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JUNE 1970

"RURAL TEACHERS AND SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONFLICT

IN MEXICO, 1921-1940"

(with special reference to the States of Michoacán
and Guerrero)

Thesis presented for the degree of Ph. D. at the

University of Warwick.

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SUMMARY

A class analysis of the period from 1921 to 1940 is essential for any understanding of the present Mexican political system and its relationship to the revolutionary upheaval of 1910-1917. No such analysis can be really adequate without detailed research on local and national politics - the growth of peasant leagues, trade unions and professional groups, and the reaction of landlords and employers. The present study will examine the role of one key professional group, the teachers, as catalysts of social change, agents of Government policy, popular organizers and agitators. Since this can only be done on the basis of detailed local knowledge, a substantial part of the thesis consists of regional studies of the teacher's role in two States: Michoacán and Campeche, with simultaneously presenting the overall national picture.

Part I outlines the national framework and the teachers' place in it; the complex political developments of the period, the direction and execution of Government educational policy, and the part played by the teachers' unions. Where possible pedagogical theory and technical aspects of education are avoided, but the broad outlines of educational policy are essential to any examination of the teachers' activities, especially in view of the originality of Mexican rural education as developed in the liberal flowering of the 'twenties and the paradoxical experiment of "Socialist Education" after 1934.

Part II attempts to reveal the reality behind official rhetoric about the social role of the teachers, as shown in their efforts to help solve the most fundamental problem of rural Mexico: the agrarian question.

Encouraged from the beginning to identify with the rural population, many teachers took the initiative in organizing peasant leagues, formulating petitions for land, and waging the subsequent legal battles. The Cardenas administration encouraged them in this, but many teachers went beyond the Government's intentions and became important local popular leaders and agitators. Because of this they fell foul of vested interests, and in the 'thirties many were attacked and murdered by agents of landlords or local political bosses. Unfortunately, because of the religious persecution imposed by the Government from 1926 to 1934, the teachers also faced the hostility of large sections of the population in some areas, with very negative consequences.

Parts III and IV consist of the two regional studies of the teachers' role. The emphasis is on their participation in peasant organizations, trade unions and State politics. In Campeche a left-wing teachers' union played the major part in organizing an independent peasant and labour movement which came near to toppling the State Government; in Michoacan the teachers' contribution was less dramatic, but they did have considerable influence in the main "cardenista" labour federation there.

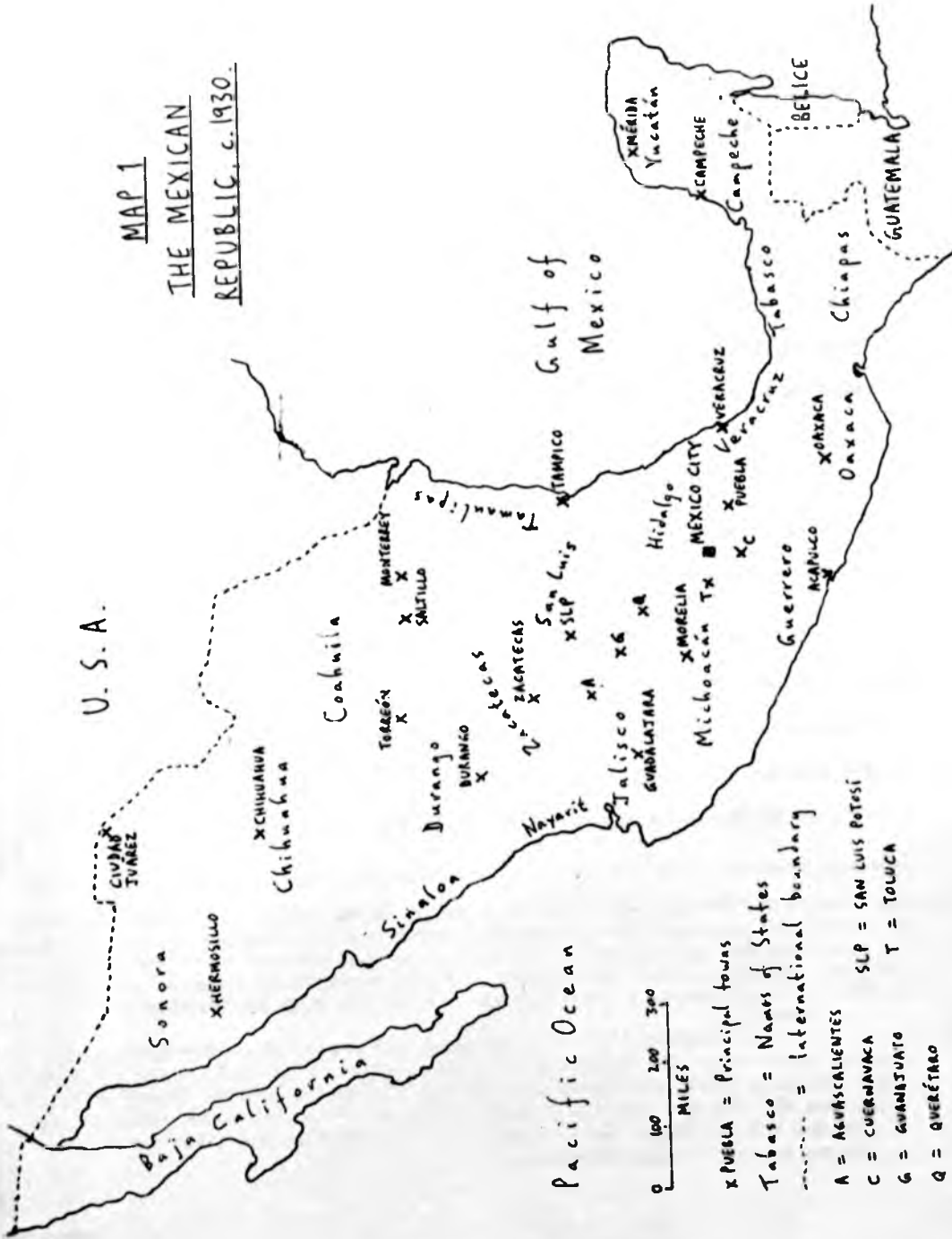
In conclusion, the influence of the teachers as a radical pressure group and cadre force agitating for land reform, organizing unions and pressing for left-wing policies is seen to be very important. Many of them joined the Communist Party, and they contributed powerfully to the revolutionary movement in rural Mexico. But they also served to rally support for the Government and in the long run helped to subordinate the peasant and labour movements to an increasingly bourgeois and corporatist regime - a paradox symptomatic of the fate of the Mexican Revolution.

PART I

THE NATIONAL POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

To page 8

MAP 1
THE MEXICAN
REPUBLIC. c. 1930.



U. S. A.

Gulf of Mexico

Pacific Ocean

0 100 200 300
MILES

X PUEBLA = Principal towns
Tabasco = Names of States
----- = International boundary
A = AGUASCALIENTES
C = CUERNAVACA
G = GUANAJUATO
Q = QUERÉTARO
SLP = SAN LUIS POTOSÍ
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CHAPTER I

THE REVOLUTION AND POLITICS IN THE 'TWENTIES AND 'THIRTIES

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917, which overthrew the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz and did much to destroy the traditional, social and economic structure of "hacienda" agriculture and foreign-dominated primary production, resulted in a political impasse which lasted until the accession to the Presidency of the radical Lázaro Cárdenas in 1934. During the intervening period, power was in the hands of bourgeois revolutionaries led by Presidents Carranza, Obregón and Calles, whose aim was to develop an independent capitalist economy based on small private farms and import substitution. But owing to the extreme weakness of the Mexican capitalist class and the underdevelopment of the middle sectors, these leaders felt unable to challenge the power of the landed oligarchy and of foreign capital without creating a mass popular movement which they might be unable to control. Hence, they relied on a policy of timid reforms accompanied by demagogic pseudo-revolutionary propaganda, and artificially encouraged a precocious State-controlled labour movement in order to counterbalance peasant unrest.

This policy of Bonapartism, or demagogic nationalist appeal to multiple class interests in a situation of class stalemate, (1) broke down after 1930 in the face of economic crisis and growing popular unrest, and was succeeded by the alliance on a progressive platform of middle sectors, labour and peasant movements, dominated by the petty-bourgeoisie whose leader was Cárdenas. (2)

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- (1) The concept of "Bonapartism" denotes a policy which arises in a revolutionary or near-revolutionary situation, when the dominant social classes are in a situation of "catastrophic equilibrium" as defined by Antonio Gramsci in "Lettere di Carcere", quoted in Anatol Shalgovski, "México en la Encrucijada de su Historia" (México, 1968, Fondo de Cultura Popular, translated from the Russian by Armando Martínez Verdugo).
 - (2) Quite apart from Cárdenas' personal origins, the groups most closely identified with his Government were typically petty-bourgeois - middle and upper peasants, young officers, urban intellectuals; and his policy despite its socialist overtones, was the classic petty-bourgeois programme of consolidating national capitalism and liberal democracy against the semi-feudal landed oligarchy and the domination of foreign interests.



..... = International boundary

A = AGUASCALIENTES
 C = CUERNAVACA
 G = GUANAJUATO
 Q = QUERÉTARO

SLP = SAN LUIS POTOSÍ
 T = TOLUCA

A revolutionary transformation was now carried out, on the basis of land reform and expropriation of foreign interests, and led to the development of a socialist consciousness among some sections of the "cardenista" masses. But since the movement always remained under petty-bourgeois control, its long-term result was the strengthening of Mexican capitalism and the incorporation of the workers' and peasants' movements into an authoritarian State machine.

The crucial period from 1921 to 1940 has been neglected by historians and political scientists, and this has given currency to questionable interpretations of the present political system of Mexico and its relationship to the 1910 Revolution. There are at present two established orthodoxies concerning Mexican history since the Revolution: the view of the Mexican Government, which sees the whole epoch from 1910 to the present as one continuous process of Revolution (the content of which is not defined except in vague nationalist and supra-class terms); ⁽¹⁾ and the view of most Western political scientists, which also presents a basically linear model, using the supposedly neutral concept of "modernisation" to present a picture of increasing national integration, industrial development and mass political participation, steadily overcoming all obstacles in the march towards an advanced capitalist economy and a liberal parliamentary democracy. ⁽²⁾ Both these interpretations ignore the class content of the Revolution and minimize the context of imperialism, and are thus unable to explain the complex political battles of the 'twenties and 'thirties, or the increasing evidence that the Mexican

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- (1) See, for example, Florencio Zamarripa M., "Días Ordaz: ideología y perfil de un revolucionario" (México, D.F., 1963, Editorial Futuro); or almost any speech by a Mexican Government official in the past 20 years.
- (2) See, for example, the recent work of C.C. Cumberland, "Mexico: The Struggle for Modernity" (New York, Oxford University Press, 1968), Ch.10.

political system is not serving popular interests or becoming more liberal and democratic, but on the contrary is relying more and more on open repression and on the corporate State aspects of the official Party.

This is not the place for a detailed class analysis of the period, but a brief outline of the course of events is essential. By the time of the "golpe de Estado" of Agua Prieta led by Alvaro Obregón and Adolfo de la Huerta in 1920,⁽¹⁾ Mexico was prostrate from ten years of almost continuous civil war. Its population had fallen, according to the census, from 15,160,000 in 1910 to 14,334,000 in 1921,⁽²⁾ and given the rate of increase in the preceding period, this represented a real loss of life of over two million.⁽³⁾ Yet the goals of the Revolution, as seen by many of its participants, were far from being achieved. Since 1910, it was true, the Díaz dictatorship had been overthrown, Huerta's attempt at a conservative restoration had been defeated, some progressive laws had been enacted and a new Constitution had been established containing radical clauses on land, natural resources, the rights of labour, and secular education.⁽⁴⁾ But these new laws so far had little existence except on paper; those who the peasants had seized land from the big estates, they had not yet (except in a tiny minority of cases) been confirmed in possession, and in not a few instances they had been forcibly evicted by their

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- (1) See Henry Esford Parke, "A History of Mexico" (London, 1962, Eyre and Spottiswoode), pp.310-311.
 (2) Official census figures, quoted in Cumberland, *op.cit.*, p.367.
 (3) From 1900 to 1910 the population rose by 1,553,000 or 11% (Cumberland, *loc.cit.*); a similar rate of increase would have given a total of over 17,000,000 for 1921. The difference can only be accounted for by deaths from combat, famine and disease resulting from the Revolution, and although the figures are not wholly reliable, they give a fair idea of the scale of destruction.
 (4) The radicals at the Constitutional Convention were led by General Francisco J. Múgica, Pastor Rouaix and Luis G. Roncón. See Magdalena Hernández, "Cuando la Revolución se Certó las Alas" (México, 1966, Costa-Amic), pp.81-86.

old masters or by the new "Revolutionary" authorities. (1) Carranza showed little enthusiasm for social and economic reforms, and it was an open question whether the Generals who deposed him were concerned with adherence to revolutionary principles as much as with their own ambitions. Despite the bloodshed and destruction, the Revolution appeared to have reached a stalemate. The decade of the 'twenties was to see a return to relative stability and the gradual initiation of reform, but was also to reveal a growing divorce between the people and the Revolutionary leaders who appeared to lack any coherent strategy of national development.

What had happened since 1910, and more especially since 1913, had been the destruction of the old Porfirian State machine - the army, the bureaucracy, many of the banks, the newspapers and other national institutions (2) - and their replacement by a new State power which depended essentially on the Revolutionary army. The latter, a loose coalition of local politicians and upstart "caudillos", represented an embryonic and incoherent national bourgeoisie, consisting of progressive northern ranchers and industrialists (mainly from Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila and Nuevo León) and popular leaders from the southern and central States (particularly Michoacán and Veracruz). (3) The new leaders had political power and wanted to use it to promote economic development, but they lacked control over the nation's resources. The old semi-feudal landholding structure, the basis of

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- (1) There are a few if any detailed studies of the early stages of the agrarian reform from 1915 to 1920, but it is known that very little land was officially granted in "restitución" or "dotación" at this stage. See Eyer N. Simpson, "The Ejidos: Mexico's Way Out", (Chapel Hill, 1937, University of North Carolina Press), Ch.6; Ernest Gruening, "Mexico and Its Heritage" (London 1928, Stanley Paul & Co.), pp.144-156.
- (2) See Daniel Cosío Villegas, "The Mexican Revolution, Then and Now", in Stanby R. Ross (ed.), "Is the Mexican Revolution Dead?" (New York, 1960, Borzio Books). Cosío Villegas also states that "Landholders...were almost entirely replaced by new ones"; this is certainly not true of 1920, but he is referring to the post-Cardenas era.
- (3) The "Sonoran Dynasty" of De la Huerta, Obregón and Calles dominated until 1928, and de facto until 1934, although it was under challenge after 1928. Other northerners were also prominent: Portes Gil (Tamaulipas), Almazán (Nuevo León)

the old régime, had been severely shaken but not overthrown, and foreign control of oil, minerals and other vital sectors of the economy was unaffected. As long as this situation continued, independent capitalist development was impossible, popular social reforms would be stillborn and there was a permanent threat of open conservative reaction. In an overwhelmingly rural country, the "hacienda" system was incompatible with dynamic growth and social progress, and the landowning class could always hope for a political restoration.

These circumstances account for the continued undercurrent of popular unrest and for the military rebellions of the Obregón - Calles period. The De la Huerta revolt of 1923 ⁽¹⁾ and the Escobar rising of 1929 ⁽²⁾ were both of serious proportions and both of an essentially reactionary nature, associated with conservative landowning interests while playing with Revolutionary phraseology. More interesting was the "cristero" movement of 1926-1929, ⁽³⁾ a popular peasant uprising of conservative and religious overtones, sparked off by the anti-clerical legislation and religious persecution of Calles and fanned by sections of the Church hierarchy and by some of the landowners. Despite its conservative direction, this movement drew much of its support from the frustration of land-hungry peasants, disillusioned by "revolutionaries" who failed to deliver the goods and misled by astute politicians who played on their religious zeal. The "cristero"

Amuro (Zacatecas), Estrada (Zacatecas), and Abelardo Rodríguez (Sonora). After 1930 the radicalisation of politics coincided with the increasing prominence of men from the southern and central states: Múgica, Cardenas, Ortiz Rubio and Sánchez Tapia from Michoacán; Tejeda, Jara, Cándido, Aguilar and Vázquez Vela from Veracruz.

- (1) Parkes, *op.cit.*, pp.321-323.
- (2) John W.F. Dulles, "Yesterday in Mexico" (Austin, 1961, University of Texas Press), pp.436-458.
- (3) On the "cristeros", see Parkes, *op.cit.*, pp.324-328 and 335; and Alicia Olivera Sedano, "Aspectos del Conflicto Religioso de 1926 a 1929" (México, 1966, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia), *passim*.

guerrillas were strongest in the central and western States of Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato and Zacatecas,⁽¹⁾ strongly Catholic areas where the benefits of the Revolution were also particularly slow in penetrating.⁽²⁾ At times in 1927-1928 the authority of the Government was non-existent in many parts of these States, and although the movement never seemed likely to achieve success, it was a serious warning of the dangers inherent in President Calles' lukewarm reforms. Having alienated powerful interests without satisfying popular demands, the régime had a perilously narrow power base and was becoming dependent more and more on the army as its sole support.

It was the assassination of Obregón, elected President for a second term in 1928, which determined Calles' attempt to institutionalize the Revolutionary régime with the creation of the "Partido Nacional Revolucionario" (P.N.R.) in 1929.⁽³⁾ This manoeuvre resolved the immediate crisis, but the continuing unpopularity of the Government's policies coupled with the impact of the world depression of 1929-1933 was to lead to a revitalisation of radical currents and a major upheaval in the ranks of the Revolutionary establishment. No adequate study has been made of the way in which popular radical and insurrectionary movements, so prominent from 1910 to 1917, died down or were suppressed during the 'twenties, only to revive after about 1929 and bear fruit in the belated execution of many of the reforms demanded by the Revolution.⁽⁴⁾ The "sapatistas", the

(1) The distribution of the "cristeros" is examined particularly in Olivera Sedano, *op.cit.*, pp.157-175 and 206-214.

(2) Olivera Sedano, *op.cit.*, pp.211-213, analyses the composition of the rebels, who included many frustrated peasants in Jalisco and Michoacán.

(3) Parices, *op.cit.*, pp.329-333; Dulles, *op.cit.*, pp.408-435.

(4) Some attempt to analyse the revival of radicalism which brought Cárdenas to power is made in Anatol Shulgovski *op.cit.*, Ch.1, Section III: "El desarrollo del movimiento de masas en el país a principios de los años treinta, la agudización de las contradicciones en el Partido Nacional Revolucionario y las nuevas elecciones presidenciales" (pp.60-90).

"villistas" and other similar but less well-known militant peasant groups had been a major factor in the victory of the Revolution, yet had gained little from it; and radical intellectuals, such as those who had imposed the more advanced clauses of the 1917 Constitution, had been largely excluded from power by conservative-minded Generals and machine politicians. Only the labour movement reaped some reward for its consistent support of the "Revolutionary" leaders, and played a prominent part in national politics; and even then it was only able to do so under corrupt and demagogic leaders of the Horones type. (1)

The revival of radical currents in the early 'thirties, which led to the P.N.R.'s Six-Year Plan of 1934 and the election of Cárdenas, has sometimes been interpreted in terms of purely personalist power struggles within the Revolutionary élite and of unilateral manipulation of popular movements from above. (2) This is clearly inadequate, and there is a growing body of evidence to indicate a groundswell of popular discontent which found expression in the formation of several new unions and peasant leagues from about 1929 onwards. (3) A good example is the "Confederación Revolucionaria Michoacana del Trabajo", founded as a political instrument of Cárdenas in 1929, but nevertheless articulating popular discontent and acting as a real participatory mass organisation and not a mere bureaucratic skeleton. (4)

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- (1) The labour movement at this time is best described in Marjorie C. Clark, "Organised Labor in Mexico" (Chapel Hill, 1939, University of North Carolina Press).
 - (2) This is the view implied by Dulles (*op.cit.*, pp.566-577) and Pacheco (*op.cit.*, pp.336-339). But see also Shulgovski, *op.cit.*, pp.77-80.
 - (3) See Frank Brandenburg, "The Making of Modern Mexico" (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964, Prentice Hall, Inc.) p.77; and, particularly on the C.C.M. ("Confederación Campesina Mexicana"), Moises Consales Navarro, "La Confederación Nacional Campesina" (Mexico 1968, Costa-Amic), pp.135-136. See also the section on Campeche, below.
 - (4) See H. & S. Weyl, *op.cit.*, pp.80-85; Dulles, *op.cit.*, p.560; Shulgovski, *op.cit.*, pp.78-79. This view of the C.R.M.D.T., as it was called, was also confirmed by personal interviews conducted by the author in Michoacán.

Despite the conservative rule of Obregón and Calles on a national level, left-wing movements composed usually of peasants and petty-bourgeois elements had flourished during the 'twenties in some States, particularly the Peasant Leagues of which the most important were led by Ursulo Galván in Veracruz, Graciano Sánchez in San Luis Potosí and Primo Tapia in Michoacán.⁽¹⁾ Such movements were patronized by radical politicians of various hues, such as Múgica and Cárdenas in Michoacán, Tejeda and Jara in Veracruz and Arroyo Ch. in Guanajuato - and these leaders, for all their limitations, maintained a constant pressure in favour of reform. They owed their strength partly to the army, but also to popular support, and it was their alliance which was to lead to the expulsion of Calles in 1935.⁽²⁾

The importance of pressure from below is suggested by the changes in the Six Year Plan which were introduced in 1933 against Calles' will by delegations of radical intellectuals and peasant leaders from Michoacán, Veracruz, Tabasco, San Luis and Tamaulipas,⁽³⁾ and the nomination of Cárdenas was intended to appease such pressures while keeping power in "callista" hands. Although Cárdenas' successful expulsion of Calles depended essentially on his control of the army, and while his personal radicalism was responsible for some of the reforms enacted from 1934 to 1940, it has to be recognised that the most daring measures of these years - the land distribution of

(1) González Navarro, *op.cit.*, chapter VII.

(2) Parkes, *op.cit.*, pp.340-341; Dulles, *op.cit.*, pp.640-681.

(3) González Navarro, *op.cit.*, pp.102-103; Sebastián Mayo, "La Educación Socialista en México: el Asalto a la Universidad Nacional" (Rosario, Argentina, 1964, Editorial BEAR), pp.175-179.

La Laguna and the petroleum expropriation - were undertaken only in response to popular demands from the peasants and the oil workers. (1)

The last two years of Cárdenas' Presidency were to witness a growing conservative opposition to such measures, leading to a serious danger of civil war which was averted only by the choice of a moderate, Avila Camacho, to succeed Cárdenas. In the process, the left was defeated and the radical "cardenista" masses were demobilized.

The growth of popular radical movements, particularly trade unions and peasant leagues of left-wing tendencies, in the years preceding Cárdenas' accession to power, and their participation in his Government as pressure groups, must be regarded as crucial factors in any attempt to explain the sudden swing to the Left in Mexican politics around 1933-1934. Local studies are needed of the genesis of these movements, their social composition, political allegiance and national influence. It is a well-known fact that they were often led or organized by radical intellectuals, particularly lawyers and teachers, but the exact contribution of such groups to social and political change has not been assessed. The purpose of the present work is to analyse the rôle of one professional group, the teachers, as popular leaders, union organisers and political agitators, on the local, State and national levels.

The great expansion of Mexican education undertaken by the Revolutionary Governments, particularly in the rural areas, has attracted the attention of educationalists and social scientists from all over the world. The sense of secular mission and idealism, the aim of redeeming the peasant and the Indian from centuries of ignorance and

(1) See H. & S. Weyl, *op.cit.*, chapters 8 and 11; and Shigovshi, *op.cit.*, chapters 4 and 6.

oppression, the concept of a school at the service of the community - all this fired the enthusiasm of foreign observers who went to Mexico in the 'twenties and 'thirties to acquire first-hand knowledge of a cultural revolution, as it was claimed to be by its leading exponents. The experiments of the itinerant Cultural Missions and the Rural Normal Schools were widely admired, and the idea of the school as prime agent of social transformation and community development gave rise to such accounts as George Sánchez's "Mexico: a Revolution by Education", George Booth's "Mexico's School-Made Society", and A. Méndez Bravo's "La Escuela Rural Mexicana".⁽¹⁾ The devotion and self-sacrifice of thousands of rural teachers was indeed admirable, but the inevitable shortcomings and errors of the educational programmes led in time to a more realistic appreciation, perhaps best summed up in the work of Ramón Eduardo Ruiz.⁽²⁾

Undeniably, the work of the Department of Education was the greatest single creative achievement of the Revolutionary régime during the 'twenties, before the agrarian reform was carried out on a large scale; and in the 'thirties the continued dissemination of learning, including the paradoxical experiment of "Socialist Education", was one of the most important facets of the Government's reforms. But the purpose of this study is not to add to the already considerable literature on Mexican education; rather it is intended to contribute towards the social and political history of the period, by taking the rural teachers as a social group and examining their participation in political conflicts. A preliminary survey of educational policy is essential, but will serve only as an introduction to a study of the unionization of

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- (1) George I. Sánchez, "Mexico: a Revolution by Education" (New York, 1936, The Viking Press); George C. Booth, "Mexico's School-Made Society" (Stanford University Press, California, 1941); A. Méndez Bravo, "La Escuela Rural Mexicana" (Santiago de Chile, 1929).
- (2) Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, "Mexico: the Challenge of Poverty and Illiteracy" (The Huntington Library, San Marino, California, 1965).

teachers, their rôle in agrarian reform and other social problems, and their participation in local politics. The general national picture, as obtained from official documents, newspapers, private archives and interviews, will be complemented by local studies of the political activities of the teachers in two States (Michoacán and Campeche) during the 'thirties. It is hoped in this way to throw some light on the composition of the Mexican Left and on its strengths and weaknesses in the post-revolutionary period.

It should be stressed that this aspect of Mexican politics has been totally neglected to date. In contrast with the 1910-1920 period, the twenty years from 1921 to 1940 have received little attention. Some good contemporary surveys were produced, such as J. W. Dulles' "Yesterday in Mexico", Ernest Gruening's "Mexico and its Heritage", and Nathaniel and Sylvia Weyl's "The Reconquest of Mexico". The agrarian problem has been well covered by the work of Simpson, Whetten and Clarence Senior, although few local studies have been undertaken; and the same applies to the labour movement. There have been few attempts to date at an overall political analysis of these years, with the notable exception of Anatol Shulgovski's "México en la Encrucijada de su Historia". But the detailed political history of the period, at the level of regional and local politics and the interplay of sectional interests - which alone can provide a solid basis for such analyses as Shulgovski's - this aspect was almost untouched until very recently. In the last few years a number of scholars have begun to work on the development of peasant leagues and trade unions in particular States, and the present study is intended to contribute to an understanding of the relationship between such movements and the Revolutionary Governments, as revealed by the activities of one of the régime's foremost agencies of political mobilisation and social control, the teaching profession.

A study of this kind inevitably encounters serious difficulties owing to the poor quality and disorganization of archives, the absence of academic groundwork and the continuing political sensitivity of the subject. Once the limited secondary material has been exhausted, official archives will provide basic information on policy and its execution; but to discover the really interesting details of the teachers' unofficial activities, the problems they faced and their relationship to local politics, it is necessary to rely on newspapers, personal archives and interviews. These sources have serious limitations, but their judicious use will provide a detailed picture of the grass-roots political situation which is unavailable elsewhere.

With newspapers, it is relatively easy to balance one shade of opinion against another in order to decide which is the more plausible; and for most purposes the author has relied on "Excoélsior" for conservative opinion, the Communist "El Machete" (after 1938, "La Voz de México") for the Left, and the P.N.L. journal "El Nacional" for the Government position. Other national newspapers, such as "El Universal" and "La Prensa" have been used occasionally, and the local press has been used where relevant (although most local dailies are extremely conservative).

The most interesting information often comes from private archives, but is almost impossible to collect systematically owing to the difficulty of access to such archives and to their disorganization. In this case such valuable information on Michoacán and Compeche was obtained from the private papers of General Francisco J. Múgica in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, which were consulted by courtesy of Sr. Carolina Escudero Vda. de Múgica. Other, smaller collections were consulted by kind permission of their owners in Mexico City and Morelia (details are given in the Bibliography).

The last major source of data was the use of personal interviews, which involve many difficulties but must be regarded as a major tool of research for the history of Mexico during the past 50 years, owing to the paucity of other sources and the deep involvement of large sectors of the population in the struggles of the revolutionary era. The author conducted over fifty such interviews, mainly with rural teachers who were active in the period under review, but also with politicians, Government officials, peasants and others. The procedure followed was relatively informal, but generally consisted of an intensive one to two-hour interview, beginning with questions concerning the subject's social origins, training and career (if he was a teacher), and going on to enquire about social problems and local and national politics. Since many teachers of that generation have in practice abandoned their radical origins and become incorporated into the system (although usually still retaining the old revolutionary rhetoric) this task was not easy. Much of the information obtained must be regarded as open to question, but where possible interview material has been compared with other sources of information; otherwise it has been judged on the basis of internal consistency and plausibility. Where appropriate, follow-up interviews were conducted after a certain period of time.

A large part of the thesis consists of local studies of the rôle of teachers in two States, since the question can only be studied effectively at the local level, although an attempt has been made to give the overall national picture as well, and to integrate the national and local analyses. The choice of States was determined by a number of factors, geographical balance, political interest and availability of material being the main ones.

Michoacán was chosen as a populous medium-size State, representing the relatively densely-populated Indian and mestizo tablelands of central and western Mexico; it is particularly important as the home of Cárdenas and Múgica, and while collections of local newspapers for the relevant period proved to be almost non-existent, personal contacts enable the author to gain access to other sources in the State. Campeche was chosen to represent the States of the Gulf coast and the Yucatán peninsula, and because of the discovery of abundant material on the teachers' movement in the State in the archive of General Múgica, complemented by the existence of complete runs of two local newspapers, the conservative "Diario de Yucatán" and the moderate "Diario del Sureste".⁽¹⁾ If circumstances had permitted, a northern State (possibly Sonora) would have been included, but this would have made the study quite unwieldy; and on the whole the two States selected should provide a representative picture.

(1) It will be noticed that personal interviews have been used extensively in the section on Michoacán, but hardly at all for Campeche. This was because the absence of newspaper material made it necessary in Michoacán to rely more on verbal sources, while the author's contacts made it easier for him to carry out interviews there rather than in Campeche. This discrepancy in methods was necessitated by the poverty of material and the absence of previous research in this field.

CHAPTER II

EDUCATIONAL POLICY, 1921-19711. The Nature of the Problem

Before the Revolution, access to education in Mexico was confined almost exclusively to the wealthy and the urban middle class.⁽¹⁾ Despite the growth of progressive ideas in some circles since the time of the Reform movement of 1855-1867, there had been no serious effort to educate the peasants or the common people of the towns. Although Mexico had produced or imported educationalists of the stature of Joaquín Baranda, Enrique C. Rébsamen and Jurto Sierra, there were scarcely any schools at all in the rural areas. Hence, although estimates vary, it is generally agreed that illiteracy exceeded 80% in 1910. Moreover, even such schools as existed offered an education of very uneven standards. Urban primary schools had been established by the Government, and in these the children of the middle class received a reasonably modern and liberal upbringing; but in other respects the clerical monopoly of education was unbroken. The wealthy sent their children to religious schools and seminaries, and if the offspring of the lower classes received any instruction at all, it was in parish schools also run by the clergy.⁽²⁾

In view of the blatant class character of education before 1910, it is perhaps not surprising that one of the first demands of the Revolution, after land for the peasants and political liberty, was for schools for the people.⁽³⁾ One of the first constructive actions after

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- (1) The best coverage of the development of education in Mexico since Independence is in Isidro Castillo, "México y su Revolución Educativa" (Mexico, 1965, 2 vols, Editorial Paz-México, Librería Carlos Cosman, S.A.)
 - (2) Castillo, op.cit, vol.1, p.149; and Daniel Cosío Villegas (ed.), "Historia Moderna de México" (Mexico, 1957, Editorial Hermes), volume "El Porfiriato: La Vida Social" by Moisés González Navarro, Parte Cuarta: "La Instrucción Pública".
 - (3) Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, "Mexico: the Challenge of Poverty and Illiteracy", pp.20-21, points out that a demand for rural schools arose after 1900 from Flores Magón, Molins Enriquez and others, and was later echoed by scores of revolutionary chieftains?

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the fall of Díaz in 1911 was the decree, issued by the conservative provisional Government of Francisco León de la Barra, establishing a network of "rudimentary" schools. (1) This measure was granted only as a concession to public opinion, and the schools it established were indeed rudimentary - intended to provide two years' instruction in the three "R's" for Indians and peasants in the most neglected parts of the country. Few were in fact established, and this was the limit of educational reform before the murder of Madero plunged the country into four more years of civil war.

But the demand for education was growing, and was to find national expression again at the Constitutional Convention in 1917. Even during the years of violent struggle, progress was made on a local level with the reform and expansion of education by radical Governors such as Alfredo Elisondo in Michoacán, Francisco J. Múgica in Tabasco and Salvador Alvarado in Yucatán. At Querétaro in 1917 the work of the radicals established the principle, as laid down in Article 3 of the Constitution, that primary education should be free and secular. However, little more was achieved at this stage, and indeed Carranza took the retrograde step of abolishing the Ministry of Public Instruction, on the pretext of respect for local autonomy. (2) The growing demand for rural schools was thus left unsatisfied until after Obregón's accession to power.

2. The Creation of the "Secretaría de Educación Pública"

The drive to bring education to the mass of the population really began with the foundation of the "Secretaría de Educación Pública"

(1) Castillo, *op.cit.*, vol.1, pp.227-228.

(2) Luis, *op.cit.*, p.24, and Castillo, *op.cit.*, vol.1, p.233.

by a law passed in July 1921.⁽¹⁾ This scheme was due above all to the efforts of one man, José Vasconcelos, an idealistic and contradictory intellectual who for a short time devoted all his energies to the cause of popular education. Appointed Rector of the National University in 1920, Vasconcelos started an anti-illiteracy campaign under the auspices of the University, calling on intellectuals and professional people to volunteer their services as unpaid elementary teachers. He then persuaded the Government to accept his plan for the re-establishment of the Ministry of Public Education, revising Article 73 of the Constitution to allow the Federal Government to maintain primary schools throughout the country (a prerogative previously confined to local authorities).⁽²⁾

With Vasconcelos in charge, the new Ministry immediately undertook a vast and original scheme of rural education. Fired by an idealistic vision of cultural renaissance, Vasconcelos wanted to revive all that was best in the Hispanic tradition and communicate it to the Mexican peasantry. The task of transmitting this culture to the peasants was mainly the work of the "Departamento de Educación y Cultura Indígena", one of the five Departments of the new Ministry. This Department, as its name implies, was particularly concerned with the education and integration of the Indians - that section of the population which had preserved a distinct indigenous culture, but only by virtue of its total exclusion from all benefits of modern civilisation. However, the problem of the Indians shaded over into

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- (1) Castillo, *op.cit.*, vol.1 p.243, says the decree was issued on 20th July; in fact the Presidential decree went out on 25th July and it was approved by Congress on 29th Sept.1921 ("El esfuerzo educativo en México, 1924-1928", México, 1929, Secretaría de Educación Pública, vol.1, p.11.)
- (2) Ruiz, *op.cit.*, pp.32-33, and Castillo, *op.cit.*, vol.1, pp.243-244.

that of the peasants in general, since it was impossible to draw a hard and fast line between the two groups; and the work of this department included the whole field of rural primary education.⁽¹⁾

Under this scheme, special teachers called "misioneros" were sent out to tour the different regions of the country, gathering information on the cultural situation of the villages and extolling the virtues of education to the assembled inhabitants. In each village, if possible, they would find a volunteer to serve as the local teacher in return for a small salary from the Ministry, and would encourage the villagers to erect a school building, however humble, by their own efforts. Those who volunteered as teachers were generally local inhabitants who had been fortunate enough to receive some basic education in a nearby town; their lack of training was compensated in the best of cases by their knowledge of local problems and by a latent idealism and enthusiasm generated by the Revolution. Despite the over-optimistic plans at the outset, the system worked, and by the time Vasconcelos left the Ministry in 1924, there were over 100 "misioneros" and about 1,000 Federal Rural Schools.⁽²⁾

The education given in these rural schools was to be specially suited to the needs of a rural community. A basic grounding in the three "R's" was supplemented by elementary history and geography (taught in such a way as to develop national consciousness) and simple vocational subjects. The teacher, guided by the "missionary", also tried to introduce the elements of hygiene and medicine - usually completely absent - and encouraged local crafts. The teachers rapidly

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- (1) Castillo, *op.cit.*, vol.1 pp.244-245; & "El esfuerzo educativo en México, 1924-1928", *loc.cit.*
(2) "El esfuerzo educativo en México, 1924-1928", *loc.cit.*

Toledo



Nos. 1 & 2. Typical rural schools: (above), that of Arroyo Seco, Querétaro, inaugurated 15th. Feb. 1932; (below), that of Buenavista del Aire, Morelos, inaugurated 18th. Feb. 1932.



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found that they had to be social workers, and in this way the "Escuela Rural" evolved of its own accord and developed its own distinctive character.

3. The Aims and Characteristics of the Mexican Rural School

"La casa del pueblo" - "the house of the people" - was the description of the rural school favoured by its leading exponents, and the phrase is an accurate, if somewhat romantic, expression of the ideal for which they are striving. Whether they would be able to realise this ideal, except in isolated instances, was rather doubtful so long as the general social and economic programme of the Revolution remained unfulfilled, for in a rural society based on the "hacienda" system there would be much opposition to popular education from vested interests, while the peasants would have little opportunity to apply their newly-acquired knowledge. But Vasconcelos and his collaborators went ahead in spite of these obstacles, and in some cases, through sheer drive and enthusiasm, they almost achieved the impossible. A good description of the "escuela rural" at its best was given by Moisés Sáenz, Undersecretary of Education from 1925 to 1930, writing in 1927:-(1)

I know and feel the rural school", he wrote, "not only through bureaucratic reports but from personal experience. I have toured extensive areas of the country visiting all the federal schools it possesses.....

"The rural school to which I want to take you now is like a mosaic..... It is not an ideal school

"When we reach the village, everyone will tell us where the school is, and even from the distance we can see the white-washed house with a bold sign announcing it as the house of the people or as a federal rural school. In the whole of the central plateau and in the South, in the mountains, the school is near the church, indeed it sometimes occupies the outhouses of the Church, and often there is a basketball court in the churchyard, which now serves as a play-

(1) Quoted in Castillo, *op.cit.*, vol.1, pp.290-294.

ground for the children..... The school's agricultural plot is usually a few yards away; the customary crops of the region are cultivated there; maize, beans, wheat, fruit and vegetables where possible. In the classroom we find from 30 to 50 boys and girls from 6 to 14 years old....There is a woman teacher in charge of this school, but since there are almost as many women in service as men, this is pure chance. The teacher is about 22 years old, the first impression she gives is of intelligence and strength. The furniture is of the new kind: we can still see a few desks...., but in general we shall find work-tables. If, as is likely, our visit was expected or if we arrive at the end of the year, we shall find an extensive exhibition of articles produced in the school; woollen and worsted cloth; embroidery; small items of furniture; rope; baskets; drawings and paintings; bread; jam; soap; clothing. The pupils move around freely. One group will perhaps be working in the wide patio, others will be looking after the farm animals and some digging the earth; those in the classroom will be reading or writing, and when the teacher brings them together, all of them will sing. If we question the children about their school life, they will tell us many things which are unusual and others we did not expect to find in a school of this kind: that there are cooperatives, that they themselves decorate the room, make the furniture and equipment with the help of adults who attend evening classes, that they are organising a school fair, that they have an orchestra, and many things unknown to old-fashioned pedagogy....."

To sum up his view of the rural school, Sáenz wrote:-

"This is, quite simply, a new school, a school with a social character, operating in a community sufficiently primitive for the school to assume many of the functions and responsibilities which in more complex social units are discharged by other agencies....."

It will be readily appreciated that there were many obstacles to the realization of this admirable vision, and in fact few rural schools of the 1920's possessed even half the amenities and activities described by Sáenz. For one thing, the very backwardness of the typical Mexican village, while it might provide the school with a unique opportunity to influence the life of a whole community, was itself largely the product of two factors which were unlikely to welcome the disturbing influence of the school: the Catholic Church and the "hacienda" system. Educationalists were not unaware of this; they frequently expressed their hostility to the Church (at times taking

refuge in a rather sterile antioliericalism), and generally advocated land reform (although its crucial importance was not always appreciated). Where they erred was in expecting the school to carry out an ambitious social programme in spite of these formidable obstacles.

When all this has been said, it remains true that a great deal was accomplished by those schools which happened to enjoy more favourable circumstances - in villages where the peasants had land, where the Church was weak or where the local political boss was a radical. In this case everything would depend on the success of the teacher in winning the confidence and co-operation of the inhabitants. To their credit, it must be said that this was fully realized by the chief policy-makers of the 'twenties - Vasconcelos, Sáenz, Puig Casaurano (Secretary of Education 1924-1926) and Rafael Ramírez (Director of the Department of Cultural Missions, 1927-1935). From the beginning of 1926 teachers were encouraged to form parents' associations - "Sociedades de Padres de Familia" - and a decree called for the formation in every village of a "Comité de Educación."⁽¹⁾ The latter was to consist of the teacher himself, a president elected by the inhabitants, one member nominated by the local authorities, another elected by the women, and a third to represent the adult pupils who attended evening classes. This Committee was to supervise the running of the school in every way, to improve it and to act as the chief link between it and the local community. Where the "Comité de Educación" was successful, the school really came near to being "the house of the people".

(1) "Memoria que Indica el Estado que Guarda el Ramo de Educación Pública el 31 de agosto de 1926" (Mexico, 1926, Secretaría de Educación Pública), pp.29-31 and 220; and Castillo, op.cit., vol.1, pp.296-298.



Nos. 3 & 4. Typical rural schools: (above), that of La Concordia, Guerrero, inaugurated 20th. Feb. 1932; (below), the "Miguel Ahumada" school, Coahuila.



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A. The Teachers: Their Origins and Training

The most important factor in the success or failure of any school was inevitably the teacher himself (for most rural schools were staffed by only one man or woman). The ad-hoc local recruitment of the first generation of teachers had already been described, and the weakness of such a system can well be imagined. However, it appears to have been a success at first, and in many cases lack of training and experience was outweighed by enthusiasm, natural ability and local knowledge. In the words of the Ministry's official "Memoria" for 1927, (1)

"..... since these teachers had not been previously trained, they had to be improvised, accepting there and then any person of good will, even when they had only a rudimentary education. The urgent need was to democratize the instruments of culture by putting the rural schools into action in the shortest possible time; later there would come the task of improving the general and professional education of the teachers already in service."

To appreciate just how improvised these early teachers were, it is necessary to bear in mind that most of them had not even finished primary school; they were literate, but nothing more. By 1928 the situation had improved to the extent that the majority had completed six years' primary schooling and many had further qualifications. (2) But the biggest change had come about through training received on the job; the Ministry devised numerous means of improving its existing teachers, including the Cultural Missions (see Below), holiday courses, guidance by inspectors and other officials, regional teachers' conferences, and official publications specially devoted to the problems of rural education.

Where the first teachers had been locally recruited, a small but growing number were coming out of training colleges, particularly the "Escuelas Normales Rurales" which gave a training specifically intended for rural work. Moreover, even those originally recruited in their own

(1) "Memoria ...el 31 de agosto de 1927" (Mexico, 1927, Secretaría de Educación Pública), p.243
(2) Hilda Sáenz, "La Educación Rural en México" (Mexico, 1928, Secretaría de Educación Pública), p.20.

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villages were frequently moved around, thus gaining experience and a broader outlook but possibly losing their local roots and becoming unsettled. The annual turnover of teachers was high,⁽¹⁾ not a good sign although there were always plenty of volunteers. It was only in the 'thirties that a body of trained, experienced and permanent rural teachers began to emerge.

With regard to the social origin of the teachers, precise data are lacking, but it is generally agreed that the great majority of them came from humble backgrounds; if not from peasant or working-class families, then from the lower middle class (sons of small tradesmen and minor provincial officials, in particular).⁽²⁾ This was their greatest asset, for they generally had first-hand knowledge of rural problems and had little difficulty in identifying with the peasantry.

5. The Growth of the "Escuelas Normales Rurales"

As part of the effort to overcome the lack of trained teachers, and particularly of teachers adapted to a primitive environment, there was created one of the most original and admirable institutions of the Mexican educational system: the "Escuela Normal Rural" or Rural Normal School. As with the rural school itself, this institution developed informally at first, on an ad-hoc basis. In 1922-1925 rudimentary training colleges were established by State Governments in Hidalgo, Puebla, Michoacán and Oaxaca.⁽³⁾ The first federal "Escuela

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- (1) George Sánchez ("Mexico: a Revolution by Education", New York, 1936, The Viking Press, chapter 6) quotes a figure of 40%; no official figures are available, but the proportion was certainly significant.
- (2) See, for example, Castillo, *op.cit.*, vol.1., pp.252-254.
- (3) Max. H. Mirano García, "La Educación Rural en México" (Mexico, 1945, Secretaría de Educación Pública), p.22.

Normal Regional", as it was called, was set up in 1922 at Tacámbaro, Michoacán. Under its first director, German Parra y Marquina, it made an indifferent start, but his successor, Isidro Castillo, led the way in developing a new form of training in accord with the needs of rural life; he gave it "an orientation inspired by the reality than confronting the rural school".⁽¹⁾

Despite the success of the Tacámbaro school, by 1926 only two more federal "Escuelas Normales Regionales" were in existence. In that year their importance was recognised, and the Ministry laid down a plan for their expansion, changing the name to "Escuelas Normales Rurales". By 1931 there were 17 of them, and they formed a central part of the whole rural education programme, preparing new teachers, training the untrained personnel already appointed, and doing social work in their own hinterland. Each school had about 100 pupils who received a two-year course in social sciences, history, literature, music, art, education, agriculture, domestic science and rural crafts. Applicants were required to have at least four years' primary schooling and to be sons and daughters of local peasants ("ejidatarios" and small farmers), wherever possible.⁽²⁾

The "Normales Rurales" had many deficiencies: many were built in provincial towns rather than in a purely rural environment, many lacked land and equipment, the wrong kind of pupils were sometimes admitted, and many graduates went off to the towns.⁽³⁾ But in spite of this they made a vital contribution to the development of the rural school, and attracted widespread attention as an instrument of social and cultural change.

(1) *Ibid.*, pp.193-195.

(2) *Rufs*, *op.cit.*, p.105; Miñano García, *op.cit.*, pp.23-24; and Castillo, *op.cit.*, vol.1, pp.301-303.

(3) *Rufs*, *op.cit.*, pp.105-106.

6. The Work of the Inspectors and the Growth of the Cultural Missions.

We have seen how the whole system of rural education was initiated by the "misioneros", trained educationalists sent out to tour the countryside recruiting teachers and establishing schools. In the succeeding years these vital cadres were to give rise to two key features of the system: the Inspectorate, and the Cultural Missions. The "inspectores instructores" as they were called, had to establish schools in their region, win the support of each village community, create the "Comités de Educación", and guide the teachers under their supervision. Each inspector would normally be in charge of about 40 schools spread over an extensive area with poor communications, and had to spend days on end traversing wild country on horseback to get from one school to the next. Each school had to be visited at least three times a year, and the influence of the inspectors was often crucial in the success or failure of rural education. Their role is well described in the annual "Memoria" of 1926:-⁽¹⁾

"....the Inspector has been relieved of the rôle of overseer in order to transform him into an instructor of the teachers, who goes to the schools to help them carry on their work; to stimulate them to give better service; to make contact with all members of the community with the aim of encouraging them to give material and moral help to the educational establishments, to organise social meetings with a cultural purpose, and if necessary, to defend the peasants against any injustice...."

We shall see later how many inspectors were in the vanguard of the teachers' unions; most of them forged strong links with the local peasantry, although some abused their position and alienated both their subordinates and the mass of the local population.

(1) "Memoria ...1926" (México, 1926, Secretaría de Educación Pública), p. 211. See also Castillo, op.cit., vol.1., pp.312-313.

While the inspectors provided the routine guidance and stimulus for the teachers and encouraged social work among the peasants, a need was felt for some more specialized agency to provide periodic sessions of intensive orientation for the teachers and the rural population. This function was fulfilled by the "Misiones Culturales", groups of highly trained personnel which toured the country performing the double function of training rural teachers and helping to arouse and develop the communities they visited. The idea of the "Misiones Culturales" appears to have originated in an initiative of the federal deputy José Gálvez. (1) approved by Vasconcelos; at all events, in October 1923 the Chief Clerk of the Ministry of Education, Roberto Modallín, nominated a pioneer team lead by Rafael Ramírez. (2) This first Cultural Mission, consisting of six of the best qualified teachers from the Federal District, (3) worked for about three weeks in Acualtipán, Hidalgo, and was so successful that in 1924 six Missions were sent out; these were also successful, and by 1930 there were 14 Missions in existence.

Initially each Cultural Mission consisted of specialists in health and physical education, agriculture, rural crafts, domestic science, carpentry, and music; the leader was responsible for giving classes on teaching methods and organization, based on modern pedagogical theories and local needs. The teachers of a given region would be gathered into a particular village for an intensive course ("Institute"

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- (1) Minero García, *op.cit.*, p.197.
 (2) Lloyd E. Hughes, *Las Misiones Culturales Mexicanas y su Programa* (Paris, 1951, UNESCO), Ch.1. See also George Sánchez, *op.cit.*, ch.6., and Castillo, *op.cit.*, vol.1, pp.255-256, for details of the growth of the Cultural Missions.
 (3) Hughes, *loc.cit.*. The "Memoria" for 1925 (pp.33-34) says that the members of the Missions were selected from the best teachers in the country, and particularly from among the specialists of the technical schools of the Federal District.

lasting three weeks, and the village itself would become the scene of a pilot project in community development. The long-term aim was to incorporate the villages fully into national life, to develop a national culture based as far as possible on local tradition, and to improve the economic, hygienic and cultural conditions of the peasantry.⁽¹⁾ To achieve this was clearly far beyond the means of a few teams of experts and social workers, however brilliant, and in practice the function of the Missions was to provide the teachers with practical skills adapted to their environment, to fire their enthusiasm and that of the inhabitants, and to sow the first seeds of social change. Even this more limited aim was quite ambitious, and for this reason the duration of each "institute" was later extended to six weeks, while after 1933 the whole programme was modified.

Despite the obvious limitations of the Cultural Missions, their work was of immense importance in terms of awakening the popular consciousness and bringing urban values to the countryside while simultaneously encouraging the best features of indigenous culture. They constituted "an experimental agency for social reconstruction and community rehabilitation",⁽²⁾ and, equally important, they contributed to the formation of many radical cadres - teachers and peasants - who participated in the social conflicts of these years.

(1) The activities of the Missions are best described in "Las Misiones Culturales" (México 1929, Secretaría de Educación Pública); see also Sánchez, loc.cit., and Castillo, op.cit., vol.1, pp.300-312.

(2) Sánchez, loc.cit...

To face p. 27

Huerto y Ejido de la Escuela de niñas de S. Catarina Huayalsacualco-Pue



No. 5. School garden and agricultural plot, Santa Catarina Huayalsacualco, Puebla.

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7. Other Experiments: the "Escuelas Centrales Agrícolas" and the "Escuelas de Circuito"

Mexican educationalists were nothing if not original, and many devices were employed in order to supplement the basic work of the rural schools, the "Normales Rurales" and the Cultural Missions. In view of the general purpose of rural education, it was particularly important to develop agricultural expertise and disseminate modern techniques among the peasants, and in this an important rôle was played by the "Escuelas Centrales Agrícolas", or Central Agricultural Schools, of which the first was established in 1925. Given that some agricultural instruction was provided by the rural schools in general and by the Cultural Missions, the purpose of the Agricultural Schools was to train experts, highly qualified peasants who could, on returning to their villages, provide an example and give advice and help to their fellows. Each Central Agricultural School gave three years' practical training to students from the surrounding villages, and graduates were meant to return to their own communities to farm with the help of lands and funds from the authorities. These schools achieved excellent results with some students, but too often the graduates were alienated from their home environment, and standards varied enormously. As with the Rural Normal Schools, only sons of local "ejidatarios" and small farmers were meant to attend, but in practice only 59% of the pupils were of this origin in 1928. (1)

Since the response of the rural population to the educational campaign had in general been very enthusiastic, it was thought that the Ministry's limited resources could be spread further by demanding even more co-operation from the village communities, thus increasing the number of schools which could be established. In 1929 there was created

(1) *Ibid.*, op.cit., p.107.

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the system of "circuit schools", by which one federal rural school served as a centre for three or four subsidiary schools in the surrounding villages. The "circuit schools" were to be maintained entirely by the local inhabitants, who not only built the school (as often happened even with the regular rural schools) but paid the teacher as well. The teacher of the central school, who should be one of the most experienced rural teachers, was to supervise the work of the circuit schools. (1)

The initial response to this scheme was very good, and in 1930 there were 705 central schools with 2,438 circuit schools. But at the same time it was admitted that the system operated inefficiently and was an unreasonable burden on the villagers, and it was decided that the authorities should pay the circuit teachers at least a minimum salary, which could then be augmented by the inhabitants. (2) The schools were renamed "Escuelas de Tipo Económico", (3) and shortly afterwards the system was abandoned altogether. This experiment was symptomatic of the faults which affected rural education as a whole, although to a lesser degree - lack of resources, over-ambitious projects and inadequate planning.

3. The Indian Question

That section of the population which was excluded entirely from the Spanish and Europeanised culture of modern Mexico, the section which still retained a thoroughly Indian culture - as measured by the number of those who spoke an Indian language - is commonly estimated to have included over 2,250,000 people, or 16% of the total, in 1930. (4) The Indians had

(1) "Memoria" 1929, p.401, and 1930, pp.17-19

(2) "Memoria", 1930, pp.XIX and XLVIII.

(3) "Memoria", 1931, pp.10-11.

(4) Official census figures, quoted in Pablo González Casanova, "La Demografía en México" (México, 1965, Ediciones Era, S.A.), p.232.

not made the Revolution, but they were its conscience; for if the purpose of the Revolution was to create social justice, to defend the worker against the capitalist and the peasant against the landlord, then logically its greatest concern should be to redeem the Indian, the most neglected and exploited of all the victims of the "ancien régime". The Indian question was therefore politically explosive for the men of the 1920's, for it raised by implication the fundamental question of why the social revolution had been stopped in its tracks.

As with everything else, the Governments of the 1920's responded to the plight of the Indian with palliatives, and the main palliative was education. The Indians, like the peasants in general, might not have land, but they could at least have schools. As we have seen, the whole rural education programme was coloured from the outset by a romantic cult of peasant life; the task of the rural school in any peasant community was to integrate local culture with modern practices in hygiene, agricultural methods and rural industries. In an Indian community there was the added problem of the language barrier, but the basic task was the same.

The pioneer work in the field of Indian education was done by the noted anthropologist Manuel Gamio, who organised a pilot project in community development at San Juan Teotihuacán.⁽¹⁾ Gamio became Under-secretary of Education for a short time in 1925, and although he was soon dismissed, his influence was probably largely responsible for the creation of the "Casa del Estudiante Indígena". First announced by Puig Casauranc in 1924, this institution was opened in January 1926 as a special boarding school in Mexico City for Indian youths of 14 to 18 years of age who had received one or two years' basic education in rural schools.⁽²⁾

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- (1) See Manuel Gamio, "consideraciones sobre el problema indígena", (México, 1948); and Ruiz, *op.cit.*, p.134.
 (2) Dirección General de Asuntos Indígenas, "Seis Años de labor, 1952-1958" (México, 1958, Secretaría de Educación Pública,) p.127.

At the "Casa" they received a comprehensive education, including training in a variety of technical and professional skills, and they were then intended to return to their native communities to act as teachers or "cultural brokers". The experiment was a success in so far as it demonstrated that the Indians had ability, contrary to a widespread middle-class prejudice; but in other respects it failed, since few of the graduates wanted to return to their old way of life. Hence in 1933, following a special investigation, the "Casa" was closed. (1)

The alternative to the "Casa" was provided by the regional "Centros de Educación Indígena", vocational boarding schools situated in the heart of the Indian zone, which had been started in 1927. These "Internados Indígenas" were more suited to preparing Indian youths as teachers and social workers in their own environment; but only four had been established by 1930, and they were poorly equipped. (2) It was left to Cardenas to make a serious attack on the problem of Indian education.

9. The Ideology of Rural Education

The developing philosophy behind the educational movement can to some extent be judged by the changing attitude towards the Indian question. For Vasconcelos, whose attitude was basically that of 19th century liberalism, the only solution was the incorporation of the Indians into a basically European civilisation; he was genuinely devoted to the welfare of the Indians, but could see no future for their culture. This Europeanist attitude was shared by Puig Casanovas, and was in some ways a reflection of the political approach of the Obregón and Calles Governments. As against this, there was a strong current of

(1) Ibid., p. 120, and "Memoria", 1931, vol. 1, pp. 25-110, "Informe del Visitador especial (General José Guzmán), acerca de la Casa del Estudiante Indígena". Of 521 students who had passed through the "Casa", only 114 had graduated, and 107 had become rural teachers.

(2) Ruiz, op.cit., pp. 143-149, and "Memoria", 1931, pp. 11-14

thought known as "indianista" or "indigenista", which regarded Mexican nationality as basically Indian and the Revolution as a reaffirmation of Indian values.

"Indianismo" was a rather confused doctrine, but it expressed a growing nationalism, the communal traditions of the peasantry, a belief in rural life and an interest in folk culture; and behind all this, by implication, there was a radical critique of the existing social order. "Indianismo" was represented in the countryside by the ejido and the rural school, and, as Ruiz points out,⁽¹⁾ the conservatives were worried by this: what began as a vague cultural movement threatened to become an attack on private property.

The rural school began as the creation of an idealistic liberal, Vasconcelos, appointed by a conservative reforming Government. But it was also the response to a popular demand, and bore within itself the seeds of radical change. Its character was forged by circumstances, responding to the exigencies of rural life and the need to improvise teachers on the spot. At first it lacked an educational theory, but this was to follow logically from its distinctive character; the stress on practical activities and on the social function of education corresponded to the ideal of the "school of action" as preached by John Dewey.⁽²⁾ The theories of Dewey soon reached Mexico, particularly through Moisés Sáenz, who had studied under him at Columbia. As Undersecretary of Education Sáenz strove to apply Dewey's doctrine and adapt it to Mexican conditions, and in 1926 the master himself visited Mexico and declared that "There is no educational movement in the world which reveals a greater spirit of intimate union between school activities

(1) Ruiz, *op.cit.*, pp .132-133.

(2) See John Dewey, "The School and Society" (Chicago, 1915, University of Chicago Press).

and the community, than is to be found in the new Mexican rural school".

Dewey's theory was well adapted to the task of the rural school as conceived in the early years: that of social integration, the diffusion of national consciousness and the adaptation of education to the needs of the peasantry. But the rural school threatened to go beyond this, becoming not merely the servant of the community but a prime agent in its transformation. This potentiality had been present from the beginning, but in the early years the emphasis had been on the propagation of national culture, with the school as a meeting place and centre of village life, shaped by the community rather than vice-versa. It was only in the late 'twenties that the importance of social work increased, and in Castillo's words:-(2)

"Without excluding the (main) aspects of the previous stage (that of the 'Casa del Pueblo'), the social function of the rural school had now become integrated and revealed itself also in the opposite or centrifugal direction; the action of the school on the community. Its function as an institution transmitting culture was reinforced and balanced by its contrary function as an agency for the transformation and improvement of the conditions of communal life."

The school was becoming an increasingly active ally of the Indians and the peasants, no longer merely defending them against the depredations of landlords and "caciques" but encouraging them in their desire to overthrow the domination of these classes altogether.

10. The Education achievements of the Liberal Pioneers, 1921-1931

By 1931, when a Marxist intellectual, Narciso Bassols, became Secretary of Education, the serious weaknesses of the educational program had become abundantly apparent, but the achievement was none the

(1) Quoted in Castillo, op.cit., vol.1, p.289.
(2) Ibid., vol.1, p.322.

less impressive. In purely statistical terms, where there had been virtually no federal rural schools in 1921, by 1931 there were 6,380, with 425,000 pupils, ⁽¹⁾ and the proportion of the national budget devoted to education had risen in the same period from 4% to 13%. ⁽²⁾ Thousands of peasants had learnt to read and write and had been offered the hope of a better life; for many it was the first time the Government had done them anything but harm. The country was going through a cultural renaissance, most dramatically expressed in the murals of Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros, patronised by Vasconcelos despite their socialist and "indigenista" fervour.

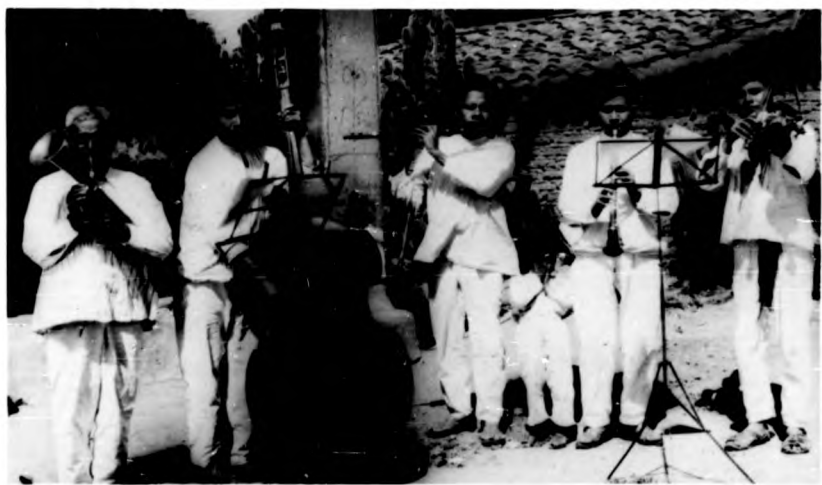
However, the limitations of educational policy ^{were} very serious. The improvisation of thousands of schools and teachers had been possible because of popular enthusiasm and individual dedication, but these qualities could not be sustained indefinitely in the face of natural obstacles, vested interests and lack of official support. Most teachers still had only minimal qualifications, and the admirable work of the Cultural Missions and Rural Normal Schools had done no more than scratch the surface of the problem. Narrow anti-clericalism had alienated the common people from the school in many areas.

