaña* took place had been compromised and corrupted. González de la Vega continued by emphasizing the intensity and success of the campaign that resulted in the apprehension of well over 1,000 individuals involved in the traffic of narcotics. González de la Vega concluded his statement to the press refuting Anslinger's declaration by pointing out that the United States could help by impeding the purchase of illegal narcotics made by "bands" of drug traffickers abroad that introduced them to the United States to satisfy addictions that were not created by Mexican producers.[89]

Here, González de la Vega brought up a very important point; the consumption aspect of the commodity chain. In his statement denying Anslinger's asseverations,

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[88] "Censura E. U. a México por el Tráfico de Drogas: El Cultivo de Amapola es Protegido," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, March 11, 1948, pg. 2.

[89] "Respuesta al Procurador a la Queja de Aslinger [*sic*]: Califica de Absurdas sus Apreciaciones," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, March 13, 1948, pp. 2, 4.

González de la Vega implicitly suggested that the reason there was an illegal production market of narcotics in Mexico was in order to satisfy a demand from the part of organized crime in the United States. These bands of organized crime were supplying the narcotics to a consumer market that could get enough of the product to satisfy their addictions. This back and forth between U. S. and Mexican authorities on their version of what is more important to attack, the source or the final destination, that is, production sites or acknowledge the existence of a consumption market will continue to play out in this protracted War on Drugs.

Despite this mistrust from the part of U. S. authorities or a lack of communication between Mexican and U. S. authorities, efforts to combat drug trafficking continued to take place. In early 1959, representatives from both countries met in Washington D. C. to discuss ways in which both countries could collaborate bilaterally in combating the traffic of narcotics through in the Border States. This meeting had representatives from California's Attorney General Office, as well as the Consul General of the United States in Tijuana, and James Roosevelt and John Holt, members of the Senate and the House of Representatives from the State of California.[90]

Extreme solutions to the transborder problem of drug trafficking were proposed at the time and they consisted in closing down and militarizing the International Border. In 1959, a Federal Judge in San Diego expressed his disappointment in the fact that the State Department did not heed his calls of closing the border with Mexico. San Diego's Superior Court Judge John A. Hewicker declared that he had been demanding the closing of the border with Mexico for at least five years.

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[90] "Importantes Pláticas Entre México y E. U. : Se Trata del Tráfico de Narcoticos a Tráves de la Línea Internacional," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, January 5, 1960, pg. 1.

He had sent several letters to the State Department voicing his very strong sentiments and providing a solution to the problem of drug addiction and trafficking that prevailed in San Diego in the late 1950s.[91] In Judge Hewicker's view, the problem of drug addiction that afflicted the youth of San Diego was caused by the free flow of drugs from Tijuana and the only viable solution was to close the international checkpoint to protect San Diego's youth. The solution expressed by Judge Hewicker was consistent with the interdiction mentality and approach favored by U. S. Foreign Drug Policy makers of the time. It constituted a signal to more drastic solutions.

In was not too long before support for the militarization of the border was expressed. In an editorial published in early 1960, cooperation against drug trafficking was considered a key element in understanding the complexities of the issue. This editorial discussed the opinion expressed by Federal Judge Thurmond Clarke. In a verdict convicting an individual guilty of introducing one hundred pounds of marihuana into San Diego, Judge Clarke called for shutting down the U. S. – Mexico Border from Tijuana to Ciudad Juárez to force Mexican authorities to cooperate. As part of his verdict, Judge Clarke also articulated the possibility to militarize the border by setting up a military camp every one hundred miles to make sure Mexico would "behave" accordingly, and to also protect America's youth.

The editorial invited Judge Clarke, as well as American society to ponder the possibility of "cleaning house," that is to address the circumstances that have created addictions, which in turn have fomented a demand for narcotics, thus addressing the consumption aspect of the issue. By eliminating the demand, the article continued,

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[91] "No Encuentran Eco los que Piden a Gritos el Cierre de Esta Frontera," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, January 18, 1959, pg. 4.

American society would greatly help Mexico to eliminate the production and trafficking of drugs.[92] This editorial encapsulated a balance in attacking the problem of drug production: a plan that not only attempted to eradicate drug production at the source, but also one that included a strategy that would address addictions and demand in the consumer country.

By decade's end, references to cocaine trafficking began to appear in the corpus of literature as predilection for the narcotic began to gain prominence amongst consumers in the United States. Andean nations became the principal suppliers. Various routes were used to introduce cocaine to the U. S. market, and eventually in the early 1970s, Mexico began to figure prominently as a transit nation. Mexico's role as a transit point began by the 1940s, thanks in large part to early historical developments that were the result of border traffic with the United States that emerged during the Prohibition era, first in liquor and then narcotics, coupled with a well-documented predilection for graft amongst public officials and law enforcement agents.

In the 1950s, small bands of individuals began to smuggle cocaine by the ounce from Peru to the United States via Mexico. By the mid-1960s, the cocaine being smuggled out of Peru reached hundreds of kilos. Mexico, Panama, Ecuador and Colombia were identified by the FBN as minor transit points in early cocaine trafficking. By 1952, long-range smugglers, such as the Chilean Huasaff-Harbs, without any impediments from Cuban smugglers, quietly exploited Mexico as their safe house en

[92] "La Cooperación Contra el Tráfico de Drogas Debe Ser a Base de Compresión," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, January 9, 1960, pg. A4.

route to the United States.[93] The role that Mexico played as a transit nation gained prominence during the 1980s.

Chapter Summary

This period saw the first President implicated with drug traffriciking activities in the history of Mexico in Miguel Alemán. Through his close collaborator and friend, Carlos I. Serrano, the Cosa Nostra infiltrated the highest spheres of Mexican government. The likes of Bugsy Siegel and Virginia Hill had at their disposal resources and direct access to the traffic of heroine with complete impunity. The case of Miguel Aleman and Carlos I. Serrano will be addressed once again in the following chapter.

This historical juncture also saw Baja California go from a territory to a state, finally reaching statehood in 1953. The region witnessed World War II in an interesting fashion. A U. S. media that saw the territory as a potential threat to U. S. security, since the belief was that a Japanese invasion would occur through Baja once again fueled concerns over a possible annexation of Baja California. As a result, Mexico intensified its colonization campaign to populate the region, and also sent former President Lázaro Cárdenas to coordinate war efforts with U. S. authorities. The region also witnessed another episode of xenophobia, when people of Japanese descent were removed from territorial Baja California and sent to central Mexico. Immigrants of Italian and German descent were also removed from the territory.

Baja California's population grew rapidly beginning World War II. With the implementation of the Bracero Program (1942-1964), many individuals from different parts of Mexico arrived in Tijuana hoping to secure a labor contract in the agricultural

[93] Paul Gootenberg, *Andean Cocaine: The Making of a Global Drug*, pp. 245-274.

fields of California. Some individuals were successful in their attempts to secure employment in San Diego, Calexico, or Orange County. The less fortunate ones either remained in Tijuana until they were able to secure a contract, or settled permanently in the town after their contracts concluded and were sent back. Unscrupulous politicians took advantage of this situation and made false promises to the aspiring Braceros and in the process, increased their following base. Tijuana was not equipped to accommodate this large influx of individuals, and growth proceeded with very little to no planning.

The population growth experienced by Tijuana in this period also necessitated an urbanization effort that was marked by controversy in the attempt of evicting the residents that had taken possession of the property that is now the "Zona del Río." This controversy was also used for political purposes in the gubernatorial elections of 1959, elections that were marked by controversy.

During the period from 1945 to 1960 Mexico's secret police service rose to serve the needs of the country's President. With a lack of organization and also lacking from strong leadership, the DFS soon became an easy target for infiltration by traffickers in narcotics. Up until its dissolution in 1985, the DFS was complicit in the operations of notorious drug traffickers, namely Rafael Caro Quintero.

The DFS main role was to provide political protection to the Official Party by repressing discontented workers or by disbanding dissident movement that emerged during this period. On the domestic front, Mexico was not interested in allowing the rise of any possible dissident movement advance the possibility of a establishing a true revolutionary leftist government. On the international front, seemed determined to promote an image of a safe haven for foreign dissenters by offering asylum to those

individuals escaping political repression from their countries, such as Spanish Republicans escaping from Franco's oppressive regime or Trotsky fleeing from Stalin's persecution. This is where it was evident that the Official Party, internally, was no longer committed to the Revolutionary ideals that sparked the 1910 struggle.

At the onset of the Cold War, the Tijuana-San Diego corridor became once more an important strategic venue for the transit of narcotics into the United States consumer market. As the European market for opium is not available due to World War II, the Cosa Nostra casts their net in an effort to control the opium trade. To accomplish this, they had intentions to convert Mexico into an opium-producing nation. The mob begins to control and operate the narcotics trade on the West coast as a natural extension of the truncated bootlegging racket.

The anti-communist sentiment being espoused by the United States was also reflected in terms of U. S. foreign drug policy. This period saw the utilization of clandestine operations in drug smuggling spearheaded by the CIA to prevent communism from establishing a foothold in third world countries. This meant a complicit participation in the drug trade by the United States since at the time individuals that were in alliance with the United States to preventing the spread of communism were also drug traffickers. This international development had direct repercussions in the Tijuana-San Diego corridor, as members of the American mafia used the region to introduce the narcotics, placing the region at the epicenter of the development of Proto-Drug Trafficking Organizations.

This period was also characterized by the early stages of what subsequently became a drug trafficking operation that incorporated strategies of a well-planned

multinational entity. In the period from 1945-1960, the literature revealed drug trafficking operations best described as "ant-like," involving bands of individuals trafficking narcotics in small amounts. There was one noted exception to this description, and that is the Cossman-Diarte case discussed above. This case involved a transborder network of drug traffickers that stretched from New York, Los Angeles, Tijuana, Sinaloa, and Mexico City, as well as the likes of Bugsy Siegel, Harold Meltzer, Mickey Cohen, Max Cossman, Carlos I. Serrano, Enrique Diarte, and important political leaders in both Los Angeles and Mexico City.

Further, the region saw in Joaquin Aguilar Robles a chronicler of the region. A former police officer, Aguilar Robles was the first journalist who wrote about the transborder implications of the traffic in narcotics. He published *El Detective Internacional* from 1934-1960, a publication that dealt with the topic of drug trafficking in a transnational fashion, placing it in its proper global and regional context. Aguilar Robles also served the Mexican Government as an informant during World War II, a function that gave him the opportunity to develop a close friendship with Lázaro Cárdenas.

The late 1940's early 1950s was a period characterized by the implementation of several campaigns to eradicate drug production launched by the Mexican government. Most notably, *La Gran Campaña*. At the regional level, authorities from territorial Baja California also implemented a campaign to combat drug traffickers. Regional efforts to combat drug trafficking had been underway since the early 1940s. Shortly after the announcement of *La Gran Campaña*, a regional campaign was pronounced.

The regional campaign had three components as it targeted delinquency in general terms. This regional campaign categorized drug trafficking in the same type of illicit activity as prostitution and graft, making the connection between the illicit trade and a complicit regional bureaucratic apparatus. It was, however, a very broad and comprehensive campaign that perhaps was an indication of the authorities' naïve understanding of a serious international drug trafficking operation. It could also be considered an indication of their incompetence in dealing with a very serious problem of drug trafficking, as well as a terse and tacit effort from the part of regional public officials to marginally deal with a problem that privately was being beneficial to some corrupt politicians and public officials.

The success of both *La Gran Campaña* and the regional efforts to eradicate drug production and distribution were difficult to ascertain. Eventually, *La Gran Campaña* did not reduce production of narcotics. Instead, it helped increase production as growers bribed or killed enforcers or simply relocated their activities to neighboring states that were not under the purview of the Great Campaign. *La Gran Campaña* represented the first of many campaigns launched to combat drug trafficking in Mexico.

It also shed light to the perennial distrust from the part of U. S. Drug authorities, since they considered Mexican efforts to eradicate drug production unsuccessful due to corrupt public officials protecting drug producers and traffickers. Also, it illustrated the emphasis from the part of U. S Drug authorities to attack the source and not address the consumption aspect of the commodity chain, a claim that Mexico has made on numerous occasions. Chapter four will address other campaigns that were implemented in the 1970s.

By the end of the 1950s, cocaine trafficking increased as predilection for the narcotic began to gain prominence amongst consumers in the United States. Andean nations become the principal suppliers. Various routes were used to introduce cocaine to the U. S. market, and eventually in the early 1970s, Mexico began to figure prominently as a transit nation.

Here, once again, the Tijuana-San Diego corridor proved to be an important strategic launching point as cocaine transversed the Western Hemisphere. As with the case of the trafficking of opium and heroin in the early part of the twentieth century, an intricate network of distributors and corrupt officials facilitated the process. As the Cold War progressed, so did the rhetoric against the War on Drugs as evidenced in my analysis in Chapter 3 of the emergence of the Tijuana Transborder War on Drugs from 1960-1970.

Chapter 3: The Emergence of the Tijuana Transborder War on Drugs, 1960-1970.

Introduction

On November 26, 1961, Carlos Estrada Sastré a journalist for *Noticias*, published his weekly political column. His contribution to the newspaper had gained him a reputation in the state as a journalist critical of the administration of Eligio Esquivel Méndez, governor of Baja California (1959-1964). For his next contribution to *Noticias*, Estrada Sastré wrote that he would divulge the links between drug trafficking and government in the region. Unbeknownst to him, it would be his last column as we will soon see.

In the early morning hours of November 27, 1961, Estrada Sastré was found dead in the room of his hotel in Tijuana. The blows of a pipe had crushed his skull. The journalist community was incensed about the tragic events. Estrada Sastré's cousin Gustavo Cárdenas y Estrada, wrote a letter to Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, Minister of the Interior during the López Mateos administration demanding that justice would be served in the assassination of Estrada Sastré.[1] There was also indignation expressed by Mexican and foreign journalists demanding a full investigation into the assassination of Estrada Sastré.

As the pressure mounted to clarify the crime, an investigation was launched, resulting in the apprehension of three members of Mexico's secret police (DFS). Due to insufficient evidence, these three individuals were released from custody. Speculation on the motive for Estrada Sastré's assassination ranged from political reasons, to his staunch

[1] *AGN-IPS*, Box 1465 A, file 14, Miscelaneous: October 7 1966 to May 11, 19, 1961, pg. 51.

criticism of the Governor of Baja California, to his uncovering of an uprising that had the objective the overthrow of President López Mateos. Another version advanced by Jesús Blancornelas, speculated that Estrada Sastré was killed because of his knowledge of the drug trafficking-government links on a local and national level. Recently declassified material from the files of Mexico's secret police lends credence to the theory advanced by Blancornelas. What did Estrada Sastré knew about the alleged narcogovernment? Who was implicated? These are questions that will be addressed in chapter three.

This Chapter analyzes both external and internal forces that will help us to understand the development of the Tijuana Transborder War on Drugs. The period from 1960-1970 witnessed the intensification of the Cold War, as well as Revolutionary movements both at the local and international level. Externally, this period proved to be pivotal in the course of history. Social upheavals in a global scale harbored the hope of a transformative social change, whether it was to be accomplished through peaceful or violent means. It is precisely at this historical juncture that the emergence of the Tijuana War on Drugs is placed.

Internally, this period was a period of a Balanced Revolution. In Mexico, there were manifestations of discontent from a sector of society dissatisfied with broken promises of a revolution that was believed to have "died" in 1940. The official rhetoric of the PRI continued to use the Revolutionary discourse as a platform for electoral purposes and to legitimize their power. This Chapter starts with an examination of the historical context of the period from a global, national, and regional level. The analysis is followed by a discussion of drug diplomacy between the United States and Mexico, and how this affected the Tijuana-San Diego corridor.

Global Context

At the World War II, a new world order was established. It consisted of the first world countries, industrialized nations commanded by the United States. The second world was the Communist bloc of industrialized states headed by the Soviet Union. Finally, smacked at the center of the dispute between first and second world nations, there were the third world countries. These were countries with a colonial past still attempting to eradicate a legacy that accounted for their underdevelopment. Any given African, Southeast Asian, or Latin American country could, in the view of the United States, fall under the control of the Soviet block like toppling dominoes that would start a chain reaction.

Entering the 1960s, the world experienced a heightened period of Revolutionary and Independence activity. Between January-December 1960, 17 sub-Saharan African nations, including 14 former French colonies, gained independence from their former European colonists. In 1959, the Cuban Revolution ushered a new era in Cold War diplomacy by increasing the concern from the part of the United States of a Red world in which one nation under Soviet influence would cause the rest of the nations to topple and succumb to Communism.

In the United States, there was also the threat of Communism as manifested by the Weather Underground Movement. This movement was led by a group of upper middle class white college student. Their objective was the violent overthrow of the Unite States Government in order to replace the Capitalist system with a more humane regime.

Further, there was also a generational shift changing the course of activism amongst students in the United States. The same activism that resulted from the participation of people of color in World War II and made them realize they were first class citizens, evolved into a more militant movement. This was student activism from a new generation that employed a more direct, confrontational approach, giving origin to movements inspired by third world revolutions.

There was an anti-war movement that galvanized an entire cadre of protesters to contest the involvement of the United States in Vietnam. The American Indian Movement (AIM) attempted to readdress a series of broken treaties, land issues, and conditions of extreme poverty that affected Native American Nations. The Black Power Movement was a more confrontational continuation of the Civil Rights Movement that was seeking to put an end to police brutality, improve conditions in communities of color and sought to build coalitions along interracial and class lines. Finally, the Chicana/o Movement attempted to re-evaluate the Chicano experience in America by improving labor, educational and political conditions for the Mexican-American population.

The above-mentioned events were part of the historical context at the time, a transnational context that had a profound, direct impact along the Tijuana-San Diego transborder region. The following section discusses the national context.

National Context

In Mexico, the official party had demonstrated the capacity to rectify their course when popular pressure and political circumstances deemed it necessary. The administrations of Avila Camacho (1940-1946), Alemán Valdés (1946-1952), and Ruiz Cortines (1952-1956) were governments that prioritized economic development over

social justice. As a result, Ruiz Cortines, encouraged by Cárdenas, elected as his successor the Secretary of Labor Adolfo López Mateos, an individual who had been a successful mediator in labor disputes.[2]

The official discourse during this epoch employed the phrase Balanced Revolution. This phrase made reference to a period of political and social tranquility made possible by continued economic growth. Economic stability was believed it would lead to continuous economic development. This "*Desarrollo Estabilizador*" amounted to a continuation of a protectionist economic policy with direct intervention from the State.[3]

By the 1960s, Mexican officials sought a new route that would overcome disillusionment with continual state policy shifts from emphasizing political themes (1910–30), to social ideas (1930–40), and then economic themes (1940–60). Thus the concept of Balanced Revolution was created.

From 1960 to 1970 the Balanced Revolution sought to synchronize the desires of each of the three preceding periods. During this period the para-state sector of government expanded into numerous industries, including nationalization of Mexico's electricity and telephone networks.[4] Professor James Wilkie refers to it as Active Statism.[5]

The late 1950s saw a period of a global economic recession that was simultaneously followed by an agrarian and industrial crisis in Mexico that led to strikes

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[2] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule Since the Late Nineteenth Century*, pg. 158.

[3] David Piñera and Gabriel Rivera, *Tijuana en la Historia, Tomo II: Las Últimas Seis Décadas*, pg. 31.

[4] James Wilkie, *Society and Economy in Mexico*, pg. 3.

[5] James Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure and Social Change Since 1910*.

led by telegraph workers, teachers, oil and railroad workers. Despite this economic and social situation, the Mexican government continued to express its commitment to industrialization.

This was possible in large part through what Ilán Semo refers to as *Monopartidización*, the process by which Mexico legitimized the one party system during the López Mateos administration. In 1953, women obtained the right to vote. The irony of this political gain for women was that while in the United States and Europe, it represented a victory by progressive political parties, in Mexico it was a victory spearheaded by the incumbent, moderate PRI.[6]

Professor Wilkie described this period as the emergence of the Active State. López Mateos' " 'balanced revolution' called for balanced political, social, and economic change under the sponsorship of the revolutionary regime." From López Mateos' view, Mexico's national development had to be directed; social assistance programs for the working class would be intercalated with promoting agricultural and industrialization with an emphasis in investments and in expanding the country's infrastructure.[7]

This approach, implemented by Adolfo López Mateos (1958-1964) had two fundamental goals. The first one called for the strengthening of Mexico's political system by impeding any type of social unrest that would threaten the nation's political stability. The second goal was to reactivate the economy. Here, the second goal was predicated on the execution of the first objective. As a result, at the start of his *sexenio* or six-year term, López Mateos ordered an intense repression of the railroad strike in 1958.

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[6] Ilán Semo, *México, un Pueblo en la Historia: El Ocaso de los Mitos, 1958-1968*, pp. 21-35.

[7] James Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure and Social Change, 1910-1960*, pp. xxiv, 90-91.

Further, López Mateos attempted to pass himself as a President with leftist tendencies; this was more rhetorical than actual praxis, the so called "*atinada izquierda*". Also, he extended the Balanced Revolution to efforts to organize public spending of social, economic, and administrative areas.[8]

This period also witnessed the leading role Mexico played in the Green Revolution. The Green revolution was initiated, financed, and supervised by the Rockefeller Foundation. It was based on technology "packages" that distributed fertilizer-responsive, hybrid seed varieties, developed in laboratories in the U.S. and Mexico. This technology was integrated with farm management practices based on biocides and modern farm machinery. The technology "packages" were designed for use on large-scale, irrigated, landholdings. During the initial stages of the Green Revolution, the agricultural development was extensive, making new lands available for cultivation through land reform, the expansion of rain-fed agriculture, and extensive irrigation. As a result, the increase in agricultural production of corn, beans, wheat, and sorghum production from 1940-1985 was dramatic. Key in accomplishing Mexico's Green Revolution was not only the expansion of rural infrastructure, but also the rapid industrialization of agriculture.

However, the benefits of this development did not occur equally to all sectors of the population. The agricultural development strategies exemplified in and carried out through the Green Revolution and River Basin development projects increased social inequality in Mexico. The beneficiaries of Mexican agricultural development were the urban industrial capitalists, who benefitted from unequal terms of trade between

[8] Gloria M. Delgado de Cantú, and Rosa Guadalupe Pérez Rangel, *Historia de México, Volumen 2*, pp. 302-303.

agriculture and industry, and large, commercial, agricultural landholders, who benefitted to the detriment of private and *ejido* small holders and agricultural laborers. As a result of the Green Revolution, control and ownership of land in Mexico were concentrated in the hands of few individuals**.**

This part capitalist, part small holding agrarian structure derived in the process known as functional dualism, in which agricultural and industrial capitalists achieved sustained profits, whereas smallholders and agricultural workers experienced increased poverty and social dislocation. Functional dualism has meant sustained profits for agricultural and industrial capitalists, and increased poverty and social dislocation for smallholders and agricultural workers.[9] Glen Coulthard described it as a simultaneous process of displacement and proletarization of Indigenous societies, peasants, and other small-scale agricultural producers.[10]

This displacement process of small-scale agricultural producers in rural Mexico created a series of rural and urban guerrilla movements fully backed by a student population that was attempting to cash in on the promises of the Revolutionary movement of 1910. The *Jaramillistas*, the *Vallejistas,* Arturo Gámiz, Lucio Cabañas, Genaro Vázquez, *La Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre* (LC 23s), and the *Movimiento de Acción Revolucionario* (MAR) were the protagonists of cycles of rebellion and repression that we see in Chapter Four, which analyzes dissidence from this period and how the Mexican government combined rural movements with drug trafficking. In this Chapter, I will analyze the *Vallejistas* and the student movement that culminated in the massacre in

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[9] David S. Sonnenfeld, Mexico's 'Green Revolution,' 1940-1980: Towards an Environmental History," *Environmental History Review*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1992, pp. 32-35.

[10] Glen Coulthard, *Subjects of Empire? Indigenous Peoples and the "Politics of Recognition" in Canada*, PhD. Dissertation, pg. 11.

Tlatelolco in 1968 in their role of mounting the first and second challenges to PRI hegemony.

The 1958 Railroad Strike

The Railroad Strikes of 1958 were lead by Demetrio Vallejo Martínez. Vallejo, of Zapotec extraction, became a railroad employee in the early 1930s. He later joined Mexico's Communist Party or *Partido Comunista Mexicano* (PCM), where he was eventually promoted to regional director in Oaxaca while he was still in his twenties.

In 1946, Vallejo was expelled from the PCM. That same year, Vallejo joined the Unified Socialist Action or Acción Socialista Unificada. In 1950, Vallejo joined the Mexican Worker-Peasant Party or *Partido Obrero-Campesino Mexicano* (POCM). Recognizing that he was going to need people that he could trust, Vallejo requested the assistance of his niece, Lilia Benitez to join him in Mexico City to help him in the railroad movement in 1958.

Benitez was one of thousands of women whose role in the railroad strikes of 1958 has been silenced in history. While men commanded all the attention and newspaper headlines, Benitez and other women toiled quietly behind the scenes and provided vital support for the cause. That same year, a series of escalating strikes that went from 2 hours, to 8 hours until calling a general strike were started and led by Vallejo.[11]

The Railroad workers represented a radical sector within the Mexican working class. Their strike went after a government owned segment rather than avaricious foreign investors. Demetrio Vallejo, section 13 delegate from Matías Romero, Oaxaca presented

[11] Robert F. Alegre, *Railroad Radicals in Cold War Mexico: Gender, Class, and Memory*, pp. 65-66; Hodges, Donald and Gandy, Ross, *Mexico Under Siege: Popular Resistance to Presidential Despotism*, pp. 71-79, 93-101; and La Botz, Dan, *Mask of Democracy: Labor Suppression in Mexico Today*, pp. 70-72.

the demands from Railroad workers. The *Vallejista* movement was representative of a series of movements that were occurring in Mexico City in which telegraph workers and teachers were also manifesting their discontent.

After the attempts by Roberto Amorós to break the strike failed, the strikers devised a new strategy in the form of the *Plan del Sureste*. In el *Plan del Sureste*, drafted in Veracruz, called for a $300.00 peso salary increase, the destitution of local executive committees, to call for staggered work stoppages and if there were not a satisfactory agreement reached a complete work stoppage would be called.[12]

López Mateos acted swiftly, sending a clear message that he would not tolerate labor unrest directed at para-state businesses. He broke up the strike in a forceful and violent manner and ordered the arrest of Demetrio Vallejo, as well as of the muralist David Alfaro Siquieros after the latter expressed his solidarity with the strikers.[13]

As López Mateos neared the end of his *sexenio*, he selected his Minister of Interior, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz as his successor. Born in Puebla, Díaz Ordaz came from a very important political family in Oaxaca. His father was the grandson of an important supporter of the liberals in Oaxaca during the Reform Wars and governed intermittently the state from 1857-1860. During his *sexenio* (1964-1970), the Balanced Revolution continued.

As president, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (GDO, 1964-1970) was an authoritarian ruler. His severity was evident in his handling of a number of protests during his term, including the railroad workers strike, as well as teachers and doctors work stoppages. An

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[12] Francisco Javier Gorostiza, *Los Ferrocarriles en la Revolución Mexicana*, pp. 573-575.

[13] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule Since the Late Nineteenth Century*, pg. 158.

example of his authoritarian rule was his forceful end to a doctor's strike. Residents and interns of the *Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado* (ISSSTE) organized a strike to demand better working conditions and increased wages.[14] The GDO Presidency continued with a perceived period of economic growth. He also founded the Mexican Institute of Petroleum in 1965, an important step since oil has been one of Mexico's most productive industries.[15]

His authoritarian style of governing produced resistance, such as the emergence of a guerrilla movement in the state of Guerrero and the take over of the military post in Ciudad Madera, Chihuahua by Arturo Gámiz. GDO was able to secure the organization of two very important and highly visible international sporting events: the 1968 Olympic Games and the 1970 World Cup. It is under this precise historical juncture that the student protests that ended with the massacre in the Plaza of the Three Cultures in Tlatelolco occurred. This instance was the second challenge to the authoritarian rule of the PRI.

Tlatelolco 1968: The Emissaries of Rupture

In 1968, the second challenge to the PRI hegemony took place. It involved the student demonstrations that culminated with the massacre in the Plaza of the Three Cultures in Tlatelolco on October 2. Mexico had been awarded both the Olympic Games and the World Cup, these two global competitions were the opportunity that Mexico craved to present to the international community that the nation was modern,

[14] Gloria M Delgado de Cantú and Rosa Guadalupe Pérez Rangel, *Historia de México Volumen II*, pg. 319.

[15] Ibid, pp. 335, 423.

cosmopolitan, and steeped in culture and tradition.[16] Attempting to conceal popular discontent before the eyes of the world, Diaz Ordaz and his Minister of the Interior, Echeverría Álvarez (LEA), violently suffocated the student movement.

Student activism emerged by the 1920s. Their first important triumph occurred in 1929 when their protest secured autonomy for UNAM. They continued with their manifestations, and in June 1958, during the railroad, telegraph and teachers strikes students protesters proved to be fundamental in providing strikers with important support. Students organized protests denouncing an increase in the price of public transportation services. The opposition between the Mexican state and student activists dates back to the struggles to achieve university autonomy in the 1920s. During the Cárdenas administration, student activism continued. The response from Cárdenas was popular. He improved access to higher education to members of Mexico's middle class and those who belonged to the "popular classes" through the creation of new institutions, such as the National Polytechnic Institute and the University of Guadalajara.

By the 1940s, institutions of higher learning became large incubators of professionals and technicians trained to put in motion the emerging state machinery. But during the late 1950s and early 1960s, university activism drew its inspiration from the Cuban revolution. By the late 1960s, there was an open confrontation between student activists and the Mexican state though attempts of inserting themselves into the issues of political importance to the country. Demonstrations started with demands to improve university instruction and curriculum, structure and access in the first part of the 1960s. Protests evolved into massive marches in solidarity with the anti-war movement in

[16] Kevin Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World: Mexico and the 1968 Olympic Games*, pg. 6.

Vietnam and Mexico's peasant movement, but especially against the construction of a subway system.

The response from the Mexican government was swift through the implementation of state sponsored violence. Strikes and protests in autonomous universities throughout Mexico were followed by military occupation by the Mexican state. Prominent student leaders were also intimidated, kidnapped and/or tortured. In response to the student challenge to political authority, the Mexican government reduced the budget destined to higher education.[17]

The student protest on the eve of the Olympic games culminated in the Tlatelolco massacre on October 2, 1968. This event represented university students confronting as a group the Mexican state for the first time. A series of developments that led to the Tlatelolco massacre began in late July 1968. The government engaged in tactics that had the purpose of discrediting the students' demands. The press began a smear campaign to discredit the student demonstrations.

The smear campaign started by the Mexican press was countered by the implementation of political brigades, impromptu demonstrations, and the distribution of flyers (*volanteo*). These three tactics utilized by student activists became the main conduit of information about their cause and their objectives. On August 13, 1968, student demonstrators occupied the Plaza of the Constitution (*Zócalo*). This represents the students' right to demonstrate and it involves the peaceful march of 150,000 people that also had a strong popular support. By the time the march ended in the Zócalo, it was

[17] Iláan Semo, *México, Un Pueblo en la Historia: El Ocaso de los Mitos, 1958-1968*, pp. 52-53, 114-124.

estimated that 200,000 people participated. Between August 14-27, student demonstrators attempted to establish a public dialogue with the Mexican authorities.

On August 27, 400,000 people marched peacefully. The march ended with the killing of 32 demonstrators by the Mexican military. The following day, the military cleared the *Zócalo* from student protesters. In his State of the Union address, Díaz Ordaz made public the possibility of utilizing violence in order to establish legal order, which in his view, constitutes an indispensable component in any organized society. On September 18, the Military assumed control of UNAM. The military occupation of UNAM provided further fuel for student protests, prompting the public support of UNAM's Rector, Javier Barros Sierra. Violent confrontation between students and the Mexican military ensued. Mexican authorities orchestrated a campaign to discredit the Rector, and on September 23, Barros Sierra presented his resignation. He was reinstated when the military withdrew from UNAM. After the Mexican authorities ended their occupation of UNAM on September 30, a demonstration for October 2 in Tlatelolco was announced.

The October 2 demonstration started at 5:30pm. Students, workers, and other members of civic society attended the demonstration. By 6:10pm, it was estimated that close to 10,000 people had congregated at the Plaza of the Three Cultures. Green flares signaled the start of the military offensive against student agitators. The shooting that ensued lasted for 20 minutes. By 10:30pm, the Mexican military had taken complete control of the Plaza, as well as the hospitals and clinics in the area.[18]

[18] Ibid, 132-144.

I refer to this period in Mexican history as the *Docena Trágica*, or Mexico's Twelve Tragic years. According to U. S. intelligence reports, both Díaz Ordaz and Echeverría Álvarez were CIA assets. The CIA would recruit from within the PRI potential informants.[19] Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (LITEMPO-2), Luis Echeverría Álvarez (LITEMPO-8), Fernando Gutiérrez Barrios (LITEMPO-4), and Adolfo López Mateos (LITENSOR) were part of a web of CIA informants from the Agency's Operation LITEMPO, a network of paid agents and collaborators in and around the Mexican president's office.[20]

In 1969, the echoes of the Tlatelolco massacre were still present. Student demonstrators continued to enjoy the support and sympathy of a large sector of society. To discredit the efforts from the part of student protestors, the Mexican government launched a campaign in which drugs were used to discredit the character and objectives of students and the movement. The following pages describe the role played by the Ministry of the Interior in the publication of a diary that allegedly was found in one of the victims of the Tlatelolco massacre.

***¡El Móndrigo!* Drugs to Discredit Student Dissidence**

Mexican secret police developed a campaign to discredit dissident student organizations. At the center of this libel campaign, was a publication of dubious origin and discovery. This publication was based on a manuscript found in a portfolio placed in the waist of a student protester that was killed near the Chihuahua building during the student massacre in Tlatelolco and whom allegedly was identified by some people by the

[19] Philip Agee, *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*, pg. 568.

[20] Jefferson Morley, *Our Man in Mexico: Winston Scott and the Hidden History of the CIA*, pp. 90-94.

nickname of *El Móndrigo*. The manuscript found tucked in in his body was believed to be the journal of the student movement. The book's publisher, Editorial Alba Roja, S. C. L, was of uncertain origin. Also, there was no author. The book contained passages that made direct references to drug consumption by students and professors, as well as marijuana and opium distribution in schools. The unidentified narrator of the book concluded the selection by expressing his concern of being arrested for drug trafficking, thus, falling from grace in the eyes of his comrades.[21]

In response to a generalized sympathy for the student movement and with the potential of another series of student led demonstrations, Manuel Urrutia Castro published a series of articles in 1969 in which he discredited the student protests that culminated with the massacre in Tlatelolco.[22] Citing passages from the book, Urrutia Castro linked student protesters with what he referred to as the Communist virus. This Red virus, along with drugs, perverted the minds of students and forced them to commit treasonous acts. He called for the intensification of the campaign to eradicate drug trafficking and he also called for the implementation of capital punishment for traffickers.

Upon further examination, ¡*El Móndrigo*! was a governmental publication that had three editions. According to Sergio Romero Ramírez, AKA *El fish*, a government informant that infiltrated the student movement, the same individual wrote the three editions from the Ministry of the Interior. According to *El fish*, the Ministry of the Interior printed the books written by Jorge Joseph, former mayor of Acapulco. The DFS was in charge of the distribution supervised by Fernando Gutiérrez Barrios, Miguel Nazar Haro, and Luis de la Barreda. In the second edition, the prologue was expanded and

[21] *El Móndrigo! Bitácora del Consejo Nacional de Huelga*, pp. 5-6, 107-108, 164.

[22] *Impacto*, July-October 1969.

certain errors were corrected. The third edition changed all the images, including the cover image. The first edition appeared in 1969 and it was distributed free of charge. Some references indicate that the book was delivered at homes or placed on the windshields of cars.

Further, an analysis of the images included in the three editions of ¡*El Móndrigo*! revealed a concerted effort from the part of Mexico's Ministry of the Interior (*Secretaria de Gobernación*) to discredit the student movement. In the first edition, the images presented two aspects that contradicted the official narrative, which was a narrative of defeat and to get back to the fold. Subsequent editions of the book did not include images where students are posing in a defiant fashion. The new images presented student protesters cornered by the authorities, not challenging police.[23]

Authorities also discredited the movement by disseminating the official narrative of a defeated and frightened student movement. Further, drugs were used in this instance as a political tool to downplay student protests and justify the use of state sponsored violence, as well as the student massacre in Tlatelolco. In Chapter Four, I will show how the same justification was used to discredit rural and urban guerrilla movements in the 1970s.

Baja California: Regional Context

At the regional level, the Federal government implemented a series of campaigns coordinated with local and state authorities. The opening of a thermoelectric plant in Rosarito that served Tijuana benefited the region. Also, the first building destined for a high school for the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC), campus Tijuana

[23] Pablo Tasso, *La Historiografía Oficial del 68*, Dissertation pp. 65-69, 125-127.

was inaugurated in 1957. Further, President López Mateos also inaugurated in Tijuana a monument to Mexico's free textbook. These events were officiated by President López Mateos in September 1963 during his visit to the region.

The region experienced new developments in national health, oil and power systems. In 1958, the *Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social* (IMSS) hospital was opened in Tijuana, providing medical services to the population. In 1960, PEMEX opened a refinery in Rosarito. Prior to the opening of a PEMEX refinery in the region, *tijuanenses* would get their gas from U. S. gas stations opened and operated by Chevron and Shell. Tijuanenses would also get their electricity from power companies from California, but in 1963 the *Comisión Federal de Electricidad* (CFE) began to provide services to *tijuanenses*.

Tijuana also saw during this period its insertion into the mass communication system. In late 1959, *El Mexicano* was established. This newspaper published separate editions for Tijuana, Ensenada and Mexicali. This newspaper also published stories from important international news agencies. In 1960, channel 12 was founded. This is an important development for Tijuana, since it was the first Spanish language television station in the region; channel 6 although founded in Tijuana in 1953, transmitted its signal in English.

The National Border Project

As early as 1961, the Federal Government had a clear vision of how to make the Mexican Border attractive once again to tourists and investors. The Federal Government launched the *Programa Nacional Fronterizo* (ProNaf or National Border Project.) ProNaf was an urban planning initiative that would provide an economic openness in

both the southern and northern border cities, which aimed to detonate an integrated development model that incorporated a global economic vision.[24]

On the one hand, the Federal Government in Tijuana, commissioned one of the first projects financed by ProNaf, the *Puerto México* in 1964.[25] But on the other hand, it could not stop the ending of the Bracero Program. The end of the Bracero Program had a profound impact on the region, as thousands of individuals flocked to the region in hopes of securing a contract in the agricultural fields of California. Individuals and their families had settled in the region after their contracts expired or they would be deported because they overstayed their permit. Migratory flows from Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, Sinaloa and Sonora had brought a tremendous amount of stress to a city infrastructure that could not keep up with the increased population.

Right after the end of the Bracero Program, the Federal Government launched the *Programa Industrial Fronterizo* or Border Industrialization Project (BIP.) The Border Industrialization Project was an attempt from the part of the Díaz Ordaz administration to get the economy of the border region started in the right direction. Although the program was touted to promote the industrialization of the border region, in reality it was an attempt to improve the commerce in this region.[26]

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[24] Lawrence Douglas Taylor Hansen, "The Orignis of the Maquila Industry in Mexico," *Comercio Exterior*, Vol. 53, No. 11, 2003.

[25] During the construction of the *Puerta México* a historical monument erected in 1931 was demolished. The monument was constructed during the administration of Carlos Trejo y Ledo de Tejada during Baja California's territorial period. In September 2014, the Mexican Government announced the planned demolition of the *Puerta México* to expand vehicular access in the San Ysidro checkpoint.

[26] Cirila Quintero Ramírez, "Cuarenta Años de Relaciones Laborales en la Maquila: Una Historia de Permisos y Restricciones Desiguales," in Barajas, María del Rosario, Grijalva, Gabriela, et. al., Coords., *Cuatro Décadas del Modelo Maquilador en el Norte de México*, pg. 314.

Mexico was developing as a country. As such, the belief was that she needed foreign investment that along with local investment would allow for an accelerated economic development. Another perceived advantage that made Mexico attractive for foreign capital was that Mexico did not have exchange restrictions and had enjoyed political stability, an evident sign of not only economic maturity, but political and social as well. Further, northern border cities at the time were characterized by their high birth rate as well as immigration from the central part of Mexico. The population growth has created many economic and social problems, mainly high unemployment rates. This was caused by a weak economic structure of the border cities that made them incapable of absorbing the large population growth. The huge working force found in northern border cities cannot find permanent jobs. The Border Industrialization Program offered jobs and the opportunity to strengthen the economy of northern border cities.[27]

BIP had the goal of addressing the high unemployment rate caused in part by the end of the Bracero Program. BIP provided incentives to international private investors to open industrial plants in Tijuana and other Mexican border cities. BIP provided private industries access to cheap labor, as well as generating jobs in the region. This is the start of the maquila industry in which the nature of the work of assembling electronic products required female labor, changing family dynamics in some households of the region. This also resulted in a change in the structure of the economic system in Baja California. The state went from an economy predominantly agricultural, to a service and industrial one.[28]

In the case of the northern border cities in Mexico, the prominent role that women played in the maquila industry was a reflection of a historical juncture in which it allowed

[27] Jorge Farías Negrete, *Indistrialization Program for the Mexican Northern Border*, pp. 7-9.

[28] David Piñera and Gabriel Rivera, *Tijuana en la Historia, Tomo II: Las Últimas Seis Décadas*, pp. 31-44.

it to be genderized. As part of the Border Industrialization Program launched in 1964, the Mexican government offered the maquila industry the possibility of employing men. The end of the Bracero Program made the male labor pool possible in that same year, as well as an agricultural crisis in Mexicali. However, the maquila industry preferred employing women instead of men. From that point on, the female labor market was molded according to the productive movements of the maquila industry. The maquila industry's main characteristic was a strict adherence to an international production process that allowed them to become detached from the national industry.

The perceived characteristics of the genderization of the maquila industry was not a response to the rationality of the labor market, but rather, to the values that are emphasized in the socialization of women, as well as perceived characteristics present in Mexican women, such as submission, docility and responsibility. These traits created the profile of a maquila worker along the U. S. – Mexico border region: female, single, young and migrant. Further, the maquila industry can be considered a continuation of the division of labor based on gender. These labor activities were developed along the line of similar occupations that women typically performed in households, textile and food industry for example, or that required meticulous assembly work, such as electronic components.[29]

As industrialization was taking off in Tijuana, attempts to urbanize the region continued. A very attractive and strategically located extension of land was in dispute. The dispute involved the heirs of the Argüello family, and a company with ties to a former Mexican President. The controversy that started in late 1958 with the removal of

[29] Cirila Quintero Ramírez, "Trabajo Femenino en las Maquiladoras: ¿Explotación o Liberación?," in Julia Estela Monárrez Fragoso and María Socorro Tabuenca Córdoba, coords., *Bordeando la Violencia Contra las Mujeres en la Frontera Norte de México*, pp. 194-197.

residents from the Zona del Rio resurfaced once again in 1964. The following pages offer an analysis of the conflict presented by Tijuana's urbanization.

Inmuebles Californianos, Sociedad Anónima (ICSA) and Tijuana's Urbanization

During these same years, the land dispute over property that belonged to the heirs of Santiago Argüello reemerged. In 1958, a group of residents took possession of the territories that were part of the Tijuana Riverbank. This property was part of the original land grant given to Santiago Argüello after the Mexican Independence. To better understand this conflict, I present a brief historical account of the lands in dispute.

The present Tijuana-San Diego region was established through a land grant given to Santiago Argüello in 1829 by Governor José María Echendía that established the Rancho Tia Juana. In 1846, Governor Pio Pico issued a land grant of the Rancho Ex-Misión San Diego also to Santiago Argüello.[30] These land grants were part of a political and economic process that began slowly in Alta California after Spanish settlement in 1769. Land grants increased dramatically during the Mexican period, especially after secularization of the missions when more land became available. Usually, these land grants were given as a reward to individuals who held military posts in the region. Santiago Argüello died in 1862 in Rancho Tia Juana without leaving a will. Litigation ensued.

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[30] Santiago Argüello was the son of José D. Argüello, born at Monterey 1791. Santiago was the paymaster at San Diego in 1818, and in 1821 had a garden in Mission Valley. He participated in the Bouchard invasion. In 1827-31 he was lieutenant of the San Diego Company, and commandant from 1830 to 1835. From 1831-1835 was captain of the company and took part in the revolt against Victoria. In 1833-4 he was revenue officer at San Diego. In 1830 he was alcalde, and held several other offices. During the Mexican war he was friendly to the Americans and gave them considerable aid. Soldiers were quartered at his house and he held a commission as captain in the California battalion. Santiago Argüello was a member of the Legislative council in 1847 and made collector of the port. He married Pilar Ortega, daughter of Francisco Ortega, of Santa Barbara, by whom he had 22 children. He died on his Tia Juana ranch in 1862, and his widow in 1878. William Ellsworth Smythe, *History of San Diego, 1542-1908: An Account of the Rise and Progress of the Pioneer Settlement on the Pacific Coast of the United States*, pg. 163.

The heirs of Santiago Argüello presented conflicting claims of ownership. The widow of Santiago Argüello, Pilar Ortega de Argüello, received confirmation of ownership by a decree issued by Porfirio Díaz in 1879. Pilar Ortega de Argüello died also without leaving a will. In an attempt to capitalize on the emerging land speculation that was emerging in the boom of sales of subdivided land in Southern California, the Argüellos decided to set their differences aside and resolve the ownership of the property so they could capitalize on the land boom.

The Argüellos also had to contend with challenges presented by legislative efforts to promote colonization in the region. During the 1880s, the original land grant that established the Rancho Tia Juana survived Porfirio Díaz's colonization program. Large amounts of underdeveloped lands were awarded to Luis Hüller, a naturalized Mexican citizen of German origin. Somehow, the Rancho Tia Juana lands remained untouched by Hüller, who began to experience financial problems in other business ventures, causing him to divert his attention from the border region.

After contentious negotiations between the Argüellos and local authorities, an agreement was reached in 1889. In January of that year, the Rancho Tia Juana was divided into two parts. The southern portion was conferred to the heirs and successors of Ignacio Argüello who had acquired three sitios de ganado mayor by purchase from his mother. The northern part was allocated to José Antonio Argüello and the descendants of his other brothers.[31]

Now, fast forward to 1963. In this year, the problem of urbanization of the *Zona del Río*, where very valuable real estate that was at the center of controversy in 1958, was

[31] Antonio Padilla Corona, "The Tía Juana (Tijuana) Land Grant," *The Journal of San Diego History*, No. 50, pg. 30-39.

once again being addressed. After the construction of the Agua Caliente Casino and Racetrack in the 1920s, the property in dispute increased in value. In an attempt to solve the matter, Emilio Portes Gil issued a Presidential decree in 1929 expropriating the lands in dispute, thus they were no longer property of the Argüellos. The action by President Portes Gil prompted further litigation that resulted in the Argüellos being awarded an *amparo* in 1938.[32]

In 1939, President Lázaro Cárdenas issued another Presidential decree reversing the actions of the Portes Gil decree of 1929. To further illustrate the difficulty in ascertaining with precision the ownership of the property in dispute, the *Club Campestre de Tijuana* was built in 1948 on the same site where the original golf course of the Agua Caliente resort was located. This part of the original Rancho Tia Juana land grant was property of Abelardo L. Rodríguez, whom in turn donated the property through a verbal agreement where *Club Campestre* was built. This situation was described sometimes as a donation, in other instances, it was described as a usufruct.

In light of the vulnerable conditions and multiple challenges to the ownership of these lands, a group of developers and investors from Mexico City founded *Inmuebles Californianos, S. A.* (ICSA) in 1958. The most important public figure involved with ICSA was Carlos I. Serrano, close collaborator and friend of former President Miguel Alemán.[33] In 1960, ICSA secured the right of the heirs of Alejandro Argüello. In 1963, ICSA won a court decision by Judge José Vicente Aguinaco Alemán in which they were

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[32] Lucio Cabrera Acevedo, *La Suprema Corte de Justicia Durante el Gobierno del General Lázaro Cárdenas (1935-1940)*, T. I., pp. 173-183.

[33] "El Coronel Carlos I. Serrano Habla Sobre Su Actuación en 'Inmuebles Californianos,' " *El Heraldo de Baja California*, January 11, 1964, pg. 1.

awarded possession of Tijuana, with the exception of public buildings and all other constructions carried out prior to 1960.

The response from Tijuana's civic society was prompt. The *Comité Pro Defensa del Patrimonio* de Tijuana was formed. Its membership was comprised of different clubs, political parties, professional associations; concerned citizens of Tijuana that were outraged to find out about the situation through the press. In late January of 1964, Gen. Abelardo L. Rodríguez declared that in 1965, the Federal government expropriated the rights of the Argüellos to the property in dispute, which is the Tijuana Riverbank lands and seized the lands where *Club Campestre* was built.

ICSA challenged the measures and in 1971 Mexico's Supreme Court ordered the restitution of the lands back to ICSA. In protest, UABC students occupied the *Club Campestre*. They argued that the land belonged to neither ICAS nor *Club Campestre*. Rather, it should be the home of the University that was holding classes and had their administrative offices scattered throughout the city. The students desisted in occupying the *Club Campestre* after the Government of Baja California gave them land in Mesa de Otay, where UABC is currently located.

In 1972, the situation was resolved by mutual agreement between the parties involved. *Club Campestre* signed an agreement in which they would pay ICSA 42 million pesos, and ICSA gave up their ownership rights to Tijuana. This agreement gave way to a project that had been planned since the López Mateos administration, the channeling of the Tijuana River. The residents of this area, an area that was referred to as *Cartolandia* since most of the improvised homes were built using cardboard, were relocated to either housing projects or lands that were given to them by the state

government of Baja California. The ICSA controversy was not the only episode that rallied *tijuaneses*; this period also saw irregularities in local elections in 1968 where once again, just like in 1959, challenged the hegemony of the PRI at the state and local levels.

1968 Elections and the Rebellion of *Panista* Women in Tijuana

Challenges to the Official Party once again resurfaced in the region. During the local elections of 1968, the PAN mounted a new effort to overthrow from power the incumbent party. The municipal elections in Tijuana and Mexicali were nullified amidst allegations of electoral improprieties. The elections of Gilberto Rodríguez González and Luis Mario Santana Cobián, the PRI candidates for Mexicali and Tijuana, respectively were revoked.[34] This opposition against the PRI was a continuation of the one manifested in the 1958 Presidential elections and the 1959 gubernatorial elections. In the federal elections of 1958, Rosas Magallón argued, the PAN won the elections in Baja California, where Luis H. Álvarez won the popular vote in Mexicali and Tijuana. In April of 1959, Rosas Magallón, the PAN's gubernatorial candidate, sent a letter to Gómez Morin, President of the PAN, in which he requested the dissolution of powers in Baja California.[35]

In accordance to the law, the nullification of results in Tijuana and Mexicali in 1968 should have led to new elections. However, PRI legislators had reformed the electoral Constitution in order to establish municipal councils. These municipal councils were in power in Tijuana and Mexicali for two years (1968-1970). In 1971, new

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[34] David Piñera and Gabriel Rivera, *Tijuana en la Historia, Tomo II: Las Últimas Seis Décadas*, pp. 44-51.

[35] José Negrete Mata, "Historia Política y Alternancia en Baja California, 1952-1989," in Tonatiuh Guillén, *Baja California: Escenarios Para el Nuevo Milenio*, pp. 62-63.

elections were called that ended with the PRI winning in both municipalities.[36] The political upheaval in Tijuana saw the vital participation of women in challenging the PRI hegemony. Once again, as a continuation of their activism during the 1959 gubernatorial elections, Panista women in Tijuana mounted a protest in light of the results of the 1968 elections.

In the case of Tijuana, the PAN militancy had the important and valuable participation of women. As early as 1957, women within the PAN militancy proved to be extremely important in fighting for the rights of *colonos* from the *Zona del Río* through the efforts of Rafaela Martínez Cantú. Martínez Cantú went on to continue with her political work among popular sectors during more than thirty years.

During the electoral conflict of 1968, Cecilia Barone de Castellanos, formed the *Mujeres por la Democracia* and caravanned with 43 other women to Mexico City to meet with President Díaz Ordaz to voice their discontent in terms of the electoral fraud that took place in Tijuana. President Díaz Ordaz refused to receive these women. Instead, the women distributed literature with information about their cause and met with members of the student movement in the summer of 1968.[37]

As the Official Party continued to hold power at the Federal, State, and local levels, the history of the region during this period revealed an instance in which collusion between drug traffickers and government reached the highest spheres of Mexico's political system. Important public officials and an ex President were willing to resort to any means necessary to not only legitimize their power, but also to profit from the traffic

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[36] Ibid, pp. 64-65.

[37] Lilia Venegas, "Women in the Border: The *Panista* Militants of Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez," in Victoria E. Rodríguez, editor, *Women's Participation in Mexican Political Life*, pg. 208.

in narcotics as we will see. The case of Carlos Estrada Sastré revealed the intricacies of how an ill-gotten fortune built on a drug empire and international arms trafficking had transcontinental implications.

Carlos Estrada Sastré and the Transcontinental Drug Empire

Carlos Estrada Sastré was a journalist that worked for the Tijuana newspapers *Noticias* and *El Mexicano*. He had arrived to Tijuana in 1959 to work for the Gubernatorial campaign of Eligio Esquivel. After the election of Esquivel as Governor (1959-1964), Estrada Sastré was not given a post in the Esquivel administration. After being ignored for a governmental post at the state level, Estrada Sastré worked for the city of Tijuana in the office of public services.

In early 1961 he began to write a political column for the newspaper *Noticias*. Prior to working for *Noticias*, *El Mexicano* employed Estrada Sastré, but for unknown reasons, he was fired. His contribution to *Noticias* allowed him to cultivate a loyal fan base that enjoyed his political commentary. His assassination was the first committed against a journalist in Northern Mexico.[38] On November 27, 1961, two men killed Carlos Estrada Sastré in his hotel room with a pipe that crushed his skull. His death caused great consternation and alarm not only in Tijuana, but also in the rest of Mexico.

The investigation of his death led to the arrest of three members of the DFS. These three individuals were set free due to lack of convincing evidence that would placed them in the scene of the crime. On December 4, 1961 Armando Díaz Molinar, Mario Magaña, and Nicolás Guerrero were arrested in connection to Estrada Sastré's crime. These individuals were members of the municipal police of Tijuana and Mexicali.

[38] Carlos Moncada, *Oficio de Muerte: Periodistas Asesinados en el País de la Impunidad*, pg. 104.

When Nicolás Guerrero was arrested, he confessed that the motive to kill Estrada Sastré was his constant criticism against the Governor of Baja California.

There are various motives to explain Estrada Sastré's assassination. One was associated with political reasons, given that *Noticias* was presumed to have ties with the National Action Party (PAN). Another speculation about his death centered on Estrada Sastré's staunch criticism directed at the Governor of Baja California.[39] There was another version that speculated that Estrada Sastré was on the verge of uncovering an uprising that had the objective of overthrowing President López Mateos. This planned insurrection organized in Los Angeles, had as protagonists key figures of the Mexican right that were actively attempting insurrections throughout Mexico.[40] Jesús Blancornelas, a journalist who covered the rise of drug traffickers in Tijuana for more than 30 years, stated that Estrada Sastré wrote, unsuspectingly before his assassination, that for his following article, he was going to divulge the drug trafficking – public official link in the region.

New evidence that I uncovered from Mexico's secret police files corroborates in part Blancornelas' theory of Estrada Sastré's assassination. I say in part because there is no other evidence available to substantiate what I found in the DFS archives. These are documents that remained classified for over forty years. An undated, anonymous report drafted by a member of the DFS, lists nine items related to the assassination of Carlos Estrada Sastré. These nine items shed vital light to the motive for his assassination.

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[39] Gabriel Trujillo Muñoz, *La Canción del Progreso: Vida y Milagros del Periodismo Bajacaliforniano*, pp. 277-279.

[40] "Estrada Sastré Sabia De Un Complot Contra El Gobierno: Surge la Sensacional Denuncia de una Conjura," *El Gráfico, Periódico Independiente al Servicio de Baja California,* November 30, 1961, pg.1. *AGN-IPS*, Box 1465A, Miscelánea, file 14, 7 de octubre de 1966 a 11 de mayo de 1961.

These items included two documents with information related to former President of Mexico Miguel Alemán Váldes, three telegrams addressed to three different Tijuana newspapers, Díaz Infante's police file provided by the San Diego Police Department, sketches of the presumed killers, pictures that show the blows that Estrada Sastré sustained to his skull and caused his death, *El Gráfico* newspaper article informing of Mr. Díaz Infante, and a document with a preliminary investigation (*acta de averiguación previa*) of the judicial police. This document contained Guillermo Carreño and Fracisco Purón's declarations in which they stated that Estrada Sastré informed them of his trip to Los Angeles to meet with Ignacio Díaz Infante. Both Carreño and Purón had no knowledge of the reason for Estrada Sastré's trip.

The first two items listed in the DFS memo are documents with specific information that illuminated the drug trade at a transborder, transnational level. The report by an agent from Mexico's secret police stated that Carlos Estrada Sastré had in his possession at the time of his death a letter from Dr. M. Díaz Infante addressed to Mr. Raymond E. Lee, Chairman of the Israel Bonds Committee explaining to him the reasons for not awarding Mexico's former President, Miguel Alemán Váldes their humanitarian award. Estrada Sastré also had in his possession a paragraph of a letter that contained very sensitive information. These two documents were not made available to the press by Mexico's secret police. Estrada Sastré was in contact with an individual by the name of M. Díaz Infante, a member of the Committee for the Liberation of Mexico who resided in Los Angeles, California.

The letter addressed to Mr. Raymond E. Lee informed the Chairman of Israel Bonds Committee of their disapproval in awarding Miguel Alemán recognition for his

contributions to humanity. The letter, signed by M. Díaz Infante, enumerated a series of improprieties committed by Alemán during and after his presidency. As President of Mexico, Alemán created two main control groups within the DFS: Jalapa and the Buddha group. The Jalapa group was in charge of "controlling the filing and operation of all government posts in the nation." The Buddha group created a "special economic power that kept a constant surveillance and corrupted the main forces of the country," Díaz Infante's letter accused.

Further, the missive accused Alemán of being involved in the traffic of weapons and narcotics. His trafficking in weapons had him receive arms from Czechoslovakia, and then the weapons were sent to other parts of Latin America, including Cuba. In Díaz Infante's view, Alemán had organized and controlled a drug empire that made him the King of the narcotics traffic in the Western hemisphere. His close collaborator and friend, Carlos I. Serrano, was supposed to have supervised Alemán's drug syndicate.

Furthermore, Díaz Infante's letter continued, Alemán's criminal activities permitted him to amass a personal fortune that at the time placed him as the fourth richest man in the world. The letter opposing the recognition of Alemán as a great humanitarian by the Israel Bonds Committee further stated that Carlos I. Serrano had established residence in San Diego, California under the alias of Inocencio Serrano with the implicit intent to control the traffic in narcotics in the Tijuana region.[41] This is the content of the first document that was found in the possession of Estrada Sastré and subsequently not made available to the press.

[41] *AGN-IPS*, Box 1465A, Miscelánea, file 14, 7 de octubre de 1966 a 11 de mayo de 1961, pp. 13-16.

The second document that was not made available to the press contained a paragraph with information that made specific reference to the traffic of narcotics in Tijuana and more concrete information into Alemán's character. This paragraph mentioned the embezzlement of $42 million dollars that were supposed to have been distributed to Mexican and American citizens ordered by the International Commission on Reclamations. This money, instead, was deposited into Alemán's personal bank account in Switzerland. The document contained a note in the handwriting of Díaz Infante with the following message: "Carlitos, this is the penultimate paragraph of the document already in your possession. Greetings, Nacho."

This document also urged the reader to investigate Alemán for the diversion of funds by requesting the United Nations' official records of July 1954 and June 1955. Further, the second document urged the reader to confirm the accusations regarding Alemán's drug syndicate by travelling to Tijuana and observe the political make up of the city. The text mentioned that J. Alessio[42] was in a position of prominence and he was only an instrument that executed the orders of Alemán. These orders came through Serrano and A. Misrachi.[43]

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[42] J. Alessio was perhaps John Alessio, a prominent businessman in the Tijuana-San Diego region and a California political force. In 1943 Alessio was the manager of the Banco del Pacifico and in 1947 he became the assistant manager of the Agua Caliente Racetrack, both positions in Tijuana. In 1960, he was the director and major stockholder of the Westgate-California Corporation a conglomerate that had interests in real estate, seafood canneries, silver mines, and transportation companies. Alessio was also involved in civic causes in both Tijuana and San Diego. In Tijuana, he built 11 elementary schools and in 1964, he was named Mr. San Diego. At the time of his death in 1998, John Alessio had various business ventures and owned real estate in both Tijuana and San Diego. It could be that through his legitimate business ventures, Alessio laundered drug money for Alemán's drug syndicate. Kenneth N. Gilpin, "John Alession, 87, Businessman And California Political Force," *New York Times (1923-Current file);* Apr 5, 1998; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The New York Times*, pg. 41.

[43] *AGN-IPS*, Box 1465A, Miscelánea, file 14, 7 de octubre de 1966 a 11 de mayo de 1961, pg. 24.

As part of this DFS file, there was also a series of telegraphs sent to different newspapers in Baja California sent by Díaz Infante. An analysis of the telegraphs addressed to *El Mexicano*, *El Gráfico*, and *El Heraldo de Baja California* rendered a different version of what was reported by *El Gráfico*. The telegraphs from Díaz Infante clearly named Miguel Alemán as responsible for the death of Estrada Sastré. Further, the telegraphs also stated that Estrada Sastré had in his possession very sensitive and specific information that implicated Alemán Váldes in what was described as a drug empire.[44]

None of the above mentioned information in the declassified documents has been verified. Some of the information, such as the embezzlement charges, is not concrete enough. These documents paint a picture of Alemán being guilty until proven innocent, which is consistent with the Napoleonic Code of Law.

However, the documents that implicated Alemán Váldes with the continental drug empire and were not made public to the press revealed the collusion and infiltration of drug trafficking into the highest spheres of the Mexican political system. Alemán's involvement in the heroin trade can be traced back to his time as President of Mexico. Through Virginia Hill, Serrano developed a relationship with Bugsy Siegel that permitted Siegel the introduction of heroin into the United States, sometimes using the Presidential aircraft. Estrada Sastré had sufficient information to shed light about the traffic in narcotics in Tijuana, and he was ready to inform the public opinion through his political column of the different parties involved in the transborder drug trade and how Tijuana was a microcosm of a larger transcontinental drug operation.

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[44] Ibid, pp. 25-27.

These documents also revealed the strategic importance of Tijuana as the launching point in the traffic of narcotics and potential money laundering activities carried out by prominent businessmen in the transborder region. Additionally, it also presented Tijuana as a microcosm of a drug empire that operated with impunity and complicity and or intimidation of key *tijuanense* public figures. Further, the documents also illuminated the dangers of reporting on these drug trafficking-government links. In the case of Carlos Estrada Sastré, it cost him his life. The official response by the Federal government to Estrada's death was the fabrication of a conspiracy of the extreme right in Mexico that planned an insurrection to overthrow the López Mateos regime, perhaps diverting the attention to a more serious accusation.

The following selection addresses the origins of the Tijuana Transborder War on Drugs

Drugs and Diplomacy: The Origins of the Tijuana Transborder War on Drugs

During the period from 1960-1970, the Tijuana-San Diego corridor continued to experience drug trafficking activities. They also developed close collaborative efforts in combating drug smuggling with California authorities. In late1960, Tijuana witnessed the arrival of Amador Toca Cangas to head the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (*Ministerio Público Federal*, MPF.) During Alemán's time as interim Governor of Veracruz (1936-1939), Toca Cangas was the State's Attorney General. He arrived in Tijuana and immediately made his presence felt by arresting Baldemar Soto González and his bodyguard in January of 1961. Ernesto Güereña, the Governor's chauffer, accompanied Soto González.

The arrest, in addition to implicate Governor Eligio Esquivel Méndez in drug trafficking activities, also disclosed a close collaboration between Mexican and American law enforcement agents. The newspaper chronicles of the time concentrated their attention on a violation of national sovereignty by allowing American law enforcement agents to operate on Mexican soil. The assassination of Carlos Estrada Sastré also illustrated the link between drug traffickers-government.

The controversy that resulted from the Soto case put in jeopardy further collaborative efforts between Mexican and American drug authorities. It also cost Toca Cangas his post in January 25 1961.[45] There was a concerted effort from the part of Baja California and California authorities to continue with their transborder cooperation in the protracted War on Drugs. In March 1960, an agreement highlighting the collaboration between California and Baja California was announced in Sacramento.[46]

Further, by March 24 of that same year, the joint California-Baja California plan to combat drug trafficking was announced. From the part of California authorities, the proposal included a plan to combat consumption and addiction. It also called for the inclusion of five additional FBN drug agents in California. The plan also called for more support from the part of the Federal Government to their respective states.[47] The California and Baja California conversations and agreements for cooperation that had been taking place since 1960 influenced the White House Conference on Narcotics that took place in 1962. This short-lived cooperation between Baja California and California

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[45] Luis Astorga, *Drogas Sin Fronteras: Los Expedientes de Una Guerra Permanente*, pp. 66-72.

[46] "California y B. Cal. se Unen en la Lucha Contra el tráfico de Drogas," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, March 6, 1960, pg. 1.

[47] "Se Activará la Campaña Contra Los Narcoticos Entre Mexico y E. U.," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, March 24, 1960, pg. 4.

to eradicate drug trafficking was in stark contrast with what took place in September of 1969 in a gross display of unilateralism.

Operation Intercept: the Unfriendly Side of Unilateralism

Richard Nixon's 1968 Presidential campaign's slogan was "law and order."[48] Despite the fact there was little the Nixon administration could do to bring the law and order it promised to the streets of America, it soon found opportunities abroad to battle dramatically foreign drug smugglers in the Cold War era. Nixon had already prepared the public for the theme of foreign devils contaminating Americans with drugs, and that enemy countries were traditionally identified as the major source of the narcotics traffic in the United States.

Thus, the CIA with drug trafficking activities implicated all Japanese, Iranians, Cubans, and Chinese as they implemented some form of communism or carried out socialist measures. Further, the Soviet Union and its satellite nations were named in the *New York Times* at the height of the Cold War as major smugglers of heroin; and, in 1962, North Vietnam was added to the list of narcotics offenders by unnamed administration sources. These charges were based more on the desires for propaganda against hostile enemies than on firm evidence of narcotics traffic.[49] In the late 1960s, the Nixon administration decided to extend the war on drugs to Mexico, even though this country, since the López Mateos administration, had been doing a very effective job in dealing with the Red menace.

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[48] Dan Baum, *Smoke and Mirrors: The War on Drugs and the Politics of Failure*, pp. 10-11.

[49] Edward Jay Epstein, *Agency of Fear: Opiates and Political Power in America,* pg. 81.

The most important bilateral relationship the United States sustained in terms of drug policy was with Mexico. In the estimation of U. S. drug authorities, disrupting the supply side of the chain seemed like the sensible path to follow. However, acting unilaterally or too powerfully in this matter would impose upon Mexican rights. This was the least of the concerns from Anslinger, whom had authorized FBN operatives to work in Mexico since the late 1930s. In 1962, the Kennedy administration announced the White House Conference on Narcotics that resulted in the creation of a joint U.S.-Mexican Commission comprised of five Americans and two Mexican officials.

The first action that the joint commission recommended to Mexican Federal legislators and individual states was to control opium production. Efforts to eradicate drug production in Mexico were truncated by the ability of drug traffickers to infiltrate the highest governmental and law enforcement spheres. This elicited a lack of trust from the part of U. S. drug authorities. This gave rise to the strategy known as "supply eradication." Supply eradication presented a loophole that corrupt law enforcement and military agencies could exploit. Mexican drug authorities would select to burn poppy or marijuana fields that were no longer productive or not important in the overall production of drugs. As a response, U. S. authorities demanded the implementation of "American observed" burns.[50]

It is under this precise context that Operation Intercept was implemented. The operation was launched along the United States- Mexico border in September of 1969, with the supposed purpose of stopping the flow of marijuana, heroin, and dangerous drugs. In reality, however, Operation Intercept was designed not to ban narcotics but to

[50] Kathleen J. Frydl, *The Drug Wars in America*, 1940-1973, pp. 373-375.

publicize the Nixon administration's war on crime and force Mexican compliance with Washington's antidrug campaign. With the exception of border residents, most Americans have forgotten the much-heralded operation.[51]

The Nixon administration had ordered the unilateral execution of a meticulous inspection of every single vehicle crossing from Mexico into the United States. The reason for not informing Mexican authorities was the same reason that historically has characterized drug eradication efforts from the part of United States authorities: mistrust derived from lack of institutional control and rampant graft present in both the highest spheres of government and law enforcement and military agencies in Mexico.

The implementation of Intercept came shortly after a meeting between Richard Nixon and Gustavo Díaz Ordaz that took place in early September 1969, as both Presidents were present for the inauguration of the Amistad Dam on the Rio Grand near Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila. During this meeting, an informal 30-minute conversation took place between the two Presidents. The topics that were discussed during the informal conversation ranged from commerce, undocumented workers in the U. S., and drug trafficking along the U. S. – Mexico Border. There were no agreements reached, given the informal nature of the conversation. Both dignitaries took notes on the matters discussed, and they considered the possibility of meeting in a more formal matter in the near future.[52]

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[51] Richard B. Craig, "Operation Intercept: The International Politics of Pressure," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 4, 1980, pp. 556.

[52] Edmundo Bustos Pérez, "Hablaron de Comercio, In-Bond, Tráfico y Empleados," *La Voz de la Frontera*, September 9, 1969, pp. 1, 6.

The history of Operation Intercept could be traced back to 1968 when Nixon promised to attack the drug problem at the source during a speech in Anaheim, California, on September 16, 1968.[53] After this speech, the Special Presidential Task Force on Narcotics, Marihuana and Dangerous Drugs was created.

On June 1969, the Task Force presented its report to the President, thus providing the analytical foundation for Operation Intercept. The report recommended better description of drug runners and the improvement of detection technology. The report also suggested applying economic pressure on Mexico by restricting access of American military personnel to Tijuana. Finally, the report signaled a new era in which the War on Drugs was elevated to the top of the list of the national security agenda. The recommendations made by the Task Force lacked any direct input from the border community. While the leaders of Customs, Immigration, and Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs played crucial roles in the Task Force deliberations, all of these men had neither any knowledge nor experience with the world of the border region. Equally puzzling was the role that the Department of State played, which was in an advisory capacity.[54]

In the weeks leading up to Operation Intercept, U.S. officials provided the Mexican Government with vague clues as to the Action Task Force's plans. In late July U.S. Ambassador Robert McBride presented President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz with the first of these clues. McBride informed the Mexican dignitary that they were concerned about problems of narcotics smuggling entry from Mexico into the United States. Apparently, Díaz Ordaz suspected nothing out of the ordinary, responding that he was also very

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[53] Dan Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors: The War on Drugs and the Politics of Failure*, pg. vii.

[54] Richard B. Craig, "Operation Intercept: The International Politics of Pressure," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 4, 1980, pp. 556-558.

concerned about the problem and would be glad to have Mexican delegation continue to discuss the drug trafficking issue through the proper official channels.[55]

Prior to the meeting at Amistad Dam between the dignitaries, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger presented President Nixon with background information and talking points for the informal conversation. Kissinger stressed that the meeting at Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, was important because it would demonstrate close relations that existed between the two neighboring countries. On the issue of drug trafficking, President Nixon was advised to notify his Mexican counterpart of the concern and intentions from the part of the United States of the problem in general terms and to assure him that the United States would notify Mexico before definite decisions were to be taken in matters that could affect Mexico.[56]

Days before the implementation of Operation Intercept, Ambassador McBride was concerned of the possible disastrous consequences Intercept would have for U. S. – Mexico relations, adding that there was nothing else they could do in attempting to cushion the impact of the unilateral decision.[57] The first pressure of Operation Intercept came on September 8, 1969. The Eleventh Naval District declared the city of Tijuana inaccessible to military personnel.[58]

Under this cloud of mistrust and concealment described above, Operation Intercept was launched on September 21, 1969. The policy was acknowledged to be the

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[55] *U. S. National Archives*, Record Group 59 CFPF 67-69, POL Mexico-US, Box 2344.

[56] *U. S. National Archives*, Nixon Presidential Materials, National Security Files, VIP Visits, Box 947. "President Nixon Trip to Mexico Sept 8, 1969 Briefing Book."