The failure of many rural schools was eloquently expressed a few years later by Moises Samá, one of the chief protagonists of the movement. Reporting on an ambitious social project which he led in 1932 in the Carupán district of Michoacán, he described the condition of the local schools when his team of social workers first arrived— ⁽³⁾

(1) Hughes, op.cit.
 (2) Ruiz, op.cit., p.40.
 (3) Moisés Samá, "Carupán: Bosquejo de una Experiencia" (Lima, Peru, 1936, Librería e Imprenta Gil, S.A., 352 pp.) pp.59-61. The Carupán project was a pilot scheme sponsored by the Ministry of Education, to initiate the comprehensive development of a group of Indian villages. While it lasted (about six months) it was an example of all that was best in Mexican rural education; but the resources were simply not available to repeat it on a large scale.



Nos. 6 & 7. Typical school orchestras organised by teachers and Cultural Missions.



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"The schools do not deserve even the contemptuous label of 'schools of reading, writing and arithmetic' since the domination of these fundamental skills which we can observe is almost nil. All those attributes which we normally associate with the thousands of rural schools created by the Revolution, are absent from these... So general and inexplicable is the failure, that I have begun to ask myself whether in defining the Rural School, we have not been guilty of some idealistic mirage. The schools of (the region) are far from being socialised; they have no equipment for carrying out the tasks which make education 'active'; the teachers are indifferent and apathetic...The Teaching programme is a capricious creation of teachers and circumstances. There is no timetable or order in what is done. Attendance is irregular..."

Even if these schools were far worse than most - and Sáenz pointed out that the conditions of the region appeared to be very favourable - it is clear that rural education was suffering from a serious divorce between the ideal and the reality, and this was to lead to a wide-ranging reappraisal of educational policy in the early 'thirties. The fundamental problem was the inability of the school to transform the cultural life of the countryside so long as its economic basis remained unchanged. A conventional liberal education was of little use to the peasant, and a socially-oriented education was bound to encounter powerful opposition until the great estates were destroyed.

These conditions must be kept in mind in order to make a realistic appraisal of the educational pioneers of the 'twenties. While none can deny the importance of Vasconcelos' grandiose vision and missionary zeal in creating the Ministry of Education and initiating the rural education campaign, his failings have too often been overlooked. (1) He was a man of ideas and a

(1) A typical judgement on Vasconcelos is that of Daniel Cosío Villegas ("La Crisis de México", Cuadernos Americanos No. XXXII, March-April, 1947):-

"In 1921 José Vasconcelos personifies the educational aspirations of the Revolution as no man was able to embody, for example, the agrarian reform or the labour movement. In the first place, Vasconcelos was what is known as an intellectual, that is to say, a man of books and of intellectual preoccupations; secondly, he was mature enough to have perceived the failings of Porfirianism and young enough not merely to rebel against it, but to have faith in the transforming power of education; thirdly Vasconcelos was the only top-ranking intellectual in whom a revolutionary government had confidence and to whom it gave authority and the means to work. That conjuncture of circumstances, so unusual in our country, also produced unusual results; to such an extent that in Mexico there was at that time something like a dazzling aurora borealis, bearing news of a real, authentic new dawn...."

revolutionary of "maderista" vintage, but as Ruiz points out,⁽¹⁾ he was a traditionalist at heart and "believed firmly in the ways of the bourgeoisie"; a confused idealist, he worshipped the Hispanic and Catholic heritage, and saw education as a moral crusade. His most characteristic gesture was the publication of popular editions of the classics and their distribution to thousands of peasants who had only just learnt to read and write, and when most rural schools were little more than improvised schools with next to no equipment.

Vasconcelos' successor, Puig Casauranc, was a political appointee who, if he lacked vision, did at least have the virtues of competence and realism lacking in his predecessor. But the constructive developments in rural education which, if they did not overcome the serious deficiencies already enumerated, did pave the way for future achievements, were due mainly to Puig's subordinates, Moises Saens and Rafael Ramirez. Saens, a Protestant minister with an excellent pedagogical training, admired Indian culture and had a realistic appreciation of the problems of the countryside; Ramirez, a dedicated teacher and pioneer of the Cultural Missions, had a deep concern for social and economic reform, and was to move towards socialism in the 'thirties.⁽²⁾ They shared in the general responsibility for the failure of the liberal education of the 'twenties, but they at least had learnt from their mistakes. Indeed, by 1930 there was an increasing realisation of the need for a new approach, and this realisation found expression in a special "Asamblea Nacional de Educacion" organised by the Ministry in August 1930.⁽³⁾ This conference sowed the seeds of a number of important reforms which were to be introduced in the next four years.

(1) Ruiz, op.cit., pp.26-28.

(2) Ruiz, op.cit., pp.29-32. On Saens, see Neal Mejia Zuniga, "Moises Saens: Educador de Mexico" (Mexico, 1956) and on Ramirez, Luis Alvarez Barrat, "La obra educativa de don Rafael Ramirez" (Mexico, 1959).

(3) "Memoria", 1930, Introduction; and Castillo, op.cit., vol.1, pp.337-343.

CHAPTER III

"SOCIALIST EDUCATION" ; ITS ORIGINS AND IMPLEMENTATION (1)1. Bassols as Secretary of Education, 1931-1934

Narciso Bassols, a Marxist lawyer and intellectual, was appointed as Secretary of Education by President Ortiz Rubio on 23rd October, 1931, and continued to hold the post during part of the administration of Abelardo Rodríguez, resigning on 9th March 1934. (2) Under his direction a number of new tendencies and reforms which had been gestating in the educational movement were to come to fruition. To a large extent these changes were due to general factors - the economic crisis, the growth of radical political pressure groups, and the response of many teachers to the failures of recent years - but the personal contribution of Bassols was certainly important. Young, radical, dedicated, with an amazing capacity for work, he abandoned a brilliant legal career to bring order and intellectual clarity to the Ministry of Education. In the words of Alonso Aguilar, (3)

"With Bassols the Revolution enters fully into the field of education, and this made it possible (in education) to do from that time onwards what in other fields would begin to come about at the time of the Presidency of Cardenas....."

Not surprisingly, Bassols encountered intense opposition from the clergy, from landed and commercial interests and from not a few politicians, but this did not prevent him from reinforcing precisely those radical characteristics of the educational system which they disliked.

Much of Bassols' work was concerned with urban problems - he increased official supervision of private schools and developed secondary and technical

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- (1) On "Socialist Education" in general, see Shulgovski, op.cit., pp.146-164. ("Esencia social de la política del gobierno de Cárdenas: V: La escuela socialista en Mexico") and Josefina Z. Vázquez de Knauth, "La Educación Socialista de los Años Treinta", in "Historia Mexicana", no.71, Jan-March 1969.
- (2) Rafael Carrasco Puente, "Datos Históricos e Iconografía de la Educación en México" (México, 1960, Secretaría de Educación Pública).
- (3) "Narciso Bassols: Obras" (México, 1964, Fondo de Cultura Económica), edited by Alonso Aguilar M. and Manuel Mesa, with an introduction by Jesús Silva Herzog; pp.115-119.

To + 4, 1932



No. 8. Lic. Narciso Bassols (on horseback, at right) on tour in Michoacán, 1932.

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education. But he also made several important changes in field of rural education; it was he who suppressed the "Casa del Estudiante Indígena" and the abortive experiment of "circuit schools", and, most important, introduced the "Escuelas Regionales Campesinas" combining the preparation of teachers with agricultural training. It has justly been pointed out that he was one of the few public figures who knew what socialism implied,⁽¹⁾ although he was not responsible for the "socialist reform" of 1934. In the orientation of rural schools, the emphasis shifted from social to economic problems; less was said about the incorporation of the Indians or the role of the schools in national integration, more about improving productive methods. Social activity must not be neglected, but the main function of rural education must be to contribute towards the economic betterment of the peasantry, with the ultimate aim of transforming the methods of production; Bassols himself declared that the purpose of rural education consisted "in trying to modify the systems of production, distribution and consumption of wealth..."⁽²⁾

Unfortunately, Bassols alienated not only the clergy and the wealthy, but also many of the teachers themselves. His cold, cerebral manner led to the resignation of Ruiz's officers and other prominent subordinates, and his attempts to rationalise the teaching structure met with the opposition of the teachers' unions in the Federal District. When the clergy organised a scurrilous campaign against him because of a tentative scheme to introduce sex education for adolescents, Bassols' patience was exhausted and he tendered his resignation.

(1) *Ibid.*, op.cit., p.51.

(2) Speech given by Bassols on 19th July 1932, quoted in "Narciso Bassols: Obras" (op.cit.), pp.170-180. See also Castillo, op.cit., vol.1, p.354.

2. The Initial Pressure for Educational Reform, 1920-1933

The work of Bassols and the subsequent introduction of "socialist education" reflected the spread of radical ideas in certain political circles, and particularly among teachers and intellectuals. From the time of the first rural schools under Vasconcelos, and even earlier in certain States, there was a minority of teachers with very advanced ideas. In Yucatán as early as 1916, owing to the influence of a group of Spanish anarchist immigrants led by José de la Luz Mesa,⁽¹⁾ the doctrine of the "Nationalist School" was given currency. This doctrine which implied a scientific and anti-religious education and exalted the value of manual labour, was officially implanted in Yucatán in 1922 by Felipe Carrillo Puerto and in Tabasco in 1925 by Garrido Canabal.⁽²⁾ In many parts of the country groups of teachers moved towards some kind of socialism on the basis of their own interpretations of Dewey's "School of Action" theory.

The influence of these ideas remained marginal until 1930. In that year the State Legislature of Tabasco sent a project to the Federal Congress which would have established the "Nationalist School" throughout the country.⁽³⁾ The initiative failed, but it was soon to be followed by other proposals of a similar kind. The conflict between Church and State was reflected in a proposal at a Pedagogical Congress in Veracruz in 1932, that all education should be "anti-religious".⁽⁴⁾ But more constructive suggestions were also being made about this time, often by rank-and-file teachers. Thus a teacher in Guerrero

(1) Josefina Z. Vázquez de Knauth, "La Educación Socialista de los Años Treinta", in "Historia Mexicana" no. 71 (enero-marzo 1969), p. 408. See also José de la Luz Mesa, "Sólo la escuela racionalista educa" (Mérida, Yucatán, 1930); "La escuela racionalista, doctrina y método" (Mérida, 1936); and "La escuela socialista, su desorientación y fracaso" (México, 1941).

(2) Josefina Z. Vázquez de Knauth, op. cit., p. 409; and Alberto Brumauntz, "La Educación Socialista en México (Antecedentes y Fundamentos de la Reforma de 1930)", (México, 1943, Imprenta "El Vencedor"), p. 150.

(3) Brumauntz, op. cit., p. 151.

(4) Josefina Z. Vázquez de Knauth, op. cit., p. 410.

argued (1) that the rural school should improve social organisation and ways of life, and another (2) said that education should be "active, for groups of both sexes, socialist, creative, human and nationalist"; while a Director of Education (3) declared that the most urgent need was to teach people to produce more, and urged a radical change in the orientation of official education.

These tendencies were given official encouragement by a Conference of Directors of Education, leaders of Cultural Missions and other functionaries in December 1932. The most important result of this conference was a statement on the "Foundations of Rural Education", (4) which declared that such education "will be oriented primarily, with the aim of satisfying the economic needs of the rural classes...It will tend to transform the systems of production and distribution of wealth, with a frankly collectivist purpose....." The officials present also agreed on various specific reforms in accordance with the spirit of these declarations, particularly regarding the Cultural Missions and the Rural Normal Schools. This conference was apparently regarded by leftist groups among the teachers as the green light to bring forward further proposals for reform, and in April 1933 the moderate "Confederacion Mexicana de Maestros" declared itself in favour of "the socialisation of primary and rural education". (5) In the next few months many organisations were to join the bandwagon movement to reform the Constitutional provisions governing education.

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- (1) Emilio H. Vazquez, of Lagunillas, Gro., writing in the official magazine "El Maestro Rural", vol.1, no.12 (15th Aug.1932).
 (2) Aurelio Merino, writing in the same number of "El Maestro Rural".
 (3) Aureliano R. Esquivel, Director of the 3rd Educational Zone, writing in "El Maestro Rural", vol.1, no.2. (15th March 1932).
 (4) "Memoria" 1933, vol.1, pp.52-58. See also Erenauits, op.cit., pp.160-161.
 (5) Sebastian Mayo, "La Educacion Socialista en Mexico: el Asalto a la Universidad Nacional" (Rosario, Argentina, 1964, Editorial B.E.A.H.) pp.53-56.

3. The Reform of Article 3 of the Constitution, 1933-1934.

In this atmosphere of growing pressure for reform and of speculation about the Presidential succession, the P.N.R. majority of the Chamber of Deputies nominated a Commission to study the educational problem and present specific proposals to reform article 3 of the Constitution.⁽¹⁾ This Commission was headed by Alberto Branauntz, a young radical lawyer from Michoacán, and was certain to present very advanced proposals. Then in December 1933 there occurred the P.N.R. Convention at Querétaro, where it was decided (with encouragement from the Government) to formulate a Six Year Plan - in itself a gesture towards the Left.

In the Convention the first move to reform the educational system was made by the Veracruz delegation, which proposed the adoption of "anti-religious" or "rationalist" education; after consultation with other delegations, the more positive term "socialist" was adopted. Branauntz, who was one of the main advocates of the reform, relates how they anticipated opposition from the leaders of the P.N.R., but outmanoeuvred them and won a surprise majority for the proposal that education should be not merely socialist, but "in accordance with the principles of scientific socialism".⁽²⁾ In the final version of the Six Year Plan this definition was replaced by the vaguer statement that education should be based on "the socialist doctrine upheld by the Mexican Revolution"⁽³⁾ - a formulation which could mean all things to all men, and represented a compromise between the radicals and the leading politicians.

The decision of the P.N.R. to adopt the "Socialist Education" scheme provoked an immediate reaction from the clergy and the conservative press, while various left-wing groups expressed their support. But the scheme did

(1) Branauntz, *op.cit.*, p.171.
(2) *Ibid.*, pp.172-190; and Mayo, *op.cit.*, pp.175-179.
(3) "Plan Sexenal del Partido Nacional Revolucionario, 1934-1940" (Mexico, 1934, P.N.R.) pp.83-90.

not progress further until 20th July 1934, when Calles declared (in the so-called "grito de Guadalupe") that the Revolution must establish firm control over the minds of the young. Four days later the special Commission of Deputies published specific proposals to reform article 3 of the Constitution, and by October the reform had been passed by both houses of Congress. (1) The offending article, which had previously decreed that primary education should be "secular", now read as follows:- (2)

"The education imparted by the State shall be socialist and, in addition to excluding all religious doctrines, shall combat fanaticism and prejudices by organizing its instruction and activities in a way that shall permit the creation in youth of an exact and rational concept of the Universe and of social life..."

The text went on to establish more stringent State control over private schools.

The introduction of "Socialist Education" is presented by Mayo (3) as having been brought about by a conspiracy of fanatical Communists and demagogic machine politicians; while Brumaerts (4) sees it as the outcome of popular democratic pressure for reform. Certainly some of the radical groups which supported the measure were no more than skeleton organisations, but equally much of the opposition to it was artificial and opportunist. The support of Calles was decisive in securing its adoption, against the will of his puppet President Rodriguez; but it cannot be denied that the agitation for educational reform reflected the growth of important left-wing pressure groups. It was far from clear, however, what this ill-defined socialism was to mean in practice, especially in the absence of any plan to socialise the economy or the political system as a whole; and "socialist education" was to be seriously vitiated by its connections with the demagogic anti-clericalism of the "callistas".

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- (1) Josefina Z. Vázquez de Menchú, *op.cit.*, pp. 411-413; Mayo, *op.cit.*, pp. 254-259; Shalgovskii, *op.cit.*, pp. 146-148.
 (2) George C. Booth, "Mexico's School-Made Society", Chapter 1; and Josefina Z. Vázquez de Menchú, *op.cit.*, p. 413.
 (3) Mayo, *op.cit.*
 (4) Brumaerts, *op.cit.*

FIG. 1. Numbers of Federal Rural Schools, Teachers, and Pupils, 1921-1940.

(These figures do not include schools maintained by the States and municipalities, which were much more numerous in the early years).

Year	Rural schools	rural teachers	Pupils
1921	-	-	-
1922	309*	399*	17,925*
1923	1,023	876	50,000
1924	1,089	1,146	65,329
1925	2,001	2,360	108,449
1926	2,572	2,916	183,861
1927	2,577	3,203	199,823
1928	3,270	4,098	278,137
1929	3,457	4,086	306,387
1930	6,132**	6,504**	324,798
1931	6,380	7,486	425,193
1932	7,070	8,842	441,876
1933	7,369	10,291	525,894
1934	7,963	11,432	545,000
1935	8,067	13,677	598,546
1936	9,682	16,079	615,085
1937	11,046	16,339	660,578
1938	11,248 (12,095†)	17,047	683,432
1939	12,208†	15,616†	
1941	13,358†		

(Source: Hughes, "Las Misiones Culturales Mexicanas y su Programa", Appendix, except where otherwise indicated).

*D.G.A.I., "Seis Años de Labor, 1952-1958", pp.123-124.
 **Including "escuelas de circuito" (previously excluded).
 †S.E.P., "Memoria", 1939, vol. 2, pp.64 & 67.
 ‡Ibid., 1941, p.13 (includes about 600 urban schools).

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4. The Expansion of Rural Education under Cardenas

Cárdenas' enthusiasm for education was well-known, and under his Presidency the rural schools programme received its greatest impulse. The Six Year Plan had established ambitious targets - transportation of the federal budget devoted to education was to be 15% in 1934, rising to 20% in 1939; the number of federal rural schools was to rise by 1,000 in 1934, to 2,000 a year from 1935 to 1938, and 3,000 in 1939; there was to be much more emphasis on agricultural and technical education, with at least three of the new "Escuelas Regionales Campesinas" being created each year. (1) In fact these targets were not met, but nevertheless a great deal was achieved. The number of federal rural schools rose from 7,571 in 1933 to 12,208 in 1939, and there was a similar growth in the number of rural teachers. (2)

But more important than the numerical expansion was the change in orientation, the diffusion of new ideas - or at least, such was the intention. If "Socialist Education" was to mean anything, it must prepare the people for the vast social and economic changes which were apparently being planned. The peasantry must be prepared to receive the land, especially where it was to be distributed on a collective basis, and national consciousness must be developed to support the Government in a crisis such as the oil expropriation of 1938. In this field as in others, achievement fell short of expectations, and in some cases, as we shall see, the active role of the rural teacher as an agent of the Government merely aroused popular hostility against him. But the rural school did become, even more than before, the main vehicle for communicating official policy to the mass of the population. Indoctrination in the ideals of the Revolution was increased, and a constant stream of propaganda explained socialism to students and parents. That this approach had been at least partially successful was shown by the magnificent popular response to the oil expropriation and the subsequent appeal for funds.

(1) "Plan Sexenal", loc.cit.
(2) "Memoria", 1934, vol.1, p.IV, and 1939, vol.2, p.67.

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Cárdenas realized that the rural school of the ^{1920s} twenties and generally waged a losing battle against a social and political system which it alone could not hope to change. He therefore intensified the new policies initiated by Bassols, with even closer links between learning, productive work and social action. The schools were to help organize producer and consumer co-operatives wherever possible, and by 1940 over 800 were in existence.⁽¹⁾ It was at last recognized that the school could only bring about a permanent change in village life if it was part of an overall programme of development to which all agencies of the Government contributed.

In the best of cases, a plan of integral reform was devised for a particular region, usually in those areas where large-scale land distribution had taken place on the basis of collective "ejidos" - as in the Yaqui valley of Sonora, in the Nueva Italia zone of Michoacán, and above all in La Laguna. As soon as the communities of the Laguna region had received land, the new "Banco Nacional de Crédito Ejidal" began to finance development, irrigation and electrification works were undertaken, medical services were provided, and a special Regional Directorate of Education was established.⁽²⁾ A rural school was founded in each "ejido", with libraries and modern equipment. Despite some problems in adapting the programme and methods of rural education to these unfamiliar conditions of abundance, the results were very good. Unfortunately, such comprehensive schemes of development were rare even under Cárdenas, and most rural schools continued to labour under great difficulties. The Government's resources were severely limited, especially after 1938, and many admirable projects remained in the experimental stage. Indeed, the physical reality of most rural schools must always be borne in mind; most teachers laboured under conditions of extreme hardship and privation. Some idea of these conditions can be gained from the photographs accompanying this chapter, although the schools shown here are generally the better-equipped ones.

(1) Ruiz, op.cit., p.57.
 (2) Castillo, op.cit., vol.1, pp.393-395.

FIG. 2. Social Composition of the Intake of the Escuelas Normales Rurales, Escuelas Centrales Agrícolas and Escuelas Regionales Campesinas, 1935-1934. (Source: S.E.P., "Memoria", 1934, vol. 2, pp.116-117).

Father's occupation	No. of students	%
"Ejidatarios"	490	23.7
Sharecroppers	128	6.2
Farmers	2	0.1
"Pequeños propietarios"	788	38.1
Peons	64	3.1
<u>Total peasantry</u>	<u>1,472</u>	<u>71.2</u>
Domestic servants	161	7.8
Artisans	120	5.8
Stonemasons	10	0.5
Other labourers	24	1.2
Small manufacturers	68	3.3
<u>Total urban labour etc.</u>	<u>383</u>	<u>18.6</u>
Teachers	61	3.0
Clerks	29	1.4
Soldiers	2	0.1
Tradesmen	42	2.0
Musicians	2	0.1
<u>Total tradesmen & professions</u>	<u>136</u>	<u>6.6</u>
Others	76	3.7
<u>Total</u>	<u>2,067</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Breakdown of Student Population by Age and Sex, 1934 (source: ibid., pp.114-115).

Age	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21+	Total
Male	1	14	165	194	234	261	270	262	144	77	1,733
Female	1	9	62	76	85	65	69	43	16	20	476
<u>Total</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>227</u>	<u>270</u>	<u>319</u>	<u>326</u>	<u>339</u>	<u>305</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>2,209</u>

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5. The "Escuelas Regionales Campesinas"

The most successful experiment of the 'thirties in rural education was undoubtedly the creation of the "Escuelas Regionales Campesinas" or Regional Peasant Schools, initiated by Bassols and continued under Cárdenas. A plan was developed in 1933 to amalgamate the Central Agricultural Schools and the "Normales Rurales" in a new kind of institution, a co-educational boarding school intended to produce both technically trained practical farmers and rural teachers. All students received two years of agricultural and technical training, and those who wished then did a year's course of teacher-training. To remedy the weaknesses of their predecessors, the Regional Peasant Schools demanded proof of the social background of all applicants, plus the recommendation of a rural school. The age limit for entrants was lowered to 14 and in order to integrate the schools with neighbouring communities, the staff were to share village lands with neighbouring "ejidatarios". Graduates with purely agricultural training were given land and equipment by the Government, and those qualifying as teachers were appointed to rural schools. (1)

The importance attached to the Regional Peasant Schools can be judged by the fact that this was the only branch of education in which the Six Year Plan targets were met, and in fact exceeded. Where in 1934 there were 10 such Schools with 900 students, in 1940 there were 33 with 4,116 students. (2) Initially this expansion took place by converting and improving the 17 existing "Normales Rurales" and "Centrales Agrícolas", but after 1935 it represented a completely new development. The Regional Peasant Schools were reasonably successful in attracting the right kind of pupils - in 1934 over 64% of their students came from peasant backgrounds (3) - and most of their graduates served as rural teachers, generally with excellent results. (4)

- (1) "Memoria", 1933, vol.1, pp.41-45; Ruíz, op.cit., p.110; & Miñano García, op.cit., pp.26-40.
 (2) Ruíz, op.cit., p.112.
 (3) "Memoria", 1934, vol.1, p.50.
 (4) Miñano García (op.cit.,p.116) says that by 1945 the "Normales Rurales" and Regional Peasant Schools had provided 6,849 teachers, of whom 98% served in rural

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20	21+	Total
44	77	1,733
16	20	476
60	97	2,209

Some faults remained - thus staff were in short supply, some graduates still succumbed to the attractions of urban life, and the function of preparing agriculturalists became completely subordinated to that of training teachers (in 1935, 291 graduates became teachers and only 50 went back to the land, and in 1937 the respective figures were 476 and nil). The latter tendency was natural, since even the humble career of a rural teacher was preferable to the life of a peasant, and this problem was recognised by the Minister's report in 1938.⁽¹⁾ But as training colleges for rural teachers the Regional Peasant Schools were highly successful, combining agricultural, technical and educational courses with an ethos of social service and identification with the peasantry. Each School had a programme of intensive social work in the neighbouring villages, and by 1938 elementary agricultural schools were created to prepare potential recruits.⁽²⁾ The abandonment of this whole system in 1941 can only be regarded as a retrograde step.

6. The Problems of the Cultural Missions

In the early 'thirties the Cultural Missions, despite their considerable success, were subjected to increasing criticism. It was said that the one-month duration of each "institute" or course was insufficient to be of permanent benefit to the rural teachers who attended or to change the customs of the local inhabitants, and that the two-week preparatory period was also insufficient; while the concentration of teachers in a given centre often interrupted the work of the rural schools. In 1932 these criticisms were confirmed by a special commission appointed by Bassols, and also by a conference of the heads of

schools. However, only 4,000 of these were fully qualified, and they represented less than a quarter of the 18,000 rural teachers then in service (p.245). Their contribution was very important, but their numbers were never sufficient to transform the general picture of untrained and improvised teachers.

- (1) "Memoria", 1938, vol.1, pp.163-164. The causes of this tendency were recognised to be as follows: "First, the very natural tendency of some pupils anxious to widen their education, reinforced by the circumstances that the Schools themselves offer opportunities to satisfy that desire, and second, the financial insecurity which these same youngsters justifiably anticipate they will encounter on leaving the School and facing up to life".
- (2) "Memoria", 1938, vol.1, p.165.

all the Missions.⁽¹⁾ The heads of Missions concluded that the time factor was crucial, and the special commission recommended that each course for rural teachers should last six weeks (coinciding with vacations so as not to interrupt school activities) and should be followed by a period of two to three months in which the Mission would tour the same region observing and guiding the teachers in their everyday work. The staff of each Mission should also be enlarged to include a doctor and various experts in rural trades (a mason, a blacksmith and a carpenter).

These recommendations were carried out, and in 1932 all thirteen travelling Missions were concentrated in one State (Oaxaca) for four months, the better to co-ordinate their activities; they were then to move on to Coahuila and Nuevo León.⁽²⁾ A reappraisal was also made of the two permanent Missions, which had been set up in 1929 in Actopan (Hidalgo) and Paracho (Michoacán) on an experimental basis, as a means of bringing about more permanent changes in the way of life of the neighbouring communities. These had been quite successful, and since the extending stay of the travelling Missions in Oaxaca had also given better results, it was decided in 1933 to make all the Missions stationary, associating each one with one of the new "Escuelas Regionales Campesinas" (E.R.C.'s), with responsibility for long-term social work in a limited area.⁽³⁾

Although this new scheme gave excellent results, it meant that the benefits of the Missions were entirely confined to a small area around each E.R.C. Unless hundreds more of these institutions were to be created (and this was quite beyond the Government's means), the vast majority of the rural population would remain untouched by this admirable programme. In view of this, in 1935 the Missions became mobile again, although on a regional basis. In retrospect

(1) *Ibid.*, 1932, vol.1, pp.120-128.

(2) *Ibid.*, p.142.

(3) *Ibid.*, 1933, vol.1, pp.41-45.

this decision seems inevitable; as early as 1932 an official report had pointed out that although the permanent Missions could bring many improvements to their fields of action, "the resolution of the economic problems of a region in an integral manner is something they can never achieve".(1) The scope and limitations of the Missions were accurately perceived by Bassols; they alone, he said, would never be able to achieve "a profound transformation in the conditions of life of the Mexican peasant", whose fundamental problems were economic; it should therefore be recognized that the Missions were basically "instruments for the professional improvement of rural teachers", and only through the teachers could they have a widespread cultural and social influence in the countryside.(2)

In 1934, owing to intense hostility from clerical and conservative circles, Cardenas dissolved the Missions, a decision for which he was severely criticised by the radicals; they were reconstituted in 1942, but on a different basis. To understand the controversy which surrounded them, it has to be recognized that they performed an important political function; they were the most effective instruments for disseminating official ideology, and performed a particularly important role in agitating for agrarian reform, as we shall see later. Their educational function is well summed up by Lloyd P. Hughes:(3)

"In spite of their efforts and of the opposition which they aroused, the cultural missions were extremely valuable instruments for training the teachers... The rapid diffusion of rural schools in Mexico between 1932 and 1938 was due to a large extent to the efforts of the cultural missionaries. Without them there would have been no trained teachers available for the rural schools. Those trained in this way by the cultural missions often lacked a professional grounding, but they made up for it by their ardent zeal to transform their communities by means of education."

(1) *Ibid.*, 1932, vol.1, p.154.

(2) "Narciso Bassols: Obra" (*op.cit.*) pp.144-166.

(3) Hughes, *op.cit.*, p.16.

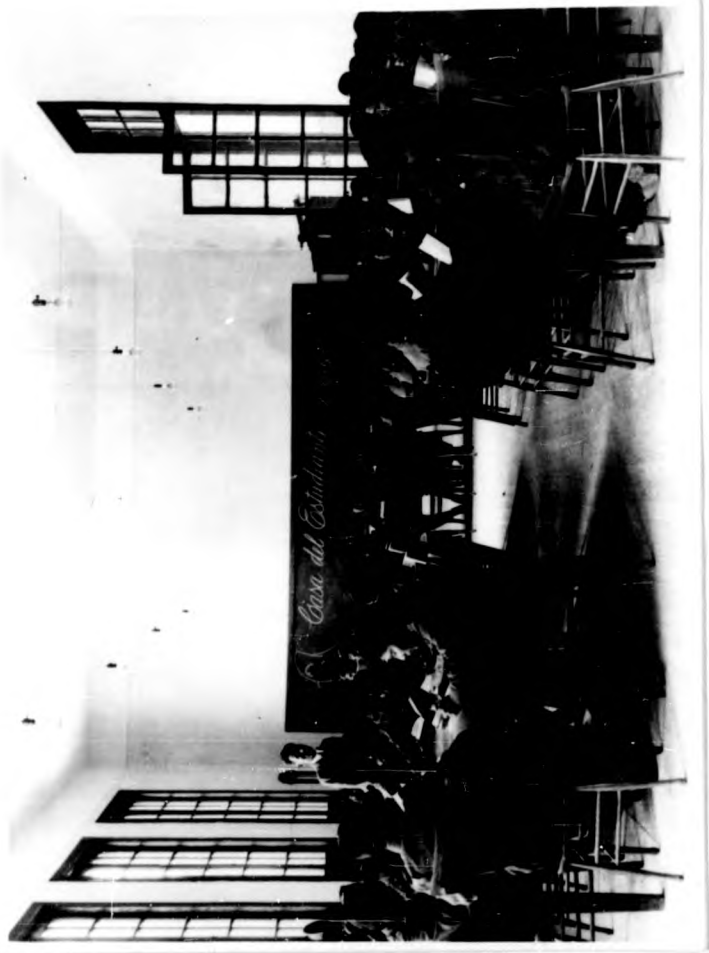
2. Cárdenas, the "Indianist" President

The educational policy of the Cárdenas years was generally a continuation of that of Bassols, although executed on a larger scale and with the enthusiastic support of the President himself. But Cárdenas' policy differed from that of Bassols in one important respect: his stress on the special education of the Indians and the protection of their culture. The Indianist element in the rural schools programme, which had been present from the beginning and had been encouraged particularly by Jaime Sáenz, was neglected by the more hard-headed Bassols, who did little except to expand the regional Indian boarding schools in place of the ill-fated "Casa del Estudiante Indígena". While Bassols was no philistine, he probably suspected the Indianists of idealistic romanticism about indigenous culture, and feared the development of the situation obtaining today, in which the encouragement of the arts and crafts of the Indians all too often merely serves to conceal their continued oppression and exploitation. He expressed this fear in 1932 in a speech to the cultural missionaries: (1)

"It is undeniable that music, popular art, poetry, etc., constitute a precious heritage whose variety and wealth are in direct proportion to the strength and vitality of our people... But it is also essential to see with equal clarity that the folkloric expressions of the Mexican people must only be encouraged so long as they do not constitute a burden opposed to the economic advancement of the peasants..."

Cárdenas was no doubt aware of the problem, but saw clearly that a special educational programme was needed for the Indians (along with special social and economic programmes) in order to rescue them from the destitution into which they had been driven. He was also convinced that the reassertion of Mexico's Indian culture, as against the imposed Hispanic strait-jacket and the penetration of North American values, was an essential part of the Revolutionary movement. The main instrument for this cultural revolution was the rural school, and policy in this field was often determined by Cárdenas himself rather than by his Minister of Education, Ignacio García Téllez (1934-1935) and Gonzalo Vázquez Vela (1935-1940).

(1) "Mencía", 1932, vol.1, pp.139-141.



No. 9. The famous "Casa del Estudiante Indígena."

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Guided by these principles, Cárdenas tried to evolve a plan of integral development for the Indian communities. His main instrument for achieving this was the autonomous Department of Indian Affairs, established in January 1936 in order to encourage and co-ordinate the activities of all branches of the Government on behalf of the Indians. The creation of this Department, headed first by the peasant leader Cracián Sánchez and after 1939 by the intellectual Luis Chávez Briceño, was a victory for the "Indianista" radicals, and caused a conservative outcry. Many Indianists wanted a full-scale Ministry, but this was politically impossible. (1)

The Department of Indian Affairs helped the Indians in literally thousands of legal cases, organized co-operatives, taught Spanish, and urged the Government to build roads, dams and schools; special inter-departmental projects were arranged to help specific groups of Indians. No less than eight Indian congresses were sponsored by the Department, all of them attended by Cárdenas himself. In the field of education the "Centros de Educación Indígena" were reorganized as Indian agricultural schools, "Escuelas Vocacionales de Agricultura para Indígenas"; by 1940 there were 29 of these, well-equipped and provided with land. After 1938 most of the Department's work was educational, but it continued to play an important role until 1947, when it was replaced by a much smaller office under the Ministry of Education. It was essentially Cárdenas' creation, and there was no place for it in the business-oriented administration of President Alemán.

5. Socialist Education in Practice

It will be apparent from the foregoing paragraphs that after 1934 a number of important changes were introduced in the system of rural education.

(1) Ruiz, op.cit., pp.143-144; Castillo, op.cit., vol.1, pp.411-413.

But it is far from clear whether these measures, generally excellent in themselves, constituted part of a coherent plan of "Socialist Education" in accordance with the reform of Article 3 of the Constitution. We have seen that the Six Year Plan spoke vaguely in terms of "the socialist doctrine upheld by the Mexican Revolution", while the amended article itself defined this socialism in purely anti-religious terms. In actual fact the anticlerical aspect of official policy, so prominent under Calles, was considerably reduced by Cardenas, who was concerned to emphasize the more constructive aspects of the educational programme.

This change of emphasis was in itself more in accord with a socialist approach to the religious problem, in contrast to the narrow anticlericalism of Calles, which has its closest parallel in the French Radical Party. But if socialist education was to be successful, the Government would have to organise an intensive programme of reorientation for the teachers and parents. Some efforts were made to do this, but they were scarcely adequate and many teachers seem to have had only a very vague conception of the meaning of socialism. The reaction of the parents would depend largely on their experience of the individual teacher, and also on the contrary influence of the clergy. As will be seen later, there was widespread misunderstanding, sometimes with tragic results. In spite of changes in school textbooks, the publication of numerous pamphlets on socialism and the organisation of orientation classes, many teachers carried on in the same old ways, while some still interpreted the reform in simple anti-religious terms.

Very soon after the reform, many Government officials and left-wing teachers came to the conclusion that it could only be made effective by a strict purge of the profession. As Josefina Vásquez has pointed out in a recent article,⁽¹⁾

"There was a considerable increase in demagogy, and songs referring to the proletariat and the peasantry were multiplied, but since the teachers were the same, it was difficult to change the type of education from one day to the next."

(1) Josefina Z. Vásquez, de Knauth, op.cit., p. 815.

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(1) Josefina Z. Vásquez, de Knauth, op.cit., p.415.

A number of prominent radicals, realizing this, began to advocate a purge as soon as the reform was passed. The original proposals presented by the Commission of Deputies in June 1934 urged "a strict selection" of the teachers "in order to put the competent revolutionary teachers in the positions they deserve". (1) Even earlier, in January 1934, the Congress of the "Confederación Revolucionaria Michoacana del Trabajo" passed a resolution urging, among other things, "an energetic and effective selection of the country's teaching staff, eliminating the enemies of the Revolution..." (2) About the same time the State of Sonora passed a law imposing "rationalist" education in the State, and requiring "The elimination of those elements who because of their ideology do not consider themselves honestly capable of carrying out this plan..." (3) Many similar proposals could be quoted, and late in 1935 this kind of policy was advocated by no less a person than Ignacio García Téllez, who had just finished a six-month period as Minister of Education:- (4)

"The teaching profession which consists of about 50% of women with a conservative ideology, almost all of them unaware of socialist philosophy, must be given the opportunity to accept it. Only when the resources of persuasion have been exhausted, will an ideological purge be appropriate, with the suspension, if necessary, of the application of the laws governing promotion and job security."

In 1935 an attempt was made to purge the teaching profession in many parts of the country, and although no official figures are available, it is said that significant numbers of teachers retired or were excluded as a result. (5) The purge is reported to have been carried out rather crudely, with committees of radical teachers asking their colleagues a few questions about religion and science; those who confessed to a belief in God were apparently dismissed.

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- (1) Bremauntz, op.cit., p.200.
 - (2) "El Maestro Rural", vol.4, no.2, 15th Jan.1934, pp.5-6.
 - (3) Ibid., vol.4, no.12, 15th June 1934, p.25.
 - (4) Ignacio García Téllez, "Socialización de la Cultura (Seis Meses de Acción Educativa)" (México, 1935, La Impresora), p.54.
 - (5) Prof. Enrique Villaseñor y Ponce de León, "Así Principió la Lucha (Notas para la Historia del Sindicalismo Magisterial en Michoacán)" (Morelia, Mich., 1967, Ediciones de la Sección XVIII del S.N.T.E.), pp.12-13; and interview with Prof. Villaseñor, 29th July 1968, in Morelia. Prof. Villaseñor says that at least 130 teachers were expelled in Michoacán, and other sources quote figures as high as 5,000 for the whole country, although this is probably an exaggeration.

Inadequate orientation accompanied by drastic measures of this kind was bound to lead to unnecessary conflicts and to the failure of socialist education. The problems which arose can readily be appreciated from this passage in the official report for 1938:⁽¹⁾

"This phenomenon (the prominent social activity of the teachers, D.L.F.) has been apparent ever since the educational reform was undertaken; but it has become more apparent during the period of this report, bringing in its wake unforeseen complications, such as the abandonment of educational work, ideological disorientation, the invasion of spheres of activities belonging to officials of other Ministries, or the resentment, sometimes unjustified, of these officials against the unusual activities of the teachers....."

Because of these and other problems, all staff had been urged to avoid "unnecessary extremisms, which only lead to the sacrifice of the teachers themselves and to the development of inconvenient movements of popular resistance". Such popular hostility to the teachers, which will be examined later was not always due to official policy, but it was undeniable evidence of the failure to win the mass of the population in support of socialist education. Brumauntz and Castillo⁽²⁾ argue that much of the blame for this should fall on Lic. Gonzalo Vázquez Vela, Minister of Education for most of the relevant period; certainly there is much truth in their accusations of political confusion and lack of leadership on the part of Vázquez Vela, but the ultimate causes of failure lie deeper in the political contradictions which beset the Cárdenas Government from start to finish.

2. The Results of the Socialist Experiment

Although the experiment of socialist education must be judged a failure, and was abandoned in practice after 1951 and in law after 1956, it did bring some benefits. Some attempts were made to provide orientation, and met with partial success; many teachers were induced to place even greater emphasis on

(1) "Memoria", 1938, vol.1, p.178. Report by the Director-General of Urban Primary and Rural Education in the States and Territories, Prof. Rafael Méndez Aguirre.
 (2) Castillo, op.cit., vol.1, pp.407 and 414.

community work and to identify even more closely than before with the life and struggles of the peasants and workers. Some had already drawn political conclusions from the problems they faced, and the increased currency of socialist ideas in official circles encouraged them in this; the political militancy of the teachers was quite important on a local level, as will be shown later. The diffusion of socialist consciousness at this time probably laid the basis for the formation of the "Partido Popular" in 1948, although it could also be argued that the deficiencies of that Party are an indication of the limitations of the consciousness created in the 'thirties.

The communication of official socialism to the ordinary rural teachers depended almost entirely on intermediate bodies, above all the inspectors and the Cultural Missions. The latter were the most effective instruments of orientation, and in the areas they covered their political influence could be considerable. This function of the Missions is described almost casually in the official report for 1936:⁽¹⁾

"The head (of the Mission) is in charge of the direction, co-ordination and supervision of the work of the 'Instituto' and of the pedagogical instruction, and also of the socialist orientation of the teachers; the organizer is in charge of those courses which are designed to increase production and to organize the peasants in such a way that they obtain a greater reward for their efforts and avoid the exploitation of which they are victims on the part of middlemen, 'caciques', etc...."

From this one can easily understand why there was powerful opposition to the work of the Missions. But the missionaries, as members of a team, were relatively secure; it was the individual inspectors and teachers, working in remote areas, who often faced serious danger if they took their socialism seriously. In fact it seems that many inspectors did not give real support to the programme of socialist education, and this was probably a major factor in its failure; but a significant minority did carry out their new duties, and often suffered on this account.

(1) "Memoria", 1936, pp. 21-25.

Much was done to help the inspectors and missionaries in the diffusion of socialist ideas by means of printed propaganda. The Ministry of Education distributed tens of thousands of pamphlets such as "Lo que Marx quiso decir" by R. D. Cole, "Un siglo de batalla proletaria" and "La huelga de Río Blanco" by Germán list Armbide, and "Marx" and "Lenin" by José Mancisidor. (1) Many articles explaining socialism, the class conflict, and similar themes were published in the official magazine "El Maestro Rural" which was distributed to most rural teachers, and for some years the Government newspaper "El Nacional" carried a daily feature on socialist education (although its circulation outside the main towns was very limited). In 1936 an "Institute of Socialist Orientation" was established, but its activities seem to have been limited to occasional publications and lecture tours.

What socialist education presumably should have meant, if properly implemented, was admirably summed up by Ignacio García Téllez writing in 1935. (2) He argued that each rural school should have a "Social Action Committee" representing staff, pupils, parents, local authorities, workers and peasants. Among other things, this Committee would "obtain the granting of 'ejidos' and their improvement, and encourage the subdivision of the big estates"; it would also encourage the formation of producers' and consumers' co-operatives, "without losing sight of the fact that co-operative organisation is aimed at socialist exploitation of the land and the factories by the peasant and the worker for their own exclusive and complete benefit...." The school was intended to help in the formation of class consciousness by means of lectures, talks, dramatic productions and other forms of propaganda, and to contribute towards the collectivisation of the means of production. Campaigns would be conducted against fanaticism and prejudice, but García Téllez recognised the danger of excessive anticlericalism:-

(1) *Ibid.*, p.179.

(2) García Téllez, *op.cit.*, particularly pp.127-132 and 227-238. This was written immediately after the author's departure from the Ministry of Education.

".....in the mercenary press within our country and abroad they are trying to portray the socialist school as if it had no other aim or object than to wage an open and implacable campaign against religion. This is a deceitful tactic, long since unmasked by socialist leaders... It is noticeable that the conservatives in the service of local and foreign exploiters have always managed to divert the fire of workingclass organizations and progressive teachers from the attack on economic forms of exploitation, into campaigns which offend the religious sentiments of the ignorant and impoverished masses...."

Unfortunately, despite this and other warnings, religious hostility continued to plague the rural schools, but this was not now the fault of the Government which greatly reduced anti-religious propaganda, particularly after 1936.

The greatest obstacle to the success of the Socialist School was its isolation, not so much geographical as political: the lack of support from other agencies of the Government. Reading the speeches and pamphlets of the period, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that many educationalists wanted to overthrow capitalism by education alone, or else they viewed the Cardenas Government through rose-tinted spectacles, believing that it had a coherent plan to socialize the means of production. It is difficult to blame them for this, since the Government itself encouraged them in this belief. To some extent the teachers' leaders recognized the problem, and in the debates over the reform of Article 3 there was much discussion of whether socialist education could exist within a bourgeois State. Thus in October 1934 the magazine "El Maestro Rural" carried a long editorial on the subject, (1) concluding that if the bourgeoisie was weakened by concessions extracted from it by popular pressure (such as land and labour reform), then socialist education would serve to hasten the general process of transformation. Other articles (2) argued that rural education was already socialist in all but name, by virtue of its stress on social work, merely needed to be supplemented by ideological orientation. These arguments were succinctly summarized by Eduardo Villanueva. (3)

(1) "El Maestro Rural", vol. 5, no. 7, 1st Oct. 1934, pp. 3-7.

(2) *Ibid.*, vol. 5, no. 8, 15th Oct. 1934, pp. 5-6. Article "Concepto de la Escuela Socialista" by Prof. José Torán Tovar.

(3) Quoted in *Discursos*, op.cit., p. 244.

"Indeed, an entirely socialist culture is only possible in a socialist system, but this does not mean that it cannot germinate in the heart of the decadent capitalist society. Did bourgeois culture not begin to develop within feudal monarchic society? Were not Marx's "Capital" and Lenin's "Imperialism" written in the bourgeois environment?"

But these very plausible arguments over-simplified the problem. It was one thing to expect a socialist culture to germinate within capitalist society but quite another to expect this culture to be actively patronised and promoted by the bourgeois State itself. This confusion apparently arose because of the contradictions within the Cardenas Government; promoting a programme of radical reforms, courting the support of peasants and workers against domestic and foreign reaction, it used socialist terminology to justify its actions but never intended to destroy capitalism in Mexico. It may well be that Cardenas and his more radical advisers were moving in the direction of socialism, but their ideas were confused and they were in no position to defy the powerful conservative pressures within the P.N.R. (except in rare crises such as the expulsion of Calles and the oil expropriation).

In these circumstances, an overall socialist policy was impossible.

Once again, the problem was well perceived by Garcia Talles: (1)

"...The school, although it may have an advanced mission, a vanguard position within the present economic system, is not the decisive factor in that transformation (from capitalism to socialism)... if the organizations whose job it is to accelerate collective progress do not help its (the school's) teachings by requests for aid, by an increase in popular credit, by protecting working-class and peasant organizations; then the work of the Cultural Mission will be transitory, passing, unenduring and will end by becoming a demagogic, unreal and fruitless effort...."

Since the work of the school was not generally complemented by that of other agencies of the Government (except in special cases such as La Laguna), not only the Cultural Missions but the whole of "socialist education" became an empty, demagogic gesture.

(1) Garcia Talles, op.cit., pp.227-238.



Nos. 10 & 11. Indian Cultural Festival in Oaxaca,
organised by the Cultural Missions, 1933.



(1) Rufus
Cast

10. The End of the Heroic Era of Mexican Rural Education

Well before the end of the Cárdenas administration, there were signs of a moderation of previous radical policies. This was due to the need for retrenchment and consolidation after the far-reaching decision to expropriate the oil companies, and to a general resurgence of the forces of conservatism. All aspects of policy were affected, and education was no exception; we have already seen that the Cultural Missions were abandoned after 1938. The practical need for economy diminished the rate of school-building; talk of socialism continued, but there was also talk of "national unity" and of "a Government for all", the waterwords of the official Presidential candidate Manuel Avila Camacho.

The first Minister of Education of the new administration, Luis Sánchez Pontón, was a quiet, well-educated left-winger, but he met with strong opposition and resigned after ten months. His successor from 1941 to 1943 was Octavio Vájar Vázquez, a conservative Catholic General who promoted clerically-minded teachers and returned some school properties to the Jesuits. Although "socialist education" had not been legally ended, in practice it was superseded by the new slogan, "the school of love" which was intended to promote social harmony - a quality much desired by the businessmen who were making quick profits under the new Government. Vájar Vázquez even abolished coeducation, a retrograde step by almost any standards, despite opposition from teachers and many parents. In the end his anti-union policies provoked such hostility from the teachers that Avila Camacho was forced to dismiss him, but not before the whole tone of education had been changed⁽¹⁾ Even under Sánchez Pontón - perhaps in spite of him - the change was noticeable; it was under him that the highly successful "Escuelas Regionales Campesinas" were abolished and his

(1) Ruiz, op.cit., pp.73-76; Josefina Z. Vázquez de Zúñiga, op.cit., pp.421-423; Castillo, op.cit., vol.1, pp.421-427.

official report for 1941 described policy in these terms: (1)

"The new Mexican school, essentially democratic, scientific and based on work, has no doctrines or tendencies unless they be those which constitute the very root of our nationality and the dearest ideals pursued by our people throughout their intense struggles for emancipation..."

The striking absence of any reference to socialism suggested that an important change had taken place, and in fact 1940 was the end of an era in Mexican education. The rural school of the previous twenty years, whether socialist or not, had been a heroic pioneer venture, constantly breaking new ground; it was one of the most characteristic creations of the Mexican Revolution. In the succeeding years, rural schools continued to be built in ever-increasing numbers, but the enthusiasm and originality gradually diminished.

(1) "Memoria", 1941, p.11.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORGANIZATION OF TEACHERS AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH
NATIONAL POLITICS

I. Early Years, 1915-1930

Some tentative efforts to organize teachers into associations or leagues were made quite early in the Revolution, about the time of the triumph of the Constitutionalist movement in 1915-1916. Several teachers had played a very active part as individuals in the military phase of the Revolution, as had been pointed out by Francisco Dulms,⁽¹⁾ James D. Cockcroft⁽²⁾ and others. The most outstanding examples were those of Estilo Montano, who helped to draft the Plan of Ayala although he was later shot as a traitor to " Zapatismo"; Esteban Heca Calderon in Sonora, who became a Revolutionary General; David G. Barlanga who served under Villa; Manuel Chao who died in the struggle against Huerta; Luis G. Monzon of San Luis Potosi, who survived to play a prominent part in the struggles of the 'twenties and 'thirties; and of course, Plutarco Elias Calles himself.

The radical spirit of many of the teachers made it inevitable that they should attempt to organize once relatively peaceful conditions returned, and local unions soon began to spring up in areas under Constitutional control. Thus in Veracruz in 1915, under the Governorship of Candido Aguilar, a teachers' congress was held - possibly the first of its kind in the country.⁽³⁾ Certainly Veracruz was advanced in this field; the first official recognition of teachers'

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- (1) Francisco Dulms, "The whole Truth about Mexico" - President Wilson's Responsibility", New York, 1916.
 (2) James D. Cockcroft, "El Maestro de Primaria en la Revolucion Mexicana", *Historia Mexicana* No. 64, April-June 1967, pp. 555-587, and "Intellectual Precursors of the Mexican Revolution", 1900-1913" (Austin, 1968, University of Texas Press) pp. 85-86. See also Enrique W. Sanchez, "Apuntes Historicos sobre el Movimiento Sindical del Magisterio Nacional", in "Conferencias Regionales de Orientacion Sindical", S.E.T.R., Mexico City, 1966, pp. 52-60.
 (3) Interview with Prof. Elicencio Hernandez in Jalapa, Veracruz, 1st Oct. 1967.

union rights is said by some to have been gained in 1923 with the signing of an agreement by the authorities of the port of Veracruz.⁽¹⁾ Such claims are a little difficult to substantiate, since local groups were active in various places, but have left little record of their activities. Yucatan under General Alvarado was also the scene of much activity by embryonic teachers' unions, and some teachers who were later to be union leaders were prominent in a Far-
 inist Congress in Merida in 1916.⁽²⁾

In fact these first local unions were very weak, and none of them managed to establish a permanent organization until much later. Other attempts at organization were made at a national level, starting from the Federal District. Thus the famous labour confederation, the C.R.O.M., founded in 1918, won the adherence of teachers' groups in Veracruz, Puebla, Tlaxcala and San Luis Potosí, and a few of them remain loyal to the C.R.O.M. to this day.⁽³⁾ In 1920 Vicente Lombardo Toledano, himself associated with the C.R.O.M. at that time, organized the "Liga de Profesores del Distrito Federal".⁽⁴⁾ Shortly after this there appears to have existed an organization calling itself the "Liga Nacional de Maestros", based on Mexico City and with scattered members elsewhere, under the leadership of Gildardo Aviles.⁽⁵⁾ In 1924 a group of radical teachers formed the "Liga Nacional de Maestros Nacionalistas", a ginger group which pressed for pressed for new approaches to education and for a strict interpretation of

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- (1) Interview with Prof. Fidencio Bermudez, 1st Oct. 1967, and with Prof. Jorge Cruickshank Garcia, official of the S.N.T.E. and National Committee Member of the Partido Popular Socialista, 3rd Oct. 1967 in Mexico City. (Cruickshank Garcia is now General Secretary of the P.P.S.) See also Sanchez, *op.cit.*, p.60.
- (2) Interview with Prof. Rosa Torre G. in Mexico City, 6th May 1968. She mentions as leaders of the early teachers' movement in Yucatan, Albino Lope, Vicente Gamboa, Fernando Gamboa, Candelaria Hill and Mercedes Betancourt (who was later to be in disagreement with the "Bloque Revolucionario de Maestros" of Campeche see below pp.).
- (3) Enrique M. Sanchez, *op.cit.*, p.60.
- (4) Robert Paul Wilson, "Mexican Marxist: Vicente Lombardo Toledano" (Chapel Hill, 1966, University of North Carolina Press), p.25.
- (5) Interview with Prof. Evangelina Rodriguez Carbajal in Zitacuaro, Michoacan, 1st Dec. 1967. Srta. Rodriguez claims to have served on the local committee of this organization in Zitacuaro in 1929.

secularism as established in Article 3 of the Constitution. It declared itself in favor of reforming Article 3 by substituting "rationalist" for "secular" education, and called on teachers to organize into "Leagues of Resistance" to fight for collective agreements and to identify with the struggles of workers and peasants.⁽¹⁾ Such declarations were not entirely empty rhetoric, for in 1923 teachers in the Federal District came out in sympathy with the tram-drivers,⁽²⁾ and in the same year a teachers' organization in Coahuila (the "Federacion Coahuilense de Sindicatos de Maestros") played a leading part in a Convention of Workers' and Peasants' Unity in Saltillo.⁽³⁾

In 1925-1927 the C.R.D.M. made another attempt to organize the teachers on a national scale, and created the "Confederacion Nacional de Maestros" with Lombardo Toledano as General Secretary.⁽⁴⁾ In fact these various "national" teachers' unions created in the 1920's were little more than skeleton organizations, with few members outside Mexico City. Effective unionism only became possible as the rank and file teachers, above all in rural areas, increased in number and became involved in social struggles alongside peasants and workers. Enrique W. Sanchez is of the opinion,⁽⁵⁾ that the real seeds of teachers' unionisation lay in the "mass of improvised teachers of village and ejido" and in the Cultural Missions. Certainly, under the influence of these stimuli, local groups were springing up all over the country, and in the late 'twenties a loose

(1) "El Machete", 4th-11th Dec. 1924; see also Luis G. Monson, "Organizacion Revolucionaria de la Escuela Mexicana", Mexico City, 1930, pp. 80-81.
 (2) Sanchez, op.cit., p. 60. This movement was led by David Vilchis, a maverick teachers' leader who retained much influence in the Federal District in the 1930's and became unpopular with both the Government and the Communist Party. The tram-drivers were very militant, having been involved in conflicts in 1915, 1923, and 1925 (see Marjorie Clark, "Organized Labor in Mexico", 1934, Ch. 4.)
 (3) "El Machete", 18th August 1923.
 (4) Millon, loc.cit. This was confirmed in an interview by the teacher Arturo S. Morett in Mexico City on 28th Jan. 1968; Morett was representative of this organisation in Morelos and part of the State of Mexico.
 (5) Sanchez, op.cit., p. 61.

federation was forced, the "Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Magisteriales", which at least seems to have been more representative than its predecessors.

2. The Struggle for National Unity, 1931-1943.

Under the controversial leadership of David Vilchis of the Federal district, the "Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Magisteriales" made efforts to improve conditions and co-ordinate the activities of its member unions. Thus in September 1931 its national assembly raised demands for higher salaries and expressed support for teachers involved in local disputes in Oaxaca and San Luis Potosí.⁽¹⁾ But its power was very limited and it was scarcely representative of the majority of teachers in the country; about the same time it came under attack from a rival group, the "Frente Revolucionario del Magisterio", which accused the C.N.O.M. of dubious political manoeuvres.⁽²⁾

The first moves towards a more effective national union came not from the rank and file but from leading educationalists and officials of the Ministry of Public Education. In 1930 these officials had formed the "Unión de Directores e Inspectores Federales de Educación", led by Luís Tijerina Alvaquer, J. Dolores Medina, Eliseo Bandala and other prominent figures in rural education.⁽³⁾ In December 1931 this group formed a loose alliance with the C.N.O.M. and the "Frente Revolucionario de Magisterio",⁽⁴⁾ and in March 1932 these efforts at co-operation bore fruit with the formation in Guadalajara of the "Confederación Mexicana de Maestros" (C.M.M.).⁽⁵⁾ The Confederation, which

(1) "Excelsior", 20th Sept. 1931.

(2) Ibid., 21st Sept. 1931.

(3) Sáenz, loc.cit.

(4) "Excelsior", 30th Dec. 1931.

(5) Sebastián Mayo, "La Educación Socialista en México: el Asalto a la Universidad Nacional" (Rosario, Argentina, 1964, Editorial B.E.A.R.) pp. 53-56; Sáenz, op.cit., p. 62; and "Excelsior", 27th Feb. 1932.

theoretically included all teachers in the country, declared the necessity for teachers to "join the struggle to transform the individualist methods which control the contemporary economy",⁽¹⁾ but this verbal concession to socialism meant little in practice.

Certainly the C.M.M. campaigned for certain reforms, and adopted a radical posture at times; thus in June 1932 it called for rural teachers to be regarded as "ejidatarios" with the right to cultivate a plot of land, and made plans for a conference with peasants' organisations; it also campaigned for better job security and promotion prospects.⁽²⁾ But from the beginning it was closely identified with the policies of the Ministry of Public Education; its first General Secretary was Ramón G. Bonfil, Director of Federal Education in Jalisco, and the Committee included two other State Directors of Federal Education, Luis Tijerina Almaguer (Nuevo León) and Celarino Cano (Michoacán).⁽³⁾ These men were outstanding educationalists, and they had the advantage of youth, but they could scarcely support the ordinary teachers against the Government which they represented. For this reason the more militant teachers rapidly came to regard the C.M.M., in the words of one of their number, as a "company union" ("Sindicato blanco") created by the Ministry for its own purposes.⁽⁴⁾

At the second national convention of the C.M.M., held in Toluca in April 1933, Bonfil was replaced by another Director of Federal Education, J. Dolores Medina. Resolutions were carried in favour of the federalisation of education (a measure which would benefit most teachers), the "socialisation" of primary and normal education, and the reform of Article 3 of the Constitution.⁽⁵⁾ These resolutions were probably due to radical pressures, both from certain rank-and-file groups and from some Government politicians, which were to lead to the

(1) Mayo, *op.cit.*, pp. 53-6.

(2) "Execlisor", 12th June 1932.

(3) Mayo, *loc.cit.*, and Sánchez, *loc.cit.*, Mayo describes Celarino Cano as "the great animator of the Confederation".

(4) Interview with Prof. José Carlos Núñez in Mexico City, 23rd Nov. 1968.

(5) Mayo, *loc.cit.*, and Sánchez, *loc.cit.*

introduction of "Socialist Education" in 1934. Thus in August 1933 a group of teachers belonging to the "Confederación de Partidos Socialistas de Veracruz" then meeting in Mexico City, formed the "Frente Socialista del Magisterio", to press for such policies.⁽¹⁾ In the following months a similar attitude was adopted by several organisations, including the newly-formed "Confederación de Estudiantes Socialistas de México", the "Comité Nacional Pro-Reforma Educativa" the "Liga Magisterial de Acción Revolucionaria" and the "Bloque de Izquierda del Magisterio".⁽²⁾ Since official policy in education was radical at this time, at least in its verbal formulations, the gap between the membership of the C.M.M. and its Government-orientated leaders did not grow too wide; but even so, at the third national convention, held in Querétaro in March 1934, it was agreed that leading educational officials should not control the union, and for the first time a rank-and-file member, Fernando Castellanos, became General Secretary.⁽³⁾

In spite of these changes in the C.M.M., there were already dissident groups growing up to its left and threatening its foundations. One of these was the "Liga de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza", affiliated to the Communist International of Educational Workers in Paris; the Mexican section was small and limited to Mexico City, but was capably led by the young intellectuals Miguel Arroyo de la Parra; Rafael Ramos Pedruca and Gaudencio Paraza Esquiliano. Its influence was much greater than its numbers; as Sánchez points out,⁽⁴⁾ it was a vanguard organisation and rejected any interference in union affairs by the authorities. There were various other groups based on the Federal District, but created by teachers of provincial origins, the most outstanding being the "Federación de Maestros Socialistas del Distrito Federal" led by Rafael Méndez Aguirre from Michoacán. Towards the end of 1934 the "Liga" brought together all these groups to form the "Frente Único Nacional

(1) Alberto Bremaunts "La Educación Socialista en México" (Mexico City, 1943, Imprenta "Elvaderneyra") p.169.

(2) *Ibid.*, pp.209-211.

(3) Sánchez, *loc.cit.*, and Bremaunts, p.193.

(4) Sánchez, *op.cit.*, pp.62-63.

de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza". (F.U.N.T.E.), which became a serious rival to the C.M.E.; at its Puebla Congress in the Spring of 1935, the latter attempted to break free of official control, and replaced its Executive Committee by a National Council directly representing its provincial branches. (1) But the F.U.N.T.E. continued to grow, and there were frequent inter-union disputes; interestingly, Sánchez suggests that the growth of the F.U.N.T.E. was actively promoted by the Cultural Missions, those vital ginger groups which always tended to be more radical than official policy. The challenge to the C.M.E. became greater later in 1935, when the F.U.N.T.E. transformed itself, with the adherence of other groups, into the "Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza" (C.N.T.E.) led by Rafael Herrera Angeles, and calling for the unity of all teachers' on an uncompromising revolutionary basis. (2)

Throughout the early 'thirties there was a proliferation of local unions each covering one District or part of a State, sometimes adhering to the national federations but often independent, or paying only lip-service to them. Some were militant, but most were little more than friendly societies, at least in the early years. Typical examples are the "Unión de Maestros Federales" of the Second Educational Zone of Puebla State, and the similar union of the Fifth Zone of Yucatan State, both founded in 1932 (the latter affiliated to the C.M.E.). (3) More interesting was the "Liga De Maestros Ateos" which existed in Tabasco, the stronghold of the anticlerical politician Garrido Canabal, in 1933 - 1934; this union was unusual in that it opposed the federalisation of education - advocated by most teachers' associations - on the grounds that it would restrict local initiative (a cynic might regard this as a device for bolstering Garrido Canabal's independence of central control). (4)

(1) *Ibid.*, p.63.

(2) *Ibid.*, p.64.

(3) "El Maestro Rural", vol.1 no.13, 1st Sept.1932, and vol.2 no.8, 1st Feb.1933.

(4) *Ibid.*, vol.4 no.4, 15th Feb.1934.

We have seen that local teachers' unions developed at an early stage in the State of Veracruz - they were strong in the districts of Jalapa, Tuxpan, Pánuco, and the town of Veracruz itself, and fought several successful strikes.⁽¹⁾ In many States where isolated local groups had existed before, they now united to form State-wide unions, as in Sonora in September 1933.⁽²⁾ In Yucatán in 1935 three rival groups were formed, the "Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza", the "Bloque de Maestros" and the "Unión de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza"; according to "El Machete", the first two of these were created by false leaders in order to manipulate the rank-and-file, and the third had been formed as a genuine democratic union to oppose this manipulation.⁽³⁾ Be this as it may, unity was not achieved in Yucatán until two years later. In December 1935 an organization was formed calling itself the "Confederación Unitaria del Sureste de Trabajadores de la Educación", and claiming to unite all the teachers of Yucatán, Campeche, Quintana Roo and Tabasco,⁽⁴⁾ but it seems to have been an artificial creation with little real support. More typical was the situation in Guanajuato, where by the end of 1936 there was a "Federación de Maestros Socialistas de Guanajuato" affiliated to the C.R.M. and claiming to represent 19 local groups.⁽⁵⁾ In some States unity was achieved on a more radical basis, as with the pro-Communist "Bloque Revolucionario de Maestros" in Campeche, which is examined in detail later. Elsewhere teachers did not form their own unions but played a prominent part in general unions of peasants and workers, as in Michoacán where they participated in the Cardenista "Confederación Revolucionario Michoacana del Trabajo" (also examined below).

Frequently the most active elements in promoting unionization were the officials and specialized teachers - Inspectors of Schools, members of Cultural

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- (1) Interview with Prof. Federico Barahona in Jalapa, Veracruz on 1st. Oct. 1967.
 (2) "Examiner", 1st. Oct. 1933.
 (3) "El Machete", 30th Sept. 1935.
 (4) Ibid., 7th Dec. 1935.
 (5) Ibid., 2nd Jan. 1937.

Missions and the staff of the Rural Normal Schools. This was due partly to Government policy, but also to their own key position. In July 1935 a convention of the staffs of the "Escuelas Normales Rurales", the "Regionales Campesinas" and the Central Agricultural Schools formed their own union, the "Unión de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza Superior Campesina",⁽¹⁾ which reflected the left-wing sympathies of most of its members.

The first serious attempt to unite the rival factions in a single national union came about under Government pressure leading to the "Congress of Unification" at Querétaro in February 1937, which created the "Federación Mexicana de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza" (F.M.T.E.) Moves to bring together the C.M.M. and the C.N.T.E. had begun the previous September, when the leaders of the two unions had agreed to set up an organising committee consisting of four representatives from each of them, and an official observer appointed by the Government. This committee began its work on 23rd October, calling on all teachers to "liquidate old interunion squabbles" and "destroy their minor differences".⁽²⁾ Despite this, shortly before the Congress was due to meet, there were differences and recriminations owing to opposition from the U.N.F.T.E. ("Unión Nacional de Encabezadores Técnicos de la Educación", an established organisation of Inspectors and other officials similar to the U.T.E.S.C.) and various local unions, particularly the "Federación de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza del Distrito Federal" which had long been controlled by David Vilchis, an ambitious leader who was then Educational Secretary of Lombardo Toledano's newly-formed C.T.M.

The conflict seems to have been essentially between Lombardo Toledano and the Communist Party; the C.T.M. wanted to gain control of the new Feder-

(1) "El Maestro Rural", vol.7 no.3, 1st Aug.1935.

(2) "El Maestro Rural", vol.9 no.6, 1st November 1936. The representatives of the C.M.M. were Colerino Cano, Luis G. Ramírez, Francisco Madrigal Castro and Arturo López Portillo; and those of the C.N.T.E., Daniel Sañudo Castro, José Santos Valdés, Agustín Peña Hernández and Arnulfo Montoya.

ation, but knew this would be difficult owing to Communist strength in both the C.M.M. and the C.N.T.E. (particularly the latter). Hence Vilchis' group and a few others attempted to hold a rival Congress. The position was complicated by the fact that the Communist Party also called on the new Federation to join the C.T.M. in the name of working-class unity and solidarity, while disliking the C.T.M. leadership.⁽¹⁾ The Congress was opened on 7th February by General Múgica, representing the Government, and over 2,000 delegates representing the C.M.M., the C.N.T.E., the U.N.E.T.E. and other groups agreed to resolve their differences. In the event the Communists appear to have won, since Vilchis' manoeuvre failed and the great majority of the different unions involved joined the new F.M.T.E., which declared its adherence to the C.T.M. but remained independent in practice.⁽²⁾

During 1937 the F.M.T.E. tried to assert its authority as the true representative of all teachers in the country, making efforts in each State to unite the rival factions and bring them under its control. Towards the end of March a Congress of 5,000 teachers of the State of Mexico was addressed by Cándido Jaramillo, General Secretary of the F.M.T.E.; it was reported to have been a great success.⁽³⁾ Similar gatherings - "Congreso Pro-Sindicato Unico Estatal" - were soon organized in Nayarit and Morelos,⁽⁴⁾ but the latter broke up in disorder with recriminations between rural and urban teachers.⁽⁵⁾ On 30th April an attempt to unite workers', peasants' and teachers' organisations of the southern part of Veracruz State failed because of the opposition of the C.T.M. delegate to the participation of the teachers.⁽⁶⁾ On the other hand in

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- (1) "El Machete", 6th Feb. 1937; "Excelsior", 5th Feb. 1937; Sánchez, op.cit., p.65
 (2) "Excelsior", 8th, 9th, 13th, 14th and 15th Feb. 1937; "El Machete", 13th and 20th Feb. 1937.
 (3) "El Machete", 3rd April 1937.
 (4) Ibid., 24th and 29th March and 3rd April 1937.
 (5) "Excelsior", 5th April, 1937. The rural teachers wanted the same pay and privileges as the urban teachers, who regarded the former as unqualified upstarts according to this report. One suspects that political differences may also have been involved.
 (6) "El Machete", 16th May 1937.

Yucatán, where there had previously been three rival teachers' unions, the F.M.T.E. succeeded in uniting them to form the "Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de Yucatán" (S.U.T.E.Y),⁽¹⁾ and in Campeche a similar organization, the S.U.T.E.C., was created by restructuring the main existing union.⁽²⁾ Similar moves were made in Michoacán in February⁽³⁾ and in Hidalgo in May,⁽⁴⁾ and national unification seemed to be on the way.

But it soon became apparent that these activities were merely papering over the cracks; the unity achieved at Querétaro had been a sham. As early as March the organ of the Communist Party was complaining of those who "use the name of the C.T.E. to oppose....the unification of the teachers", particularly Vilchis and Rodolfo Pina Soria in the Federal District, and it reported that in Veracruz, Tlaxcala and Sonora certain groups were trying to separate the teachers from the F.M.T.E.⁽⁵⁾ In May Lombardo Toledano denounced the influence of the Communists among the teachers, and at a National Congress of the F.M.T.E. in June there were attacks on Lombardo, Vilchis and other leaders of the C.T.E.⁽⁶⁾ Because of these tensions it became necessary to reform or replace the F.M.T.E., and in February 1938 another "Congress of Unification" was held, this time in Mexico City. With the encouragement of the Government, the C.T.E. and the Communists overcame their differences to form the "Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de la República Mexicana" (S.T.E.R.M.), the first union with an authentic claim to represent the majority of teachers in the country.⁽⁷⁾ The C.T.E. leaders - Lombardo, Vilchis, Fidel Volázquez, Salvador Lobato and Rubén Magaña - played a prominent part along with the ex-leaders of

(1) Ibid., 22nd and 29th May 1937.

(2) See below p.

(3) See below, p.

(4) "El Machete", 6th June 1937.

(5) Ibid., 13th and 20th March 1937.

(6) "Excelsior", 2nd June 1937.

(7) "Excelsior", 18th, 20th and 21st Feb. 1938; "El Machete", 12th and 26th Feb. 1938; Sánchez, op.cit., p.65; and "Memoria de la Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1938, vol.1, p.14.

the F.M.T.E. The General Secretary of the new union was a compromise candidate, Octaviano Campos Salas, a young rural teacher of left-wing views from Guanajuato (later to have a successful career in national politics).

In the months that followed the S.T.E.R.M. carried out the same work of national consolidation that its predecessor had attempted the previous year. In some cases where effective unity had already been achieved, it was possible for the existing union simply to transfer its allegiance from the F.M.T.E. to the S.T.E.R.M., but in most cases it was more difficult. Thus another local "Congress of Unification" was held in Morelos in June 1938 with the encouragement of Campos Salas and his colleagues, this time with apparent success. ⁽¹⁾ Similar congresses were organised in July in Durango, Nuevo León and Coahuila. ⁽²⁾ The S.T.E.R.M. had powerful official backing, and in August arrangements were made for it to be maintained by a 1% deduction from the salaries of all teachers. ⁽³⁾ But divisions still persisted below the surface, and on 8th August the S.T.E.R.M. denied rumours that certain teachers' groups were opposed to its leadership, rumours propagated by "individuals who, hiding in the mass of teachers, carry out counter-revolutionary work among them...." ⁽⁴⁾ The tone of this denial suggested that all was not well, and in October there were disputes between Communist and pro-C.T.M. factions in Guerrero. ⁽⁵⁾ In November a "Congress of Unification" in the Federal District broke up in disorder, and the leaders condemned a dissident group who they said were Trotskyites. ⁽⁶⁾

Towards the end of 1938 and throughout the following year, there were constant political manoeuvres in which the S.T.E.R.M. tried to assert its auth-

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- (1) "El Machete", 25th and 28th June 1938.
 (2) Ibid., 8th, 21st and 28th July 1938.
 (3) Ibid., 22nd August 1938.
 (4) Ibid., 8th Aug. 1938, and "Excelsior", 8th Aug. 1938.
 (5) "Excelsior", 1st Nov. 1938.
 (6) Ibid., 6th, 13th & 14th Nov. 1938. In September a National Council of the S.T.E.R.M. had accused Trotsky of agitating among the teachers in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, where he was living at the time. ("El Machete", 3rd Sept. 1938). The dissident group in the Federal District was called the "Bloque de Maestros Revolucionarios del Distrito Federal".

the F.M.T.E. The General Secretary of the new union was a compromise candidate, Octaviano Campos Salas, a young rural teacher of left-wing views from Guanajuato (later to have a successful career in national politics).

In the months that followed the S.T.E.R.M. carried out the same work of national consolidation that its predecessor had attempted the previous year. In some cases where effective unity had already been achieved, it was possible for the existing union simply to transfer its allegiance from the F.M.T.E. to the S.T.E.R.M., but in most cases it was more difficult. Thus another local "Congress of Unification" was held in Morelos in June 1938 with the encouragement of Campos Salas and his colleagues, this time with apparent success.⁽¹⁾ Similar congresses were organised in July in Durango, Nueve León and Coahuila.⁽²⁾ The S.T.E.R.M. had powerful official backing, and in August arrangements were made for it to be maintained by a 1% deduction from the salaries of all teachers.⁽³⁾ But divisions still persisted below the surface, and on 8th August the S.T.E.R.M. denied rumours that certain teachers' groups were opposed to its leadership, rumours propagated by "individuals who, hiding in the mass of teachers, carry out counter-revolutionary work among them...."⁽⁴⁾ The tone of this denial suggested that all was not well, and in October there were disputes between Communist and pro-C.T.M. factions in Guerrero.⁽⁵⁾ In November a "Congress of Unification" in the Federal District broke up in disorder, and the leaders condemned a dissident group who they said were Trotskyites.⁽⁶⁾

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erity in each State, but was opposed by various factions, notably an anti-Communist organisation called the "Grupo de Acción Social".⁽¹⁾ These divisions came to a head in the S.T.E.M.'s National Congress in Mexico City in February 1940. Immediately before the Congress, on 17th February, there was a fracas in the courtyard of the Ministry of Public Education between pro- and anti-Communist delegates (the former including such distinguished figures as Rafael Mendez Aguirre, Luis Alvarez Barret and Octaviano Campos Salas).⁽²⁾ On the 21st the right-wing delegates set up a rival Congress, and later formed a "Sindicato Nacional Autonomo de Trabajadores de Educación Pública". This move was praised by most newspapers, which were hysterical in their attacks on the official Congress.⁽³⁾ The latter body was certainly more representative, although it was also divided between Communist and C.T.M. factions, and did reveal rank-and-file discontent with the union's bureaucracy (including some accusations of corruption).⁽⁴⁾ In the end these differences were overcome, and a new Executive Committee of six Communists and five non-Communists was elected.⁽⁵⁾ However, there were soon attacks on the new General Secretary, Nazario Aguirre (Communist),⁽⁶⁾ and the C.T.M. used its influence to have him replaced (unconstitutionally) by Raymundo Flores Fuentes.⁽⁷⁾

By mid-1940 it was clear that the S.T.E.M. was disintegrating, with Communist, pro-Government (C.T.M.) and right-wing groups at war with each other. The position was complicated since some teachers wanted to affiliate to the peasants' federation (C.N.C.), some to ally with the workers in the C.T.M., and some to join the public employees' federation (F.S.S.S.E.) (the latter course of action was official Government policy). Confusion was worse

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- (1) "La Voz de México", 28th Feb. 1939; Sánchez, op.cit., p.66.
 (2) "Excelsior", 18th Feb. 1940. The report uses rather tendentious language - "comunizantes", "stalinizantes", "comunistaoides".
 (3) Ibid., 22nd and 25th Feb. 1940.
 (4) "La Voz de México", 25th Feb. and 3rd March 1940; "Excelsior", 23rd Feb. 1940.
 (5) "La Voz de México," 1st Mar 1940; "Excelsior", 26th Feb. 1940.
 (6) "La Voz de México" 1st May 1940.
 (7) Sánchez, op.cit., p.66.

confounded with the appointment in September 1941 of Octavio Véjar Vázquez as Minister of Public Education. Véjar Vázquez was violently anti-Communist and in general anti-union, and owing to his policies the divisions and conflicts multiplied, so that by 1943 there were at least four different teachers' unions. In September of that year Avila Camacho dismissed the unpopular Minister, and in December it was at last possible to constitute a united teachers' union of moderately leftist tendencies, the S.N.T.E. ("Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación"), which has remained intact to this day, despite some difficulties. (1)

3. Teachers' Conditions of Employment and Union Policy

For rural teachers in particular, the methods of recruitment and the nature of their work, especially in the early years, meant that they were poorly paid, had little job security and poor prospects, and were isolated from each other and from the outside world. To some extent this was inevitable because of the task faced by the Government and its limited resources and many teachers were so dedicated that they would accept quite amazing hardships in order to bring a better life to the peasants. But after a few years there was increasing pressure from them for a living wage and for reasonable conditions of employment, and the Government became more willing to concede such demands.

When the first rural teachers were recruited in 1922, they had no pension rights, no insurance scheme, no fixed arrangements for promotion or transfer; they were simply appointed by the Ministry's Inspectors who could dismiss or transfer them virtually at will. Their pay was extremely low - normally 2 pesos per day, and in many cases less (particularly for those employed by local authorities as opposed to the Ministry). In 1926, 2,669

(1) Sánchez, *op.cit.*, pp.66-68; Isidro Castillo, "México y su Revolución Educativa" México, 1965, Editorial Pax-México, pp.422-427.

out of a total of 2,897 federal rural teachers were earning only 2 pesos a day, and the rest received 3 pesos a day (rates were often expressed in daily terms, although they were paid fortnightly or monthly).⁽¹⁾ In 1928, 2 pesos was still the rule for ordinary rural teachers, and 3 pesos for Directors (Headmasters) in schools with a staff of more than one. But there was a startling contrast in the salaries of inspectors, who earned 12 pesos a day,⁽²⁾ six times more than the ordinary teachers, which was surely a grossly inflated differential. Moreover, there were still many State-employed teachers working for only 1.50 pesos a day, and in some cases even less. Thus in 1929 the State Government of Jalisco halved teachers' salaries as an economy measure during the campaign against the "cristero" rebels; the teachers were left with only 75 centavos a day, on a level with the starvation wages paid to peasants labouring on the "haciendas".⁽³⁾

A move towards a more equitable pay structure was made in the same year, 1929, when the Ministry replaced the flat rate of 2 pesos for rural teachers by a graduated scale running from 1.50 to 3 pesos, according to experience and qualifications.⁽⁴⁾ However, teachers in the experimental "circuit schools" which were established at this time and were intended to be maintained by the village communities themselves, received only 1 peso per day. In 1933 Narciso Bassols established a minimum wage of 2 pesos, which considerably improved the position of 3,502 federal teachers throughout the country (there were 10,291 altogether) who had been earning less.⁽⁵⁾ Bassols recognised that the need was urgent, since "In some regions, like Sonora, the posts with these minimum salaries could not all be filled, because manual workers and field labourers were

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- (1) "Memoria de la Secretaría de Educación Pública", Mexico, 1926, Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, p.226.
 (2) A. Méndez Bravo, "La Escuela Rural Mexicana", Santiago de Chile, 1929, p.179.
 (3) "El Machete", 1st May 1929.
 (4) "Memoria de la Secretaría de Educación Pública", Mexico, 1929, p.399.
 (5) "Memoria...", Mexico, 1933, vol.1 p.XIII; Mauricio Magdaleno, "Narciso Bassols: Notas para una Fisonomía Política", Mexico, 1934, p.8.

earning higher sums".⁽¹⁾ A further increase was granted by the Cárdenas Government in 1935, raising the basic wage to 80 pesos a month.⁽²⁾ But it is worth noting that teachers in Mexico City were paid more than twice as much⁽³⁾ - a difference scarcely justified by the higher cost of living there, considering the much greater hardships and dangers faced by the rural teachers. The fact of the matter is that rural teachers were grossly underpaid, and they were beginning to demand a better deal; thus in 1935 a teachers' convention in Hidalgo demanded a minimum of 4.50 pesos a day,⁽⁴⁾ and in Michoacán in the same year they struck for 4 pesos⁽⁵⁾ (although these demands were not met),

After pay, the main problem was that of insecurity. At an early stage, along with pressure for better remuneration, there arose a demand for a graduated pay scale with an organised system of promotion to different grades. In 1926 the Ministry acknowledged the need for some classification of teachers according to experience and qualifications, although for the time being the principle was applied only in the Federal District.⁽⁶⁾ Shortly after this, work began on the draft of a law to provide teachers with some job security ("Reglamento de Estabilidad").⁽⁷⁾ In 1929, in the Presidency of Portes Gil, the "Ley de Inamovilidad y Escalafón del Magisterio" was passed, establishing by law the principles governing hiring and firing, transfers from one place to another, and promotion.⁽⁸⁾ However, the rules governing the promotion of rural teachers do not appear to have taken effect until 1931.⁽⁹⁾ Moreover, in

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- (1) "Memoria", 1933, vol.1. pp.15-17.
 (2) "Memoria", 1936, p.9; Sánchez, op.cit., p.62.
 (3) Ibid., pp.10-11.
 (4) "El Maestro Rural", vol.6 no.10, 15th May 1935.
 (5) See below, p.
 (6) "Memoria", 1926, pp.3-4 and 16.
 (7) "Memoria", 1927, p.13.
 (8) Castillo, op.cit., p.337.
 (9) "Excelsior", 11th Jan.1931.

1933 when Bassols increased the basic wage, he also made "a just and thorough selection of the personnel" whose rates were being improved, in order to eliminate those teachers who were totally unqualified and incompetent. As a result, 724 teachers were sacked, and although this decision may have been justified, the way in which it was carried out seems to have created considerable resentment. (1)

During the 1930's further rights and privileges were established, the most important being an insurance scheme to be financed by the Government. A partial life assurance for teachers was decreed by the Ministry of Public Education in 1928. (2) In 1932 Governor Ortiz Garza of Coahuila established another scheme for teachers in his State, and it was said that similar measures would be proposed in other States and on a national level. (3) A national scheme was introduced, but was based on salary deductions, and in 1938 the S.T.E.R.M. was campaigning to have it financed entirely by the Government; (4) however, no comprehensive system of benefits was established until the general Law of Social Security was passed in 1943. (5) The S.T.E.R.M. negotiated other benefits for its members, such as a 50% discount on the national railways. (6) Most of the teachers' fundamental employment rights were confirmed in the "Estatuto Jurídico de los Trabajadores al Servicio del Estado" covering all Government employees, which took effect in December 1938. (7)

A grievance which arose several times during the period under discussion was the temporary unemployment of significant numbers of teachers, despite the enormous expansion of education being undertaken by the Government. This

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- (1) "Memoria", 1933, vol.1 pp.15-17; Narciso Bassols, "Obras" (Mexico, 1964, Fondo de Cultura Económica), pp.264-267; "Excelsior", 1st, 3rd & 4th Jan.1933.
 (2) Prof. Ricardo Cabrera Lamadrid, "La Seguridad Social en Latinoamérica. El Funcionamiento del Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado", in "Conferencias Regionales de Orientación Sindical", S.N.T.E., Mexico, 1966, pp.193-210.
 (3) "Excelsior", 15th Nov.1932.
 (4) "El Machete", 2nd Aug.1938.
 (5) Cabrera Lamadrid, op.cit., p.198.
 (6) "La Voz de Mexico", 8th Oct.1938.
 (7) Castillo, op.cit., p.396; Gustavo Casasola, "Historia Gráfica de la Revolución Mexicana", Mexico, 1965, Editorial F. Trillas, p.2284.

paradoxical situation arose because of lack of resources and bad planning, which meant that funds were not allocated for new staff or school buildings, although the "Normal Schools" and similar institutions continued to produce more teachers. Thus in November 1932, 100 unemployed teachers in the Federal District took a petition to the Chamber of Deputies asking for more schools to be created. (1) In 1937, 350 recent graduates from the "Escuelas Regionales Campesinas" of Ayotzinapa, Guerrero and La Huerta, Michoacán wrote to Cárdenas saying there were no jobs for them and asking for the educational budget to be increased. (2) A similar petition was sent to Vázquez Vela in February 1939 by the "Federación de Estudiantes Socialistas Campesinos de México", (3) and in October of the same year another group marched to the Chamber of Deputies, claiming that there were nearly 2,000 teachers out of work in the country as a whole. (4) This may have been an exaggeration, but there is no doubt that the problem did exist owing to the stringent economies introduced by the Government after the oil expropriation of 1938.

Unemployment may have been comparatively rare, but the teachers' union spent much of their time agitating about similar bread-and-butter issues. However, they did also agitate for changes in educational policy and on general political issues. The second Convention of the C.M.M. in 1933 called for the federalisation of all education (a frequently reiterated demand) and for the reform of Article 3 of the Constitution; (5) and we have seen that some teachers unions and pressure groups played an important part in establishing "Socialist Education". The "Confederación Unitaria del Sureste de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza" in 1935 resolved to struggle not only for a minimum wage of 4 pesos a day, but also called for local teachers' councils to control the arbitrary authority of Inspectors and Directors of Education, and passed a resolution against

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- (1) "Excelsior" 8th Nov. 1932.
 (2) "El Machete", 6th Feb. 1937.
 (3) "La Voz de México", 15th Feb. 1939.
 (4) "Excelsior", 8th Oct. 1939.
 (5) Mayo, op. cit., pp. 53-56.

fascism, imperialism and war.⁽¹⁾ The congress which created the F.M.T.E. in 1937 called for the federalisation of education, a proper social security scheme, a minimum wage for teachers in private schools, and other straightforward union demands; but it also called for the dismissal of Juan B. Salazar and J. Muñoz Cota (heads of the Departments of Secondary Education and Fine Arts, respectively) as "reactionaries" and "divisionists". Attacks were also made on the Governors of various States and on General Cedillo the Minister of Agriculture.⁽²⁾

Despite all the faction strife and political manoeuvres, certain union policies remained fairly constant. One of these was federalisation, which it was hoped would bring uniform conditions for teachers all over the country, and end the situation in which they could become victims of insolvent, inefficient or reactionary State Governments. The S.T.E.R.M. was still pressing for this in 1938,⁽³⁾ and during that year federal control was established in eight States;⁽⁴⁾ but complete federalisation was never achieved. After the days of the C.M.M., unions were also consistently critical of the authority of educational officials such as Inspectors and heads of Departments. But their basic policies were inevitably concerned with improving the wages and conditions of their members, and this, as an editorial writer of "El Machete" pointed out in 1928,⁽⁵⁾ could only be achieved by one means:-

"The strike: here is the great solution to the immediate problem of today..... Only by increasing the great family of unionized workers will the teachers win respect....."

4. Strikes and Other Forms of Protest

Regardless of the policies and manoeuvres of the national unions, teachers all over the country soon became conscious of their rights and of

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- (1) "El Machete", 7th Dec.1935.
 (2) Ibid., 20th Feb.1937; "Excoisior", 9th and 13th Feb.1937.
 (3) "El Machete", 29th June 1938.
 (4) "Memoria", 1938, vol.1 p.180. the 8 States were Campeche, Hidalgo, Morelos, Oaxaca, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Querétaro and Guerrero.
 (5) "El Machete", 14th July1928.

the possibilities of united action. At first many rural teachers were hindered by their idealism and self-sacrifice, but there were some hardships and abuses which even the most dedicated refused to accept; and at a very early stage in the 1920's, spontaneous local protests and strikes began to affect the teaching profession.

Owing to the isolated, small-scale, localized nature of most teachers' strikes, it is impossible to make any serious estimate of the numbers involved and the days lost. But there is a general pattern which becomes obvious from a glance at newspapers and educational journals. There was never anything approaching a nation-wide stoppage, and most strikes were limited to one State or even one municipality. There were often specific local grievances giving rise to a series of 24-hour "guerrilla" walkouts in one locality, followed by a longer strike of two or three weeks if no progress was made; this might be accompanied by sympathy strikes in surrounding areas. Frequent actions of short duration were the rule, although there were several strikes lasting a month and a few continued for as long as four months.

The geographical distribution seems to have been fairly even, except for the State of Veracruz which was apparently far more strike-prone than other areas. This might reflect local conditions - a particularly harsh State Government or alternatively one sympathetic to militant teachers, although there is little to support either of these arguments; the Government of Veracruz, unlike that of the country as a whole, was more left-wing in the 'twenties and early 'thirties under Tejeda, than it was in the Cárdenas period. It does seem that teachers' strikes in Veracruz were most frequent in the latter period, under a relatively conservative local administration, but this is hardly an adequate explanation since other States with more autocratic Governments had fewer strikes. More to the point is the fact that the Communist Party, strong among teachers in general, was particularly strong in Vera-

crus; although it is hard to say whether Communism was the cause of the result of militancy. Other States whose teachers appear to have been more militant than most were Coahuila, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas.

While the teachers often constituted a kind of left-wing political vanguard, owing to their curious situation, the motivation of their strikes was not openly political in most cases. Their most common demands were concerned with very elementary issues: higher pay, job security, pension rights, or quite simply a guarantee that they would be paid on time and not six months later. The insolvency of many State and municipal Governments meant that time and time again, rural teachers were deprived of even the miserable pittance on which they were normally intended to subsist. Payment would be made several months in arrears, and there was little guarantee that past debts would be honoured (and although insolvency was the usual reason for non-payment, the device could be used as a political weapon by local authorities who found the teachers' influence subversive). This situation arose so frequently that the main demand in over 50% of all teachers' strikes known to the author, was for the payment of overdue wages.

An example of this was the strike by teachers in most parts of the State of Veracruz, from 25th September to 16th October 1927; in the port of Veracruz itself, pay was three months in arrears, and in Córdoba it was nine months in arrears. (1) The conservative press claimed that the State Government had already given the teachers cheap housing, and could not afford to pay the debt for the time being. But with the support of local trade unions and of Lombardo Toledano's "Confederación Nacional de Maestros", the teachers forced the authorities to meet part of the debt with the aid of the Federal Government. This strike had some political implications, since it contributed to some extent to the overthrow of Governor Heriberto Jara. (2)

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- (1) "Excoelador", 24th, 25th and 26th Sept. 1927; "El Machete", 24th Sept. 1927.
 (2) "Excoelador", 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th Sept., 1st, 6th, 10th, 12th, 14th and 15th Oct. 1927; "El Machete", 1st Oct. 1927.

A similar situation arose in November 1927 in Saltillo, Coahuila, where the teachers had not been paid for four months, but after a strike lasting eleven days their demands were met.⁽¹⁾ In July 1933 it was reported that the teachers of the Tampico district were undergoing great hardship because they had not been paid, and one woman was having to beg from public officials in order to eat.⁽²⁾ In the State of Mexico teachers went on strike for about a week in July 1935, mainly because of non-payment but also demanding a pay rise and certain legal benefits.⁽³⁾ Since this action failed, they struck again from 20th to 27th August, when most of their demands were met.⁽⁴⁾ In San Pedro, Coahuila there was a teachers' strike in April 1937, concerned mainly with the non-payment of wages, and it was stated that this was the third time within a year that they had struck for this reason.⁽⁵⁾ Many other examples could be quoted to show how widespread this situation was; and it was no answer to the teachers' problems to point out, as did their opponents, that irregular payment of public employees was common practice in provincial Mexico.

Other frequent causes of strikes were demands for higher pay, for certain educational reforms, and for the reinstatement of dismissed colleagues, and protests against unpopular Inspectors or other officials. A pay rise was the main demand of the ever-militant teachers of Veracruz State who struck for 20 days in February 1939 for a minimum wage of 4 pesos a day. In the end they obtained a very small rise, a fraction of what they wanted.⁽⁶⁾

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- (1) "El Machete", 19th Nov. 1927; "Excoflador", 15th, 16th, 17th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 24th Nov. 1927.
 - (2) "Excoflador", 3rd July 1933. The woman, a teacher in the village of Tancol, walked 12 kilometres into Tampico to ask for her long-overdue wages, and when these were not forthcoming she went to ask the Municipal President for assistance.
 - (3) Ibid, 19th, 20th, 22nd, & 23rd July 1935; "El Machete", 11th Aug. 1935.
 - (4) "Excoflador", 20th, 25th & 29th Aug. 1935.
 - (5) "Excoflador", 27th March, 16th & 18th April 1937; "El Machete", 16th May 1937.
 - (6) "Excoflador", 9th, 11th, 13th & 19th Feb. and 1st March 1939; "La Voz de Mexico", 23rd & 29th Jan, 8th, 13th, 17th & 19th Feb. and 2nd March 1939.

Another common demand was for the federalisation of education, which would end the problem of irregular payment and bring higher wages and other benefits to those previously employed by local authorities. This issue was raised by strike movements in Querétaro,⁽¹⁾ Hidalgo⁽²⁾ and Oaxaca⁽³⁾ in 1937, in the State of Mexico in 1940,⁽⁴⁾ and in fact all over the country about this time; we have seen that the S.T.E.R.M. campaigned on this issue and achieved partial success.

Opposition to dismissals appears to have been the main cause of a strike by teachers in Sinaloa from 15th March to 17th April 1938. However, the movement seems to have had a political background, since the dismissals were said to be due to the opposition of the State Government to the teachers' participation in the affairs of labour unions;⁽⁵⁾ on 20th March 10,000 workers demonstrated in Mazatlán in support of the teachers, and there was general agitation against Governor Delgado, who was accused of being behind the murders of militant peasants and the overthrow of a popular Municipal President.⁽⁶⁾ In Querétaro in July 1940 teachers were demanding the immediate reinstatement of dismissed colleagues, along with higher wages, provision of better educational facilities in the schools, and the replacement of two unpopular Inspectors and of the Director of Federal Education in the State.⁽⁷⁾

Demands for the replacement of unpopular officials were frequent in the late 'thirties, and while they sometimes arose from simple resentment against high-handed actions, they were often a reflection of political conflicts. Thus in September and October 1938, left-wing teachers who were campaigning against

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- (1) "El Machete", 16th, Jan. 1937; "Excelsior", 11th, 12th and 17th Jan. 1937.
 (2) "El Machete", 26th June 1937.
 (3) Ibid., 11th July 1937; "Excelsior", 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th & 7th July 1937.
 (4) "Excelsior", 23rd Sept. and 6th Oct. 1940; "La Voz de México", 29th Sept. 10th and 17th Nov. and 15th Dec. 1940.
 (5) "Excelsior", 5th April 1938; "El Machete", 2nd and 9th April 1938.
 (6) "Excelsior", 18th, 22nd and 24th March and 18th April 1938.
 (7) "Excelsior", 24th July 1940.

Governor Román Yocupido of Sonora, directed their main attacks against the Director of Education in the State, Leobardo Parra y Marquina, "an unconditional servant of the reactionary Governor". After a short strike the militant teachers achieved the expulsion of Parra y Marquina, but only at the price of having eleven of their own number expelled from the State as well. (1)

In 1935, according to "El Machete", there was widespread friction between teachers and their supervisors - "There is a serious conflict between the teachers' organisations and the Inspectors and Directors of Education who for so long have manipulated the 'Confederación Mexicana de Maestros', preventing this organisation from fighting for the defence of the interests of educational workers...." (2)

In 1938 the official report ("Memoria") of the Ministry of Public Education recognised the existence of friction, and the Director General of Primary Education, Rafael Méndez Aguirre - himself sympathetic to demands for change - stated:-

"On the basis of the criticism made in previous years of the authoritarian methods and the personal tendencies of individuals who occupied posts of responsibility, the opinion was being strengthened in the mind of the teachers that supervisory systems were unnecessary and that for the correct channelling of the national educational system, the (Teachers') Councils were adequate...." (3)

In spite of this, the current systems were maintained and there was continued opposition to many leading officials. Thus there were complaints against the Directors of Federal Education in Jalisco (4) and San Luis Potosí (5) in 1938, in Zacatecas (6) and Puebla (7) in 1939, and in Tamaulipas, (8) Jalisco (9) and Veracruz (10) in 1940.

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- (1) "La Voz de México", 21st and 28th Sept., 1st and 6th Oct. 1938.
 (2) "El Machete", 21st Sept. 1935.
 (3) "Memoria", 1938, vol.1 p.177. Méndez Aguirre - who was an active Communist - nevertheless went on to say that the continuance of the present supervisory system was essential.
 (4) "El Machete", 21st July 1938. In this case the S.T.E.R.M. defended the man concerned, Eliseo Bandala, who was a radical.
 (5) "Exelsior", 3rd Oct. 1938; "La Voz de México", 4th Oct. 1938. Again, the S.T.E.R.M. defended this official, Prof. Rodríguez Lozano, against a campaign led by the C.T.M. organ "El Popular".
 (6) "La Voz de México", 27th March 1939.
 (7) "Exelsior", 18th March 1939.
 (8) "La Voz de México", 7th April 1940. The official concerned, Anibal Pérez González, had recently been expelled from the Communist Party on charges of opportunism.
 (9) "Exelsior", 9th Sept. 1939. Interestingly enough, the discontented teachers of Jalisco, whom this report described as "ultracomunistas" and "rusofilos" contd

Governor Román Yocupido of Sonora, directed their main attacks against the Director of Education in the State, Leobardo Parra y Marquina, "an unconditional servant of the reactionary Governor". After a short strike the militant teachers achieved the expulsion of Parra y Marquina, but only at the price of having eleven of their own number expelled from the State as well.⁽¹⁾ In 1935, according to "El Machete", there was widespread friction between teachers and their supervisors - "There is a serious conflict between the teachers' organisations and the Inspectors and Directors of Education who for so long have manipulated the 'Confederación Mexicana de Maestros', preventing this organisation from fighting for the defence of the interests of educational workers...." ⁽²⁾ In 1938 the official report ("Memoria") of the Ministry of Public Education recognised the existence of friction, and the Director General of Primary Education, Rafael Méndez Aguirre - himself sympathetic to demands for change - stated:-

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- (1) "La Voz de México", 21st and 28th Sept., 1st and 6th Oct. 1938.
 - (2) "El Machete", 21st Sept. 1935.
 - (3) "Memoria", 1938, vol.1 p.177. Méndez Aguirre - who was an active Communist - nevertheless went on to say that the continuance of the present supervisory system was essential.
 - (4) "El Machete", 21st July 1938. In this case the S.T.E.R.M. defended the man concerned, Eliseo Bandala, who was a radical.
 - (5) "Excelsior", 3rd Oct. 1938; "La Voz de México", 4th Oct. 1938. Again, the S.T.E.R.M. defended this official, Prof. Rodríguez Lozano, against a campaign led by the C.T.M. organ "El Popular".
 - (6) "La Voz de México", 27th March 1939.
 - (7) "Excelsior", 18th March 1939.
 - (8) "La Voz de México", 7th April 1940. The official concerned, Aníbal Pérez González, had recently been expelled from the Communist Party on charges of opportunism.
 - (9) "Excelsior", 9th Sept. 1939. Interestingly enough, the discontented teachers of Jalisco, whom this report described as "ultracomunistas" and "rusofilos" contd

Naturally enough the top officials of the Ministry, even those who were sympathetic to the teachers' unions and their demands, were concerned about the extent of conflict and the disruption of an educational system which was in any case under heavy attack from conservative circles. They tried to overcome this by meeting the teachers' demands as far as possible - though they were hindered in this by financial difficulties and the hostility of many local authorities - and by appealing to them not to strike. The question came to a head in January 1937, when there was a rash of teachers' strikes (in Querétaro, Coahuila, Campeche, Yucatán, Quintana Roo and Tamaulipas)⁽¹⁾ and the Secretary of Education, Vázquez Vela, called on them to return to work:-

"The revolutionary action of the teaching profession must not be diverted from its main aim, and much less become denatured and distorted in manifestations which only lead to a loss of time for the pupils. In other words, the union activity of the teaching profession should not go beyond the interests of the collectivity whom it serves, and therefore the Ministry cannot, for whatever reason, tolerate strike movements. This position of the Ministry is due not only to the desire to safeguard the interests of the collectivity, but also to the fact that its intervention is enough to resolve any conflict which may arise, as practice has demonstrated....." (2)

This argument had considerable appeal to left-wing teachers who felt a deeply-rooted loyalty to the Cárdenas Government which they regarded as leading the struggle of the Mexican people against imperialism and internal reaction; and Vázquez Vela's appeal did have some effect. But none could deny that the discontent of the teachers was in many cases entirely justified. In many rural areas they still suffered quite appalling hardship, as in the Soconusco region of Chiapas where in November 1940, 75% of the teachers were reported to have malaria and others to be victims of the terrible disease onchocercosis;

were also attacking the local leaders of the S.T.E.R.M. and "exalting the personality of the ex-pre-candidate General Francisco Múgica".

- (10) "Execlior", 10th Sept.1939.
 (1) "El Machete", 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th Jan. and 6th Feb.1937; "Execlior", 10th, 11th, 12th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 31st Jan.1937.
 (2) "Execlior", 21st Jan.1937. Vázquez Vela's speech was made on 20th Jan, and the teachers of Campeche, Yucatan and Quintana Roo immediately returned to work.

in March of that year Cardenas had visited the area and ordered improvements to be carried out, but it seems that little had been done.⁽¹⁾

5. Political Attitudes and Involvement

It is clear from what has gone before that many teachers were Communists or left-wingers of similar views. But there was always a significant minority of liberal or right-wing teachers, and it must be stressed that in the 1920's their politicization had scarcely begun. From the beginning many of them had a radical or revolutionary spirit, and the nature of their work with its emphasis on community development and identification with the peasants made them very receptive to socialist and communist ideas. Although few precise figures are available, it seems that these ideas began to penetrate the profession in the late 'twenties, and large numbers of teachers joined the Communist Party in the early 'thirties.

In June 1937 the Communist Party claimed 17,000 members (probably an accurate figure, since it is generally recognised that it reached its peak membership of some 30,000 towards the end of Cardenas' Presidency, about 1939); and the Party itself admitted that almost one third of these 17,000 were teachers, an extraordinarily high proportion.⁽²⁾ At the time there were some 40,000 or more teachers in the country, which means that about one teacher in eight was a Communist - at first sight not such a high proportion, but it must be remembered that for everyone who was a member of the Party, three or four would be sympathizers. It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that in the years from 1936 to 1939, over half the teaching profession was pro-Communist, although from 1939 to 1942 the Party underwent a crisis which resulted in the departure or expulsion of thousands of members, including many of the teachers.

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- (1) "La Voz de México" 10th Nov. 1940. These teachers were still being paid only 68 pesos a month, a salary which had been general ten years earlier (and was scarcely adequate even then).
- (2) "El Machete", 26th June 1937. The breakdown of the membership was said to be 36.8% workers, 32.4% teachers, and 19.5% peasants.

The involvement of teachers in politics appears to have begun on a personal level, before the process of unionization was far advanced. Even in the early 1920's many rural teachers participated in the political campaigns of local "caudillos" and popular leaders who had emerged from the Revolution. It was only to be expected that they should feel identified with the aspirations for social justice which had emerged from the turmoil of the previous decade, and it was natural that many of them should see the solution in political terms. Many teachers took part in the election campaigns of General Múgica for the Governorship of Michoacán in 1917 and 1920,⁽¹⁾ and local research in other States would almost certainly reveal similar activities. The important role of teachers in the demagogic rule of Garrido Canabal in Tabasco is well-known, and in September 1931 "Excoelsior" denounced the conduct of a cultural mission from Veracruz which was propagandizing on behalf of Garrido Canabal as a possible candidate for the Presidency.⁽²⁾

As the political inclinations of many of its employees became apparent, the Ministry of Public Education began to show concern and to urge them to keep out of politics. In 1929 Ezequiel Padilla declared to Congress:-

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- (1) Personal archive of General Francisco J. Múgica in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán; unclassified file "Correspondencia y Miscelánea, 1914-1921".
- (2) "Excoelsior", 10th and 15th Sept. 1931. The members of the mission, then visiting Mexico City, were accused of being responsible for a terrorist attack against a church there. The newspaper quoted a letter from one of their number to Vázquez Vela, then Secretary to the Governor of Veracruz: "We took greetings to Engineer Garrido, brother of the Governor of Tabasco, and to the Director of Education of that State, who showed their satisfaction with the work carried out, adding that it should not only be anticlerical and anti-religious, but that we ought to give the Colonel (Garrido Canabal) a good press, since by this means he would see that we are in favour of his candidacy for the Presidency....."

"I cannot insist too much on the necessity that you should consider the school and the teachers as non-political entities, leaving themselves free to dedicate themselves, without the danger or the narrowness of faction or party, to the realisation of the basic and essential work upon which the whole structure of the Nation has to rest. The teachers, and especially the rural teachers, are undeniably a powerful influence in the community. I beg you never to convert them into political factors....." (1)

Similar appeals were made by several leading officials in the early 'thirties: in 1930 Padilla's successor Aaron Saenz declared that "We must prevent the teachers from becoming demagogues, thus discrediting their vital role as social workers and guides of national life". (2) The Ministry stressed this point of view in all the organs at its disposal -, thus in June 1933 the magazine "El Maestro Rural" carried an editorial entitled "Rural Teachers Must Not Act As Politicians". (3) But it was soon obvious that the Ministry was fighting a losing battle, since political activity was becoming so widespread among the teaching profession that not even harsh disciplinary measures would be able to stop it.

In any case, many people found it difficult to see why teachers, any more than other sections of the population, should be prevented from taking part in politics. While it might be undesirable that political views should be drummed into the children in the classroom, it was natural that a rural teacher who had won respect and honour in a community, should want to influence the way it was run, and from there it was a short step to participating in State politics. Moreover, where the teacher did have the confidence of the common people - and despite errors and difficulties there were many villages where this was so - they often wanted him to help in their political

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- (1) "Memoria", 1929, p.XI (address to Congress by Lic. Ezequiel Padilla, then Secretary of Education).
 (2) "Memoria", 1930, p.LXVI (address to Congress by Lic. Aaron Saenz).
 (3) "El Maestro Rural", vol.3 no.2, 15th June 1933.

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 (3) "El Maestro Rural", vol.3 no.2, 15th June 1933.

struggles. After the unending manipulation, corruption and false promises to which they had been subjected by traditional "caciques" and pseudo-revolutionary "caudillos", the teacher was one of the few people they could trust as having some integrity.

From the point of view of the teacher himself, entrusted with a high-minded social mission to improve the lives of the peasants and the Indians, the political implications of his work were often inescapable. What was the point of teaching new agricultural methods to the peasants if all the good land was in the hands of a few "latifundistas"? How would a local co-operative succeed if the "cacique" monopolised all the trade outlets? How could alcoholism be stamped out if a deputy in the State legislature derived his income from liquor sales and distributed "aguardiente" to sway elections? Not only was the teacher encouraged by such factors to enter politics, it might be impossible for him to carry on his work without a change in the political system. A better situation for producing Socialists and Communists could scarcely have been devised.

Under these circumstances, especially in the early 'thirties when the official stress on social work and community development in education was increased, the teachers moved rapidly from vague declarations of solidarity with workers and peasants and support for progressive local politicians, to more radical forms of political expression. This was the time when many of them joined the Communist Party, and by about 1935 the orthodox Party line was being reflected in declarations from teachers' congresses and unions all over Mexico. Thus the founding congress of the F.M.T.E. in February 1937 called for the expulsion of Trotsky (who had just arrived in the country) and passed resolutions against fascism in Spain, against Batista in Cuba, and in favour of the formation of a Popular Front. ⁽¹⁾ At a meeting of the S.T.E.R.M.'s

(1) "El Machete", 13th and 20th Feb. 1937.

National Council in September 1938, Campos Salas denounced the work of dissident groups whom he described as "Trotskyites" and complained that "Trotsky himself, violating the conditions under which he was given hospitality in Mexico, is agitating among the teaching profession, as also among the workers...." (1) Similar denunciations were made by local unions as well, such as the Oaxaca branch of the S.T.E.R.M. which in January 1939 warned against "the manoeuvres of divisionist elements, manipulated by Trotskyites..." (2)

It is however probable that the extent of Trotskyism in the teaching profession was exaggerated by the Communist Party, which naturally used the term as a label with which to brand dissident elements in the Party and on its fringes.

In these years Communist influence in Mexican education was certainly very great, although it is an exaggeration to say, as does Karl M. Schmitt, that "if one desired a good teaching job the best avenue was through affiliation with a Communist cell in the Education office". (3) In many cases, by mid-1939 there were already signs of serious divisions within the Party and of disillusionment among many of its followers. These dissensions were to come to a head with the expulsion in March 1940 of the General Secretary, Hernán Laborde, and his second-in-command Valentín Campa, on poorly substantiated charges of corruption and political deviationism. (4) Disagreement also resulted from international events, particularly the Nazi-Soviet pact and the Soviet invasion of Finland; in December 1939 the invasion of Finland was condemned by several teachers' groups, notably the Morelos branch of the S.T.E.R.M. and it seems that a fair number of teachers left the party for this reason. (5)

(1) Ibid., 3rd Sept. 1938.

(2) "La Voz de México", 8th Jan. 1939.

(3) Karl M. Schmitt, "Communism in Mexico: A Study in Political Frustration", Austin, University of Texas Press, 1965, p. 19.

(4) Ibid., p. 20.

(5) "Excelsior", 10th Dec. 1939.

Right-wing groups among the teachers were now emboldened by these divisions on the left, and there was increasing agitation in the press against "Socialist Education"; an organisation called the "Asociación Nacional de Maestros Independientes" became increasingly active.⁽¹⁾ We have seen how right-wing delegates formed a breakaway group during the National Congress of the S.T.E.R.M. in February 1940. But the importance of these groups must not be exaggerated; the majority of teachers still had socialist sympathies, even if they were disillusioned with the Communist Party.

There was at this time a systematic offensive by several leading politicians - whether directly inspired by the Government is not clear - against all socialist tendencies in education, a campaign which was not supported by most teachers. Thus 25 Communist and sympathetic teachers were sacked from the "España-México" model school for Spanish refugee children in Morelia,⁽²⁾ and a considerable stir was caused by the dismissal of the Communist Rafael Méndez Aguirre from the post of Director General of Urban and Rural Primary Education in the States and Territories, in May 1940.⁽³⁾ Méndez Aguirre, who had held the post for three years, was dismissed on charges of inefficiency and failure to obey orders. In reply he claimed that the action was due to purely political motives, and denounced "the policy of disorder and anarchy introduced by Lic. Vázquez Vela", in which "lies the origin of all the evils affecting the Education of the people",⁽⁴⁾ Many teachers recognised Méndez Aguirre's ability and devotion to duty, and suspected the reasons given for his dismissal.

(1) *Ibid.*, 10th and 18th Dec. 1939.

(2) "Excelesior", 11th Feb. 1940; "La Voz de México", 11th Feb. 1940.

(3) "La Voz de México", 19th & 26th May 1940; "Excelesior", 13th May 1940.

(4) Open letter from Prof. Rafael Méndez Aguirre to Prof. Francisco Nicodemo, Under-Secretary of Public Education, 15th May 1940; published in "La Voz de México" 26th May 1940. In this letter, Méndez Aguirre levelled serious accusations at the Secretary and Under-Secretary concerning their handling of the Ministry's affairs. He said that his loyalty to the S.T.E.R.M. was a cause of hostility to him from other officials, and denounced "reactionary and immoral Directors and Inspectors of Education, accustomed to controlling the teachers like foremen", and who, he said, made arrangements with private companies for the closure of Schools of Article 123 (which the companies were supposed to maintain under public supervision) and embezzled their subordinates' pay. He also alleged that progressive measures which he encouraged, in accordance with Government policy, such as the formation of democratic Teachers' Councils and the furtherance of the social activity of the schools, were hindered by Vázquez conte

In contrast to this, it should be pointed out that the teachers were at times encouraged by the Government to undertake political activity, in the form of publicizing and popularizing official policy. They played a key rôle in rallying support for the Government in the crucial months following the oil expropriation in 1938. An official report commented:-

"This Office considers that the activity of the teachers under its control ought not to remain excluded by any means from the general policy of our country, and for this reason has issued several statements of a general character, giving concrete instructions to the teachers in order to justify, and to obtain from the Mexican people their loyal and sincere co-operation in, the policy of economic recuperation which the President of the Republic, General of Division Lázaro Cárdenas, has been carrying out with true patriotism; in this way the teachers have formed in the Mexican people a strong consciousness of the social transcendence of the decisions to nationalise the railways, the ejidal redistribution of the Laguna region, the ejidal division of the Henequén Area of Yucatán, (and) the expropriation of the property of the oil companies in view of their attitude of insubordination to our laws." (1)

In accordance with this, teachers organised meetings and rallies to support official policy; and their rôle in stimulating national consciousness and unity is well-known. Furthermore, the teachers' unions, like most other unions in Mexico, were used (and are still used) to drum up support for official candidates in elections. At an early stage in the campaign of 1939-1940 the S.T.E.R.M. leaders gave their backing to Avila Camacho, and on 7th July 1940 they issued a manifesto in support of his candidacy. (2) There was considerable discontent over this, for in the early stages many left-wing teachers favoured General Mugica; some of them were brought into line since Avila Camacho had the endorsement not only of the Government but also of the

Vela and Micodemo. He condemned expenditure on special imported educational materials when there was a shortage of essentials like chalk, notebooks and pencils, and lamented the recent suppression of the valuable magazines "Educación" and "El Maestro Rural". Finally he defended his support of strike action by the S.T.E.R.M., and reaffirmed his loyalty to the Mexican Communist Party. The truth of these allegations is hard to prove, but they do not seem to have been answered.

- (2) "Memoria", 1938, vol.1 pp.182-183 (report of the Technical Office of Rural Schools).
 (2) "La Voz de México", 7th July 1940.

Communist Party, but for others this was just one more reason for leaving the Communist Party. At a later stage, some right-wingers became involved in Almazan's campaign. At all events, there was considerable opposition to Avila Camacho for various reasons, and there were not a few protests like that of "more than a hundred" teachers in Guanajuato, who in October 1939 made an energetic protest against "the imposition on the part of the leaders of the Teaching Profession, of a certain candidate for the Presidency of the Republic...." (1)

Finally, it must be admitted that few individual teachers achieved prominence in national politics, for all their political activity. A few examples spring to mind, notably Octaviano Campos Salas, now Secretary of Industry and Commerce in the Diaz Ordaz Government, and Jesus Romero Flores, a veteran teacher from Michoacan who is now a Senator. But the teaching profession does not seem to have produced more politicians than have other groups, such as lawyers, engineers or the military. Collectively the teachers did not influence national politics in a decisive way, except possibly over the introduction of "Socialist Education"; but their participation in local politics was very important, and their social impact on rural Mexico was incalculable.

(1) "Excelsior", 22nd Oct. 1939.

PART II

THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

CHAPTER VTHE SOCIAL ROLE OF TEACHERS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE:THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM1. The task of the Rural Teacher and the Nature of the Agrarian Problem

It will be apparent from chapters two and three that the duties a rural teacher might be called upon to perform embraced almost every aspect of village life, and in fact the social task for which he was briefed was so vague and general as to be capable of almost infinite extension. Ideally, in addition to his purely educational work, the teacher should be social worker, nurse, midwife, agronomist, craftsman and legal adviser all in one. In practice this was impossible, and we have seen that many teachers failed even in the most elementary aspects of their work; but a surprising number did succeed, through enthusiasm and with the help of such training as they received from Cultural Missions and other agencies, in bringing many practical improvements to the communities they served. Thus in many a rural community new wells were dug, the standard of housing was improved, elementary hygienic practices were introduced, simple crafts such as carpentry, basketwork or weaving were improved or introduced for the first time, and even roads were built as a result of the stimulus and example of the teacher. Sports, particularly volleyball and basketball; civic festivals celebrating national events and holidays; dancing and popular drama; - all these features of modern life were introduced to thousands of Mexican villages for the first time by these dedicated men and women. Agricultural techniques were improved by the use of crop rotation, fertilisers, new crops and implements - simple but effective improvements which were often due to the work of the "maestros rurales". Western-style clothing was introduced, the diet became more varied, alcoholism diminished as a result of determined campaigns, and the people became more sociable and less superstitious. The author has reports of scores of cases in which each of these elementary improvements was brought to

a Mexican community by the work of the teacher. However, it is intended here to examine only one aspect of the teachers' work, but one which was fundamental for the peasantry: their contribution to the resolution of the agrarian problem.

It has already been emphasised that all the excellent social work carried on by the teachers would ultimately do little to change the life of the rural population so long as the basic problem, which was economic, remained. If a community was deprived of the means of subsistence - in other words, generally, the land - it would not progress. Better hygiene, sports, new clothes, new techniques - such things would mean little, and would in fact often be impossible to introduce, if the peasants did not have enough land to support themselves at least a little above the minimum subsistence level. For this reason, rather than attempt a detailed account of all these facets of the teachers' activity, it has been decided to concentrate on their contribution to the agrarian reforms: to see how far they helped the peasants to organise into leagues to fight for land, to go through the legal processes of obtaining land from the Government, to organise co-operatives and to defend and improve the land once they had won it.

The history of Mexican agrarian reform has been covered by many authors,⁽¹⁾ but since it is very complicated a brief explanation is necessary. Under Madero the question was scarcely considered, and it was only under consistent pressure from the peasants themselves, notably the "zapatistas" in Morelos and neighbouring States, that the bourgeois revolutionaries were eventually obliged to include land reform as an important element in their programme. Initially the peasant movements were largely defensive in nature, concerned mainly to regain possession of communal lands lost owing to the encroachment of the big estates during the Diaz dictatorship. Zapata's "Plan de Ayala" of 1911 called for the restitution of such lands to those villages which could prove ownership,

(1) See, for example, Nathan Whetten, "Rural Mexico" (Chicago & London, 1948, University of Chicago Press), and Eyles N. Simpson, "The Ejido: Mexico's Way Out" (Chapel Hill, 1937, University of North Carolina Press).

and where proof was not available but the need was obvious, for expropriation of land from neighbouring "haciendas", with compensation of one-third of the value.⁽¹⁾ The first full legal expression of the agrarian programme was Carranza's famous decree of 6th January 1915; in this the right of villages to obtain lands was hedged around with all kinds of qualifications, but it did provide the basis for future legislation. Villages were required to make application to the State Governor, and each case would then be considered by State Agrarian Commission; if the application was approved the inhabitants could then take possession provisionally, until the grant was reviewed by the National Agrarian Commission and confirmed by Presidential decree. Only communities with "categoria politica" could apply (in other words, many villages were excluded on a technicality, and "asasillado" peons - those resident on a "hacienda" - were excluded); the peasants had to take the initiative; the emphasis was on restoration of lands illegally acquired by the big estates, and grants ("dotaciones") by expropriation where a village had no previous legal claim were intended to be exceptional; and the landlords were allowed a year in which to take legal action against the reform, so that in practice they could often defeat it by obtaining writs of "amparo".⁽²⁾ In other words, Carranza's decree was thoroughly negative, and the amount of land actually distributed under this law was negligible.

The legal position was improved considerably by Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution, which introduced a functional concept of property rights, called for the subdivision of the big estates, and provided for direct grant ("dotacion") irrespective of the question of restoration.⁽³⁾ But while Carranza remained in power little was done to implement the reform, except by frustrated peasants who seized land by force of arms up and down the country.

(1) John Womack, Jr. "Zapata and the Mexican Revolution" (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1969), Appendix B.

(2) Simpson, *op.cit.*, pp.56-61.

(3) *Ibid.*, pp.65-74.

During the 20 years following Carranza's decree, nearly a hundred laws were issued concerning land distribution, but the significant changes were few. In 1920 Obregon issued a vague and confused "Ley de Ejidos", followed in 1922 by the Agrarian Regulatory Law, confirming and amplifying the provisions of the 1915 decree and of Article 27. The scope of this law was still restricted, but the period allowed for landlords to appeal against expropriation was reduced from one year to one month.⁽¹⁾ Apart from other measures to encourage colonization of unsettled public lands, Obregon did little, and the total of land distributed during his Presidency was little more than one million hectares⁽²⁾ - a mere pinprick in relation to the size of the problem. During Calles' Presidency from 1924 to 1928 land distribution reached a significant level for the first time, but was accompanied by a move against the communal traditions of the peasantry, the Law of Ejido Patrimony of 1925, intended to encourage the breaking-up of "ejidos" into small private holdings.⁽³⁾ - in other words, to develop a rural middle class which would supposedly promote economic efficiency, with the desires of the peasantry taking second place. In 1929 land distributed exceeded one million hectares, but during the next three years Calles, still the power behind the scenes, changed his mind and tried to abandon the reform altogether.⁽⁴⁾ There was, however, one victory for the "agraristas" in 1932, when radical congressmen pushed through a law abolishing the rights of landowners to use "amparo" writs to prevent grants of "ejido" lands.⁽⁵⁾

Simpson⁽⁶⁾ describes the year 1933 as the crisis in the agrarian reform, but this phrase really applies to the whole period from 1930 to 1933. During these years there was intense in-fighting between the conservative and radical

(1) Ibid., pp. 81-85.

(2) Whetten, op.cit., p.125.

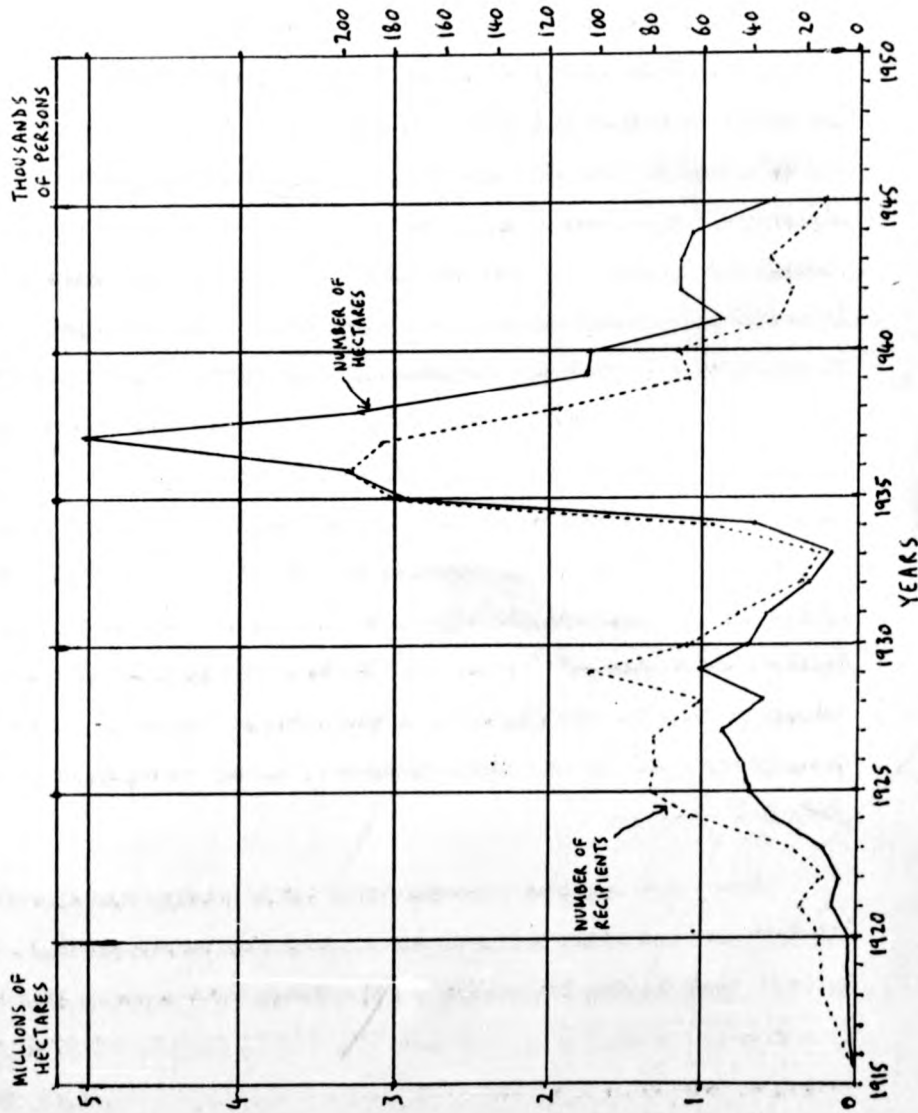
(3) Simpson, op.cit., pp.89-90.

(4) Ibid., pp.111-118; Whetten, op.cit., pp.125-127.

(5) Simpson, op.cit., pp.118-120.

(6) Op.cit., pp.125-127.

Fig. 3. Land Distribution, 1915-1945.
(Source: Whetten, "Rural Mexico", p. 126).