[57] *U. S. National Archives*, Record Group 59, CFPF 1967-69, Economics INCO Drugs 17 US-Mexico, Box 1034, "1/1/67"

[58] Edward Jay Epstein, *Agency of Fear: Opiates and Political Power in America,* pg. 82.

most extensive attempt in the United States history to curtail the introduction of illegal drugs. It was based on a document titled *Report of Special Presidential Task Force Relating to Narcotics, Marihuana, and Dangerous Drugs*, released on June of that same year. It employed the efforts of nearly 2,000 agents of the Bureau of Customs and the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Under pressure from both the Mexican government as well as Mexican and American business interests, Operation Intercept was officially ended on October 2, 1969. This failed operation was followed by a new policy, Operation Cooperation.[59] Operation Cooperation included the participation of Mexico. Under the terms of the new bilateral cooperation, the United States government provided logistical and technological support to the Mexican government in an attempt to combat the production and distribution of narcotics. Operation Cooperation was later abandoned without much fanfare.[60]

Operation Dignity: The Border's Counteroffensive

The reaction to the unilateral implementation was harsh at both the national and regional levels. Nationally, both the American and Mexican press harshly criticized the Operation by considering it simply a display of ineptitude from the part of U. S. authorities.[61] The America press questioned the effectiveness of the operation by targeting land checkpoints that were used by tourists, arguing that marijuana traffickers

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[59] Lawrence A. Gooberman, *Operation Intercept: The Multiple Consequences of Public Policy*, pp. 1-3.

[60] Associated Press, " 'Operation Cooperation ' U. S., Mexico join forces in war on drugs," *Eugene Register-Guard*, June 29, 1970, pg. 4A.

[61] *AGN-IPS*, Box 1793A, file 1: septiembre de 1969 al 13 de octubre de 1971, pg. 8.

smuggle the drug by utilizing more effective and elusive means. This criticism was extended also to the newly launched Operation Cooperation.[62]

At the regional level, the impact of the implementation of Intercept was also severely criticized and the response from the business and civic sectors was swift. Operation Dignity was a civic campaign launched by border residents in response to the unilateral implementation of Operation Intercept. It used students as a conscientious force that had the task of convincing individual households of the objectives of *Operación Dignidad*.[63] It was the counter response sponsored by the Mexican Confederation of National Chambers of Commerce as it sought to dissuade Mexicans who work or shop in the United States from crossing the border.[64]

In Tijuana, student activists along with members of the *Partido Comunista Mexicano* were planning a demonstration along the San Ysidro checkpoint to protest the implementation of Operation Intercept. According to an intelligence report, the organizers of the demonstration distributed flyers with the following text: "*Mexicanos!...Cuidado.- Después de la 'Intercepción' vendrá la INTERVENCION.- Recuerda la Dominicana*," (Mexicans, beware: After Intercept there will be INTERVENTION.- Remember the Dominican Republic.) This was in clear reference to the United States' second occupation on the Dominican Republic from 1965-1966, Operation Power Pack.[65]

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[62] Ibid, pg. 3.

[63] *AGN-IPS*, Box 1793A, file 1: 26 de septiembre de 1969 a 13 de octubre de 1971, pg. 72.

[64] *AGN-IPS*, Box 1451A, file 7, junio de 1965 a julio de 1968, pg. 114.

[65] *AGN-IPS*, Box 1793A, file 1: 26 de septiembre de 1969 a 13 de octubre de 1971, pg. 65.

In the meantime, Mexican authorities implemented Health Checks by Mexican authorities to keep drugged and drunk U. S. citizens out of Mexico. Mexico's Consul Eduardo Perez Camara explained that the Mexican government had planned the health check prior to the implementation of Operation Intercept. Therefore, it could not be construed as a reprisal for Operation Intercept. The Health Check went into effect on November 1, 1969 along the 2,500-mile border. It consisted of qualified physicians conducting the Health Checks at the 21 border crossing points "to stop Americans from entering Mexico who appear[ed] to be ill, drunk, or under the influence of drugs."[66] Moreover, an article by Jesse Martinez from *The News* compared Operation Intercept with an incredible witch-hunt. The article further explicated that the Operation was a bust, affecting tourism and businesses on both sides of the border.[67]

Criticism continued even after Operation Intercept gave way to Operation Cooperation. In another editorial published by *The News* on October 14, 1969, stated that both Operation Intercept and Operation Cooperation should have been named "Operation Aggravation," because both created long line to cross into the United States and the meticulous inspection of every vehicle and pedestrian only created tensions with border residents. The attempts from the part of U. S. authorities in stopping the flow of drugs amounted to a waste of time and resources, the editorial continued. The editorial also highlighted that "[b]ig time pot pushers don't line up at the border for inspection. They fly the stuff in."[68]

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[66] *AGN-IPS*, Box 1451A, file 5, junio de 1965 a julio de 1968, pg. 58.

[67] Ibid, pg. 16.

[68] *AGN-IPS*, Box 1451A, file 1, junio de 1965 a julio de 1968, pg. 3.

Operation Intercept was unsuccessful. It represented a public relations fiasco for the Nixon administration and a burden for border residents. It further displayed the mistrust that characterized U. S. – Mexico drug policy affairs. On the Mexican side of the border region, the population was incensed by this unilateral measure implemented by the Nixon administration in which they felt criminalized and disrespected by a group of public officials with no knowledge of what life in a border town was about. Subsequent efforts to combat drug trafficking consisted on bilateral efforts, albeit these efforts being dictated by U. S. foreign drug policy and the need to attack drugs at the source. In the 1970s, these interdiction efforts resulted in the implementation of defoliation campaigns in Mexico to eradicate poppy and marijuana fields. I will further discuss these operations in Chapter 4.

Chapter Summary

In showing the emergence of the Tijuana War on Drugs is placed in a period of global heightened revolutionary activity and amidst a domestic period of relative social tranquility and economic growth. I have stressed that the period from 1960-1970 witnessed internal and external factors that shaped events in the Tijuana-San Diego corridor. Such events included the intensification of the Cold War, as well as Revolutionary movements both at the local and international level. Externally, this period proved to be crucial in the course of history. Global social upheaval held the hope of transformative social change, whether it was to be accomplished peacefully or in a violent fashion.

Internally, the 1960s the period of a Balanced Revolution by the PRI, yet there were manifestations of discontent from a sector of society disgruntled with broken

promises of a revolution that leftists argue died in 1940. But the official rhetoric of the PRI continued to use the Revolutionary discourse as a platform for electoral purposes and to legitimize their power.

Moreover, this period witnessed the repressive nature of the PRI against any manifestation of discontent from the part of society. The railroad strikes of 1958, as well as the student protests on the eve of the Olympic games were violently suppressed by a well-oiled political system determined to legitimize its ill-gotten power. In a continued effort to minimize student dissidence, the PRI-gobierno used a campaign in which authorities fabricated a diary that propagated the official narrative of a defeated student movement, as well as the use of drugs to discredit the goals and aspirations of those who bravely protested and lost their lives in Tlatelolco in 1968.

Narcoviolence had appeared in Tijuana in 1961 by claiming the life of a journalist ready to expose the links between drug traffickers and government. Carlos Estrada Sastré was killed before he exposed the nexus between drug traffickers and elected officials at the local, regional, and national level. At the time of his death, Estrada Sastré was thought to have in his possession damaging evidence that shed light to a drug empire controlled by a Mexican ex-president. This information was concealed from the press and public opinion by Mexico's secret police, the same organization that the former president founded.

At the regional level, the period from 1960-1970 saw the emergence of the War on Drugs in the transborder region. The governments of Baja California and California made attempts to establish a transnational, regional cooperation to combat drug trafficking in the region. This development was intercalated with an attempt by the

Kennedy administration to tackle the traffic of narcotics from Mexico in to the United States at the federal level. In this joint binational effort, the work of the governments of California and Baja California were crucial in providing the necessary understanding to the problem from a transborder perspective. Further, this period also saw the end of the Bracero Program, as well as the implementation of the Border Industrialization Program.

Politically and socially, Tijuana experienced events that challenged urbanization attempts as well as challenges to the incumbent party. As a continuation to the events that unfolded in the gubernatorial elections of 1959, the elections of 1968 also saw irregularities in the electoral process. Based on improprieties committed during Election Day, the results that favored the PAN in Mexicali and Tijuana were revoked. Instead of calling special elections as the law stipulated, it was decided that municipal councils would complete the terms in both Mexicali and Tijuana. These municipal councils were in power in both Tijuana and Mexicali for two years (1968-1970). In 1971, new elections were called that ended with the PRI winning in both towns.

Socially, the efforts to urbanize the *Zona del Río* led to further litigation and mobilization by members of Tijuana's civic society. ICSA had attempted to carry out its claim to ownership of all of Tijuana with the exception of buildings constructed after 1961. Again, as a continuation to the events that fomented an alleged electoral victory by the opposition party in 1959, further litigation ensued in an attempt to protect Tijuana's patrimony. This situation also led to a student occupation in protests to urbanization efforts in a rapidly growing city.

Even as Presidents Díaz Ordaz and Nixon met in September 1969 on the Mexican border town of Ciudad Acuña to inaugurate the Amistad Dam, the Nixon administration

was finalizing the plans to implement what became known as Operation Intercept. Drawing information form a Congressional Special Task Force report prepared shortly after Nixon took office, the Nixon administration had ordered the unilateral execution of a meticulous inspection of every single vehicle crossing from Mexico into the United States. Due to the perceived corruption by Mexican officials, the Nixon administration had decided not to inform Mexican authorities of Operation Intercept.

Operation Intercept proved to be a public relations nightmare for the Nixon administration. It led to neither arrests of high profile drug traffickers, nor the confiscation of significant amounts or narcotics. Instead, it led to uneasiness from the part of border residents that saw an increase in the wait time to cross into the United States. The transborder business community voiced its unhappiness over the unilateral decision. Civic society along the Mexican border also voiced their displeasure over the implementation of a blatant attempt by the U. S. government to criminalize every Mexican crossing into the United States by launching its own operation, Operation Dignity, which called for a boycott of U. S businesses.

As the decade neared its end, the traffic in narcotics continued unabated. More heroin and marihuana continued to enter the U. S market. By the 1970s, drugs produced in Mexico were about to substitute those coming via the French connection, which controlled the heroin trade from 1960-1971.[69] The War on Drugs promised to eradicate drug production and distribution, but aside from Pyrrhic victories claimed by both the United States and Mexico, the flow of drugs was persistent. U. S. foreign drug policy was gearing up to enter into a period of counterinsurgency, one in which drug production

[69] Nicolas Pileggi, "Anatomy of the Drug War," *New York Maganize*, January 8, 1973, pg. 33-39.

was to be attacked at the source, with defoliation campaigns aimed at destroying poppy and marijuana fields.

This new period also represented an attempt to halt the proliferation of communist regimes in the so-called third world, a continuation of the post World War II period. U. S. Counterinsurgency proved to be a tactic that had a direct influence in the way in which Mexico would deal with not only drug production and eradication, but also with dissidence. In an attempt to deal with both fronts at the same time and in response to the historical period, Mexican authorities coalesced drugs and dissidence in their two-pronged strategy. Chapter four analyzes the "eradication" of dissidence and not drugs from 1970-1985.

Chapter 4 - The "Eradication" of Dissidence and not Drugs: Mexico's Corrupt Law Enforcement and Military Agencies, 1965-1985

Introduction

On January 1st, 1994, the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN) erupted into the scene in the form of an uprising in the state of Chiapas. Their uprising coincided with the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). *Subcomandante* Marcos was in charge of an army of rebels of indigenous extraction. The 1994 uprising brought the worst fears in the Mexican government. It fomented a mindset that perhaps other leftist guerrilla movements would follow the example of the EZLN and take up arms. According to government intelligence reports, it was estimated that 35,000 men were in open rebellion against the Mexican government in Chiapas. This, in turn, could have led to a loss of foreign investment to Mexico.[1]

Two years later, as the negotiations continued to find a peaceful solution to the uprising, Mario Renán Castillo, military chief stationed in Chiapas, discovered drug deposits in Las Margaritas, Ocosingo, and Altamirano, three geographical points of strategic importance for the Zapatista rebels.[2] In April of that same year, *Subcomandante* Marcos revealed in an interview to the *Reforma* Group Newspaper, that drug traffickers had approached him and offered weapons in exchange for dealing drugs freely in the state. After rejecting the offer, drug traffickers warned Marcos that if he did not reached

[1] Jorge Carrasco Araizaga, "1994: los terrores de Salinas," *Proceso*, No. 1939, December 29, 2013, pp. 6-7.

[2] Samuel Blixen, "El doble papel del narcotráfico en el terrorismo de estado y en la democracia militarizada," in *Drogas, poder y derechos humanos en América Latina*, pg. 219.

an agreement with them, they (drug traffickers) would reach a compromise with the Mexican Army.[3]

In 1943, an uprising took place in the state of Morelos, the *Jaramillista* movement. Twelve years later after the *Jaramillista* uprising, Arturo Gámiz led the Ciudad Madera uprising in Chihuahua. From 1959 to 1974, Genaro Vázquez and Lucio Cabañas led a leftist guerrilla movement in Guerrero. The *Jaramillista*, Ciudad Madera, and Genaro Vázquez and Lucio Cabañas uprisings share a similar characteristic with the 1994 Zapatista uprising: a link between drugs and dissidence.

Chapter Four examines the Official response by the Mexican Government in its two-pronged war against dissidence and drugs. By coalescing revolutionary struggles with drug trafficking activities in rural Mexico, the Mexican State began to use the War on Drugs as a political instrument. The Mexican journalist Diego Osorno advanced the argument that in the rural regions of Guerrero and Sinaloa, the Mexican Government launched a campaign aimed at coalescing dissidence and drugs. Osorno further explicates that there is no confirmation found in the historical record officially linking leftist guerrilla movements in rural Mexico being in collusion with drug traffickers.[4] This selection goes beyond Osorno's contention.

As the sources and the analysis in this chapter will demonstrate, there was a willing and able State sponsored repressive apparatus in Mexico eager to legitimize and perpetuate their political power, a political power challenged by both urban and rural leftist *guerrilla* movements. Further, this strategy is best understood within the United States' anti-communist framework of the Cold War Era.

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[3] Jorge Ramos, "Marcos: no pactamos con narcotraficantes," *Reforma*, April 7, 1996, pg. 1.

[4] Diego Osorno*, El Cartel de Sinaloa: Una historia del uso político del narco,* pg. 78.

The following chapter presents a narrative that intercalates Mexico's Dirty War, The War on Drugs as a political tool, and land tenure. This selection begins with a discussion of the historical context. The chapter continues with an analysis of the agrarian question in Mexico. The present selection proceeds with an analysis that illuminates the conditions that made possible the emergence of *Narcocampesinos*. A brief history of dissidence in Mexico follows. This discussion continues with an analysis of the relationship between Mexico's Dirty War and the use of the War on Drugs as a political tool. This exposition ends with some final considerations.

The Revolution will be Institutionalized

The historical period from 1965 to 1985 was characterized by an interesting combination of contrasting domestic and foreign realities; a period of relative stability on the domestic front, as well as a period framed by anti-communist rhetoric on the international arena after World War II. The combination of these two elements yielded a historical epoch that is characterized by a revolution that by 1946 had been "institutionalized" by the PRI.

On the domestic front, the Revolutionary struggle of 1910 started as a social revolution, but it clearly had a political transformation by the 1930s. This in turn makes possible the political vulcanization of the Mexican State. During the "*Maximato*," Plutarco Elias Calles, or "*el Jefe Máximo*" was the *de jure* president from 1924-1928, but served as *de facto* ruler from 1930-1934.[5] The *Maximato* also sees the creation of what eventually became Mexico's Official Party for seventy years. The first incarnation of the present day PRI was under the name of the National Revolutionary Party (PNR). The

[5] Sherman, Meyer, and Deeds, *The Course of Mexican History*, pg. 441.

official party would change its name in two more occasions. The Mexican Revolutionary Party (PRM) in 1938, and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in 1946.[6]

Beginning in 1934 with the Lázaro Cárdenas administration, presidential terms were extended to 6 years. Cárdenas was credited with both carrying the revolution to the left, as well as laying the foundations for a strong Presidential, authoritarian system.[7] Implementing a corporativist approach, Cárdenas co-opted the "four pillars of society:" the peasant, labor, middle class and the military sectors. A fifth sector, the business sector, was amalgamated into chambers of commerce, reporting directly to Cárdenas. According to Professor James Wilkie, Cárdenas saw the need of moving Mexico forward into an industrial phase.

In 1946, the Mexican Revolution was institutionalized under President Miguel Alemán when he eliminated the military sector. The transformation of the PRI into what the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa called "the perfect dictatorship" in 1946 coincided with the advent of the Cold War era. Subsequent presidents continued to utilize the revolutionary rhetoric as part of their political platform to the extent that it became the official version of the revolutionary order.[8]

As the Revolution began to change interests, the emphasis was now placed on Mexico achieving economic growth and industrialization. From 1946 to 1970, Mexico enjoyed a relatively prolonged period of political, economic, and social stability. On the economic front, Mexico sees a period of sustained economic growth. This period is known as the Mexican Miracle.

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[6] Ibid, pp. 442, 452, 480.

[7] Ibid, pp. 445-454.

[8] James Scott, "Foreword," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, pg. ix.

Described as a manifestation of statist policy that was in vogue after the first global depression of 1929, the Mexican Miracle was a series of economic policies aimed to foment a shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy. The Mexican government provided funding for import substitution industrialization (ISI). Some of the economic policies adopted under ISI were aimed at aggressively investing to build up industry, imposing protective tariffs on produced foreign imports to protect Mexican products, heavily investing in developing tourism infrastructure. This economic growth heightened rather than mitigated social inequality. Further, the Mexican Miracle benefited manufacturing, export agriculture, tourism, and the border region. In the heavily indigenous rural areas, subsistence agriculture suffered due to a combination of population growth and a lack of a well-articulated agrarian policy.[9]

The social aspect of the Mexican Revolution experienced a different reality. The agrarian sector saw a decrease in productivity on most of the communal lands or *ejidos*, and communal agriculture was no longer favored. Socialism was supposed to characterize the post-Cárdenas period; instead, Industrial Capitalism typified the period.[10] Dissident movements in rural areas in Mexico attracted supporters, and this increase in dissidence was met by government repression. The concept of rural dissidence will be further explored in the cycles of rebellion and repression section of this Chapter. On the international front, this historical epoch in Mexico coincided with the Cold War Period, a period characterized as one that sees the revolution in Mexico as being capitalists and anticommunist.

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[9] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule Since the Late Nineteenth Century*, pp. 155-157.

[10]Sherman, Meyer, and Deeds, *The Course of Mexican History*, pp. 480-482.

Hal Brands opined that the Cold War Period in Latin America was marked by the dynamic interactions between international forces and domestic actors.[11] The Cold War agenda that prevailed in the international arena had an altering effect on how Mexico dealt with not only their attempts to eradicate dissident movements, but also with their strategy to combat drug trafficking activities. The Cold War Period was characterized by a struggle that prevented the establishment of socialist or communist regimes, especially in "Third World Countries." Within the context of Mexico's emerging political landscape, the Cold War era was defined as a global (and Latin American) confrontation that restricted and outlined both the official and the popular discourse of the revolution. During the Alemán administration, communism was proclaimed anti-Mexican.[12]

Fueled by both international forces and local actors, Mexico's one party system brought a political stability that lasted from 1929 until 2000. A different reality prevailed regionally. The rest of Latin America did not enjoy this prolonged period of political stability. Mexico was the only nation in Latin America not ruled by a military regime. Mexico, in the eyes of the international community, was at the time, a beacon of political, economic, and social stability. Thus, the War on Drugs as well as the War against dissidence in Mexico was predicated by an anti-communist framework. The well-oiled political machine of the PRI continued with the repressive mechanism, thus making possible this perceived period of national growth and social peace. However, the cracks on this well-oiled political machine were beginning to show the stress caused by the friction of dissidence in the form of challenges to the PRI Hegemony.

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[11] Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War*, pp. 3-7.

[12] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution*, pg. 151.

Leftists have described the period from 1964 to 1976 as Mexico's *docena trágica* (twelve tragic years). This historical juncture was marked by the *sexenios* (six year presidential terms) of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (GDO) and Luis Echeverría Álvarez (LEA). GDO had served as secretary of the interior under the López Mateos administration. A native of the state of Puebla, GDO was believed to be the most conservative PRI candidate of the twentieth century.[13] Under the GDO presidency, Mexico was awarded the Olympic games in 1968. The Official Party saw this as the ideal opportunity to show the international community that Mexico was a modern industrial country. The PRI financed the necessary infrastructure for the Olympic games, despite the fact that the country faced more pressing needs.

But not all was well in the home front. With the eyes of the international community fixated on Mexico, student protesters from the major universities in Mexico City took to the streets in a series of demonstrations that attempted to denounce the dichotomy of Mexico's social and political reality, with the luxury of organizing the Olympic Games. With the Olympic Games fast approaching, GDO refused to address student concerns. He took a hard line and increased security. By September 1968, Díaz Ordaz ordered the military occupation of the National University. The protests reached a tragic culmination on October 2nd, 1968 in Tlatelolco.[14] GDO, along with his secretary of the interior, LEA, were responsible for the massacre at the *Plaza de las Tres Culturas*.

Despite the suppressive nature of Mexico's authoritative de-facto one party system, dissatisfaction and uprisings against the PRI was taking place in the form of urban and rural guerrilla movements. By 1969, social unrest was brewing in both the

[13] Sherman, Meyer, and Deeds, *The Course of Mexican History*, pg. 497.

[14] Ibid, pp. 497-501.

streets of important urban centers, as well as the mountainous regions of rural Mexico. In 1970, LEA became president and continued with the state sponsored repression against dissident movements. LEA embarked on a political pilgrimage to rehabilitate his image, an image directly linked to the GDO *sexenio*. Reminiscent of the political campaigns of Madero and Cárdenas, LEA transversed Mexico, and in the process, presented himself as a populist. In September of 1970, LEA was elected with an impressive 86% of the total vote in a rigged election. While in power, LEA observed a hard line for domestic leftist movements, but presented himself as a staunch supporter of the international left and a critic of the Cold War.[15]

On domestic policy, his administration revived the land distribution program, established housing subsidies for workers, and released most of the political prisoners captured under the GDO presidency.[16] Further, LEA also co-opted leaders of the student movement. In a clear attempt to prevent any possible recurrence of student dissidence and the subsequent state repression of 1968 and 1971, LEA absorbed graduating students from Mexico's universities and promised them a job, thus increasing the size of the federal bureaucracy.[17]

The LEA *sexenio* faced a world economic crisis derived from the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 that saw a surge in the oil prices, thus reducing the world demand for Mexican export products. A year later, LEA decided to increase taxes on the wealthiest, a populist measure very unpopular in the business circle. At the end of his presidential term, any

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[15] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Rrevolution*, pp. 168-171.

[16] James W. Wilkie, *Society and Economy in Mexico*, pg. Ibid, pp. 171-173.

[17] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Rrevolution*, pp. 171-173.

hopes he had of leaving a meaningful legacy were replaced by embarrassment. Echeverría handpicked José López Portillo y Pacheco (JOLOPO) as his successor. JOLOPO, a former law professor at UNAM's school of law, vowed to continue LEA's populist policies by mirroring his domestic policy. JOLOPO raised taxes on the wealthy, increased the size of the federal bureaucracy by creating new government dependencies, instituted a 15% value added tax, and increased housing and food subsidies. By the end of his presidential term, Mexico had to default on its international debt, causing a disastrous devaluation of the Mexican currency, and eventually the nationalization of the Mexican banks.[18]

On foreign policy, JOLOPO also imitated LEA by displaying a hard line for domestic leftist movements through the implementation of Operation Condor, while at the same time in the international arena, he lend his support to the Sandinista Revolution, and recognized El Salvador's Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front as a legitimate political force. In this rubric, López Portillo found a formidable adversary in Ronald Reagan as it related to the conflict in Central America. Shortly after taking office in early 1981, Ronald Regan made it very clear that he "would not tolerate Mexican interference in an area the United States had long considered its own backyard."[19]

In addition to the severe economic downturn Mexico faced during what historians have dubbed as the *década perdida* or lost decade of the 1980s, there were the mounting accusations of corruption and mismanagement. The most notorious cases of corruption and nepotism involved Arturo "El Negro" Durazo Moreno, Carlos Hank González, and

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[18] Ibid, pp. 173-175.

[19] Ibid, pg. 174.

JOLOPO.[20] In the case of the former Mexican president, he and his family lived a life of extraordinary and inexplicable luxury, causing people to "change" his name to José López Porpillo.[21] JOLOPO left the presidency in 1982.

Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado (MMH) was JOLOPO's hand picked successor. MMH inherited a Mexican economy on pins and needles, and faced a series of austerity programs that further alienated Mexican society, especially the working class sector. The platform that MMH used for his presidential campaign was one that called for a *renovación moral de la sociedad*, or moral renovation, thus publically denouncing both the corruption that took place during the JOLOPO *sexenio* and what MMH referred to as "financial populism" from the part of his predecessor. It is at this precise juncture that pundits believed that the PRI gave up on its revolutionary rhetoric, essentially accepting that the "Revolution" was over.[22]

The event that fully demonstrated Mexico's corruption and ineptitude was the earthquake of September 19, 1985 and its aftershock the very next evening. This natural disaster evidenced Mexico's inadequate emergency response, due in large part to corruption. This governmental ineptitude, along with an inadequate response from the part of the Mexican government, empowered civil society to take matters into their own hands. Grassroots organizations, rather than governmental assistance, provided the

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[20] Ibid, pp. 175-176.

[21] For a historical look of the topic of political jokes as acts of rebellion, please see Samuel Schmidt, *Humor en serio: Análisis del chiste político en México.*

[22] Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Rrevolution*, pp. 176-177.

immediate relief needed by the victims of the earthquake and set in motion a new type of middle class political mobilization in defense of urban neighborhoods.[23]

Intercalated with cycles of growth, stagnation and hyperinflation, there was also a period of alternating rebellion and repression in both urban centers and rural areas that reached a high point in the early 1970s onto the early 1980s. In the early 1970s in rural Mexico, Lucio Cabañas and Genaro Vázquez led the insurgency in Guerrero with the creation of the *Partido de los Pobres*. This period was known as Mexico's Dirty War. At the same time these authoritarian events were taking place in urban centers across the nation, indigenous communities began to wage a similar type of struggle in rural Mexico. It is under this precise context, Mexico's Dirty War that the War on Drugs began to be used as a political tool to fight dissidence in rural areas of Mexico. Deeply entrenched in this issue was also the agrarian question. The following section offers a historical explication of the relationship between the agrarian question, dissidence and the War on Drugs.

The Agrarian Question in Mexico

At a macro level, there have been three agrarian reforms in Mexico. The first agrarian reform was a result of the conquest, when Spaniards introduced a new concept of land tenure to the indigenous populations. The second agrarian reform was a product of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. The third agrarian reform was considered a counter reform and it was the direct result of legislative actions put into motion in 1992 during the Salinas administration.[24]

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[23] Ibid, pp. 178-179.

[24] Víctor Manzanilla-Schaffer, *El drama de la tierra en México: Del siglo XVI al siglo XXI*.

In a modern context, the agrarian question in Mexico has gone through very distinct phases. In 1853, Santa Anna centralized land. Juarez took away the land that belonged to the church, and placed it for public auction, effectively privatizing the land. As part of his Modernization campaign, Porfirio Diaz used his Presidential Powers to create large private haciendas and latifundia, as well as to expand existing large land holdings. Zapata's *Plan de Ayala* called for the redistribution of land through the restoration of *ejidos* or communal lands. The Constitution of 1917 established the legal foundation for communal lands, known as *ejidos*.

Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution called for the creation of communal land to be distributed to farmers, especially those in rural areas. Plutarco Elias Calles, President of Mexico from 1924-1928 saw the distribution of land from a Malthusian perspective, and attempted to put a stop to this practice. Lázaro Cárdenas del Río, his successor, continued with the Revolutionary project, and stepped up the redistribution of land to rural peasants. Opposing this action, land speculators in the State of Sinaloa joined forces with crime bosses to intimidate and persuade small farmers of benefitting from land redistribution, a measure they vehemently opposed. This was due in large part to the potential profit margin these land speculators saw in their involvement in the emerging illicit production and distribution of opium-based products.[25]

From 1936 to 1988, Mexican Presidents enacted a series or measures to protect large commercial agricultural producers against being divided through land reform. These measures entailed the issuance of what is known as certificates of inaffectability. These certificates of inaffectability were design to foment large-scale production in the

[25] Diego Osorno, *El cartel de Sinaloa: una historia del uso político del narco*, pp. 95-98, 104-106.

agricultural sector. Certificates of inaffectability were granted to protect large commercial agricultural producers against being divided through land reform.

Such certificates, emphasized after 1936 by Cardenas, assured that productive commercial farming, needed to provide a stable food supply for the domestic and foreign markets, would not be disrupted. Aleman added certificates to protect livestock ranching, some permanently and some for only 25 years.[26] This practice continued until the Administration of Miguel de la Madrid. From 1936 to 1982, 190,235 certificates had been granted. By 1987 Miguel de la Madrid had granted 222,816, more than the combined total of his eight predecessors.[27] After the violent phase of the Mexican Revolution, agrarian policy changed to a more suitable model that could take advantage of mechanization and modern techniques. In 1929, Plutarco Elias Calles ordered a halt to the distribution of land started under the auspices of the Constitutional text of 1917. Despite Elias Calles' concerns over Mexico not having enough arable land to redistribute, Lázaro Cárdenas continued with the redistribution of land. According to Prof. James Wilkie, by the end of the Cardenas administration, Mexico could no longer sustain this model of land redistribution, given the fact that all the productive land had been already given away.[28]

Historically, the problem of drug trafficking in Mexico has been connected to land tenure and guerrilla activity in rural areas. Mexican officials have known about the link between drug traffickers and peasants since 1971 when it became a concern for the

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[26] James Wilkie, *Society and Economy in Mexico*, pg. 64.

[27] Ibid, pp. 64-65.

[28] James Wilkie, *Society and Economy in Mexico*, pp. 1-15.

official party. Agrarian policy in Mexico has also been linked to drug trafficking in the form of the so-called *Narcocampesinos* since 1971. The following section illuminates how efforts to combat the War on Drugs in Mexico were predicated by the anti-communist agenda of the Cold War era, giving rise to the *narcocampesino*.

The 1971 Federal Agrarian Reform Law and the Emergence of the *Narcocultivador*

Prior to 1971, certain structural forces laid the foundations for the rise of *narcocampesinos*. Such groups were comprised of poor indigenous peasants in remote, rural areas. As a result of lack of economic opportunities and neglect from the part of public officials, these peasants began to engage in the production and or storage of narcotics. At this same time, Mexican Officials started to intensify their efforts to combat drug traffickers fueled by the Cold War agenda.

Consistent with United States' counterinsurgency theory and counternarcotic policy, the Mexican Military intensified their campaign against producers and distributors of opium and marihuana in producing states. As part of the Cold War agenda, the United States devised the counterinsurgency theory in the 1950s in an attempt to prevent the spread of communism in Asia and Latin America.[29] The purpose of this policy was two-fold: to stop drug production and distribution, as well as to promote internal security within Mexico. By implementing this drug control policy, U. S. authorities instructed Mexican authorities in how and why to fight the war on drugs.[30]

In an effort to combat proto drug trafficking organizations, a campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of engaging in the illicit trade directed at farmers was initiated

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[29] Daniel Weimer, *Seeing drugs: Modernization, Counterinsurgency, and U.S. Narcotics Control in the Third World, 1969-1976*, pg. 2.

[30] Ibid, pp. 181-189.

by the Mexican State. Mexican officials warned peasants of the dangers of using communal lands for the production of opium and marijuana. The branch of Mexico's Secret Service, the dependency known as *Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales* (Political and Social Investigations), began to pay close attention to the issue of what they referred to as "*Narcocultivadores*" or narcogrowers. In an effort to discourage these individuals from engaging in the illicit production of opium and marihuana, they issued the Federal Agrarian Law in April 1971. The *Ley Federal Agraria* (Federal Agrarian Law) entered into effect on May 1, 1971.

Mexican officials had knowledge about the link between Drug Traffickers and *campesinos* since the early 1970s. In 1971 we see the emergence in the literature of the *narcocultivador*, or nacocultivator.[31] This is a term that helps to identify *ejidatarios* engaged in the production of opium or marihuana in rural Mexico. That same year, the Mexican Government started to pay close attention to the activities carried out throughout the national territory by criminal elements associated with proto drug trafficking organizations. At this same time, Mexican officials initiated the implementation of an offensive to combat the production and distribution of illicit drugs, namely, opium and marijuana.

The passage of the Federal Agrarian Reform also took place in 1971. On April 16, the new Federal Agrarian Reform Law was published in Mexico's *Diario Oficial de la Federación* (Official Gazette of the Federation). On May 1 of that same year, the law

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[31] Rafael de la Cruz, "Un Herido y 3 Detenidos, en Batidas Contra Narcocultivadores, en Nayarit." *Excelsior*, June 21, 1971, pg. 9. *AGN, IPS*: Box 1007, junio 1971.

entered into effect.[32] The new Federal Agrarian Reform Law enumerated provisions that addressed the role of *campesinos* in the production and distribution of opium and/or marijuana, as well as actions that will be taken against them by Mexican authorities.[33] There are four articles that fall under the purview of my investigation. These articles are: 85, 87, 200, and 257.

Article 85 stated that the *ejidatario* would lose his rights to use his portion of communal land if he was convicted of using such land in the cultivation of opium or marijuana, or if he allowed other people to cultivate these or other narcotics in his assigned land.[34] Article 87 stipulated that any *ejidatario* that has served a prison sentence that was the direct result of the violation of article 85 would loose access to communal land.[35] Article 200 prevented any individual from being awarded communal land on the basis of having a conviction related to the cultivation of opium, marijuana, or other type of illicit narcotic.[36] Finally, Article 257 called for the cancellation of any "certificate of inaffectability issued to an *ejidatario* that was found to have authorized, has induced, or allowed the cultivation of opium, marijuana, or other type of illicit narcotic."[37]

At this same time, Mexican Officials began a unilateral campaign aimed at combating the production and distribution of narcotics. Dubbed *Operación Equilibrio* by

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[32] *Ley Federal de Reforma Agraria: exposición de motivos, antecedentes, comentarios y correlaciones*, pg. 17.

[33] Dantón de los Rios, "Castigo a los campesinos que cultiven droga". *Avance,* May 27th, 1971. *AGN IPS*, Box 1007, mayo 1971.

[34] Martha Chávez Padrón de Velázquez, *Ley Federal de Reforma Agraria: Exposición de Motivos, Antecedentes, Comentarios y Correlaciones*, pg. 79.

[35] Ibid, pp. 80-81.

[36] Ibid, pp. 152-153.

[37] Ibid, pg. 187.

the Mexican journalist Julio Pomar, The Federal Agrarian Reform Law of 1971 was part of a more elaborate campaign that mounted an offensive against drug traffickers that called for the collaboration of the Federal and State governments, as well as Mexico's organized peasantry.[38]

Mexico's Attorney General's Office (*Procuraduria General de la República*) launched a campaign aimed at informing organized peasantry in rural Mexico about the new Federal Agrarian Reform Law, as well as the repercussions of engaging in the cultivation of opium or marihuana.[39] This campaign constituted a clear attempt by the part of Mexican authorities to address the involvement of *ejidatarios* in the production of illicit narcotics. It acknowledged the problem faced by *ejidatarios*, but it did not address the structural forces that produced such situation for the agricultural sector in rural Mexico.

Based on my investigation, there is a clear connection between issues of agrarian policy and drugs. Further, my investigation has also yielded the presence in the historical record of another issue that is closely related to agrarian policy and drugs, and that is the issue of dissidence in agrarian rural areas in Mexico. The following section offers an analysis of dissidence in Mexico, and how the official response has colluded leftist activities with drug trafficking operations. But first, a brief explication of Mexico's cycles of rebellion and repression is offered in the following pages.

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[38] Julio Pomar, "Nefasta Mancuerna: Latifundismo Simulado y Tráfico de Drogas." *El Día*, March 9, 1976. *AGN, IPS*: Box 1007, March 1976.

[39] "Franco Rodríguez Hablará con Campesinos Sobre la Ley Agraria, Ganaderia y Cultivo de Drogas." *El Día*, August 9, 1971, pg. 8. *AGN, IPS*: Box 1008, August 1971.

Dissidence in Mexico: Cycles of Rebellion and Repression

Rural guerrilla activity in Contemporary Mexico dates back to 1943, with the emergence of the *Jaramillista* movement in Morelos led by Ruben Jaramillo. Two elementary school teachers, Genaro Vázquez and Lucio Cabañas, headed the Revolutionary efforts in the state of Guerrero from the 1960s until the 1970s. The urban guerrilla resistance was marked by the creation of MAR (*Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria*), in the 1960's and The *Liga Comunista 23 de septiembre* in 1973.