(1) Ibid
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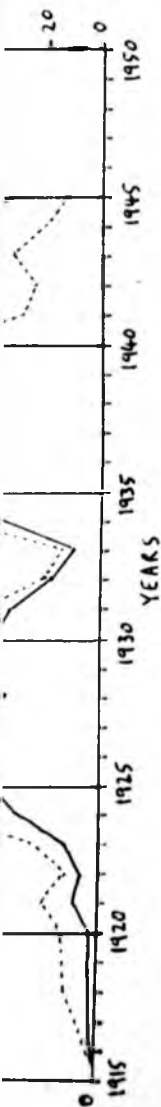
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wings of the P.N.R., concerning the course not only of the agrarian programme but of national politics as a whole; and by 1933 the left wing had gained the upper hand in this struggle, aided powerfully by growing pressure from discontented peasants. The result was the Six Year Plan and the Agrarian Code of March 1934.

In July 1933 the "stop" laws of 1931 (ending land distribution in several States) were abolished and the State Agrarian Commissions re-established; and during the following months measures were passed to accelerate procedure and transform the National Agrarian Commission into an autonomous Agrarian Department. The Agrarian Code systematised all previous legislation, increased federal authority in order to prevent obstruction of the reform by local politicians, and widened the scope of land distribution by a number of measures, including at long last the admission of "acasillado" peons to participation in the programme. (1) In 1934 the amount of land distributed rose once again, and in 1935, with Cardenas in the Presidency, the unprecedented figure of nearly 3 million hectares was distributed. The reform had at least achieved a significant momentum, and during Cardenas' six-year term some 17 million hectares were distributed in all, twice as much as under all previous administrations put together. (2) After 1938 the rate of distribution did fall significantly, largely owing to the need for national consolidation after the oil expropriation, but it was still higher than in any year prior to Cardenas' accession to power.

It is quite apparent even from this brief summary that for a village to obtain land, even after the national political climate became more favourable in 1934, much complex litigation was necessary. The peasants must be members of a fixed community; they must prove their need for land; they must take the initiative in drawing up a petition; they must submit to a census; there must

(1) *Ibid.*, pp.455-458.
 (2) Whetten, *op.cit.*, p.125.



be large properties unprotected by "certificados de inafectabilidad" within a radius of 7 kilometres; and representatives of the peasants must follow up the progress of their petition through the State and Federal administrations. In all this they naturally welcomed the help of any sympathetic individual with some knowledge of law and politics, who might be a lawyer, a doctor or an engineer, but far more often a teacher.

2. The official orientation of the Teachers

It has been seen that in the early years of rural education, the teachers' rôle in village life was far from clearly defined, and although more precise instructions were issued after 1931, the position was still confused. In general terms it was understood that the teacher was to be the friend and champion of the peasantry, and hence that he would help them in their efforts to obtain land and improve agricultural methods; but initially at least, it was scarcely intended that he should become an agitator and a leader of peasant movements.

A mild hint concerning the teachers' rôle in this field was contained in a circular sent to the heads of Cultural Missions in 1930 instructing them to concentrate their work in those areas most severely affected by the "cristero" rebellion. (1) The emphasis was on pacification of the peasants by civic instruction and education to end religious fanaticism, but instruction concerning the agrarian reform was also mentioned as an instrument of Government policy. Two years later the direction of policy became clearer with the transference of the Central Agricultural Schools to the care of the Ministry of Public Education and the transformation of the Office of Cultural Missions into a Department of Agricultural and Normal Rural Education. (2) The emphasis was still on adapting education to rural needs, with no mention of agrarian reform as such; but then in December 1932 a meeting of leading educational officials issued a

(1) "Memoria", 1930, pp.136-138.

(2) "Memoria", 1932, vol.1, pp.198-200; and 1933, vol.1, pp.41-45.

report "On the Foundations of Rural Education" containing the following interesting propositions:- (1)

"First. Rural education should be based on the psychology of the peasant child, adolescent and adult.....

"Third. It will be oriented primarily, with the aim of satisfying the economic needs of the rural classes.....

"Fourth. It will tend to transform the systems of production and distribution of wealth, with a frankly collectivist aim....."

This new and radical approach was also apparent in the third number of the magazine "El Maestro Rural", which was to be such a valuable instrument of educational policy during the next eight years. One of the first articles entitled "Gejo and I (Stories of a simple peasant)" represented a fictitious dialogue between a peasant and a teacher, justifying the redistribution of land:- (2)

"Gejo:....I was thinking: the landlord inherited the lands from his father; his father bought them, fifteen years ago, from another man; and this man perhaps bought them from another and so on.... but the first one to sell them, whom did he pay in order to be owner of these lands? As I see it, he simply 'grabbed' them.

"I: So it was, Gejo. Before the world was as you see it now, anyone was free to cultivate the land which he wanted..... there was none to say this land is mine....."

Similar moral tales followed in later issues, so that the rural teachers (to whom the magazine was distributed free of charge) could have little doubt as to what general attitude they should adopt with regard to agrarian reform - even if their precise role was not clear.

The identification of rural teachers with the peasantry was further promoted about this time by the decision of various States to give each teacher a plot of land from the "Ejido" to cultivate for himself; in the words of Ildro

(1) "Memoria", 1933, vol.1, pp.52-77.

(2) "El Maestro Rural", vol.1, no.3, pp.8-9.(1st Apl.1932).

Castillo, (1) the teacher would not simply be "ruralised" by being obliged to work in the country, but would himself be re-educated as a peasant. Shortly afterwards an article by Cesar Martino (2) stressed the need to "define just how intimate is the relation between the rural school and the 'ejido', as a serious and profound creation of the Revolution"; in rural communities still oppressed by the "hacienda" system, the teacher could not ignore this basic problem:-

"It is necessary for rural teachers to know and to say, that that village has not satisfied its needs, that it is a lie that the agrarian problem has been finished (this was written when land reform was virtually at a standstill); so long as there are hungry people in our countryside, the Revolution will not have finished."

In 1933 Narciso Bassols declared that "The Ministry of Education believes intensely that there exists a powerful kinship, an indestructible link between the school and the 'ejido'", and the teachers' journal urged its readers to participate actively in agrarian reform. (3) The Ministry advised teachers to organise the peasants into co-operatives, both for production and for consumption, and pointed out in a circular (4) that the Directors and Inspectors of Education were those chiefly responsible for "arousing in the teachers this spirit of solidarity and sympathy towards the disinherited..." Early in 1934 the new Agrarian Code was published in its entirety by "El Maestro Rural" with a commentary explaining its implications for the teachers. (5)

That these increasingly frequent and categorical instructions were beginning to produce results, aided no doubt by the concrete experience of the teachers themselves, is indicated by a survey made in 1934 among the students of the Central Agricultural School of Teneria in the State of Mexico. (6) The

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- (1) Ibid., vol.1, no.10, p.23 (15th July 1932).
 (2) Ibid., vol.1, no.15, pp.11-12 (1st Oct.1932).
 (3) Ibid., vol.2, no.8, p.33 (1st Feb.1933).
 (4) Circular no.IV-14-132 of 12th Sept.1933, quoted in "El Maestro Rural", vol.3, no.9, pp.6-7 (1st Oct.1933).
 (5) Ibid., vol.4, no.1-2 (1st & 15th Jan.1934).
 (6) Ibid., vol.4, no.2, pp.20-22 (15th Jan.1934).

School gave part-time courses for the improvement of teachers working in the area, while many of its full-time students would themselves become teachers on graduating; it is therefore interesting that all the pupils showed militantly agrarian attitudes in their replies, speaking of their "duty and desire to instruct and organise the peasant masses", of how they would leave the School trained "like a lion against the exploiters", and so on. Similar views were expressed by teachers who wrote in to "El Maestro Rural", such as Marcelino Reyes of the Central Agricultural School of Santa Lucia, Durango, who argued that the most urgent task was the economic emancipation of the rural population; to this end the teachers must be converted into "dynamic leaders". (1)

Although the teachers were often warned by the Government against intervention in politics, the political nature of the agrarian question was clear for all to see, and during most of Cardenas' Presidency the teachers were encouraged to act as peasant leaders even if it created local political problems. The Cultural Missions were instructed to help the peasants in every way possible, among other things by "preventing the exploitation to which they are subjected by the middlemen, caciques, etc." (2) - an objective which could clearly only be achieved by organising them into leagues or unions to protect their interests.

In 1938 the Department of Agricultural and Normal Rural Education stated as one of its aims "to diffuse socialist ideas in the rural areas, encouraging the organisation and preparation of the rural proletariat for the social struggle....." (3) and it was reported that the attitude of the peasantry towards the educational programme had improved considerably; in contrast to the situation of earlier years, "now the (rural) communities themselves frequently

(1) Ibid., vol.5, no.2, pp.13-14 (15th July 1934).

(2) "Memoria", 1936, pp.21-25.

(3) Ibid., 1938, vol.1, p.156.

ask for the social work of the teacher, above all in agrarian matters."⁽¹⁾

But in 1938 the large-scale agrarian transformation of the Cardenas years was beginning to slow down, and the emphasis was therefore increasingly on protection of the "ejidatarios" against reprisals and on technical assistance and credit to help them secure maximum benefits from the lands they already possessed, and less on the continued distribution of land.

3. Organising the Peasants into Leagues and Unions

If a rural community was to obtain land, it must first be conscious of the way to organise itself to put pressure on the authorities. The first step was to create an Agrarian Committee which would petition the State Agrarian Commission for a decree of "restitucion", "dotacion" or "ampliacion" (the latter where a community had already received a grant under one of the previous categories, and wanted an extension). It was very common for the teachers to play a leading part in this initial organisational work.

In many cases the desire for land was dormant and only became apparent after the work of the school had aroused a spirit of improvement and innovation among the inhabitants. This was the case in the village of Santa Elena, as explained by the teacher Natalia Antillon.⁽²⁾ She was the first teacher ever to serve in this poor and depressed community, and founded the school in May 1933. Having described the progress of the school she goes on:-

"As they had no elected representative ('comisario'), and the only 'authority' was the landowner, I explained to them their right to nominate one from among themselves, adding that the Revolution has made us free, and that only in the time of the Dictatorship could such a state of affairs be seen, that today was impossible to believe: a landlord who ordered them about, robbed their harvests and treated them like slaves.

(1) *Ibid.*, 1938, vol.1, p.198.

(2) "El Maestro Rural", vol.3, no.11, p.32 (1st.Nov.1933).

"We proceeded to nominate a representative and in a popular election, without pressure of any kind, senior Ramon Murga emerged with a clear majority as representative....Senor Manuel Almanza led the work; an enterprising man, who knows more about building than the rest, he persuaded the others to follow him. (They then proceeded to build a school-house, but the landlord, seeing that they supported the teacher, tried to intimidate her). One day, when one of the workers overheard a child reading the book 'Ferdin' (a primary school textbook), he liked it and went to talk with his friends. As a result, several of them approached me, asking if the book dealt with agrarianism, and as I informed them that it did contain such ideas, they revealed their desire to know if they could ask for the lands which for many years they had worked for the benefit of others, and had received in return only maltreatment. They said they were willing to become 'agraristas', because they had put up with the exploiter for long enough....."

And so the inhabitants elected an Agrarian Committee, headed by Manuel Almanza, and despite the threats and intrigues of the landowner, they began negotiations to obtain land, helped always by senorita Antillon.

In many cases the crucial role of the teachers was confined to this initial stage - it was they who organized the peasants and provided the first impetus, but after that the peasants themselves often took charge. Thus in the area of Contapec (Michoacan), J. Eleazar Bermudez relates (1) how from 1934 onwards he and other teachers organized the agrarian movement in several communities, but once the process had begun the villages affiliated to the regional League of Agrarian Communities, and peasant representatives of the League (Juan and Itigurdo Correa) supervised the actual process of land distribution. In other words, the teachers helped the peasants to elect Agrarian Committees and formulate petitions for land, but most of the later work was done by representatives of the League. Some communities received land quite quickly, but it was five years before all the villages in the "municipio" were satisfied.

(1) Interview with Prof. J. Eleazar Bermudez in Morelia, Mich., 1st Nov. 1967. The title "professor" is used in Spanish to designate anyone from a University Professor to a primary school teacher, and the abbreviation "Prof." has been used for convenience throughout this work.

Where the teachers aroused the desire for land by making the peasants aware of the agrarian laws and educating them in their rights, they could be described as "agitators" in the strict sense, and conservative opinion was greatly incensed at this. The tone of the following report in the newspaper "Excelsior" is typical of this reaction to the teachers' work: (1)

"Ocosingo, Chi., July 19th - Here where there was no agitation, trouble began with the arrival of the Cultural Mission, which at first attracted the sympathies of the local inhabitants; but under the pretext of giving a dinner for the inhabitants of the valley of the 'murdicio', they obliged them to come and with that contingent organized a demonstration during which they made fiery speeches against the owners of rural estates, advised the said inhabitants to kill and not to buy the lands, and told them that everything was theirs and that they should destroy private property.

"An inhabitant of the village of Tenango, said that his landlord robbed him, and that the priest deceived him, although there has never been a priest in this place.

"The agitator Enrique Caballero with a red and black flag at the head of the mob entered this town shouting 'vivas' to communism and calling for destruction...."

It may be doubted whether the members of the Mission really told the people to kill, but regardless of the details of the case it is clear that here, as elsewhere, they did much to arouse the spirit of "agrarismo" which had previously lain dormant. But sometimes the situation was reversed; thus the teacher Roberto Gutierrez Armas relates how in Jiquilpan, Michoacan in 1931-1932 he was not at first interested in the agrarian question, but the peasants began to talk to him about the lack of land and to ask for help, so he and another teacher, Rafael Barriga Valencia, gave them advice and became their leaders. (2)

Before the peasants had obtained land, or where for some reason this proved impossible, the teachers could at least help to defend them against the worst abuses of the system. In 1931 the Inspector of Schools Victor M. Vega

(1) "Excelsior", 22nd July 1935.

(2) Interviews in Uruapan, Mich., with Prof. Roberto Gutierrez Armas (15th Aug. 1968) and in Morelia, Mich., with Prof. Rafael Barriga Valencia (10th Nov. 1968).

denounced in a speech to a local ~~grade~~ union the miserable conditions of the agricultural labourers in the "municipio" of San Pedro, Coahuila, who were still paid in kind or in the form of scrip exchangeable only at certain stores maintained by the landowners - in other words, a form of "tienda de raya".⁽¹⁾ Frequently the teachers tried to organise rural workers in order to oblige employers to comply with the minimum wage laws, which were almost universally violated. In 1935 an assembly of the teachers of the Educational Zone of Colctlan, Jalisco, resolved to help the peasants in a number of ways, including campaigning for the payment of the minimum wage.⁽²⁾ With certain commercial crops, even where land reform had taken place, cultivation was in the hands of a Government administration which paid the workers a wage and a share in the profits; this was the case with the production of "chicle" (for chewing gum) in Quintana Roo, and in 1940 teachers were leading the "Committee of Indian Defence" based in the village of Chunhuas, which was defending the workers against the abuses of the administration, demanding that the profits be distributed as originally planned.⁽³⁾

However, the crucial question, if the peasants were to obtain recognition of their rights to any significant extent, was that of organisation; and not merely the organisation of individual communities into Agrarian Committees, but the formation of leagues and unions on a regional basis, to present a united front against the landlords, "caciques" and opportunist politicians. In this respect too the teachers were prominent. An interesting example is that of the "Asociacion Campesina del Suroeste de Oaxaca" (Peasant Association of South-West Oaxaca), founded on 11th June 1932:-

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- (1) "Excelesior", 2nd May 1931.
 - (2) S.E.P.(G), expediente 4-5-7-57.
 - (3) "La Voz de Mexico", 11th Aug. 1940; a number of peasants and four teachers were imprisoned for their pains.

"Under the aegis of the teacher citizen José Torán Tovar, head of the Cultural Mission which carried out its activities recently in the zone of Putla, Oaxaca, there was created under the name of 'Liga Campesina del Sureste de Oaxaca' an interesting association whose motto is proclaimed in these two words, 'Land and Liberty'. This Society, according to its own statute, will be subject in everything to the 'Gran Confederación Campesina Oaxaqueña' (Great Oaxacan Peasant Confederation). The new note characteristic of this society is that they are not simply individuals who have united in this way, but a whole series of Mixtecan villages; in fact, no less than 35 villages have declared themselves founding members of this league. The associated villages have sworn not to consult, for the resolution of their affairs, money-grubbing lawyers ('tinerillos') or other exploiters. They will accept enthusiastically, on the other hand, the collaboration of the schoolteacher, when his antecedents recommend him as a militant and a friend.

"Sadly convinced that all their troubles spring from an inadequate education, they will struggle with tenacity to see that in every village in the Union (i.e. the country), there shall be a federal school..." (1)

It is questionable whether all the peasants' troubles sprang from a lack of education, but certainly with mentors like José Torán Tovar they would find it much easier to overcome their problems. A similar case was reported from the "municipio" of Cheix, Sinaloa, in 1938; at a meeting of representatives of several agrarian communities, the Inspector of Schools, Gustavo Jarquín and other teachers explained the benefits of unity, and "the immediate result of the said meeting was the constitution of an Alliance of Agrarian Communities of the 'Municipio' ". (2)

Where local peasant leagues already existed, teachers often helped them to win new recruits or to unite with neighbouring leagues to form Federations. An early example of such activity was the organisation of a peasants' and workers' congress of unity in Saltillo, Coahuila, arranged in August 1928 by unions of teachers, peasants and workers in the State, with the leading role apparently played by the "Federación Coahuilense de Sindicatos de Maestros" (Coahuilan Federation of Teachers' Unions), (3) whose Secretary General, José

(1) "El Maestro Rural", vol.1, no.11, p.10 (1st Aug.1932); and *Ibid.*, vol.2, No.4., pp.33-34 (15th Feb.1934).

(2) "El Machete", 22nd June 1938.

(3) *Ibid.*, 18th Aug.1928.

Santos Valdés, was a young militant teacher who was to be prominent in the Communist Party and other leftist organisations for many years to come. (1)

In 1937 the teachers' union of Tlaxcala ("Sindicato Único de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de Tlaxcala") signed a pact of solidarity with the Tlaxcalan Confederation of Peasants ("Confederación Tlaxcalteca de Campesinos y Agraristas"), (2) and a similar agreement was arranged at national level between the F.M.T.E. and the "Confederación Campesina Mexicana" (C.C.M.). (3) It is interesting that the Secretary General of the C.C.M., Graciano Sánchez, was himself a teacher. (4) The teachers' unions always laid great stress on support for the agrarian movement; in 1939 the teachers of Tabasco organised ceremonies to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Zapata's death, and it was said that the local branch of the S.T.E.R.M. was a "bulwark" of the peasant movement in the State, contributing greatly to the organisation of the rural population. (5) In later chapters the contribution of teachers to the organisation of peasant leagues and unions in Michoacán and Campeche will be examined in detail, and it will be seen that their rôle could be very important.

4. The Legal Process of Obtaining Land Grants

In addition to playing an important part in the initial work of organising Agrarian Committees and forming peasant leagues and unions, many teachers helped individual communities in the different stages of the complicated litigation which followed a petition for land. The least a teacher

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- (1) Correspondence with Prof. José Santos Valdés, April-July 1969, and interview with him in Torreón, Coahuila, 26th Aug. 1969. "El Machete" wrongly prints Santos' Valdés' name as Jesús Valdés Sánchez.
- (2) "El Machete", 11th June 1937.
- (3) Ibid., 3rd April 1937.
- (4) Moisés González Navarro, "La Confederación Nacional Campesina" (Mexico, 1968, Costa-Amic), p. 137.
- (5) "La Voz De México", 19th April 1939 (Zapata's murder occurred on 10th April 1919).

could do was to help the inhabitants to draw up a petition in correct legal form, and many teachers who did nothing else towards the solution of the agrarian problem did at least help in this respect. (1) Antonio Ibarra Checaco, a rural teacher in various parts of Michoacán from 1929 onwards, testifies that in several communities he explained the Agrarian Code, helped the peasants to draw up legal documents, accompanied them to Government offices and even, on several occasions, to the Agrarian Department in Mexico City, and says that many other teachers did the same. (2) Genaro Hernández Aguilar, who worked as a teacher and Inspector in various parts of Michoacán, Aguascalientes, Querétaro and Guanajuato, gave advice to the peasants and encouraged the teachers under his supervision to travel to Mexico City to put pressure on the Agrarian Department, (3) and it will be seen later that he suffered for his activities. (4) Luis Torres Osorio, a teacher in southwestern Michoacán from 1937 onwards, says that Agrarian Committees had already been formed in most villages when he arrived, but he and his colleagues helped to draw up the petitions and visited Morelia and Mexico City several times, alone or with delegations of peasants, until the petitions were favourably resolved. (5)

Similar claims were made by many other teachers interviewed, and in some cases it was possible to confirm them in interviews with peasants and other people in the localities mentioned. (6) Thus Prof Alejandro Pérez Salas says that in Tocumbo, Michoacán, in 1937 he brought the inhabitants together to form an Agrarian Committee and formulate a petition; they were very fortunate and

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- (1) Interviews in Jalapa, Veracruz with Prof. Fidencio Bermúdez and others, 1st Oct. 1967.
 (2) Interview with Prof. Antonio Ibarra Checaco in Morelia, Mich., 29th Oct. 1968.
 (3) Interviews in Morelia with Prof. Genaro Hernández Aguilar, 30th Jan & 10th Jun. 68.
 (4) See below, p.
 (5) Interview in Uruapan, Mich., with Inspector Luis Torres Osorio, 15th Aug. 1968.
 (6) Interviews with Major Antonio Magana Garcia in Arrio de Robles, Mich., 13th Aug. 1968; with the "fidatarios" Emiliano and Roberto Sánchez Martínez, Luis Velasco and Ramón Zambrano in Chavinda, Mich., 4th Aug. 1968; with señor Samuel Vaca, official of the Secretaría de Hacienda in Lan Huacana, Mich., 14th Aug. 1968; and with the peasant Marcelo Alejandro Morales in Zuruáitaro, Mich., 13th Aug. 1968.

within a week the 150 members of the community were given provisional possession of the land, confirmed three months later. Sugar cane was planted, and the community prospered, and in the autumn of 1938 they obtained an extension ("ampliacion"). Perez Salas carried out all the formalities, taking documents to Morelia and helping the State officials who came to delineate the lands when the peasants took possession. This version of events was substantially confirmed by inhabitants of Tocumbo.⁽¹⁾ Perez Salas claims to have done similar work in several communities of the neighbouring "municipio" of Los Reyes, and it seems probable that this is true, although it was not possible to confirm this in the communities themselves.

In many villages the teacher played an important rôle in every stage of the agrarian reform, from the formation of the Agrarian Committee to giving technical and organisational advice to ensure the successful functioning of the newly-formed "ejido" for several years after land had finally been obtained. A typical case in the State of Colima was described in detail in the magazine "El Maestro Rural", under the heading "How a Rural School prepared an agrarian community to reconstruct itself economically and socially", and this account is worth quoting in full:- ⁽²⁾

"On the first of October 1931, the Ministry of Education founded a school of the economic type ⁽³⁾ - a school of minimum standards ('de poor es needs'), whose teacher received the miserable wage of one peso a day - in 'Las Humedades', today the ejido 'INDEPENDENCIA', in the State of Colima; this was done precisely because of the burning of the homestead of the agrarian community ordered by the 'hacendado' of the neighbouring estate of Armeria, within the bounds of which the little community was situated.

"The rural school, then in the hands of the teacher José Juárez M. one of those dynamic, enthusiastic young men of truly revolutionary spirit who proclaim to the peasant masses the clarion-call of emancipation, gave its moral and material support to the new 'ejidatarios'. He advised and guided them in the building and organisation of their community, which today - it has to be said with pride - is in the vanguard

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- (1) Interviews with Prof. Alejandro Pérez Salas in Patzcuaro, Mich., 26th July 1968, and with the "ejidatario" Manuel Ruiz and others in Tocumbo, Mich., 17th Aug 1968.
 (2) "El Maestro Rural", vol. 11, no. 10, pp. 24-25 (Nov-Dec. 1938); capitals in original.
 (3) Schools sustained largely by the villagers themselves (see above, pp.).

of the Agrarian communities of the State, thanks to the sustained progressive effort of four modest and humble peasants who ought to be imitated by all the rural workers of the country who feel a desire for economic and social emancipation.....

"The school strove persistently to expedite the proceedings of the petition for 'ejido' lands, and did not falter in its task until it had achieved first provisional possession, and then later, definitive possession by a Presidential resolution. The peasants, now owners of the land, were urged by the school to work hard. They began by making a clearing to build the village on the site which it now occupies; then they built the houses and organized a rural defence force(1) to protect the life and the interests of the little settlement. All of this, under the direction and guidance of the humble village school.

"On various occasions the school (i.e. the teacher) represented the village in several Agrarian Congresses organized by the State Government. In order to help the workers and to promote in them the spirit of co-operation, the school itself organized the peasants in an agricultural co-operative, and thanks to the help which the "Banco de Credito Agricola" gave to the inhabitants as a result of the school's representations, the undertaking went ahead at full steam and was a success. With the profits, the peasants managed to buy forty cows, and with their milk, the diet of the local 'ejidatarios' improved substantially.

"As the 'ejido' needed to be able to communicate rapidly and conveniently with more important centres of population in order to have an outlet for its produce, the school suggested to the villagers the convenience of building a road and helped them to mark it out. Today that road, in a perfect straight line, unites the little settlement with ARMERIA....."

The teacher apparently also suggested the cultivation of bananas and coconuts, both new to the village, and by 1936 the community was doing a prosperous trade in maize, bananas and papayas, and won a prize in a State agricultural show. This success story was no doubt exceptional, but similar if less dramatic progress was achieved in many communities, often as a result of the teacher's work.

The rôle of the teachers during the actual process of the struggle for land is well illustrated in a detailed account published in 1939 by the Communist journal "La Voz de México", describing the trials experienced by a community in Chiapas in its efforts to obtain an "ejido" grant. Under the heading

(1) The "defensas rurales" were civilian guards established in many villages to keep the peace and protect the inhabitants against bandits or reactionary attacks.

"The Struggle for Land in the Soconusco - Vivid Report by a True Peasant of the San Jerónimo Estate, in Chiapas - the Teachers Lead the Movement", it runs as follows:-(1)

"I enclose with this article a photo, with the modest request that you be so kind as to give it publicity; the group of peasants who appear in the photo are the long-suffering and persecuted peasants of the 'SAN GERÓNIMO' Estate of the 'Unión Juárez' municipality, Ex-District of Soconusco in the State of Chiapas, property of the landlord Alejandro Córdova Jr., and who were given lands (BUT LATER THEY WERE TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM) under the decree issued by the Governor, Engineer Efraín A. Gutiérrez, which appeared in the 'Diario Oficial' on 29th September of last year.....

"In the month of March previous to the presentation of the lands, by the Governor, we were called to the village of Unión Juárez, with the purpose of forming the Ejidal Commissariat, and also to discover which of us would have a right to the lands and which not; naturally all the peasants of the region came to an agreement and decided that in order to be successful in future, the Commissariat must be made up of honest and revolutionary elements of peasant origin....One Sunday we all gathered in the appointed place, accompanied by the teachers who collaborate in a revolutionary way with the peasantry of this coffee-producing region, carrying flags, banners, etc.

"Our meeting was held in the house of the People (i.e. the school-house), where we were to wait for the Engineers who would attend the formation of the Commissariat, but unexpectedly and as a political ruse our leaders were called by the local authorities and with the threat of ten armed soldiers.... we were obliged to change the venue because these were the orders of the Engineers Hernández and Rincón. When we were assembled opposite the State school, and in the presence of the aforesaid Engineers, the Lieutenant, the ten soldiers and the Municipal President Hernández began to read the rollo calls, beginning with the peasants of Santo Domingo, of whom about one-third were admitted as eligible (for lands), for of FOUR HUNDRED WORKERS or more belonging to that Estate, only ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY were admitted as eligible, and so it went on.

"We were going into the new hall, having been thoroughly checked (for arms), but things began to look nasty because the aforesaid Engineer or whatever he was, Hernández, laid down the law too much; to the extent of insulting several comrades who were demanding justice, insulting their mothers, and cajoling us more or less in the following way: 'If you want it, O.K., if not, get out here and go ---- your mother'..... for out of more than FIVE HUNDRED PEASANTS ASSEMBLED THERE, scarcely TWO HUNDRED AND SEVENTY were admitted as eligible... and the rage of the aforesaid Señor Hernández boiled over when they told him that a teacher had been admitted as eligible, and without going any further, Hernández identified the said teacher, insulted him as he pleased, and ordered him to leave because he had no right to be in the Assembly because he received a salary of more than THIRTY PESOS (2) (but on the other hand several inhabitants of the village appeared as qualified who earn more than 200 pesos, such as Spanish administrators).

(1) "La Voz de México", 31st May 1939. Capitals in original.

(2) Per Month.

"When the said Teacher left, all the peasants in the meeting followed him, by way of a protest for the harassment and the imposition they were suffering; at this Hernández grew more angry and ordered the Lieutenant who is in his service, to arrest the teacher and accuse him of being an agitator, and to imprison him; and so it was that the platoon of soldiers and police...took this comrade from his house where he was having lunch with his family, and while they were taking him to the jail there were incessant protests to the Engineers and the Municipal President etc. who locked themselves in the school, for they were amazed by the gesture of rebellion on the part of the workers who were demanding justice; immediately there appeared a soldier carrying a machine-gun and while he loaded it he pointed it towards the peasants who were furiously demanding the release of the arrested teacher.....

"So it was, and when he came out of the jail everyone returned to the meeting-place and the three teachers, Mandujano, Mancilla and Rodriguez, the latter being the one who had been arrested, were invited to enter the room as well, but without the right to speak or vote... It has to be said that the situation was now very different, the officials were still pale and the workers enraged, and in a benevolent and hypocritical tone Hernández spoke inviting us to create the Ejidal Commissariat there and then; and all the members of the Commissariat were elected by unanimous vote, all of them being reliable elements of well-known integrity...."

Shortly afterwards the peasants began to work the land and obtained a small loan from the "Banco de Credito Ejidal", but then by a manoeuvre of the landlords they were deprived once again of the lands; and the peasant who wrote the report, Emilio Macario, said they did not know how they were going to live, with no means of subsistence and under the threat of eviction from their homes.

This report is valuable for the insight it gives into the details of a very common situation, in which the legal complexities and the consequent delay in the process of obtaining land exposed the peasants and their leaders to all kinds of manoeuvres and reprisals on the part of the landlords in alliance with corrupt local officials and politicians. In this case the teachers, along with one or two of the more experienced peasants, were clearly playing a leading part in the movement, and this too was fairly typical.

It was also very common for a community to find its efforts frustrated in this way, so that some never obtained "ejidos" while many had to endure years of conflict and litigation before receiving what was often a quite inadequate acreage of poor-quality land. But many others did achieve success, like the community in Colima described earlier, and they often owed their good fortune at least in part to a rural teacher. The Cultural Missions were very active in this respect; thus the peasants of El Platanal, Nayarit, received their "ejidos" owing to the efforts of a social worker ("Organizadora Rural") attached to a Cultural Mission,⁽¹⁾ and in the region of Ixtapa, Chiapas, a Cultural Mission obtained land for several Indian villages.⁽²⁾ But the Missions were few and their work in this respect could not compare in scale or consistency with that of the ordinary teachers.

That the teachers contributed to the success of a large number of communities in obtaining land is confirmed by a few more examples. In the region of Colotlán, Jalisco, the teachers led and encouraged by the Inspector Gilberto Ceja Torres "devoted all their efforts to giving moral support to the peasants of the region" in obtaining land grants or "ampliaciones", and in the two months from December 1935 to January 1936 alone they achieved the resolution of "ejido" grants in two villages.⁽³⁾ In various parts of Michoacán, the teacher Ignacio Tapia Rangel claims to have helped in the formation of 27 "ejidos" between 1923 and 1938;⁽⁴⁾ Hilario Reyes Garibaldi says that from 1933 to 1939 in Tlazazalca, Opopeo, Villa Escalante and Patzcuaro (all in central Michoacán) he intervened in the formation of more than fifty agrarian communities;⁽⁵⁾ Evangelina Rodríguez Carbajal says she contributed to the formation of several "ejidos" in the Zamora region of the same State;⁽⁶⁾ and other interviewees make similar statements.

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- (1) "El Maestro Rural", vol.5, no.9, p.17 (1st Nov.1934).
 (2) Ibid., vol.6, no.6, pp.12-15, (15th March 1935).
 (3) S.E.P.(G), expediente 4-5-7-57; and see below, p.
 (4) Interviews with Prof. Ignacio Tapia Rangel in Morelia, Mich., 28th & 29th Jan. 68.
 (5) Interviews with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi in Morelia, 9th & 10th July 1968.
 (6) Interview with Prof. Evangelina Rodríguez Carbajal in Zitacuaro, Mich., 21st Dec. 1967.

Claims to such widespread influence may appear at first sight to be exaggerated, but this need not be the case, for rural teachers were ideally placed to help the peasants in this respect if they felt so inclined. Writing to "El Maestro Rural" in 1935, the Inspector of Schools for the Third Federal Educational Zone of the State of Chiapas, Prof. Epigenio de León C., reported that in his area from 1929 to 1934 some thirty estates had been affected by grants of land to agrarian communities (and he listed their names), largely as a result of the work of the teachers. He also gave a good explanation of the educators' rôle in the process:-(1)

"Since the school is the only educational agency in rural centres of population and therefore the moral entity responsible for the activation and resolution of many of the problems affecting the social and economic structure of communities far removed from the big urban centres, the rural teachers have directed their attention towards aims of vital importance, dedicating themselves in addition to the essential function which characterises the school, which is the academic preparation of children and adults, to attack the following questions: create a consciousness of the agrarian laws sufficient to obtain the granting of 'ejidos', organise co-operatives of production and consumption among the 'ejidatarios', and intensifying the campaigns of public hygiene and health, of reforestation and the complete abolition of the vice of alcoholism.

"With respect to the first point, that is the granting of 'ejidos'...., I do not mean to say that the teacher or the school on their own are those who carry out the grant, because for that there exists the Mixed Agrarian Commission and the State Government; but it is the rural teachers who, at the cost of a thousand sacrifices, in a bold, open and decided manner, have put themselves on the peasant's side and in favour of the disinherited in order to obtain immediate grants of land, sponsoring them and helping them in various ways until the acquisition of a plot of land becomes a reality....." (Underlining mine - D.L.R.).

After listing all the estates affected by the land distribution in his area the Inspector goes on to point out:-

"If this has occurred in one Federal Educational Zone, it is easy to imagine what is happening in the fifteen Zones into which the State of Chiapas is at present divided....."

- and, one might add, in the other 28 States and two Territories which make up the Republic of Mexico.

(1) "El Maestro Rural", vol.7, no.7, pp.23-30 (1st Oct.1935)

5. Class Warfare in the Countryside

Given the long and difficult process often involved in obtaining land, and the opposition they faced on the part of the landowners, the Church, and not a few politicians and administrators, it is not surprising that many peasants and their allies resorted to direct action to achieve their aims. There was a long tradition of direct action, going back to the 19th century, and certainly since the time of Zapata occupations of lands by armed peasants had been commonplace. When the teachers became involved in the agrarian question, the more militant among them were certainly willing to encourage such tactics where other methods failed, as a few examples will make clear.

In the area of Santa Clara, Michoacán, in 1932-1934, since petitions for land were making little progress under the conservative Governor Serrato,⁽¹⁾ members of the local peasant federation led by the teacher Hilario Reyes Garibaldi encouraged the peasants to occupy "hacienda" lands illegally; the authorities tried to evict them but the peasants defended themselves until their occupation was legalized by a decree of "dotación".⁽²⁾ Similar actions were taken in several States where conservative local authorities blocked the process of agrarian reform, and in fact they were common in most parts of the country before the acceleration of the reform in 1934, and again to some extent after 1938. In January 1940 the conservative newspaper "Excoelsior" reported from Guadalajara that the leaders of several agrarian communities of the "municipio" of Amatlán had seized the buildings of the "hacienda" of San José del Refugio, "on the pretext that they are going to use it as a school".⁽³⁾ Significantly, the indignant report continued as follows:-

"The aforesaid 'agraristas' had never before been insubordinate like this, until the communist rural teachers arrived in this place and began to preach their doctrine intended to lead these people to seize what does not belong to them....."

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- (1) See below, pp. 1
 (2) Interview with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi in Morelia, Mich., 24th Aug. 1968.
 (3) "Excoelsior", 27th Jan. 1940.

Only three months later the same journal was complaining of similar activities being carried on by the "communist teachers" in the State of Mexico:-(1)

"Toluca, Méx., April 16th - The timely intervention of State troops prevented last Sunday afternoon a serious disturbance that was on the point of breaking out owing to the activities of a group of communist teachers of Section XV of the S.T.E.R.M.

"On the 'La Bomba' ranch, in the Lerma district, a group of peasants appeared, instigated by the speeches of some communist teachers, and took possession of the ranch by force, driving out the workers who live in the place and trying also to seize the cattle and tools of the property. The owner of the ranch, señor Salcedo, on realising how serious the situation was, made contact with the State authorities to demand protection, and a group of soldiers and Red Cross ambulances left this city (Guadalajara) in a hurry...."

By 1940 the tide was turning against the peasants, and those who took direct action often exposed themselves to brutal reprisals; but equally, this might be the only way they could attract attention.

But if the peasants and their supporters sometimes resorted to force, so too did the landlords and the defenders of "order", and their methods tended to be much more violent and effective, at least in the short run. Militant peasants were intimidated and physically attacked by "guardias blancas" - "white guards" or hired gunmen at the service of the landlords, and literally thousands of peasants were murdered in Mexico in the 1920's and 1930's for this reason;(2) so that it is no exaggeration to speak of open and continuous class warfare, albeit generally local and unorganised, in large areas of the Mexican countryside. Where teachers were involved, given their key rôle as leaders and advisers of the peasantry, they were favourite targets for such attacks.

The nature of the opposition to public education will be analysed in some detail in chapter 6; here it will suffice to examine a few instances of hostility to the teachers on account of their participation in the struggle for

(1) *Ibid.*, 17th April 1940.

(2) Shulgovski, *op.cit.*, pp.73 & 266-267. Prof. José Santos Valdés quotes a figure of 3,000 peasants killed in the State of Veracruz alone for the years 1930-36. (correspondence with the author, March-July 1969).

land. The connection appears to be quite clear in the case of Palemón Díaz and Gláfira S. De Díaz, who suffered several attacks because of their activities in the State of Guerrero. At the beginning of 1937 they were working in the Federal Rural School of Guayameo:-

"the teachers helped the peasants who are asking for lands, and achieved success in their efforts, since the Agrarian Department commissioned an engineer to carry out the necessary tasks preliminary to the granting of 'ejidos'. As a result of this action, the teachers received a series of threats and on the night of 17th January were attacked with firearms while they were sleeping in the school, by a group of 'cristeros' of not less than 20 men led by Custodio and Bolívar Aburto, landlords and enemies of the peasantry. On hearing the shooting, the 'Defensa Rural' came to their defence but had to withdraw for lack of ammunition, and one member of the 'Defensa', Santos León, was seriously wounded..."⁽¹⁾

The two teachers took refuge in the "Escuela Regional Campesina" of Coyuca de Catalán and requested protection from the Director of Federal Education in the State and the Inspector of the Educational Zone, Francisco Saldaña, but it seems that he was against them, and they continued to have difficulties. It is extremely interesting to notice that in this case the aggressors, whose motives were clearly connected with agrarian matters, are nevertheless described as 'cristeros' - an example of the flexible usage of such terms.

Disputes about land caused trouble again slightly over a year later, when we find the same teachers, Palemón Díaz and Gláfira S. de Díaz, working in the school of Santiago Tetipac, Guerrero, where they were harassed by the Popoca family, "caciques" who intrigued against them in the Department of Education and with local politicians. The Popocas dominated the region and had suppressed all the "agraristas", but on their arrival the two teachers undertook the defence and organisation of the peasants, activities which caused them many problems and even endangered their lives. In particular, in August 1938, "... while the two teachers were in Mexico City, where they had gone in order to transact questions of lands, the aforesaid 'caciques' made a surprise

(1) "El Machete", 27th Feb. 1937. Case 100 in the Appendix.

manoeuvre through the judge of Taxco, who, on the basis of a false accusation, has issued an order of arrest against the two teachers...." (1) In areas dominated to such an extent by landowning "caciques", anyone who organised agrarian agitation was liable to be exposed to such dangers.

Another case of this kind was that of the teacher Enrique Lopez Huitron murdered on 26th February 1939 near San Andrés Tuxtla, Veracruz, together with three peasants. (2) According to "La Voz de Mexico", López Huitrón did a lot to obtain land for the peasants, and on 6th March there was a great protest demonstration in San Andrés with the participation of "more than twelve thousand" workers, who were demanding the resignation of the town council because an official commission to investigate the crime had shown its responsibility. Certainly the deceased had done many things which could have made enemies for him; the correspondence of "Exosíntor" reported that "López Huitrón had become very well-known for the work he was carrying out in the last three years in the region of 'Los Tuxtlas'. A restless agitator, he dedicated his activities mainly to the organisation of workers and peasants, paying little attention to his job as a Federal Inspector of Schools". In fact, behind these immediate causes of the murder are to be found questions of union politics, because López Huitrón was an important leader of the C.T.M. in the region, where he had created the local Workers' Federation; and this organisation had constant disputes with the town council, which was then dominated by a member of the "Liga de Comunidades Agrarias".

In the municipality of Zacualpan in the same State, on 16th April 1939, the teacher Ubaldo López Bernabé was murdered. He and eight peasants fell into an ambush prepared by individuals "in the pay of the landlord Amador"; the peasants defended themselves, killing one of the assailants, and then took

(1) *Ibid.*, 19th Aug. 1938, Case 181 in the Appendix.

(2) "Exosíntor", 28th Feb. & 18th & 24th March 1939; "La Voz De México", 8th March 1939. Case 203 in the Appendix.

refuge in the woods. The teacher had already received threats and knew that the situation was dangerous; in his report of 4th March to the Regional Inspector of Schools he referred to threats against himself and the peasants, the possible consequences of which had to be taken seriously because they came from no less a person than the Municipal President of Zacualpan. The cause of this incident is very clearly revealed in a letter from the victim to the local branch of the teachers' unions:- (1)

"On account of the formation of the Local Agrarian Committee of the 'La Pahua' ward, community of La Pazma, 'municipio' of Zacualpan, Veracruz, a process which the school intervened in very actively, the landlords directed their attacks against the school, obstructing its revolutionary work by every means within their power; but the situation became even more critical once a formal request had been made for lands from 'La Palma' a property of the landlord GONZALO AMADOR...."

A somewhat more complex case, but one which appears to raise similar issues, occurred in Yucatán in 1933. This was the murder of Felipe Alcocer Castillo in Xcalakdzonot, "municipio" of Cuncunul, on 4th June of that year. (2) According to reports of the correspondent of "El Nacional" in Mérida, the teacher Alcocer was taken, severely wounded, to the city of Valladolid, 62 kilometres from Xcalakdzonot. Before dying of gangrene resulting from his wounds, the victim declared in the presence of the justice of the peace and the "Agente del Ministerio Público" that the crime had its origin in a question of lands ("ejidos"), although the heart of the matter is not very clear:-

"From his declarations and from the judicial enquiries carried out with regard to the case, it can be seen that Anselmo Caamal, the murderer, 'comisario municipal' of Cuncunul, had a cultivated plot next to the school garden, and the enclosure of this garden aroused such resentment in him that he decided to commit the crime. On the 4th, at about nine in the morning, the said 'comisario' appeared in front of the school leading an armed mob which was making a great hullabaloo, and opened hostilities against the teacher and a group of pupils who were involved in their work. The teacher sent one of his pupils to Cuncunul, to request the assistance of the constituted authorities, who responded by sending 15 men of the public guard... A battle then took place leading to 4 deaths, 2 of the attacking group, and 2 of the group which was defending the school..."

- (1) "La Voz De México", 25th Apl, 20th May & 13th Aug. 1939. Case 207 in Appendix.
 (2) "El Maestro Rural", vol. 3, no. 3. (1st July 1933); "El Nacional", 8th June 1933, Case 10 in the Appendix.

In view of the seriousness of the incident and the determination of the aggressors, who even when confronted with a detachment of troops did not retreat until they had suffered two casualties, one might suppose that the cause of the incident was something more important than a school garden. And other reports confirm this impression:-

"According to information provided by the delegate of the National Agrarian Commission in the locality, the case in question is not an isolated one, but comes on top of a series of grave disturbances which have occurred in the same region, caused by the conflict existing between the inhabitants of Xcalakdzonot and the surrounding villages, over questions of 'ejidos'....."

The origins of the conflict become a little clearer from the report of Luis G. Ramírez, Director of Federal Education in Mérida. After praising the diligence and enthusiasm of the deceased teacher, who had won the sympathies of the community in which he worked, the report says that for more than a year past the only people who were obstructing the teacher's work were the local men Emilio Noh, Juan Silvano Caamal and Estebán Chf. These men created difficulties which obliged the Inspector Víctor Flores to visit the village in order to resolve the situation; but the inhabitants, "misled by perverse politicians", treated the inspector in such a high-handed way that he had to go, along with them and the authorities of Xcalakdzonot, to the municipal presidency of Valladolid, in the hope that the town council would find a solution to the situation. But the council did nothing, and according to the Director of Education (as reported in the magazine "El Maestro Rural"):- ,

"These individuals to whom I refer, made contact with people of the village of Ebtún, whose inhabitants are characterized by being of a nomadic disposition (and) reject any kind of obligation You will remember that at the beginning of May this office requested the authorisation of your Department to close the school of Ebtún, as the situation had become untenable, in view of the persistent work of obstruction organised by a politician who controls the region with fire-water....."

According to this report Anselmo Caamal, the murderer, was "comisario" of Ebtún and not of Cuncumal, and the people of Ebtún, regarding the closure of their school as a victory, had extended their agitation against education to other nearby villages.

These different reports do not reveal all the details of the conflict which gave rise to the incident in which the teacher Alcocer was killed. But it would not be assuming too much to see the "comisario" Anselmo Caamal and his friends as agents or instruments of local landowners or "caciques" - precisely those who "controlled the region with fire-water" - and it may be supposed that the teacher had become involved in activities very damaging to their interests for him to have been the object of such violent revenge.

Interviews in Michoacán indicate that teachers in that State frequently encountered opposition, which would be violent, because of their participation in the struggle for land. The Director of the school of Coñre, José Guadalupe Vaca Mata, was murdered in October 1935 in an ambush between Coñre and Coalcomán, a town some thirty miles distant to which he was going in order to present a report to the Inspector of Education there.⁽¹⁾ He was shot by a group of gunmen in the pay of señor Laureano Mendoza Soto and the Guillén family, local landowners described by the teacher Luis Torres Osorio (who knows the region well) as ex-"cristero" leaders. Señor Torres says that Vaca Mata had begun to organize the Indians into a union, and this is confirmed by another teacher who was Vaca Mata's assistant at the time. On the fatal day a group of the Indians whose lands he was defending went with him on the first part of the journey, but he was attacked after they had left him. It is worth noting that Vaca Mata had begun his career in a Catholic seminary, but had abandoned religious life and volunteered to serve as a teacher in this remote part of Michoacán, and not long before his death had been praised by the Ministry of Education for his distinguished services.

Elsewhere in the same State, in August 1936, in the town of Los Reyes, an assault was made on the house of the teacher Alejandro Pérez Siles, who was

(1) Brants, *loc. cit.*; interviews with Magdalena Delgado Toscano de Carda in Morelia, 27th July 1968, and with Prof. Luis Torres Osorio in Uruapan, Mich., 15th Aug. 1968. Case 32 in the Appendix.

out at the time. (1) Pérez Salas' activities in organising peasants in this region have already been mentioned (above, pp. -), and he claims that the assailants were led by one Juan Rodríguez of the sugar "ingenio" of San Juan de Dios, which was liable to be affected by these activities. A year later in Tocuambo, the same teacher was threatened by the Municipal President in connection with a small plot of land which he wanted for a school garden, but nothing came of the incident. (2) In 1937 a young teacher who had only just left the "Normal" was murdered in the village of Tirio, not far from Morelia; he was helping a group of militant peasants ("agraristas") when they were assaulted by "free" peasants who were in the service of the landlords. (3) A problem which frequently arose was that during the interval between a request for land by a peasant community and its fulfilment - an interval which, as we have seen, could last several years - the peasants were subject to all kinds of reprisals on the part of the landowners, who might refuse them not only land but work. In this case the peasants often tried to force the landowners to enter into a temporary sharecropping arrangement, and in this aspect also they were helped by the teachers. Thus in 1938 the teacher Francisco Tapia Díaz was helping the peasants of Chuén, near Arrio de Rosales (Michoacán) in this respect. On 27th September they went to Arrio to obtain a legal decision forcing the local landlord to sign a contract of this kind with them; they succeeded, but next day the bandit Matilde Pedraza attacked Chuén with 16 well-armed men and killed three of the peasants. Pedraza's men then assaulted the teacher's house as well, but he managed to escape by the back door and hide in the woods. (4)

But the methods used by the landlords were not always so violent, since they could often rely on the connivance of the legal authorities. Towards the

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- (1) Interview with Prof. Alejandro Pérez Salas in Patzcuaro, Mich., 26th July 1968. Case in the Appendix No. 85.
 (2) *Ibid.*; case 142 in the Appendix.
 (3) Interview with Prof. Leonardo Nava Heras in Morelia, 8th July 1968. Case 143 in the Appendix.
 (4) Interviews with Prof. Francisco Tapia Díaz and Señor Samuel Vaca, employee of the "Secretaría de Hacienda" in La Huacana, Mich., 14th Aug. 1968. Case 184 in the Appendix.

end of 1937 in Zitácuaro (Michoacán), the teachers Luis Barajas and Rosendo Cruz were imprisoned on charges of fraud brought by a certain Pedro Sánchez, and it was not until a year and a half later that they were freed because the charges had been proved completely false.⁽¹⁾ The accusations had been trumped up in order to hinder their efforts to further the process of land reform, and it is extremely interesting to note that one of the teachers, Rosendo Cruz, was actually President of the Agrarian Community of Tiripetío.

Conflicts of this kind appear to have occurred with more or less the same frequency in most parts of the country. There is rather less evidence of them in the northern States, but it is doubtful whether any significant conclusions can be drawn from this; it may reflect merely the lower population density in the North and the relative lack of information about the area in the national press. In 1937 it was reported from Aguascalientes that on 14th June the teacher J. Marcial Salazar had been murdered in a place called La Granja by Francisco de Luna, described as "a thug in the service of the landowners".⁽²⁾ According to "El Machete" Salazar was killed because of "his struggle in favour of the peasants, for whom he was trying to obtain the division of the lands of the "hacienda" among them, from which it is to be supposed that the intellectual authors of the crime are those likely to be affected by the said division...."

In San Luis Potosí, in the village of El Salto, near Río Verde, a teacher's house was set on fire on the night of 6th April 1939, but fortunately the teacher was sleeping elsewhere, since she had been expecting trouble.⁽³⁾ The cause of friction here, as in the case of Felipe Alcocer Castillo (above, pp.). was said to be the appropriation of a plot of land by the school

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- (1) "La Voz de México", 29th April 1938 (this was when the men were released). Case 141 in the Appendix.
 (2) "El Machete", 11th July 1937. Case 129 in the Appendix.
 (3) "La Voz de México", 20th April 1939. Case 206 in the Appendix.

for teaching horticulture and farming techniques, which had aroused the hostility of one family in particular; although in both cases it may be assumed that other issues were involved, petty disputes of this kind merely serving to bring matters to a head. In "El Salto" it was said that the teacher had the sympathy of a majority of the inhabitants, who were very indignant at the attempt on her life.

A particularly brutal incident was the murder of María Murillo, a young and devoted teacher beloved of all the inhabitants of the village of Huiscaloc in the 'municipio' of Tabasco, Zacatecas. (1) In November 1936 she was "cut to pieces" by a group of armed men who proceeded to mutilate the body and exhibited her breasts on either side of the road "as an example"; the following morning the local priest gave a mass and absolved the murderers. Senorita Murillo was killed "for being a communist and because being a federal teacher she supported the distribution of land to the peasants while the great majority of the priesthood condemned agrarianism as theft and threatened the peasants who received land with the punishments of hell". (2) Such brutality was by no means unusual and sometimes a very minor "offence" could evoke the most frightful revenge. In such circumstances a militant teacher could only be confident of survival if protected by an armed and organized body of sympathetic peasants.

5. Defending the Communists of the Peasants and Developing the Rural Economy

In any given community or group of communities, once the fundamental problem of land distribution had been solved, attention was centred on the long-term aims of the reform programme: to provide a decent standard of living, and indeed a new way of life, for the mass of the rural population, and to raise agricultural production to feed the towns and lay the basis for economic

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- (1) Correspondence of the author with Prof. José Santos Valdes, March-July 1969; and Bremauntz, *op.cit.*, pp. 328-330. Case 64 in the Appendix. Bremauntz gives the date as 1935, Santos Valdes as November 1936.
- (2) Santos Valdes, *loc.cit.*

development. In a sense, when a village obtained land its task had only just begun; it had to know how to use and improve the land, how to get credit, improve techniques and market products, avoiding if possible the danger of falling into the hands of loan sharks, speculators and middlemen. In this aspect of rural policy perhaps more than any other, the teachers were encouraged and expected by the Government to play a leading role.

The first essential was to defend the newly-won land from possible attempts to recover it, by legal or illegal means, on the part of the previous owners. This was tied up with the question of the organisation of peasant leagues and unions, which existed in many areas prior to the granting of land to most local communities, but had later to be strengthened and extended. In many cases the peasants had to defend their rights by force of arms, and, at least under Cárdenas, this harsh reality was recognised by the Government, which encouraged the formation of "Defensas Rurales" - civilian armed guards consisting largely of peasants.⁽¹⁾ Here again, the teachers would often help to organise the "Defensas Rurales" and might lead them in pursuit of bandits or reactionary guerrillas.⁽²⁾ In addition, many peasants had arms left over from the conflicts of previous years, and sometimes organised themselves into irregular agrarian militias to defend themselves and to support other radical groups.

With regard to the development of the ejidal economy, one of the Government's main instruments was the co-operative movement. Villages were to be encouraged to form co-operatives for agricultural production and distribution and craft industries, and it was assumed that the teachers would play a leading part in their organisation. Thus in 1934 the Inspector of the Third Education

(1) Shulgovski, op.cit., pp.266-267.

(2) See below, pp. and k

Zone of Michoacán reported that the co-operative system had triumphed in his area; speaking of "the great principle of salvation which the English philanthropist Robert Owen bequeathed to humanity almost a century ago", he described the co-operative production of "ates" (a local delicacy) in the schools of Morelia, and vigorous agricultural co-operatives in several "ejidos", including one at Tungareo which possessed two threshing machines, two tractors, and other agricultural equipment and maintained a shop and a hotel. Moreover, said the Inspector, "In Queréndaro and other places, the Rural School is the centre of development of the co-operative movement; and while its successes cannot for the moment be compared with those of the aforementioned zones (i.e. Tungareo etc.), there is a well-founded hope that in the next few years the co-operative movement will extend its benefits to a good part of the State's population...."(1)

Co-operatives were being established rapidly all over Mexico from the early 'thirties onwards, frequently encouraged by the rural schools. The movement was particularly important in the Yucatán peninsula, where the large-scale production of henequén and "chicle" for export made division of the land into independent "ejidos" impracticable. The workers were therefore organised into co-operatives which carried out the cultivation and harvesting, and then sold the products to the companies (or after the summer of 1937, to a Government administration which replaced the companies). The co-operative movement was thus very strong in Quintana Roo, where in April 1937 it was reported that the teachers were helping the rural workers to defend themselves against a "malicious campaign of the imperialist companies". According to this report,⁽²⁾ "The Union of Educational Workers of this Territory has given indispensable aid to the chicle- and wood-producing co-operatives, and is struggling in favour of the workers and against the foreign contractors..." It will be shown

(1) "El Maestro Rural", vol. 4, no. 8, pp. 27-28 (15th April 1934)
 (2) "El Machete", 17th April 1937; and see above, p.

later ⁽¹⁾ that the co-operative movement was strong also in Campeche, where it owed its development almost entirely to the work of militant teachers.

But, for the successful development of the peasant economy, co-operative organisation, although valuable, was only one link in a whole chain of necessary improvements. The Ministry of Education was constantly urging the adoption of all kinds of new techniques and programmes of development; thus in 1936 Prof. J. Jesús Cortés suggested a "Programme for the Immediate Improvement of the Ejido", including better housing, farm buildings, use of fertilizers, better livestock, roads, schools for every "ejido", and co-operative production and distribution.⁽²⁾ Clearly this kind of comprehensive development could only be achieved with the help of several Government Departments, and there was some attempt to co-ordinate the work of the Ministries of Education, Health, Communications and the Agrarian Department. But most important of all was the provision of credit, and while the "Banco de Crédito Ejidal" was helpful, its efforts were never remotely adequate. The kind of problems which arose in many areas were summed up in a report made in 1935 about a particularly difficult community, that of Cocula, Guerrero, by Francisca Huerta de Huerta, a social worker employed by the Ministry of Education.⁽³⁾ By nature, she said, this was a rich "ejido", with fertile irrigated lands producing large crops of maize and sugar-cane; but "by the intermeddling of the Ejidal Commissar", the harvest was pledged year after year to the owner of a nearby "hacienda" and the villagers were compromised by illegal credits from private sources. A Cultural Mission visiting Cocula had been unable to prevent the illegal loans (which is scarcely surprising if the Government could not provide sufficient funds) or to form a sugar-producing co-operative to unite the peasants in self-defence against the "hacendado". Señorita Huerta also reported serious social problems such as drunkenness and incest, and propaganda hostile to the

(1) See below, Chapter 8.

(2) "El Maestro Rural", vol. 8, no. 6, pp. 26-27 (15th March 1936).

(3) Ibid., vol. 8, no. 5, pp. 5-6 (1st March 1936).

school on the part of a corrupt tax collector who dealt illegally in maize.

Such cases were by no means rare, but it should not be concluded that no progress was made. Corruption was a serious problem, but it was probably less under Cárdenas than at any time since the Juárez Governments of the 1860's, because for the first time many ordinary people had real hope of improving their situation by honest means, while many public officials were inspired by a new idealism and devotion to duty. Where conditions were favourable, therefore, a real transformation of rural life was possible - as we have seen, for instance, in the case of the "Independence" ejido in Colima,⁽¹⁾ aided by Government credit and an enthusiastic teacher. The multiple ways in which a teacher could help are exemplified by the work of José Santos Valdés, an outstanding member of the profession whose whole life has been devoted to the service of the rural workers of Mexico. It is worth examining his career in some detail, and this, perhaps more than the brief mention of several unconnected incidents, will give a convincing picture of the contribution of the most militant teachers to the organisation and defence of the peasants and rural workers.⁽²⁾

Santos Valdés began his career as a rural teacher in 1923 on the San Marcos "hacienda", near San Pedro, Coahuila; the "hacienda" formed part of the enormous properties of an English absentee landlord, and the native administrator in charge of San Marcos was resolutely opposed to federal education and was constantly harrassing the young "maistrito". From there Santos Valdés went to Sonora, where at the age of 22 he was promoted to the rank of Inspector, and in the zone under his control he managed after a few years to establish schools on almost all the "haciendas", at the expense of the owners (as provided for in Article 123 of the Constitution). But in 1932, an account of his

(1) See above, pp.

(2) The account that follows is based on correspondence with Prof. Santos Valdés from March to July 1969, and on an interview with him in Torreón, Coahuila, on 26th Aug. 1969. While the author cannot vouch for the accuracy of all the details, the general outline of Santos Valdés' account of his life conforms with opinions about him expressed by others interviewed by the author, such as Señorita Norma Castro Quiteño, a journalist of "El Día" newspaper and Prof.

defence of local trade unions against the manoeuvres of the Governor of Sonora, Rodolfo Elías Calles (son of Don Plutarco), he was expelled from the State as a "dangerous communist". Despite his radical sympathies, Santos Valdés knew nothing about communism at this stage, but his experience caused him to make contact with the Communist Party in Mexico City, and "there I realised that my individual work was of no value, but only the collective, organised work of a political party". His educational work now took him to Tamaulipas, where his prominent participation in the organisation of trade unions and peasant leagues led to three attempts on his life, and finally obliged him to flee the State in September 1934.

His work in Tamaulipas took many forms: organising the peasants who worked on henequén plantations near Ciudad Victoria, helping to formulate their legal petitions for land and taking part in their meetings to give advice and denounce abuses by the authorities. He and other teachers studied the agrarian laws and planned the formation of local Agrarian Committees to struggle for land, and of co-operative societies to defend the existing "ejidos" against commercial interests. In several communities they were successful, but only after confrontations with the landowners, including armed conflicts with the "guardias blancas"; Santos Valdés mentions as the man who contributed most actively to the agrarian campaign in this region another teacher, José Dolores Ponce Rodríguez, who was seriously wounded in one such battle.

Moving to Durango, Santos Valdés taught in the "Escuela Regional Campesina" of Santa Lucía, organising meanwhile a "Marxist League" in the vicinity. In the following year he was promoted to the leadership of a Cultural Mission working in the State of Querétaro, where Governor Saturnino Osornio, an ex-"ejidatario" converted into a landlord, was persecuting radical peasants and

Miguel Hernández Topete, now representative of the Ministry of Public Education on the "Comisión del Río Balsas" (a regional development organisation).

teachers; inevitably, Santos Valdés had a personal confrontation with Osorio who threatened to have him murdered for having denounced in a pamphlet the appallingly low wages paid to the peasantry of Querétaro.

In 1936 the Mission moved to other States, and while in Veracruz its members helped the banana workers of Villa Azueta to win a strike against a subsidiary of the giant United Fruit Corporation, contributing evidence which was crucial in the decision of the court of arbitration. Moving to Tabasco, where the pseudo-revolutionary dictatorship of Tomás Garrido Canabal and his followers had imposed temperance and regimented the schoolchildren in semi-military fashion while completely boycotting the land reform programme, Santos Valdés tried to help organise the peasantry and along with Claudio Cortés (Inspector-General of Education in the South-Eastern States, who will be seen in Chapter 8 to have contributed much to the peasants' and teachers' movements in Campeche) disrupted a meeting of some of the local teachers who were being obliged to support the Governor; the two unwanted educational officials were promptly put on a plane to Veracruz.

In 1937-38 Santos Valdés taught in the "Escuela Regional Campesina" of Galeana, Nuevo León, and the School carried out a great deal of social work in the neighbouring "ejidos", organising agricultural contests and improving techniques. In May 1938 conservative interests in the region were planning to join the rebellion led by General Cedillo in San Luis Potosí (immediately to the South) against the radical policies of the Cardenas Government, and at an assembly of over 1,000 peasant delegates from all over the southern half of Nuevo León State, Santos Valdés persuaded those present - at considerable personal risk since there were many "cedillistas" in the meeting - that it was not in their interests to ally with Cedillo.

Throughout his career, then, José Santos Valdés has been intensely involved in the struggles of the peasantry wherever he has worked. In the foregoing account several dramatic political incidents stand out, but all the time

he was helping with the more mundane but vital work of organising, agitating for land, formulating legal documents, defending "ejidos", establishing co-operatives and improving agricultural production. While his record is undoubtedly exceptional and few others could rival the scope and enthusiasm of his contribution, thousands of teachers all over Mexico helped peasants communities in one or another of the ways mentioned. It cannot be denied that there was always a minority of teachers with conservative sympathies, and some also were corrupt and therefore identified with vested interests; in 1939, for instance, "La Voz de Mexico" carried reports of two teachers in Tasquillo, Hidalgo, who were in alliance with local landowners,⁽¹⁾ and of a group of teachers in Tierra Colorada, Guerrero, who fervently supported the reactionary Presidential candidate General Almasán, much to the disgust of local radicals.⁽²⁾ But it is generally accepted that a majority of teachers had leftist political sympathies, and it seems clear that many of them were actively involved in peasant movements, often as leaders; and while their contribution to the solution of the agrarian problem cannot be measured, it was certainly very important. This was recognised in 1939 by Prof. Rafael Méndez Aguirre, Director-General of Urban and Rural Primary Education in the States and Territories:-⁽³⁾

"From 1936 onwards the agrarian reform accelerated its forward march considerably, entrusting to the rural school important tasks of education and guidance of peasant aspirations, for the organisation of the struggle against the resistances organised by the landowning class and against the more or less profound deviations from the proper concept of the 'ejido'. This was a heroic epoch during which the teachers paid with their blood for the fulfilment of their historic destiny; but in all the actions of transformation of the agrarian régime of any importance, carried out by the Government of the Republic, they were present as organisers of the masses.

"Later on, when the agrarian reform was consummated in the most important regions of national agricultural production, such as Yucatán,

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- (1) "La Voz de Mexico", 19th Nov. 1939.
 (2) Ibid., 26th Nov. 1939.
 (3) "Memoria", 1939, vol. 2, p. 63.

La Laguna, the Mexicali Valley, the Yaqui and Mayo areas, etc., there began to be noticed the need to give the school a more precise content as an agent for training the peasant population in order to ensure the conquest of the land by the improvement of the technical capacity of the cultivators to use and benefit from it, and by their preparation to control and administer it."

The importance of the teachers' rôle could not be more clearly stated; and it will be seen in the next chapter just how frequently they did "pay with their blood for the fulfilment of their historic destiny".

CHAPTER VITHE OPPOSITION: VESTED INTERESTS AND OFFENDED TRADITIONS1. Introduction

It has already been indicated that the intense social work carried on by many teachers frequently met with opposition, which could be violent, especially where the teachers were very anticlerical or politically militant. The nature of this opposition and the means by which it was overcome - or, as in a number of cases, the failure to overcome it - reveal many facets of the teachers' activity and of Mexican rural society at this time. Details of the tensions and conflicts which existed are not always easy to discover; but it is well known that in the period under consideration, many rural teachers were murdered, had their ears cut off or were mutilated or attacked in other ways, and the purpose of this chapter is to throw light on the question by means of an analysis of these outbreaks of violence and other forms of opposition.

The author has found over 223 specific incidents of violence or threats of violence against teachers in the years from 1931 to 1940, and a chronological list of these incidents with the sources from which they are drawn is presented as an Appendix; here we are going to examine only those cases about which relatively detailed information has been obtained, making possible some judgement about the context and causation of conflict.

So far it appears that no study has been made of this violence, of its immediate and long-term causes, the forms it took, and its geographical and chronological distribution. As far as the author could discover, no official list has been preserved of the teachers who were murdered, although there are certain widely-held opinions on the subject (thus it is frequently said that many teachers had their ears cut off by "cristeros" or similar groups, presumably in order to brand them for life as enemies of religion; and certainly

this did occur in a number of cases, but it seems to have been comparatively rare). The commentaries in the press are often polemical; for the radicals it is simply a question of praising the "martyrs" of rural education (a description which was often justified), while avoiding the basic question of whether the tragedy was partly due to a mis-conceived educational policy; and the conservatives dismissed the suffering teachers merely as "trouble-makers", "atheists", "protestants" or "communists". As has been seen, this last accusation of the teachers' opponents was often correct, insofar as many teachers did join the Mexican Communist Party in the 'thirties (although towards the end of the decade many left it or were expelled for various reasons.) As for the accusations of Protestantism and atheism, it can be stated that there were very few Protestants in the teaching profession, and the atheists were not very numerous either, although the Communists were presumably non-believers, and there did exist, for example, a "Liga de Maestros Ateos" in Tabasco in 1934. (1)

But it cannot be denied that, according to the Constitution, education in Mexico was "secular" ("Laics") and later "socialist", that it encountered intense opposition on the part of the Church and of many Catholics, and that the majority of teachers were anticlerical by inclination or from pressure of circumstances. It has to be remembered that there was a tradition of conflict between Church and State in Mexico, going back to the early nineteenth century, and often centred on the question of education, over which the Church wanted to maintain a monopoly. Although it had long since lost this battle, the Church continued to exercise an important influence on education, and when the priests could not impose the kind of schooling they wanted, they frequently adopted the negative tactic of trying to exclude all education, using their influence to boycott schools established by the Government. The anticlericalism of the teachers was natural for this reason (not to mention the clergy's

(1) "El Maestro Rural", vol. 4, no. 4, (15th Feb. 1934).

opposition to many other urgent social reforms). But there was always the danger that they would over-react, meeting clerical fanaticism with a secular fanaticism of the kind that had been propagated by Calles in the late 'twenties; the effect of this could be to make the teachers regard the Church as being their main enemy, diverting their energies from the real fight against ignorance, poverty and exploitation, in which the Church was only one of several obstacles. This sterile anticlericalism was liable, in such a Catholic country, to provoke the hostility not only of the clergy, but, much more serious, of the common people themselves, thus destroying the popular basis of progressive education.

2. Religious Opposition

Certainly, religious questions were the cause of many attacks against teachers. Already in the years from 1926 to 1929 the "cristeros" had burnt schools, assaulted teachers and tried to boycott official education, acting from motives which were at least said to be religious. Similar cases frequently occurred in the 'thirties, especially after the introduction of "Socialist Education". In September 1934, in the municipality of La Huacana, Michoacán, the regional inspector of education, Prof. Carranza, organised a "Bad Week" ("Semana Roja") in order to disseminate socialist ideas; when the event was over, as the teachers were leaving to return to their respective homes, "groups of fanatics" attacked and killed Flavio Gómez, Rubén Cortantes, Regelio Amillano, and a number of other teachers whose names are not known.⁽¹⁾ According to information given by the teacher Ignacio Tapia Rangel the attack had been brought on by "anti-religious provocation" on the part of the organisers of the event, and this is confirmed by the family of a local inhabitant, Señor Santos Ponce, who say that during the week the participants - mainly teachers -

(1) Alberto Rumbaut, "La Educación Socialista en México (1934-1935)", *Revista de la Universidad de México* (México), pp. 328-330; interviews by the author with Prof. Ignacio Tapia Rangel in Morelia, 28th & 29th Jan. 1968; with Major Antonio Magaña García in Arío de Rosales, Mich., 2nd Nov. 1967; and in La Huacana, Mich., with the family of Señor Santos Ponce and with Señor Samuel Yaca, employee of the "Secretaría de Hacienda", 14th Aug. 1966. This incident is no. 15 in the Appendix.

had marched through the streets with red flags shouting "Death to the clergy!" and "Death to the fanatics!" But other factors may have been involved, for the assailants were gunmen under the orders of Prodigius Pedraza, a rebel-cum-bandit who, according to another local inhabitant (Senor Samuel Vaca), "was known to be in the pay of the big landowners." (1) And whatever the reason for it, the revenge taken seems extremely brutal: another version of the events says that the assailants of the teacher Flavio Gomez, who was assaulted in the "tenencia" of Paso Real, between La Huacana and Arico De Rosales, smashed his skull and dragged the body through the streets.

Also in this part of Michoacan, in Santa Rita, municipality of Tacambaro, the teacher Maria Salud Morales was murdered at about four in the afternoon on 16th June 1937; according to "El Machete", -

"The teacher Morales has given an example of integrity and sacrifice. As soon as she arrived in the place she noticed the opposition of a group of fanatics who tried to frighten her so that she would leave. The teacher, understanding the danger she was in, refused to leave the place, but did buy herself a pistol. By this means she imposed her will on the 'cristeros' who on many occasions tried to assault her on the way from the village of Tecario to the school. On another occasion the 'cristeros' set fire to the school but the local Council and the federal office (of Education, D.L.R.) obliged the inhabitants to repair it, and so the hatred towards the brave teacher grew." (2)

The report goes on to say that on the 16th they attacked the teacher inside the school, "surprising her when she was unarmed and beating her to death with sticks and stones". On the other hand, according to an ex-pupil of the teacher Morales, they killed her with a rifle in front of him and all the other children. The witness also says that the aggressors were "cristeros" commanded by a certain Dionisio Chávez (or Mendoza, according to others), with the support of the priest Cipriano Zarpién; two months later the "ejidatarios" had killed the ringleader, and the priest had fled from the area. In this case it seems to be a matter of hostility to the school on the part of groups of fanatics, who did not enjoy the sympathy of the majority of the population; if there were other motives, they are not apparent.

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- (1) Prodigius Pedraza was the cousin of Matilde (see ch.5 p.).
 (2) "El Machete", 26th June 1937; Leopoldo Mández, "En Nombre de Cristo... Han Asesinado a Más de Dieciséis Maestros" (Siete Litografías, Editorial

The sensitivity of the religious question is brought out by an incident related by Prof. José Corona Núñez, who began his career as a rural teacher, but is today Director of the National Library of Anthropology and History in Mexico City. In 1932 in Charo, Michoacán, he had succeeded in arousing considerable enthusiasm for sport among the adults who attended evening classes, and since they lacked facilities he took over the Church yard as a basketball court. The yard was completely disused, but nevertheless the Secretary of the "Ayuntamiento", with the help of the priest, used this as a pretext to try and expel Corona Núñez from the village, arousing the inhabitants who tried to stone him when he was about to make a speech on Independence Day (15th September). However, the 70 or so people who had attended evening classes defended their teacher. (1) Less than a year later, Corona Núñez was involved in another, similar incident, in Cuitzeo, Michoacán. Many inhabitants, possibly following the advice of the priest, refused to send their children to the school, and in retaliation the Municipal President ordered the church to be closed. Many people assumed, wrongly, that Corona Núñez had advised the President to take this action, and on Corpus Christi 1933 a crowd of women entered the Municipal offices followed by their menfolk, threatening to stone both the teacher and the President. This tense situation was only resolved by ordering the church to be re-opened, in return for a promise from the parents to send their children to the school. (2) However, Corona Núñez continued to face opposition from the majority of the parents, who demanded his expulsion from the town.

Gráficas Populares, México, 1939; consulted by courtesy of Ing. Narciso Bassols); and interviews with Major Antonio Magaña García in Arco de Rosales, Mich., on 2nd Nov. 1967; with Prof. María de la Luz Molina Zendejas in Tacámbaro, Mich., 4th Nov. 1967; and with Prof. Maximiliano León Murillo (who in 1937 was a pupil of Srta. Morales) in Mexico City, 3rd Oct. 1967. This is case no. 130 in the Appendix.

- (1) Interviews in Mexico City with Prof. José Corona Núñez, 21st, 22nd & 23rd Nov. 68. Case 5 in the Appendix.
 Ibid., case 11 in the Appendix.

There were many incidents like this, of popular hostility to the teachers on religious grounds, in many cases without apparent provocation, or where at least a fairly minor provocation seems to have aroused quite disproportionate hostility. One such case, which was very nearly fatal, occurred in March 1935 in the "tenencia" of Galeana, municipality of Puruándiro, Michoacán. The situation is colourfully described by the teacher Sara Posadas de Magaña, who had recently gone as an assistant to join the director of the local school. There was already serious opposition, for when she arrived attendance at the school was down to four and the teachers were subject to anonymous threats and insults from the women who were inciting the children to throw stones at them. On 9th March a crisis was reached:-(1)

"... But this is not the whole story, for a mob of fanatical passionate, priest-ridden women gathered against us wanting to throw us out if it had not been for the arrival of some gentlemen from Puruándiro I don't know how things would have gone for us but they contained their anger and on the 9th of this month at one o'clock in the morning they knocked down a window-pane... and fired a shot where they thought the teacher was sleeping (but) as a precaution he was sleeping in the next room so we were not hurt. At two o'clock in the morning they attacked through the porch they almost broke it and as the teacher had a pistol he defended himself... We didn't sleep at all until dawn, and without anyone to bring help to us... it was a hail of bullets... and the next day we went to Puruándiro....."

In this case it may well be that the teachers had behaved without consideration for the religious feelings of the people, though this is impossible to prove. But on other occasions, groups of fanatics assaulted teachers as enemies of religion without having any such pretext for their actions. Thus, late in 1936 or early in 1937, in Los Herreros, municipality of Coahuacán (also in Michoacán), a group of armed men shot the teacher Eduardo González while he was combing his horse outside the school. (2) These men did not even

(1) Múgiza archive, volume "Correspondencia Particular, 1934-1935, 'M'-'Q'", pp. 393-395. Case 18 in the Appendix.

(2) Interview with Prof. Luis Torres Osorio in Uruapan, Mich., 15th Aug. 1968. Case 99 in the Appendix.

know him, and shot him simply as a representative of public education to which they were opposed on religious grounds. He was thus the victim of a concerted campaign against innocent teachers by fanatical groups, whose motives were unfortunately, given some plausibility by the errors of some teachers and the misguided policy of the Ministry of Education in earlier years.

In the educational zone of Colotlán, Jalisco in 1935-1936 there were generalised disturbances, with frequent assaults on schools and teachers by people apparently motivated by religious questions. The Inspector of Education in the zone, Gilberto Ceja Torres, told the Director of Federal Education in the State that on 17th October 1935 "a band of fanatics" had burnt the equipment of the school of Tenaseo de Abajo, municipality of Santa María, while shouting "Viva Cristo Rey!" ("Long Live Christ the King!").⁽¹⁾ The inspector, who happened to be in the vicinity at the time, went to the school protected by a detachment of federal troops, and found the furniture, books and records all burnt; the teacher, a woman, had managed to take refuge in the nearby village of Santa María. On 25th January 1936 the same school was burnt a second time, and when the inspector passed through the village two days later, he found the teacher hiding in a private house.⁽²⁾ On 26th October 1935 the contents of the school of Dolores, municipality of Colotlán, were burnt, and there also the teacher, a woman, was threatened by the rebels, who forbade her to continue running the school on pain of violent reprisals.⁽³⁾ On 28th October the inspector himself was attacked on the road from El Mortero to Monte Escobedo: ".....I was assaulted by the bandit José Sánchez, in command of thirty men, at the place known as Bajío de los Alamos; this led to the wounding, on our side, of Emilio Jiménez, a member of the 'Defensa' of Mezquitic".⁽⁴⁾ On 9th November several armed men entered the hamlet of Las

(1) S.E.P.(G), expediente 4-5-7-57. Case 29 in the Appendix.

(2) Ibid.; case 77 in the Appendix.

(3) Ibid.; case 30 in the Appendix.

(4) S.E.P.(G) expedientes 4-2-7-25 and 4-5-7-57. Case 31 in the Appendix.

Armas, but the teacher managed to hide from them.⁽¹⁾ In Potrereros in the municipality of Colotlán, the teacher Victorio Pouratt, "of well-known revolutionary ideology", had to take flight several times when the rebels came to look for him;⁽²⁾ in spite of his enthusiasm attendance at the local school was falling owing to the insecurity, and after visiting the place on 23rd December the inspector decided he would have to ask the educational authorities to close the school because it could not function properly under the circumstances. Altogether, in the year from September 1935 to August 1936, of the 40 rural schools in the region, 7 were set on fire: those of Mirillas, Bocas and Ciénega Grande, municipality of Mezquitic; Dolores, municipality of Colotlán; Ojo de Agua, Soteles and Tenasco de Abajo, municipality of Santa María. In many other schools educational work was hindered because the parents refused to send their children to school. In some cases it appears that there was a genuine popular aversion against the tendencies of official education; thus, in Boquilla de los Pérez, Colotlán, it was reported that the inhabitants were "indifferent towards the school", and in Barrio de Tapias, Santa María, the inhabitants refused to send their children to the school. In Bocas, Mezquitic, on the other hand, it was reported that the teacher was at fault, and often did not attend. But in many cases the population was obeying instructions from the clergy or threats from the armed bands; in Liebres, Santa María, the residents spoke of "fears of the rebels who threaten them and forbid them to co-operate with the school", and in Ciénega Grande they explained that "the reason why they did not send their children to school was only because of the threats made against them by the rebels". In other cases the problem lay in the demands of agricultural life;

(1) Ibid.; case 34, in the Appendix.

(2) Ibid.; case 35 in the Appendix.

in San Pedro, municipality of Huejúcar, the peasants indicated that they did not send their children for economic reasons, and in Zapate, Colotlán, they did not send them "on account of the fact that they keep them busy, earning something, since their harvest had been lost..."

But in general the wave of violence in this region seems to have been of a religious character; the opinion of Inspector Ceja Torres is clear on this matter:-

"...having observed the latest events carefully, and having heard the opinions of the rural teachers and the feelings of the people identified with the government of the Revolution, I declare the catholic clergy to be responsible for the agitation which prevails in these places and for the propaganda openly hostile to socialist education, as also for the assaults on the teachers.

"If the events which have occurred and the opinions of the teachers are not accepted as conclusive proof, given the way in which the clergy has always acted, we are bound to continued working in difficult conditions, but that does not prevent us from stating that the catholic ministers, by scaring the people with excommunications and other tricks, are creating an extremely difficult situation for our schools, aided by the apathy and indifference of certain municipal authorities....

"The priests of Colotlán, Santa María and Huejúcar, in person and represented by fanatical individuals, go on visits to the villages and by the well-known devices they employ, persuade the parents not to send their children to school....."

Also in other parts of the State of Jalisco there were religious disturbances. Thus, in the town of Atoyac, in September 1935 the teacher León Fernández was on the point of being lynched by a mob of enraged inhabitants. According to the newspaper "Exoñador" the teacher was on his way home after attending some sporting events, when a group of men and women approached him and "suddenly a hail of sticks and blows was unleashed upon him", and this made him fall to the ground along with his wife who had come to his aid; and only the prompt arrival of the police saved them from "a certain lynching". We do not know the cause of this angry confrontation, but according to "El Nacional" this was the third assault on the teacher Fernández by "fanatics ~~instigated by the local priest.~~"⁽¹⁾

(1) "Exoñador", 18th Sept. 1935; "El Nacional" 23rd Sept. 1935. Case 25 in the Appendix.

Two years later, in December 1937, another armed raid occurred in the municipality of Colotlán, where the Inspector Ceja Torres was still in service. The Inspector had organized a training course - "Centros de Cooperación Pedagógica" - in the nearby village of Las Canoas, and when the teachers present were about to disperse, "suddenly an armed band came charging in shouting slogans against the school and the socialist teachers and firing shots indiscriminately". According to "El Nacional" the teachers fled in all directions and reassembled after in Colotlán, where they noticed the absence of the young teacher Lucía Curiel; and it transpired that she had been murdered. In this case too the official newspaper of the P.N.R. blamed the "clerical and moneyed groups" for what had happened. (1)

But there were some indications of the existence of other, more profane motives behind this religious war. In particular it is worth drawing attention to the following observation of Inspector Ceja Torres in his report which has already been mentioned:-

"The rural teachers have made every effort to give moral support to the peasants of the region, whether making requests for lands or extensions of their lands ('ampliaciones') or organizing them in cooperatives. We can mention during the present two-month period (December 1935 - January 1936, D.L.R.), the satisfactory resolution of grants of lands in Tenasco de Abajo and Tenasco de Arriba..."

Moreover, Ceja Torres confirmed in an interview that he was very active in helping to solve the agrarian problem in this area in 1935-1938; he considered this to have been his greatest success in terms of social work. (2) Perhaps the marauding bands were not motivated by pure religious zeal; either they considered agrarianism to be contrary to Catholic doctrine, or they were using this as a convenient pretext for vested interests.

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- (1) "El Nacional", 21st Dec. 1937; and interview in Morelia with Inspector Gilberto Ceja Torres, 6th Nov. 1967. Case 139 in the Appendix.
 (2) See chapter 5, pp.

In the summer of 1938 it was the turn of the teachers of the northern part of the State of Puebla to suffer a series of attacks by armed gangs. The journal of the Communist Party informs that at the beginning of July these "savage hordes of bandits", made a violent entry into the villages of Chiconcuautla, Tleala, Yetla and Villa Juárez, demanding money and making threats on the lives of tradesmen, peasants and teachers, and "sowing panic in the whole region". In August the teachers requested the closure of several schools in the district of Zacatlán because of innumerable raids and murders committed in the region. At least in appearance, these disturbances also had a religious character; according to "La Prensa", whenever the bandits entered a village, "the first thing they do is to make for the schools to look for teachers, whether it be to murder them or to cut off their ears, for they are of the belief that they (the teachers, D.L.R.) are enemies of the catholic religion...."(1)

But such hostility to the teachers for this reason was not new in the State of Puebla, although it might take other forms. Thus in Xardimiluloc, district of Huejotzingo, in September 1935, the teacher Carlos Rueda León was nearly lynched by an indignant crowd who were opposed to the socialist education he was disseminating. The newspaper "Excofador" reported that the Indian villagers wanted to capture Rueda León and bury him, but he managed to escape so they gave vent to their anger by smashing all the furniture in the school.(2) Where a teacher faced the hostility of the population at large, as in this case, there is reason to suspect that the situation had been provoked by acts of imprudence on his part, but this is less plausible when the assault was committed by armed bandits masquerading as champions of religion. One of the clearest examples of the latter was the murder early in 1935 of the teachers Saúl Maldonado and Guillermo Suro, near Tlaltemango, Zacatecas.(3)

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- (1) "El Machete", 19th July 1938; "La Prensa", 16th Aug.1938. Case 169 in Appendix.
 (2) "Excofador", 13th Sept.1935. Case 21 in the Appendix.
 (3) "El Maestro Rural", vol.6, no.4, 15th Feb.1935; and Bremaunts, loc.cit., Case 16 in the Appendix.

In the words of the teachers' journal "El Maestro Rural", this act was not the result of the tactless introduction of new ideas, but of the self-interested exploitation of ignorance and fanaticism:-

"The meanness with which the teachers were taunted, insulted, obliged to pray and then hung from a tree, is clear proof that the evildoers were not acting in obedience to their own impulses, but that other forces, knowing how to take advantage of the ignorance of the poor classes, have inflicted on our country an era of persecutions and acts of savagery of this kind."

The best known of such incidents is that which occurred in March 1936 in Ciudad González, Guanajuato, widely reported because Cárdenas himself was touring the area at the time and immediately went to the town to make a personal investigation of what had happened. It seems that a Cultural Mission was due to visit the town to carry out social work and spread the ideals of Socialist Education, but when the local priest heard of this, he arranged a religious service to coincide with a public meeting organised by the teachers in the adjacent square. The teachers, accompanied by militant peasants, were heckled and insulted by the Catholics in and around the church, and a fracas resulted in which a number of people were killed. (1) When Cárdenas arrived the next day, he ordered an immediate investigation, as a result of which he gave the priest (who, he concluded, was mainly responsible) 24 hours to leave the town. He then made a speech of great importance:-

"From the investigations which I ordered to be carried out..., as also from the accounts I received from worthy people of this same town, it can be deduced that the Cultural Mission which has been in the municipality for several days, has come to fulfil its high and noble mission, without overstepping the limit of the law, without doing the least injury to religious beliefs....

"However, unfortunately for the country and shamefully for this town, the crowd which gathered in this place (the church, D.L.R.) was incited by people who have nothing to do with our problems of an

(1) "El Maestro Rural", vol.8, no.8, 15th April 1936; W.C.Townsend, "Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexican Democrat" (Mexican edition, 1954, Biografias Gandesa; first published by George Wahr Publishing Co., Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952), pp.133-135; Leopoldo Méndez, loc.cit.; and correspondence of the author with Prof. José Santos Valdés, March-July 1969. Case 83 in the Appendix.

economic and social kind, and directed against the teachers who have a mission of redemption. And as a result of this unspeakable provocation many men of the people were struck down, humble folk.....

"And who are those responsible for such wanton bloodshed? They are not the teachers. They are not the teachers, who go touring the country in order to awaken the popular consciousness.... It is a lie that socialist education is an agent for the dissolution of homes and a lie that it perverts the children and separates them from their parents....

"Who, then, are responsible for yesterday's events? The culprits are the wealthy, those who live comfortably and provoke the working classes, inciting them against their class brothers. They are the bosses and principally the landowners who by maintaining inhuman systems of exploitation, provoke these acts of bloodshed which fill the Nation with mourning....."

With this speech the President convinced the teachers that they had the moral support of the Government in their dangerous task. But he also recognised that some teachers had been diverted from their main task of social reform into sterile anti-religious provocation, and in another important speech shortly afterwards, in Jalisco, he declared that there must be no more anti-religious propaganda in the schools; instead all efforts must be concentrated on the great battle for social reform.

Today, many teachers who began their careers in the 'twenties and 'thirties recognise that serious errors were made, and, in spite of Cárdenas' declarations, it seems that intemperate attacks on religion still continued after 1935. Indeed, some are of the opinion that they became more frequent. An elderly teacher of Michoacán, Roberto Gutiérrez Armas, says that in earlier years the "cristeros", the clergy and "fanatical people" criticised and sometimes assaulted the teachers because of their advanced ideas, but this was not the fault of the teachers who did not generally commit acts of provocation before 1934. But after the "Socialist Reform" of that year, he says, many teachers thought it their duty to attack popular religion, and in some cases they set fire to images in the churches and cast scorn on religious festivals, foolish acts which showed that "nobody understood what socialism was".⁽¹⁾ This

(1) Interview with Prof. Roberto Gutiérrez Armas in Uruapan, Mich., 15th Aug. 1968.

is confirmed by another veteran teacher, Agapito Constantino Aviña, who reports that in 1939 when he was in Magdalena, Sonora, there was a group of some forty teachers calling themselves the "Bloque de Maestros Socialistas" who took over the church of San Francisco and burnt all the images, thus creating a very tense situation. Señor Constantino emphasizes that he did not agree with this action, for he has always believed that religious fanaticism can only be overcome by persuasion and example.(1)

But when all this has been said, it remains true that religion was used to attack many teachers quite unjustly, and often to sanction barbarous and sadistic assaults on them. Many a priest, interested only in maintaining his dominion over the popular mind, opposed the spread of secular education as such, and spread false rumours to the effect that teachers were Protestants. Thus a peasant of the small community of Zurumútaro, Michoacán, says that there was opposition to the teachers in the area at first because "it was said that they were going to introduce strange doctrines", but "now they (the peasants, D.L.R.) know that all that was false, that it was a lie", (2) and today everyone is asking for education. A teacher who began her career in the same district, María Piedad Flores Castillo, says that at first "the clergy attacked us greatly, thinking that we were going to introduce new ideologies and so on, when really we only wanted to give them (the people, D.L.R.) a new life". In the village of Casas Blancas, near Pátzcuaro, where she was posted from 1932 to 1935, the clergy "made bad propaganda" and tried to organize a boycott of the school, but it did not last because "liberal elements" among the peasants supported the school, and after a time the others followed suit.(3)

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- (1) Interview with Prof. Agapito Constantino Aviña in Chilchota, Mich., 2nd Aug. 1968.
 (2) Interview with the peasant Marcelo Alejandro Morales, of Zurumútaro, near Pátzcuaro, Mich., 19th Aug. 1968.
 (3) Interview with Profa. María Piedad Flores Castillo in Morelia, Mich., 8th July 1968.

Another feature which was distorted by the clergy to prevent the spread of schools, was the attempt, initiated by Bassols in 1933, to introduce sexual education. Rumours were spread to the effect that promiscuity was to be openly encouraged and that practical demonstrations were to take place in the schools. In fact, of course, the measure was moderate and sensible, but there can be no doubt that its introduction at such a time played into the hands of the clergy and increased existing opposition to such an elementary reform as the establishment of mixed education.

The degree of prudery which had to be faced was quite amazing; such a prominent newspaper as "Excelsior"⁽¹⁾ expressed moral outrage at the idea of teaching children even the most elementary facts of life:-

"In a little journal entitled 'Periquín' which circulates widely in both public and private schools, on the recommendations of Inspectors from the Ministry of Public Education - we have been informed - the diffusion of the controversial Sexual Education has been cunningly initiated with the insertion in this month's number of two engravings of 'male' and 'female' flowers, which are real outrages against the morality and modesty of the young....."

Since the countryside was so populated by immoral and promiscuous flowers, birds and bees, not to mention higher animals, presumably it was really unsafe for their morals for children to live in rural surroundings at all.

We have seen that, whether or not it was provoked by the teachers, some religious opposition to the spread of official education was genuine, however misguided. But it is also clear from the incidents which have been examined that religion was often used as a cloak for the vested interests of landowners or "caciques". Several teachers were murdered by gunmen who claimed to be defending religion but were really in the pay of "hacendados" who thought

(1) "Excelsior", 7th Sept. 1934.

their lands were threatened. It is interesting that the terms "cristeros" and "sinarquistas" were often used indiscriminately to describe marauding bands of armed men, whether or not their motives were primarily religious. Popular opinion is often quite clear about this. The same peasant of Durango, mentioned above, declared in answer to a question about the clergy: "Well, you must surely know that, sir, in that matter Capital and Clergy were together, in order that the people should not take their lands.... There was a trick at that time - they said that those who wanted the land were Protestants, or heretics or Bolsheviks." (1) A group of peasants in Chavinda, Michoacán, say that there were many "cristeros" in the area in 1927-1929 and again in 1933-1936, who killed "agraristas" and teachers, "because they didn't want people to be educated, lest they should become aware of their rights". The "cristeros" claimed to be defending religion, "but really they were inspired by the wealthy people and the political clergy to prevent the distribution of the lands". (2) And another teacher is even more categorical:-

"In relation to the fanaticism of the people - they did help the teachers, but the priests were the ones who urged them not to accept the teachers or the school. Those priests were given orders or paid by the owners of the 'hacienda's. What they did not want was that there should be a distribution of lands." (3)

There is thus ample confirmation for the suspicion that armed "cristeros" were not always motivated by religion alone, and that popular hostility to the teachers was generally far from being spontaneous, and was often the result of deliberate manipulation by vested interests. Moreover, the attitude of the Church hierarchy tended to encourage the identification of religion with political and social reaction.

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- (1) Interview with Marcelo Alejandro Morales in Zuzumátari, near Pátzcuaro, Mich., 13th Aug. 1968.
 - (2) Interview with the "ejidatarios" Emiliano and Roberto Sánchez Martínez and Ramón Zarcero in Chavinda, Mich., 4th Aug. 1968.
 - (3) Interview with Prof. Antonio Ibarra Checano in Morelia, Mich., 29th Oct. 1968.

3. "Caciquismo" and State Politics

Local political conditions can explain many of the attacks and threats against the pioneers of education in the countryside, either because they had become involved in politics, or because certain politicians wanted to manipulate the teachers for their own ends. Sometimes political hostility would take the form of straightforward obstruction, preventing or hindering the establishment of a school. Thus in June 1931, the authorities of Tenango del Aire, municipality of Cortocan, in the State of Mexico, refused to allow a federal rural school to be opened in the village, and ordered the arrest of the teacher María Asunción Nava y Galán who had been sent to open the school. (1) It was reported in "Excelsior" that when Senorita Nava y Galán arrived in the village, the local teacher (employed by the State, not the Federation) refused to help her, and she was then approached by a group of individuals with orders from the local Council to arrest her if she tried to open the school. The newspaper decried "the systematic opposition of the municipal authorities of Tenango del Aire to everything that is progress or instruction"; and it appears that this was a case of conflict between the Municipal or State authorities and the Federal Government.

Isolated cases of this kind frequently occurred in remote localities, but they became much more serious when they ceased to be confined to isolated villages and formed part of an overall policy imposed by a State Government which for one reason or another disliked the penetration of federal education into its domains. Such a situation arose in the summer and autumn of 1931 in San Luis Potosí, the fief of the indomitable "caudillo" Saturnino Cedillo. At the end of August the teachers of the State went on strike to protest against various abuses including arbitrary arrests, and demanding eleven months' back pay which they said was owing to them. It seems that they were not alone in

(1) "Excelsior", 5th July 1931. Case 1 in the Appendix.

opposition to the State Government, for they claimed the support of several associations of parents and of 18 local trade unions. Even their delegates who had gone to Mexico City were persecuted, being illegally arrested in the capital early in September.⁽¹⁾ The situation rapidly worsened, and in November a number of teachers were kidnapped by the State Government in a place called Guadalupe.⁽²⁾ On 30th November six of them - Emma Martínez, Laura Martínez, Carmen Cabrera, Catalina Manzaneros, Julia Montoya, and Felina Amaya - were "rescued" by federal troops, although they were still not released but taken to the State Penitentiary in San Luis. Several teachers went on hunger strike, and there was a great scandal in the press about the situation, which was resolved early in December when most of the teachers' demands were satisfied through the intervention of the federal authorities.

In 1936-1937 it was the turn of the teachers of Baja California (Sur) to face threats and persecutions from the Government of the Territory, which was ruled in dictatorial fashion by a veteran "revolutionary", General Juan Domínguez Cota. In 1936 the teacher Arturo S. Moretti, a member of an itinerant Cultural Mission, had to flee from the Territory pursued by troops in the service of the Governor.⁽³⁾ This scenario was repeated in March 1937, when according to "El Machete", the General Secretary of the Federation of Teachers of the Territory, Rafael Tapia S., had to leave hurriedly by plane because Domínguez had been informed of the telegrams of protest he was sending to Mexico City about the situation there.⁽⁴⁾ On 26th February 1937 in Santa Rosalía (B.C.) "agents of the Governor" shot at Fabián Abitia and two other teachers; a message of protest sent some two weeks later alleged that no attempt was being

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- (1) "Exclisor", 23rd & 26th Aug., 1st, 6th & 9th Sept. 1931. Case 3 in Appendix.
 (2) Ibid., 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 6th Dec. 1931. Case 4 in the Appendix.
 (3) Interviews with Prof. Moretti in Mexico City, 2nd, 3rd, 6th & 8th Jan. 1968. Case 96 in the Appendix.
 (4) "El Machete", 24th March 1937. Case 118 in the Appendix.

made to punish the assailants, and described the situation in the Territory as being identical with that of Tabasco under Garrido Canabal.⁽¹⁾ On 18th March "El Machete" carried a banner headline saying: "Baja California under the Oppression of a Great Butcher: J. Domínguez" and reported that he had closed the industrial school of La Paz, taken scholarships away from poor students, and constantly harassed the teachers. These opinions of the Communist journal received some corroboration from other sources; about the same time, "Excelsior" published a report from the "Federación Mexicana de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza" (F.M.T.E.) to the effect that the teacher of the community of La Purísima (B.C.) had been wounded by "someone in the service of the Government".⁽²⁾

A similar situation arose about this time in the State of Sonora, under the Governor Roman Yocupido. It was reported by the teachers' union in March 1937 that the teachers Francisco Zárate and Agustín Flores were imprisoned by the police of Huatabampo for no other reason than that they had organized a union meeting.⁽³⁾ On 13th March 1938 the Inspector of Schools Juan G. Oropeza was wounded in Arizpe by gunmen in the Governor's service, and in July 1938 the teacher Pedro S. Rodríguez, fearing for his life, made interesting declarations to the effect that "... there is a group of gunmen at the service of reaction, who in their eagerness to serve Yocupido, do not stop short of crime. Such was the case in the attempted murders of the Federal Inspector of Education, Juan Oropeza, and of the president of the 'comisariado ejidal' of Arizpe. The same occurred in the case of the aggression against the teacher Enrique Mayorga in Hermosillo and in the arrests of teachers and 'agraristas' in Etchejon and Huatabampo...."⁽⁴⁾

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- (1) "El Machete", 13th & 18th March 1937. Case 111 in the Appendix.
 (2) "Excelsior", 17th March 1937. Case 116 in the Appendix.
 (3) Ibid.; case 117 in the Appendix.
 (4) "El Machete", 23rd and 28th July 1938. Case 152 in the Appendix.

The situation can be more clearly understood when we examine the imprisonment in July 1938 of the Inspector Heriberto Salazar and of several other Sonoran teachers. According to the teachers' union and "El Machete", this action was unjust and it was a manoeuvre of the Governor "owing to a political suspicion and to the relations which comrade Salazar enjoys with the workers' and peasants' organisations of the area". On the other hand, according to "Excelsior" the conduct of the Inspector, who was employed in the zone of Ures, had caused a very bad impression, and "when a big popular festival was being held there, with the attendance of numerous visitors, he delivered a tirade against some of the visitors and even against the lieutenant of the military detachment, creating a noisy scene"; for this reason Salazar and another teacher were arrested and later heavy fines were imposed on them.⁽¹⁾ The truth of the matter is difficult to determine, but what matters to us here is the evident involvement of the teachers in State politics, whether through their own wishes or not, to the extent of coming into serious conflict with - in this case - Governor Yocupicio.

In March 1938 the teachers of Sinaloa went on strike against the State Government, in protest against the dismissal of many teachers because of their Union activities. In the following weeks the S.T.E.R.M. in Mexico City received numerous protests against the imprisonment of leading teachers in Mazatlán, Culiacán, Los Mochis, Concordia, El Fuerte and other places, by the Government of Alfredo Delgado.⁽²⁾ Towards the end of March it was reported that in Culiacán a group of women teachers acting as pickets outside a school had been insulted and beaten by the police.⁽³⁾ The teachers seem to have had the sympathy of the local population, and this was clearly another conflict of a political nature, in which the Governor regarded the teachers as a potential threat to his power.

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- (1) "Excelsior", 5th July 1938; "El Machete", 28th July & 4th Aug. 1938. Case 176 in the Appendix.
 (2) "Excelsior", 5th April 1938. Case 155 in the Appendix.
 (3) "El Machete", 9th April 1938. Case 154 in the Appendix.

When teachers were involved in political conflicts, it was not always in this form of a simple confrontation between the teachers on the one hand and the local authorities on the other. In January 1939 the Governor Rodríguez Triana of Coahuila, previously a Communist but by that time estranged from the Party, tried to divide the unionized teachers of that State for his own political ends; and it seems that he was successful, since in Saltillo, on 26th January, according to "La Voz de México", "a numerous group of divisionist teachers" assaulted three schools occupied by teachers belonging to the C.T.M., who were on strike. (1) This version appears to be confirmed by "El Porvenir" of Monterrey, which reported that the Federation of Workers of Coahuila ("Federación de Trabajadores de Coahuila") had requested the intervention of the National Committee of the C.T.M. "in order to resolve the difficulties of the teachers of Saltillo with the local Executive, which is trying to divide the branch concerned", and added that "the police have made assaults on the schools to try and replace the unionized teachers by others.."

Another revealing incident occurred in Chilpancingo, Guerrero, in August 1940, during a conference of the "Comité de Defensa y Lucha por los Intereses del Magisterio Guerrerense". During the first session of the Conference, various delegates denounced "the activities of 'almazanistas' with regard to an armed rising", and shortly afterwards 13 teachers, including the Inspector Juan Campuzano, were arrested for having made these accusations. (2)

The pattern of conflict between State Governments and teachers' unions, in one form or another, could be repeated many times over. Two more examples will serve to show the extent of the phenomenon. In May 1938 the S.T.E.R.M. reported "specific cases of persecution, murders, expulsions, imprisonments

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- (1) "El Porvenir" of Monterrey, 27th Jan.1939; "La Voz de México", 27th Jan.1939. Case 197 in the Appendix.
 (2) "La Voz de México", 11th Aug.1940. Case 220 in the Appendix.

and exorbitant fines and a series of assaults" against the teachers of Tabasco, who were being pursued by gunmen in the service of the Governor.⁽¹⁾ And in Durango, later in the same year, the Government of Colonel Enrique Calderón R. carried out a series of offensives against the teachers with the purpose of making them leave the C.T.M. and join the "Sindicato de Trabajadores al Servicio del Estado", an organization described by a delegation of teachers and workers as a "bosses' union" ("sindicato blanco") in the service of the Governor and his associates.⁽²⁾

In the last analysis, in the majority of these cases it can be seen that the teachers were in a weak position in relation to the local distribution of political forces. Governors accustomed to manipulating all sections of the population for their own purposes were not prepared to allow agitations and denunciations on the part of socialist teachers who could undermine the foundations of their power. If the teachers, who were often defenceless, persisted in their activities, they knew what to expect; and these situations usually changed only if the Federal Government decided to depose the Governor in question. (An example of this, where militant teachers achieved sufficient popular support and political power to be a serious threat to the existence of a State Government, will be examined in detail later in relation to Campeche). Thus, the instances politically motivated hostility to teachers (in the narrow sense) can be seen to have obeyed the special circumstances of each State rather than the national situation.

4. The Landed Interest

As has already been pointed out, it was natural that the rural teachers should take an interest in the problems of the peasants, and specifically in

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- (1) "Excoelador", 20th May 1938. Unfortunately the full details are not given. See also Ch.5 p.
- (2) "Excoelador", 16th Aug. and 7th Dec.1938; "La Voz de México", 8th Jan 1939. Again, details of the attacks are not given.

land reform. Naturally any participation in these questions on their part could create very serious difficulties between them and established interests, above all if they took the initiative in requests for land. It has been shown in Chapter 5 that they frequently did precisely that, and that they often faced violent opposition on this account. It has also been shown that in a number of assaults on teachers by so-called "cristeros", the underlying motives may well have been connected with disputes over lands; and it is clear from the evidence of the incidents which have been considered that a significant proportion of the acts of aggression carried out against rural teachers arose from agrarian questions, above all from their participation in requests for lands and in the organization of peasants into leagues or unions. Moreover, landowners sometimes tried to prevent schools from even being established, fearing that they might lead to agrarian agitation. But in addition to those cases of violent opposition whose origins are clearly in agrarian problems, there are many others which arose from social conflicts of a similar type, or which at least give a strong impression of being related to such conflicts, even when the connection cannot be proved.

A series of assaults of this kind occurred in the State of Querétaro in 1936-1937, and were the subject of a bitter denunciation by the local correspondent of "El Machete":-

"The teachers of the District of Jalpan, Qre., are victims of a savage campaign of aggressions and acts of injustice on the part of the 'caciques' of the region. Indeed, Noradino Rubio, a 'cedillista' and deputy senator who manipulates the local peasants by intimidation and Eduardo Hawly Vargas, a 'callista' and nephew of Engineer Vargas Lugo and Local Chief of the 'Banco Ejidal', incite the peasants with lies to attack the teachers. This is all because the teachers are exposing these 'caciques' to the peasants as people who in combination with other authorities, such as the doctor of (the Department of) Health, brutally exploit the rural workers....."

It was because of his efforts to expose this exploitation, the report continued, that the teacher Antonio Tapia Zamora of the village of Tepame, near Arroyo Seco, was murdered "with the participation of" the Municipal

President, towards the end of 1936.(1) Also, shortly afterwards - on 14th December - the Inspector of Schools Manuel Cortina Vizcaino was attacked in his house by gunmen on account of his efforts to investigate the murder of Tapia Zamora, which the authorities were trying to present as a suicide.(2) The assault on the Inspector's house was led by one Alfredo Hernández, self-styled "Comisario Ejidal" of Jalpan, who was said to be guilty of various crimes. The correspondent said that these "caciques" were able to perpetrate such deeds with impunity because they had the protection of General Cedillo; and while it is difficult to judge the accuracy of epithets like "callista" and "cedillista", this report is very plausible in the light of local politics in Querétaro and San Luis Potosí at the time.

Also in Querétaro, in Santa Rita, near San Juan del Río, the teachers José Luis Alfaro and Antonio Sánchez Rivas were murdered on 27th December 1937, while the teacher Ildelfonso Lara Rivas "made a miraculous escape".(3) The three had gone to the village of Santa Rita to talk to the peasants and enjoy a day off work, but according to "El Machete" i-

"Unfortunately the teachers ate in a place known as 'La Cuvita', property of a well-known 'cristero' called Facundo Otero, the real 'cacique' of the place. This individual was able from the conversation of the teachers to find out their (political) affiliations, and this it seems led him to execute the horrible crime.

"After allowing a little time to pass, ten armed men appeared and arrested the teachers Alfaro and Sánchez Rivas, saying that they had to take them away to be interrogated by 'their boss'. Shortly afterwards, several shots were heard....."

It is interesting to see that the victims were members of the Communist Party distinguished for "their activity in the social struggle", a characteristic unlikely to endear them to established interests. It was reported a few days later in "Excelsior" that several teachers and relatives of the victims were organizing a protest demonstration.

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- (1) "El Machete", 2nd Jan.1937. Case 90 in the Appendix.
 (2) Ibid., case 94 in the Appendix.
 (3) "Excelsior", 30th Dec.1937; "El Universal", 29th Dec.1937; "El Machete", 8th Jan.1938. Case 137 in the Appendix.

In the neighbouring State of Guanajuato it seems that the situation was very similar. It was reported that towards the end of 1937 armed bands supported by the landowners were constantly persecuting peasants and rural teachers, and on 23rd December the "white guards" of the hacienda "El Comodoro" assaulted the house of the teacher Amada Chávez, who managed to escape.⁽¹⁾ Another widely reported incident occurred in the village of La Venta, near Acámbaro, on 12th June 1938. The teacher Juan Martínez de Escobar was murdered by "a rebel gang" of "cedillistas" just as he was returning from an excursion undertaken for purposes of study; they killed him "with great cruelty and in front of 15 children".⁽²⁾ The immediate pretext which led to this is not known, but the sources say that he was "a young teacher, full of life, dynamic, revolutionary", who belonged to the Communist Party and did a great deal of social work. He was only 24 and came from a lower middle class family in Mexico City, where he had graduated from the "Escuela Nacional de Maestros" before volunteering to serve out in the country. It is interesting to note that in this case a local army commander spoke at the victim's funeral in favour of the radical activities of teachers, workers and peasants, declaring that "we soldiers and teachers are brothers". Unfortunately, such progressive attitudes seem to have been rare among the military, despite their revolutionary origins.

A year later, on 3rd February 1939, another outstanding teacher was assaulted in Acámbaro. This time it was the Inspector of Schools Genaro Hernández Aguilar, who was attacked with firearms and severely wounded:-

"Of the five shots fired by the aggressor, only two hit their targets one on the right hand side of the chest, damaging the lung, and the other in the upper part of the left thigh....." ⁽³⁾

According to this report from "El Maestro Rural", the assault took place in the teacher's own home; another version says it was at a union meeting; but

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- (1) "El Machete", 15th Jan. 1938. Case 135 in the Appendix.
 (2) "El Maestro Rural", vol. 12, no. 5 (May 1939); "El Machete", 13th & 16th June 1938; "Exéclador", 15th June 1938; and Leopoldo Méndez, loc. cit. Case 164 in the Appendix.
 (3) "El Maestro Rural", vol. 12, no. 5 (May 1939); "La Voz de México", 10th Feb. 1939; and interviews with Inspector Genaro Hernández Aguilar in Morelia, Mich., 30th Jan. and 10th June 1968. Case 200 in the Appendix.

the victim himself (who is still alive) declares that it was in his office, and it is to be supposed that memory does not lie about such a dangerous experience. The gunman fled and was not identified, but it was said that he had connections with the "sinarquistas". As for the antecedents of the Inspector Genaro Hernández, according to the prominent educationalist Celerino Cano writing in "El Maestro Rural", he was a brilliant young teacher and had "a mastery of special skills which help to bring success in social work"; in spite of this, he had resisted pressure from many people to make him dedicate himself to politics. But this presumably refers to official, P.R.M. politics, because the newspaper "El Machete", believing that he had died in the incident, published an obituary revealing among other things that Genaro Hernández had been "an active militant of the Communist Party" and had been Educational Secretary of the Party's Regional Committee in Acámbaro, figuring "among the most outstanding leaders" of the Party in the region. Moreover, the obituary said that he had organized many sections of the "Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas de México", and that earlier, in Michoacán, he had cooperated "energetically" in the organization of peasants. Thus, even if the direct cause of the crime is not known, it can be understood why this teacher should have been a natural target of local conservatives. He had probably fallen foul of the same landed interests as were said to be responsible for the death in November 1940 of the teacher Antonio Lozano Rubio, murdered by the "sinarquistas" near Yuriria, in the same part of Guanajuato. (1)

At the beginning of August 1938 the teacher Rafael Rojas C., Director of the "Escuela Regional Campesina" of Champusco, Puebla, wrote to the Governor of the State defending himself against the intrigues of "reactionary elements and agents of the landlords of Puebla", who were trying to have him arrested on the grounds of unjustified complaints against him. But apparently Rojas'

(1) "La Voz de México", 24th Nov. 1940. Case 223 in the Appendix.

letter did not have the desired effect, because only a few days later the "Diario de Puebla" published a news item to the effect that the Governor himself had had Rojas arrested. As for the cause of the affair, the teacher maintained that "his only crime has consisted of carrying out work for the guidance of the peasants...."⁽¹⁾ The fact was that the teachers were seen by many local authorities, in any disturbance, as political subversives or peasant leaders; it was reported in "La Prensa" that in January 1938 the police beat up the teacher Jesús Hernández in front of his pupils, in the State school of Tlaquepaque, Jalisco.⁽²⁾ This aggression occurred at the same time as the arrest of several local agrarian leaders, which suggests that the teacher was associated with them in his ideas, if nothing more.

In Tenancingo in the State of Mexico the rural teacher Gustavo Domínguez became involved in an incident in July 1938; he was accused of having fired on the tradesman Vidal Domínguez and his wife (the two men were not related). But according to the correspondent of "Excelsior", "the victim was the aforesaid teacher", assaulted simply for having reported the tradesman to the Forestry Department because he was involved in the purchase of timber secretly removed from certain forests. Vidal attacked the teacher pistol in hand, and the victim defended himself to the best of his ability; as a result, both of them were wounded.⁽³⁾

In the State of Veracruz, on 29th May 1939 the teacher Agustín Moctezuma González was wounded in an ambush when he was on his way from Zempoala to La Esperanza, the place where he worked. This is another example of a Communist teacher, and his assailants belonged to "the people commanded by the eternal and pernicious murderer of rural workers, Manuel Parra"; but the attack on

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- (1) "El Machete", 11th and 13th Aug. 1938; "El Diario de Puebla", Aug. 1938. Case 180 in the Appendix.
 (2) "La Prensa", 5th Jan. 1938. Case 148 in the Appendix.
 (3) "Excelsior", 15th July 1938. Case 174 in the Appendix.

Moctezuma was to some extent a chance affair, because the previous day this same armed band had failed in an attempt to kill several policemen and had lost one of their own men in the process; and they picked on the teacher mainly in order to avenge themselves for their defeat.⁽¹⁾ Even so, it is interesting that they should have chosen a teacher as the object of their revenge.

The State of Guerrero, which is renowned today as the home of violence and social conflict, was far from immune from it in the 'thirties, although at that time it was in no way exceptional in this respect. On 30th June 1938 the Director of the rural school of Totolapan, Guillermo de la Cruz, was murdered by one Teófilo Márquez, described as a drug addict. The teacher was said to have undertaken much "revolutionary work" and to be admired by the peasants, earning the hostility of "numerous reactionaries" who were thought to be behind the crime.⁽²⁾ Similarly, in the port of Acapulco on 21st February 1939 the teacher Isidro Meza was killed by two well-known criminals, and it was reported that Meza had been outstanding for his "revolutionary work" in the region.⁽³⁾

Finally, another case of this kind occurred in the State of Hidalgo in March 1940. The victim on this occasion was Ernesto Escamilla, who had done much to help the Indians in the defence of their lands against the "caciques". He had been threatened several times because of his activities, and therefore went to Pachuca (the State capital) to request the protection of the military authorities. But when he was returning to Arbolado, where he lived, he was assaulted and killed by five gunmen who were lying in wait.⁽⁴⁾ "La Voz de México" reported that true responsibility for this lay with several "caciques" -

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- (1) "La Voz de México", 5th June 1939. Case 211 in the Appendix.
 (2) "El Machete", 13th July 1938. Case 165 in the Appendix.
 (3) "La Voz de México", 25th Feb. 1939. Case 201 in the Appendix.
 (4) Ibid., 24th March & 26th May 1940. Case 217 in the Appendix.

whom it named - with the local authorities of Zimapan and Tarquillo, and, interestingly, with the Inspector of Schools Carlos Castillo Díaz.

From these examples it can be seen that a large number of assaults took place because various privileged groups felt their interests threatened by the social work and agitation carried on by the rural teachers. This also tends to confirm the connection between the teachers' rôle in agrarian reform and the opposition they encountered; many of the incidents just described appear to be connected with requests for land or the organization of peasant leagues, although this is not specifically mentioned. When a teacher is described as being renowned for his "revolutionary work" or for his defence of the peasants, it is fairly clear that he was engaged in these struggles. What also emerges is the continuing close connection, in many areas, between the local authorities and the big landowners or traditional "caciques" - a situation which was bound to be a serious brake on the progress of the Revolution.

5. Other Vested Interests

If the teachers showed great interest in the problems of the peasants and in agrarian reform, it does not follow that they ignored other important social and economic conflicts. Naturally, living in the rural areas, they were less affected by the affairs of industry and labour; but there are a few incidents which indicate their participation in these questions when they came into contact with them.⁽¹⁾ In particular, there are three very interesting cases of rural teachers being victimised for promoting the unionisation of construction and mining workers. On 11th October 1937 an official of the teachers' union (F.M.T.E.) in Mexico City telegraphed to General Múgica that he had just received news that the teacher Carlos López was imprisoned on orders of

(1) It will be seen later that they were very active in the unionization of rural workers in some areas.

the Municipal President of Iguala, Guerrero, when his only crime had been to help in the organisation of the local Road Labourers' Union. (1) Múgica replied that he would write to the Governor of Guerrero about the matter, although he hoped that justice would be done without having to resort to personal influences.

In June 1938 the teacher Luis Cervantes Bustamante, of Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo, was the victim of several acts of aggression by the authorities of the nearby community of Cardonal. According to information given to the press by the S.T.E.R.M.:-

"In 'El Cardonal' there are mining properties being worked. The 'Real del Monte' company, with its associate Timoteo Barrera, which exploits the mines in that place, is constantly infringing the Labour Act and keeps the miners, all of them Indians, under the most fearsome exploitation.... In this dirty work they have the cooperation of the local authorities and the 'cacique' and leader of the 'Defensa Rural' señor Alberto Ramírez...The Teacher Luis Cervantes Bustamante, director of the school of Ixmiquilpan, began to make persistent efforts on behalf of our comrades the miners of that town. This comrade managed to form a miners' union which was dissolved and all the miners who had joined it were dismissed owing to the anti-union bias of the 'cacique' Ramírez. This man promised that the teacher 'would pay for it' and a few days ago he armed eight bandits, who went to the school of Ixmiquilpan and opened fire on it at a time when the teacher with his wife and two children was inside....."(2)

In this attack there were no casualties and the gunmen fled from the scene; but a little later they returned and fired 180 shots against the school, "the proof of which is in the bullet-marks on the walls"; and the following night they chased the teacher through the woods. The fact that he survived unharmed suggests that they had orders to do no more than frighten him.

The other case of this kind of which the author has details occurred in Salinas, San Luis Potosí, in 1939. On the afternoon of 15th May the federal teacher Manuel Losano Cercoeros was sitting on a bench in the main square talking to some women teachers when he had an argument with the town's municipal president. This man, known as "a bitter enemy" of the teachers and workers

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- (1) Múgica, archive, vol. 2 "Correspondencia Particular, 1937, 'E'-'F'"; Telegram to Múgica, 11th Oct. 1937, from Mariano Franco, official of the F.M.T.E. in Mexico City; and Múgica's reply 18th Oct. 1937. Case 132 in the Appendix.
- (2) "El Machete", 21st June 1938. Case 166 in the Appendix.

because "he is in the pay of the English Salt Company", insulted the teacher Lozano, telling him that "he alone was responsible for the fact that the workers had formed a union", and since the teacher defended his action, the municipal president tried to shoot him but was prevented by the timely intervention of a lieutenant from the local garrison. (1)

6. Personal Animosity and Casual Violence

Some of the opposition to individual teachers, naturally enough, arose from purely personal motives and cannot be related to general social or political conflicts, or at least only in a very indirect way. Certainly there are a number of incidents of violence which, in the absence of further evidence, must be ascribed either to personal animosities or to the general high level of criminality. An example of the former is the murder of the young teacher Emilia Beltran during a dance in the village of San Antonio, Sinaloa, on Christmas Day of 1937. Emilia was shot by one Javier Nava, and it seems from newspaper reports that this was a "crime pasional" since "for some time past the aforesaid young lady had been molested by Javier Nava, and when the bloody crime occurred, the teacher was dancing with Ruperto Gastelum Machado, who was seriously wounded by the same shot that killed Miss Beltran." (2) It is to be supposed that teachers were quite frequently involved in personal disputes of this kind, which were common enough in rural Mexico, although they may not always have been widely reported.

General criminality and unrest seems to have been responsible for a fair number of assaults and outrages against the teachers. In particular it is clear that the large number of young women - and some of them were very young - sent to take charge of schools in remote areas, were a natural target for the attentions of armed bandits or rebels of dubious morals. Thus a numerous

(1) "La Voz de México", 23rd May 1939, Case 209 in the Appendix.
(2) "La Prensa", 2nd Jan. 1938, Case 136 in the Appendix.

group of "bandits" committed a gratuitous crime in the community of San Jerónimo, Jalisco, on 1st September 1935. The assailants pillaged the shops and terrorized the whole place, and before withdrawing they captured the teachers María Guadalupe and Elena Rico Garza and took them to the mountains. In the night the teachers tried to escape, but according to "El Nacional", the "barbarous 'cristeros'" overtook Elena and "covered her with stab-wounds", leaving her body "completely disfigured". It appears at first sight that this brutality was not motivated by any political or social issues, although it is worth noting that the bandits were considered to be enemies of socialist education, and that during the raid on San Jerónimo they killed four well-known "agrarista" peasants and wounded another two, which may put their actions in a different perspective. Later, María Guadalupe declared in an interview that the assailants had shown them some papers saying that the owner of the "San Jerónimo" hacienda had sent them "to punish all those ----- teachers of the Socialist School and to kill them because the priests had also ordered it"(1)

Another similar incident occurred in the same State in January 1937: an armed group assaulted the teacher María del Refugio Higuera (Hipólito according to the correspondent of "Excelsior") in Cinco Minas, municipality of Etzatlán, raping her and then beating her so much that she died later in hospital. (2) Once again it seems difficult to attribute the crime to anything other than lust and sadism, but it is to be noted that the local peasants of "agrarista" tendencies supported the indignant protest of the teaching profession.

In Coatepec, Veracruz, the attractive young teacher Leonor Alfonso was kidnapped in 1937 by a group of armed men and held captive in a remote village

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- (1) "Excelsior", 9th Sept. 1935; "El Nacional", 6th Sept. & 5th Dec. 1935. Case 20 in the Appendix.
 (2) "Excelsior", 31st Jan. 1937; "El Nacional", 7th Dec. 1937; "La Prensa", 31st Jan. 1937. Case 104 in the Appendix.

for two years until her brothers managed to save her.⁽¹⁾ Another picaresque incident occurred in Jalisco in January 1938, when the "graceful" teacher Rebeca Gómez Luna was kidnapped by a band of rebels in Villa de Tordila.⁽²⁾ The "ruffians" who came from the region of the "Volcán de Colima" took the poor woman by surprise while she was bathing and forced her to follow them half-naked; and nothing is said of her fate, except that federal troops went out to give chase to her captors. Again, in August 1938, María de la Luz Avalos, a teacher serving in the community of Tepames, near Tapalpa, Jalisco, was kidnapped by bandits. They demanded a ransom and when it was not paid, they raped and murdered their victim; and the correspondent of "La Prensa", reporting the same incident, commented: "A new victim is added to the already numerous casualties produced among the rural teachers by bandits, who without any cause to defend, go about spreading terror among the small villages."⁽³⁾ It would be tedious to list further instances of apparently senseless and capricious brutality, and the few examples quoted here should make it clear that the teachers sometimes faced the risk of violence or death unconnected with the opposition of political, religious or economic interests to their educational work. But the importance of this should not be exaggerated, since even in some of these cases - as with the murders of Elena Rico Garza and María del Refugio Higuera - there are strong hints of other factors at work.

7. Confused and Conflicting Strands of Opposition

In any specific situation, it was natural that hostility to the teachers and opposition to official education in general should spring from a combination of motives which are often unclear or impossible to disentangle. So far, we have examined those incidents in which the cause of hostility seems

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- (1) "Excelsior", 7th May 1939. Case 144 in the Appendix.
 (2) "La Prensa", 5th Jan. 1938; "El Machete", 22nd Jan. 1938. Case 145 in Appendix.
 (3) "La Prensa", 20th & 21st Aug. 1938. Case 182 in the Appendix.

relatively clear and where one motive in particular is dominant, be it religion, politics, economic self-interest or lust. But inevitably, in almost every case, other motives are present, and it has been seen how religion was often a cover for the self-interest of landlords or "caciques", how agrarian agitation could lead the teachers into conflict not only with the "hacendados" but with local politicians, and how lust might be combined with the defence of vested interests.

The latter situation is further illustrated by the murder of the 19-year-old teacher María Mora, on the ranch of San Nicolás belonging to the "Puga" hacienda, Nayarit, on 21st October 1932. In two years' work she had done much to "present to the peons of the hacienda a panorama of a better life", an activity which did not please the administrator of the ranch, one of the "intimate" employees of the hacienda. This would appear to have been the main cause of the crime, committed by the administrator's son, Hilario Venegas, "the cretin who cut short the flower of a young life". But there were other factors, according to this report from "El Maestro Rural":-

"The crime was executed on the morning of 21st October; the teacher had (already) asked for a transfer, because of the hostile activity of the administrator of the ranch, Macario Venegas...Hilario was making amorous advances to the young teacher, and she of necessity did not give way to the ruffian's pretensions; perhaps she already foresaw her tragic end, and she had a real dislike of the two Venegas, both father and son.

"The day before, and with good reason, she explained her complaints to the authorities of the hacienda..... her words were moderate, she accused no-one, she merely asked for guarantees while her transfer was being arranged; this was the death-sentence....." (1)

On the very next day Hilario shot her, and it is impossible to say which motive predominated.