These periods of rebellion, both urban and rural, were occurring during a perceived phase of sustained economic growth. Ironically, during this period Mexico saw an unprecedented cycle of social and political upheaval that spilled into the streets in the form of strikes and student protests. These manifestations of discontent were met by the Mexican State in a repressive manner, an action that helped the State consolidate its authoritative power.[40]

The above-mentioned movements, along with the railroad strikes of 1958 and the student protest in Tlatelolco in 1968, were violently repressed by the Mexican Government in their attempts to eradicate any type of dissidence. By the mid-1970s, these movements had been either eradicated or co-opted by the LEA Administration. Mexico's cycle of rebellion and repression, in the modern context, began with the attack by a group of elementary school teachers in Ciudad Madera, Chihuahua. Prior to this,

[40] Sherman, Meyer, and Deeds, *The Course of Mexican History*, pp. 489.

there had been dissatisfaction expressed by the working sector in Mexico over labor conditions, most notably, the railroad strike in 1958-59.[41]

As explicated in the previous chapter, in 1968, a group of students from various educational institutions in Mexico staged a demonstration against the Mexican government a couple of weeks prior to the start of the Olympic games. This student demonstration begins to garner support from civic society. The PRI considered this demonstration a test to their hegemony. The student demonstration was effectively suffocated in an extremely violent fashion. The student massacre in October 2nd, 1968 at the Plaza of the three cultures was another example of Mexico's repressive tactics in order to protect their sovereignty and it remains as one of the bloodiest examples of State repression in Mexican history.[42]

According to an intelligence report prepared on January 15, 1973, there were 12 different urban and rural leftist organizations active and on the run in Mexico, with 60 members clearly identified by Mexico's secret service.[43] During this same period, MAR and *Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre* were the most vocal insubordination movements in urban centers.

This section begins with an analysis of the *Jaramillista* movement led by Ruben Jaramillo. This will be followed by the events in Ciudad Madera. Next, the actions carried out by MAR from 1966-1971 will be discussed. This section will be followed by

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[41] Hodges, Gandy, and Gandy. *Mexico Under Siege: Popular Resistance to Presidential Despotism*, pp. 74-79.

[42] See Chapter Three for a more detailed description of the Tlatelolco massacre.

[43] "Relación de Personas que se Encuentran Profugas y Pertenecientes a Diversas Organizaciones Suversivas," AGN IPS, Box 1490-A, File 1, FS.103: 6 de abril de 1967 a 23 de abril de 1975.

an account of *Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre.* This section will conclude with a description the struggles led by Genaro Vazquez and Lucio Cabañas in Guerrero.

Rubén Jaramillo and the *Jaramillista* Movement

Beginning in 1943, the State of Morelos witnessed the effects of rural neglect by a failed agrarian policy geared toward industrialization. The *Jaramillista* movement in Morelos marked the genesis of popular peasant dissidence after the Mexican Revolution. Ruben Jaramillo, from Morelos, led a movement that became known as *Jaramillismo*.

At age 15, Jaramillo had joined Emiliano Zapata[44] to fight for land and liberty. By the time he was 17 years old, Jaramillo was promoted to the rank of Captain in the Zapatista army. As the Mexican Revolution and its peasant leadership became either co-opted or murdered, Ruben Jaramillo retreated to the mountainous region of Morelos to continue with the struggle that Zapata had started.

Frustrated at one point from being constantly on the run, Jaramillo decided to lay down his weapons and join the political process by running political office. But this attempt to seek political inclusion was met by violent repression from the State.[45] After briefly seeking to make a change through his participation in the political process,[46] Ruben Jaramillo realized that the only way to advance his political ideals and defend his life and advocate for justice in his community was through taking up arms, so once again

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[44] Tanalís Padilla, *Rural resistance in the land of Zapata: the Jaramillista movement and the myth of the Pax PRIÍsta*, 1940-1962, pp. 43-44.

[45] Ibid, pg. 86.

[46] Donald Hodges, "The Plan of Cierro Prieto: The Peasant-Worker Movement in Morelos (1942-1962)." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 31, 1991, pp. 128-129.

he retreated to the mountainside. Jaramillo and his sympathizers took up arms against State authorities in three separate occasions: 1943, 1944, and 1951.

Tanalís Padilla contends that Ruben Jaramillo sought to frame his struggle as a continuation of Zapata's struggle. Padilla further contends that the *Jaramillistas'* use of both armed and legal mobilizations "can be best understood as a part of the 'ambivalent and unstable' compromise reached as a result of the revolution." This pact called for the State's attempt to substitute the popular elements of the revolution with the "official" version of the revolutionary order. Moreover, while Zapata fought for the restoration of land, Jaramillo went beyond Zapata's original demand by pressuring state authorities for the implementation of a true agrarian reform, that is, granting access to the necessary mechanisms by which peasants can make their lands productive for self-sustainment. [47]

In response to the State's attempt to substitute the popular elements of the revolution with the official discourse of the revolutionary order, Jaramillo issued the *Plan de Cerro Prieto*. This plan had not only responded to Mexico's changing socioeconomic reality, but it also reflected the expansion of an agrarian ideology sparked by an alliance of Marxists teachers and workers.[48] Finally, in 1962, Ruben Jaramillo was killed by Federal troops as he attempted to flee. [49] Jaramillo's family was also killed in the

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[47] Tanalís Padilla, *Rural resistance in the land of Zapata: the Jaramillista movement and the myth of the Pax PRIÍsta*, 1940-1962, pp. 85-86.

[48] Ibid, pp. 86-87, 95-101.

[49] Donald Hodges, "The Plan of Cierro Prieto: The Peasant-Worker Movement in Morelos (1942-1962)." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 31, 1991, pg. 126.

process. According to the official version, Jaramillo, in his attempt to avoid being shoot, shielded himself behind his wife and children.[50]

The "Slaughter at Xochicalco," as it was called in the Mexican Journal *Política*, was described as a brutal political assassination unlike anything seen before, not even during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. Immediately after Jaramillo's death, the Office of the Attorney General issued a press bulletin in which Jaramillo was accused of a series of crimes, including illegal land occupation and drug trafficking. The rest of the Mexican press echoed that narrative, one in which Jaramillo was presented as a criminal and drug trafficker in order to justify his execution.

Despite being accused of stealing $100,000 pesos, the coffins in which the bodies of Jaramillo and his family were laid to rest, were paid by the Tlaquiltenango peasants, since Jaramillo lived in poverty. Jaramillo's coffin was wrapped in a Mexican flag used by the Zapatista forces during the Revolution.[51] It was clear what Mexican authorities were trying to accomplish this early in 1962: link dissents and dissident movements with drug smugglers and the War on Drugs.

Ruben Jaramillo represented the continuation of the peasant struggle initiated by Zapata. However, Jaramillo took the struggle a step further by advancing the notion of an agrarian reform cemented in Marxist ideology, and supported by teachers and workers with a clear understanding of class struggle. One year after the death of Ruben Jaramillo by Federal troops in Morelos, another class struggle began to take shape in the state of

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[50] "Jaramillo muerto al tartar de huir." *El Universal*, May 24, 1962, pg. 1.

[51] "Nación: La Matanza de Xochicalco," *Política: Quince días de México y del Mundo*, Vol. III, No. 51, June 1, 1962, pp. 5-9.

Chihuahua. A class struggle deeply influenced by both international forces and domestic actors.

Ciudad Madera, Chihuahua

According to Professor Fernando Pineda Ochoa, the events in Ciudad Madera, Chihuahua, and the struggle led by Ruben Jaramillo, represented the emergence of the first guerrilla movements in contemporary Mexico.[52] The guerrilla movement in Chihuahua occurred at a historical juncture characterized, on the international arena, by the triumph of the Cuban revolution, and on the domestic front, by an increasingly dissatisfied group of peasants, workers, and university students.[53] Internationally, the events that resulted in the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959 fueled a base of peasants, workers, university students, and teachers that forged an alliance to actuate a revolutionary change, as had Fidel Castro.

In the 1960s, the state of Chihuahua epitomized Mexico's transition from an agrarian society to an industrial one championed by the official revolutionary discourse. Chihuahua is Mexico's largest state and in 1963, possessed the largest *latifundios* used for cattle ranching to produce meat that was sold to the United States.[54] One year prior to the uprising, Franciso Ibarra, a rancher who had the support of Bosques de Chihuahua

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[52] Fernando Pineda Ochoa, *En las profundidades del MAR: el oro no llegó de Moscú*, pg. 38.

[53] Víctor Orozco Orozco, "La guerrilla chihuahuense de los años sesenta," in *Movimientos armados en México, siglo XX*, Vol. 2, pp. 341-345.

[54] Laura Castellanos, *México armado, 1943-1981*, pg. 66.

and the local government, committed heinous crimes against an Indigenous group that lived in the El Refugio community.[55]

In this period, Chihuahua was a state whose rural peasant population was declining, while at the same time, urban centers like Ciudad Juarez experienced an increase in population due to the Border Industrialization Program. Thus, the displacement of Mexican peasants and their proletarization was crystallizing in Ciudad Madera. [56]

Nevertheless, there was a group of domestic actors in Chihuahua that fueled the movement. Precisely because of this transition from an agrarian society to an industrial society, the Ciudad Madera movement was deeply based in class struggle. The Ciudad Madera movement had an "agrarian problem" component as well as an "urban brigade" element whose responsibility was to produce and distribute literature in urban areas of Chihuahua.[57] In Chihuahua, the Mexican Revolution of 1910 had yielded no palpable results for the masses, and it had not properly addressed the "agrarian problem." It was no surprise that the 1960s revolutionaries were utilizing the same coded language previously used by their 1910s counterparts, since the rich landowners were the ones that benefited from the armed struggle of 1910.

In light of this, Arturo Gámiz sent out an invitation for the *II Encuentro en la Sierra de Chihuahua* (Heraclio Bernal encounter). This *II Encuentro* produced a five-

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[55] "Panorama Nacional, La Nación: Sangre en Chihuahua," *Política: Quince Días de México y del Mundo*, Vol. VI, No. 131, October 1, 1965, pg. 6.

[56] Víctor Orozco Orozco, "La guerrilla chihuahuense de los años sesenta," in *Movimientos armados en México, siglo XX*, Vol. 2, pg. 346-347.

[57] Ibid, pg. 341.

point resolution. The political nature of the five-point resolution centered on Marxist ideology. This five-point resolution was an indictment on capitalism, imperialism, the colonial legacy, and a Mexican bourgeoisie dictatorship that had failed to advance the interests of the masses. The last resolution illustrated that the only way to actuate changes was through an armed struggle.[58]

It is at the Heraclio Bernal encounter that the decision was made to take up arms against the Mexican State.[59] Arturo Gámiz led a group of 12 other individuals into an attack of the military post in Ciudad Madera. On September 23, 1965, a group of peasants, teachers, and university students, decided to carry out a plan of action in Ciudad Madera's military post. The aim of these 13 individuals was simple. Their plan called for a quick strike to obtain ammunition, take control of the town, expropriate the local bank, and sent a Revolutionary communiqué through the local radio station.

According to the plan, once the above-mentioned objectives were accomplished, these 13 individuals would return to the mountainous region of Chihuahua. In the end, 13 people died and 15 were injured.[60] The military base had 125 soldiers stationed, certainly no match for the 13 guerrilleros. This desperate attack was the culmination of unsuccessful pleas in defense of the rights of peasants in the region. Each time, the demands of demonstrators were met with violent repression from the part of the government. As the bodies of the subversives laid on the ground on a gruesome display of power, the then Governor of Chihuahua, Práxedes Giner Durán declared "*Puesto que*

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[58] Fritz Glockner, *Memoria Roja: Historia de la Guerrilla en Mexico (1943-1968)*, pp. 170-175.

[59] Ibid, pg. 176.

[60] Laura Castellanos, *Mexico armado: 1943-1981*, pg. 63.

era tierra lo que peleaban, dénles tierra hasta que se harten" (since they were fighting for soil, give them soil until they get sick of it).[61]

Some of the survivors of the Ciudad Madera assault continued with the armed struggle. Oscar González Eguiarte founded the *Grupo Guerrillero Arturo Gámiz,* and sustained confrontations with the Mexican Army until his capture and execution Sonora in late 1968. Other individuals who joined the *Grupo Guerrillero Arturo Gámiz* also expressed frustration at the way in which the land issue had been neglected in Chihuahua. Among them were Guadalupe Scobell Gaytán, Juan Antonio Gaytán Aguirre, Arturo Borboa Estrada, Carlos David Armendariz Ponce and José Luis Guzmán Villa. These individuals were either captured and executed or were killed in action in late 1968.[62] The siblings of Arturo Gámiz joined urban guerrilla forces that lent their support to Lucio Cabañas.

Despite the unsuccessful attack and their failure to readdress the land issue in Chihuahua, the actions of this group of peasants, teachers and university students served as an inspiration for the creation of an urban Guerrilla in 1973, *La Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre*. But before this selection embarks on the analysis of the *Liga 23 de Septiembre*, this section continues with an examination of the *Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria* (MAR).

Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria (MAR)

The political climate in the state of Michoacán of the early 1960s served not only as a backdrop for the ideological foundations of the *Movimiento de Acción*

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[61] "Panorama Nacional, La Nación: Sangre en Chihuahua," *Política: Quince Días de México y del Mundo*, Vol. VI, No. 131, October 1, 1965, pp. 5-6.

[62] Mario Menendez Rodríguez, "Los Guerrilleros de Chihuahua," *Por qué? Revista Independiente*, No. 26, December 27, 1968, pp. 18-20.

Revolucionaria (MAR), but it also epitomized the political climate of Mexico at the time. Student activism increased after the state gubernatorial elections in 1962, and the election of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz at the national level in 1964. In a clear indication of the international political atmosphere, the student movement in the state of Michoacán had a very leftist focus. This was clearly evident in the demands the precursor to MAR issued during their protests against both the state and federal government. The students demanded a more egalitarian education, they conveyed their support for the Mexican political prisoners, and expressed their solidarity with the anti-imperialists struggles around the world.[63]

Further, there had been other contributing factors in Michoacán that influenced the ideological tendencies of MAR after the 1964 election of Díaz Ordaz. *The Movimiento de Liberación Nacional* or National Liberation Movement (MLN) formed the *Central Campesina Independiente* or the Independent Central Peasantry (CCI). The CCI brought together communists and other dissatisfied factions of Michoacán's society in a challenge against the *Confederación Nacional Campesina* or the National Conferedation of Peasants (CNC).[64] The CNC was formed in 1938 as part of Cardenas' corporativist strategy. Years of political activism and government repression in Michoacán, led to the creation of a leftist guerrilla organization by a nucleus of students from various parts of Mexico that traveled to the USSR as part of an exchange program.

The origins of the *Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria* (MAR) can be traced to the now defunct Soviet Union. In 1966, the founding members of MAR met while

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[63] Verónica Oikión Solano, "El Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria: una historia de radicalización política," in *Movimientos armados en México, siglo XX, Vol. II*, pg. 423-424.

[64] Ibid, pp. 426-427.

studying abroad at the *Universidad de la Amistad de los Pueblos Patricio Lumumba* or Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow. Fabricio Gómez Souza, Leonardo Mendoza Sosa, Camilo Estrada Luviano, Alejandro López Murillo, Candelario Pacheco Gómez, Octavio Márquez Vázquez, José Luis Guerrero Moreno, and Salvador Castañeda Álvarez met while enrolled at the University in Moscow. From this meeting, and subsequent conversations regarding the revolutionary perspectives for Latin America, in particular for Mexico, a 14-point program emerged that called for the improvement of the condition of Mexican society.[65]

Another of MAR's founding members, Martha Maldonado Zepeda, has an interesting link to previous dissidence. Martha is the daughter of the first governor of the State of Baja California Norte, Braulio Maldonado Sández (1953-1959). After finishing his 6-year term as Governor, Braulio Maldonado was in charge of the *Frente Popular Electoral* (Popular Electoral Front), an organization that opposed the presidential campaign of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. It was for this reason that in 1964, Braulio Maldonado left for Cuba in exile. Braulio Maldonado returned to Mexico in 1966 and worked as a consultant for the *Central Campesina Independiente*. He was also involved in the *Movimiento Coordinador Revolucionario de la República Mexicana.*[66]

MAR continued with their efforts to de-destabilize the Mexican State. To this end, a contingent of MAR members travelled to North Korea between August-September of 1969.[67] On March 16, 1971, before they could put their revolutionary plan into action,

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[65] Fernando Pineda Ochoa, *En las profundidades del MAR: el oro no llegó de Moscú*, pg. 29.

[66] Braulio Maldonado Sández, *Baja California: comentarios políticos y otras obras selectas*, pp. 226-228.

[67] Fernando Pineda Ochoa, *En las profundidades del MAR: el oro no llegó de Moscú*, pg. 47.

Mexican authorities arrested 19 members of MAR.[68] This event put in motion a well-devised misinformation campaign orchestrated by the Mexican State. With the notorious participation of the press, five Soviet diplomats were expelled from the country,[69] effectively preventing MAR from accomplishing their objectives, and efficiently disarticulating the aspiring Revolutionary Movement.

In the cases of both Arturo Gámiz and the Ciudad Madera Movement, as well as with MAR, there was an attempt to build an alliance between the urban and rural sector of the population. In a similar fashion, the *Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre* attempted to build a base that comprised both urban and rural supporters.

Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre

In 1970, a broad coalition of leftist organizations in Mexico started to lay the theoretical foundations of what would become an important urban guerrilla movement. Officially founded on March 15, 1973, by Ignacio Salas Obregón[70] *La Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre* (LC, *la Resortera, la Orga, la O*) took its name from the events that transpired in Ciudad Madera in 1965. Founded and inspired in the wake of the events that transpired in Tlatelolco in 1968 and the University experience in the state of Sinaloa, their thesis was known as the *Universidad Fábrica*, or University Industry, where the labor force was comprised of professors and students, placing the student as proletariat, thus transferring the exploitation that workers were subjected to university students. Among their membership was the *Guajiros* from Baja California, *los Procesos*, *los*

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[68] Ibid, pp. 63-66.

[69] Ibid, pg. 1.

[70] Mario Ramírez Salas, "La relación de la Liga Comunista 23 de septiembre y el partido de los pobres en el estado de Guerrero en la década de los setenta," in *Movimientos armados en México, siglo XX*, pg. 527.

Enfermos de Sinaloa, the majority of the *Feroces* from Guadalajara, the *Lacandones* from Mexico City, as well as the Red Brigade. The organization's main objectives were the construction of a proletariat class, the overthrow of the dominant bourgeoisie, and to obtain power through class struggle – a struggle that was supposed to culminate in the creation of a political party and a people's army.

As the LC continued to grow at the national level, their militancy became more confrontational, ironically, the opposite was occurring with MAR. The LC continued to expand throughout Mexico. According to governmental reports, the LC membership ranged from 400 to 3,000. On September 17, 1973, the command of the LC decided to kidnap an important business figure from Monterrey, Eugenio Garza Sada as a way to make a statement to the authorities but they failed. On October 10 of the same year in Guadalajara, the LC kidnaped Great Britain's consul, as well as an important business individual of the region in exchange for ransom and the release of 51 political prisoners. The LC's failed attempt to kidnap Garza Sada marked the beginning of the end for the organization.

The response from the Echeverría administration was swift and violent, prompting him to authorize torture and disappearance against members of the organization. In an example of Echeverria's hard line against the dissenters, he refused to negotiate the release of hostages in subsequent kidnappings, including the one of his father in law.[71] By September of 1975, the *Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre* had been effectively crushed.[72]

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[71] Laura Castellanos, *Mexico armado: 1943-1981,* pp. 204-207, 208-216.

[72] "Está desarticulada la liga 23 de Septiembre: Ojeda P." *El Universal*, September 13, 1975, pg. 1.

At the same time that urban guerrilla movements were wrecking havoc in important metropolitan areas, two rural elementary school teachers had begun leftist struggles in the state of Guerrero: Genaro Vázquez and Lucio Cabañas. These struggles have at their core a common cause, and that is the agrarian question. The following section places the struggles of Genaro Vázquez and Lucio Cabañas in the context of both the teacher activism the state and Mexico, as well as the anticommunist framework that prevailed at the time.

Teacher Activism in Guerrero

Teacher activism played a fundamental role in the leftist guerrilla movement of the state of Guerrero. This situation dates back to the revolutionary period. Education Minister Jose Vasconcelos had founded the rural schools during his time as Mexico's minister of education from 1921-1924. The rural schools embraced the teaching style where reality must be experienced, a teaching philosophy in which both students and educators interact with their environment in order to adapt and learn. Educators who obtained their teaching degree from normal schools are known as *normalistas*. These rural schools or "*escuelas normales*" where *normalistas* are formed were created as a result of the Mexican Revolution, when Mexico was largely a peasant society.

Vasconcelos began an educational campaign directed by rural teachers, selecting them as fundamental figures responsible to carry out the revolutionary spirit of the time. Historian Mary Kay Vaughan considered this educational campaign part of the cultural politics of the Revolution. She considered rural schools as central in state policy making. Professor Vaughan further opines that the creation of this educational campaign helped the longevity of the PRI by inculcating a state ideology for purposes of rule, but it also

served communities when they needed to contest state policies. At the same time, it helped in the creation of a national civil society that would eventually render obsolete the single party state, and "teachers facilitated this dual construction."[73]

In Guerrero, *normalistas* were shaped in one of Mexico's best-organized collectives with a socialist and assembly driven emphasis, the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural School.[74] This educational center produced two rural elementary school teachers that transformed the history of dissidence in the state: Genaro Vázquez and Lucio Cabañas. Furthermore, although they were not formed in the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural School, Rubén Jaramillo and Arturo Gámiz were also rural elementary school teachers who went on to lead important dissident movements in Morelos and Chihuahua, respectively.

As Mexican society moved from being a peasant society and the government stopped being a revolutionary entity, teacher activism intensified in rural areas. Throughout the 1950s, Mexico experienced an increase in activism of organized labor and academic actions in which strikes of railway, electrical, telegraph and oil industries found support from students from the *escuela normal nacional*, *Instituto Politénico Nacional* (IPN), and the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM). This teacher-activism uncovered a continuum of popular resistance driven by an ideology rooted in promises that date back to the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and the Cuban Revolution of 1959.

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[73] Mary Kay Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940*, pp. 3-7.

[74] Paula Chouza, "¿Qué son los normalistas mexicanos?: El colectivo de origen revolucionario se moviliza ante la desaparición de 43 estudiantes." *El País*, International Section, October 17, 2014. Available at: http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2014/10/17/actualidad/1413568451_060339.html. Accessed on January 9, 2015.

As rural educators, these individuals had a vantage point that combined praxis with theory. These individuals were committed to carry out the revolutionary spirit of the time and exposed the masses to the promises of the Mexican Revolution. Teachers became politicized by conditions in their home communities and through participation in contentious union activities in the nation's capital. This combination of praxis and theory allowed rural teachers to serve "as important conduits of oppositional ideology and strategy between the city and ongoing struggles for democracy" and social justice.[75] Just in the same way they served as conduits to legitimize a revolutionary government, elementary school teachers became the vanguard class of the voiceless, in a constant real life exercise of revolutionary praxis and subversive, liberatory pedagogy in rural indigenous communities. The following selection shows the relationship of the rural educator turned guerrillero, with the cases of Genaro Vázquez Rojas and Lucio Cabañas Barrientos in Guerrero.

Genaro Vázquez, Lucio Cabañas, and *el Partido de los Pobres*.

From 1959 to 1974, the state of Guerrero was the epicenter of teacher activism and dissidence. Not too far from the idyllic resort of Acapulco, the charismatic leaders and former elementary school teachers emerged as the voice of action against abuses committed against poor indigenous communities: Genaro Vázquez and Lucio Cabañas. Genaro Vázquez Rojas and Lucio Cabañas Barrientos had many characteristics in common. The most noted were that both selected their home state to start rebellions in

[75] Nelly Blacker-Hanson, "La Lucha Sigue! Teacher Activism and the Continuum of Social Unrest in Guerrero, Mexico," pg. 1.

defense of indigenous peasants; they were elementary school teachers that received their education in the *Escuela Normal Rural de Ayotzinapa*.[76]

Genaro Vázquez, a former elementary school educator actively involved in the teacher movement organized by Othon Salazar, emerged as the first leader committed to social justice and revolutionary change in his native state. In response to abuses committed by the then State Governor, Raul Caballero Aburto, Genaro Vázquez established the *Asociación Cívica Guerrerense* (ACG).[77] At the heart of Vázquez's struggle was the land issue. The Presidency of Miguel Aleman (1946-1952), issued certificates of innafectability to protect livestock ranching, some permanently and some for 25 years.

This made possible the emergence of new wealthy *hacendados* who were able to develop agriculture and livestock by using modern techniques. The best lands were given to these rich farmers. Poor farmers, without resources and without the support of the State, were unable to compete with rich *hacendados*, and were forced to give up their lands to settle debts. This "*Reforma Agraria alemanista*" further widened the gap between the rich *hacendados* and poor farmers, creating friction and a profound polarization in their social relations. Poor farmers were driven out of their lands, and had no other choice but to work for these rich *hacendados*.[78]

It is at this juncture that the figure of Genaro Vázquez Rojas appeared. From 1960 to 1972, Genaro Vázquez was the object of an intense manhunt perpetrated by

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[76] Luis Suárez, *Lucio Cabañas: El guerrillero sin esperanza*, pp. 22-23.

[77] Laura Castellanos, *Mexico armado: 1943-1981*, pp. 102-104.

[78] Antonio Sotelo Pérez, *Breve Historia de la Asociación Cívica Guerrerense, Jefaturada por Genaro Vázquez Rojas*, pp. 51-53.

members of the Mexican military. In November 1966, members of Federal Police in Guerrero arrested Vázquez, perhaps as a sort of payback for his involvement with the *Asociación Cívica Guerrerense*. The following year, Vázquez escaped from prison in a shooting confrontation with members of the Iguala police as Vázquez was being taken to a dentist appointment.[79] In 1968, Genaro Vázquez, frustrated of seeking a peaceful solution to his demands and not getting one, decided to resort to an armed struggle. That same year the *Asociación Cívica Guerrerense* became the *Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria* (ACNR). The goals of the ACNR were: to take the armed struggle to a national level; accomplish Mexico's political and economic independence; and to established a coalition that would govern Mexico comprised of workers, peasants, students and progressive intellectuals.[80] On February 2, 1972, Genaro Vázquez Rojas died. According to individuals close to Genaro Vázquez Rojas and knew him well, his ideological and political stances were more polished than those of Lucio Cabañas.[81] The official record noted that the cause of Vázquez's death was due to trauma sustained in a car accident. The unofficial version of his death was an execution by members of the Mexican military.[82]

Lucio Cabañas was also a charismatic revolutionary leader. A former elementary school teacher, his political activism superseded his performance as a student. By 1965 and due to his political activism, he was transferred to Durango, but returned to Guerrero

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[79] Luis Suárez, *Lucio Cabañas: El guerrillero sin esperanza*, pg. 23.

[80] Antonio Sotelo Pérez, *Breve Historia de la Asociación Cívica Guerrerense, Jefaturada por Genaro Vázquez Rojas*, pp. 131-140.

[81] Luis Suárez, *Lucio Cabañas: El guerrillero sin esperanza*, pg. 23.

[82] Laura Castellanos, *Mexico armado: 1943-1981,* pp. 135-136.

after his colleagues pressured the governor of the state to intervene on Cabaña's behalf to the ministry of education. During this time, Cabañas still believed in solving the region's problems through negotiation and democratic processes, refusing to take up arms. After the Massacre of Atoyac in 1967, Cabañas had a change of heart and retreated to the mountains. On May 18, 1967 a group of parents from a nearby elementary school asked Cabañas to speak at a rally in which they asked for the resignation of the school's principal. Law enforcement authorities attempted to prevent Cabañas from participating in the demonstration. Violence was employed and State forces killed five people, including a pregnant woman. Cabañas was accused of provoking the violent confrontation and outcome. He hid in the mountainous regions in Guerrero, and for the following seven years, he fought for social justice on behalf of peasants in Guerrero.[83]

That same year, Cabañas Barrientos established the *Partido de los Pobres* (PDLP). The PDLP had as its main objective the politization of civic society through the creation of what he called "comites de barrio."[84] On December 2nd, 1974, Lucio Cabañas Barrientos was killed in a confrontation with the Mexican military.[85]

By this time, rural guerrilla movements began to receive support from urban leftist movements. In April of 1973, a series of Bank robberies and kidnappings took place in Mexico City and the State of Guerrero. Urban guerrilla forces with links to Lucio Cabañas carried out these robberies and kidnappings. According to authorities, the guerrilla group called *Brigada Obrera de Lucha Armada* (Workers Brigade of Armed

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[83] Sergio Ocampo Arista, "Critican que los crímenes de Estado sigan en la impunidad: Grupos Guerrilleros recuerdan matanza en Atoyac de Álvarez," *La Jornada*, May 19, 2009, pg. 20.

[84] Ibid, pp. 120-122.

[85] Laura Castellanos, *Mexico armado: 1943*-1981, pp. 158-159.

Resistance) was responsible for the robbery on the Mexican Commercial Bank in Mexico City, as well as the kidnapping of a prominent cattle rancher and an important Doctor in Guerrero.

It is important to point out that there was an interesting connection with Lucio Cabañas and the Ciudad Madera, Chihuahua uprising. Among the members of the Workers Brigade of Armed Resistance that were arrested in Mexico City in connection with the robbery of the Mexican Commercial Bank and the Bank of the Ministry of Education were Jacobo, Amalia, and Maria Dolores Gámiz García. These members were siblings of Arturo and Emilio Gámiz García, leaders of the September 23, 1966 uprising in Ciudad Madera, Chihuahua.[86]

By combating the War on Drugs in conjunction with political insurrection, Mexican authorities employed a strategy that called for the use of State sponsored violence in the name of national sovereignty, PRI-Gobierno style. How was the War on Drugs employed by the Mexican State as a political tool? The following section addresses this issue.

The War on Drugs as a Political Instrument

Before the Díaz Ordaz presidency, the Mexican Army had not developed an official strategy on how to deal with insurgency and dissidence. From 1959-1964, military sources do not mention or acknowledge the existence of guerrilla forces. During this time, the emphasis was placed on combating dissidence in the urban centers and not in rural areas. Aside from the *Jaramillista* movement in Morelos, social movements in

[86] Joaquín Herrera, "Dinero para Lucio Cabañas: Se Jactan Los Asaltantes del Banco de una Larga Cadena de Crímenes". *El Universal*, 26 de abril, 1973, pp. 1, 14-15. Guillermo Saad, "Un Rosario de Asaltos, Plagios, Asesinatos y Otros Delitos Confesaron los Detenidos: Declaran Tener Nexos con Lucio Cabañas los que Asaltaron el Banco de la SEP". *Novedades*, 26 de abril, 1973, pp. 1, 6. AGN IPS, Box 945, File 1, pg. 246.

Mexico were being carried out in urban areas in the form of labor and student strikes. At the end of the López Mateos presidency (1958-1964), the Mexican army began to develop the first counterinsurgency plans.[87]

As more manifestations of social and political discontent began to emerge throughout urban areas in Mexico, the presence of the Mexican army became more prominent. In addition to being utilized to eradicate poppy fields and marijuana plantations in rural areas, members of the Mexican military were also used in breaking up strikes in cities as well as arresting student leaders. However, the control of popular manifestations of social and political discontent in urban areas superseded any type of dissidence control that was occurring in rural areas. The logistic and technical assistance to carry out these missions was coming from Washington. The majority of weapons the Mexican government was purchasing were destined to strengthen their existing infantry arsenal. Further, the Mexican army began to implement "social action" strategies in an attempt to convince rural peasants to avoid armed struggle as means to solve their grievances. These counterinsurgency plans developed to combat labor and student strikes in urban areas constituted the groundwork to develop the Mexican army's modern repressive apparatus.[88]

By the 1970s, the anti-communist rhetoric espoused by the United States intensified. At the same time, the first instance of the use of the War on Drugs as a political instrument emerged in the historical record. In 1972, the CIA attempted to block the publication of Alfred W. McCoy's manuscript in which he implicated the CIA in the

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[87] Jorge Luis Sierra, *El enemigo interno: Contrainsurgencia y fuerzas armadas en México*, pp. 39-40.

[88] José Luis Piñeyro, *El profesional Ejército mexicano y la asistencia militar de los Estados Unidos (1965-1975)*, pp. 74-76.

traffic of opium from Vietnam to the United States through the use of Air America.[89] The CIA initiated a public relations battle in which they granted "a rare on-the-record interview at the agency's headquarters in McLean, Va.," as well as the attempt to persuade the publishers of McCoy's manuscript to allowed them "to review the manuscript prior to publication."[90] This is where we begin to see the appearance of a U. S. Foreign Drug policy that was consistent with the global conflict of the Cold War.

As the Nixon administration implemented its War on Drugs interdiction campaign, Mexico became one of the theaters of operation. Ironically, Mexican public officials acknowledged the use of the war on drugs as a political tool by the United States. In September of 1976, Guido Belsasso, director of the Mexican Center for the Studies in Drug Dependency, declared that drugs in the United States were an element of political and electoral manipulation. As such, Belsasso further opined, American society had made this political and electoral manipulation into a cultural characteristic that they pretended to export to other countries whose goals and national projects greatly differed from what he considered being a consumption society. Belsasso also went on to declare that the poverty in which Mexican peasants lived made possible their coercion into cultivating illicit products such as opium and/or marijuana by international drug traffickers.[91]

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[89] Jasper J. Beechman, "La CIA interfiere en la Edición de un Libro," *El Universal*, July 26, 1972, pg. 1. AGN IPS, Box 1003, File 3: julio de 1972.

[90] Seymour Hersh, "C.I.A. Aides Assail Asia Drug Charge: Agency Fights Reports that it Ignored Heroin Traffic Among Allies of U.S.," *The New York Times*, July 21, 1972, p. A1.

[91] Victor M. Salinas, "La Droga, Arma Política de EU: Coacción de Traficantes con el Campesinado Empobrecido," *Últimas Noticias*, September 17, 1976. *AGN IPS*, Box 1798-B, File 5: 9 July 1975 to 30 September 1976, pg. 194.

The official position in this statement was clear: Mexican authorities passed culpability of the drug production in Mexico to the United States by identifying a market that not only exported lifestyles, but it was also the biggest consumer of drugs. Mexican officials recognized the use of the War on Drugs as a political tool by the United States, but they failed to acknowledge or omit to acknowledge that they too, by combining dissident elements with their attempts to combat drug production in the very same states where rebellious activity were taking place, were using the War on Drugs as a political tool.

The combination of Mexico's misguided economic policies from the part of the Mexican Government, a failed agrarian policy, the increasingly strong presence of drug trafficking organizations, and the U.S. Foreign Drug Policy predicated on the Cold War, had a negative effect on many rural, indigenous communities in Mexico. Challenges to the Mexican political hegemony by the popular sector began to emerge in the mid-1940s. In an attempt to further legitimize their hegemony and combat dissidence, the PRI embarked on a campaign where Guerrilla activities and Drug Trafficking organizations were linked as one. Thus, the use of the War on Drugs as a Political tool by the Mexican State began to take shape.

From the official pronunciation by the Mexican State to combat drug trafficking, to the Nixon administration's first efforts to eradicate the illicit trade through interdiction in the form of Operation Intercept, [92] rural communities have been the first casualties in this protracted war. In 1969, Mexico's Social and Political Investigations

[92] The United States' Strategy to combat drug trafficking as it relates to Mexico officially began with the Nixon administration's unilateral decision to implement "Operation Intercept" along the US-Mexico Border. In return, Mexican Border cities launched their own operation titled "*Operación Dignidad*."

(Investigaciones Politicas y Sociales) drafts a document titled "*Trafico Ilicito de Estupefacientes y Otras Drogras Peligrosas en la Zona Frotenriza, Fundamentalmente en los Limites con el Estado de California,"* where Mexican officials acknowledged the year of 1947 as the official start of Mexico's War on Drugs.[93]

Mexican authorities have attempted to link drug trafficking activities with rural guerrilla movements, in particular the State of Guerrero since the 1970s. Recently declassified material from the Institute of Social and Political Investigations, stored in the National Archive in Mexico City, has produced evidence corroborating the official version. In a declassified report by Mexico's Ministry of Defense, the link between the Lucio Cabañas campaign and narcotraffickers of the Guerrero region was officialized. This in turn, effectively combined the War on Drugs with Mexico's Dirty War. Prior to his official, institutional link, the ministry of defense had made a public implication of guerrilla fighters being in collusion with drug traffickers. In a statement to the press published on October 24, 1974, Gen. Cuenca Díaz declared that it had been confirmed beyond any doubt that the group commanded by Lucio Cabañas was involved in drug trafficking, exchanging drugs for weapons.[94]

The official implication of dissidence and drug trafficking came in 1975. In a report prepared by the Ministry of Defense (*Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional)* titled *Plan Conjunto DN-PRI or Plan TECPAN DN-PRI*, the link between drug traffickers and Lucio Cabañas was established by the dependency then headed by General Hermenegildo

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[93] *Trafico Ilicito de Estupefacientes y Otras Drogas Peligrosas en la Zona Frotenriza, Fundamentalmente en los Limites con el Estado de California,"* AGN IPS*,* Galeria 2. Caja 1793A, file 1. September 26 1969 to October 13, 1971, pg. 101.