Equally difficult to ascertain are the aims of the rebel leader "El Tallarín" who committed many assaults against peasants and teachers in Morelos

(1) "El Maestro Rural", vol.3, no.14 (15th Dec.1933). Case 6 in the Appendix.

between 1935 and 1938. In September 1935 this bandit, who was marauding in the area of Jojutla, attacked a car and kidnapped the teachers Facundo Bordilla (or Bobadilla) and Camerino Valle, who were working in Los Hornos, a place on the road from Jojutla to Huautla. Then he murdered the teachers and abandoned their bodies, which were later discovered and taken to Cuernavaca. (1) An interesting detail is the fact that the commander of the detachment of federal troops in Jojutla refused to go out and search for the rebels, because, he said, "he had no orders to that effect"; and because of the lack of security the Office of Federal Education in Morelos ordered all the teachers to take shelter in Cuernavaca for a time. Again in 1938 this "Tallarín" obliged 21 teachers, this time those of the District of Tecanixtla, to seek refuge in the main town of the District. (2) On 16th August of the same year the "Defensa Rural" of Totela del Volcan went to Metepec in pursuit of the insurgents and forced them to fight; two rural teachers had volunteered for the "Defensa" and one of them, Delfino Aguilar, was slightly wounded in the skirmish. (3) This is not a case of a premeditated attack on the teacher, but in all assaults carried out by this leader there appears to have been a nebulous mixture of cultural resentment, political feeling and outraged patriotism, easily directed against peasant leaders and socialist teachers.

The same appears to be true of the band of armed men who threatened the inhabitants of the region of Tlitzio, Michoacán, in May 1938. (4) They entered the village of Tlitzio looking for the teacher Salvador Nuñez, and when he managed to escape, they burnt the contents of the school. Soon afterwards they did the same in the schools of Queretarillo and Patámbaro, where the teachers also managed to escape. But their hostility was not confined to teachers, since they also assaulted a bus and killed a group of road-menders, "merely

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- (1) "La Prensa", 2nd Oct. 1935; and Brewsantz, loc. cit. Case 26 in the Appendix.
 (2) "El Machete", 5th Aug. 1938. Case 179 in the Appendix.
 (3) Ibid., 20th, Aug. 1938. Case 178 in the Appendix.
 (4) "El Machete", 26th May 1938. Case 162 in the Appendix.

for having found on them the credentials of the Union to which they belong". In one sense these men were obviously bandits, but they were bandits with a specific political or religious hatred of radical groups.

It is often difficult to distinguish between the immediate and longterm causes of hostility to the emissaries of the Department of Education. Thus "El Maestro Rural" describing the murder of the teacher Juan Manuel Espinosa in Santiago Toxihé in the State of Mexico, gives a very emotional account of what happened, emphasizing the exemplary social work of Espinosa and the brutal way in which he was struck down in front of a crowd of women and children on 10th May 1933, while celebrating Mother's Day.⁽¹⁾ No doubt Espinosa had made enemies by his protection of the common people, but it seems likely that the immediate cause of the crime was a dispute about the local "Defensa Social", in which both Espinosa and his assailants played a leading part.

Where hostility was expressed by the people as a whole in the form of lynching or mob violence, it is often very difficult to discover the true causes of their anger. Opposition of a religious nature often expressed itself in this way, as has been seen (above pp.83-84), especially as a result of anti-clerical actions on the part of the teachers. But such mob hostility was not always spontaneous, and might be fomented on pseudo-religious grounds by landowners or "caciques" whose real motives were very different. This may well have been true in the case of Trinidad Ramírez, a teacher who was lynched in Contepec, Michoacán, in 1935.⁽²⁾ Various rumours are current about the death of Ramírez; an elderly colleague of his, J. Eleazar Bernáides, said in an interview that Ramírez took refuge from an angry crowd in the municipal offices, but the crowd dragged him out and killed him. Various people were

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- (1) "El Maestro Rural", vol.3, no.1, (1st June 1933). Case 9 in the Appendix.
 (2) Interviews with Prof. José Corona Núñez in Mexico City, 21st, 22nd & 23rd Nov. 1968; with Prof. Enrique Villaseñor in Morelia, 11th & 29th July 1968; and with Prof. J. Eleazar Bernáides in Morelia, 1st Nov. 1967. Case 66 in the Appendix.

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arrested afterwards, most of them women, because the local priest, "a great friend of the landowners, incited the people against the agrarian reform, and he had greater influence with the women". Another ex-colleague of Ramírez, Enrique Villaseñor, confirms that he was lynched - stoned to death, in fact - but says that he had provoked this by making a very strongly anticlerical speech. Finally, it is confirmed by Prof. José Corona Núñez, who was then a teacher in Michoacán, that Ramírez was killed in a particularly brutal manner by a crowd consisting mainly of women; as a punishment for this action, the State Government degraded Contepéc from the status of "municipio" to that of "tenencia". As regards the cause of the assault, Corona Núñez makes it clear that both factors were involved: Ramírez was very active in organizing unions and agitating for land (and many peasants protested at his death), but he was also rather tactless over the religious question.

A similar outbreak of mob hostility took place in the same year elsewhere in Michoacán, in Tzintzuntzan.⁽¹⁾ Here the people made an attack on the teachers of the Technical School ("Escuela Industrial"), on account of a brawl between the Director of the School and an Indian who was influential in the village. When the church bell was rung as a signal, the people gathered and laid siege to the School, firing guns, throwing stones and setting fire to the doors. The Director received a bullet-wound, and the teachers would probably have all been killed if it had not been for the prompt arrival of federal troops from Pátzcuaro; the School was temporarily closed and then reformed on orders from President Cárdenas. This account is given by Corona Núñez, who was not there at the time but joined the School when it reopened; he stresses that the quarrel which sparked off the battle was only a pretext, for there had long been tension over the religious issue. This example and the previous

(1) Interviews with Prof. José Corona Núñez in Mexico City, 21st, 22nd and 23rd Nov. 1968. Case 74 in the Appendix.

one appear to indicate that the teachers' anticlericalism, when it was not the main cause of trouble, often served to precipitate a crisis where other tensions already existed. Popular fanaticism was easily offended, and once the fire was alight the flames were often fanned by conservative priests and landowners.

In addition to all these instances of violence being used against members of the teaching profession, it has to be recognized that some teachers could be violent themselves on occasions. In a country with a tradition of personal vendettas and where it was common to resort to violence to resolve private disputes, this was only to be expected. The teachers were particularly likely to be aroused as a result of political differences; thus, in the city of Zacatecas on 29th December 1937 the rural teacher Fidel Casas Pérez found himself involved in a brawl. He and other teachers expressed sentiments hostile to the Government and "were boasting of communist ideas", when the Major Ramón Cervantes reproached them, and "feelings became heated and several shots were exchanged, and one of them ~~struck~~ struck the person of the soldier who died instantly".⁽¹⁾ In the opinion of "La Prensa", Casas Pérez was to blame, although one cannot be sure of this. It is also possible that there were political motives behind the actions of the teacher Salvador Valladores, who in June 1939 assaulted the caretaker of the San Rafael paper factory in Amecameca in the State of Mexico, and then murdered one of the workers;⁽²⁾ but it seems more likely to have been a case of a personal vendetta or of emotional disturbance.

In general, with the exception of isolated crimes like that of Valladores, the teachers were a relatively pacific group and seem to have been moved to violence only by political disputes. In this connection it is probably significant that on the rare occasions when they did become aggressive,

(1) "La Prensa", 1st Jan. 1938. Case 198 in the Appendix.
 (2) "Excolector", 18th & 25th June 1939. Case 213 in the Appendix.

their wrath was often directed against other members of the teaching profession. This appears to have been the case in the death of the teacher David Larrañaga in the port of Veracruz on 31st January 1938; the local trade union federation (the F.R.O.C.), quoted in "Excoélsior", said that Larranaga had been "hunted down" by his colleagues Nicéforo and Constantino Martínez, "obeying orders of the Inspector of Education Tomás Gallegos Viñas", who was described as an implacable enemy of the federation.⁽¹⁾ This account may well be correct, although "El Machete", reported the murder of Larrañaga as having taken place in Tuxpan, 150 miles further north, and made no mention of the other teachers.

A similar incident was reported from Jonacatepec, Morelos in 1940. The local inspector of schools, Leonardo Ramírez, was attacked by his fellow-inspector Jesús Vides Mercado of Cuautla, on the evening of 22nd April.⁽²⁾ Just outside the town of Jonacatepec, Ramírez was threatened by Vides Mercado with a pistol, and defended himself to the best of his ability until he was saved by the arrival of a friend; later it was stated that the people of the town were angrily demanding the punishment of the aggressor, since Ramírez had great popular sympathy owing to his excellent conduct. Here, as in most incidents of violence between teachers, the trouble was probably caused by trade union disputes with political overtones; and there is some evidence that such conflicts became more frequent in 1938 to 1940, just when internal differences within the Mexican Left came to a head in connection with the Presidential succession of 1940.

It must be remembered that owing to their position as radical leaders and "cultural brokers", the teachers were particularly vulnerable to slanderous accusations and judicial "frame-ups". One such case, particularly difficult to judge in the absence of further evidence, was that of the imprisonment of

(1) "El Machete", 23rd July 1938; "Excoélsior", 2nd Feb. 1938. Case 147 in Appendix.
 (2) "Excoélsior", 25th April 1940. Case 218 in the Appendix.

the teacher Felicitos Delgado M. by the municipal authorities of San Antonio, San Luis Potosí, in April 1939.⁽¹⁾ According to "La Prensa" Señor Delgado had raped one of his pupils, but for the correspondent of "El Machete", this was a great libel: the girl, according to this version, had been forced to accuse the teacher, a good revolutionary whose real crime lay in his progressive work among the Indians, which the authorities did not like.

8. General Remarks

From this long history of violence and threats, certain significant conclusions can be deduced with regard to the resistance which was offered to the penetration of official education at this time; and in the process, further evidence is provided of the participation of rural teachers in the social and political conflicts which rocked the Mexican countryside as the result of a social revolution which was only half complete. Given the conditions which prevailed over a large part of the country during the 'thirties - invasion of lands, brutal reprisals on the part of the owners, religious discontent, "caciquismo" and attempts at political rebellion, in other words, a general social malaise leading at times to open class warfare - it was natural that the thousands of rural teachers sent to remote hamlets and villages should receive their quota of assaults and injustices. But this does not mean that all the acts of violence against teachers occurred from pure chance, as a consequence of general upheavals and gangsterism and without reference to the profession and the activities of the victims. As we have seen, there were some assaults of this kind, but in the great majority of those cases, in which more or less precise data are available about the aggressors and their probable motives, there were specific issues related to political, religious or social conflicts which aroused hostility against the teacher in question.

(1) "La Prensa" 27th April 1939; "La Voz de México", 30th April 1939. Case 208 in the Appendix.

Of the 223 specific incidents or situations mentioned in the Appendix, 91 were fatal and led to the death of 100 teachers (there were some multiple killings). It is of course difficult at times to separate one incident from another for purposes of analysis, and some of the cases listed involve a series of incidents (e.g. case 143, concerning imprisonments of teachers in various parts of Sinaloa). It is impossible to say with any certainty how many teachers died in the decade - no precise records seem to have been kept, and it would be necessary to comb through all the provincial newspapers to get anything approaching a complete list - but the figure must reach two or three hundred, and could be higher. Thus, in addition to the 91 fatal incidents listed here, Prof. José Corona Núñez says that when he was an official of the teachers' union in Michoacán, he wrote official letters of protest for the murder of no less than 16 teachers in the space of six months in 1937, in that State alone; unfortunately he no longer has detailed information about all of them. Again, in July 1938, the teachers' union (S.T.E.R.M.) provided information about 15 murders just in the first six months of that year (but without giving full details),⁽¹⁾ and it may be supposed that there were other cases which did not come to the knowledge of the union. The elderly teacher Agapito Constantino Avina reports that in 1940-1941 there were many assaults on teachers throughout Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán and Querétaro, making educational work almost impossible. Even if the phenomenon reached its peak about this time and in these areas, it is clear that the total has to be counted in hundreds rather than in tens.⁽²⁾

Owing to the lack of precise information it is impossible to make anything like a rigorous statistical analysis, but the incidents studied do at least suggest some significant conclusions. Taking the 223 cases listed, both

(1) These are included in the Appendix.

(2) A booklet published in 1939 was entitled "En Nombre de Cristo...han asesinado a mas de 200 Maestros" (by Leopoldo Méndez, Editorial Gráfica Popular, México, 1939). Consulted by courtesy of Ing. Narciso Bassols.

fatal and non-fatal (since the difference was usually a matter of chance), one finds a somewhat unusual geographical distribution. The highest number of incidents occurred in Jalisco (32), Campeche (30), Michoacán (26), Veracruz (18) and Puebla (14); and in addition, several other States have a high number of incidents in relation to their small populations, notably Guanajuato (11), Querétaro (8), Morelos (8) and Guerrero (9). The figures for Campeche and Michoacán are inflated owing to the detailed local research carried out by the author in these States; and Campeche in particular has very few fatal incidents (4) as opposed to non-fatal (26). This seems to suggest that the fatal incidents which hit the national headlines were merely the tip of the iceberg; local research in other States (such as Puebla, with 10 fatal incidents out of a total of 14) would probably reveal a similarly large number of non-fatal encounters. In other words, the great extent and frequency of hostility to the teachers is further confirmed.

As regards the geographical distribution, it is noticeable that the States where violence appears to have been most common (leaving out Campeche) are those most noted for religious fanaticism (Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato, Querétaro, Puebla); these were the regions of greatest "cristero" activity in 1926-1929, and later the home of "sinarquismo". The other States with a high incidence are known to have gone through particularly bitter agrarian struggles at this time (notably Veracruz), a factor which also affected the principal "cristero" areas. In general, there appear to have been relatively few teachers killed in the Northern or South-Eastern States; but this may reflect merely their lower population density and a comparative lack of information about them in the national press.

The teaching profession did not accept without protest the constant insults, abuses, mutilations and murders suffered by its members. There were frequent local protests and demands for protection, and in 1935 these protests

reached a national level. One of them in teachers' unions, the C.M.M., organised a great demonstration in Mexico City on 4th December of that year, attended by 10,000 rural teachers from all over the country. (1) Among other things, they demanded punishments for those responsible for the assaults, and called for arms to be distributed to all rural teachers to protect themselves. Agapito Constantino Aviña confirms that many teachers from his part of the country (Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato, Nayarit) attended this demonstration, including several who were injured or mutilated and who were put in a prominent position in order to draw attention to their plight. Earlier in 1935, Señor Constantino, who was then an Inspector in Lagos de Moreno, Jalisco, went to Guadalajara to see the Director of Federal Education in the State and ask for all the teachers in Jalisco to be concentrated in the city until the countryside had been pacified. The Secretary of Public Education, Vázquez Vela, was passing through Guadalajara at the time, and adopted this suggestion; as a result, the teachers of that State were withdrawn to the city for two or three weeks. (It will be remembered that it was at this time that Inspector Ceja Torres reported numerous acts of arson and violence committed by armed "bandits" in the Colotlan area of Jalisco). At the same time, Señor Constantino asked to be moved to another Zone where life would not be so dangerous; and he was moved, to Zacatecas, but found that conditions there just as bad. (2) Pressure from the teachers did eventually lead to results, and we have seen that Cárdenas himself spoke out in their defence, while counselling caution over the religious question. On 23rd March 1936 a more positive step was taken, when the National Executive Committee of the P.R. announced that the Party would pay compensation of 1,000 pesos, plus a monthly pension of 25 pesos for the space of two years, to the dependants of teachers ("sacrificed in the service of socialist education". (3) This compensation does seem to have been paid in many cases, although it was scarcely adequate by any standards.

(1) "Excelsior", 5th Dec. 1935; "El Nacional", 5th Dec. 1935.

(2) Interview with Prof. Agapito Constantino Aviña in Chilchota, Mich., 2nd Aug. 1968.

(3) "El Maestro Rural", vol. 8, no. 7 (1st April 1936).

But since the slaughter continued, there were further demands for military protection or for arms to be given to the teachers by the Government; and in July 1938 it was reported (1) that the Secretary of Defence, General Manuel Avila Camacho, had offered to provide each "Escuela Regional Campesina" with 50 rifles and ammunition, and to concede the right to carry firearms to all rural teachers. This information was later modified; no rifles were to be provided, but the teachers were already free to carry arms, and many did so.

The opposition to the spread of official education can be seen from this survey to have taken many different forms, but basically it was of two types: that which was motivated by the preservation of vested interests, and that which expressed popular resistance to change. The former was essentially the reaction of the dominant landowning class, which saw its privileges threatened by peasant unrest and the rise of new middle sectors with radical and nationalist ideas - a growing national bourgeoisie which found political expression in the Cárdenas Government. The landlords and their traditional political allies, the local "caciques" (in fact the two were often identical) had in many cases managed to maintain their dominance in spite of all the revolutionary turmoil of the 1910-1920 period, and in the Obregón-Calles era they formed a working alliance with many pseudo-revolutionary local "caudillos" where the old Porfirian landed élite had been smashed, the conservative rôle was often performed by the new ambitious "caudillos" alone, crushing popular revolutionary movements by force of arms or selling them out by political manoeuvres. At all events, this constellation of conservative forces still ruled the roost over most of the country in the early 'thirties, and it saw its power directly threatened by the political developments that followed. Rural education, with socialist overtones, was a key instrument of the Revolutionary Government, and this was recognised by landlords and "caciques", who feared that education, even of a conventional liberal variety, would increase popular

(1) "Excelsior", 29th July 1938.

discontent and political awareness. Hence the opposition to official education even in the 'twenties, and the support of many landowners for the "cristero" rebellion: a Church monopoly of rural education would be a powerful instrument for maintaining the status quo.

It has to be recognised that the Church as an institution, and most of the clergy as individuals, actively supported social conservatism and political reaction, consistently opposing land reform and the labour movement; and despite the religious devotion of the "zapatistas" and other radical peasant movements, many priests propagated the idea that "agraristas" were heretics. When the teachers helped the peasants by organizing cooperatives and agitating for land, they were attacked not only as subversives but as heretics or Protestants - a smear which was much more likely to sway the peasants against them. Probably, then, most of the murdered teachers were victims of the unholy alliance denounced in 1935 by "El Nacional": (1)

"From the confession-box the priests advise the peasants not to send their children to that School which is 'of the devil', that 'God prefers children to be stupid but in heaven rather than intelligent and in hell'. The landowners who see that education is a threat to their interests, have joined with the clergy in a campaign of butchery against the rural teachers, and the fanatical peasants, brutalised by work and deceived by the priests, are the instruments they use to carry out these deeds which exhibit Dantesque and horrifying features."

It is thus impossible to draw a line between clerical and lay opposition to Government education, although in many specific conflicts it is possible to see whether the main influence in arousing hostility to the teachers was that of the local priest or that of the landowners. By the same token, it is difficult to separate economically- from politically-motivated opposition to the teachers, since those who organised agrarian agitation could not fail to see the frequent connections between the landed elite and the municipal or even State authorities. Even where the teachers were not initially involved

(1) "El Nacional", 5th Dec. 1935.

in political movements, they were often forced to extend their activities, to the political sphere in order to achieve or defend the reforms they wanted; this was made clear by the frequent arrests of militant teachers on trumped-up charges, or more subtly by the role of captive unions and peasant leagues in defending established interests. However, some distinctions can be made as to which groups were primarily responsible for the death or persecution of a particular teacher. In this respect it is noticeable from the cases examined here that the thugs and bandits who actually carried out the crimes are often described - sometimes even in the conservative press - as being "in the pay of" or "under the orders of" local landowners, and occasionally of mining or trading companies. There are also several instances of police violence or illegal arrests which were primarily instigated by local politicians who felt their power threatened; the same applies to the attempts to manipulate teachers' unions. It is interesting that when teachers went on strike, usually for better pay or conditions, their struggles very quickly developed into political confrontations. Sometimes a politician would oppose the teachers' organisations not so much because he disliked the reforms they advocated (though this was usually the case) but because he feared the growth of a rival power base if the teachers gained widespread popular support; this is arguably true of Governor Eduardo Mens Córdova in Campeche, as will be seen later. These political confrontations usually occurred at State level, and hence in some States the incidence of violence against teachers is concentrated in a short period: Baja California in 1936-1937, Campeche in 1935-1937, Durango in 1938, San Luis Potosí in 1931 and 1939, Sonora in 1938. In some States this phenomenon was due to a local political crisis involving the repression of popular movements in general; although it is noticeable that in many States it came in the 1935-1938 period, and was thus probably related to national trends in the form of the struggle for power between "callista" and "cardenista" groups - a struggle which at national level was won in 1935 by Cárdenas and the radicals, but which remained unresolved in many States for some years after that.

In the light of this analysis, the importance of hostility to the teachers on primarily religious grounds is proportionately reduced. Certainly, opposition was often organized by priests, but as has been seen, the religious purity of their motives can often be questioned. The same applies to the "cristeros", a term which had a precise meaning from 1926-1929 but was applied rather indiscriminately in the 'thirties to armed bands who murdered and looted from a variety of motives. Later, the "sinarquistas" combined political reaction with religious fanaticism, and probably obtained most of their money from landowners. In fact it is only in the case of lynching and mob violence against teachers that the religious motive was clearly predominant. Such cases were not uncommon, and they were often provoked by the teachers themselves, who in their very understandable anti-clericalism sometimes overlooked the existence of a deep-rooted folk Catholicism, easily offended by anti-religious diatribes and iconoclasm. Popular grievances against the clergy were very real, but did not generally extend to a willingness to reject religion as a whole; moreover, popular defence of the Church might be only the most obvious expression of a resentment against all encroachments on traditional culture, a field in which the teachers had to tread very warily. Certainly, mob attacks on teachers were not always spontaneous, but they could hardly have been stirred up at all if distrust and suspicion had not been present. Nevertheless, it was only in a relatively small minority of cases that violence against the teachers took this form, and most of the opposition they encountered came from vested interests of one kind or another, above all from the big landlords.

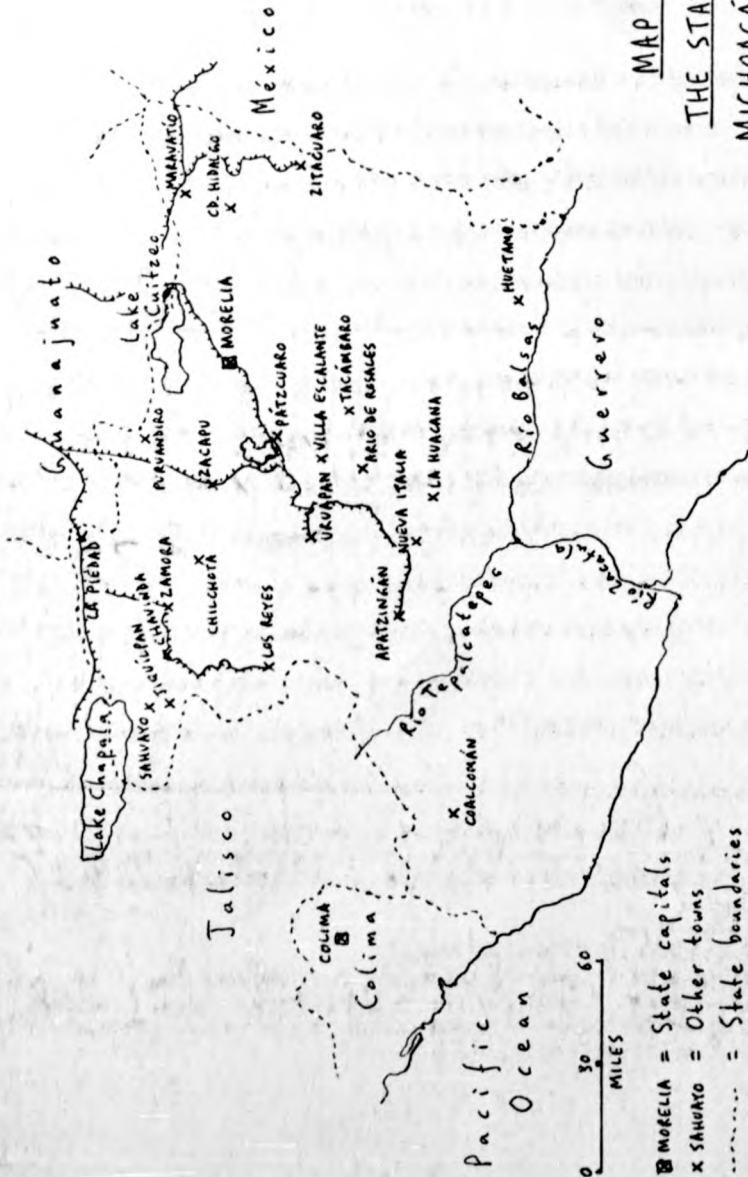
PART III

THE CASE OF MICHIGAN

CHAPTER VIITEACHERS AND LOCAL POLITICS IN MICHOACÁN1. The Pacification of Michoacán under the "carrancistas". 1915-1920.

The fertile western State of Michoacán, home of the Tarascan Indians, was not one of the chief centres of revolutionary activity; but, especially after Huerta's coup d'état of 1913, it was increasingly drawn into the struggle, often as a battleground of the rival factions. Many intellectuals in the State had supported Madero, including the celebrated physician Dr. Miguel Silva who was Governor in 1912-1913.⁽¹⁾ During the three years of chaos which followed, domination of the State was constantly being disputed between "carrancistas"; "villistas" and "convencionistas"; after April 1915 the State capital, the beautiful colonial city of Morelia, was in the firm possession of the victorious Constitutionalists, but it was to be some time before they gained effective control of the rest of the State.⁽²⁾

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- (1) Juan López de Escalera, "Diccionario Biográfico y de Historia de México" (México, 1964, Editorial del Magisterio), p.1029; and Jesús Romero Flores, "Historia de Michoacán" (México, 1946, Imp. "Claridad", 2 vols.) Appendix.
- (2) José Bravo Ugarte, "Historia Sucinta de Michoacán" (Morelia, Mich., 3 vols) vol.3, pp.203-204. General Gertrudis G. Sánchez was nominated as provisional Governor by Carranza in August 1914, and was substituted by General Néstor F. López and then by General Cecilio García, who moved the capital to Tacámbaro when Morelia was occupied by the "villistas". Villa appointed General José I. Prieto, who lasted for one month (March-April 1915) before the "carrancistas" returned and General Alfredo Elizondo was appointed by Obregón (26th April 1915 - 19th Feb.1917). Elizondo was followed for a few months by General José Rentería Laviano, until Ortiz Rubio took over as legally elected Governor.



- (1) J
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- (5) S

Indeed, Michoacán was one of the States which suffered most at this time from the depredations of marauding guerrilla bands composed of the remnants of the defeated factions and of straightforward bandits. Thus several "villista" chieftains, notably J. Jesús Sántora, José Altamirano and Félix Ireta, took refuge in Michoacán in 1915 and defied the Constitutional armies. One by one they were captured or submitted, but the most famous of them all, José Inés Chávez García, held out until the end of 1918. (1)

The benefits of the Revolution were thus very slow in coming to Michoacán, although a few timid reforms were carried out under the "carrancista" Governors Elizondo (1915-1917) and Ortiz Rubio (1917-1920). (2) Elizondo was one of the first revolutionaries to give expression to that anticlericalism which was to become such a feature of the new régime, and is said to have forced numerous priests to go into hiding. (3) He also gave some impulse to education in the State; the "Escuela Normal" of Morelia, provisionally founded in January 1915 but disbanded shortly afterwards when the "villistas" occupied the city, was finally established in May when Elizondo had gained control. (4) The director of the "Normal" and of the new Department of Public Education was a young radical teacher, Jesús Romero Flores, who was to play a very prominent part in the subsequent development of education in the State. During his Governorship Elizondo also increased the number of schools in the area by 97, to reach a total of 410. (5) He also placed the schools under municipal

(1) José Valdovinos Garza, "Tres Capítulos de la Política Michoacana" (México, 1960, Ediciones "Casa de Michoacán"), pp.15-16. Valdovinos Garza deals at length with Chávez García, who is also mentioned in Bravo Ugarte (op.cit., vol.3) pp.213-214.

(2) Romero Flores, loc. cit..

(3) Bravo Ugarte (op.cit., vol.3) pp.207-208.

(4) Raúl Arreola Cortés, "Notas para la Historia de la Escuela Normal de Michoacán" (Morelia, 1947, Ediciones Conmemorativas del XXXII Aniversario), pp.9-10.

(5) Jesús Romero Flores, "Historia de la Educación en Michoacán" (México, 1948, Talleres Gráficos de la Nación), pp.54-55.

control, a measure which was intended to give power to the hitherto lifeless municipalities, but which in practice left education at the mercy of local "caciques"; it was therefore revoked by the following administration.⁽¹⁾

Pascual Ortiz Rubio, a conservative engineer, was elected Governor in 1917 with the support of Carranza and of local landowners;⁽²⁾ fearful of change and faced with the armed rebellion of Cháves García and others, he did little. However, his administration should be given credit for the creation of the University of Michoacán, which was based on the old "Colegio de San Nicolás de Hidalgo".⁽³⁾ He also convened the first Michoacán Pedagogical Congress, which met at La Piedad in 1917 and provided an opportunity for progressive ideas in education to be publicised; and the total number of schools in the State continued to increase during this period.⁽⁴⁾ But the real expansion of education would have to await the new impulse from the centre which was to come after 1921. As for the activities of the teachers themselves, at this stage they were weak and unorganised. Many had participated in the Revolution, and a few, such as Jesús Romero Flores, had already achieved prominence; but as yet they had little consciousness of their potential influence in local affairs. Some teachers joined with workers in the "Casa del Obrero Mundial" of Morelia,⁽⁵⁾ but they were completely unorganised as a body.

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- (1) Romero Flores, "Historia de la Educación..." p. 58; "Cultura" (Revista mensual. Órgano de la Dirección Gral. de Educación Pública en el Estado. Morelia, Mich.), vol. 1, no. 1, March 1916, p. 27; "El Magisterio Michoacano" (Revista mensual. Órgano de la Dirección General de Educación Primaria del Estado. Morelia), vol. 1, no. 2, 29th Feb. 1920, pp. 8-9.
- (2) Apolinar Martínez Méjica, "Primo Tapia" (Mexico, 1946), p. 84.
- (3) Arreola Cortés, op. cit., p. 12; Romero Flores, "Historia de la Educación", p. 57.
- (4) "El Magisterio Michoacano", vol. 1, no. 2, p. 9, and vol. 1, no. 3 (1st March 1920) pp. 9-10; Prof. Mónico Gallagos Orozco, "Síntesis Histórica del Movimiento Educativo en Michoacán" (Morelia, 1950, Escuela Normal Urbana Federal), pp. 25-26.
- (5) Interview with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi in Morelia, 10th July 1968.

2. The Carranza and Governorship of General Múgica, 1920-1922

When Carranza was overthrown in 1920 by a group of Generals led by Alvaro Obregón, Ortiz Rubio quickly forgot his "carrancista" origins and hastened to join the new revolutionaries, occupying Morelia by force and throwing out the deputies to the State Congress (his own former supporters). For his pains he was appointed Minister of Communications and Public Works under the new Government. (1) He also hoped to impose his own machine to succeed him as Governor of Michoacán, but in this he was to be disappointed, for the year 1920 witnessed the first victory of the growing radical movement in the State, led by General Francisco J. Múgica.

Múgica, the son of a local schoolteacher and clerk, had shown a spirit of rebellion and radicalism in his schooldays, refusing to study the bible on the grounds that it conflicted with what he had been taught in science classes. (2) As a young man he agitated against the abuses of the Díaz régime and was a secret correspondent of the opposition journal "Regeneración" published by the Flores Magón brothers. He participated in the Madero Revolution and later fought under Carranza, becoming the spokesman of the radicals in the 1917 Constitutional Convention. (3) He was thus the natural leader of the Left in Michoacán, and stood for the Governorship against Ortiz Rubio in 1917; his campaign was organized by one of the first revolutionary workers' leaders in the State, J. Isaac Arriaga, along with students and young workers from Morelia who formed the "Partido Socialista Michoacano". Defeated by Ortiz Rubio who had the backing of powerful local interests, many of the "mugiquistas" were forced to leave the State, claiming that the elections had been a fraud. (4)

(1) Brevo Uparde, (op.cit., vol.3) p.214.

(2) Magdalena Mondragón, "Cuando la Revolución se Cortó las Alas" (Mexico, 1966, Costa-Amic, Editor), pp.200-201; Armando de María y Campos, "Múgica: Crónica Biográfica" (Mexico, 1979).

(3) Mondragón, op.cit., pp.81-86; María y Campos, op.cit., pp.

(4) Valdevinos Gama, op.cit., pp.28-31; Mondragón, op.cit., pp.272-273.

In 1920 Múgica joined the Agua Prieta movement against Carranza, thus achieving a reconciliation (which was to be very short-lived) with Ortiz Rubio. Even before the military actions had finished, he announced that he would stand again for the Governorship, and his supporters began campaigning. But once again they encountered powerful opposition, for Ortiz Rubio, with the machinery of government under his control, was backing his own candidate, Porfirio García de León. After the elections both sides claimed victory, but by this time Ortiz Rubio had left the State, and the local military commander, General Lázaro Cárdenas, seized control on Múgica's behalf. At first the central Government was reluctant to accept this situation but on 22nd October 1920 Múgica was formally recognised as Governor.

(1) It is interesting to note that a number of teachers took an active part in Múgica's campaign, for radical ideas had already begun to penetrate their ranks.

However, it soon became apparent that this victory for the Left was far from complete: Múgica was in the Governor's palace, but it was by no means certain that he would be allowed to govern. From the beginning he encountered intense opposition from the clergy and the landowners, encouraged from Mexico City by the federal deputies from Michoacán, who were partisans of Ortiz Rubio. He lost no time in putting the radical programme into effect, appointing J. Isaac Arriaga as head of the local Agrarian Commission which proceeded to distribute land to the peasants in significant amounts, for the first time in Michoacán. (2) He attempted to apply the laws banning religious processions in public and restricting clerical schools, but met with immediate opposition. Friction came to a head on 12th May 1921, when a series of demonstrations and counter-demonstrations by socialists and Catholics in Morelia culminated in an armed clash in which 12 people were killed, including Isaac Arriaga. (3)

(1) Valdovinos Garza, op.cit., pp. 41-45; Bravo Ugarte, op.cit. vol. 3, p. 217; Mondragón, op.cit., pp. 294-295.

(2) Valdovinos Garza, op.cit., p. 46.

(3) Bravo Ugarte, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 215-217; Valdovinos Garza, op.cit., pp. 46-47; Mondragón, op.cit., pp. 304-306; María y Campos, op.cit., pp.

By the beginning of 1922 Múgica faced armed revolt in various parts of the State, led by guerrilla chieftains who were often little more than bandits in the pay of the "hacendados". One such "cabecilla" was Ladislao Molina, who was to become notorious during the next decade for his assaults on militant peasants and rural teachers in the Tacámbaro area. Moreover, a serious political conflict had arisen in the important municipality of Uruapan, and the Municipal President, Melchor Ortega (a clever politician who was to achieve national status under Calles), declared himself in revolt against Múgica.⁽¹⁾ According to the "mugiquistas", these rebellions were secretly encouraged by the commander of the military zone, General Enrique Estrada; and on 3rd March there was a demonstration in Morelia in protest against Estrada, who was accused of responsibility for various acts of repression.⁽²⁾ But Múgica was rapidly losing control of the situation, and since he had also earned the hostility of President Obregón, he resigned on 9th March.⁽³⁾

During his brief and turbulent period in office, Múgica did succeed in enacting some constructive measures, and the main object of his attention, apart from land reform, was educational policy. The number of schools was increased, a corps of inspectors was established, and books and equipment, were distributed free for the first time. In 1921, with the encouragement of Jesús Romero Flores, who was now inspector of the La Piedad educational zone, the first Rural Normal School in the country was established there; it was followed in the next year by similar Schools in Ciudad Hidalgo, Uruapan, Nuntamo and Tacámbaro (the latter was created by the Federal Government.). The Directors of these first Rural Normal Schools - Isidro

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- (1) Martínez Múgica, op.cit., pp.51-53 & 58; Valdovinos Garza, op.cit., p.47.
 (2) Martínez Múgica, op.cit., p.50; Gerrit Haiser, "Los Movimientos Campesinos en México" (unpublished document, Mexico, 1968, Centro de Investigaciones Agrarias), p.45.
 (3) Evarro Ugarte, op.cit., vol.3, p.217; Martínez Múgica, op.cit., pp.66-70; Mondragón, op.cit., p.306; María y Campos, op.cit., pp.

Castillo, Elías Miranda, Juan Ayala, Federico García and Emiliano Pérez Rosas - were all to feature prominently in the educational movement in Michoacán and in Mexico as a whole.⁽¹⁾ Under Múgica nearly half the State budget was devoted to education; the teachers' minimum wage was doubled to 5 pesos a day (a level which was not maintained under subsequent Governments), and their salaries were actually paid on time (a privilege which they all too rarely enjoyed).⁽²⁾

3. The Peasant Movement in Michoacán; Primo Tapia and the "Liga", 1921-1926.

Given the particularly chaotic nature of the Revolution in Michoacán, it is perhaps not surprising that no well-organised peasant movement, independent of opportunist middle-class politicians, emerged until 1922. At an early stage in the revolutionary movement the "hacendados" formed a "Sindicato Nacional de Agricultores" which encouraged the creation of "sindicatos blancos" (company unions) uniting landowners, foremen and peons under the slogan "Justice and Charity"; and these groups were very active in Michoacán. But after the Constitutionalist victory a branch of the anarcho-syndicalist "Casa del Obrero Mundial" was established in Morelia, and later changed its name to "Federación de Sindicatos de Obreros y Campesinos de la Región Michoacana". In reality it was only a centre of agitation and had little strength, but along with Múgica's "Partido Socialista Michoacano" and the radical newspaper "El 123", it laid the foundations of a future movement.⁽³⁾

That this agitation had little effect is indicated by the example of the Indian communities around Pátzcuaro, which in 1921, under the influence of clerical propaganda, actually refused land offered to them by Múgica.⁽⁴⁾ The man who was to change this situation was a peasant, Primo Tapia, who in that year returned to his native community of Naranja, near Zacapu, after

(1) Romero Flores, "Historia de la Educación.." pp.62-63.

(2) Martínez Múgica, op.cit., pp.30-31.

(3) Ibid., pp.37-38.

(4) Ibid., p.35; Unzué, op.cit., p.43.

working in the United States as a "bracero". The peasants of the Zacoapa area, like those of Morelos, had suffered particularly from the encroachment of the big estates on their communal lands during the "Porfiriato", and under Tapia's leadership they now began to demand land.⁽¹⁾ Tapia was immediately subject to persecution by armed vigilantes in the pay of the owners, but managed to escape the fate of another peasant leader, Felipe Taintorin, murdered with a group of his followers by the rebel Ladislao Molino.⁽²⁾ Then in December 1922 the old "Federación de Sindicatos de Obreros y Campesinos" invited delegates from all over the State to an Agrarian Convention in Morelia, which created the "Liga de Comunidades y Sindicatos Agraristas de Michoacán" with Tapia as Secretary General. Soon the League claimed to have over 100 groups of peasants affiliated,⁽³⁾ and in 1923 when President Obregón passed through Pátzcuaro, it organized a demonstration of 8,000 people to demand the return of Múgica as Governor - an impressive indication of strength.⁽⁴⁾

Tapia's movement was one of the most radical peasant leagues in the country, sending delegates to Mexico City to demand changes in the agrarian law, including the distribution of land on a collective basis. Its true strength is difficult to estimate; Tapia and his comrades made constant efforts to proselytize, but suffered severe repression under Sidronio Sánchez Pineda, the conservative provisional Governor imposed after Múgica's resignation (March 1922 - September 1924).⁽⁵⁾ Despite this, recruitment seems to have increased steadily, and Tapia was also active organizing "sindicatos femeniles", militant women's groups which participated in the League and also fought to improve the social position of women.⁽⁶⁾

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- (1) *Ibid.*, op.cit., p.42; Martínez Múgica, op.cit., p.21.
 (2) Martínez Múgica, op.cit., p.41.
 (3) *Ibid.*, pp.99-100.
 (4) *Ibid.*, op.cit., pp.45-46.
 (5) Martínez Múgica, op.cit., pp.105-106 & 117-119.
 (6) *Ibid.*, pp.189-195.

The second Convention of the League, meeting in November 1924, denounced all kinds of persecutions and attacks on its members, many of whom had been physically assaulted or driven off their newly-acquired lands. But progress had been made - thus three communities in Tapia's home district of Zacapu had been given 2,200 hectares of land from the big "Cantabria hacienda," and had also broken the political control of the owners in the municipality. The League had established links with fraternal organizations in other parts of the country, notably the powerful Veracruz League whose leader Úrsulo Galván attended the Convention, and persuaded the delegates to hold a special ceremony in commemoration of the seventh anniversary of the Russian Revolution - an indication of the way the movement was going. (1) The Convention also discussed the progress of rural education, and Alberto Coria, a young intellectual from Morelia, proposed the creation of a "Junta de Instrucción de los Trabajadores" in order to improve conditions in the schools, raise the standard of the teachers and encourage the introduction of modern methods. He was supported by Luis Mora Tovar (another intellectual who was to become a leader of the Left in Michoacán), who proposed the introduction of "Nationalist Education". Their motion was carried and the new "Junta de Instrucción" was duly elected, although the extent of its activities is not clear. (2)

By 1925 the League was a powerful force in the State, and Primo Tapia could write to one of his friends that "we are not far short of controlling the whole of Michoacán". (3) But the opposition was still powerful, and on 26th April 1926 Tapia was arrested in his own village on charges of conspiracy brought by the owners of the Cantabria "hacienda". The next morning he was

(1) *Ibid.*, pp.161-160; *Huiser*, op.cit., p.47.

(2) *Martínez Múgica*, op.cit., p.162.

(3) Letter from Tapia to Apolivar Martínez Múgica, 19th Dec.1925, quoted in *Martínez Múgica*, op.cit., pp.196-200. Martínez Múgica was a trader in Zacapu, who had protected Tapia against his enemies in 1921; because of this the land owners organized a boycott of Martínez Múgica's business, and as a result he devoted himself full-time to the agrarian movement.

shot by federal troops without any legal formalities, and ten days later other leading "agrarristas" were murdered at Oyamel, not far from Pátzcuaro. There is evidence to suggest that President Calles, fearing the growth of the League, was personally responsible for arranging the liquidation of its leaders.⁽¹⁾ At all events, the desired result was achieved, and the League went into decline for the next two years while Michoacán was submerged in chaos by the reactionary "cristero" rebellion. But Tapia's efforts were not in vain, for they provided the basis on which Lázaro Cárdenas was to build a new mass organization after 1929.

4. The Early Progress of Federal Education in Michoacán, 1921-1926.

We have seen how popular education, largely neglected before 1920, received its first real impulse under Múgica in his brief period as Governor. This coincided with the beginning of the Federal Government's activities in this field, and the result was that for a few years Michoacán made rapid progress in creating schools for the peasantry. In 1923 the Government of Sánchez Pineda passed a law regulating conditions of recruitment and promotion in the teaching profession (the "Ley de Escalafón del Magisterio"), a progressive measure which was not applied in the country as a whole until several years later; however, in practice it implied a drop in salary for most teachers, and its beneficial clauses were rarely applied.⁽²⁾

rudimentary as they were, the Rural Normal schools established under Múgica at La Piedad, Ciudad Hidalgo, Uruapan and Huasteco represented an important step forward, and were also to serve as a model for the rest of Mexico. The Federal Government showed its appreciation of their potential by providing funds for another one at Tacámbaro, and here a new approach was developed which was to serve as a model. The importance of this is described by Miñano García.⁽³⁾

(1) *Ibid.*, pp. 216-217; Huizer, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

(2) Romero Flores, "Historia de la Educación", pp. 66-67.

(3) Max H. Miñano García, "La Educación Rural en México" (Mexico, 1946, S.E.P.), pp. 22-23 and 193-195.

"The first (federal) regional normal school at Tacámbaro, whose foundation coincides with the creation of the first (federal)rural schools in the country, began the first stage of its life with a course of study of six semesters....

"When Prof. Isidro Castillo took over the direction of this establishment,...he gave it a character based on the reality which then confronted the rural school. He created agricultural plots, a nursery for animals and a programme of social action. In addition, he reorganised the administration of the boarding section, giving the students participation...."

These first Rural Normal Schools were thus intended to create a minority of teachers with adequate training and advanced ideas, a minority who would take the lead in future years. To some extent they did this, but they were too short of resources to have a significant impact for at least another decade.

Michoacán was fortunate in having a number of progressive and enthusiastic educationalists at this time, who made great efforts to develop rural education despite the many political obstacles. Outstanding among them were Jesús Romero Flores, J. Guadalupe Nájera (Director of Federal Education) and Osampo W. Bolaños (inspector of the central educational zone). In the autumn of 1925 Nájera and Bolaños organised a series of special courses for rural teachers in the lakeside town of Pátzcuaro, centre of the Tarascan Indian culture. These courses were attended by 78 teachers from all over the State, together with a number of local inhabitants, who for three weeks were exposed to intensive courses in social work, hygiene, first aid, rural crafts, physical training and child psychology. Similar courses had been organised before in other States, but those at Pátzcuaro were particularly successful, and Nájera reported that "the teachers who attended..... are imbued with ideas of renovation and struggle which if realised, will introduce serious changes in the way of life of their communities..." (1)

(1) Archivo General de la Secretaría de Educación Pública, México, D.F. (hereinafter quoted as "S.E.P.(G)"), expediente 12-29-164; "Michoacán - Asuntos Escolares del Estado 1925", pp.322-323 & 400-405; and "Memoria que indica el estado que guarda el Ramo de Educación Pública el 31 de agosto de 1926" (México, 1926, S.E.P.) P.7.

Similar courses were offered by the Cultural Missions organised by the Ministry of Education, one of which visited Michoacán for the first time in 1926 and communicated the new methods to 212 teachers - over half the total then in service in the State.⁽¹⁾ The Normal School of Morelia was also expanding, and despite its more traditional atmosphere, many of its students at this time were to become militant teachers' leaders a few years later; they included Genaro Hernández Aguilar, Leobardo and Gilberto Coja Torres, Manuel López Pérez, Rafael Méndez Aguirre (who was to be a leading official of the Ministry of Education and an active member of the Communist Party a decade later); Daniel Mora Ramos, Jesús Múgica Martínez, Enrique Villaseñor and Antonio Mayés Evarro (who became a Senator under Cárdenas).⁽²⁾

Closer investigation reveals that much constructive work was being done by humble teachers at village level. Thus Najera reported that in the Patzcuaro area, a long-standing dispute between two neighbouring villages had been resolved by the work of the newly-established schools. The dispute, over communal lands which were occupied by the inhabitants of San Juan Tumbdo but claimed by those of Nuiravangaro, had given rise to a permanent feud, but the teachers managed to bring about a reconciliation.⁽³⁾ In Taratan the teacher Rosendo R. Orduna was reported in 1927 to have transformed the social life of the community; he had won the confidence of the adults, many of whom attended night classes and were enthusiastic supporters of the school, despite their initial reticence.⁽⁴⁾ Some teachers were already displaying signs of their future radicalism, as for example a teacher in Egojan, municipality of Parandicuaro, who prepared a special address for his school's annual

(1) "Inmoria", 1927, pp. 264-267.

(2) Arreola Cortés, op.cit., p. 20.

(3) S.E.P.(G), exp. 12-3-9-164, p. 249 (report of J.C. Najera, Director of Federal Education in the State of Michoacán, to the Director of the Department of Rural Education and Indian Cultural Integration, 20th June 1925).

(4) S.E.P.(G), 12-10-2-160, pp. 1 & 4 (reports by Inspector L. Parra y Marquina about the work of Prof. Rosendo R. Orduna in Taratan, March and October 1927).

festival, entitled "A Comparison of Bartolomé de las Casas with the Present-Day Clergy".(1) Such anticlericalism could be a source of friction, but to many peasants who had seen the attitude of the clergy towards their demands for land, it was quite welcome. Where Primo Tapia's peasant leagues had taken root, the inhabitants were crying out for schools - thus in 1925 the "Confederación de Comunidades Agrarias" of the Huertamo district offered to build and furnish 15 schools if only the authorities would provide the teachers.(2)

5. Obstacles to Educational Progress

Unfortunately, such closer investigation also makes it clear that all was not well with the educational programme, which faced powerful opposition and also suffered from serious weaknesses. The hostility of certain powerful vested interests was soon manifest, and combined with the natural suspicions of the peasantry to make the teachers' task well-nigh impossible at times. In the more remote areas (in other words, the greater part of the State) the arrival of an agent of the Government was a rare event, and was much more likely to bring harm than good to the long-suffering inhabitants. It was thus easy for powerful landed interests, timber or mining companies, in alliance with the Catholic Church and at times with the local authorities, to brainwash or intimidate the peasants into believing that official education was evil. A classic instance of this was denounced in 1923 by María del Refugio García, the young inspector of schools in charge of the eastern part of the State. The north-eastern part of Michoacán was dominated by the Amer-

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- (1) S.F.P.(G), 12-2-3-89, p.3 (letter dated 11th Dec.1923, from Prof.Donato G. de la Cruz to Inspector Ciro Esquivel in Parícutinegro).
- (2) S.F.P.(G), exp.12-7-9-164, pp.601-602 (petition dated 27th April 1923, from the Confederación de Comunidades Agrarias del Distrito de Huertamo" to President Calles). The petition was referred to the relevant Department, which offered to provide teachers at the beginning of the next academic year.

ican Smelting Company which exploited the rich stands of timber existing there. In a report to the Ministry of Education Maria del Refugio gave a vivid description of the effects of this on one particular school: (1)

"I take this opportunity to inform you that on my last visit to the 'congregación' of 'El Asoleadero', of the municipality of Angangueo, I was able to observe the numerous enemies faced by the federal schools among people who are opposed to the penetration of civilisation in these areas which were formerly abandoned by every Government.

"The economic conditions of the inhabitants of this 'congregación' are of absolute poverty. The hut which is used as a school has been provided by one of the villagers, who has been obliged to live in the most wretched conditions; but he made this sacrifice with pleasure in view of the community's need for education... But our enemies have not rested for a moment in their attacks on the school, threatening the parents with loss of work if they send their children to the 'Protestant' school... And these last months have seen a veritable campaign (against us), for the Timber Company, which is American, sent one of its agents to collect signatures among the parents promising that their children would not attend this school but would go instead to one that the Company is going to give them; and under the threat of loss of work some of the pupils ceased to attend..."

The inspector then asked the municipal authorities to order the parents to send their children to school, but if any such order was given its effects were not apparent, since the school was now stricken by natural calamities, in the form of an epidemic which killed eight of the children within a month. The local teacher and the inspector did what they could to fight the infection, and:-

"By these efforts we naturally won the sympathy of the villagers, but even so they still opposed the school, and in view of this I went to the head town of the 'municipio', which is Angangueo, to speak with the local authorities... The municipal president received me politely and without more ado said to me: 'Miss García, I have been obliged to become your enemy; I am making war on the school of El Asoleadero because I think it is more essential in a town than in a village....' he said that it was superfluous, that the parents could not appreciate the Government's efforts, and predicted that I would have many disappointments in trying to redeem the rural population; for it seems that he shares the opinion of many others that the indigenous race must disappear, without considering that they number about eleven or twelve million and therefore constitute our basic national type...."

(1) S.R.P.(G), 12-2-35, pp.1-2.

This depressing picture was confirmed shortly afterwards by a special inspector who was sent by the Ministry of Education to investigate the problems of all the schools in this area: his reports confirmed that most of them suffered from the same problems of primitive conditions, disease and a boycott by some of the inhabitants because of propaganda to the effect that official education was evil. (1) The special inspector also reported unfavourably on the work of some of the teachers, but according to María del Refugio García, who knew them better, these criticisms were mostly unjustified: with some exceptions the teachers were doing their best in an impossible situation. Largely as a result of her experiences in these years, this young inspector, popularly known as "Cuca" García, was to become a leading figure of the Communist Party in Michoacán in the 'thirties.

Two years later, Evangelina Rodríguez Carvajal, who had replaced "Cuca" García as inspector of this zone, discovered the same problems, although she was able to make some progress. To reach Asoleadero from Angangueo, she reported, was a journey of three leagues through dense forest, "no longer so dense as perhaps it was in earlier years, since the 'American Smelting' company has exploited it in a terrible manner." But she had finally overcome the obstacles to this particular school. (2)

"Asoleadero has been one of the places which have given me most trouble, since the inhabitants are fanatical in the extreme, and so they have been persuaded that the school is of 'protestant' tendencies, and for this reason they have always refused to send their children to the school. In view of this, I wanted to talk to all the inhabitants to see in what way I could make them see reason..... To my surprise, on my arrival I noticed that a large number of people had gathered, I think I counted about 300 persons..... I spoke to them at length about the vital necessity for all of them to unite for such a noble cause... Quite spontaneously, one of the inhabitants asked to speak..... and to my surprise, he who spoke was one of those who had been most opposed to the school's progress. Eloquenty, with passion and in simple language, he spoke to the people.... calling on them to unite and to accept my words....."

(1) Ibid., pp.4-5; and expedientes 12-2-2-32, 12-2-3-33, 12-2-3-34 and 12-2-3-36.
 (2) S.E.P.(C), 12-3-9-164, pp.285-289.

This success was all the more striking since Evangelina Rodríguez was in fact a Protestant herself, but she had managed to convince the villagers that there would be no attempt to impose such ideas in the school. In other cases she was less successful; thus in "El Sauz", a "ranchería" of the Zitácuaro district, the parents asked for the teacher, Srta. Vera, to be replaced because she would not teach Catholic doctrine in the school. Srta. Rodríguez tried in vain to explain that the official schools were not allowed to teach any religion, but that parents were quite free to give their children religious instruction out of school; the inhabitants continued to boycott the school and so it was moved to another village whose people were less fanatical.⁽¹⁾ The same problem was reported from Arroyuelos, near La Piedad at the other end of the State; the villagers were reluctant to co-operate "on account of certain sermons made by Catholic priests".⁽²⁾

Again, the whole district of Zinapécuaro was described as being "completely fanatical", its inhabitants under the domination of the clergy.⁽³⁾ The position was summed up by J. G. Nájera, Director of Federal Education in the State:⁽⁴⁾

"... In Michoacán, the social life is dominated by the Catholic priests and the religious associations allied to them in order to ensure the failure of any attempt at popular liberation; they maintain an active propaganda against the federal schools (which they call 'bolshévik'), The clergy has now abandoned its old tactic of opposing or restricting the education of the masses; a tactic impossible in these days in which undeniable social progress has revolutionised people's consciousness... Today, the priests and their allies maintain in this State a large number of so-called Catholic schools, but not in order to bring about a real education of the people, rather as an effective means of domination and for the benefit of a few. Their schools are full of children languishing in an atmosphere laden with prejudice...."

(1) Ibid., pp. 211-214.

(2) Ibid., p. 95. The inspector in this region was Mariano Pérez Andrade.

(3) Ibid., p. 150. Zinapécuaro was also in the eastern zone of the State, under Srta. Rodríguez' jurisdiction, and the description is here.

(4) Ibid., p. 19.

In such areas it was extremely difficult for official education to be successful, unless it could be demonstrated that the clerical propaganda was false and intended only to keep the peasantry in ignorance and in submission to the landlords.

Inevitably some teachers came into direct conflict with the "hacendados" where the landowners did not oppose the establishment of official schools as such, it might prove impossible to maintain a school because of the peasants' lack of resources. Often the children would be working with their fathers on the "haciendas" or on their own inadequate patches of land. Most schools needed an agricultural plot of their own to teach pupils farming techniques, but the peasants had little or no land of their own to spare and the landowners were reluctant to release even the tiny fraction of their property needed for this purpose. There were exceptions - thus in Puruándiro the owner of the San Antonio "hacienda" willingly provided a good plot of land for the school's needs ⁽¹⁾ - but such cases were rare. Moreover, even where the school had such facilities they were of little value if the peasants had no land of their own, for when the children left school they would be unable to apply their newly-acquired knowledge. The inspector Mariano Pérez Andrade pointed out that the good work of many of the schools in his charge would have little effect until the peasant communities they served were given "ejido" lands and an adequate water supply. ⁽²⁾

Not infrequently, as in the case of Asoleadero mentioned above, the teachers' work might be opposed by the local authorities; another case was that of Santa Clara, near Pátzcuaro, where the "ayuntamiento" was said to be hostile. ⁽³⁾ The problem could take a more dramatic form, as with the teacher

(1) *Ibid.*, p.208.

(2) *Ibid.*, p.206.

(3) *Ibid.*, p.12; report by Inspector Ocampo N. Bolaños, who was largely responsible for organizing the successful refresher course for teachers in Pátzcuaro.

Santiago N. Treviño who was kidnapped from his school by the municipal authorities of Janay, just across the State line in Jalisco, apparently because of an old dispute between the two "municipios". (1)

Despite such obstacles, many teachers were able to do good work because their persistence and self-sacrifice won the inhabitants over to their side. But the situation became really serious when the teachers themselves lacked enthusiasm, or even worse, entered into alliance with the very interests which were oppressing the rural population. It was natural that there should be a minority of such teachers, and it seems that they were only a small minority. But in Michoacán in these years there was one particularly serious case which is worth mentioning here, for it must have destroyed all the good work of the educational authorities for several years in the southern zone (one of four into which the State was then divided). This was the case of J. Lúndes Martínez, who was the inspector in charge of that zone for more than two years (1923-1925). Lúndes Martínez sent in many reports which seemed quite plausible, indicating that he was actively reorganizing the zone which had been neglected by his predecessor. Since it was the most primitive part of the State, more than 6,000 square miles in area and with scarcely a mile of paved road, with difficult terrain and a sweltering tropical climate, it was not surprising that many of the teachers should have malaria, that the inhabitants should be completely ignorant and fanatical, and that there should be danger from bandits, as he reported. (2) But when his work revealed an increasing number of irregularities, the Ministry sent a special inspector to investigate in October 1925. This inspector's report makes interesting reading: (3)

"..... The first measure of the said gentleman (Lúndes Martínez) on arriving in his zone was to ask the teachers who was the prettiest girl teaching in the federal schools, and when he was told that the prettiest was the Srta. Luisa Montes de Oca, he sent for her to take her as his wife.... This gentleman married Srta. Montes de Oca on the 26th of April and in spite of this the lady continued drawing her salary

(1) S.E.P.(G), 12-5-1-17, pp.1-6.

(2) S.E.P.(G), 12-3-9-164, pp.31-35, 116-141, 221, 234-241, 272-273 & 379-380.

(3) Ibid., pp.433-441.

until 21st July, on which date she was dismissed by the Ministry. Because of these irregularities and certain others which I shall explain later, Sr. Martínez began to have difficulties with all the teachers, one of those who complained being Señor Juan Santana, who was taken by Señor Martínez to the outskirts of the town of Coahuacán, where Martínez threatened him pistol in hand saying that he knew Santana had complained to the Ministry about his misconduct, and that he was therefore going to punish him severely.....

"During the whole time that Sr. Martínez remained as inspector he did not carry out a single visit to the schools in his charge, but dealt with matters most of the time from this city (Colima, Col.) where he is living at present....."

This picture was confirmed by Martínez' successor, who reported that the condition of the federal schools in the area was "lamentable" as a result of the activities of the "Sultancillo de Turquía" as Martínez was apparently known in the area. (1) In this case an inspector had taken advantage of his authority and the remoteness of his area to become a veritable "cacique", intimidating the teachers and embezzling their salaries; fortunately such extreme cases were rare. (It is worth noting that Lúndez Martínez was a military man by origin, which may help to explain his behaviour.)

6. The Cristero Movement in Michoacán (1926-1929)

Such educational progress as had been made in the State was to be severely disrupted after 1926 by the impact of the "cristero" rebellion, both through the deliberate activities of the rebels and through the general dislocation of normal life. Over large areas the chaotic situation must have come near to completely destroying the achievements of the schools.

As is well known, towards the end of 1926 rebel bands appeared in various parts of Mexico under the slogan "Viva Cristo Rey!", from which they came to be known as "cristeros". The basic cause of the conflict was the Church's systematic opposition to the revolutionary movement, but it was brought to a head by provocative acts on both sides. Given the intense

(1) *Ibid.*, pp. 464-470.

religiosity of large sectors of its population, which as has been seen was in itself an obstacle to official education, it is not surprising that Michoacán was among the States most seriously affected by the conflict.

Friction between the Church hierarchy and the State Government had already occurred under Governors Elizondo and Múgica. It was revived in February 1926 when on account of certain minor incidents, Governor Enrique Ramírez began closing seminaries and Church schools in Morelia and elsewhere,⁽¹⁾ and in March he became one of the first Governors to decree the registration and numerical restriction of the clergy. This led to the hierarchy's decision to suspend all religious services (which in July was extended to the whole country), followed by the arrest of Bishop Lara of Tacámbaro and the flight of Bishop Fuldner of Zamora and Archbishop Ruiz of Morelia. The hierarchy issued inflammatory statements; minor disturbances occurred in Morelia and Saluayo,⁽²⁾ and soon armed bands appeared in the countryside.

Towards the end of 1926, a group of Catholics who had been organising for resistance in Ciudad Hidalgo took up arms and went into the hills.⁽³⁾ About the same time, a small landowner who had led a local revolt in the neighbouring State of Guanajuato, took refuge in northern Michoacán after being defeated by Government troops.⁽⁴⁾ This man, Luís Navarro Orígal, was to become one of the chief "cristero" leaders; having recruited more followers he reappeared in April 1927 near Coahuacán, which he took with the help of other guerrilla bands. During the next six months he came to dominate most of the remote south-eastern part of Michoacán, from Apatzingán to the sea.⁽⁵⁾

(1) Bravo Ugarte, op.cit., vol.3, pp.223-225.

(2) Alicia Olivera Sedano, "Aspectos del Conflicto Religioso de 1926 a 1929" (Mexico, 1966, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia), p.122.

(3) Ibid., p.153.

(4) Ibid., p.137; Bravo Ugarte, op.cit., vol.3., p.226.

(5) Olivera Sedano, op.cit., pp.152-153; Bravo Ugarte, loc.cit..

Other "cristero" chieftains were Librado Guillén, Serapio Cifuentes and Prudencio Mendoza in the south-western area; Fernando Tenorio in the north-western part of the State; Ladislao Molina around Tacámbaro, and Simón Cortés to the north of Morelia. (1) Most of them were little more than bandits, but the "cristeros" chief of operations, Jesús Degollado y Guisár, claimed to control all of them and to have command of more than 7,000 men in Michoacán alone towards the end of 1927. (2)

Early in 1928 Navarro Orígel (also known as Fermín Gutiérrez) defeated a powerful Government force under General Juan Domínguez, but this rebel victory was only a prelude to the movement's decline. In July Navarro Orígel's men turned against him, and he went to Jalisco where he was killed a month later. (3) The many local guerrilla bands continued to disrupt communications and assault Government troops, schools and agrarian leaders for over a year, but by early 1929 the rebellion was virtually over; it was formally terminated in the summer of that year when President Portes Gil came to an agreement with the Church hierarchy.

The effect of these years of chaos on the progress of education in Michoacán was catastrophic. True, the "cristeros" never controlled any of the main towns, and in many rural areas their dominance was very short-lived, despite their claims. But the danger they represented made it unsafe for teachers to work in remote areas, and often made parents reluctant to send their children to school. Perhaps more serious was the effect of their propaganda against the "atheist" or "protestant" education, which led to a widespread and effective boycott of Government schools; some teachers in Michoacán estimate that in these years school attendance throughout the State was one-third of the required level, and this situation continued for several years

(1) Olivero Sedano, op.cit., pp.176 & 195.

(2) René Velázquez López, "El Problema Religioso en México (1917-1929)" (unpublished thesis, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1963), p.190; Olivero Sedano, op.cit., p.176.

(3) Olivero Sedano, op.cit., pp.180-181; Bravo Ugarte, loc.cit..

(1)

after the rebellion itself was over.

While the unrest continued many teachers had to abandon their work for periods varying from a few days to several months, and some were in danger of their lives. A teacher who began working in 1920 near Tacámbaro testifies that from 1927 to 1932 most of the children did not attend because the local priest said the school was atheist. (2) She herself was in constant danger from the followers of Ladislao Molina, who in 1927 murdered a young colleague of hers, María Zamora, in the nearby village of Yoricostio. (3) In 1927 Antonio H. García, nominated as inspector in the south-western area of the State, had great difficulty in reaching his destination because of insecurity; and a few months later the Director of Federal Education in Michoacán wrote to the Ministry expressing fears for García's safety, because "with his loyalty to the Government he has damaged certain private interests". Two months later he was moved elsewhere. (4) In San José de Gracia, the teacher Rafael C. Haro was obliged to leave in July 1927 when most of the inhabitants joined the "oristero" revolt under the influence of the priest - although Haro was a native of the place and was not anticlerical. (5) In October 1928 teachers from a wide area of the countryside had to be concentrated in Uruapan for reasons of security (6) - and similar cases occurred all over the State.

(1) Interviews with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi (24th Aug. 1968) and Prof. Miguel Gropiza Vázquez (18th Dec. 1967) in Morelia.

(2) Interview with Prof. María de la Luz Molina Zendejas, 4th Nov. 1967 in Tacámbaro.

(3) *Ibid.*; and interviews with Prof. Diego Hernández Topete (9th Aug. 1969) in Mexico City, and Prof. Leonardo Nava Heras (8th July 1968) in Morelia.

(4) S.F.P. (O), 12-1-3-2, pp. 3-6.

(5) Interview with Prof. Rafael C. Haro in Morelia, 20th Dec. 1967. San José de Gracia has just been the subject of a fascinating and exhaustive local history by Lidia Gónzales of El Colegio de México. ("Pueblo en vilo: Microhistoria de San José de Gracia", Mexico, 1968).

(6) Interview with Prof. Leonardo Nava Heras in Morelia, 8th July 1968.

One effect of the three years' conflict was to hasten the process of radicalisation which had already begun among the teachers, with important results for local politics in the succeeding period. It also obliged the teachers to identify themselves more closely with the Government, and to see themselves to some extent as its ideological agents, propagating a spirit of nationalism, secularism and social change. This was brought home particularly in 1929, when all the Cultural Missions were concentrated in the States of Jalisco, Colima, Michoacán, and Guanajuato, "with the aim of carrying out a campaign in favour of the spiritual pacification of the peasants of those States who were driven by fanatical elements into rebellion against the revolutionary institutions, gravely endangering their most important interests....." (1) The ordinary teachers were also urged to take part in this campaign. But along with this constructive work, the negative effects of the Government's sterile anticlericalism have to be recognised.

7. The Teachers Begin to Organise, 1926-1936

Although individual teachers in Michoacán had become quite militant and politically conscious, participating in Higuera's campaigns and in the peasant leagues of Primo Tania, until 1925 they themselves had made no effort to organise. In that year a group of teachers in Morelia began to meet regularly to exchange ideas, and in 1926 they formed the "Liga de Maestros Michoacanos" with 51 members, mainly in Morelia. Although this League was never very strong or politically sophisticated, it did recruit further members and waged a successful campaign for the resignation of the State Director of Education, Prof. Manuel Hernández Leal; after a few months Governor Roldán agreed to replace Hernández by Prof. Salvador Andrade, who was more acceptable. (2)

(1) "Memoria" 1929, pp. 270-272.

(2) Prof. Enrique Villaseñor y Ponce de León, "Así Principió la Lucha (Notas para la Historia del Sindicalismo Magisterial en Michoacán)" (Morelia, 1967, Ediciones de la Sección XVIII del S.N.T.E.), p.6.

In 1929, with the encouragement of Lázaro Cárdenas, the young radical General who had just taken office as Governor, the "Liga" transformed itself into the "Unión de Maestros Michoacanos" with José Sánchez Calderón as Secretary General.⁽¹⁾ Also on the committee was Jesús Múgica Martínez, who had just graduated from the "Normal" in Morelia and was to play a prominent part in the conflicts of the next decade.⁽²⁾ The U.M.M. was more dynamic than its predecessor, and soon had local committees in most parts of the State. But it was still a fairly moderate body, and the only hint of radicalism in its constitution was a clause calling for the revision of Article 123 of the Federal Constitution "in the sense that the Teacher should be considered as a worker and producer and not just as an employee..."⁽³⁾

However, new currents of thought were beginning to make themselves felt, and gave rise to the formation of a rival body, the "Sindicato de Maestros de Michoacán" (S.M.M.) which was affiliated to the newly-formed "Confederación Revolucionaria Michoacana del Trabajo" (C.R.M.R.T.) and to the Communist-led International of Educational Workers. The leaders of the S.M.M. were mainly products of the "Normal" in Morelia and included Miguel Arroyo de la Parra, Martín H. Heróldo and Leobardo Ceja Torres.⁽⁴⁾ The U.M.M. was bigger than the S.M.M., and they appear to have coexisted peacefully although the latter was more radical.⁽⁵⁾

In the late 'twenties the activities of teachers as organisers and agitators in local politics became important, perhaps for the first time in Michoacán. In 1926 a certain Félix Velázquez founded the "Partido Socialista de Tacámbaro", a left-of-centre organisation which grew to have considerable influence locally, largely as the result of the work of a group of teachers (in particular Diego Hernández Topete, then working in the Rural Normal School

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- (1) *Ibid.*
 (2) *Ibid.*, and interview with Prof. Jesús Múgica Martínez, 30th Jan. 1968 in Morelia.
 (3) Villaseñor, *op.cit.*, p.9.
 (4) *Ibid.*, p.10.
 (5) Interviews with Prof. Villaseñor in Morelia, 12th Aug. 1968, and with Prof. Diego Hernández Topete in Mexico City, 9th Aug. 1969.

of Tacúbaro, and Félix Chamery, who had just graduated from the "Escuela Nacional de Maestros".⁽¹⁾ The Communist Party was also beginning to win adherents among the teachers, the most notable of whom was "Caca" García, whose work as an inspector of schools has already been mentioned (above, pp.). In a tense debate in Morelia in 1928 between Communists and supporters of the C.R.S.M., this "revolutionary teacher" spoke on behalf of the former and was loudly applauded because of the respect she already enjoyed as a result of ten years' work "for the emancipation of the working class".⁽²⁾ In 1929 a Communist labour organisation, the "Bloque Obrero y Campesino", established a branch in Michoacán, and among those most active in its formation were Miguel Arroyo de la Parra (a teacher) and J. Jesús Rico (a labour leader).⁽³⁾ In the same year teachers were also prominent in the formation of local labour and peasant unions under the control of the new "cardenista" labour federation, the C.R.V.D.T., which was to be of crucial importance in the following years.

5. The Governorship of Cárdenas, 1928-1932: formation of the C.R.V.D.T.

General Lázaro Cárdenas assumed the Governorship of Michoacán on 16th September 1928,⁽⁴⁾ at the age of 33; the son of a small trader in Jicófilon, he had risen during the Revolution as a faithful follower of Obregón and Calles. A close friend of Ságuica, who was his senior and had a considerable influence on his early political career,⁽⁵⁾ Cárdenas had some reputation as a radical; but there seemed little reason to expect a major change in the way the State was governed. The previous Governor, Enrique Ramírez, was noted for his anticlericalism and, remarkably, for his honesty, but had done little to introduce reforms, and it seemed likely

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- (1) *Ibid.*, and interview with Señor Félix Chamery in Nueva Italia, Mich., 16th Aug. 1960.
 (2) "El Heraldo", 4th Aug. 1928 (report of a meeting held on 13th July).
 (3) *Ibid.*, 16th March 1929.
 (4) *Irave Ugarte*, *op.cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 254-255.
 (5) *Kondragin*, *op.cit.*, pp. 108 & 323-325.

that his successor would continue these policies. The Cárdenas candidacy was assured of victory as the result of a reconciliation between Ramírez and Melchor Ortega (the ex-municipal president of Uruapan who had led the revolt against Múgica and was now federal deputy for Michoacán); early in 1928 they founded the "Confederación de Partidos Revolucionarios de Michoacán" led by Ortega, to promote the campaigns of Cárdenas for Governor and Obregón for President. (1)

In fact Cárdenas soon revealed that his radicalism was not merely verbal, and did much to make Michoacán one of the most advanced States in the Republic in terms of social reform - although he was more prudent than Múgica and was careful not to go beyond the limits acceptable to the "Jefe Máximo". Land reform at last became a reality for many of the peasant communities which had fought in vain under Primo Tapia; in his four years in office Cárdenas distributed over 400,000 hectares of land to 24,000 "ejidatarios" in 400 communities, and this also led to political changes in many "municipios", where agrarian radicals gained control from traditional "caciques". (2) Naturally these changes could not be achieved without tension, and there were violent clashes in a number of localities. One of Cárdenas' biggest decisions in agrarian policy was the distribution of the huge Harkness estate around Puruándiro, which he decreed immediately before leaving office in September 1932, thus satisfying the demands of many communities which had been struggling for land for as long as ten years in some cases. (3)

In the field of education, the State Government did more under Cárdenas than in any previous period, with the possible exception of Múgica's brief Governorship. In 1930 Michoacán was one of the few States to devote more than 40% of its budget to education, (4) and the State Government opened more than

(1) Valdeuino Garza, op.cit., pp.113-115.

(2) Riva Ugarte, op.cit., vol.3., pp.219-220.

(3) "El Maestro Rural", vol.5, no.11, 1st.Dec.1934; article "Una Comunidad que Progresa". This article was by a teacher in Tres Mesquites (near Puruándiro), Antonio Salas León, who had helped to organize the peasants there.

(4) "Memoria", 1930, p.LXI (speech of Molina Sáenz before the Asamblea Nacional de Educación, August 1930).

100 new schools in these years, quite apart from the efforts of the Federal Government. In addition, Cárdenas began to enforce Article 123 of the Constitution (previously a dead letter throughout the country), obliging the owners of "haciendas" to establish schools for their peons at their own expense, and this measure alone increased the number of schools in the State by over 300.⁽¹⁾ The new Governor toured the State visiting many of the schools, something which had never been done before, and he decreed that each school should have a plot of land for agricultural training - an amenity which had previously been confined to a minority of establishments. Sports and civic festivals were greatly encouraged, and three technical training centres were founded for Indian children. The Federal Government was also increasing its support for education in Michoacán; among the most interesting experiments of this period was a permanent Cultural Mission, one of only two in the Republic, which was established in Paracho in April 1930. This Mission, intended as a catalyst of social development in a limited area, was quite successful, but was closed down in November 1931 because it was decided that its influence should not be restricted to such a small area.⁽²⁾

As might be expected in view of these developments, most of the teachers were ardent "cardenistas", and they participated prominently in the labour and peasant federation formed under Don Lazaro's guidance, the "Confederación Revolucionaria Michoacana del Trabajo" (C.R.M.D.T.). This organisation was created at a congress attended by some 150 peasants' and workers' delegates in Patascuro from 5th to 7th January 1929, the purpose of which, according to one of the participants, was "to promote the class struggle".⁽³⁾ Cárdenas presided over the congress, which he himself had called immediately after taking office, and Lic. Alberto Coria, an intellectual from the University of Michoacán, was elected Secretary General. Among the chief organisers

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- (1) Romero Flores, "Historia de la Educación.", pp. 68-69; and W.C. Townsend, "Lázaro Cárdenas, Democrata Mexicano" (Mexican edition, 1954) p. 96 Romero Flores puts the number of such new schools at 500.
- (2) "Mimoria", 1930, pp. 11-12, and 1932, vol. 1. p. 154; Minano Garcia, op. cit. p. 204.
- (3) Jesus Padilla Gallo, "Los de Abajo en Michoacán (Apuntes Breves del Movimiento Social en Michoacán, desde el Primer Congreso de la C.R.M.D.T. hasta su 60. Congreso. Su Organización y los Caídos en la Lucha de Clases)" (Morelia, 1935, Tipografía de la E.T.L. "Alvaro Obregón"), pp. 3-4; and interview with Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete in Mexico City, 9th Aug. 1969.

and participants were Antonio Mayés Navarro, a lecturer from the "Normal" in Morelia; intellectuals such as Ernesto Soto Reyes and Luis Mora Tovar; Diego Hernández Topete and José Palomares Quiroz, both teachers; and the peasant leaders José Solórzano Aguirre and Pedro López Cruz - all of them young radicals who were to play an important part in the "cardenista" movement in the 'thirties.⁽¹⁾ The new organisation took as its slogan "Union, Land and Labour" and its motif was a hammer and sickle with an open book - the latter a recognition of the contribution of the intellectuals. The Confederation's declaration of principles also showed the influence of the intellectuals and teachers in its third clause: "The Educational Problem in its moral, intellectual and physical aspects, will receive preferential attention from the Confederation, taking into the school the means of advance and transformation which the most advantageous social development demands."⁽²⁾

It was in the process of recruitment to the C.R.M.D.T. that the rural teachers came to the fore. Many of them joined as individuals, and local unions of teachers affiliated - often groups independent of the U.M.M., which was still weak and concentrated in Morelia. These groups were led by pioneers of the teachers' movement such as Eneas Miranda in Zamora, García Valdovinos in Htáconraro and Juan Ayala, an interesting figure influenced by anarcho-syndicalism who had been active for some years as one of the leaders of Melchor Ortega's "Partido Socialista de Uruapan".⁽³⁾ As has been seen, the Confederation also organised its own teachers' union, the S.M.M. which was composed of the more radical members of the profession.

It was the teachers who were most active in attracting individual members to the C.R.M.D.T., affiliating existing local peasants' and workers' unions and organising new groups. In collaboration with the local Federation

(1) Padilla Galle, op.cit., pp.5-8.

(2) Ibid., pp.38-39.

(3) Interviews with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi in Morelia, 9th and 10th July and 26th August 1968.

of Labour in Morelia, the C.R.M.D.T. organized unions of electricians, transport workers, bootblacks, waiters and students, and in the rest of the State over 200 peasant unions. ⁽¹⁾ Within a year the Confederation claimed 100,000 members (in a State with a total population of about 900,000), and had the allegiance of almost all the peasant leagues and most of the labour unions in the State. Without doubt it was one of the strongest regional labour organizations in the country, rivalled only by the powerful Vera Cruz peasant league (which was suffering from an internal crisis at this time). On 1st May 1930 over 6,000 people took part in a labour day parade in Morelia, testifying to its rapidly growing strength. ⁽²⁾

The rôle of the teachers is well illustrated by the history of the peasant unions of Lombardia and Nueva Italia, a rich tropical area of irrigation farming dominated by the Italian Cusi family, who employed over 3,000 rural workers. In November 1929 some of these workers formed the "Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Negociación Agrícola del Valle del Marqués", affiliated to the C.R.M.D.T. One of the main agents in organizing this union, together with an engineer from Zaatecas and two of the workers themselves, was the teacher Félix Chamery, who had been active three years earlier in the "Partido Socialista de Tacámbaro". Chamery came to Nueva Italia as a member of one of the Cultural Missions sent out by the Ministry of Education (which, incidentally, he describes as teams of social and political agitators, whose main purpose was to organize workers and spread radical ideas); he became so involved in the work of agitation that he left the teaching profession and devoted himself completely to local politics. ⁽³⁾

Chamery was an adherent of the C.R.O.M., the national labour federation which had enjoyed Government favour during Calles' Presidency; but the

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- (1) Interviews with Senor Rubén Munguía in Coahuila, Guanajuato (21st Aug. 1969) and with Prof. Diego Hernández Topete in Mexico City (9th Aug. 1969); Padilla Gallo, *op.cit.*, pp. 11-12; and Villaseca, *op.cit.*, p. 10.
 (2) Padilla Gallo, *op.cit.*, pp. 15-16.
 (3) Interviews with Senor Félix Chamery (now Secretario del Juzgado Menor) and Prof. Manuel Paredes Higuera in Nueva Italia, 16th Aug. 1968; and Padilla Gallo, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

"Sindicato Agrícola" of Nueva Italia did not affiliate to the C.R.O.M. since the latter was already in decline (and was in fact largely destroyed in Michoacán by the growth of the C.R.M.D.T.). Moreover, in 1930 the Communist Party began to penetrate the Nueva Italia region, and several other teachers who were active in the "Sindicato Agrícola" became Communists. By 1931 the Nueva Italia and Lombardía union was the strongest in Michoacán, controlling most of the 3,000 workers in the area.⁽¹⁾

The C.R.M.D.T. held its second congress early in 1930 in Zamora. This was a mass assembly, with over 3,000 people attending, and the delegates showed their spirit by singing the "Internationale" at the closing session. The congress was presided by Mayés Navarro, and a teacher, Diego Hernández Topete, was elected as Secretary General for the coming year (another teacher Prof. Lamberto Moreno, also served on the committee).⁽²⁾ Under the new committee the Confederation continued to grow, although according to some of his colleagues⁽³⁾ Señor Hernández (who was one of the more moderate leaders) found himself in conflict with some of the peasant leaders. There was also a serious dispute involving the Uruapan District Federation, the strongest component group (which included the Nueva Italia union); the leaders of this group, among whom was Chanssy, came to terms with the administrators of the Cusi estates and declared themselves autonomous. The Confederation answered this betrayal by expelling them and forming a new District Federation.⁽⁴⁾

In spite of these difficulties, the Confederation's third congress, in Morelia in July 1931, was attended by a similar mass of delegates and was able to report continued expansion. The new Secretary General was a peasant leader, José Solórzano Aguirre, although some aggranted several teachers took a

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- (1) Interviews with Señor Félix Chanssy and Prof. Manuel Parades Higuera in Nueva Italia, 16/VIII:68; and with Prof. Diego Hernández Topete in Mexico City, 9/VIII:69.
- (2) Padilla Gallo, op.cit., pp. 21-26; interview with Prof. Diego Hernández Topete in Mexico City, 9/VIII:69.
- (3) Interviews with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi and Señor Manuel López Peres in Morelia, 24th Aug. 1968.
- (4) Padilla Gallo, op.cit., pp. 33-34; and interview with Prof. Diego Hernández Topete in Mexico City, 9/VIII:69.

leading part in the debates, particularly Elías Miranda and Lamberto Moreno. The Confederation now had its own journal, "Frente Unido", edited by Mayra Navarro, and was organizing "Ligas Femeniles" and agitating against the clergy, in addition to its other activities. By 1932 the organisation had reached its peak; its fourth congress, in September of that year, was attended by 5,000 delegates, and it completely dominated the political scene in the State.⁽¹⁾ But its domination was soon to be challenged, with the departure of Cárdenas from the Governor's Palace.

2. Regime Serrato and the Political Conflict of 1932-1934.

When the question arose of the succession to Cárdenas, the C.R.M.D.T. was in a position to have a decisive influence on the selection of a candidate, and its choice ^{was} Ernesto Soto Reyes, the left-wing intellectual and federal deputy (who at this time had reached the position of President of the P.N.R. in Michoacán). But Soto Reyes was not welcome to Calles, who imposed from above the candidacy of Rogelio Serrato, a revolutionary general of decidedly militaristic and authoritarian outlook. Cárdenas was not in agreement with this, but he had no alternative but to accept, and in these circumstances he obliged the C.R.M.D.T. to conduct Serrato's election campaign; this caused considerable bad feeling, since the Confederation was already quite far advanced in its campaign on behalf of Soto Reyes when the latter withdrew his candidacy and the unpopular Serrato was imposed.⁽²⁾

Serrato assumed office on 16th September 1932, and very soon he was faced with political strife in various parts of the State. His style of Government was dictatorial, and even one of his sympathisers has to admit that "on reaching the Governorship of his State, he could not from one day to the next adapt

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- (1) Padilla Gallo, op.cit., pp.35-38 and 46-47; and interview with Senor Antonio Mayra Navarro in Colaba, Oba, 21:VIII:69.
 (2) Interviews with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi (9th & 10th July 1968) and with Senor Manuel Lopez Perez (27:VII:68) in Morelia.

his soldier's mentality, made to command and to be obeyed, to the demands of politics.⁽¹⁾ Although the C.R.M.D.T. had in the end helped Serrato to win power, the alliance was an unhappy one and could not last. Not long after the change of Governors, the Deputy for La Piedad in the State Congress, Luis Méndez (who had been provisional Governor for a few months in 1928 and was originally pro-Cardenas) made a speech strongly favouring Serrato and containing veiled criticism of Cardenas.⁽²⁾ This was part of the preparation for Serrato's attempt to take over the Confederation, which was staged in March 1933.

From 26th to 28th March a convention was held in Morelia which claimed to be the fifth congress of the C.R.M.D.T., but was organised by the State Government. As soon as the invitations to this congress had been issued, the C.R.M.D.T. committee denounced it as "the divisionist work of a group of leaders already excluded from our ranks" and called on its members not to attend.⁽³⁾ When the time came, most of the authentic delegates refused to take part and organised a protest demonstration outside,⁽⁴⁾ but a significant minority of leaders, corrupted or deceived by Serrato's propaganda, did participate, and he was able to form a rival organisation. One of the first acts of the spurious congress was to declare the formal expulsion of 67 leading figures of the Confederation (most of whom were absent), and the list includes many of the founding members and most of the best militants from Ernesto Soto Reyes downwards.⁽⁵⁾

To lead the new organisation Serrato obtained the services of one of the less worthy members of the teaching profession in Michoacán, Ramón Rodríguez.

(1) Valdivinoso Garza, *op.cit.*, p.143.

(2) Interview with Señor Manuel López Pérez in Morelia, 27:VII:66.

(3) Padilla Gallo, *op.cit.*, pp.61-62; statement issued 24:III:32.

(4) *Ibid.*, p.60.

(5) Méjica archive, unclassified file "Campaña Pro-Lasero Cárdenas y Asuntos de Michoacán", 1933; "Lista de los malos elementos expulsados por traidores a los trabajadores, en el Quinto Congreso de la Confederación Revolucionaria Michoacana del Trabajo reunida en el Teatro Ocampo el 26 de marzo de 1933"; there follows a letter dated 17:IV:33 and addressed to Ernesto Soto Reyes, denouncing the manoeuvre and asking for it to be brought to the attention of Méjica.

When he came to power Serrato had been unable to dominate the State legislature, in which his supporters were one vote short of a majority; but before long one of the opposition deputies, Miguel Rincón (an outstanding union leader from Uruapan) was murdered, and then Rincón's substitute ("suplente") was illegally disqualified from sitting. In these dubious circumstances Ramón Rodríguez came to represent Uruapan in the State legislature, and then to be Secretary General of a body calling itself the C.R.M.D.T. (1)

Since all the waverers and opportunists had been drawn into the pro-Serrato Confederation, the authentic C.R.M.D.T. was now completely dominated by the Left, and the result was virtual war between the two factions. Already the political manoeuvres of the State Government had led to serious clashes, and in 1933 something approaching a white terror reigned in many parts of the countryside against peasant leaders and militants of all kinds. The work of intimidation, imprisonment and murder was organised and encouraged by the pro-Serrato politicians Luis Méndez, Enrique Ramírez, Othon Sosa and Ramón Rodríguez. (2) The C.R.M.D.T. tried to organise resistance, holding mass meetings all over the State and forming peasant militias to repel any attacks. (3) The Nueva Italia area was again the scene of a serious clash; the labourers struck to oblige the owners to observe the terms of a collective agreement signed two years earlier, but the "Junta de Conciliación y Arbitraje" declared in favour of the owners, and the State Government then brought in troops to crush the strike, leading to an armed clash with over 20 dead. (4) Later in the year Gabriel Zamora, a "cardenista" leader, was assassinated on the road from Lombardía to Uruapan. (5)

- (1) Interviews with Señor Antonio Mayo Navarro in Colaya, Oco., (21:VIII:69); and with Prof. Diego Hernández Topete in Mexico City (9:VIII:69); Padilla Gallo, *op.cit.*, pp.49-50.
- (2) Padilla Gallo, *op.cit.* pp.59-61.
- (3) Valdovinos Guerra, *op.cit.*, p.155.
- (4) Padilla Gallo, *op.cit.*, p.59; Brevé Ugarte, *op.cit.*, vol.3, p.220 (according to this version it was the "agraristas" who attacked the troops); and interview with Señor Antonio Mayo Navarro in Colaya, Oco., 21:VIII:69).
- (5) Archivo General y Público del Estado de Michoacán, Rama de Gobernación, 1933, expediente 23-15; telegram dated 22:XI:33, from the Comité Político Radical Pro-Cardenas de Uruapan to the State Government, protesting against the assassination of Zamora the previous day.

Another violent confrontation occurred in Zitácuaro, where on 11th June 1933 Serrato's supporters tried to take over the "Federación Agraria y Sindicalista Distrital" which was affiliated to the C.R.M.D.T. The attempt led to a skirmish as a result of which 3 people died and 40 of the "serrattistas" were arrested by the municipal authorities, since the "ayuntamiento" of Zitácuaro was controlled by the radicals.⁽¹⁾ Some of the latter were also arrested by the State authorities, owing to the complex clash of powers, but were released after the intervention of General Múgica.⁽²⁾ However, Serrato did not abandon his efforts to gain control of the area; a few days later there were further clashes,⁽³⁾ and six months later his supporters assaulted the town hall of Zitácuaro, expelling the legitimate council (which was headed by a "Cardenista" teacher, Federico García) and imposing their own candidates by force.⁽⁴⁾ In a letter to President Abelardo Rodríguez, the Governor denounced his opponents as Communists.⁽⁵⁾

The opposition to Serrato was saved ultimately by the growing strength of "cardenismo" at a national level. Early in 1933 many of the "maguquistas" old guard formed an organisation called the "Federación Política Radical Socialista de Michoacán" (F.P.R.S.M.), led by Antonio Mayés Navarro and Luis Mora Tovar, an intellectual from Toluca who did much to promote the cultural life of the State.⁽⁶⁾ Its purpose was to lead the opposition to Serrato and to

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- (1) Ibid., Ramo de Gobernación, 1933, exp.22-5-A, pp.3-10; Padilla Gallo, op.cit. p.71.
- (2) Múgica archive, unclassified file "Campaña Pro-Lázaro Cárdenas y Asuntos de Michoacán, 1933"; (1) letter dated 12:VI:33 from Múgica to General Rafael Sánchez Tapia, commander of the 24th Military Zone in Morelia, asking for his intervention; (2) letters to Múgica from the "Federación Agraria y Sindicalista Distrital de Zitácuaro, Miembro de la Gemina C.R.M.D.T.", dated 6 and 9:VII:33 respectively, thanking him for his help.
- (3) Archivo General y Público del Estado de Michoacán, Ramo de Gobernación, 1933, exp. 22-5-A, pp.13-15.
- (4) Múgica archive, loc.cit., letter to Múgica dated 20:II:34, from Colonel Heftalí N. Cojedo of Zitácuaro.
- (5) Archivo General y Público del Estado de Michoacán, Ramo de Gobernación, 1933, exp. 22-5-A, p.18.
- (6) Interviews in Morelia with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi (9 and 10:VII:68) and Señor Manuel López Pérez (27:VII:68).

organise Cárdenas' campaign for the Presidency; it enjoyed close relations with the C.R.M.D.T., to which most of its members also belonged, but was concerned exclusively with the political struggle and not with union affairs. (1)

The F.P.R.S.M. outmanoeuvred the "serrattistas" in the State Convention of the P.N.R. which in August 1933 nominated delegates for the National Convention to be held at Querétaro in December; as a result the Michoacán delegation to Querétaro consisted entirely of "cardenistas" and contributed strongly to the success of Don Lázaro in winning the Presidential nomination. (2) The F.P.R.S.M. was also largely responsible for bringing about an investigation of the situation in the State by a Commission of Federal Deputies and Senators, which reported in terms highly unfavourable to the State Government. The Commission denounced the formation of the pro-Serrato Confederation as fraudulent and confirmed that the State Government and many of the municipal authorities had organised a systematic campaign of persecution and repression against the opposition; they claimed to have evidence of 382 assaults and 50 murders committed against members of the original Confederation in the last four months of 1933 alone. (3)

Encouraged by these successes, the authentic Confederation held its fifth Congress in Morelia from 1st to 3rd January 1934. The assembly, attended by more than 3,000 delegates (one report puts the number at 6,000), denounced all kinds of injustices committed by the State Government and called for the resignation of Serrato and his replacement by a progressive figure, possibly Múgica, as provisional Governor. The growing influence of the teachers was revealed with the election of three of them to the new committee; José María Cans, Jesús Múgica Martínez and Elías Miranda, the latter being Secretary General. (4)

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- (1) Interviews with Señor Antonio Mayés Navarro in Colaya, Ota (21st Aug. 1969) and with Prof. Diego Hernández Topete in Mexico City (9th Aug. 1969).
 (2) Múgica archive, loc. cit.; press release dated 21 Aug. 1933 by the Federación Política Radical Socialista de Michoacán.
 (3) Múgica archive, unclassified file "Michoacán 1933"; copy of the report of the Commission of Senators and Deputies on the situation in Michoacán, 26:XXI:33.
 (4) Padilla Gallo, op. cit., p. 84; Múgica archive, loc. cit., letter dated 3 Jan. 1934 to Múgica from Señor Luis Castañón in Morelia.

During 1934 the opposition to Serrato continued to grow, until on 3rd December of that year the problem was unexpectedly solved by his death in an air crash near Arco de Rosales; he was flying in his private plane at the time, and many suspected that it was a case of suicide, since his greatest political opponent had assumed the Presidency only two days before.⁽¹⁾ After this the puppet Confederation disintegrated and the authentic body, free from persecution, was able to rebuild its strength. The provisional Governorship was assumed by General Sánchez Tapia, a moderate who was on good terms with the recently-inaugurated President Cárdenas.

10. The Politicisation of the Teachers, 1930-1934: their role in the C.R.M.D.T.

The period which saw the rise of the C.R.M.D.T. and its confrontation with Serrato also witnessed the emergence of the radical teachers as an important pressure group organised for political action. Before 1930, although increasing numbers of teachers were being radicalised each year, few were involved in any kind of political organisation, while their own professional organisations were still at a very low level. Over the next few years they were to play an important role in State politics through the C.R.M.D.T., while a growing minority came under the influence of the Communist Party; and the teachers' unions in Michoacán became both stronger and more radical.

The "Sindicato de Maestros de Michoacán", which as we have seen was organised in 1929 within the C.R.M.D.T. as an association of the radical minority of teachers, was replaced towards the end of 1930 by a new group, the "Bloque de Maestros Socialistas de Michoacán" which had a more clearly defined political position. It was founded in Morelia by Elías Miranda and Diego Hernández Topete, while the latter was Secretary General of the C.R.M.D.T., and gradually began to recruit new members in the form of local branches or cells.⁽²⁾ But the

(1) Bravo Ugarte, op.cit., vol.3, p.227.

(2) Villaseñor, op.cit., p.11; and interviews with Prof. Diego Hernández Topete in Mexico City (9 Aug.1969) and with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi in Morelia (9 & 10 July 1968).

B.M.S.M. never controlled the majority of teachers, and its early progress was reversed when Serrato came to power. Towards the end of 1932 and in the early months of 1933 there was another attempt to organise, this time on the part of several young and independent teachers, led by Mario Erenauta, Manuel López Pérez, Leobardo Coja Torres, José Gallardo, Claudio Rodríguez and Hilario Reyes Garibaldi; their group had an advanced left-wing programme, but before long they were dispersed by the State Government, and directed their efforts instead to agitation within the C.R.M.D.T. (1)

The larger and more moderate teachers' union, the "Unión de Maestros de Michoacán", had been relatively inactive although it had a considerable nominal membership, and in December 1933 it was replaced by a new organisation, the "Federación Michoacana de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza". This was affiliated to the national "Confederación Mexicana de Maestros" (C.M.M.) founded the previous year, and it had the backing of the educational authorities, both State and Federal. With Manuel López Pérez as Secretary General, the "Federación Michoacana de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza" included many progressive teachers, but it became closely associated with the Government of Serrato, and when he died López Pérez was obliged to leave the State and the organisation disintegrated. (2) However, the same fate did not befall the C.M.M. in Michoacán, for Diego Hernández Topete, who in 1935 became Director of Federal Education in the State, gave it official backing. (3) By that year the teaching profession in the State was quite clearly divided into two factions, the moderates in the C.M.M. and the radicals in the C.R.M.D.T.

Although the growth of the teachers' own organisations was slow, they played a key role in organising other sectors (the peasantry and to some extent

(1) Interviews with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi (9 & 10 July and 24 Aug. 1968), and with Señor Manuel López Pérez (24 Aug. 1968) in Morelia.

(2) Villaseñor, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12; and interview with Señor Manuel López Pérez (24 Aug. 1968) in Morelia.

(3) Interviews with Prof. Diego Hernández Topete (9 Aug. 1969) in Mexico City, and with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi (9 & 10 July and 24 Aug. 1968) in Morelia.

the urban workers) within the C.R.M.D.T.; and after the peasants (who predominated by sheer weight of numbers) they were the most influential group in the Confederation). They were able to exert this influence largely because of the absence of alternative leadership; many capable peasant leaders had been eliminated during the suppression of Primo Tapia's movement and the subsequent activities of the "cristeros", and those who had remained or who had emerged since lacked the necessary knowledge and experience of political and legal matters. Other social strata, such as local politicians and urban intellectuals, also contributed to the organization of the peasantry, but the teachers, closely integrated with rural life and generally from humble backgrounds themselves, were more acceptable. The Confederation thus owed much of its grass-roots strength to their work as organizers, which needs to be examined more closely. (1)

Here it is only possible to examine some of the more interesting cases of such activity on the part of the teachers. Their prominent role in organizing the powerful "Sindicato Agrario" of Nueva Italia has already been mentioned; unfortunately they also bore much of the responsibility for the early division of this union along political lines. The moderate faction, which was strong initially, was led by Félix Chamery, and the Communists (who rapidly established themselves in this area after 1930) by Jesús Figueroa Mendoza, a teacher in the community of Parícutaro who became secretary of the local Communist Party cell. Other teachers who played a leading part were Secundino Ramírez Martínez, Manuel Rega González, José Masa Pérez and Manuel Paredes Higuera; and as a result of their participation in the struggle for land, several of them were to become "Ejidatarios" themselves, receiving parcels of land when Cárdenas expropriated the Cudí estates in 1938. In most cases their participation was disinterested, but some used the opportunity for

(1) These opinions are derived from interviews with many people conversed with in Michoacán, but principally Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi (14 Aug. 1969 in Morelia), Prof. Raúl Arceola Cortés (23 Aug. 1969 in Mexico City), and Señor Antonio Mayés Navarro (21 Aug. 1969 in Colaya, Oco.).

personal enrichment - as in the case of Secundino Ramírez, who is today an "ejidatario millonario" (i.e. one who has gained control of a large area of land by taking over the individual parcels of other peasants) and owns a cinema and a private aircraft. (1)

The community in which the revolutionary work of the teachers was very successful was that of Zuruñitaro, just outside Pátzcuaro. This was one of the first communities to receive land during Cárdenas' Governorship, although the land was inadequate and the inhabitants were soon agitating for more. They were greatly helped by the work of a teacher employed by the State Government, Alfredo Galván Mendoza, who tried to develop local crafts, led the peasants in petitions for land, and organized them in a union affiliated to the Confederation. Then in 1933 a federal rural school was established in Zuruñitaro, and the new teacher, José Contreras, was also very active in these matters. (2) In addition to the peasant union, there was a militant women's group, a "bloque de jóvenes revolucionarios", and an anticlerical league, all organized by the teachers. In 1934 Diego Hernández Tepete, who was then inspector of schools in the Pátzcuaro area, gave an extremely interesting account of the radicalism of Zuruñitaro; in particular he quoted a speech by the president of the peasants' union, Pedro Talavera, which provides further evidence of the anticlericalism of at least a significant minority of peasants. Talavera argued that all religions were the same, invented to deceive the people, and denounced the activities of a Protestant missionary because "we still haven't rid ourselves of one religion and if we go and join another, it's quite pointless". (3) It was the teachers Galván and Contreras who were chiefly responsible for the spread of such radical ideas, and today they are well remembered by the more elderly inhabitants.

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- (1) Interviews with Señor Félix G. Chasery and Prof. Manuel Paredes Higar^{oda} (15 Aug. 1968) in Nueva Italia.
 (2) Interviews with Marcelo Alejandro Morales, agricultural labourer, and others in Zuruñitaro, 13 Aug. 1968.
 (3) "El Maestro Rural", vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 7-9 (15 Feb. 1934), and vol. 5, no. 7, p. 12 (11 Oct. 1934).

Patzcuaro was the scene in November 1934 of an event almost unbelievable to anyone familiar with the region today, where Catholicism has an apparently complete hold over the mass of the population. On the 15th and 16th of that month the town was host to a "Feminine Socialist Congress" in which militant women from all over Michoacan demanded the expulsion of the priests and the "caciques", the conversion of the churches into community centres, the provision of arms for the people to support the revolutionary Government, and the modification of the law to allow women to receive "ejido" lands. They marched through the streets with red flags, and visited the "progressive community" of Zuruatario, where they were well received. Observers stress the sincerity and authenticity of the delegates, and this can only be explained by the intensive work of the female teachers who took the lead in organising the womenfolk in their communities; one of the leading delegates was the indefatigable "Cuca" Garza. (1)

Many teachers testify that they devoted much of their time in these years to agitation and organisation among the peasantry, usually as a direct function of their membership of the C.R.M.D.T. In the Patzcuaro region the teacher Maria Piedad Flores Castillo, who worked in the community of Casas Blancas from 1932 to 1934, was delegated specifically by the Confederation to organise the surrounding agrarian communities, and succeeded in forming Ligas Campesinas and Ligas Femeniles in several localities. These leagues helped the inhabitants in all kinds of ways, but their basic function was to fight for the land. (2) Srta. Flores worked in conjunction with Hilario Reyes Garibaldi, who from 1933 to 1935 was in charge of the school of Opopeo, a few miles further south in the municipality of Villa Escalante. Senor Reyes became Secretary of the local Agrarian Federation, affiliated to the C.R.M.D.T. and encouraged the peasants to occupy land illegally until their possession was ratified by the Government.

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- (1) Ibid., vol.5, no.12, p.22 (15 Dec.1934); and interview with peasants in Zuruatario, 13 Aug.1968.
 (2) Interview with Prof. Maria Piedad Flores Castillo in Morelia, 8 July 1968.

In these years Senor Reyes, Srta. Flores and other teachers were the main agents in organizing over 50 agrarian communities in the Patcuero region, and affiliated all of them to the Confederation.⁽¹⁾

In the internal politics of the Confederation this key rôle of the teachers was reflected by their prominence in its committees and congresses, which was quite out of proportion to their numbers. Broadly speaking, they shared power with the most outstanding peasant leaders - Pedro López Cruz, José Solórzano Aguirre, Ernesto Prado, José Garbay Romero - and a small group of intellectuals (Alberto Coria, Antonio Mayés Navarro, Luis Mora Tovar, Ernesto Soto Reyes and a few others). Three of the Confederation's seven Secretary Generals from 1929 to 1937 were teachers (Diego Hernández Topete in 1930-1931, Elías Miranda in 1934-35, and José María Cano in 1935-1936), and they frequently occupied other posts on its central executive committee. There does not appear to have been an identifiable "teachers bloc" in the confederation's assemblies - this would hardly have been desirable in any case - but most of them took a radical line on most issues (this may have been partly because those teachers who held more conservative views did not militate within the Confederation, but the fact remains that as a body they were to the left of other sectors).

This rôle of the teachers is recognized by José Padilla Gallo in his brief history of the Confederation.⁽²⁾ He specifically singles out the three teachers on the 1934-35 committee as being its most active and zealous members :-

"..... The dynamism of comrades Miranda, Cano and Mígica Martínez, has caused the bourgeoisie to abandon much of the territory it had conquered during the Government of General Don Benigno Serrato."

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- (1) Interviews with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi and Prof. María Piedad Flores Castillo in Morelia (8, 9 & 10 July 1968) and with local inhabitants in Villa Escalante (12 Aug. 1968).
- (2) Padilla Gallo, op.cit., pp. 88-89.

Certainly these three were among the most able and militant members of the Confederation. Miranda and Cano, together with Antonio Mayas Navarro and another teacher, Martin S. Mercado, had proposed a very radical educational resolution in the organization's fifth congress in January 1934, including the following objectives:-⁽¹⁾

- I. That Public Education should be the unique and exclusive function of the State, controlled in its totality by the Nation...
- II. That the National Educational System should unify its doctrine, methods of work, and internal organization of the schools around the materialist conception of History.....
- IV. That educational institutions of a private character should disappear.
- V. We also maintain as a principal objective that there should be an energetic and effective selection of the country's teaching personnel, eliminating the enemies of the Revolution....."

This leaves no doubt as to the spread of socialist views among the teachers, and since the motion was passed such views were evidently dominant in the Confederation by this time, largely as a result of their influence.

II. Educational Policy, 1932-1935

The great impulse given to education during Cardenas' Governorship was not completely interrupted by the change of policy and the political conflict precipitated by Serrato, since for all his faults Serrato did retain some of the functionaries of the previous administration, including the capable and progressive Jesus Romero Flores as Director of State Education (Romero Flores had occupied this post on various occasions since 1916, being re-appointed to it by Cardenas in May 1930).⁽²⁾ Moreover the growing federal sector of education was continuing to expand and was in fact undergoing a radical reappraisal at this time, with the socialist Narciso Bassols as Minister of Education. In 1931 several areas of Michoacan benefited again from a tour by one of the federal Cultural Missions,⁽³⁾ and better-trained rural teachers were now beginning to graduate from the new Rural Normal School established by the Federal

(1) "El Maestro Rural", vol.4, no.2, pp.5-6 (15 Jan.1934).
 (2) Romero Flores, "Historia de la Educacion...", pp.67-70.
 (3) "Numeris", 1932, vol.1, p.201.

Government in 1929 at Erongaricaro in the heart of the Tarascan Indian zone. (1)

The State was also the scene at this time of the special research station at Carapan, led by Moises Saens, designed to investigate the problems faced by the rural school as an agent of social development; and if the results of this were discouraging, they did provide a basis for new and more appropriate policies. (2) In September and October 1932 Bassols himself toured Michoacan and visited Carapan, (3) and despite the differences between him and Saens there is good reason to believe that he appreciated its implications better than Saens; certainly the need for greater stress on the social function of the school was recognized in his reforms, and the futility of the school's revolutionary programme if unsupported by other agencies of the Government was recognized and partially resolved by the radical policies of Cardenas' Presidency, policies from which Michoacan had already benefited to some extent when Don Lazaro was Governor.

The need for this approach was stressed by the teacher Prospero I. Hernandez of Morelia, writing in the magazine "El Maestro Rural": (4)

"For the school to resolve the problems with which it is presented, it needs the help of other Ministries (Agriculture, Industry, Communications, the Department of Public Health and even War)... it would be needed in the case of: grants of land to the peasants; construction of canals, artesian wells, dams (irrigation in general); health; an agricultural Bank; improvement of cultivation; agricultural machinery; etc., etc."

One of the first fruits of Bassols' reforms was the creation of the "Escuelas Regionales Campesinas" (E.R.C.'s) and one of the first of these to be established was at La Huerta, near Morelia (by the fusion of the Rural Normal School of Erongaricaro with an existing Agricultural School; (5) it soon became a centre for the diffusion of socialist ideas. The new institution soon developed links with the surrounding communities, and first reports of its work were very favourable. (6)

(1) *Ibid.*, pp.161-200.

(2) See Moises Saens, "Carapan: Bosquejo de una Experiencia" (Lima, Peru, 1936, Libreria e Imprenta Gil, S.A.), *passim*.

(3) "Memoria", 1933, vol.1, pp.33-34.

(4) "El Maestro Rural", vol.1, no.13, pp.20-22 (1 Sept.1932).

(5) "Memoria", 1933, vol.1, p.94.

(6) "El Maestro Rural", vol.1, no.11, p.11 (1st March 1933).

By the end of 1934 there were in Michoacan 385 federal schools with 590 teachers, and a similar number maintained by the State Government, plus a number maintained by the "hacendados" in accordance with Article 123 of the Constitution; ⁽¹⁾ education of some kind was reaching perhaps half of the school-age population, but the provision was still quite inadequate. At this time the decision was taken to unite the two sectors of education (Federal and State-maintained), bringing them both under Federal control. ⁽²⁾ The prospect for educational development seemed good in 1935 when Diego Hernandez Topete, with his record as a progressive and a leader of the C.R.M.D.T., took over as Director of Education. ⁽³⁾

12. The Political Movement in the "Normal" and the University

Despite the existence of the Rural Normal Schools, the "Escuela Normal Urbana" of Morelia continued to provide Michoacan with its ablest teachers, if not those best prepared for work in the rural areas. Because of its central position and its more sophisticated training, it tended to provide the teaching profession with most of its leaders; nearly all the teachers prominent in their own unions and in the C.R.M.D.T. were products of Morelia. It is therefore interesting to note that the "Normal" was one of the first institutions in the State to be penetrated by socialist ideology.

In 1930 the "Normal" underwent important administrative changes, passing from the control of the University of Michoacan to that of the State Government, and becoming co-educational. It was also in that year that it experienced the beginnings of political struggle, and in 1931 student unrest culminated in what has been described as the "Revolucion Normalista". Raul Arreola Cortes, in his notes on the School's history, categorizes this movement as "a purge

vol.3, no.6, p.95 (19th Aug.1933); and vol.4, no.4, pp.10-12 (19th Feb.1934).

(1) Mexico Gallegos Orense, "Historia Historica del Movimiento Educativo en Michoacan (Morelia, 1950, Escuela Normal Urbana Federal), p.29.

(2) Ramiro Flores, "Historia de la Educacion...", p.71.

(3) *Ibid.*, p.73.

promoted by the students within their own ranks and among the staff of the School", in order to exclude all those who did not have an "advanced ideology".⁽¹⁾ A committee led by Enrique Castillo Janasca, Maria Dolores Nunes and Marnel Zavala Barron expelled over half the students and many of the teachers, who promptly went to the local Seminary and founded an independent, conservative "Normal".

During the next two years the School, with the epithet "Socialist" appended to its name, experienced severe financial difficulties, but in 1933 the expelled faction returned and the problems ceased. The conflict revived in April 1934 when left-wing students founded the "Eduardo Ruiz" group, which became a focus of political activity "characterized by its seriousness in the study of the various problems affecting not only the Normal School but the Education of the country (as a whole)".⁽²⁾ This group, led by Jesus Castillo Janasca, Luis Sepulveda Vasquez and Juan Tavera Castro, revived the ideas of 1931 but in a more sophisticated and less demagogic form, contributing towards the emergence of a concept of "socialist education" at the national level.

The ferment of 1934 was shared by the students of the University, and it achieved an early victory, leading to the installation of Dr. Enrique Arreguin as Rector and Prof. Emiliano Perez Rosas as Director of the "Normal".⁽³⁾ Perez Rosas brought about a significant change, not only in the School but in its relations with the teaching profession in general. He encouraged the students themselves to participate in the union activities of the teachers in the State, and in fact contributed directly towards the reconciliation of the rival factions in the profession within a "United Front" to campaign for a minimum salary of 4 pesos a day in 1935. As we shall see, this led to the first ever teachers' strike in Michoacan, during which Perez Rosas led the strike committee.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Arreola Cortes, op.cit., pp.21-22.

(2) Ibid., p.24.

(3) Romero Flores, "Historia de la Educacion..", pp.81-82.

(4) Arreola Cortes, op.cit., pp.25-26; Villasenor, op.cit., pp.15-16.

13. Increasing Radicalism among the Teachers, 1935.

The revolutionary mood of the students in the "Normal" appears to have acted as a catalyst for the activities of the left-wing in the teaching profession. The "Eloque de Maestros Socialistas de Michoacan", which had been severely restricted under Serrato, was revived as his power was undermined during 1934, and was again a significant force by the time of his death in December; it had the backing of the leaders of the C.R.M.D.T. and of Perez Rosas.⁽¹⁾ The leaders of the B.M.S.M., encouraged by the example of the "Normal", wanted to carry out a purge of the teaching profession in order to exclude the right wing; pressure for such a measure was mounting at national level, and towards the end of 1934 it began to be implemented in many States. In Michoacan a "Comision Depuradora" was created under the domination of the B.M.S.M. leadership (Emiliano Perez Rosas, Ignacio Magana, Joaquin Barrera Bravo, Maria Dolores Nunez and others), and all teachers had to satisfy its members of their ideological reliability.

Harsh as this measure may seem to outsiders, it was a logical corollary of the decision to adopt "Socialist Education"; but its implementation was not a success. The test applied seems to have been simple but crude, and created a lot of antagonism; even among those who supported the purge many admit today that it was administered without feeling or imagination. Enrique Villaseñor, who opposed it, estimates that at least 130 teachers, Catholics or Serrato supporters, were excluded, although others say the figure was smaller. Some of them left the profession, others joined private schools or went to Mexico City to work. But the effects of the purge were short-lived, since the State Government and the educational authorities, who had been neutral at first, turned against it; and within six months many of the excluded teachers had returned.⁽²⁾

(1) Interview with Prof. Enrique Villaseñor in Morelia, 12 Aug. 1968.

(2) *Ibid.*; Villaseñor, *op.cit.*, pp. 12-13; and interviews with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi in Morelia (9 & 10 July and 24 Aug. 1968) and with Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete in Mexico City (9 Aug. 1969).

The most resolute opponents of the purge were naturally those who had least sympathy with the revolutionary aims of the new union leaders, and the conflict also found expression in union rivalry. Many of those excluded were ex-leaders of the U.M.M. or of the "Federacion Michoacana de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza", generally conservatives and "serrattistas". But some of them were not purged, and attempted a come-back at a teachers' assembly in Morelia on 16th February 1935; the meeting broke up in disorder and was reconvened a week later, when the opposition leaders were expelled and proceeded to form their own union, the "Bloque de Izquierdas del Magisterio Michoacano" led by Enrique Villaseñor, Miguel Barriga Rosas and Ramon Andrade Carmona. The "Bloque de Izquierdas" claimed a majority of the teachers in Morelia, but had little support in the rest of the State; many of its members were Catholic women, and its opponents claimed with some justice that to call it "leftist" was an abuse of language. (1)

The "Bloque de Izquierdas" was saved from insignificance by affiliating to the nation-wide C.M.M., which was being encouraged by the educational authorities, particularly Diego Hernandez Topete who as Director of Education had lost some of his enthusiasm for the C.R.M.D.T. By this means the "Bloque" soon won the nominal support of a majority of teachers in the State, but still could not overcome the powerful radical group who remained faithful to the C.R.M.D.T. The split reflected the national situation, for the left-wing teachers now affiliated to the "Confederacion Nacional de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza" (C.N.T.E.) which opposed the moderate C.M.M. throughout the country. The radicals were now led in Michoacan by Francisco Fabian Rosales, Jesus Alvarez Constantino, Elias Miranda, Jose Maria Cano, Claudio Rodriguez and Jose Estrada Sayago - all of them ardent "cardenistas", some old followers of Magia, and many now members of the Communist Party. (2)

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- (1) Villaseñor, op.cit., pp.13-14; interviews with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi in Morelia (24 Aug. 1968), and with Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete (9 Aug. 1969) and Prof. Ramon Lopez Zamano (16 Aug. 1969) in Mexico City.
- (2) Villaseñor, op.cit., p.14; interviews in Morelia with Villaseñor (12 Aug. 1968) and with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi (24 Aug. 1968).

The temporary reconciliation of the two factions was brought about by the efforts of Enrique Pérez Rosas and others, leading to the formation in August 1936 of the "Frente Único Magisterial Michoacano Pro-Salario Mínimo de Enrique Pérez" to struggle for an adequate minimum wage. This United Front did not end the independence of the rival unions, and was led by an ad hoc committee with José Ayala Becerra and Fabian Escalero for the radicals and Alfredo García for the moderates. (1) Because of the intransigence of the new provisional Government, Rafael Ordóñez Villaseñor (who had just replaced Santiago Tapia), the movement led to a strike beginning on 15 th September. The leaders had made great efforts to ensure unity, sending special delegates to many parts of the State, and receiving gestures of solidarity from the local Committees for Proletarian Defense, the "Heraldo" and the University. In the event the strike was solid in Morelia, Zamora and other towns, but not in more remote areas; the strikers held out for nearly a month but then Ordóñez brought in non-union teachers and broke the resistance of the militants with federal troops. (2) A small pay increase was obtained, but basically the strike was a failure. Many of the leaders were dismissed by the State Government, including even the moderate Villaseñor; Pérez Rosas had to leave the State in January 1936.

The experience of the strike and its suppression must have helped to radicalise many teachers, and it undoubtedly contributed to the disintegration of the so-called "Bloque de Izquierdas". Despite his victimisation, Villaseñor tried to rally the group and in January 1936 it tried to form a wider association, the "Alianza de Maestros Michoacanos" (A.M.M.), also affiliated to the C.M.M., and with Luis Zamudio as Secretary General; but within a few days Zamudio left for Mexico City, and in his absence the organization collapsed, exposing its underlying weakness. (3) The "Bloque de Izquierdas" continued to exist, but was very weak.

(1) Villaseñor, op.cit., pp.15-16.

(2) Arceola Cortes, op.cit., p.27; "El Heraldo", 14 Sep. and 12 Oct.1936; interviews with Prof. Enrique Villaseñor (12 Aug.1968) and Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi (20 Aug.1968) in Morelia, and with Prof. Hugo Murochano Tapete (9 Aug.1968) in Mexico City.

(3) Villaseñor, op.cit., p.17; and interview with Villaseñor in Morelia (12 Aug.1968).

The victory of the Left was in fact confirmed shortly before this, in December 1935, when the C.R.M.D.T. organized the "First Congress of Socialist Education" in Morelia. The Congress, beginning on 15th December, was attended by the majority of teachers in the State, who now joined the "Federacion Sindical Michoacana de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza" (F.S.M.T.E.), adhering to the C.W.T.E. and led by Fabian Rosales, Jesus Alvarez Constantino, Claudio Rodriguez, Salvador Lopez Barragan and Jose Estrada Sayago. (1) Rosales was an old militant who had joined the Communist Party, and indeed the new organisation was dominated by the Communists - the first time they had achieved such a strong position in Michoacan. (2)

The spirit of the Congress is apparent from some of the topics dealt with: "The Class Struggle", expounded by Perez Rosas, and "How to redeem the labouring masses and how they are treated in the present capitalist regime" by Alvarez Constantino. The assembly was inaugurated by the teacher Jose Maria Cano in his capacity as Secretary General of the C.R.M.D.T., and others who played a leading part were Jesus Magica Martinez, Daniel Mora Ramos and Antonio Dias - all left-wing militants. It was agreed that the teachers should "struggle for the betterment of the working classes and act as directors and advisors of the workers in order to resolve all the problems which affect them". (3)

The expulsion of Perez Rosas from the State marked the beginning of a difficult phase for the "Normal" of Morelia. Out of favour with the State Government and short of funds, the School stagnated. In the summer of 1936 a new Director, Julio Mejia, inspired the students to demonstrate their discontent by marching the 200 miles to Mexico City in order to see Cardenas and request his aid. (4)

(1) Villaseñor, op.cit., pp.16-17.

(2) Interview in Mexico City with Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete, 9 Aug. 1969.

(3) "El Nacional", 21 Dec. 1935.

(4) Arceola Cortes, op.cit., p.29.

This march, from 1st to 7th August 1936, was successful in that Cardenas made a special grant to help the School and provided for the appointment of several new lecturers. But within two years the federal aid had run out and the situation was as bad as before. Mejia had now been succeeded as Director by Leobardo Coja Torres, a local man who had graduated from the "Normal" only nine years previously and had made a highly successful career as a rural teacher, inspector and cultural missionary. (1) In August 1939 Coja Torres led another march to Mexico City to request the federalisation of the School; Cardenas said this was impossible for economic reasons, but did grant more federal aid. The financial situation remained difficult and was complicated by staff problems; the School had three Directors in the space of a year. But the last of these, Miguel Arroyo de la Parra, was a very capable left-wing lawyer who had begun his career as a teacher in Michoacan, and he now brought with him a dynamic group of intellectuals from Mexico City. (2) The "Normal" thus remained throughout a centre of socialist agitation and ferment.

14. "Socialist Education" in Michoacan, 1934-1940

Following the introduction of the "socialist reform" of 1934, efforts were made to diffuse the new ideology through the educational system, but as has been shown, (3) methods of work remained much the same, and the old institutions were used to propagate the new orientation, not always very efficiently. Circulars from the Ministry of Education, journals like "El Maestro Rural", radio broadcasts and occasional courses or conferences for inspectors and senior personnel - these were the channels by which "Socialist Education" was introduced. There was certainly no dramatic change at grassroots level, except for the rather unsuccessful purge of 1934-1935.

(1) Interview with Prof. Leobardo Coja Torres in Jiquilpan, Michoacan, 2 Aug. 1968; and Arreola Cortes, *op.cit.*, p. 30.

(2) Arreola Cortes, *op.cit.*, pp. 30-32.

(3) Above, pp.

Michoacan was no exception in this respect: official activities concerned basically with ideology or re-education were few. The federal Cultural Missions, one of the most effective instruments of orientation, visited the State again in 1936 (Ario, Villa Victoria, Aguililla, Paracuaro and Tzacambaro)⁽¹⁾ and in 1937 (Uruapan);⁽²⁾ and in 1939 a "Brigada de Penetracion Indigena" was established in Zitacuaro.⁽³⁾ The "Instituto de Orientacion Socialista" held a course in Morelia in 1936 for supervisory staff,⁽⁴⁾ and in May of that year a special course of "Orientation and Social-Pedagogical Training" was held in Patzcuaro for inspectors and Directors of Education from Michoacan and neighbouring States.⁽⁵⁾ Undoubtedly these courses did help to spread the new ideas, but their effectiveness is difficult to judge: it is only possible to examine the work of the more active teachers in their localities.

The number of schools continued to grow (federal rural schools in the State rose from 385 in 1934 to 535 in 1938),⁽⁶⁾ and in many cases their orientation had become more radical. In 1938 the remote Huastamo district was the scene of much agitation led by socialist teachers. On 29th May a mass meeting was held in the town in order to explain to the people "the ridiculous situation created by the 'FASCIST' Saturnino Cedillo". The meeting was reportedly organised by "The regional Workers' Federation, representatives of the ... teachers' union, the town council and other popular sectors"; but all those reported as speaking were teachers: Jose Delgado Madrigal, on behalf of the Workers' Federation and the town council; David Vivero and Ubaldo Baltazar for the teachers' union; and Ruben Cornejo and Maria Ascension Jacobs for the "Escuela Regional Campesina".⁽⁷⁾ On July 14th there was a demonstration in

(1) "Memoria", 1936, pp. 21-25.

(2) Ibid., 1938, vol. 1, p. 177.

(3) Ibid., 1939, vol. 2, p. 31.

(4) Ibid., 1936, p. 225.

(5) "El Maestro Rural", vol. 9, no. 1, p. 27 (1 July 1936).

(6) "Memoria", 1939, vol. 2, p. 67.

(7) "El Machete", 1 June, 1938.

honour of the "Día de la Democracia", organized by the teachers, the E.R.C. and the municipal and military authorities; José Delgado Madrigal again addressed the participants, together with another teacher, Francisco Huerta, a student and a lawyer. A few days later the ever-active Delgado Madrigal spoke at a "festival" in the local gaol, in order to "reorientate" the inmates. (1) But on July 20th one of the most active teachers in the area, José de la Fuente, was murdered, apparently by agents of the "hacendados". (2)

Undeterred, the socialists of Huatamo - who were clearly led by the rural teachers and the members of the E.R.C. - organized on August 1st a rally to condemn "the criminal work of fascist elements in our country", including also against the Japanese aggression in China, the Spanish falangists, Trotsky and the mercenary press of Mexico. The rally heard speeches by Rubén Cornejo, Concepción Flores and Macario García (all of the E.R.C.), the teacher Francisco Huerta, and a representative of the peasant leagues. (3) They continued to face hostility from vested interests, for on 19th August two local conservatives, Francisco Sierra and Lic. Nicolás Rodríguez, led a procession of 500 inhabitants to demand the re-opening of the local church; it was said that these men were responsible for the murder of De la Fuente, and that they had also attacked the E.R.C. (4) The latter institution appears to have had a key role in local political activities, and under the lead of its Director Carlos Hallsterg, contributed greatly to the development of both popular education and socialist politics in the area. (5)

The E.R.C. of La Huerta, near Morelia, was just as active as its counterpart in Huatamo in organizing the peasants of the surrounding communities, helping to improve agricultural methods and at the same time diffusing social-

(1) *Ibid.*, 22 July, 1938.

(2) *Ibid.*, 21 July 1938.

(3) *Ibid.*, 6 Aug. 1938.

(4) *Ibid.*, 1 Sept. 1938.

(5) "La Voz de México", 5 Oct. 1938.

ism; in 1938 the School organized two agricultural competitions, and the guest of honour at the prize giving was Hernan Laborde, General Secretary of the Communist Party.⁽¹⁾ Another notable centre of left-wing activities was the special "Españo-Mexico" school for Spanish refugee children in Morelia, although its tone was changed in February 1940 when the Director, Roberto Reyes Perea (widely regarded as an opportunist and careerist) dismissed 25 members of the staff, apparently for their political beliefs.⁽²⁾ These examples could be multiplied from the work of the individual rural schools all over the State; one of the more interesting cases was the painting of a mural with a revolutionary theme in the school of Villa Jimenez, by the teacher Luis Martinez Gallegos⁽³⁾ (unfortunately this was an isolated case and the Michoacan rural renaissance did not strike truly popular roots).