[94] "Lucio Cabañas Trafica con Drogas Para Adquirir Armas, Afirma Cuenca Díaz," *Sol de México*, October 24, 1974, pg. 10. AGN IPS, Box 1747-B, File 8: 1968 a 1977 GENERALIDADES, pg. 93.

Cuenca Diaz. Under section three of the report pertaining to operations, the document stated that as part of *Operación Atoyac Uno* and in response to an executive order issued by then President Luis Echeverria, military forces carried out a plan to rescue Ruben Figueroa Figueroa. Figueroa was the gubernatorial candidate for the State of Guerrero and a staunch critic of the Guerrilla Movement lead by Lucio Cabañas.[95]

The report continued by describing the difficulty of the rescue mission. The report further stated that Lucio Cabañas and his troops benefited from the shelter of intimidated peasants and protection provided by drug traffickers. In addition to providing protection, drug traffickers also provided Lucio Cabañas with weapons and information about the troop's plans as they pertained to his possible capture.[96]

Moreover, beginning in the early 1970s, the link between dissidence and drug trafficking started to appear in the media, perhaps as a strategy devised by the Mexican State to validate their power. According to a statement made a Senator from Guerrero to the Newspaper *Ovaciones*, dated July 15, 1972 and gathered by Mexico's *Investigaciones Politicas y Sociales*, the State of Guerrero was not a place where one could find guerrilla activity, but rather, a State where Drug Trafficking activity prevailed.[97]

Moreover, in 1973, Pedro Ojeda Paullada, at the time Mexico's Attorney General made another statement implicating Lucio Cabañas with *narcotraficantes*. The newspaper article, which appeared in *Ultimas Noticias* on March 22, 1973, indicated that

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[95] "Plan Conjunto DN-PRI or Plan TECPAN DN-PRI 1975 (SEDENA)," AGN, Galeria 1, pg. 35.

[96] Ibid, pp. 36-38.

[97] Alberto Cañas G., "Declaró un Senador: No Son Guerrilleros, Sino Gente que Cultiva Amapola y Mariguana en la Sierra de Guerrero," *Ovaciones*, July 15, 1972, pg. 1. ANG IPS, Box 1003, file 3, June 1972.

there was an exchange of weapons for marijuana taking place between forces linked to Lucio Cabañas, and members of an international drug trafficking group. Ojeda Paullada continued by stating that people associated with Lucio Cabañas were well known drug traffickers, whom had previously been arrested with possession of 4 tons of marijuana and weapons.[98] The statement made by Senator Ruben Figueroa, and the one uttered by the Federal Attorney General, Pedro Ojeda Paullada, encapsulated the official position of a Mexican State eager to defend their ill achieved legitimacy and defend their sovereignty.

Furthermore, in 1976, Mexico's Attorney General's office published a report in which Jun Barona Lobato made the narco-guerrilla connection. The report discussed Mexico's official position on the War on Drugs. The report highlighted the efforts and successes the Mexican government had accomplished during the Echeverría administration. Barona Lobato alluded to certain characteristics and situations that do not occur in other regions of the world. As a result, Barona Lobato continued, these characteristics and situations yielded social nuances that were the result of the illicit drug trade that affected both Mexico and the United States. Barona Lobato mentioned the emergence of what he called *focos de consumo* or "consumption centers" in tourists centers where vacationers purchased drugs. There was also the danger of smuggling unauthorized electronic equipment that could potentially be exchanged for drugs. But the most dangerous of activities, Baron Lobato contended, was the introduction of illegal weapons from the United States into Mexican territory. These weapons eventually were delivered to drug producers. Drug producers not only used these weapons against

[98] Antonio Andrade, "Truecan armas por Mariguana: Extranjeros en el Negocio: Ojeda P." *Ultimas Noticias*, 22 de marzo de 1973. *AGN IPS*, Box 1004, File 2, March 1973.

Mexican authorities, but they also provided these weapons to alleged revolutionaries that only disrupted public order, disseminated uncertainty amongst peasantry, thus alarming the population.[99]

Barona Lobato and Figueroa's statements represented an attempt from the part of Mexican authorities to link guerrilla activity in Guerrero with drug traffickers and with the movement led by Lucio Cabañas. This strategy was a clear indication of what Mexican authorities wanted to accomplish, and that was to associate guerrilla activity with Drug Trafficking and weapons being exchanged for drugs. The triumvirate of weapons dealt by foreigners, drugs, and dissidence was being attacked under the pretext of National sovereignty.

Ruben Jaramillo and his Revolutionary attempts were linked to Drug Trafficking activities as well by the press. An article published in *El Universal* on May 24, 1962, identified Jaramillo as "El tristemente célebre rebelde de posesión y tráfico de drogas y despojo de tierras."[100] Without any further details, the Jaramillista struggle was associated with nefarious elements of the drug trade.

Rural indigenous communities have been affected by Mexico's failed agrarian policy. Further, economic policies aimed at modernizing the agrarian sector and Mexico' overall economy, have had a detrimental effect to these communities as well. Gradually, as part of the economic agenda aimed at modernizing Mexico's economy, many of the subsidies that promoted agriculture in rural Mexico were eliminated. This unequivocally had a detrimental effect on poor peasants in rural Mexico. All of those displaced

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[99] Juan Barona Lobato, *México ante el reto de las drogas*, pp. 61-62.

[100] "Jaramillo fue muerto al tratar de huir." *El Universal*, May 24, 1962, A-1.

individuals saw three alternatives that they could pursue in order to improve their situation: (1) abandon their farms and migrate to the United States; (2) abandon their farms and migrate to large urban centers in Mexico; (3) remain on their farms and turn their attention to the only lucrative cash crops not replaced by U.S. subsidized crops, usually associated with the production of commodities linked to narcotrafficking.[101]

The violence associated with the war on drugs affected rural indigenous communities. Indigenous farmers, referred to as *Narcocampesinos*, became involved in the production and distribution of drugs either by necessity or intimidation. In early 1975, peasants that were arrested for the production of heroin and marijuana from the community of Coalcoman, Michoacán declared to members of the Mexican army that they became involved in the trade due to a lack of money to buy grain to engage in lawful production of other crops. Military authorities engaged in the eradication of drug production in the region declared that they saw more marijuana and poppy cultivation, with very little production of corn or beans.[102]

The strategy of eradicating dissidence and drugs was clear. It required the collusion of narcotraffickers and leftist guerrilla movements into one complicit storyline; drug traffickers providing protection and support to guerrilla forces. That was the strategy decided by the government and implemented by Mexico's armed forces. There was, however, an individual that did not share the same strategy of combating rebellious

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[101] Richard Craig, "Operation Condor: Mexico's Antidurg Campaign Enters a New Era," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, pp. 353-355.

[102] Salvador Cuevas Álvarez, "Por Hambre se Convierten en Narcotraficantes," *La Prensa*, January 30, 1975, AGN IPS, Box 1798-A, File 1: 16 de enero de 1975 al 30 de mayo de 1975, pg. 38.

elements. The story of General Salvador Rangel Medina illuminates this dissenting opinion within the Mexican armed forces.

Salvador Rangel Medina and the Cost of Not Being an Institutional Man

The policy for the war on drugs consisted of relying on a strategy of low intensity conflict. The United States Department of the Army in its Field Manual No. 100-20 defines it in the following manner:

> Low intensity conflict consists of a political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies. Low intensity conflict ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. It is waged by a combination of means, employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments.[103]

This was the same strategy being implemented against the communist forces in Vietnam, and later on against the Central American nations of Nicaragua and El Salvador and other dissident movements in the world in a period characterized by heightened revolutionary activity in the 1970s and 1980s. Under this anti-communist framework, low intensity conflict was favored by U. S. military officials, and was a strategy being taught and encouraged by the instructors of the School of the Americas, a place where many military leaders from Latin American nations were getting their training from during this period.

Within the rank and file of the Mexican Armed forces existed a General that did not share the same view of combating dissidence in the mountainous, rural regions of Mexico by implementing a low intensity conflict strategy. General Salvador Rangel Medina was an atypical military man. He openly opposed the PRI Gobierno's handling

[103] United States Department of the Army (5 December 1990), Field Manual 100-20: Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, pg. 1-1.

of the Lucio Cabañas' *foco guerrillero* in Guerrero. Such an opposition cost Rangel Medina a possible post as the Minister of Defense.

Rangel Medina considered himself a man of action, an individual not capable of being in an office or being someone else's personal assistant. Rangel Medina was named commander of the 27th Military Zone in Acapulco in December 1973. Prior to occupying this post, he served as commander in Michoacán and Durango. He had the peculiarity of establishing professional, amicable relationships with important dignitaries of the old PRI regime and higher-ranking officials of the Mexican armed forces. Rangel Medina had one incident in the 1950s with the individual that in 1973 was his superior: Minister of Defense Gen. Hermenegildo Cuenca Díaz. The incident, which triggered their estrangement, involved Rangel Medina's refusal to promote the driver of Cuenca Díaz from the rank of sub lieutenant to lieutenant.[104]

Hermenegildo Cuenca Diaz had a very distinguished military career. But he also made no secret of his intentions of having an equally illustrious political career. During his military service, Cuenca Díaz served as the commander of the military forces in the state of Baja California in 1959. Prior to that, he had served in the Tlaxcala military zone. He also distinguished himself in the battlefield during the Mexican revolution, as he served for the Venustiano Carranza contingent that fled to Veracruz in 1922. Politically, Cuenca Díaz was an institutional man to the old PRI regime. He served as a PRI senator for the state of Baja California during the Díaz Ordaz *sexenio*. After he stepped down as Minster of Defense, Cuenca Díaz accepted the PRI's gubernatorial nomination for the state of Baja California. In 1970, Luis Echeverria Alvarez named

[104] Juan Veledíaz, *El General sin memoria: una crónica de los silencios del ejército mexicano*, pg. 257-258.

Cuenca Díaz Minister of Defense. The old incident that caused the rupture between Rangel Medina and Cuenca Díaz 20 years earlier would eventually lead Rangel Medina to ask President Echeverria to remove him from his post as commander of the 27th zone in Acapulco.

This difference, irreconcilable difference with Cuenca Díaz was one way in which the government was dealing with the guerrilla forces under the command of Lucio Cabañas in Guerrero. Rangel Medina firmly believed that the strategy being employed to combat the guerrilla forces in Guerrero was not the correct one. As a result of this difference in opinion, he offered a different picture of the circumstances and events that led to *Operación Atoyac*, the military operative that resulted in the capture and killing of Lucio Cabañas in late 1973.

Based on his successful involvement in the 1958 worker's strikes, in convincing Ruben Jaramillo to put his weapons down that same year, and his campaigns in Durango and Michoacán, Rangel Medina had a different approach in securing the cooperation of rural peasants. He wanted to implement that same successful strategy in his campaign in Guerrero. Further, Rangel Medina believed that a more effective way of combating dissidence in Guerrero consisted in implementing a strategy in which the federal government would intervene through a social program plan that resulted in the creation of jobs in the region.[105]

The intervention of Cuenca Díaz in the state of Guerrero had a profound effect in the way in which drug eradication was going to take place in Mexico. The result of this intervention meant the implementation of a Low Intensity Conflict strategy that became

[105] Ibid, pp. 105-116, 119-129, 163-180, 259, 304.

the foundation of another campaign that had a two-prong approach in the fight against drugs and dissidence: Operation Condor. The following selection illuminates the implementation of Operation Condor in the state of Sinaloa.

Operation Condor

Since the early 1970's, Mexico steadily became the primary supplier of heroin to the United States. According to a report authored by the House of Representatives in 1971, "15% of heroin and 90% of marijuana that are consumed in the United States come from Mexico." Additionally, the report indicates that Mexico was becoming an increasingly popular medium for South American cocaine.[106] Further, Mexico also began to be the principal provider to the United States of psychotropic drugs.[107]

As this scenario began to unfold, U.S. officials long sought to convince their Mexican counterparts of the importance of interdiction. At the core of this interdiction campaign was the implementation of a defoliation strategy. In the fall of 1975, Mexican officials decided to change the character of their program fundamentally by employing defoliants.[108] This defoliation strategy was in accordance with the political climate of the time, i.e., the Cold War.[109]

The defoliation campaign was a strategy developed in part to combat communism. This campaign called for the utilization of herbicidal warfare, having Agent

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[106] "América del Sur es Trampolín de Drogas." *Novedades*, November 22, 1971, pg. 26. AGN IPS, Box 1028, 1971.

[107] "Decomisaron 6 millones de pastillas tóxicas." *El Universal*. December 14, 1971, pg. 1, col. 4a. Ibid.

[108] Richard Craig, "Operation Condor: Mexico's antidrug campaign enters a new era." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, pp. 343-346.

[109] *See* Daniel Weimer, *Seeing drugs: modernization, counterinsurgency, and U. S. narcotics control in the third world, 1969-1975,* pp. 1-3.

Orange as the main chemical to be used in the destruction of poppy and marijuana fields. During the Vietnam War, the U.S. military developed Agent Orange. With the help of Agent Orange, the U. S. military defoliated approximately five million acres of forests in an attempt to expose communist guerrilla fighters loyal to the National Liberation Front (NLF, or Viet Cong) of South Vietnam. Known as Operation Ranch Hand, from 1961 to 1971 this herbicidal warfare program targeted not specific weeds but entire ecosystems. In Vietnam the forest was the weed. This "ecocide" accounted for the destruction of whole environments upon which humans depended, not to mention the threatening prospect that the chemicals themselves might harm humans and animals.[110]

The decision to launch military herbicide operations in Vietnam in November 1961 was a key component of President John F. Kennedy's grand strategy to contain the spread of communism and roll back the global influence of the Soviet Union. Three years before Lyndon B. Johnson "chose war" against North Vietnam through sustained bombing campaigns and the large-scale introduction of U.S. ground troops, Kennedy committed the United States to a wide array of counterinsurgency tactics in an attempt to defeat the Viet Cong.[111] After the herbicidal warfare was no longer utilized in the fight against communism, this strategy was implemented in the War on Drugs. It was used as

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[110] David Zierler, *The Invention of Ecocide: Agent Orange, Vietnam, and the Scientists Who Changed the Way we Think About the Environment*, pg. 2. In addition to Zierler's work on Agent Orange as a historical topic, there are also the following works that will further our understsinding of this topic. Thomas Dunlap, *DDT: Scientists, Citizens, and Public Policy*; Edmund Russell, *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring*; Paul Fredrick Cecil, *Herbicidal Warfare*; Fred Wilcox, *Waiting for an Army to Die*; and Peter H. Schuck, *Agent Orange on Trial.*

[111] Ibid, pg. 48.

a part of the United States' interdiction campaign to eradicate drug production in the region known as the Golden Triangle: Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia.[112]

As a result of pressure from United States drug authorities, Mexico's Ministry of Defense in conjunction with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) launched an operation that had as its main objective the eradication of poppy and marihuana fields in the states of Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua, Mexico's *triángulo crítico* or golden triangle.[113]

In November of 1975, Mexican authorities announced an eradication campaign that they considered to be the last blow against drug traffickers, or at least that was the official version. This eradication campaign was made possible by technical support and training provided by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, the very same agency that in 1973 became the Drug Enforcement Administration. Described as a comprehensive, coordinated effort between the Mexican Army and law enforcement agencies, this strategy was believed to have the potential of yielding effective and immediate outcomes against drug producers in Mexico. As a result, this campaign was initially scheduled to last until March of 1976.[114]

In addition to eradicate poppy and marijuana fields through the use of chemicals that contained the active ingredients found in Agent Orange, there was a brief discussion of using Napalm bombs as part of the interdiction strategy. Mexico's Attorney General at the time, Pedro Ojeda Paullada declared that Mexico would not be pressured into using

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[112] Wil D. Verwey, *Riot Control Agents and Herbicides in War*, pg. 99.

[113] Daniel Weimer, *Seeing Drugs*, pg. 347.

[114] Roberto Bolaños H., "Desde Mañana, Batida de Exterminio al Narcotrafico: Policia y Ejército en Acción Envolvente." *El Diario de Mexico*, November 14, 1975. AGN IPS, Box 1798-A, File 2: 6 de octubre de 1975 al 30 de marzo de 1976, pg. 70.

chemical products that could cause damage to their ecology, including Napalm bombs. This declaration came after Rep. Charles B. Rangel from New York expressed concerns about the magnitude of the heroine problem, and declared that the United States government should pressure their Mexican counterpart to use defoliants, herbicides, or powdered chemical products in their fight against heroin production.[115]

The case of Sinaloa best exemplified how, through the implementation of Operation Condor, the Mexican government was implementing a strategy that responded to the realities of the anti-communist framework. According to Richard Craig, members of the Mexican military in charge of implementing Operation Condor were being accused of committing abuses against the rural population.[116] A report prepared for the Ministry of the Interior dated February 22, 1977, further corroborated such abuses of authority by members of the Mexican military. The account stated that several complaints had been made against Mexican soldiers for destroying private property. The report continued by stating, "Soldiers steal money and food, and threaten to kill anyone who will report such actions." These instances of abuse of authority were reported in communities located in the highland areas of Culiacán, Mocorito, Badiraguato, and El Fuerte. The report also read that members of the Mexican military had confiscated the weapons of members of

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[115] Miguel López Saucedo, "México no Aceptará Presiones Para Emplear el Napalm: Tampoco Usará Productos que Dañen la Ecología," *Excelsior*, November 14, 1975, AGN IPS, Box 1798-A, File 2: 6 de octubre de 1975 al 30 de marzo de 1976, pg. 72.

[116] Richard Craig, "Operation Condor: Mexico's Antidrug Campaign Enters a New Era." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Aug., 1980), pp. 353-354.

the State Judicial Police.[117] The special agent J. F. C., stationed in Culiacan, Sinaloa, signed this report.

The following day, special agent J. F. C. prepared another report in which the abuse of authority was being committed in the city of Culiacan. The report stated that members of the Mexican Army entered a hotel in the middle of the night, and ordered its occupants to leave their hotel rooms to search for drugs.[118] These reports reflected a reality that started to take shape in the highlands of Sinaloa. Shielded by the pretext of the War on Drugs, members of the Mexican military engaged in authoritative practices that resulted in the depopulation of several highland communities in Sinaloa. While Operation Condor resulted in a decrease in opium production, it also resulted in an increase in guerrilla activity in the Sinaloan highlands.

A report prepared by the same special agent J. F. C., dated June 23, 1976, warned that an alleged member of the *Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre* was providing weapons training to a group of *campesino*s from the *Ejido Guadalupe Victoria.*[119] In a separate five-page report drafted on November 12, 1976, special agent J. F. C. cautioned that the

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[117] Secretaria de Gobernación, "Son diversas las quejas que se han presentado por el atropello que cometen los miembros del ejército que participan en la 'Operación Condor'," *Investigaciones Politicas y Sociales*, February 22, 1977. *AGN IPS*, Box 1707-B, file 9, 1976 to 1980, pg. 5.

[118] Secretaria de Gobernación, "Continúan cometiendo arbitrariedades los miembros del ejército que trabajan en la Operación 'Condor'." AGN IPS, February 23, 1977. Box 1707-B, file 9, 1976 to 1980, pg. 6.

[119] Secretaria de Gobernación, "Luis Gambino Heredia, lider de la UGOM, señalo que 4 jóvenes al parecer de la Liga Comunista '23 de Septiembre' adoctrinan en el manejo de armas a campesinos de la sindicatura de Quila, por lo que se teme enfrentamientos," *Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales*, June 23, 1976. *AGN IPS*. Box 1707-B, file 8: 1976 to 1980, pp. 33-34.

agrarian and student sectors were the two most problematic segments of Sinaloan society.[120]

The abuses by the Mexican military under Operation Condor continued into the JOLOPO administration. In an account drafted on February 23, 1977, a member of Mexico's secret service informed the Social and Political Investigations dependency of complaints against members of the Mexican military involved in Operation Condor. The dispatch reported that the harassment by members of the Mexican military was having a detrimental effect on the tourism of the city of Culiacán. In this particular abuse of authority, Mexican soldiers ordered the occupants of the hotel "3 Rios" to come out of their rooms to conduct a search for possible possession of drugs.[121]

Reports of abuse of authority were beginning to appear in other states. A group of *ejidatarios* from south Chihuahua and north Durango delivered a letter to JOLOPO. The letter made it very clear that the *ejidatarios* from Chihuahua and Durango supported the activities that fell under the purview of Operation Condor. However, they opposed the repressive methods by which Mexican soldiers pretended to implement the operation. The *ejidatarios* stated that these repressive methods had a negative effect on entire families. These abuses of authority included rape, subjecting entire families to unauthorized house arrests, and theft to homes and stores. These abuses perpetrated by soldiers involved in Operation Condor were the cause of depopulation in the area, as

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[120] Secretaria de Gobernación, "Los sectores agrario y estudiantil, son los que representan mayores problemas en la entidad," *Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales*, June 23, 1976. AGN IPS. Box 1707-B, file 8: 1976 to 1980, pp. 145-149.

[121] Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales, Estado de Sinaloa, Información de Culiacán. "Continúan Cometiendo Arbitrariedades los Miembros del Ejército que Trabajan en la Operación 'Condor'." AGN IPS, Box 1747-B, 1968 a 1977 GENERALIDADES: File 8, Varios Estados – 16 ene 77 a 4 dic 77, pp. 42-43.

entire families abandoned their homes and lands as fear of more abuses continued with no abatement. Further, the complaint continued, members of the Mexican military were torturing peasants. These tortures resulted in coerced confessions that implicated innocent people in the trafficking of drugs, while impunity reigned for important drug traffickers in the region.[122] In the state of Coahuila, the abuse of authority by a soldier involved in Operation Condor culminated in the death of an 18 year old civilian in the city of Saltillo in 1978.[123]

Looking at the problem through the lens of the commodity chain approach, it was clear that the only facet being addressed by this strategy was the production aspect. This was consistent with the climate of the, an anti-communist framework. It was also a clear idea of Washington's perception in terms of the War on Drugs. The official line from the Mexican authorities was the importance of attacking the source. But there were other sectors of society that had a different interpretation of the events that were unfolding in this War on Drugs.

The Mexican journalist Julio Pomar described a disastrous pairing of simulated latifundium and drug trafficking. Large land holdings in the hands of very few individuals created situations that allowed for the emergence of spaces that worked in favor of drug traffickers. Neglected Mexican peasants faced a predicament: continue to hope for the implementation of social assistance programs from the part of the federal

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[122] Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales, 28 de febrero de 1978, Distrito Federal. "Hoy se Presentó a Esta Secretaria de Gobernación un Grupo de Pequeños Propetarios y Comuneros del Sur de Chihuahua y Norte de Durango, Quejandose del Desvio de Poder de Elementos de 'Operación Condor'." *AGN IPS*, Box 1747-C, 1977 a 1983 GENERALIDADES: File 9 – 5 dic. 77 a 3 feb. 79, Varios Estados, pp. 62-68.

[123] Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales, 5 de septiembre de 1978, Estado de Coahuila, Información de Saltillo. "La Falta de Respeto a la Ciudadania y el Asesinato de una Joven por Soldados, ha Creado un Clima de Animadversión Hacia el Ejército Mexicano." *AGN IPS*, Box 1747-C, 1977 a 1983 GENERALIDADES: File 9 – 5 dic. 77 a 3 feb. 79, Varios Estados, pp. 176-178.

government, or the highly lucrative, but extremely dangerous option of working for drug traffickers in the production of marijuana and opium.[124]

During this time, U. S. authorities failed to address the consumption aspect of the commodity chain approach. A simple implementation of the supply and demand model yields an explanation that production is a function of a consumer market that cannot be satiated in their desire for drugs. The combination of demand, a Mexican peasantry neglected by the federal government, and the allure of easy and fast money by drug traffickers created a problem that no interdiction program could solve effectively.[125] The Mexican government effectively implemented a two-prong approach to combat dissidence and eradication of drugs. This strategy has serious consequences in rural areas where abuses were being committed against peasants, and drug traffickers who were beginning to take advantage of a space afforded by not only a repressive military force, but also by a series of structural forces that left these individuals in an ever increasing vulnerable position and with a difficult dilemma: take up arms to change their social condition, or take part in the production of narcotics either by force or necessity.

Institutionally, the United States created an agency that was in charge of implementing operations and provided technical as well as logistical support in the war on drugs. This U. S. governmental agency played an important role in a more close collaboration between Mexico and the United States in their joint efforts to eradicate drug production and distribution in the region, as we will see in Chapter Five.

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[124] Julio Pomar, "Nefasta Mancuerna: Latifundio Simulado y Tráfico de Drogas," *El Día*, March 9, 1976. AGN IPS, Box 1798A, File 2: 6 de octubre de 1975 al 30 de marzo de 1976, pg. 323.

[125] Daniel Ruiz Bringas, "Difícil Liquidar el Tráfico de Drogas: EU, Gran Mercado," *Diario de la Tarde*, April 5, 1976. AGN IPS, Box 1789-B, File 4: 1973-1976, pg. 51.

Chapter Summary

Framed in a global and regional anti-communist framework, the War on Drugs was used as a political tool to combat dissidence in rural Mexico. As previously stated, the Cold War Period in Latin America was marked by the dynamic interactions between international forces and domestic actors. On the one hand, there was a regional and global process that was attempting to thwart the spread of communism. Influenced by the United States' anti-communist framework and counternarcotics policy, Mexican authorities implemented a defoliation campaign. Through the Mexican military, Mexican officials intensified their campaign against producers and distributors of opium and marihuana in producing states. This approach had two outcomes in mind. First, the intent was to stop drug production and distribution from Mexico to the U.S. Secondly, this tactic was intended to promote internal security within Mexico. In implementing this drug control policy, U. S. authorities provided Mexican authorities with the means and the justifications to fight a drug war and the Dirty War. This was evident in the official response by the Mexican Government in combating drugs and dissidence.

On the other hand, there was a willing and able state apparatus bent in legitimizing their power at any cost. Mexico enjoyed a relative period of political and social stability, the result of the institutionalization of the revolution. Despite this, there were cycles of rebellion and repression. A repressive authoritarian government seeking to legitimize their power violently suffocated leftist movements in Mexico. When leftist movements attempted to readdress the agrarian question in rural Mexico, the official response was to coalesce dissidence with drugs. The irony of this period was that while domestically the administrations of Echeverría and López Portillo followed a hard line in

terms of leftist guerrilla movements, in the international arena, they lent their full support to leftist movements in Chile and Central America, respectively.

As evidenced by the analysis of rural guerrilla movements and the agrarian question, there was a connection between land tenure and dissidence in areas that also happened to be drug-producing states. Here, we also see how interdiction proved to be an effective strategy in the sense that it also served the dual purpose of combating dissidence and drugs. The decision by Mexican authorities to enact legislation that penalized producers, only addressed the production side of the commodity chain approach. These producers happened to be peasants of indigenous origin that due to structural circumstances derived in part by U. S. pressures on the one hand, and governmental neglect from the part of Mexican authorities on the other, confronted the dilemma of working for drug traffickers either by necessity or intimidation. The relationship between dissidence and the War on Drugs was apparent in the cases of Ruben Jaramillo, Lucio Cabañas, and Genaro Vázquez. In these cases, the strategy was part of a much broader War, the Cold War. Under the pretext of a supposed conspiracy between proto drug trafficking organizations and leftist rural guerrilla movements, the Mexican State intervened in order to legitimize their hegemony and in response to an anti-communist agenda predicated by the Cold War.

The *Jaramillista Movement*, the Genaro Vázquez and Lucio Cabañas uprisings had a similarity with the 1994 Zapatista uprising: a link between drugs and dissidence. In the case of Vázquez Rojas and Cabañas Barrientos in Guerrero, both received their teacher training in the *Escuela Normal Rural de Ayotzinapa*, also known as the *Escuela Normal Raúl Isidro Burgos*. Further, these movements had indigenous peasants as their

vanguard class and were led by rural elementary school teachers. These peasants had not seen the trickledown effect of a modern economy that favored free market practices over subsistence practices for a segment of the population that relied on making their lands productive. Under the Cold War era context, these peasants were the targets of a campaign that not only claimed to eradicate drugs, but also had the purpose of stamping out the possibility to readdress their grievances against the Mexican state. At the end of the Cold War era, these communities faced a new challenge in the form of violence associated with the drug trade and continued neglect from the part of government officials. Due to a series of structural forces, peasants have become involved in the production and distribution of drugs either by necessity or intimidation.

Very much in the same way in which the anti-communist framework dictated both foreign policy and eventually hegemony, the United States developed drug policy that was predicated by the politics of the Cold War. Discussions of democracy and development in the Western hemisphere during this period were also accompanied by conversations about the ever-growing War on Drugs in the region and how very little impact it has had in terms of the flow of drugs into the United States. This concept of justice, U. S. style has affected other institutions in countries were interdiction programs have been implemented, such is the case of Mexico. Furthermore, it has also exposed the level of corruption, collusion and impunity these drug trafficking organizations have reached with both law enforcement and military agencies and the highest governmental spheres in Mexico.

Finally, the ever-increasing role of the Mexican military in the War on Drugs and the dangers of utilizing the armed forces to fight drug trafficking organizations represent

a legacy of the Cold War era. While stationed in Acapulco as the commander in chief for the XXVII military zone, Salvador Rangel Medina was the only member of the Mexican military to publically question the armed forces' implementation of Low intensity conflict, a strategy in which military force was applied selectively. Rangel Medina, a career military General more loyal to the army and its principles than to the PRI-Gobierno, opined that the state loses legitimacy when it robs and its security forces accumulate accusations of abuse of authority and grave human rights violations. Thus, Rangel Medina further stated, that the same military forces entrusted to provide protection to indigenous peasants in rural areas failed to gain the trust of this sector of the population by engaging in instances of abuse of authority and violation of human rights, not to mention providing protection to drug traffickers.

A further legacy of the Cold War is the case of the desertion of members of the *Grupo Aeromóvil de Fuerzas Especiales* (GAFE), an elite group of the Mexican Army that, as mercenaries, eventually became the *Zetas*. Generals like Miguel Nazar Haro and José de Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo are two clear examples of the perils of using the military in the war on drugs that Rangel Medina warned about in the 1970s. These Mexican generals, along with the deserting soldiers from GAFE received their training from the Western hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, formerly known as U. S. Army School of the Americas, where they were instructed in coercive measures, torture, and extrajudicial executions.

Chapter 5 continues to look into a period of the Cold War era through the Camarena affair. Both the official and the unofficial versions of the 1985 abduction,

torture and murder of Kiki Camarena are presented in the context of the CIA-Contra-Drug Trafficking Triangle and the political violence derived from the Cold War.

Chapter 5: The Camarena Affair

Introduction

On February 7, 1985, Enrique "Kiki" Camarena Salazar left the American Consulate in Guadalajara, Mexico to meet his family for lunch. A month later, on March 5, 1985, his dead body was found in a rural area outside of La Angostura, Michoacán. According to the "official version," the bosses of a Mexican drug cartel had viciously tortured the veteran agent, along with his pilot, Capt. Alfredo Zavala Avelar. The cartel took action against Camarena because they believed that he had uncovered a multimillion-dollar smuggling operation, which tied them to top officers in the Mexican army, police and government officials.

The autopsy provided an insight into his death at the hands of his captors. The autopsy revealed a fracture skull, jaw, nose, cheekbones and windpipe. His ribs were broken and a hole had been drilled into his head with a screwdriver. Perhaps in order to ensure that he remained conscious throughout his torture, he was plied with amphetamines and other drugs, which were also found in his system during the autopsy. It is suspected that the heinous torture occurred throughout a 30-hour period.[1]

The murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena Salazar was a turning point in Mexico – U. S. Drug Enforcement operations. For both countries, the Camarena Affair revealed a complex and elaborate web of connections between cartels and state actors. For the Mexicans, the murder revealed CIA complicity with a burgeoning cartel powerhouse, the Guadalajara Cartel. For the Americans, the murder confirmed long held

[1] Jerry Seper, "Brutal DEA agent Murder Reminder of Agency Priority," *The Washington Times*, March 5, 2010. Available at: http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/mar/05/dea-has-25-year-burning-reminder/?page=all. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

beliefs by American drug authorities about collusion between cartels and Mexican state actors. Namely, it revealed the level of complicity between drug traffickers, law enforcement agencies and public officials in Mexico. It also highlighted the resulting impunity with which the cartels ran their business. Finally, the murder revealed an intricate scheme of cover-ups that relied both on covert operations and Cold War ideological convictions.

In this chapter, I examine the Camarena Affair as a pivotal moment in the evolution of Mexican drug trafficking. In doing so, I place the kidnapping, torture, and murder of Camarena in its proper transnational and historical context. Also, I offer a brief historical account of the DEA presence in Mexico. Next, I examine Mexico's foreign policy towards and relationship with Central America, during the Cold War era. I also examine the origins and development of drug trafficking enterprises in Mexico, most notably the Guadalajara cartel. This includes the rise of the importance of the Mexican drug cartels, as they began to smuggle cocaine for Colombian drug cartels. I present the cooperative ventures brokered by Juan Matta Ballesteros, a Central American drug trafficker. Finally, I conclude with a new analysis of the Camarena Affair. I frame his murder as one ordered by CIA operatives in Mexico. A murder ordered because Camarena had discovered the connection between South America cocaine and the Mexican drug cartels, which secured its transport into the United States.

The Camarena Affair: Transnational Historical Context

"Kiki" Camarena was born in Mexicali, Mexico in 1947. Camarena worked as a firefighter and police investigator before joining the DEA in Calexico.[2] In 1974, he joined the DEA at their office in Calexico, California; just across the border from his Mexican birth city. In 1977, Camarena moved to their Fresno office, and in 1981 he was assigned to the agency's Guadalajara office in Mexico.

Armed with his Mexican roots and DEA training, Camarena had successfully infiltrated the GC. He had begun to work as an undercover DEA agent assigned to Guadalajara in 1981. By 1984, Camarena developed a vast network of informants that included cultivators from the state of Sinaloa and operatives from the GC. This network of informants allowed Camarena to deal a devastating blow to Caro Quintero and the GC—the destruction of a large marijuana field in *El Búfalo* ranch, property of Caro Quintero. According to the official version of Camera's murder, it was as a result of these events that on February 9, 1985 Camarena was eventually kidnapped, tortured, and executed by the GC.[3]

As a consequence of Camarena's death, the DEA launched Operation Intercept II and Operation Leyenda, activities that created crisis in U. S. – Mexico relations.[4] Operation Intercept II, a rehash of the unilateral decision implemented by the Nixon administration in 1969, was launched shortly after Camarena's disappearance. Intercept II involved the intensive checks of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic entering the

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[2] Elaine Shannon, *Desperados: Latin Drug Lords, U.S. Lawmen, and the War America Can't Win*, pg. 1-2, 6, 418.

[3] J. Jesús Esquivel, *La DEA en México*, pp. 75-85.

[4] María Celia Toro, *Mexico's "War" on Drugs: Causes and Consequences*, pg. 31.

United States from Mexico. However, in a similar fashion to the 1969 version, both operations caused social and economic chaos in the entire U. S. – Mexico border region, mainly creating enormous traffic delays and the partial closing of the border crossing. The 1985 version of Intercept had very little impact on the flow of drugs into the United States, much in the same of the 1969 version of this operation.[5]

The subsequent investigation into Camarena's abduction led to the launching of Operation Leyenda in May of 1985. Described as a long and complex investigation, Operation Leyenda was made more difficult by the jurisdictional problem and the high profile of the individuals involved; namely, major Mexican drug traffickers and corrupt government officials.[6] The Camarena affair sent U. S. – Mexican relations into a plunge, overturning the climate of antidrug cooperation that had been fostered during the 1970s[7] and led to an episode of transborder kidnapping in 1990 of Dr. Humberto Alvarez Machain, the gynecologist from Guadalajara who administered the drugs that revived Camarena after torture so his captors could interrogate him further.[8]

The official version advanced by United States authorities of Camarena's murder contended that Rafael Caro Quintero and Ernesto Fonseca Carrillo ("Don Neto"), members of the Guadalajara Cartel, ordered the torture and assassination of Camarena. The kidnap, torture and murder of Camarena were ordered as retaliation for the raid at El Bufalo Ranch in Chihuahua, property of Caro Quintero. During the raid, DEA authorities

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[5] Peter Andreas, *Border Games: Policing the U. S. – Mexico Divide*, pg. 47.

[6] María Celia Toro, *Mexico's "War" on Drugs: Causes and Consequences*, pp. 64-65.

[7] Peter Andreas, *Border Games: Policing the U. S. – Mexico Divide*, pg. 47.

[8] Andreas F. Lowenfeld, "Kidnapping by Government Order: A Follow-Up," *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (1980), pg. 712.

confiscated over 4,000 tons of marijuana. However, in 1984, a Mexican journalist was beginning to unravel a complicated web of connections that had transnational implications: the CIA-Contras-Drug Trafficking Triangle. The following selection presents the presence of the DEA in Mexico.

The DEA in Mexico

American agents had been present in Mexican soil since 1917—the year which marks the Zimmerman telegram that offered the return of the territory lost to the United States in 1848 in exchange for oil to help the German war effort. This period also coincided with the enactment of United States laws that prohibited the importation of drugs. Many of these drugs were either produced in Mexico or transversed Mexican territory on their way to the United States market.[9] The creation of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN), within the Department of Treasury, in 1930 also ushered in the presence of official U.S. drug agents in Mexico. With Harry J. Anslinger heading the agency, between 1930 and 1962, these U. S. drug agents were operating in Mexico, in both open and clandestine posts.[10]

As Cold War politics began to shape United States foreign policy in the 1960s, it also began to influence United States foreign drug matters. In Mexico, it resulted in the creation of the Dirección Federal de Seguridad. The new Cold War influence on drug foreign policy ushered in the creation of new drug enforcement institutions in the United States. With this, there was also the requisite to continue having operatives from the U.

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[9] María Celia Toro, "The Internationalization of Police: The DEA in Mexico, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 86, No. 2, pg. 627.

[10] William O. Walker III, *Drug Control in the Americas*, pg. 191.

S. drug agencies in Mexico in an attempt to overcome historic levels of corruption there.[11]

In the span of five years, beginning in 1968, the U.S. federal drug enforcement bureaucracy underwent two major reorganizations. The first took place in 1968 with the FBN transfer from the Treasury Department to the Justice Department. The FBN operations dealt with drugs both in the United States and abroad and were handled by several government dependencies. A merger with the Bureau of Drug Abuse Control (BDAC) also marked the transfer. The FBN-BDAC merger resulted in the creation of the newly formed Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD). As a result of this new historical juncture, President Nixon felt the need to create a super agency that would oversee all drug related activities.[12]

Nixon's vision for a "super agency," which would have the purview of all drug related activities, gave way to a second major reorganization in the early 1970s. In 1973, then President Nixon authorized the restructuring of the BNDD through the Reorganization Plan no. 2 of 1973.[13] His executive order, officially established the current incarnation of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) within the Justice Department.[14]

Shortly after the DEA was establish, three official operations in Mexico commenced: Operation SEA/M, Operation Endrum, and *Operación Tridente*. These

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[11] Ethan A. Nadelmann, *Cops Across Borders: The Internationalization of U. S. Criminal Law Enforcement*, pp. 93-96.

[12] *The Federal Register*, Vol. 82 - 90th Congress, 2nd Session, 1968: 5611, 82 Stat. 1367, pg. 1368.

[13] ***Executive Order 11727--Drug law enforcement.*** **Available at: http:***//www.gpo.gov/.../USCODE-2011-title5-app-reorganiz-other-dup96.pdf.* Accessed on November 17, 2013.

[14] Ibid, pp. 139-140.

combined opeations "allowed" the DEA to send at least 20 of its agents to the various states of Mexico. Between August of 1973 and January of 1974, Nixon's administration pressured Echeverria's government to allow surveillance and policing activities to be carried out by DEA operatives in Mexican territory.[15]

Although the U.S. embarked on the remarked expansion of their drug enforcement agencies and corresponding operations, the cooperation between Mexican and United States drug agents could be described as less than reciprocal, at best. The best example of this less than reciprocal cooperation was Operation Intercept. The poor collaboration between the two nation's drug agencies and operatives came at a time when the war on drugs intensified.[16] As a result, the United States government began advocating for stricter enforcement of laws to combat drug trafficking in Mexico. In the early to mid 1970s, the DEA sought to expand efforts to combat drug traffickers. The plan called for a joint law enforcement program, in which the Mexican government ultimately declined to participate, father exacerbating the lack of collaboration between the two nations.[17]

Further, any semblance of U. S. – Mexico cooperation to combat illicit drug traffic was devastated by the 1985 assassination of DEA agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena Salazar by the Guadalajara Cartel. Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo, *El Padrino* (the Godfather), headed the Guadalajara Cartel and was a former Federal Judicial agent from the state of Sinaloa. The Guadalajara Cartel began to introduce cocaine shipments from

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[15] J. Jesús Esquivel, *La DEA en México: Una historia oculta del narcotráfico contada por los agentes*, pp. 21-23.

[16] María Celia Toro, *Mexico's "War" on Drugs: Causes and Consequences*, pg 30.

[17] María Celia Toro, "The Internationalization of Police: The DEA in Mexico," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 86, No. 2, pg. 628.

Colombia to the United States as drug interdiction efforts increased in the Caribbean region. These actions made it difficult for Colombian drug traffickers to introduce cocaine through Miami. As we will see later on in this Chapter, the disarticulation of the Caribbean corridor coupled with developments in Central America and alleged complicity from the part of State players, allowed for the Guadalajara cartel to become a conduit of South American cocaine into the United States.

By 1980, Mexico developed into an important transshipment point for illicit drug trafficking and the DEA took notice. A Congressional report presented to the President and Attorney General of the United States identified three typical transshipment patterns that placed Mexico at the center of the transport of South American cocaine. The first pattern involved the transportation of South America cocaine by Mexican drug traffickers over land routes into the United States. The second pattern was the transportation of cocaine by either Colombian or Mexican couriers via commercial aircraft from South America to Mexico. The cocaine was then introduced through a pedestrian checkpoint along the U. S. – Mexican border. The final shipment pattern described Colombian or Central American traffickers' use of Mexico's numerous clandestine airstrips, especially in Yucatan, for purposes of reloading or offloading. From the clandestine airstrips, the smuggling aircraft would either continue directly to the United States, or the drug shipment would be broken off into smaller loads, and then smuggled overland by Mexican organizations into the United States.[18]

In matters of foreign and domestic policy, Mexico had a contrasting approach. On the international front, during the Cold War era, Mexico was considered a leading

[18] United States. President's Commission on Organized Crime. *America's Habit: Drug Abuse, Drug Trafficking, and Organized Crime: Report to the President and the Attorney General*, pp. 88-89.

nation amongst the so-called Third World Countries. In such capacity, Mexico took the lead, albeit timidly, in opposing U. S. foreign policy globally. Regionally, Mexico contradicted Washington's strong anti-communist sentiments, by supporting both the Cuban and Nicaraguan Revolution. Internally, Mexico touted a hard line against any leftist urban and rural guerrilla movements.

However, Central America's stability became threatened by the possibility of the region collapsing like dominoes under the control of communism. As the threat of a U. S. intervention in Central America loomed larger in the horizon, Mexico became more preoccupied with the political stability of the region, even if it meant supporting authoritative regimes. In the following section, I present a discussion as part of the historical context of the period that addresses Mexico's foreign policy toward Central America as a method of maintaining stability in the region in order to ward off U.S. intervention.

Mexico's Foreign Policy Towards Central America

Prior to the 1980s, Mexico's foreign policy mainly focused inward. Instead of increasing its sphere of influence, Mexico aimed at protecting itself from outside pressures, specifically from the United States. Indeed, the U.S pressure on Mexico, largely influenced the country's policy toward the rest of the world. Mexico's foreign policy was largely influenced by its relationship with Washington. Therefore, East-West concerns and even developing world problems seemed irrelevant to the Mexican state.

By displaying its independence from Washington, Mexico presented as a defense against U. S. intervention to the world. Thus, the policy of impetuous words and guarded action served Mexico well. It was consistent with the country's history; as it kept alive

nationalism, discouraged militarism, appeased leftists both at home and abroad and allowed Mexico to challenge Washington in diplomatic mediums without threatening fundamental U. S. interests in Mexico. Also, it was constant, because it was a policy that reflected the consistent national interest rather than the impulses of a single administration.

During the Cold War era, Mexico acknowledged its alignment with the United States in any conflict with the Soviet Union. However, Mexico rejected to view Latin America's problems framed in an East-West context. Mexico's collective memory, as well as a political viewpoint, resulting in difficulty comparing interventions by the United States and the Soviet Union. Two facts remained constant in the Mexican political-psyche: American soldiers had invaded Mexico on several occasions, while Soviet troops had never set foot on Mexican soil.

Historically, Mexico's foreign policy toward Central America has been complex. In the early part of the 20th century, and perhaps as a response to U. S. military and political interventions that took place during the Revolution, Mexico expressed its support and sympathy to struggles that were taking place in Central America. For example, in the 1920s, the Calles administration sent weapons to support rebels under the command of Augusto Cesar Sandino who were fighting U. S. Marines in Nicaragua. However, by the 1950s, Mexico's support of Central American struggles was reduced to the public forum the Organization of American States (OAS) afforded. By 1954, Mexico opposed a resolution proposed in the OAS in which the left leaning government of

Guatemala was condemned. A move, which eventually paved the diplomatic way for the U. S., backed invasion that ousted President Jacobo Arbenz.[19]

By the late 1970s and early 1980's, Mexico's change in foreign policy toward Central America was brought forth by the political unrest that prevailed in the area. Throughout the twentieth century, Mexico's single interest in the region had been political stability. They sought to avoid any semblance of instability in the region that would likely usher in U.S. intervention of the United States. They sought this stability, even if right wing dictators placed in power by Washington maintained it. As the situation in Nicaragua began to unfold in favor of the Sandinistas, Mexico began to pay attention to the area. The Lopez Portillo administration (1976-1982) provided the Sandinistas with economic aid to cover travel expenses and allowed them to open offices in Mexico City. In 1980, Mexico's interest in Central America expanded to El Salvador and Guatemala. In August of that year, the Mexican officials set up secret meetings with representatives of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMNL) and Guatemalan guerrilla leaders.[20]

This situation did not bode well with the Reagan administration. Once in office, Ronald Reagan made sure to reassert his leading role in the region and in the world. Characterized by a strategy known as "peace through strength", the Reagan Doctrine offered overt and covert assistance to anti-communist rebels and resistance movements in an effort to roll back Soviet-backed communist governments in Africa, Asia, and Latin

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[19] Alan Riding, *Distant Neighbors: A Portrait of the Mexicans*, pp. 340-342.

[20] Ibid, pp. 350-353.

America. The doctrine aimed to reduce Soviet influence in these regions as part of the administration's overall Cold War strategy.[21]

Consequently, violence intensified in Central America. This escalation of violence was the result of Washington's Geo-Political objectives in the region, as well as a bloody civil war in the Central American nations of Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Individuals displaced by the violence in these countries would eventually began a long journey that would take them to the United States and Canada, while others would settle in Mexico.

Mexico has had a long tradition of accommodating the persecuted and the displaced. From extending political asylum to Spanish Republicans and Leon Trotsky, or the self imposed exile of Fidel Castro, Ernesto Guevara, Augusto César Sandino and Farabundo Martí—at times—Mexico served as a safe haven for political refugees and ideologues unwelcome in their home countries. A similar parallel can be made for the displaced and persecuted by the violence in Central America in the 1980s. Mexico became the country of first asylum for hundred of thousands of people fleeing repressive conditions.[22] For example, the state of Chiapas had refugee camps of Guatemalan and Salvadoran immigrants who fled the violence in their home countries.

While some migrants enjoyed the hospitality of Mexico as their host nation, others experienced a less welcoming political response. In 1984, Mexico's Ministry of the Interior gave Central American migrants the option of self-repatriation back to their

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[21] Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "The Reagan Doctrine: The Guns of July," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1986.

[22] María Cristina García, *Seeking Refuge: Central American Migration to Mexico, the United States, and Canada*, pp. 44-46.

country of origin or relocating in Campeche.[23] This proposal may likely have been in response to attacks and violence at the hands of the Guatemalan Army. The first was an attack in early January of 1984. The second was an April 30th incursion during which members of the Guatemalan Army entered Mexican territory and murdered 6 refugees.[24]

It is in this precise historical context in which political violence, driven by Cold War in Latin America and in particular Central America, begins to develop. In the course of this historical juncture, Mexico acts as a bridge nation for the transport of South American cocaine. The same routes that had previously been used to smuggle marijuana and heroin along the U. S. – Mexico border now carried a new product: cocaine from South America. As Mexican drug cartels began to operate with the protection of corrupt law enforcement agents and government officials, their power increased significantly. The level of impunity that drug cartels enjoyed reached its breaking point with the abduction, torture, and murder of Camarena and the complicity of corrupt governmental and law enforcement officials. The Camarena affair constitutes an integral – yet misunderstood – piece of this Cold War political violence puzzle.

The Camarena Affair: The Unofficial Version From the Mexican Perspective

While the "official" explanation of Camarena's murder cleanly places the blame on the typical bad actors—unscrupulous drug cartels. However, further evidence eventually surfaced that established a link between the CIA, Contras and the Guadalajara Cartel. Based on new evidence revealed by Hector Berrellez, former DEA agent in charge of

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[23] Carlos Fazio, "Oscura y contradictoria conducta de Gobernación hacia los refugiados guatemaltecos," *Proceso*, No. 393, May 14, 1984, pp. 6-9.

[24] Carlos Fazio, "Relaciones exige a Guatemala que investigue, castigue y evites incrusiones, de quien sea," *Proceso*, No. 392, May 7, 1994, pp. 14-15; Juan Balboa, "Violación sistemática del territorio por el ejército guatemalteco," *Proceso*, No. 392, May 7, 1984, pp. 15-17; Carlos Fazio, "Para el Obispo de San Cristóbal no hay duda: el agresor fue el ejército guatemalteco," *Proceso*, No. 392, May 7, 1984, pg. 16.

Operation Leyenda suggests that the true reason Camarena was targeted went beyond the El Bufalo ranch raid and instead led to Camarena's investigation and discovery that U.S. intelligence operatives were involved in drug trafficking. New evidence implies complicity from the part of CIA operatives and Mexican drug traffickers. This evidence revealed that Camarena uncovered the CIA's involvement of smuggling drugs from South America into the United States to finance the Contras in Nicaragua. Camarena's discovery established a link with the potential to scandalize and implicate the highest spheres of the Reagan administration, namely, the Iran-Contra affair. This U.S. government cover-up was believed responsible for the crack epidemic that ravaged American inner cities in the 1980s. As a result of Camarena's discovery, the unofficial version of his murder contends that the CIA's Félix Ismael Rodríguez killed Camarena.[25]

Gary Webb exposed the CIA-Contra connection in the United States on August of 1996 in his three-part exposé titled "Dark Alliance" published in the *San Jose Mercury News*. Webb's sources included the Kerry Commission Report, interviews with Nicaraguan drug traffickers Oscar Danilo Blandon, Norwin Meneses and American drug trafficker Rick Ross. Webb's investigation revealed a connection between the CIA and the Contras and the resulting crack epidemic that devastated inner cities in the United States.

While Webb's exposé would highlight the CIA-Contra connection, year's earlier Mexican journalist Manuel Buendía reported on the Mexican press about the CIA presence in Mexico. As he prepared to publish the results of an investigation of an

[25] Luis Chaparro and J. Jesús Esquivel, "A Camarena lo ejecutó la CIA, no Caro Quintero," *Proceso*, no. 1928, October 12, 2013, pp. 6-10.

alleged CIA-Contra-Drug Trafficking conspiracy with the complicity of Mexican public officials, Buendía was murdered in Mexico City.

Manuel Buendía and the CIA-Contras-Drug Trafficking Triangle

Buendía was a highly regarded journalist in Mexico and became interested in the CIA after his visit to Guatemala in 1954. His visit coincided with the overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz. From that point on, Buendía became intrigued by the role of the CIA in Latin America, and specifically, in Mexico. Buendía's articles appeared on *Excelsior, El Día, El Sol de México,* and *El Universal*. In his column *Red Privada* (Private Network), he exposed corruption by Mexican government officials. Buendía claimed in 1982 a CIA – Contra connection.[26] In his column, he provided names of CIA operatives in Mexico.[27]

By spring of 1984, his areas of research concentrated on exposing suspected links between drug traffickers and high-ranking government officials. On May 4, 1984, he argued in his column that the drug trade was creating an extremely serious situation in Mexico. Buendía quoted Catholic bishops in southern Mexico to establish that peasants were forced to grow marijuana. Anyone who opposed the forced marijuana cultivation was killed. On May 14, 1984, quoting unnamed sources, Buendía wrote of the complicity, direct or indirect, of high public officials on the state and federal level involved in the drug trade. Foreshadowing the fate of future brave Mexican journalists who would later expose government-narco corruption, Buendía was killed two weeks

[26] Manuel Buendía, "Pastora, ¿CIA?", *Excelsior*, 18 de mayo de 1982. In Manuel Buendía, *La CIA en México*, pp. 214-217.

[27] Miguel Ángel Granados Chapa, *Buendía: El primer asesinato de la narcopolítica en México*, pp. 129-139.

later. On May 30, 1984, he was shot as he left his office located in Mexico City's posh *Zona Rosa* neighborhood.[28]

Manuel Buendía's brother, Angel, sought answers and justice for his brother murder. He conducted an inquiry into his brother's death. The findings of this inquiry were published in a book titled *Mi Testimonio Sobre la Muerte de Manuel Buendía*. The book revealed that months prior to his death, Manuel Buendía was conducting an investigation on drug trafficking activities in Mexico. In his investigation, he discovered oil tankers from Veracruz were making constant round trips to Central America, perhaps Honduras. These oil tankers would take weapons to the Contras, and returned with drugs to be transported to the United States. As he continued with his investigation, Buendía found a recurring connection between drug trafficking, weapons trafficking and the heavy CIA presence in Mexico. Buendía presumed such actions necessitated the complicity of corrupt Mexican public officials to carry out the weapons and drug trafficking. The Mexican journalist Rogelio Hernández López followed up on this lead, but he was persuaded by a criminal organization based in Veracruz, the *Sonora Matancera*,[29] to desist in his intentions or he would be killed. [30]

Further, Angel argued that his brother Manuel published a series of articles that attacked the interests of the CIA in Mexico with possible repercussions to its policy towards Central America. The first series of articles published the names of CIA

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[28] Anthony Collings, *Words of Fire: Independent Journalists Who Challenge Dictators, Druglords, and Other Enemies of a Free Press*, pg. 69.

[29] *The Sonora Matancera* was a criminal organization headed by Felipe Lagunes Castillo. It enjoyed its heyday during the governorship of his cousin Agustin Acosta Lagunes (1980-1986) in the state of Veracruz.

[30] Angel Buendía, *Mi Testimonio Sobre el Asesinato de Manuel Buendía*, pp. 11-12, 20-22.

operatives in Mexico. The second series of articles questioned the interests of the *Instituto Lingüistico de Verano* (Summer Institute of Linguistics, SIL) an organization with alleged CIA ties throughout the then called Third World. Finally, when Manuel was murdered, he was in the process of publishing his findings of an investigation in which he found a link between the Contras, the CIA and the GC.

In his column *Red Privada*, Manuel Buendía published a series of articles in which he divulged the names and affiliations of individuals he identified as CIA operatives in Mexico. He expanded upon these articles in his 1984 book *La CIA en México*. This book compiled all of his articles pertaining to the CIA's connections in Mexico.

In one of his articles, Buendía began to unravel the interconnections between the CIA, arms and drug trafficking. In his exposé, he identifies Gerhard Mertins, as a CIA operative in Mexico. Mertins was a former member of the Nazi party, who after World War II, became a major weapons trafficker. In 1963, Mertins along with Otto Skorzeny, founded Merex AG Company in Switzerland.[31]

Further, a former DEA operative in Mexico had established a connection between Mertins and the Leaño family of Guadalajara—a region where Mertins sold large amounts of weapons. According to testimony by a former DEA operative in Mexico, Lawrence Victor Harrison, the Leaño family controlled large marijuana fields. His testimony also reveled connections with a fascist, extreme right group called *Los Tecos*. *Los Tecos* were believed to have been in collaboration with the CIA and the Mexican government in the 1970s to combat leftist guerrilla and student movements. Mertins

[31] Ken Silverstein y Daniel Burton-Rose, *Private Warriors,* pp. 109-140.

trafficking weapons into Mexico, and these weapons would eventually made their way to the Contras in Central America in exchange for cocaine that was being shipped to the United States.[32]

The second series of articles that Manuel Buendía published in *Red Privada* dealt with the Summer Institute of Linguistics[33] or the Wycliffe Bible Translators (SIL/WBT). William Cameron Townsend founded SIL/WBT in 1917. The SIL/WBT was a sort of missionary intervention in the affairs of "unreached group." For decades it was the most notorious of the U.S. based missionary agencies in the so-called third world. Townsed decided to go to Guatemala and sell bibles translated into Spanish. After failing to take into consideration that the majority of the population in Guatemala did not speak Spanish, he decided to learn one of the Indigenous languages, construct an alphabet, and translate the New Testament into the Cakchiquel language. This task took him twelve years.

In 1934, Townsend began to train missionaries in Arkansas. After the completion of their training, the missionaries set out to Mexico to begin translating the bible. Townsed offered the Mexican government a team of trained linguists who would perform nonsectarian translation services and literacy training for peasant Indigenous populations. In exchange, the Mexican government granted Wycliffe access to people and their languages. By the end of World War II, Wycliffe had 100 team members dispersed in Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, the Phillipines, and Guatemala.

To link the diverse mission fields and reach more and more remote areas, the group's technical support division, Jungle Aviation and Radio Services (JAARS), hired

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[32] Anabel Hernández, *Los señores del narco*, pg. 98.

[33] The article "ILV y CIA, hermanos," was originally published in *El Sol de México* on January 12, 1978. A second article, "Frontera caliente," was originally published in *Excélsior* on March 8, 1980. These two articles were reprinted in Buendía's book, *La CIA en México*.

pilots, mechanics and radio technicians. Before beginning the translation process, Wycliffe teams conducted extensive surveys of the target population, extracting detailed information on the community's demographics, natural resources, belief systems, cultural practices, and attitudes toward the state. They also sponsored local development projects in the areas of health, agriculture and literacy. Critics argue that under the guise of humanitarian work, the group served a conservative and pro-capitalist ideological agenda. In 1978, SIL/WBT prepared a dictionary for the Tzolzil people of Mayan descent. This dictionary eliminated the Spanish and indigenous words for ideological concepts that threatened the status quo—elimination of critical references to class, conquer, exploitation, oppression, repression, and revolution, among others. Mexican academics and community leaders were highly vocal in their opposition to SIL/WBT.

Over the years, SIL/WBT's close working relations with U.S. government officials and allied foreign leaders has earned the missionaries a reputation as CIA "assets." It has been suspected that SIL/WBT cooperated with the American government during the Cold War, supporting counterinsurgency efforts in different Latin American countries, as well as the work of U.S. corporations working to displace indigenous populations from exploitable land resources. In 1983, Mexico's Ministry of the Interior reported that SIL/WBT was working with the CIA and teaching Mexico's Indigenous population a revisionist history of the U.S. – Mexican War of 1848.[34]

Manuel Buendía accused SIL/WBT of carrying out espionage activities in Southern Mexico by recruiting indigenous people to carry out what he considered

[34] Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right*, pp. 217-219; David Stoll, *Fishers of Men or Founders of Empire? The Wycliffe Bible Translators in Latin America. A US Evangelical Mission in the Third World*, pp. 81-88; Laurie Hart, "The Story of the Wycliffe Translators: Pacifying the Last Frontiers", *NACLA's Latin America & Empire Report*, Vol. VII, No. 10, 1973, pp. 22-24.

seditious activities. According to Manuel's investigation, SIL was not engaged in the study, documentation and development of indigenous languages across Mexico. Instead, he argued that the SIL/WBT was only a front used by the CIA to engage in drug trafficking activities. In his articles, Manuel stated that SIL/WBT possessed a flotilla of planes in southeast Mexico that transported cocaine from Central and South America to the United States, as well as a powerful system that guided night flights.

Finally, prior to his murder, Manuel Buendía was in the process of writing a column in which he planned to reveal collusion between the DFS, the GC, and the Contras.[35] His article would establish the participation of corrupt Mexican government officials, among them Manuel Barlett, then Minister of the Interior. Between 1981 and 1984, Buendía received information from a journalist by the last name of Velasco that Central American forces were receiving training in a ranch property of Caro Quintero in Veracruz. The CIA conducted these operations/training with the complicity of the DFS. After compiling this information, Buendía presumably approached José Antonio Zorrilla, then Director of Mexico's Dirección Federal de Seguridad for advice. Zorrilla warned Buendía of the sensitivity of the CIA-Contra-Drugs triangle.

After the murder of Buendía, DFS agents retrieved from his office the evidence that linked the CIA with top Mexican officials and DFS in the Contra-Drug link. The top Mexican official that was complicit in the CIA-Contra-Drug triangle was Manuel Bartlett Díaz, then Minister of the Interior.[36]

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[35] Angel Buendía, *Mi Testimonio Sobre el Asesinato de Manuel Buendía*, pp. 157-160.

[36] Anabel Hernández, *Los señores del narco*, pp. 94-98; Sergio Aguayo, *La Charola: una historia de los servicios de inteligencia en México*, pp. 239-240.

Buendía's death was not an isolated incident in Mexico. On the same day Buendía was killed, Javier Juárez Vázquez was found dead in Veracruz. Juárez was Buendía's source in Veracruz; the same source that Berrellez had made reference to in his Operation Leyenda investigation as Velasco. Juárez was the editor of *Primera Plana* (Front Page) in Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz. On the same day Buendía was killed in Mexico City, Juárez was tortured and shot eight times in an execution style slaying.[37] Prior to his death, Juárez was in the middle of an investigation for a story in which he found that the CIA was responsible for establishing and maintaining clandestine airstrips that were used for refueling planes with arms being sent from the United States to Nicaragua and Honduras or were transporting cocaine from Colombia to Miami.[38] It is for the above-mentioned reasons that the CIA killed Manuel Buendía, according to his brother Angel.

Academics and agency insiders alike, agree with Angel Buendía's belief that the CIA killed Manuel Buendía. Russell H. Bartley, Matthew Rothschild, and Hector Berrellez shared this contention as well. Both Bartley and Rothschild as academics offer an outsider's historical perspective on an event that shocked the journalistic community in Mexico. While former DEA agent Hector Berrellez—the agent in charge of Operation Leyenda, the investigation launched to solve Camarena's murder—also agreed with the CIA connection in the Buendía murder.

Russell Bartley, Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Wisconsin explained that Buendía's criticism of the marked CIA presence in Mexico, along with his

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[37] Juan M. Vasquez, "Murder of Major Columnist Casts Shadow Over Mexico's Freedom of the Press Day," *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 1984, pg. B1; Miguel Cabildo and Oscar Hinojosa, "El Director de *Primera Plana* de Coatzacoalcos, muerto también a tiros," *Proceso*, No. 396, June 4, 1984, pg. 14.

[38] Anabel Hernández, *Los señores del narco*, pg. 99.

criticism against U. S. foreign policy in Central America had attracted the attention of the Reagan administration.[39]

Matthew Rothschild was, at the time, a columnist for *The Progressive*. In his article published in 1985 titled "Who Killed Manuel Buendía? A Mexican Mystery," he also advanced the same allegation in which the CIA was involved in the murder of Manuel Buendía. In a similar explanation as presented by Professor Bartley, Rothschild contended that Buendía's criticism against the Reagan administration's foreign policy towards Central America was the principal reason to suspect the CIA's involvement in the murder of Buendía.[40]

Finally, former DEA agent Hector Berrellez also contends that the murder of Buendía had the involvement of the CIA. In the course of his investigation dubbed Operation Leyenda, Berrellez received Camarena's agenda. He found the name of Manuel Buendía as one of Camarena's contact. At first, Buendía's name did not mean much to Berrellez. He asked his Mexican contacts about Manuel Buendía. His sources in Mexico informed him that he was a Mexican journalist killed by the DFS and the CIA. Berrellez decided to continue with his investigation into the murder of Buendía. He concluded that Buendía was killed because published several articles in which he accused the DFS being colluded with drug traffickers in Mexico, and that the CIA was involved in suspicious deals with the DFS.[41] I will discuss Berrellez's account in more detail later in

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[39] Russel H. Bartley, "Evidencias de un posible involucramiento de intereses foráneos en el asesinato de Manuel Buendía," *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, Año 1, Número 5, Mayo-Junio 1989, pg. 13.

[40] Matthew Rothschild, "Who Killed Manuel Buendia? A Mexican Mystery," *The Progressive*, Vol. 49, Issue 4, April 1985.

[41] J. Jesus Esquivel, "El 'thriller' Camarena," *Proceso*, No. 1929, October 20, 2013, pg. 7.

this Chapter. In the following selection, I examine Mexican, Central and South American drug trafficking during the Cold War Era.

Mexico, Central and South American Drug Trafficking During the Cold War Era

As the Nicaraguan Revolution triumphed in the early 1980s, there was a concern in Washington that Central American nations would succumb to Communism. As a result, a very atypical association formed in order to halt the spread of Communism in the region. This alleged association brought together the CIA, Mexican, South and Central American drug traffickers to prevent the spread of the "Red virus." This section narrates the rise of Central American drug traffickers and their subsequent association with South American and Mexican drug "cartels." I also present their relationship with the CIA to fund the Contras based in Honduras.

As illustrated in Chapter 2, proto-transnational drug trafficking organizations began to emerge at the end of World War II. In the early stages of the drug smuggling activities, heroin and marijuana were the drugs being introduced to the U.S. market. From Mexico, heroin trafficking into the United States was carried out by the Herrera organization. The President's Commission on Organized Crime Report to the President and the Attorney General described to this organization as "…a major heroin smuggling power operative between Mexico and the United States" since the early 1970s. This organization was a confederation of families related by blood and marriage, although some non-family members had been accepted into the group over time. Despite the

conviction of Jaime Herrera Nevares and several key family members in 1978, the organization remained active.[42]

The Herrera Organization

In the 1940s, the Herrera organization was established in the mountain village of Los Herreras, Durango, Mexico. Family connections linked Chicago and Durango with branches across the United States and Latin America. As early as 1957, the organization was highly integrated running what the DEA has called a "farm-to-the-arm" operation in heroin trafficking. They were pioneers in developing smuggling techniques, such as a false driveshaft sleeve packed with drugs. Their network was known as "Heroin Highway" and the "Durango Pipeline." After U.S. Drug authorities smashed the "French Connection" drug conduit from Turkey to New York via Marseilles in the early 1970s, the Herrera organization stepped in to fill the void and provide the U.S. black market with the heroin that it now lacked. The Herrera organization sought to fill this void with Mexican heroin made from poppies grown in its own fields high in the Sierra Madre Mountains. By 1978, the organization has successfully filled this void, for example, they controlled 90 percent of the Chicago heroin market.[43]

Juan Ramón Matta-Ballesteros: The Conduit

It has been erroneously assumed that Central American traffickers were underlings to Colombian and Mexican drug traffickers. Further, the term bridge state is mainly associated with the transit of drugs, but also, Central American drug traffickers

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[42] United States. President's Commission on Organized Crime. *America's Habit: Drug Abuse, Drug Trafficking, and Organized Crime: Report to the President and the Attorney General*, pp. 109-110.

[43] Tom Diaz, *No Boundaries: Transnational Latino Gangs and American Law Enforcement*, pp. 246-247.

served to bridge the differences between Colombian and Mexican Cartels. Juan Ramón Matta-Ballesteros was the conduit that made possible cooperative ventures between South American and North American drug traffickers. Born in Honduras, Matta went from being a boyhood pickpocket who grew up homeless in Tegucigalpa, to a narcotics chemist, to a smuggler of gems, gold, and jewels to finally a prominent drug trafficker. At the time of his arrest, he was considered by the DEA to be among the world's ten most important drug traffickers. Matta gained experience in the different aspects of the drug trade and developed important connections, mainly with the founding members of the Medellin and Cali Cartels. In 1975, Matta formed a partnership with Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo, leader of the Guadalajara Cartel.[44]

Alberto Sicilia Falcón: The Tijuana Kingpin

Prior to the emergence of the Guadalajara Cartel, Alberto Sicilia Falcón was one of the biggest drug kingpins in Mexico. Operating from Tijuana, Sicilia was believed to be the leader of the world's largest cocaine and marijuana trafficking organization. Setting up his base of operations in Tijuana permitted Sicilia supervise the flow of drugs into the United Sates, establish a strong group of collaborators, stay away from any possible investigation into his illicit activities and expand his network in Mexico to continue to operate with impunity and benefit from the protection of corrupt public officials. Sicilia came to dominate the drug trade after the dismantling of the French Connection in 1972, marked by the killing in Mexico City of the French heroin trafficker Lucien Sarti. With the demise of the French Connection, Sicilia began to run vast quantities of marijuana from Mexico, cocaine from the Andean region, and heroin form

[44] Julie Marie Bunck and Michael Ross Fowler, *Bribes, Bullets, and Intimidation: Drug Trafficking and the Law in Central America*, pp. 270-272.

Europe. Sicilia himself claimed that his sudden rise within the criminal world was made possible by the protection afforded to him by powerful political and intelligence allies.

After his arrest in 1975, Sicilia confessed to police that he was a CIA protégé, and that he received training at Fort Jackson as a part of the secret war against Castro's Cuba. He asserted that in return for helping the CIA move weapons to certain groups in Central America, the Agency facilitated his movement of drugs. One of these alleged collaborators with intelligence links was Jose Egozi, a CIA-trained intelligence officer and Bay of Pigs veteran.

Further, Sicilia enjoyed support from top corrupt Mexican politicians, intelligence and law enforcement officials. One of the most important of these was Miguel Nazar Haro, DFS director from 1978 to 1982. Both the DFS and Nazar played an important role in the fight against left wing subversive groups in Mexico through the creation of a death squad dubbed the "White Brigade." It was precisely Nazar who offered Sicilia protection after Sicilia escaped from Lecumberri Federal prison in Mexico City in 1976 to make sure Sicilia did not divulge any compromising information.[45] The emergence of Sicilia and his complicity with corrupt Mexican politicians, as well as intelligence and law enforcement officials paved the way for a similar type of arrangement brokered by the Guadalajara Cartel during the Cold War period. From the Guadalajara Cartel other drug trafficking organizations splintered, most notably, the Juarez Cartel, the Arellano

[45] John Marshall, "CIA Assets and the Rise of the Guadalajara Connection," in Alfred McCoy and Alan A. Black, eds., *War on Drugs: Studies in the Failure of U. S. Narcotics Policy*, pg. 198; Froylán Enciso, "Régimen global de la prohibición, actores criminalizados y la cultura del narcotráfico en México durante la década de 1970," *Foro Internacional*, Vol. XLIX, No. 3, julio-septiembre, 2009, pp. 617-618; Isabelle Hall, "Heroin, Smuggling Case May Uncover Mystery," *Ludington Daily News*, September 22, 1972, pg. 8; Rafael Rodríguez Castañeda, *El policía: perseguía, torturaba, mataba*, pp. 81-91.

Felix Organization, and the Gulf Cartel. We now turn our attention to the Guadalajara Cartel

The Gudalajara Cartel

The Guadalajara Cartel was an organization that enjoyed the protection of the DFS. This organization saw its heyday in the 1970s and early 1980s. The Guadalajara Cartel was established in 1979 under the complicity of Gen. Federico Amaya Rodriguez, Jalisco's Military chief.[46] The Gudalajara Cartel had established a working relationship with Colombian Cartels to introduce cocaine into the U. S. by using the same routes that the Mexican cartels were using to introduce marijuana and heroin. The historical record revealed a heavy presence of Colombian nationals living in Guadalajara in the early 1970s.

Juan Matta Ballesteros, the Honduran drug trafficker mentioned earlier, provided support to the Contras in the early 1980s, brokered the working relationship between the Guadalajara Cartel and the Colombian Cartels. According to Court records, Rafael Caro Quintero, Ernesto Fonseca Carrillo, Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo, Ruben Zuno Arce, Manuel Ibarra, Miguel Aldana and Javier Barba Hernandez, all Mexican nationals, jointly operated a marijuana and cocaine trafficking group in Guadalajara, Mexico, the Guadalajara Cartel.

Zuno Arce had connections high in the Mexican government and was the brother-in-law of former President of Mexico, Luis Echeverría Álvarez (1970-1976).[47] Manuel Ibarra Herrera was the former director of the Mexican Federal Judicial Police; Miguel

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[46] Sergio Aguayo, *La Charola: una historia de los servicios de inteligencia en México*, pg. 239.

[47] William Yardley, "Rubén Zuno Arce, Guilty in Drug Murder, Dies at 82." *The New York Times*, September 20, 2012, pg. B19.

Aldana Ibarra was the former director of Interpol in Mexico.[48] Javier Barba Hernandez was a Mexican former lawyer turned enforcer, hired by the GC (GC) to combat the Mexican Federal Judicial Police (FJP) and the DEA. Hernandez acted as a warlord for Ernesto Fonseca Carrillo, Rafael Caro Quintero and Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo. According to the DEA he is believed to have assisted in the transportation of two Americans, John Walker and Alberto Radelat, who were later killed by the cartel under the false suspicion they were DEA agents. Prior to his death he was wanted for questioning in the murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena. Barba was killed on November 13, 1986 in a shoot-out with Mexican Federal Judicial Police in Mazatlán, Mexico. The DEA believed this may be part of a cover-up as the FJP has refused to turn over his fingerprints for identification.[49]

The Guadalajara Cartel operated marijuana ranches in various Mexican locations. Matta became involved with the GC in 1982 or 1983, and attended meetings where drug trafficking plans were discussed and decided. Felix Gallardo and Matta imported large amounts of cocaine into the United States on a number of occasions. At one point during their cocaine trafficking, Matta and Felix Gallardo grossed over $5 million a week from this enterprise.

The Abduction, Torture, and Murder of Camarena: The Beginning of the End for the Guadalajara Cartel

During 1984, the DEA made several significant seizures of marijuana and cocaine, which resulted in substantial losses for the Gualajara Cartel. At a gathering held

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[48] Richard L. Berke, "2 Ex-Mexican Aides Charged in Slaying of U.S. Drug Agent," *The New York Times*, February 1, 1990, pg. A1.

[49] United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit (November 1, 1993), *United States of America v. Javier Vasquez-Velasco*; Jay Robert Nash, *World Encyclopedia of Organized Crime*, pg. 45.

after the baptism of Barba Hernandez' daughter in Guadalajara in September 1984, members of the enterprise – with the exception of Matta – discussed these losses and suggested that the DEA agent they believed was responsible should be "picked up." In October 1984, at a meeting held prior to the wedding of Barba Hernandez' brother in Guadalajara, members of the enterprise, including Matta, met and discussed the DEA seizures as well as a police report file covering one of the major marijuana seizures at Zacatecas, Mexico. The DEA agent responsible for the seizures was again discussed.

Members of the Guadalajara Cartel held yet another meeting after the wedding, in which Zuno Arce suggested that the DEA agent should be "picked up" when his identity was discovered. By December 1984, Fonseca Carrillo had identified the responsible DEA agent as Special Agent Enrique Camarena. Fonseca Carrillo said that he would "take care of" Camarena.

In February 1985, Zuno Arce, Fonseca Carrillo, Caro Quintero and Barba Hernandez met in Guadalajara and once again discussed picking up the DEA agent, finding out how much he knew, and learning who was cooperating with him. Camarena disappeared on February 7, 1985 after leaving the DEA office in Guadalajara. Out-of-court statements, audiotapes and physical evidence, including hair, carpet fibers, sheet fabric and rope strands, showed that Camarena had been taken to a house in Guadalajara, where he was held, tortured, interrogated and finally killed.

After learning he was under surveillance, Matta was seen checking out of a hotel in Guadalajara on February 12, 1985. Physical evidence found in the guesthouse and bedroom at main house where Camarena was killed tied Matta to the scene of the crime. Matta faced charges that he participated in the conspiracy to kidnap and kill Enrique

Camarena. Matta was charged, tried and convicted of conspiring to commit a violent act in support of the Guadalajara Cartel, conspiracy to kidnap a federal agent, and participating in the kidnapping of a federal agent. Despite the evidence presented in the case, he was acquitted on charges of murdering a federal agent engaged in his official duties.[50]

The importance of Matta in facilitating the link between Colombian and Mexican cartels proved to be fundamental in the development of drug trafficking into the United States. By the late 1970s, the Caribbean corridor had been disrupted by the United States. The need for a new route to continue the flow of drugs necessitated this cooperative venture brokered by Matta. Further, the context at the time necessitated all efforts from the part of the United States to halt the spread of communism, even if this meant dealing with know drug traffickers in the region. In the following section, I discuss the Contra-Drugs Connection

The Contra – Drugs Connection: A Continuation of the Iran-Contra Affair

The United States financed and directed a covert war against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua, a war that extended over the eight years of the Reagan administration. As part of Reagan's anticommunist policy aimed at ousting leftist governments, the Reagan administration repeatedly stated that its goal in Nicaragua was to getting the Sandinistas to accept democracy and that the Contras were a group of freedom fighters committed to bringing democracy to Nicaragua.[51] In the initial stages of the conflict, Congress provided financial support for the Contras.

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[50] U.S. v. Matta-Ballesteros, 71 F.3d 754 (1995), pp. 1-2.

[51] Thomas Carothers, *In the Name of Democracy: U. S. Policy Toward Latin America in the Reagan Years*, pg. 77.

After Congress cut off funding for the Contras, there was a need to continue providing support to the Nicaraguan rebels. As part of an operation dubbed "Project Democracy," Oliver North coordinated the efforts to divert funds that were the product of two clandestine operations.[52] The first covert operation involved the sale of arms to Iran for the exchange of hostages held captive in Lebanon. The second operation consisted of the introduction of cocaine from South America into the United States. Project Democracy was a resupply operation that used the military base of Ilopango in El Salvador to provide weapons and supplies to the Contras. This was carried out despite the fact there was a law that prohibited U. S. intelligence agencies from supporting military of paramilitary actions in Nicaragua, the Boland Amendment.[53]

Robert Parry was the first journalist that reported on the White House – private Contra funding link in June 1985. The article stated that the White House "gave advice…to individuals involved in private fund-raising for Nicaraguan rebels despite a public stance that it doesn't encourage those efforts." The article also stated that the "White House did not discourage[d] offers from several friendly governments to funnel aid to the Contra Rebels."[54]

Further, in late 1985, Robert Parry and Brian Barger first reported the Contra – Drugs connection. According to the article, Contras working out of northern Costa Rica "have engaged in cocaine trafficking, in part to help finance their war against Nicaragua's

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[52] Former DEA operative in Guatemala, Celerino Castillo III thought of Oliver North at the "leader of Latin America's most protected drug smuggling operation."

[53] Celerino Castillo III and Dave Harmon, *Powderburns: Cocaine, Contras and the Drug War*, pg. 17.

[54] Robert Parry, "White House linked to private Contra Funding," *The Telegraph*, June 10, 1985, pp. A1, 12.

leftist government." Among the drug trafficking operations mentioned in the article were "refueling planes at clandestine landing strips and helping transport cocaine to other Costa Rican points for shipment to the United States."[55] It was later unveiled that the covert operation was more sophisticated and inclusive, as other Central American nations also participated in the clandestine action.

The money and weapons trail to support the Contras was made possible by a series of shell corporations in the United States and in several Central American nations. The Kerry Subcommittee Report traced the origin of the Contras' involvement in drugs to a network of mercenary pilots and arms suppliers in Central America. These mercenary pilots that worked for had served in the 1970s both the Sandinistas and Salvadoran guerrillas. This same network of mercenary pilots was used by the State Department to supply humanitarian aid to the Contras. Employed by the State Department as subcontractors, these companies included SETCO, *Frigoríficos de Puntarenas*, DIACSA and Vortex. They were all receiving money from the Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office (NHAO).

SETCO

Matta, the same individual responsible for brokering the venture between the Guadalajara Cartel and the Colombian Cartels and would later be acquitted of charges for Camarena's murder, headed SETCO. From 1983 through 1985, SETCO was the principal airline used by the Contras in Honduras to transport supplies and personnel for the *Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense* (FDN). Alfredo Calero, FDN leader testified that

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[55] Brian Barger and Robert Parry, "Nicaragua Rebels Linked to Drug Trafficking: U.S. Investigators Say Contras Help Transport Cocaine in Costa Rica," *The Washington Post*, December 27, 1985, pg. A22.

SETCO received funds for Contra supplies and personnel operations from accounts established by Lt. Col. Oliver North. As part of a contract awarded by the State Department, SETCO earned $186,000 for transporting humanitarian goods to the Contras.[56] According to testimony by FDN leader Adolfo Calero before the Iran-Contra committees, SETCO received funds for Contra supply operations from the bank accounts that were established by Oliver North.[57]

Frigoríficos de Puntarenas

Frigoríficos de Puntarenas was a Costa Rican seafood company that served as a front for laundering money that was the product of smuggling drugs into the United States along with its U. S. sister company in Miami, Ocean Hunter. This Costa Rican company was used to finance the Contra rebels in Nicaragua. A convicted drug smuggler as the firm he helped found to hide drug profits identified it. Rodriguez was linked with drug activity as early as 1983, when he was named by convicted money launderer Ramon Milan Rodriguez when the latter was detained while attempting to leave the United States with $5 million in cash. [58]

In May 1983, Ramón Milián Rodríguez was arrested for money laundering in Miami. He told federal authorities about Luis Rodríguez and his criminal activities. According to Massachusetts law enforcement officials, Rodríguez directed the largest

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[56] Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall, *Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies, and the CIA in Central America*, pp. 10-12.

[57] Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Inspector General, Investigations Staff, *Report of Investigation Concerning Allegations of Connections Between CIA and The Contras in Cocaine Trafficking to the United States*. Available at: https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/cocaine/contra-story/pilots.html#6. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

[58] United Press International, "Contra Company linked to Drug Smuggling, Report Says," *The Boston Herald*. Available at: http://www.upi.com/Archives/1988/11/11/Contra-company-linked-to-drug-smuggling-report-says/3369595227600/. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

marijuana trafficking ring in the state's history. Rodríguez was one of *Frigoríficos'* heads. Further, a 1984 FBI report of an interview with an informant identified Ocean Hunter Inc. as a conduit for monetary support to the Contras. Ocean Hunter was a U.S. firm set up by Luis Rodríguez to do business with *Frigoríficos*. The FBI report listed Rodríguez as the head of Ocean Hunter, and said the firm obtained money sent to the Contras from illegal drug smuggling profits.[59]

DIACSA

Convicted drug traffickers Floyd Carlton and Alfredo Caballero operated DIACSA. Caballero also ran *Frigoríficos*. Carlton was a pilot that flew cocaine for Panama's Manuel Antonio Noriega. Caballero was a Cuban-American veteran of the Bay of Pigs. Caballero was under investigation by the DEA for drug smuggling and money laundering charges when the State Department chose DIACSA to be a supplier of humanitarian aid to the Contras.[60]

A May 4, 1985 cable provided a summary of reporting concerning *Frente Revolucionario Sandinista* (FRS, a Contra group in Costa Rica headed by Eden Pastora) personnel who may have been involved in drug trafficking. According to the cable, Caballero in February 1985 had offered to transport FRS supplies to Ilopango or Costa Rica in one of his aircraft if he could make the landing arrangements. The cable also reported that Caballero was the Miami representative of a company based in San Jose that

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[59] Martha Honey, *Hostile Acts: U. S. Policy in Costa Rica in the 1980s*, pp. 368-369.

[60] Gary Webb, *Dark Alliance: The CIA, the Contras, and the Cocaine Explosion*, pp. 244-245.

was owned by David Mayorga. The cable noted that there were those who believed that Mayorga, Caballero and others were transporting drugs from San Jose to Miami.[61]

Vortex

Vortex was an aircraft company based in Miami. On February 25, 1986, NHAO negotiated $96,961 in transportation costs with Michael B. Palmer, an official with Vortex a now-defunct aircraft sales and leasing firm in Miami. On April 1985, Colombian police had jailed Palmer for three months after he allegedly flew there to pick up a planeload of marijuana. In June 1986, after the contract was negotiated, Palmer was charged with conspiracy and drug possession in a major smuggling ring that allegedly imported more than 1,000 pounds of marijuana from Colombia to the United States between 1977 and June 1986. Palmer was scheduled to go on trial in federal court in Detroit in April 1987.[62]

According to an April 6, 1988 memorandum to Webster and Gates from David Pearline in the Office of the Chief Accountant, Palmer testified that day to the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations that he had gone to work for Vortex in 1985 or early 1986. Vortex later changed its name to Universal Air Leasing. Palmer also testified that Vortex/Universal entered into a contract in late 1986 to service planes and deliver materiel to the Contras. Palmer denied that he was ever an Agency asset or employee.

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[61] Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Inspector General, Investigations Staff, *Report of Investigation Concerning Allegations of Connections Between CIA and The Contras in Cocaine Trafficking to the United States*. Available at: https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/cocaine/contra-story/pilots.html#6. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

[62] Steve Stecklow, "Pilot Held as Drug Suspect Got U.S. Contra-aid Contract," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 22, 1987. Available at: http://articles.philly.com/1987-03-22/news/26223832_1_colombian-jail-vortex-marijuana-charges. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

The April 6, 1988 memorandum also reported that Palmer had testified that he smuggled 120,000 pounds of marijuana into the United States in 1977. Palmer testified further that aircraft he used to smuggle drugs were later used to supply humanitarian assistance to the Contras. He asserted, however, that he was not involved in illegal drug smuggling while involved in supplying the Contras for the NHAO.[63]

Under the disguise of humanitarian aid, known Central American drug traffickers were receiving money to allegedly transport weapons to the Contras. As the airplanes that shipped weapons to Central America returned to the United States, they did so with cocaine from South America. All of this took place, supposedly, with the assistance and complicity of the CIA.

As this situation began to unfold in the early 1980s, a DEA agent stationed in Mexico supposedly uncovered the CIA complicity in drug smuggling and supplying of weapons to the Contras in Central America. New evidence revealed by the former DEA agent in charge of the investigation into Camarena's murder contends that as Camarena was getting ready to notify of his findings to his DEA superiors, he was kidnapped, tortured and killed by members of the Gudalajara Cartel who were acting on orders from a CIA operative in Mexico. The following selection addresses the unofficial version of the Camarena assassination as presented by Hector Berrellez.

The Camarena Assassination and CIA involvement: The Unofficial Version

The official version of the events surrounding the Camarena murder, as discussed above is simple: Camerena was a DEA agent working undercover in Mexico. He was

[63] Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Inspector General, Investigations Staff, *Report of Investigation Concerning Allegations of Connections Between CIA and The Contras in Cocaine Trafficking to the United States*. Available at: https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/cocaine/contra-story/pilots.html#6. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

captured along with his pilot—Zavala—tortured and killed on orders leaders of the GC, namely by Rafael Caro Quintero and Ernesto Fonseca Carrillo (Don Neto). The official account attributes the murders of Camarena and Zavala to the alleged bust on Caro Quintero's Ranch "El Bufalo" in Chihuahua in late 1984, where they seized close to 4,000 tons of marijuana, although other sources place the amount of marijuana seized at 10,000 tons.[64] In early 1985, the Guadalajara Cartel was determined to retaliate against the individual that made them suffer such loses. By early February, members of the GC had identified Kiki Camarena as the culprit. As they set up surveillance to eventually kidnap him, members of the GC referred to Camarena as "la leyenda," or the legend. On February 5, 1985, Enrique Camarena was kidnapped at gunpoint outside the American Consulate in Guadalajara. Acting on a tip received on February 13 of an intercepted telephone conversation with members of the GC in Tijuana, the DEA was able to identify the kidnapper as Tomas Morlet Borquez, a 22-year veteran of the DFS and known drug trafficker associated with the Guadalajara Cartel.[65]

The official version of Camarena's murder is seemly understandable to the naked eye, but it lacks the nuances and realities of the underworld in which Camarena found himself. The unofficial version is more complicated and reveals strange international bedfellows. The unofficial version of the Camarena assassination reveals a complex web of state and intelligence actors whose goals were different from eradicating drugs in the region: they were concerned with halting the spread of communism.

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[64] Juan M.Vasquez, "Marijuana Farms: 7,000 Slaves Had No Way Out," *Los Angeles Times,* November 15, 1984, pg. B1.

[65] James Kuykendall, *¿O Plata O Plomo? Silver or Lead: The Abduction and Murder of DEA Agent Kiki Camarena*, pp. 60-65.

Strategically missing from the annals of the "official version" of the Camarena murder is DEA agent Berrellez's Operation Leyenda investigation results, which highlighted CIA involvement in the murder of Camarena. He discovered that CIA sub contractors were present in the torture and murder of Camarena. Operation Leyenda also revealed that the CIA provided protection to the Guadalajara Cartel with the complicity of the DFS.

In new revelations advanced by former DEA agent Hector Berrellez, the GC received protection from the CIA. In exchange, the CIA coordinated the delivery of cocaine shipment from South America on its way to the United States. Further, Berrellez revealed that Camarena had discovered this link and reported it to his superior officers in the DEA. Camarena's discovery, which would reveal the CIA and other U.S. officials disgraceful connections with Central American drug traffickers, would ultimately lead to his demise. Berrellez was ordered by his superiors and other governmental officials to drop the investigation into the Camarena murder due to National Security concerns.

While the official version purports that the cartel sought to "take care" of Camarena, Berrellez uncovered that it was in fact Felix Ismael Rodriguez at the bequest of the CIA who ensured Camarena's demise. Berrellez argues that after the CIA found out about the extent of Camarena's intelligence, it called for his killing at the hands of Rodriguez, a retired CIA agent. Berrellez decided to follow up Felix Rodriguez.

Rodriguez, like many other individuals at the center of the Camarena affair, had a personal and professional history out of an international intrigue novel. His uncle was minister of Public Works during the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in Cuba. After the Cuban Revolution he and his family became exiles in the United States. He actively

participated in the Bay of Pigs invasion as part of Brigade 2056. After the failure of Bay of Pigs invasion, he was part of Operation 40, a CIA-sponsored undercover operation to seize control of the Cuban government. He was also credited with the capture and murder of Ernesto "Che" Guevara in Bolivia in 1967. Rodriguez had also ties with then Vice-President George H. W. Bush during the Iran-Contra affair.

Additionally, Felix Rodriguez faced allegations that placed him in direct connection to the Contras. A controversial allegation arose during the course of the Kerry Committee investigation, which places him at the center of the controversy. In a June 26, 1987 closed session of the Subcommittee, Ramon Milian Rodriguez—in custody for money laundering—testified about the details of a meeting with Felix Rodriguez. During the meeting, arranged by a Miami private detective, Milian offered to provide drug money to the Contras and Felix accepted the offer. Subsequently, Milian claims he provided the Contras ten million dollars of assistance through a system of secret couriers. Milian testified that he also offered to assist in entrapping the Sandinistas in a drug sting, all in return for dropping the charges then pending against him.

Felix Rodriguez vigorously denied Milian's version of the meeting. He instead claimed that he reported Milian's offer to a number of U.S. government agencies, including the FBI and CIA. No action was taken by those agencies, and Milian Rodriguez's case went to trial.[66]

The Kerry Commission Report also mentioned a Cuban-American connection and their support during the period that the Boland Amendment prohibited official U. S

[66] Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, pg. 317; Daniel Hopsicker, *Barry and the Boys: The CIA, the Mob and America's Secret History*, pg. 170. U. S. Government Printing Office, *Drugs, Law Enforcement, and Foreign Policy: A Report Prepared by the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate*, pg. 61.

government assistance. The report stated that Cuban-Americans involved in anti-Sandinista activities were connected with drug traffickers.[67] This Cuban American connection present during the Iran Contra Affair in the United States was also present in the CIA-Contra-Drugs connection in Mexico.

In the case of Mexico, Manuel Buendía mentioned the Cuban-American presence in 1982. In an article that he translated by Arturo Golden from the *San Diego Union* and published in his column in *Excélsior*, Buendía stated the U. S. feared Mexico being engulfed by the conflict in Central America. To prevent this from happening, Buendía explained that far right Mexican groups were receiving paramilitary training by members of Alpha 66 in Lucerne Valley. The article mentioned how a group of approximately 80 individuals from Tijuana and Mexicali received training from an anti-Castro group.[68]

After further inquiry, Victor Lawrence Harrison—a CIA subcontractor—informed Berrellez that Rodriguez was in charge of the Contra camps. These camps were located in the state of Veracruz, on a ranch owned by none other than Caro Quintero—the Mexican cartel leader. Harrison also warned him to be careful with the CIA Contra link, since the CIA was involved in Camarena's death.

Berrellez further stated that Camerena was not even present at the drug bust in El Bufalo Ranch, which undercut the official version's revenge plot altogether. He credited Camarena with coming up with a new strategy that resulted devastating to the GC. This strategy, dubbed Operation Padrino, called for confiscating the drug trafficker's money in

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[67] United States Senate. *Drugs, Law Enforcement, and Foreign Policy*. A Report Prepared by the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate, pg. 59.

[68] Manuel Buendía, "Mexicanos en la CIA," *Excélsior*, August 6, 1982. In Manuel Buendía, *La CIA en México*, pp. 217-221.

different cities in Mexico. Berrellez estimated that from 1984 to 1985 the DEA confiscated over 1 billion dollars, largely under Camarena's plan. Given the success of Operation Padrino, the GC intensified its efforts to find the culprit. Based on intelligence gathered by GC informants, it was determined that Camarena was behind the setbacks the Gudalajara Cartel suffered. Berrellez's investigation also revealed the existence of Contra training camps in Sinaloa operated by the CIA. The Mexican DFS, as well as Cuban-American CIA operatives provided protection to these training camps. When Berrellez informed his findings to the Justice Department, he was summarily instructed to drop his investigation.

Berrellez was not alone in his belief and assertion that the CIA was at the center of the Camarena murder. Calderoni, a former Mexican DFS agent that became Berrellez's informant, also corroborated the version that the CIA was behind Camarena's murder. However, Calderoni did not share the same fervor to reveal the truth behind the murder. Instead, he urged Berrellez to drop the investigation to protect his life and professional reputation.[69]

The two versions of the Camarena killing represent much more than a "two sides of the same coin" theory. It represents a divergence of reality. The official version of Camarena's death follows the traditional story line of the good versus the bad. It paints the picture of a burgeoning Mexican cartel that is able to infiltrate, monitor and enact revenge against a U.S. government official, at all costs. The official version, serves to amplify the U.S. role as the world's peacekeeper through the service of American heroes who are willing to sacrifice their lives, at all costs. On the other hand, the unofficial story

[69] J. Jesus Esquivel, *La CIA, Camarena y Caro Quintero*, pp. 56, 60-68.

paints a much different and complex picture. It reveals the gritty underbelly of U.S. foreign policy, covert action and CIA black operations.

The Mexican sources presented an undeniable link between the CIA, the Contras and Drug Trafficking activities in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Beginning in the late 1970s, Manuel Buendía became the first Mexican journalist to write about the presence of the CIA in Mexico. By the early 1980s, he began to write about the CIA-Contra-Drug Trafficking Triangle.

Ultimately, few will know the "truth" behind Kiki Camarena's death. Particularly given that access to documents pertaining to the investigation into the abduction, torture and killing of Camarena – Operation Leyenda – has been, and remains, classified by the U. S. Government for National Security Interests.

The Camarena killing represents a moment in history where Mexican cartels find themselves at a precipice. Behind them lay the years of development in and black-market industry that bore witness to the Mexican cartels emergence from low level middle men to central figures in the black market of drug trade. Ahead, lay before them a new era of Mexican drug cartel dominance in the industry. A future that enables them to take control of the US-Mexico border, and at times redefine U.S. foreign policy and case law. The Camarena killing—both the unofficial and official version—presents the burgeoning power and strength of a Mexican cartel contrasted with the United States efforts to enforce drug policy and legislation.

Chapter Summary

The Camarena Affair represents a sliver into a contemporary period of the U.S. twin wars global wars of the era: the Cold War and the War on Drugs. In the context of

the Cold War era, Washington's primordial objective was the defeat of communism. Within this anti-communist framework, the mandate was to stop the spread of the red menace, even if this meant supporting authoritative regimes with ties to known drug traffickers. Consequently, the War on Drugs intensified in Latin America and in Mexico.

DEA operations in Mexico brought at least two issues to the forefront. First, there is the issue of trust. Since its creation of U. S. governmental agencies in charge of implementing drug policy, several dependencies have operated with various degrees of cooperation from the part of the Mexican government. Given the level of graft and collusion on both law enforcement and military agencies, as well as in the highest governmental spheres in Mexico, there was a level of mistrust from the part of the DEA stemming back to the 1930s. This led to a series of actions in which information was not properly shared with Mexican authorities.

Secondly, the importance of the historical context under which the War on Drugs originated cannot be overstated. This "war within a war," i.e., the War on Drugs within the context of the Cold War had a tremendous collateral damage in terms of issues of jurisdiction, due process and human rights and the manner in which they were largely ignored U.S. authorities in the quest of bringing to justice those individuals responsible for the abduction and assassination of Camarena. This dynamic created very difficult episodes where diplomatic relations between the two countries could be best described as contentious.

During this period, Mexico maintained its support to revolutionary struggles around the world, but practiced a hard line approach to any internal threat that demonstrated leftist tendencies. Mexico saw itself as a nation that challenged the United

States in foreign affairs, as evidenced in its support to the Cuban and Nicaraguan Revolution. In Central America, Mexico did not see eye to eye with U. S. foreign policy. However, as violence intensified in the region and in an attempt to minimize U. S. involvement, Mexico began to play close attention to Central America affairs. The violence in the region placed Mexico in a particular historical situation, by becoming the country of first asylum choice for hundred of thousands of people escaping repressive conditions.

As Washington and Moscow clashed for global Geo-Political control, the nations in the middle of this battle were at times pawns, facilitators, and laboratories for clandestine operations and practices. As Cuba and Nicaragua were established as beachheads of communism in the Western hemisphere, the United States was attempting to prevent the rest of the Central American nations from toppling under the control of the red virus. Thus, the Contras began to operate and receive training in Honduras and Costa Rica.

As U. S. Congress cut funding for the Contras, a new clandestine operation was implemented to divert funds in support of another clandestine operation. This diversion of funds involved the clandestine operations of arm traffickers and drug smugglers with the logistical support of the CIA. CIA subcontractors managed and operated training facilities not only in Central America, but also in Mexico. Mexican journalist Manuel Buendía established this link. As Buendía prepared to present the findings of his investigation in his *Red Privada* column, he was murdered. The CIA is believed to be behind Buendía's murder.

The presence of the CIA in Mexico was evidenced in Guadalajara with the creation and the protection afforded to the GC. The CIA's presence in Mexico dates back to the Díaz Ordaz administration. As the War on Drugs began to be coalesced with the eradication of dissidence in Mexico, the Agency became more active in their attempts to halt the spread of communism in the region. Equally important in accomplishing this task was the role-played by complicit corrupt Mexican officials, as well as military and law enforcement agents, most notably the DFS.

Moreover, the Camarena affair evidenced two situations. One was the collusion between drug traffickers and the DFS. After the foundations were laid for the creation of the GC in 1979, the group had the protection of the DFS. Corruption and impunity characterized this period that lasted until 1985. This protection by the DFS to drug traffickers was eventually what resulted in the demise of an agency that had been active since 1947. The second situation was the CIA-Contra-Drug Triangle. The political violence that resulted from the Cold War had serious implications in Mexico. Through the investigative reporting of Manuel Buendía, we begin to see the emergence of the CIA-Contra-Drug Trafficking Triangle. In the late 1970s, evidence reveals the appearance of training camps in Mexico that are operated by the CIA with the complicity and protection of the DFS. Further, the DFS offered protection to the Guadalajara Cartel, the same drug trafficking organization that enjoyed the protection of the CIA.

The CIA-Contra-Drug Trafficking Triangle was also exposed by an investigation into the murder of Camarena. Hector Berrellez conducted operation Leyenda. In the course of the investigation, Berrellez uncovered a web of connections that led to CIA involvement with Contra training in Mexico, as well as with the murder of Camarena. As

he continued to press forward with his inquiry, Berrellez was told repeatedly by several sources to drop the issue, since it was a matter of National security. His investigation also revealed Cuban-American involvement. At the time, the context was such that Washington's primordial concern was to support the moral equivalents of our founding fathers as they stymied the spread of communism in the region.

In the Reagan years, a policy of containment was replaced by a rollback policy. This rollback policy entailed forcing change in nations with leftist leaning regimes and replacing them with authoritative, repressive regimes. These friendly regimes were in collusion with arms and drug traffickers. The result of the Reagan Doctrine was one of violence in Central America, a violence that we continue to see to this day.

Finally, the two versions of the Camarena affair represent much more than the two sides of the story. It represents a divergence of reality. The official version of Camarena's death follows the traditional story line of the good and the bad. It paints the picture of a burgeoning Mexican cartel that is able to infiltrate, monitor and enact revenge against a U.S. government official, at all costs. The official version, serves to amplify the U.S. role as the world's peacekeeper through the service of American heroes who are willing to sacrifice their lives, at all costs. On the other hand, the unofficial story paints a much different and complex picture. It reveals the gritty underbelly of U.S. foreign policy, covert action and CIA black operations.

Whether one believes in the official or unofficial version of the Camarena murder, it represents a pivotal moment in the development in the history of Mexican drug trafficking, a moment that marks them as a burgeoning dominant drug trafficking force in the region and eventual rise as an international power.

Epilogue

Pero al sacar el perico
Les gritan
Están rodeados
Eran nueve Judiciales
Del Estado
Bien armados
Y el Comándate les dijo
Pásame El
Dólar Doblado.

El dólar doblado, Sergio Vega y Los Rayos del Norte, 1994

The following section presents the relevant themes within this body of research with present day implications and serves as future lines of investigation. These themes are: the emergence of the narcostate; corruption and collusion of law enforcement and military agencies; community police forces; teacher activism and repression; and the role of journalists in chronicling the War on Drugs from the trenches.

The Emergence of the Narcostate

From a historical perspective, the collusion between drug traffickers and public officials manifested itself on a local, regional, and national level. In the early part of the twentieth century, Baja experienced the early stages of what is now known as the narostate. The narcostate can be defined as an entity in which there is either an implicit or explicit pact between drug traffickers and public officials, as well as members of law enforcement agencies.

Due to geographic and political isolation, the governments of Esteban Cantú and Abelardo L. Rodríguez, operated with a high degree of autonomy, away from the oversight of the federal government, which ushered in the emergence of the fledgling

narcostate. Further, during the violent phase of the Revolution (1910-1917) the federal government was more concerned with the armed struggle that was occurring in central Mexico. This independence in governing gave Cantú leeway to implement innovative, albeit nefarious, ways to generate revenue for the District, as well as for his personal fortune. By taxing opium production and engaging in human trafficking, Cantú was able to meet payroll obligations for his troops and to provide them with weapons as well. This represents a proto narcostate.

As the temptation of a highly lucrative, yet illicit industry of drug trafficking lured in more and more public officials, the link between government and drug traffickers grew exponentially. This in turn, allowed drug traffickers to operate with impunity and control strategic turfs in certain corridors, such as the Baja California-California corridor.

Corruption and Collusion of Law Enforcement and Military Agencies

By necessity and through intimidation, local law enforcement agents were the first to be corrupted by drug traffickers. The next to fall was the Mexican military; a second group largely corrupted by drug traffickers.

In 1947, the Mexican government began a new plan to utilize the military to combat drug production. The military instituted air and ground campaigns to destroy poppy and marijuana fields. As the drug traffickers became more sophisticated and organized, they were able to either relocate to a new site to prevent government intervention. Eventually drug traffickers developed the standard procedure to combat the government efforts to destroy the drug fields: a strategic system of bribery. This system began with local officials, rose to police forces, and eventually, the military.

As the Mexican government's campaign to eradicate drug production was combined with efforts to eliminate drug production, the military was key in this plan. By 1983, the Mexican government was successful in eradicating political dissidence. However, the eradication of the drug production and trafficking industry continues to be an elusive quest. The Mexican government's strategy of using the military in the War on Drugs placed them in a precarious situation. They were tasked with protecting a population but in doing so risked committing human rights violations against that very same population, such as employing torture to secure a confession. Additionally, the use of the Mexican military in the War on Drugs left them at the mercy of drug traffickers with superior weapons, resources, and plenty of cash and highly exposed to corruption.

One prime example of the corruption in the Mexican military is the emergence of the Zetas. During the Dirty War period, the Zetas were part of an elite military group that was vital in the elimination of dissident movements in rural Mexico. At the end of the Dirty War, the Zetas continued their efforts to eradicate drugs. By the late 1990s, Osiel Cárdenas Guillén, leader of the Gulf Cartel in Tamaulipas, corrupted one of the members of the Zetas, Arturo Guzmán Deeena. The cartel leader convinced Guzmán Deeena, know as Z-1, to be part of his personal security detail. Soon, Guzmán Decena convinced other Zetas work for the Gulf Cartel. In 2010, the group broke away from the Gulf Cartel and became the most violent and technologically advanced Drug Trafficking Organization in Mexico.

Community Police Forces

The creation of Community Police Forces is another relevant theme, which emerges from my body of research. The inability of the Mexican government to provide

basic protection to Mexican Citizens has forced those communities most vulnerable to the violence of the cartels, namely inhabitants of rural areas, to develop their own security and safety solutions. These rural community members found no assistance from their local or state officials when presented with the issues of rampant insecurity and narcoviolence. This is due in large part to the graft and collusion that is experienced by both law enforcement and military agencies. One way in which rural communities have tackled the problem is by the creation of Community Police Forces, also known as Self-Defense Forces.[1]

In an attempt to provide for their own safety and protection and as a response to corrupt law enforcement and military agencies, Indigenous communities in the Americas have resorted to the creation of Community Police Forces.[2] These Community Police Forces are formed by members of local Indigenous Communities with the sole purpose of providing protection from local caciques and drug traffickers. The emergence of Community Police Forces provides unequivocal evidence of the State's inability to provide basic protection to its constituents.

In the states of Guerrero and Michoacán, Self-Defense Forces were created as a response to narcoviolence and encroachments made by multinational corporations intent on exploiting the natural resources of the region. The official local law enforcement

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[1] The U. S. media refers to these groups as Vigilante groups. They are also referred as Self-Defense Groups.

[2] The two prime examples of these Self-Defense Indigenous groups are found in the Cauca Region of Colombia, and in the States of Guerrero and Michoacán in Mexico. See *Guardia Indigena del Norte del Cauca Colombiano," in Corporación de Apoyo a Comunidades Populares,CODACOP*. Available at: http://www.codacop.org.co/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=88:guardia-indigena&catid=34:procesos&Itemid=58. Accessed on December 30, 2013. See also, José Gil Olmos, "Solo el pueblo puede defender al pueblo", *Proceso*, No.1934, November 24, 2013, pp. 6-9.

agencies in these regions have either broken down or have been overtaken by a drug trafficking organization that controls the area.

As a response to the structural breakdown of government law enforcement, Community Police Forces have filled a security void left by the failure of the local law enforcement agency. Some sectors of society support the efforts of these Community Police Forces. Other sectors are extremely critical and suspicious of Self-Defense Groups—likening them to rag-tag vigilante groups with ulterior motives. Research indicates that the Community Police Forces resulted with the basic goal of providing safety where the government failed in response to a specific narco-threat. In Michoacán, they were created in response to the violence created by the Knight Templars. In Guerrero, they were created to combat drug violence, as well as the encroachment of a Canadian mining company, the Guerrero Exploration Inc. The case of Nestora Salgado in Guerrero illuminates both sentiments regarding Community Police Forces.

After living in the United States for twenty years, Nestora Salgado decided to return to her community in Guerrero. In the early 1990s, Salgado had settled in the Pacific Northwest where she worked as a waitress, became an American citizen and learned about Civil and Women's rights. Although she lived in the United States and naturalized, she maintained her roots with her Guerrero community. She continued to visit her community to take donated money and clothing to neighbors. Salgado eventually decided to return to Olinalá on a permanent basis and began construction on a private home.

Shortly after her return, Salgado faced the harsh reality that authorities in Olinalá were not doing anything to protect their constituents from crimes committed against the

residents of the town. Salgado took action after the kidnapping and assassination of a taxi cab driver that refused to pay protection or rent money to *Los Rojos,* a group associated with the Gulf Cartel. Salgado decided to create a Community Police Force to defend themselves from *Los Rojos*. As Salgado and her supporters forged an alliance with members of *Coordinadora Regional de Autoridades Comunitarias* or Regional Coordinator of Community Authorities (CRAC), the sentiment in the town split. Some members of the community wanted the Mexican military to step in and handle security in the area, given the fact that Salgado had aligned herself with a group from CRAC from the town of Paraiso considered to be part of the more radical elements of CRAC.

In the summer of 2013, Nestora Salgado and her group arrested three teenage girls and accused them of selling cocaine on behalf of their boyfriends, members of *Los Rojos*. The girls were sent to Paraiso. This action was believed to be an act in which Nestora overreached her legal authority. Salgado likely sealed her fate when she arrested a City Hall official and two associates for stealing a cow. This arrest was probably the last straw, since one of the individuals arrested was politically connected. After the arrests, state authorities intervened. The Mexican Army was summonsed to free the three cow-thief suspects and the three teenage girls accused of selling cocaine. Just a few months later, in late August, Nestora was accused and charged with the kidnapping three adults and three minors. Salgado, along with 30 of her associates, were arrested and transported to the penitentiary in the neighboring state of Nayarit.[3] Nestora Salgado continues her advocacy from prison. Family and friends have launched a campaign to free her.

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[3] Tracy Wilkisnon, "After Return to Mexico, She Fights Crime, Runs Afoul of Law," *Los Angeles Times*, September 25, 2013. Available at: http://www.latimes.com/local/great-reads/la-fg-c1-mexico-nestora-20130925-dto-htmlstory.html. Accessed on December 28, 2014.

At first, Salgado had the support of Angel Aguirre, the Governor of Guerrero (2011-2014). Aguirre promised to provide the community police force with the necessary support. The impact of the community police force was dramatic – a 90% drop in the crime rate and no murders during the 10 months it was in operation. In the two months since the Governor shut down the community police, crime increased and there were four killings. The spike in crimes occurred despite the heavy presence in the area of marines and soldiers, as well as state and federal police.[4] The success of Nestora Salgado's Community Police Force, albeit short lived, simultaneously highlight the failures of the Mexican sate. When local, untrained and underfunded private citizens can afford the community at large better that government forces, it illustrates that Mexico has become a nation sequestered by narcopolitics and corruption.[5]

Entire rural indigenous communities are stuck in the middle of the War on Drugs, as warring factions are in an open dispute for finding new smuggling routes and production sites.[6] These regions are also Mexico's largest producing areas of opium and marijuana. This in turn, has also increased the role of the military and prompted more cases of human rights abuses.[7]

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[4] "Libertad Para Nestora Salgado/Free Nestora Salgado! U. S. Citizen and Mexican Indigenous Leader Wrongly Imprisoned in Mexico," Avaialble at: http://freenestora.org/q-a/. Accessed on December 28, 2014.

[5] Guadalupe Lizárraga, "El Estado mexicano contra Nestora Salgado," *Los Ángeles Press*, November 19, 2013. Available at: http://www.losangelespress.org/el-estado-mexicano-contra-nestora-salgado/. Accessed on December 28, 2014.

[6] Marcela Turari, "…Y la narcoviolencia se estableció en la Tarahumara". *Proceso*, No. 1815. August 14, 2011, pp. 18-24.

[7] Gilberto López y Rivas, "Pueblos indígenas y narcotráfico," *La Jornada,* October 15, 2010. Available at http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2010/10/15/opinion/029a1pol. Accessed on January 23, 2013.

Further, Indigenous communities continue to sustain attacks against their autonomy and livelihood. In the Second Continental Summit of Indigenous Communication of *Abya Yala* (*II Cumbre Continental de Comunicación Indígena del Abya Yala*), representatives from various Indigenous communities of the Americas expressed their continued concern against perceived dissident activity, paramilitary actions, and narcoviolence. Also, they have witnessed an increased presence of both United States and Canadian multinational corporations attempting to exploit the mineral wealth of lands inhabited by Indigenous communities.[8]

Teacher Activism and Repression

Another salient theme that emerges from my investigation is teacher activism and repression. The historical reality of repression in response to teacher activism continues to manifest its ugly side presently. The state of Guerrero once again illustrates this theme. Guerrero is the one state in Mexico that perfectly captures the meaning of its name, a warrior state. Teacher activism in Guerrero is just another issue that makes the history of the state a complex one. In modern times, Guerrero has been in constant rebellion in an attempt to readdress the land issue. Since the late 1950s until 1973, Genaro Vázquez and Lucio Cabañas led guerrilla movements that were violently repressed by the Mexican government. Both Vázquez and Cabañas received their teaching training at the Raúl Isidro Burgos Nornal School in Ayotzinapa. This is the same institution from which 43 student teachers disappeared in September 2014, capturing the world's attention.

[8] José Gil Olmos, "El despojo interminable". *Proceso*, No. 1928. October 13, 2013, pp. 36-39.

The 2014 Ayotzinapa tragedy epitomizes the phenomenon of the narcostate. On September 26-27, 2014, a series of violent episodes that had the participation of members of the municipal police of Iguala, soldiers, and students from the *Escuela Normal Rural de Ayotzinapa* resulted in the disappearance of 43 student teachers. What followed next illustrated the manifestation of a narcostate that has set roots in Mexico.

Ayotzinapa illustrates that the Mexico people not only have to contend with repression by the state, but they also must cope with repression orchestrated by drug trafficking organizations that are in collusion with local politicians. In the case of Ayotzinapa 2014, María de los Angeles Pineda Villa, the wife of José Luis Abarca Velázquez, Mayor of Iguala, has been linked to *Guerreros Unidos*—a drug trafficking group with ties to the Beltran Leyva Organization. Her brother, Salomón, heads *Guerreros Unidos*.

The students from *Normal Rural Raúl Isidro Burgos de Ayotzinapa* arranged a trip to protest an official celebration organized by the Mayor of Iguala. The celebration served to celebrate his wife, a "congratulatory affair" Iguala's first lady in honor of giving her second report of activities as Director of *Desarrollo Integral de la Familia* (DIF)—Mexico's federal Children and Family Services Agency. Once government officials found out about the protest, the order was given to members of Iguala's municipal police, soldiers and elements from *Guerreros Unidos* to prevent the protest from the part of the student teachers—*normalistas*. As the normalistas approached the celebration, they were confronted by the contingent made up of drug traffickers, law enforcement and military agents. The confrontation resulted in six people dead, 20

injured and the disappearance of 43 student teachers from the above-mentioned teachers college.[9]

The disappearance of the 43 *normalistas* sparked global protests. On December 6, the first of the 43 missing students was confirmed dead by forensic specialists.[10] Mexicans have to deal with two types of repressions: State and narco repression. The following pages examine the theme of investigative journalists covering the War on Drugs in Mexico.

The Role of Journalists in chronicling the War on Drugs From the Trenches

On the issue no. 1744 of *Proceso,* Julio Scherer García published an interview of Ismael "el mayo" Zambada. The publication of this interview generated a debate regarding the ethical responsibility of journalists. Some of the detractors argue that the publication of this interview not only glorifies a narcotrafficker, but it also provides them with a platform and a public space for one of the leaders of the Sinaloa Cartel to present his side of the story.[11] Others argue that the mere fact that the interview took place lends credence to the important role journalists play in bringing the issue to the forefront, and elicit a public, critical dialogue.[12] What is the ethical and moral responsibility of journalists? Do they have an obligation to present a history that is being neglected by

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[9] "María de los Angeles Pineda Villa," *Excelsior en Línea*. Available at: http://www.excelsior.com.mx/topico/maria-de-los-angeles-pineda. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

[10] Tim Johnson, "A charred eye socket provides proof that 43 missing Mexico students are dead." *The McClatchy Company*. 7 December 2014. Available at: http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2014/12/07/249260/a-charred-eye-socket-provides.html. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

[11] Hector Aguilar Camin, "Zambada y Scherer," *Milenio*, April 5, 2010. Available at http://impreso.milenio.com/node/8745892. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

[12] Maria Elena Meneses, "Una entrevista muy oportuna," *El Universal*, April 7, 2010. Available at http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/editoriales/47916.html. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

traditional, trained individuals in charge of preserving Clio's tradition? The role of journalists in chronicling the War on Drugs from the trenches was another relevant theme in my investigation.

Despite the fact that the Mexican government in general controlled the press and the media, there has been journalists that report on the War on Drugs, specifically, the links between politicians and drug traffickers. Such are the cases of Carlos Estrada Sastré in Tijuana in 1961. Estrada was assassinated shortly after the publication of what tuned out to be his last political column for the Tijuana newspaper *Noticias*. For his last column, Estrada wrote that he would divulge the links between drug trafficking and public officials in Tijuana and Baja California. He was assassinated prior publication of his expose.

Another case involving narcoviolence against a journalist was the one committed against Roberto Martínez Montenegro in Culiacán, Sinaloa in 1978. Manuel Buendía and Javier Juárez Vázquez were murdered in 1984 for carrying out investigations into links between drug traffickers and corrupt Mexican government officials. In 1997, Jesús Blancornelas was the victim of an attempted assassination by the Arellano Félix Drug Trafficking Organization in Tijuana. Blancornelas co-founded the weekly newspaper Zeta, a publication known for their criticism against government corruption and drug trafficking in the region. Unfortunately, this list continues to grow.

Presently, one of the most dangerous contrives for journalists is Mexico. Since the early 1990s, Mexican journalists have been the only ones writing books about the War on Drugs, in addition to their continued investigative reporting about organized crime as well as governmental graft. According to the Center for International Media

Assistance, the job of Mexican journalists covering drug trafficking and organized crime along the Mexico-U.S. border has regularly been termed the most dangerous job in the world. The danger has spread from journalists for traditional media to bloggers and citizens who post reports on drug cartel violence through social media.

The danger is not just from drug cartels; journalists often identified local politicians and police, frequently in the payroll of the cartels, as the source of most of the threats. As a result of the threats and extra judicial executions carried out against members of the press, journalists preoccupied with their safety have exercised self-censorships, so no real news is being reported.[13] In a country were historically freedom of the press has been elusive due to governmental control, now it has become even more challenging due to the narco-repression being implemented by drug trafficking organizations. Mexican journalists are being forced to exercise self-censorship in order to survive.

Narcoviolence and Immigration

The final relevant theme in my investigation is narcoviolence and immigration. In 2006, Mexican President Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) implemented his strategy to combat narcotraffickers. This strategy involved the escalation of the military in hot spots throughout the nation. This approach of "fighting fire with fire" launched by Calderón resulted in the death of 121,000, according to a report prepared by the *Procuraduria General de la República* (PGR), Mexico's Office of the Attorney General.[14]

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[13] Douglas Farah, *Dangerous Work: Violence Against Mexico's Journalists and Lessons from Colombia*, pg. 4.

[14] Leticia Robles de la Rosa, "En el sexenio de Calderón hubo 121 mil muertes," *Excelsior*, December 3, 2014. Available at: http://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/2014/03/12/948239. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

In 2012, the PRI reclaimed the Presidential seat with the victory of Enrique Peña Nieto. His strategy to combat narcotraffickers involves the creation of a National Gendarmerie of 10,000 elements. It also calls for the division of Mexico into five operative regions, an investment of more than $1 billion in programs to prevent crime, the reorganization of the federal police, the creation of a human rights national program, and the establishment of 15 police units nationwide dedicated to crimes involving kidnapping and extortion.[15]

These actions by the Mexican government have only intensified the level of violence in contested territories. Rural communities in these regions were violence has escalated are caught in the middle of a war that is claiming innocent lives. Often, residents of these contested territories are forced to choose a side to work with, or threats to comply follow. Threats are also made to their families. Drug traffickers have infiltrated almost every single aspect of social and political life in Mexico. This infiltration not only has resulted in an increase of narcoviolence, but it also has resulted in an increase of undocumented immigration to the United States. Journalists, unaccompanied minors, and victims of narcoviolence are fleeing Mexico and seeking refuge—whether sanctioned on not—in the United States.

Future Research Lines

Unequivocally, more work remains to be done on this topic. One future research project of interest is the 1970s guerrilla movements – narcotraffickers link. The historical development of the *narcocultivador* or narcogrower is another interesting line of

[15] "México: El Plan de Peña Nieto Contra el Narcotráfico," *BBC Mundo*, December 18, 2012. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2012/12/121218_mexico_pena_nieto_estrategia_seguridad_narcotrafico_jg#orb-banner. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

research. Also, the historical underpinnings of the development of the narcostate since 1960 could provide a much-needed understanding to a present day situation in Mexican politics.

Further, a scholarly investigation of the origins of the Arellano Félix Organization remains a noteworthy yet unexplored area of research. This is a topic that has been addressed by journalists, but the need for historians to address the origins of this drug trafficking organization can place it in its proper transnational context. The Arrellano Felix Organization controlled the Tijuana plaza for over twenty years. The most notable members of the organization were the brothers Ramón and Benjamin.

Of the Arellano Félix brothers, Ramón was the impetuous one, often times reacting in a visceral, violent manner to potential threats over the control of their territory. Benjamin was believed to be more calculating and cerebral. It was not until 2002 that the first signs of the eradication of the Arellano Felix Organization began to emerge. Ramón was killed in a confrontation with a police office in Mazatlán on February 10 of that same year. A month after Ramón's death, on March 9, Benjamin was arrested by the Mexican Army in the sate of Puebla. Some experts believe the Arellano Félix Organization was effectively disarticulated. Others contend that they re-organized and emerged with a new generation of leaders at the helm.

Another stimulating line of research is the ecological impact of drug production is having on the environment, specifically the production of synthetic drugs. Historically, the War on Drugs has had a detrimental impact on Mexico's environment. In Mexico, the construction of clandestine airstrips and the impact of illegal logging for purposes of production of opium and marijuana date back to the early 1940s. Further, the

implementation of the defoliation campaign in Mexico in the mid 1970s, damages to the environment abound. In many areas of Mexico, the production of synthetic drugs continues without abatement. As these ad-hoc narcolabs are dismantled by the Mexican Military, environmental protection agencies in Mexico have not taken measures to safeguard the natural integrity of the region.

In the state of Jalisco for example, 53 out of the 125 municipalities have detected repeated ocurrences of the existence of clandestine methamphetamine labs. This number represents 42% of the municipalities in Jalisco in which neither federal nor state environmental authorities have intervened in the proper disposal of dangerous chemical substances. Further, neither the PROFEPA nor the SEMADES (federal and state environmental protection agencies respectively) participate in the confiscation of synthetic drugs that are routinely carried out by the Mexican military.

Every kilogram of methamphetamine produced accounts for ten kilograms of chemical waste, and yet, there is no clear articulated policy to handle this alarming problem. The disposal protocol practiced by members of the Mexican Military consists of incinerating the drugs, clearly not the proper way to dispose of methamphetamines. It was only until 2007 that Mexican authorities officially recognized the problems posed by narcolabs.[16]

The environmental impact of these narcolabs is becoming alarming. In the state of Sinaloa, they have discovered 146 narcolabs in 9 of the 18 municipalities that comprise the state between January 2011 and June 2013. As a consequence, the Mexican Army has used up the available space in warehouses where they store the confiscated

[16] "Sin atención, daños ecológicos por narcolaboratorios en Jalisco," *El Informador.mx*, February 28, 2012. Available at: http://www.informador.com.mx/mexico/2012/360164/6/sin-atencion-danos-ecologicos-por-narcolaboratorios-en-jalisco.htm. Accessed on December 30, 2014.

toxics. In response to this logistical nightmare, Mexican Drug Authorities have converted other facilities that do not meet the minimum standards for storing the toxic chemicals used in the production of methamphetamine and crystal meth. These narcolabs are set up in close proximity to rivers, and during rainy season, the devastation to the environment is tremendous. There are also reports that claim that the flora and fauna that is located within a 50-meter radius of the narcolabs dies due to the effects of the toxic chemicals.[17] Unequivocally, more work is needed in this fascinating, emerging topic of narco-environmental studies and its social, political and policy impact on both humans and the environment.

Finally, another interesting research topic to delve into would be a scholarly work that examines the full-blown turf wars in Mexico between drug trafficking organizations to control or wrestle control of key drug corridors. This is another topic in which Mexican investigative journalists have done fascinating work.

After the capture of Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo in 1989, the Pacific group or the Guadalajara cartel was subdivided into different groups that controlled the production and distribution of narcotics. This fracturing of the organization brought about subsequent battles in an attempt to take over the turf that was in control of other drug trafficking organizations. As narcoviolence began to pervade Mexico, some drug trafficking organizations began to form implicit pacts with certain government officials. Once a rival group was weakened, the infighting began to take its toll on a group.

In an attempt to seize the opportunity, some individuals within the weakening drug trafficking organization will forge an alliance with the previous rival drug

[17] Aurora Vega, "Tóxicos, la nueva amenaza del narco; improvisan bodegas en Sinaloa," *Excélsior*, June 8, 2012. Available at: http://www.excelsior.com.mx/2012/08/06/nacional/851937. Accessed on December 30. 2014.

trafficking organization in an attempt to assert control over the coveted plaza or corridor. These turf wars between drug trafficking organizations or within a weakening organization to gain control over certain important plazas or corridors became a common occurrence.

In a similar approach as the institutional history of DFS and its ties with drug traffickers and the CIA-Contra link, it is extremely important to place these turf wars in its proper transnational, transborder context. How much credence should be given to the idea that while in prison, Miguel Angel Félix Gallardo divided up the Pacific territory? What role did the dismantling of the Guadalajara Cartel and its subsequent fragmentation into three regionally organized crime groups have in the escalation of narcoviolence, as asserted by Professor David Shirk in his report *Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis Through 2013*?

This epilogue has formulated questions that address both the recent and drug history of the region. The analysis I raise presents a deep historical analysis of Mexico up to 1985. It also provides a starting point for future scholarship to be placed in its proper historical context, thus utilizing my historical scholarship as developed in this work as a launching point.

I end this volume where I began, with a question: To what extent has Mexico's financial, political, a legal epidemic of corruption—expanding ever faster for at least five centuries—finally become a pandemic? The country's present and future appears to be trapped in a multi-dimensional "Mexican Standoff" that involves much of its culture being rooted on the Aztec Empire's based on collecting "tributes"--today called "bribes."

Answers to such questions will begin to emerge only with continued scholarly research….

Popular and Elite Protest against corruption in Mexico and the lack of public safety has arisen in the last five to ten years through the expansion of the Internet. Marches against the Mexican "Government" may soon reach the level of anger just attained in Guatemala, where an "International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala" has joined with responsible Guatemalan government leaders to expose the inner-workings of dishonesty and to lay the legal foundation for bringing down Guatemala's President and Vice President. New elections are scheduled as I write, and the leading contender is a TV comedian and a political novice….

Images

Figure1. Anti-Chinese demonstration by Ensenada's *Comité Nacionalista*, 1934. The sign reads: "Opium, drugs, disease, vices- that is what the Chinese have brought us." The Baja California Anti-Chinese campaign was unsuccessful in removing people of Chinese descent, unlike the Sinaloa and Sonora campaigns that resulted in the removal of Chinese nationals. Source: *Archivo General de la Nación,* Galería 2, Mexico City.

Figure 2: Dr. Leopoldo Salazar Viniegra, 1938. A true iconoclast, Salazar Viniegra conducted a 14-year experiment on the effects of marijuana. His results led him to conclude that it was an innocuous drug. He also critically questioned the prohibitionist model advanced by the United States in the late 1930s. Salazar Viniegra proposed that Mexican authorities should concentrate their efforts on more serious drugs, such as opium and alcohol. His experiments led to the short-lived legalization of opium in 1940. Source: *Archivo Casasola*, Mexico City.

Figure 3. Joaquín Aguilar Robles, 1940s. Former Tijuana Police Chief and Editor of *Detective Internacional*. Source: *Archivo Histórico de Tijuana*.

DETECTIVE INTERNACIONAL

La Carroña de Diarte aun Inficiona a Tijuana

Nuestro Editorial.

Lea Usted en este número:

El VII Capítulo de
EL CASO ROJO
—sensacional—

Continuación de
EL MISTERIO DE MITLA
—Emocionante—

★ ★ ★ ★

HEMEROTECA NACIONAL
MEXICO

El cadáver de Diarte apenas puede distinguirse donde lo arrojaron sus asesinos, mientras que Max Weber, considerado como el traficante número uno en E. U. era capturado en Mexicali, cuando logró escapar a mas de 500 Agentes Federales del país vecino.

★ ★ ★ ★

50c M.N. - 10c A.M.

No. 51

JUNIO 8 DE 1946

Figure 4. Cover of *Detective Internacional*, June 8, 1946. This magazine was published from 1934-1960. It was the first publication to discuss issues of drug trafficking in the region in a transborder, national, and transnational fashion. Source: *Hemeroteca Nacional de México*, UNAM, Mexico City.

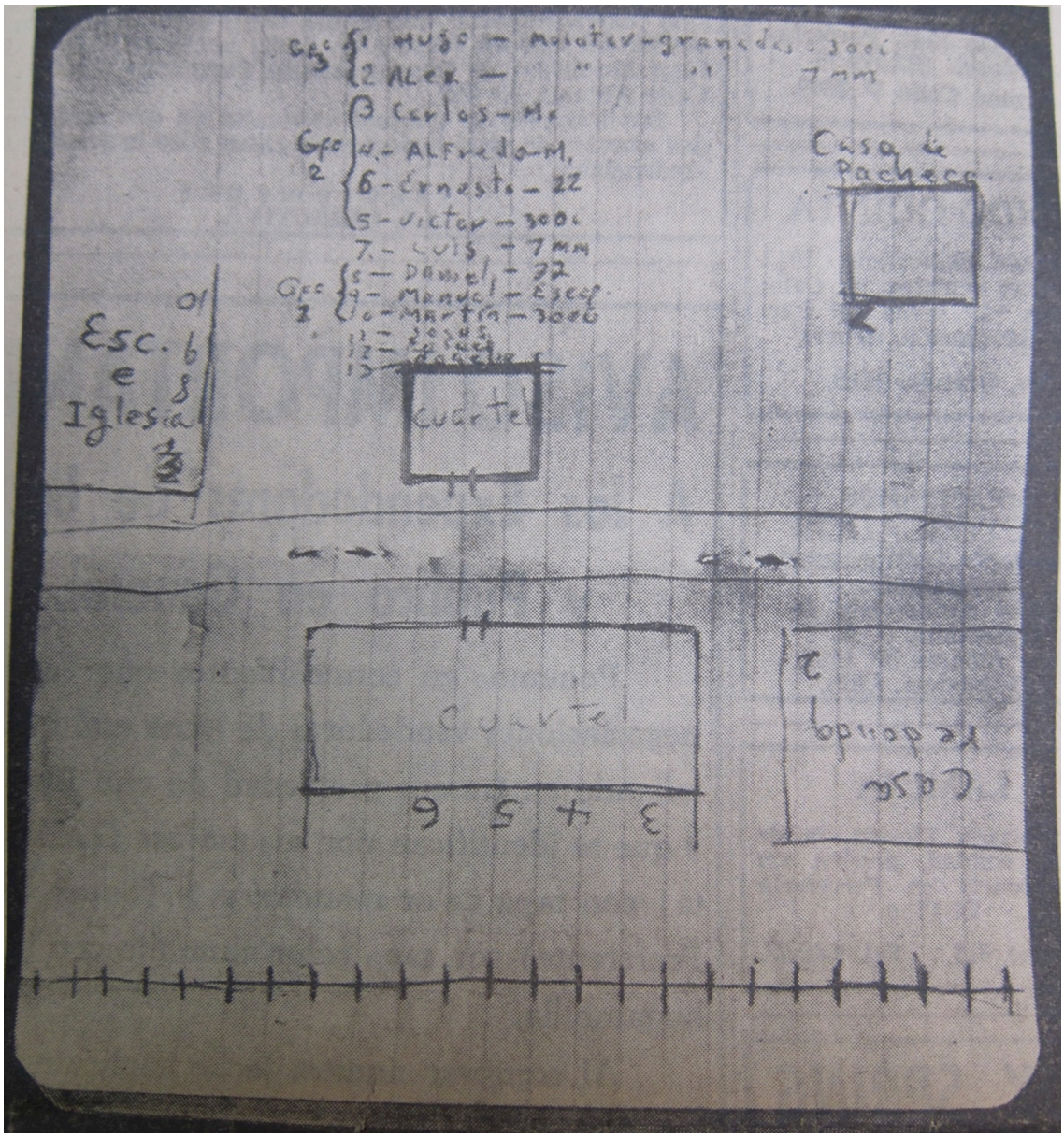

Figure 5. Attack on the military post of Ciudad Madera, Chihuahua, September 23, 1965. This drawing was found on the body of Arturo Gámiz García for the attack on the Ciudad Madera military post. The plan included the names of thirteen participants with the types of weapons they used in the attack, as well as the positions and buildings they used for protection. Source: *Archivo General de la Nación, Galeria 2*, Mexico City.

Figure 6. The bodies of the guerrilla fighters that died in their attempt to take over the military post in Ciudad Madera, Chihuahua on September 23, 1965. The failed attempt commanded by Arturo Gámiz García served as the inspiration for the creation of the urban guerrilla movement *Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre*. Source: *Archivo General de la Nación*, Galeria 2, Mexico City.

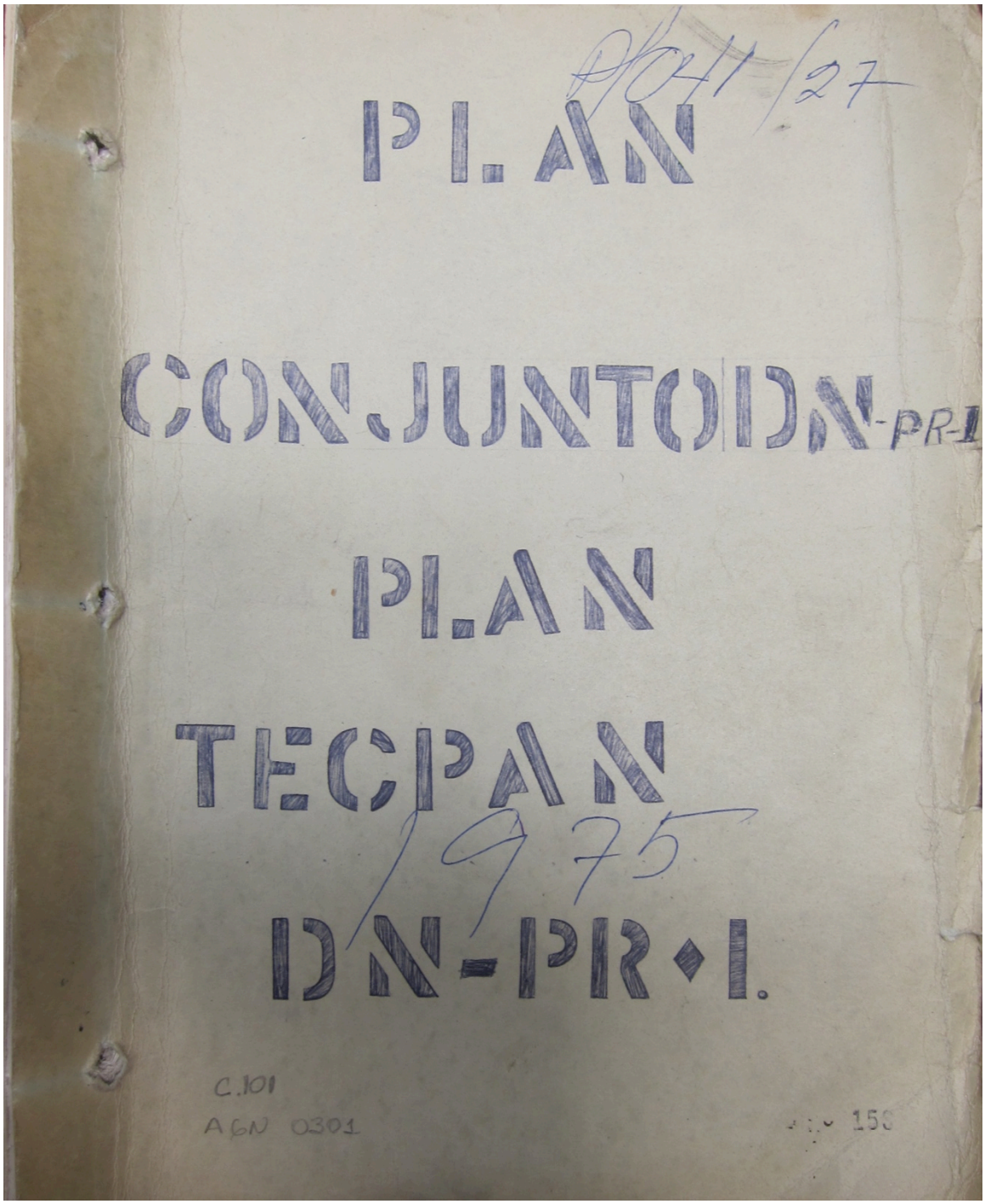

Figure 7. Minister of Defense's Plan TECPAC DN-PRI, 1975. This document established the official link between Drug Traffickers and Lucio Cabañas. Source: *Archivo General de la Nación*, *Galeria 1*, Mexico City.

Figure 8. Gen. Hermenegildo Cuenca Díaz (center, seated), Mexico's Minister of Defense during the sexenio of Luis Echeverria (1970-1976). In late 1973, Cuenca Diaz personally oversaw the capture of Lucio Cabañas in Guerrero by assuming command of the XVII Military Zone in Acapulco, Guerrero in substitution of Gen. Salvador Rangel Medina. He was the gubernatorial candidate for the PRI in Baja California for the 1977 elections. Cuenca Díaz died of a heart attack on May 1977 while campaigning. Source: *Archivo General de la Nación, Galeria 2*, Mexico City.

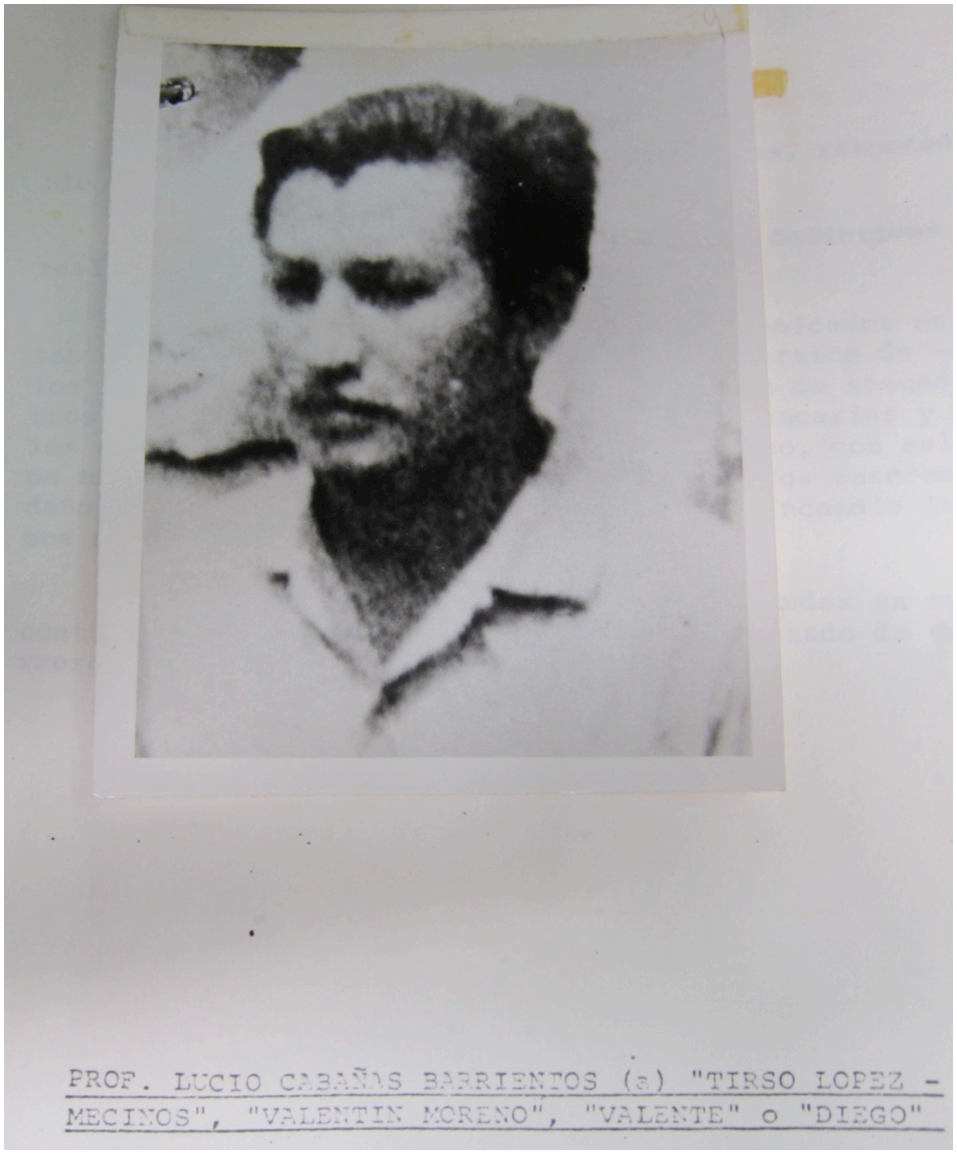

Figure 9. Lucio Cabañas Barrientos, 1973. A former elementary school teacher that graduated from the *Escuela Normal Rural de Ayotzinapa Raúl Isidro Burgos*, Cabañas led the rural guerrilla in Guerrero. Initially, Cabañas was in favor of a peaceful solution to the conflict, but after the massacre of Atoyac in 1967, he decided to take up arms against the government and forms El Partido de los Pobres. Cabañas kidnaps the gubernatorial candidate for the PRI in Guerrero. Lucio Cabañas was killed in a confrontation with soldiers on December 2, 1974. Source: *Archivo General de la Nación, Galeria 2*, Mexico City.

Figure 10. *Brigada Obrera de Lucha Armada*. Urban Guerrilla that supported Lucio Cabañas, 1973. Second row, from left to right, are Maria Dolores and Amalia Gámiz García, sisters of Arturo Gámiz García, leader of the 1965 uprising in Ciudad Madera, Chihuahua. Source: *Archivo General de la Nación. Galeria 2*, Mexico City.

Figure 11. Jacobo Gámiz García, 1973. The brother of Arturo Gámiz García leader of the Ciudad Madera uprising in 1965, continued to be active in a leftist movement – along with his sisters – that supported the Lucio Cabañas uprising in Guerrero. They would support the Lucio Cabañas guerrilla movement through a series of kidnappings for ransom and bank robberies. Source: *Archivo General de la Nación, Galeria 2*, Mexico City.

Figure 12. Amalia and Maria Dolores Gámiz García, 1973. Picture taken after their apprehension for suspicion of Bank robbery. Source: *Archivo General de la Nación, Galeria 2*, Mexico City.

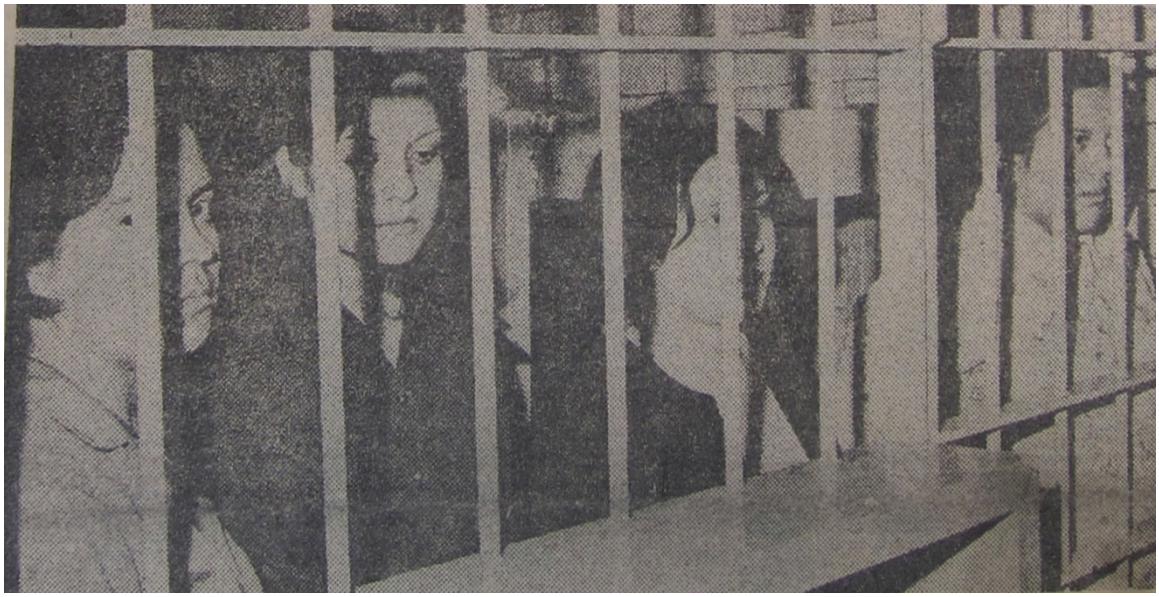

Figure 13. Guerrilleras, 1973. From left to right: Maria Dolores Gámiz García, Amalia Gámiz García, Maria Elena Martínez de Trujillo, and Guadalupe Valdés. These four women were involved in the robbery of the Mexican Commercial Bank in Mexico City in 1973. Source: *Archivo Genral de la Nación, Galeria 2*, Mexico City.

Figure 14: Cache of weapons and ammunition confiscated from the members of the *Frente Revolutionario Armado del Pueblo* in 1973. Source: *Archivo General de la Nación, Galeria 2*, Mexico City.

Figure 15. Martha Maldonado Sosa y Silva, one of the leaders of the *Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria* (MAR). Martha received guerrilla tactics training in North Korea in 1968. She was the daughter of former Governor of Baja California, Braulio Maldonado Sández. Source: *Archivo General de la Nación, Galeria 2*, Mexico City.

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