In practice the meaning of "Socialist Education" depended largely on the interpretation given to it by individual teachers, since the orientation provided by the authorities was sporadic and often impracticable. While official directives did encourage the teachers to organize the peasants, to improve agricultural methods, to fight alcoholism and so on, those who were particularly zealous in this work could not rely on official protection if attacked by local conservatives, as has been amply demonstrated. Much depended on the inspectors, and while some were militant leftists, others were moderate or even conservative bureaucrats who might actively discriminate against those teachers who took part in any kind of social agitation.

A case in point is that of Policarpo T. Sanchez; before he was appointed to the Patzcuaro zone in 1934, it was the scene of some of the most radical activities in the State,⁽⁴⁾ but he did everything in his power to dampen such

(1) *Ibid.*, 10 June 1939.

(2) *Ibid.*, 11 Feb. 1940.

(3) *Ibid.*, 6 April 1939.

(4) See above, pp.

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(1) Ibid., 10 June 1939.

(2) Ibid., 11 Feb. 1940.

(3) Ibid., 6 April 1939.

(4) See above, pp.

enthusiasm. Although he was prevented from dismissing such militants as Jose Corona Nunes and Hilario Reyes Garibaldi,⁽¹⁾ he was allowed to continue abusing his authority until 1940. In that year the Patzcuaro branch of the teachers' union wrote to General Mugica accusing Sanchez of unjustly dismissing three teachers, of leaving six rural schools unattended, and generally treating his subordinates, "not as an inspector but as an overseer".⁽²⁾ Mugica passed the complaint on to Cardenas, and at long last Sanchez was removed from his post; but during the six years he was in charge, any socialist flavour imparted to the schools of Patzcuaro was introduced in spite of him. And this was not an isolated case, although Sanchez was certainly worse than most. While some inspectors were more radical than their subordinates, many were less so, and if education in Michoacan was in any way socialist in practice, this was due in large measure to the participation of the teachers in the Communist Party and other left-wing groups, rather than to official policy.

15. The Governorship of Otilberto Magana, 1936-1939; the decline of the C.R.M.D.T.

Sanchez Tapia and Ordorica served as provisional Governors during the remainder of Serrato's period from December 1934 to September 1936, but most political activity, particularly during Ordorica's administration, was concerned with the occupancy of the Governor's chair during the next four-year period. With the conservative forces in the State subdued by the fall of Serrato and the strength of the C.R.M.D.T., the latter appeared to have the Governorship

(1) See above, pp.

(2) Mugica archive, file "Asuntos de Michoacan, 1940"; Memorandum no.173 de la Delegacion no.2 de la Seccion XVI del S.T.E.R.M. en Patzcuaro; followed by a letter from Mugica to Cardenas, 14 April 1940. The memorandum is signed by the executive committee of the union branch, teachers Rafael Cortes Lopez, Francisco Contreras Blanco, Hector Alvarez Cano, Maria Ocampo de Rios and Carmen Salas Leon. They also complain against the work of Diego Hernandez Topete as Director of Education in the State, but this complaint was not followed up.

virtually within its gift, always assuming the neutrality of Cardenas. Unfortunately the Confederation's first choice was Cardenas' brother, Don Damaso, and not long before the elections the President made it clear that this was one candidacy he would never accept, lest it should give rise to suspicions of nepotism. As a substitute the Confederation picked on Gildardo Magana, the General who had been one of Zapata's lieutenants and had become Commander of the Liberating Army of the South after the assassination of its great hero. Magana was little known in Michoacan, although he had been born there and had recently returned as military commander of the region; he was chosen on the strength of his reputation as a "zapatista". (1)

Magana thus owed his rise to power directly to the Confederation, quite unlike Serrato who had been imposed upon it by the will of Calles. But having no experience of the politics of Michoacan, he was not closely identified with the organization, although it was assumed that their ideological position was similar. It soon became apparent that Magana had changed considerably since his "zapatista" days, and while not completely reactionary, he was far from enthusiastic for large-scale expropriations and other radical measures. A clash was thus inevitable, and was hastened by Magana's personal political ambitions. As they could not work together in harmony, then either the Confederation must become the tool of Magana, or he must become the puppet of the Confederation. (2)

The conflict began to come into the open as early as December 1936, when the Confederation held its seventh congress in Morelia. The congress had been postponed for several months owing to the political situation, and Antonio Mayes Navarro, the ex-student of the "Normal" who had been one of the Con-

(1) Bravo Ugarte, *op.cit.*, pp. 228 & 254-255; interviews with Senor Antonio Mayes Navarro (21 Aug. 1969) in Celaya and Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete (9 Aug. 1969) in Mexico City.

(2) Interviews with Senor Antonio Mayes Navarro in Celaya, Gt. (21 Aug. 1969) and with Prof. Hilario Mayes Ursibaldi in Morelia (24 Aug. 1968).

federation's leading members since its foundation, had serious political and personal differences with Magana. Mayes now possessed considerable power; elected federal deputy in 1934, he helped found the Left-Wing Bloc of the Chamber of Deputies, of which he was President, and was also agrarian secretary of the National Executive Committee of the P.N.R.(1) In the latter capacity he arranged for all the peasants' complaints and requests to be dealt with in the P.N.R. office in Morelia for the duration of the congress, which was attended by over 4,000 delegates. (2)

The congress was formally opened on 15th December by Magana, who received the ovation expected on such occasions; but the man elected to preside the next session was Mayes. The presence of numerous national politicians and of fraternal delegations from many other organisations testified to the importance of the occasion; and it is interesting to note that among the fraternal delegations was that of the Communist Party, "whose mission", according to the P.N.R. organ "El Nacional", "is to co-operate so that the unification and harmony of the workers may be the principal result of the Congress". (3) The topics covered during the next two days included "the role of youth in the class struggle", "aims, characteristics and means of realisation of Socialist Education", the problems of evening classes in rural schools, the need for reforms of the agrarian laws, and methods of agrarian organisation. Among those to address the delegates were the ever-militant "cuca" Garcia, on behalf of the League for Women's Rights; a representative of the Red Militias of Spain; Miguel Velasco for the Communist Party; and for the Communist Youth Federation, Jose Revueltas (a leading leftist intellectual of future years). Although the outgoing Secretary General of the Confederation, Jose Maria Cano,

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- (1) Agustin V. Camacho, "Historia Grafica de la Revolucion Mexicana" (Mexico,)pp. and interview with Senor Antonio Mayes Navarro in Celaya, Gto., on 21st.Aug.1969.
 (2) "El Nacional", 16 Dec.1936.
 (3) Ibid.

was unable to attend through ill-health, many other teachers were prominent in the assembly's proceedings. Elias Miranda, Daniel Mora Ramos, "Cuea" Garcia, Jesus Mugica Martinez, Jose Estrada Spyago, Jesus Alvarez Constantino, Leonardo Ceja Torres and others served on the presiding committee or in other capacities. (1)

The first two days of the Congress passed without incident, but the latent divisions came to the surface on the third day, when "certain minor disagreements" were reported among the leaders as to the future operation of the Confederation. Significantly, Magana immediately intervened "to invite all the workers to deliberate with greater calmness and urgence". (2) He was followed by similar appeals from other leaders, notably Jesus Risco and "Cuea" Garcia. The final session was tense but a split was avoided, and the peasant leader Jose Garibay Romero was elected as Secretary General, with a committee again dominated by the Left. Most delegates still identified Magana with their own interests, and he was careful not to arouse their antagonism at this stage.

In many ways the Confederation had never been stronger. Its domination of politics in the State is indicated by the fact that of the twelve federal deputies for Michoacan in the 36th Legislature (1934-1937), ten were members of the Confederation, including Mayas, Luis Mora Tovar and Jose Solorzano. (3) It was also improving its grass-roots organization: an important aspect of this was the impulse given to its youth organization, the "Bloque de Jóvenes Socialistas de Michoacan" (B.J.S.M.), founded in 1935. This body had hitherto been very small and largely confined to students in Morelia, but in the seventh

(1) *Ibid.*, 16th and 17th Dec. 1936.

(2) *Ibid.*, 18 Dec. 1936.

(3) Camacho, *op. cit.*, pp. ; and interview with Senor Antonio Mayas Navarro in Colima, Oco., 21 Aug. 1969.

congress it was decided to make a special effort to recruit and organize workers and peasants, and it was pointed out that the C.R.M.D.T. was actually the first organization of its kind in the country to attempt this. (1) As was to be expected, there was a serious gap between the intention and the reality, but the E.J.S.M. did come to represent an active minority of young workers, and again such strength as it had was created largely by the efforts of the teachers. (2)

Also at this time, the Confederation tried to co-ordinate the activities of the various left-wing journals and broadsheets published by its constituent groups or fraternal organizations, by forming a "Bloque Revolucionario de la Prensa Michoacana". This "Bloque" laid down a common programme for its members - journals with evocative names like "Clase", "Frente Unido", "El Socialista", "El Proletario" and "Octubre". (3)

Magana, who already harboured Presidential ambitions, wanted to use the Confederation as a power-base for his future campaign, but it soon became clear that he would be unable to win control of it (in the seventh congress he had done no more than mediate in its internal conflicts). In view of this he undoubtedly hoped to weaken its hold on politics in the State, beginning by getting some of his own supporters elected to represent Michoacan, in the 37th Federal Congress. In this he failed completely, for after the elections of July 1937 all twelve federal deputies for Michoacan, and both senators (Ernesto Soto Reyes and Luis Mora Tovar) were longstanding members of the Confederation. (The deputies included two teachers, Elias Miranda, and Jose Maria Cano.) (4)

The situation was to change in part because of external factors. Cardenas' desire to achieve national unity of all mass organizations, with

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- (1) "El Nacional", 3 Jan. 1937.
 (2) Interviews in Mexico City with Prof. Raul Arriola Cortes (23 Aug. 1969) and Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete (9 Aug. 1969).
 (3) "El Nacional", 15 Dec. 1936.
 (4) Casanola, op. cit., pp. : interview with Senor Antonio Hayes Navarro in Coahuila, Oto. (21 Aug. 1969)

the peasantry in the C.N.C. and the urban workers in the C.T.M., implied the end of the C.R.M.D.T. in its existing form. It was not merely that the C.R.M.D.T. would have to affiliate to a national organisation - this would not have affected its internal functioning - but that it could no longer continue to embrace both rural and urban workers. Since Michoacan was an overwhelmingly rural State, the majority of the Confederation now became a "Liga de Comunidades Agrarias" under the aegis of the C.N.C. But a significant minority did join the C.T.M., since the definition of "urban workers" was interpreted very loosely; and as for the teachers, they were not sure where to go. The Governor was able to take advantage of this confusion, and soon both the C.N.C. and the C.T.M. in Michoacan were divided into pro- and anti-Magana wings. He won over some of the old leaders, notably Pablo Rangel Reyes, a local deputy and peasant leader from the Zacapu area, who in 1938 was elected Secretary General of the majority sector of the "Liga de Comunidades Agrarias". (1)

The familiar situation of political division and intrigue continued among the constituent groups that had previously formed the C.R.M.D.T., until the death of Magana in 1940. As the Presidential campaign developed, the dissident left-wing groups, including many of the teachers and of the best militants of the old Confederation, complained increasingly of persecution by the State Government, as in Serrato's time (although the position was never as bad as under Serrato). (2) The general opinion on the Left was that Magana, "in spite of his 'anastista' origins....., betrayed the support he had been given by the C.R.M.D.T., and became an ally of the landowners and so-called small proprietors of the State". (3)

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- (1) Bravo Ugarte, op.cit., p.228; interviews with Prof. Raul Arreola Cortes in Mexico City (23 Aug.1969) and with Senor Antonio Mayes Navarro in Celaya, Qto. (21 Aug.1969).
 (2) "La Voz de Mexico", 24, 28 & 31 Mar., 2 & 23 April & 3 May 1939.
 (3) Interview with Prof. Raul Arreola Cortes in Mexico City (23 Aug.1969). This opinion was shared by other interviewees.

16. The Division of the Teachers into Communist and Non-Communist Factions.
1936-1939

We have seen that the year of 1936 opened with a majority of the teachers united in the militant left-wing "Federacion Sindical Michoacana de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza", adhering to the C.R.M.D.T. and the C.N.T.E. As always, this unity was subject to developments in the general political situation of the State, and the right-wing teachers, although defeated, had not disappeared and were awaiting a more favourable political climate.

Such a change in climate was not long in coming. The interim Governor Ordorica had been less than astute in his treatment of the teachers' strike the previous year, suppressing the moderate leaders along with the radicals. He was in a difficult position, faced with the hostility of the State Congress and of the C.R.M.D.T. But he soon began to court the moderate teachers' leaders, and had some success since the C.M.M., which was quite strong at the national level, was still being encouraged by the Director of Education, Diego Hernandez Topoto (who was to hold this post until 1942). The situation was complex since although the F.S.M.T.E. was much stronger than the so-called "Bloque de Izquierdas", the latter was affiliated to the C.M.M., which had official backing and was just as strong as the C.N.T.E. nationally. Moreover, the split reflected the somewhat artificial controversy over whether the teachers should militate with the workers in the C.T.M. (this was the C.N.T.E. line) or ally with the peasants in the C.N.C. (as advocated by the C.M.M.).⁽¹⁾

The situation in Michoacan was one of deadlock, with a majority of teachers in the F.S.M.T.E. and the C.R.M.D.T. facing a minority supported by the educational authorities and the State Government. In March 1936 Cardenas intervened during a visit to Michoacan, throwing his weight on the side of the

(1) Villanor, op.cit., pp.17 & 19; interview in Mexico City with Prof. Diego Hernandez Topoto (9 Aug. 1969).

C.M.M. which he described as "a revolutionary organization friendly to the Government".⁽¹⁾ Cardenas took this line because he saw in the C.M.M. a relatively progressive grouping with a large national following which might provide the basis for the national unification of the teachers; but in Michoacan the immediate effect of his intervention was to increase tension. A few days later the F.S.M.T.E. issued a strong statement claiming that it was being victimized by the authorities:-

"The two sides were clearly divided: on one side, there remained the teachers identified with the organized masses of the C.R.M.D.T. and belonging to the "Confederacion de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza", a section of the "Confederacion de Trabajadores de Mexico"; on the other side there were the teachers faithful to the inspectors of schools and to the Director of Education, forming an organization which they call the C.M.M." ⁽²⁾

The F.S.M.T.E. also expressed a desire for unity, but its position was obviously fairly hostile to the C.M.M. It should be stressed that the division had a deep ideological basis, and was not merely concerned with personal rivalries or academic disputes about whether rural teachers had more in common with peasants or workers. It has been shown that growing numbers of teachers in Michoacan (as indeed throughout Mexico) were joining the Communist Party in these years, and that Communists were very influential in the C.R.M.D.T. The F.S.M.T.E., which certainly controlled a majority of organized teachers in the State (and probably a majority of the absolute total), was largely pro-Communist. Diego Hernandez Topete⁽³⁾ estimates that some 250 of the 2,000 teachers in the State at this time were members of the Communist Party; some would put the figure higher,⁽⁴⁾ but at all events if 250 were cash-carrying members, several hundred more were sympathetic.

This judgment is borne out by other evidence: even some of the moderate teachers, who today are far from revolutionary, admit to having joined the

(1) Villaseca, op.cit., p.18.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Interview with Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete in Mexico City (9 Aug.1969).

(4) Interview with Senor Felix Chanery in Nueva Italia (16 Aug.1968).

Communist Party for a short period, precisely at this time (1935-1939) when its prestige was greatest owing to the far-reaching reforms of the Cardenas Government and the appeal of the Popular Front policy.⁽¹⁾ Leading teachers who were in the Communist Party for some years included "Caca" Garcia (a lifelong member who in 1937 made a vain stand as the Party's candidate for federal deputy in Orizaba),⁽²⁾ Miguel Arroyo de la Parra (who was a teacher for a few years before becoming a lawyer and then Director of the "Normal"), Fabian Rosales, Felipe Torres, Daniel Mora Ramos, Jose Corona Nunez, Jesus Alvarez Constantino, Jesus Nuncio Martinez, Raul de la Fuente Diaz, Jose Retraca Sayago, Hilario Reyes Garibaldi and Elias Miranda.⁽³⁾ The Communists were opposed to the State Governments at all times on principle, while applauding any measures they regarded as progressive; they also maintained a critical attitude towards the C.R.M.D.T., which they accused of being opportunist and pro-government (but during the Popular Front period they kept their criticisms to a minimum).

The conflict among the teachers came to a head in August 1936, when those belonging to the C.R.M. organized, with the backing of the authorities, a convention in Morelia in order to revive the defunct A.M.M. The convention was arranged for the 7th and 8th August, but the F.S.M.T.F. tried to impede the preparations for it and disrupted the opening session with militant groups of workers, teachers and students, on the grounds that it was an undemocratic gathering purporting to represent the majority of teachers when in fact it represented only the will of the authorities. This action was successful in

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- (1) A case in point is Prof. Ramon Lopez Zermeno, who militated in the "Bloque de Izquierdas" and the C.R.M., yet was in the Communist Party for about 6 months in 1936 (interview in Mexico City, 16 Aug. 1969).
- (2) "El Machete", 13 March 1937.
- (3) Interviews in Mexico City with Prof. Ramon Lopez Zermeno (16 Aug. 1969), Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete (9 Aug. 1969), Prof. Jose Corona Nunez (21, 22 & 23 Nov. 1968) and others.

that Enrique Villaseñor, who was chairing the meeting, allowed some members of the F.S.M.T.E. to speak alongside the moderates; but the next day the sessions were secretly moved to another venue, creating a very tense situation.

However, after mediation the radicals agreed not to intervene, and the A.M.M. was recreated with Eduardo Gutierrez as Secretary General. A gesture of unity was then made when the two factions agreed to create a common front, the "Frente Unico de Maestros Michoacanos", although this had little real existence.⁽¹⁾ This reconciliation was possible because of national developments; under pressure from the Federal Government the national leaders of the C.M.M. and the C.F.T.E. had been conducting preliminary talks with a view to unity, and they sent delegates to calm the tempers of their respective adherents in Michoacan.⁽²⁾

This superficial unity imposed from above was reinforced later in the year when the two national organisations finally agreed to call a special congress to unite their forces. This was the congress which met at Queretaro in February 1937 and formed the F.M.T.E. (see above, p.), and it represented a big triumph for the Left in general and the Communist Party in particular, for the executive committee of the new Federation was dominated by the Communists. The F.M.T.E. was concerned to bring about unity at State level as well, if possible on a similar basis, and before leaving Queretaro the Michoacan delegation designated an organising committee for a congress of unity in their own State; before doing this they were addressed by the railway union leader, Valentin Campa, leading member of the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist Party.⁽³⁾

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- (1) Villaseñor, op.cit., pp.20-21; and interviews with Prof. Hilarie Reyes Saribaldi in Morelia (9 & 10 July & 24 Aug.1968).
 (2) Interview in Morelia with Prof. Enrique Villaseñor, 12 Aug.1968; and see above pp. .
 (3) Villaseñor, op.cit., pp.21-22; and see above pp. .

A congress of unity was arranged in Michoacan by the organizing committee, which consisted of two representatives of the moderate faction (Villaseñor and Juan Valades) and two Communists (Rosal de la Fuente Diaz and Miguel Barriga); Magana, no doubt hoping to make political capital from the occasion, was persuaded to grant 5,000 pesos from the State treasury towards the cost of organization.⁽¹⁾ The congress took place in Patteuaro from 7th to 10th April 1937, and was attended by all the teachers in the State and some visiting delegations - about 2,500 or more in all.⁽²⁾ The different interests involved were all represented in force - the Communist Party, the State Government, the educational authorities, Diego Hernandez Topete was present as Director of Education in the State, as was the Director General of Rural and Primary Education, Rafael Mendez Aguirre (who was originally from Michoacan and was also an active Communist), and the whole executive committee of the C.R.M.D.T., which naturally used its influence to favour the left wing.⁽³⁾

In effect the congress was a trial of strength between the Communists (backed by Mendez Aguirre and the C.R.M.D.T.) and the moderates (backed by Hernandez Topete, the State Government and other representatives of the S.E.F.). The outcome was difficult to predict, because of the presence of hundreds of rank-and-file teachers whose participation in previous political struggles had been minimal. The Communists lost the first round when their candidate for chairman, Fabian Rosales (who was also on the committee of the C.R.M.D.T.) was defeated by Ramon Lopez Zermeno, a young teacher from Miaspato who had himself been a Communist for a short time but was now firmly identified with the moderates.⁽⁴⁾

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- (1) Villaseñor, *op.cit.*, p.22; and interview in Morelia with Villaseñor (12 Aug. 1968).
 (2) Estimate of Prof. Ramon Lopez Zermeno (interview in Mexico City, 16 Aug. 1969); Villaseñor (*op.cit.*, p.22) puts the number at 3,300.
 (3) Villaseñor, *loc.cit.*; and interviews in Mexico City with Prof. Ramon Lopez Zermeno (16 Aug. 1969) and in Morelia with Prof. Hilario Rojas Garibaldi (24 Aug. 1968 and 14 Aug. 1969).
 (4) Interview in Mexico City with Lopez Zermeno (16 Aug. 1969).

The debates in the congress were very tense, as was to be expected from the nature of the conflict and the size of the assembly, but open clashes appear to have been avoided; and the congress achieved its purpose with the formation of a new, all-embracing union, the "Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de Michoacan" (S.U.T.E.M.), affiliated to the F.M.T.E. and to the C.R.M.D.T.

In the closing session, when it came to the election of the executive committee of the new union, the voting was very close, but Enrique Villaseñor was elected Secretary General by a small majority over the Communist candidate, José Corona Nunez. After complex negotiations and maneuvers, the rest of the committee was divided between the two factions, and while the moderates took the Secretary Generalship, the Communists were given a majority of one on the committee. Corona Nunez, who was a very active militant from Cuicatlan, became Secretary of Organization and Propaganda, and was in charge of the union's journal; José Estrada Sayago (Communist) was responsible for union affairs.⁽¹⁾ Those activists who opposed both the Communist and the educational authorities were now excluded from union affairs; this was the case of a group of teachers from Patzcuaran led by Hilaria Reyes Garibaldi, who had recently left the Communist Party.⁽²⁾

In these circumstances it is not surprising that the committee had some difficulty in functioning, and in the following months the conflict continued within the ranks of the S.U.T.E.M. The local teachers' unions in different parts of the State, which had previously been affiliated to the F.S.M.T.E. or the A.M.E. at State level, or directly to the C.M.M. or the C.N.T.E., had now to become branches of the S.U.T.E.M. In the process there was inevitably

- (1) Villaseñor, op.cit., p.23; interviews with Prof. José Corona Nunez (21, 22 & 23 Nov. 1968) and Prof. Ramon Lopez Zermeno (16 Aug. 1969) in Mexico City.
 (2) Interviews in Morelia with Prof. Hilaria Reyes Garibaldi (20 Aug. 1968 and 18 Aug. 1969).

a struggle for power in each district, and conflicts were reported from Uruapan, La Piedad, Patzcuaro, Tustamo, Maravatio and other localities. (1) However, the union as a whole retained at least a semblance of unity, although the tension between the two groups on the committee was quite severe at times.

This tension found expression within a few months, when the very understandable discontent of the rank-and-file with their miserable wages and conditions led to another strike against the State Government (in August 1937). This movement was led by Corona Nunez, who acted as Secretary General since Villaseñor had resigned over the issue, and the Communist influence in the union was thus increased. Unlike the previous strike, this one was quite successful and won a significant wage increase: initially Magana offered a ludicrous increase of 10 centavos a month, and issued abusive propaganda against the strike leaders, but they took the issue to Cardenas and it was resolved in their favour. (2)

It will be remembered that the national unity achieved with the formation of the F.U.T.E. in February 1937 proved to be illusory, and that it had to be replaced a year later by the creation of the S.T.E.R.M., in which the Communists no longer had a majority (see above, pp.). In Michoacan the S.U.T.E.M. was not immediately affected by these changes: its second congress was not held until March 1939, when it was reorganised as a section of the S.T.E.R.M. Over 2,000 members were present, and the observers included Octaviano Campos Salas (Secretary General of the S.T.E.R.M.), David Vilchis of the C.T.M., and the usual representatives of the State Government and the educational authorities. Governor Magana was unable to sway the proceedings which were again dominated by the educational authorities and the Communists, although it was reported

(1) Villaseñor, loc.cit.; and interview with Villaseñor in Morelia (12 Aug. 1968).
 (2) Interviews in Mexico City with Prof. Jose Corona Nunez (21, 22 & 23 Nov. 1968) and Prof. Diego Hernandez Tomate (9 Aug. 1969) and in Morelia with Prof. Milario Reyes Garibaldi (28 Aug. 1968).

that 'a very small group of "magaristas" tried to sow dissension by attacking the P.R.M.'(1) The sessions were presided by Villaseca, but this time the Communists won the post of Secretary General, which went to Jose Estrada Sayago. Daniel Mora Ramos was elected again, together with Fabian Rosales, but the other four posts were taken by non-Communists (Ramon Lopez Zermeno, Leonardo Hava Flores, Esther Sosa and Alfonso Chavez).(2) The previous situation was thus reversed, but the internal conflict continued.

The non-Communist members of the new committee all belonged to an organization called the G.A.S. ("Grupo de Accion Socialista") (3) which was rapidly gaining ground in the teaching profession in Mexico: it embraced non-Communist leftists and also quite conservative teachers, and contributed significantly to the defeat of the Communist Party within the teaching profession. Its strength in Michoacan was confirmed by the results of the 1960 congress of the S.U.T.E.M. in Morelia: the new committee consisted of five members of the G.A.S., including the Secretary General, Ramon Lopez Zermeno, as against only four Communists.(4) The change was slight but it indicated a real shift in the balance of power.

One factor that is said to have contributed to the decline of the Communist Party was the poor quality and sectarianism of its leaders. This can hardly have been the basic cause (in general the Party's policy at this time was that of the "Popular Front" and was far from sectarian, but it is true that a number of capable teachers found it impossible to remain in the Party, although retaining their Marxist convictions. One such in Michoacan was Hilario Reyes Garibaldi, who left after some years in 1937 because of differences with

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- (1) "La Voz de Mexico" 20th March 1939 (the report is dated 23rd March from Morelia, when the congress finished).
 (2) Ibid., and interviews in Mexico City with Prof. Ramon Lopez Zermeno (16th Aug. 1969) & Prof. Jose Corona Ramos (21, 22 & 23rd Nov. 1968).
 (3) See above, p.
 (4) Interviews in Mexico City with Prof. Ramon Lopez Zermeno (16 Aug. 1969) and Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete (9 Aug. 1969).

the local leaders of the Party.⁽¹⁾ Another was Jose Corona Nunez, one of the Party's best activists in the State, who resigned angrily in 1938 after five years' membership; his basic motive was an accumulation of incidents in which the local cell had disciplined him for "ultra-leftism" and other errors. Corona expected his resignation to be followed by ostracism on the part of all the Communist teachers, but found that this was not so because at the time he held the decisive vote on the S.U.T.E.M. committee, and the Party feared that he might ally with the pro-Government faction if they alienated him; this attitude offended him because "the fact of having resigned from the Party did not imply any wavering in my beliefs as a man of the Left".⁽²⁾

The arrival of Trotsky in Mexico inevitably gave rise to dissension, and particularly in Michoacan, since he stayed in Patzcuaro for a time in 1937-1938. Hilaric Reyes Garibaldi was charged by the Communist Party with having led a group of teachers in visiting the exiled Russian there, although he denies the charge.⁽³⁾ Certainly Trotsky was interviewed for a local teachers' journal, "Vida", published in Patzcuaro;⁽⁴⁾ and in October 1938 the inspector of schools for the Patzcuaro zone, Policarpo T. Sanchez, was expelled from the Party on the grounds that he was responsible for this interview and had also visited Trotsky at a later date in Coyocacan.⁽⁵⁾ This may be true, but if so it casts some doubt on the discipline the Party demanded of its members, since other teachers who served in the Patzcuaro region and were themselves Communists, report that Sanchez was well-known for his drunkenness and abuse of authority, and back in 1935 had tried to pressure them into joining the C.N.M. - which was quite contrary to the official Party line.⁽⁶⁾

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- (1) Interview with Prof. Hilaric Reyes Garibaldi in Morelia (24 Aug. 1968).
 (2) Interviews in Mexico City with Prof. Jose Corona Nunez (21, 22 & 23 Nov. 1968).
 (3) Villasenor, op. cit., p. 23; and interview in Morelia with Prof. Hilaric Reyes Garibaldi (24 Aug. 1968).
 (4) "El Machete", 3 Sept. 1938; speech of 1 Sept. by Octaviano Campos Salas, Secretary General of the S.T.E.R.M.
 (5) "La Voz de Mexico", 6 Oct. 1938.
 (6) Interviews in Mexico City with Prof. Jose Corona Nunez (21, 22 & 23 Nov. 1968) and with Prof. Hilaric Reyes Garibaldi in Morelia (24 Aug. 1968).

In many cases charges of Trotskyism may have covered up other motives for expulsion, although there was at least one clear-cut case of a Trotskyite from Michoacan: that of Felipe Alba Guante, a teacher then living in Mexico City who became the red leader's secretary. (1)

17. The Campaign for the Presidential Succession, 1939-1940

The effects of the electoral campaign were particularly marked in Michoacan, since no less than three of the principal contestants were associated with the State: Mugica, Magana and Sanchez Tapia. The campaign really began with the resignation from the Government in January 1939 of Mugica, Sanchez Tapia and Avila Camacho. Magana did not declare himself at this stage, but his name was widely mentioned and he had already begun working behind the scenes; this was to lead to accusations that he was making unfair and unconstitutional use of his position as Governor to further his Presidential ambitions. (2)

There can be little doubt that the favourite of the Left throughout the country, and above all in Michoacan, was Mugica, who had the most consistent record of radicalism and personal integrity (although some felt he was too intransigent to make a good President, and he was never fully trusted by the leaders of the Communist Party). For many of the teachers he was the obvious choice, and many local branches of the S.U.T.E.M. declared in his favour. Among the activists who supported Mugica were Daniel Mora Ramos, Jesus Mugica Martinez, Hilario Reyes Garibaldi, Jose Corona Nunez, Leonardo Nava Heras, Jose Estrada Rayago, Elias Miranda and many others. (3) But the union leaders were

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- (1) Interview in Morelia with Prof. Enrique Villaseñor, 12 Aug. 1968; and with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi, 24th Aug. 1968.
 (2) See above, pp. ; Casasola, op.cit., pp. ; Mondragon, op.cit., pp. 130-134; Maria y Campos, op.cit., pp.
 (3) Interviews in Morelia with Prof. Hilario Reyes Garibaldi (24 Aug. 1968 and 14 Aug. 1969) and Prof. Daniel Mora Ramos (29 Jan. 1968) and in Mexico City with Prof. Jose Corona Nunez (21, 22 & 23 Nov. 1968).

not prepared to credit themselves and remained silent on the subject at this stage, thus effectively contributing to the emergence of Avila Camacho as the "official" candidate. This, as might be expected, was also the position of the educational authorities - although in public they maintained a facade of neutrality.

The teachers' movement in Michoacan was thus in some danger of division between the followers of Magica and those of Avila Camacho (as occurred in Campeche - see below, pp.). Support for Sanchez Tapia was also a complicating factor, but was not really very significant. However, the real cause of the split in Michoacan was the ambition of Magana, who hoped to wardulate all the popular forces in the State and use it as a secure power base for his campaign. Knowing that he could not rely on the teachers, Magana tried to gain control of them by appointing a friend of his from Morelos, Carlos Perez Guerrero, as Deputy Director of Education under Diego Hernandez Topete (who, holding his appointment from the Federal Government, theoretically controlled all education in the State). Perez Guerrero appointed his own inspectors, thus in effect creating a parallel system alongside the federal inspectors and reviving the old division between the federal and state education.⁽¹⁾ This divisive move almost led to another strike, which was averted only by the intervention of Cardenas.⁽²⁾ In August 1939 the leaders of the S.U.T.E.M. condemned the divisive actions of "certain functionaries of the State Government" who wanted to end federal control of education and thus its concomitant benefits (better salaries, pensions, security and promotion prospects); they said that these actions were only part of a general attack by the State administration on popular organisations, and demanded the immediate suspension of Perez Guerrero and the new inspectors.⁽³⁾ These demands were not obtained while Magana remained in power, and the question caused constant friction.

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- (1) Interview in Mexico City with Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete, 9 Aug. 1969.
 (2) Ibid., and interview in Mexico City with Prof. Ramon Lopez Zerrano (16 Aug. 1969).
 (3) "La Voz de Mexico", 2 July and 20 Aug. 1939.

During 1939 Magana used every means in his power to defeat the opposition to him in Michoacan, and he was accused of responsibility for many injustices and acts of repression.⁽¹⁾ The "Federacion Juvenil Revolucionaria Michoacana", the youth organization which had replaced the "Bloque de Jovenes Socialistas de Michoacan", consistently opposed Magana, and its leaders were subject to all kinds of persecution; the students Raul Arreola Cortes and Jesus Gallardo Gonzalez were imprisoned, and on 22nd April 1939 another of its leaders, Maximiliano Ramirez, was murdered. The teachers' union accused the Governor of responsibility for this, but the authors of the crime were never discovered.⁽²⁾ In December Magana finally resigned in order to dedicate himself completely to electioneering, although by this time his chances were slim indeed, since the P.R.M. had already adopted Avila Camacho as its official candidate; Mugica had withdrawn five months earlier because he could see which way the wind was blowing.⁽³⁾

Until 16th September 1940, Magana's position as Governor was filled by his brother, Conrado.⁽⁴⁾ In the final stages of the campaign it became clear that all his manoeuvres had failed, and none of the unions or other organizations in the State gave him their support. As regards the teachers, they held a convention in Morelia early in 1940 to determine their attitude, and gave their vote to Avila Camacho.⁽⁵⁾ This decision was largely the result of pressure and manipulation by the Party machine of the P.R.M.; but those teachers who were reluctant to accept the official line would have preferred Mugica, not Magana. Later in the year Magana returned to Michoacan to retire from politics, but died of a heart attack.⁽⁶⁾

(1) *Ibid.*, 24, 28 and 31 Mar., 2 April and 3 May 1939.

(2) *Ibid.*, 23 April 1939; and interview in Mexico City with Prof. Raul Arreola Cortes, 29 Aug. 1969.

(3) Mondragon, *op.cit.*, pp. 151-160; and interviews in Mexico City with Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete (9 Aug. 1969) and Prof. Ramon Lopez Zepeda (16 Aug. 1969).

(4) Jesus Romero Flores, "Historia de Michoacan" (2 vols., Mexico City, 1946, Imprenta "Claridad"), Vol. 2, Appendix.

(5) Interviews with Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete ((Aug. 1969) in Mexico City, and with Senor Antonio Mayas Navarro in Colaya (21 Aug. 1969).

(6) Casanola, *op.cit.*, p.

During the same period electoral activity was also going on to determine who should occupy the Governor's chair for the next four-year period. Magana played little part in this, concerning himself only with his Presidential ambitions. The two names generally mentioned as candidates were those of Damaso Cardenas, the President's brother, and General Felix Ireta, the local military commander (he resigned from his military post in the summer of 1939 in order to campaign, and was replaced by Mugica.)(1) This again caused a deep division among the popular forces in the State; Don Damaso was a natural magnet to many "carderistas", including many old leaders of the C.R.M.D.T., while General Ireta also had many followers, particularly among the teachers, because he himself had been a rural teacher at one time, and as military commander had often protected militant peasants and teachers. When the "ajidatarios", led by the teachers, formed "Defensas Rurales" to protect their lands Ireta supplied them with arms - an attitude not shared by many of the "Revolutionary" Generals.(2)

The rivalry created by the gubernatorial campaign was lessened when it became apparent once again that President Cardenas would not allow his brother to stand. Many of the "damasistas" then transferred their support to another progressive General, Martin Montoya; but he did not enjoy the same prestige, and since he died only a few months later, General Ireta had a clear field, and became Governor on 16th September 1940.(3) The teachers contributed in no small measure to his victory, and some of them shared in it personally; thus Ramon Lopez Zermeno was elected local deputy for the district of La Piedad, and Diego Hernandez Topete was Ireta's candidate for Senator right up to the last minute, when Ireta did a deal with the "maganistas" and sacrificed Hernandez for one of their men. (4)

(1) Mondragon, op.cit., p.175.

(2) Interviews in Mexico City with Prof. Ramon Lopez Zermeno (16 Aug.1969) and with Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete (9 Aug.1969).

(3) Ibid., and Hasso Ugarte, op.cit., vol.3, pp.254-255.

(4) Interviews in Mexico City with Prof. Ramon Lopez Zermeno (16 Aug.1969) and Prof. Diego Hernandez Topete (9 Aug.1969).

10. The Nature of the Teachers' Role in State and Local Politics

Although the teachers as a group at no time emerged as the dominant force in politics in Michoacan - that would clearly be impossible for so small and specialized a group, even if they had harboured such aspirations - it is apparent from this survey that they did exercise an influence out of all proportion to their numbers, owing to their key position in village affairs and their prestige among the rural population. As organizers of peasant leagues, trade unions and other associations, as agitators in the struggle against the blindening oligarchy and the clergy, and as cadres spreading socialist and Communist ideas, they were unrivalled, at least from about 1929 onwards. Without their efforts it is doubtful if the C.R.M.D.T. could have become the most powerful political organization in the State, as it was from about 1931 to 1938. Individual teachers became officials of peasant leagues and unions, local and even federal deputies. As a social group their influence was therefore only exceeded by that of the military and (in exceptional cases like Ernesto Soto Rojas and Luis Mora Tovar) by urban intellectuals, and possibly by that of militant peasant leaders like Jose Solerzano Aguirre, Pedro Lopez Cruz and J. Trinidad Garcia (and Primo Tapia who was in a class on his own for the period 1921-1926).

It scarcely needs to be pointed out that not all the teachers were militant socialists or Communists, nor were they politically incorruptible. In Michoacan there was always a moderate group, led by Enrique Villasana, Ramon Lopez Zamano and others. As for corruption, there were the significant cases of the "sacristista" leader Ramon Rodriguez, the venal and dictatorial inspector Policarpo I. Sanchez in Patzcuaro, and the opportunistic Felix Chamary in Nueva Italia; not to mention the flagrant case of J. Landes Martinez in the early years of federal education. But it seems clear that the incidence of venality and corruption was significantly lower among the teachers

than among the military, the professional politicians, the lawyers and intellectuals; this is one reason for the respect they enjoyed among the peasantry. And while some teachers were active conservatives or supporters of Serrato or Magana, the great majority of those who were politically active were well to the left. If the Communist Party was a force in Michoacan (as it was for a time, particularly in Morelia, Uruapan and Nueva Italia), it owed this very largely to the teachers, who constituted a majority of the membership of some branches, and had recruited many of the rest.

After about 1938 their influence began to decline, for various reasons. As the peasants became more educated and gained political experience, they had less need to look to outsiders for leadership. The break-up of the C.R.M.D.T. deprived many militant teachers of an established platform, and confined them more to their own union. Moreover the forced marriage which produced the S.U.T.E.M., although it united the teachers, tended to bring their union activities more under official control, especially as manipulation from above by the P.R.M. increased; and the Presidential campaign of 1940 revealed that the socialist and Communist Left lacked a solid power base either inside or outside the P.R.M. Radical teachers therefore found themselves absorbed by the official Party machine; their strongest allegiance was to individual "caudillos" like Cardenas and Magica. Their considerable organizing ability therefore served more and more to build a political base for the P.R.M., and not, as had been the case in previous years, for the Communist Party or any other independent force.

The C.R.M.D.T. constituted the strongest local basis of the vitally important phenomenon known as "cardenismo" - a nation-wide mobilization of popular forces on a progressive platform. The Confederation, which owed so much to the teachers, had begun to show its strength and to play an

independent role under left-wing leadership, preventing Serrato from implementing his reactionary policies, virtually determining the gubernatorial succession in 1936, and then preventing Magana from imposing his will when he turned against it. But after 1938 the Confederation was broken up by the will of the Federal Government into separate labour, peasant and "popular" organizations, in accordance with the new structure of the P.R.M.; and although the "Liga de Comarcas Agrarias" was in many ways a continuation of the strongest section of the Confederation, it enjoyed less autonomy. The teachers were increasingly confined to their own union and the F.S.T.S.F. (Government Employees' Federation), and thus no longer had the same opportunity to participate as agitators and leaders in mass popular organizations.

PART IV

THE CASE OF CAMPECHE

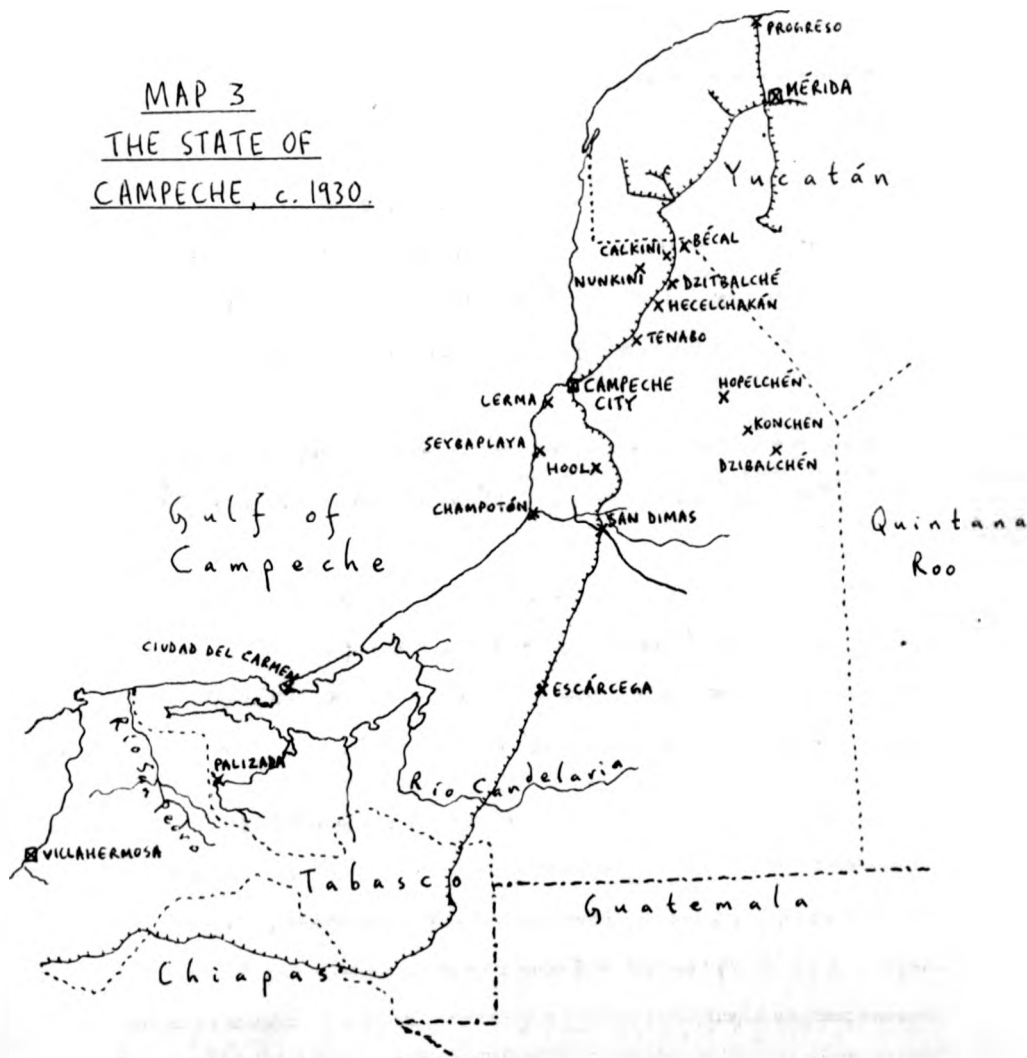
CHAPTER VIII

TEACHERS AND LOCAL POLITICS (II): THE CASE OF CAMPECHEOrigins of the Conflict

An extremely interesting political situation developed in the mid-thirties in the poor and neglected coastal State of Campeche, in the Yucatán peninsula. The background to this local political tension, breaking at times into open strife, was a social and economic malaise dating back fifty years or more, but brought to a crisis by the world-wide depression of 1929-1933. The economy of Campeche was based almost entirely on the production for the world market of three commodities: tropical hardwoods (in which the State is rich), chicle (for chewing gum) and henequén (as in the neighbouring State of Yucatán). The social organisation of this production was semi-feudal, consisting of large haciendas which the Revolution had as yet done little to divide and give to the peasants - and the tensions and contradictions of the hacienda system were more extreme in the Yucatan peninsula than in most parts of Mexico. The chief beneficiaries of this situation were the big North American companies, who monopolised the market and effectively dominated the economy of the State. This is well illustrated by a report on the economic situation of the area made in September 1936 by the Secretary of the Financial Commission of the "FerroMex" Company, which had just been taken over by the Mexican Government⁽¹⁾ and was in charge of the construction of the Mexican South-Eastern Railway, intended to link the peninsula with the rest of the country. The report notes the impression of the local Chamber of Commerce, that the Railway had come just in time to save the State from death by inanition; it goes on to lament the recent abandonment of many of the henequén plantations, the absence of irrigation and the failure to develop other potential sources

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 11th Sept. 1936. This was an initiative of General Múgica, then Secretary of Communications and Public Works.

MAP 3
THE STATE OF
CAMPECHE, c. 1930.



- MÉRIDA = State capital
- × SAN DIMAS = Other towns
- = Railways
- - - = State boundary
- - - - = International boundary

0 30 60
MILES

of wealth, such as cattle, fisheries and tropical fruits. It then comes to the heart of the matter:-

"The exploitation of the chicle and the timber is carried on by an American Company called the 'Laguna Corporation' which has its work camps in Matamoros and its administrative offices in Ciudad del Carmen, where they export most of their production. This Concern has a subsidiary the 'Mexican Gulf Corporation' which operates in the same region, but in different sectors.....

"Between the 'San Pedro' and 'Candelaria' Rivers is the Hearst Company which is also dedicated to these activities.

"All these Firms have concessions for their exploitations of the forests. Their methods are completely colonial. They are in agreement with regard to wages and they divide the region into sections among themselves so as not to compete with each other. They themselves undertake the transport. They only leave to the country the minimal amounts which they pay the natives in the jungle and the taxes on production....

"Unlike the cases of Tabasco, and even of Yucatan, Campeche is very poor. There are no important sources of income or monetary reserves which can be used for new activities. The semi-colonial system of exploitation has deprived the people of the State of the necessary elements to undertake on their own account, the development of their own wealth....." (1)

The origins of this situation go back to the late 19th century. A report made to the Federal Congress in 1861, recommending the separation of Campeche from Yucatan proper and its recognition as a sovereign State of the Mexican Union, reflected a rather more diversified economy, if not a very dynamic one.

The report pointed out that Yucatan was already marked by a tendency towards monoculture, with most of the State devoted to the cultivation of henequen; but the different regions of Campeche produced hardwoods, vegetable dyes, rice and sugar cane, (2) and cattle raising was also important. (3)

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- (1) Múgica archive, File entitled "Informe Sobre la Situación Económica de los Edos. de Yuc. y Campeche, en relación con el F.C. del Sureste, por el Sr. Julio d'Acosta Srío de la Comisión Financiera de la 'Ferrosmax'", Mexico, D.F., Sept. 1936, pp. 21-25.
- (2) "Memoria Sobre la Conveniencia, Utilidad y Necesidad de Erigir constitucionalment en Estado de la Confederación Mexicana el Antiguo Distrito de Campeche, constituido de hecho en Estado Libre y Soberano desde may de 1848..." presentado al Congreso de la Unión en agosto de 1861 por los diputados Tomás Aznar Barbachano y Juan Carbó (México, 1861, Imprenta de Ignacio Cumplido), p. 3.
- (3) Moisés T. de la Peña (ed.), "Campeche Económico" (2 vols., Gobierno Constitucional de Estado, 1942) vol. 1, pp. 62-63).



In addition, ever since the colonial period, the jurisdiction of Mérida had looked inland, whereas Campeche was dominated by seafarers and tradesmen, "vigorous and hard-working people" dedicated to fishing, boat-building and seaborne trade.⁽¹⁾ The maritime trade was still flourishing in 1861, and the State also produced (albeit in modest quantities), soap, salt, rum and straw hats.⁽²⁾ The State's economy at this time, although far from booming, was thus recovering from the effects of the "Caste War" of 1847-1851 and was scarcely in danger of "death by inanition" as reported 75 years later.

What had happened to bring about this marked decay? One powerful reason is to be found in the enormous concessions of land granted during the Díaz dictatorship, and the conversion of the State into a few huge plantations for the production of hardwoods, chicle and (after 1900) henequén. For this and other reasons, cattle-raising, sugar and rum production, and the all-important maritime trades, went into sharp decline.

The concessions made under Díaz revolutionized the economy of Campeche; big estates had existed since colonial times, but the concentration of landed property in a few hands was vastly increased by a few concessions made from 1886 onwards. In that year, a contract was signed between the Federal Government and a certain Manuel S. Vila, to survey lands in Campeche; Vila immediately transferred his rights to a surveying company, which proceeded to survey a total of nearly 2 million hectares. By law the Company could appropriate one third of this, or 655,872 hectares, and having done so it went on (illegally) to alienate all these lands, through various channels, to three foreign companies: the Laguna Corporation, the Mexican Gulf and Lumber Corporation, and the Pennsylvania Campeche Land and Timber Co. (the last two being subsidiaries of the first, and all three having connections with the Wrigley chewing-gum monopoly).⁽³⁾

(1) Aznar & Carbó, *op.cit.*, pp.4-6.

(2) *Ibid.*, pp.127-128.

(3) De La Peña, *op.cit.*, vol.1, pp.71-73.

The result was that the 1940 census of landed property recorded these three companies as holding 708,026 hectares, or 35.5% of the total land covered in the Campeche census; ⁽¹⁾ in addition to which further big concessions were held by Randolph W. Hearst (142,315 ha.), the "Campeche Timber and Fruit Co.", the "Campeche Development Co." and the aptly-named "Mexican Exploitation Co.". Another factor contributing to the concentration of landed property was the sudden extension, around 1905, of henequén cultivation from Yucatán into northern Campeche. ⁽²⁾ But the henequén estates were doomed to failure, partly because they could not compete with the higher-quality fibre of Yucatán, but above all because of the Revolution. De la Peña points out that the "ferocious system of slavery" under which the peons worked was "more marked in Campeche than in any other State of the Republic", and hence the estates were deserted when the Revolution liberated the peons; but it has to be added that while the Revolution soon freed the peons of their legal ties, up to 1936 in Campeche it had done virtually nothing to give them land or work or break up the great estates, which helps to account for the parlous condition of the State's economy as reported in that year.

The reasons for the poverty and backwardness of Campeche were thus very simple, and although the State did not play a major part in the dramatic events of the Revolution from 1910 to 1920, it could hardly escape contagion by the climate of social ferment in the years that followed. The remarkable thing is that popular discontent appears to have been relatively subdued for so long - in fact, until 1934. The stage was set by the great depression of 1929-1933, the effects of which on Campeche are strikingly revealed by the figures for State revenue from chicle and henequén duties. Chicle revenue fell from 199,967 pesos in 1929/30 to 163,863 pesos in 1930/31, and in the

(1) *Ibid.*, p.65.

(2) *Ibid.*, pp.62-63.

same year henoquén revenue dropped two-thirds, from 109,565 to 35,768 pesos. (1)

In the years that followed the situation was ripe for social conflict, and the spark which set it alight was provided by a group of rural teachers who began their service about this time.

The political background of Campeche is well described in a report presented to a teachers' congress in 1937:- (2)

"The State of Campeche is, given its outstanding characteristics, a semi-feudal State.....

"It was not until very recently that the chicleros could count on the beginnings of an organisation to defend themselves from imperialist voracity and its native agents. The artisans and the peasantry found themselves equally, without militant organisations. The same goes as well for the maritime workers and the rest of the proletariat of Campeche. Until the second decade of the present century none of the workers and artisans of the State had anything more than associations of a medieval guild kind with a feudal structure. These served, we all know, as active instruments of the clergy in order to encourage the religious festivities of the patrons of the church. Similarly, there existed mutualist societies, also of a feudal type, which levied contributions in order to help the members' families (out of their own money) in cases of sickness and death. The peasants were subject to the semi-slavery which was exercised over them by the landlords and big businessmen, who at the same time acted as political bosses, and the agricultural peons were sunk in complete servitude beneath the yoke of the landlords. Later, and corresponding to the foundation of the 'Partido Socialista del Sureste' and the 'Ligas de Resistencia', which grew up under the protection of the Government of General Alvarado in Yucatán, there were born here the so-called 'Ligas de Resistencia' grouped around a 'Partido Socialista Agrario del Sureste' which was recently dissolved. Without ceasing to recognise the historical importance of these organisations in spite of their mistakes and vices, we have to emphasize that their functions were limited purely to electoral politics."

Although considerable progress was made during the rule in Yucatán of the famous socialist leader Felipe Carrillo Puerto (assassinated in 1924),

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- (1) Carlos J. Sierra, "Gobernadores de Campeche (1857-1961)", pp.126-128. Unpublished work, 1967 (consulted by courtesy of Lic.Sierra who edits the "Boletín Bibliográfico de la Secretaría de Hacienda").
- (2) "Encuesta 'El S.U.T.E.C. y sus Relaciones con las Organizaciones Obreras, Campesinas, de Estudiantes, Juveniles, de Empleados Públicos y de Mujeres' que presenta la Comisión Designada por el Comité Ejecutivo del 'Bloque Revolucionario de Maestros del Estado de Campeche', ante la 2a. Gran Convención Magisterial de Campeche", 22nd. April 1937 (Múgica archive, volume "Correspondencia Particular, 1937" classified as 10/110 "937"/1.).

after a few years these "Leagues" became nothing more than personal appendages of the local political bosses. Moreover, whereas some of the early revolutionary Governors, such as Colonel Joaquín Mucel Acero in Campeche (1914-1919), had begun to implement certain reforms including some grants of land to the peasants (1) after the early 'twenties the Calles policy of political repression and anticlerical demagoguery at the expense of social reform made it difficult for genuine radical movements to prosper. The Governors of Campeche from 1923 to 1935 were revolutionaries of the Obregón-Calles variety - Angel Castillo Lanz, Silvestre Pavón Silva, Ramiro Bojórquez C. and Benjamín Romero Esquivel, (2) they used the "Partido Socialista del Sureste" (and after 1929, the P.R.) as a political machine to maintain the status quo. At this stage there were really no trade unions in the proper sense of the term in the area, but in 1934, under external pressure, the local authorities began to convert the old "Leagues" into properly organised unions. This external pressure was due to a large extent to the activities of young rural teachers who had graduated from the Rural Normal School of Hecelchakán, established in 1930. (3) The teachers themselves attempted to organise, but the "Union de Maestros Campechanos" formed in 1931 and affiliated to the C.M.M., was weak and conservative. (4) However, as the teachers came into contact with the peasants, they became active in the social struggle, establishing health centres, leading petitions for land, and disseminating new ideas. It was in September 1934 in Hecelchakán, following a tour of the surrounding villages by a Cultural Mission, that the "Bloque Revolucionario de Maestros del Estado de Campeche" was formed, with Ramón Berzunza Pinto, a

(1) Carlos J. Sierra, op.cit., pp.108-109; and the same author's "Campeche en la Revolución" (Mexico, D.F., 1961, Editorial Ah-Kin-Pech), pp.126-128.

(2) Sierra, "Gobernadores de Campeche", pp.119-131.

(3) "Ponencia 'El S.U.T.E.C.....'" etc...

(4) Personal interview with Prof. Ramón Berzunza Herrera, now Director of Federal Education in Campeche, 11th Dec. 1968.

young activist, as General Secretary.⁽¹⁾ This organisation was to play a leading part in the struggles of the next three years, and its influence was soon evident with the foundation in the succeeding months of other independent popular organisations, the most important being the "Federación de Cooperativas Revolucionarias" founded on 22nd October 1934 in Dzitbalché and drawing support from peasants over a wide area.⁽²⁾ Two of the nine members of its first executive committee were teachers (Ramón Barzunza Herrera and José Guadalupe Novelo C.), and it worked closely with the "Bloque Revolucionario de Maestros" in spreading opposition to the existing State Government.

The First Outbreaks of Friction (1935)

The progressive work of the teachers was given protection and encouragement by the appointment in January 1935 of a young radical, Luis Alvarez Barret, as Director of Federal Education in the State.⁽³⁾ Alvarez Barret, a "campechano" by origin, was later to have a distinguished career in Mexican education.

The teachers' activities were not long in leading to disputes with the local authorities. On the afternoon of 22nd February 1935 there was a violent encounter in the village of Sahcabchón, near Calkin', leading to the death of several peasants and of the local policeman Edmundo Ramos. According to the conservative journal "Diario de Yucatán", the encounter "was provoked by members of the cooperative led by the teacher of the village school";⁽⁴⁾ and later reports indicated that Prof. Pedro Castilla S. was among 17 people arrested after the events. In the absence of further information the veracity of this version may well be doubted, but the nature of the conflict, with local authorities opposing cooperative peasants led by the teacher, is clear.

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- (1) Ibid., and "Ponencia 'El S.U.T.E.C.....'" etc. Among those present at the first session of the "Bloque Revolucionario de Maestros" was General Múgica, who maintained close contact with left-wing groups in Campeche.
 (2) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1935-1936, correspondiente a la letra 'F'", p. 27.
 (3) "Diario de Yucatán", 16th January 1935.
 (4) Ibid., 24th and 25th February 1935.

Moreover, it was not an isolated incident, as can be seen from a report of a similar encounter the previous day in Bacabchén, only a few miles away. (1)

In the early stages of the movement by no means all the teachers were radical, especially since many of them were women, always somewhat more conservative and notably so in a traditionally Catholic society. Evidence of the consequent dissensions appears in a telegram sent to the "Diario de Yucatán" on 26th February 1935 by 32 teachers in Campeche, nearly all of them women, and signing as a "sector" of the "Bloque Revolucionario de Maestros"; (2) They protested against a strike of secondary school pupils instigated by the B.R.M. itself, and pursuing "undoubtedly" political aims. (3) But these difficulties would appear to have been resolved by September 1935, for there appear to have been no serious divisions within the "Convención Estatal del Magisterio Campechano" then held in Ciudad del Carmen, and it was generally agreed that the teachers should be identified with the struggles of the workers. (4) Even so, minor differences came to light again in December, this time concerning two teachers in particular who were in militant opposition to the B.R.M. The position is clarified by a special report made for the Director General of Rural and Primary Education in Mexico City, and which comes to the following conclusions:-

"1st. That the teachers Brígida Arceo and Josefa Muñoz never sympathized with the tendencies and plans of action of the B.R.M. of Campeche.

"2nd. That they belonged to a hostile group formed by urban teachers of Campeche City and Ciudad del Carmen, which acted in earlier periods against the B.R.M. The latter group (the B.R.M.) consisted at that time of all the rural teachers and at present all the teachers of Campeche except the odd few belong to it....

"3rd. That the activity of the B.R.M. is an attitude of work and cooperation to the benefit of the postulates of the revolution and that the functioning of this group is characterized by its democracy and seriousness.

(1) Ibid., 23rd Feb. 1935.

(2) Hereinafter referred to as "B.R.M."

(3) "Diario de Yucatán", 27th Feb. 1935.

(4) Letter, 8th March 1936, to General Múgica from the Executive Committee of the "Sindicato Independiente de Marineros, Estibadores de a Bordo, Trabajadores de la Zona Marítima y sus Filiales de la Ciudad del Carmen, Campeche", in Múgica archive, unclassified file labelled "Comunicaciones".

"¹th. That the sritas. Muñoz and Arceo asked for admission to the 'bloque' but were always a source of obstruction within it...."(1)

These conclusions appear to be supported by the accusations made in a letter by another teacher, Sra. Aurora de Illescas, that the sritas. Arceo and Muñoz encouraged their relations to make a physical attack on the teachers Manuel Montes de Oca and Juan Segundo Güemes in Campeche City on 27th December.

(2) Whatever the truth of this, the sritas. Arceo and Muñoz would appear to have been instruments of the growing offensive by the State Government against independent popular organisations since the new Governor, Eduardo Mena Córdova, had taken charge on 16th September.(3)

The nature of this offensive and the rôle of the teachers in leading popular opposition is well illustrated by the history of the "Sindicato Independiente de Marineros, Estibadores de a Bordo, Trabajadores de la Zona Marítima y sus Filiales de la Ciudad del Carmen, Campeche". This Union of Seamen and Dockers was originally formed in 1916, but personalist politics gained a hold over its members in the 'twenties. In November 1935 it was reconstituted by the majority of its members as a "Sindicato Independiente" on the advice of local teachers.(4) Its committee give various reasons for their action, consisting mainly of a long series of abuses committed at their expense by certain politicians, notably embezzlement of funds by Benjamín Romero Esquivel, ex-Governor of the State, and Senator Angel Castillo Lanz. (Castillo Lanz was to become a frequent object of the opposition's attacks). After a whole series of accusations on the same kind, the committee go on to say:-

"On leaving the League, we formed ourselves immediately into an independent union, with the name already indicated, and guided and advised by the teachers, we sent all the relevant documentation to the Labour Department requesting our registration. Despite having fulfilled all the requirements mentioned in the Federal Labour Law, and having spent more than 500 pesos in the process of documentation, commission and general expenses, we have not obtained our recognition, and wish to make clear that we constitute the majority of the ex-League of Seamen."

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- (1) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular 1935-1936, correspondiente a la letra 'C'", pp.103-104.
 (2) Ibid., pp.107-8.
 (3) Sierra, "Gobernadores de Campeche", pp.133-4.
 (4) Letter, 8th March 1936, to General Múgica (see note 15).

They further claim that the minority group, supported by the municipal authorities, tried forcibly to prevent members of the "Sindicato Independiente" from working, which caused a two-day strike; and that their members have suffered reprisals, while the local Chamber of Commerce is preparing to sign a collective agreement with the minority.

The subsequent development of this dispute is not revealed, but it was only one of many in which the teachers were prominent in opposition to the State Government. Some hints of this are given by a report in "El Machete" in September 1935, (1) to the effect that several peasants of the village of Poeboc were under arrest in Hecolchakán, "on the pretext that they took part in the recent political contest, but really because of their desire for organisation and struggle." The teachers, it said, were being persecuted because they encouraged these activities, and one of their number, Pedro Heredia, had been arbitrarily moved away from Dzibalchén (not to be confused with Dzitbalché) on account of his "revolutionary activity" there. Another teacher, Marcela Salvatierra, was under arrest for "encouraging the struggles of the peasants of the hacienda of San Ignacio...for the minimum wage..."; while Ramón Berzuma Pinto had been arrested, along with Salvador Lizárraga, a local student leader, when they visited San Ignacio to contact a local agricultural workers' union. Another teacher, Faustino Cuevas, had been unjustly fined 40 pesos, and relations between the teachers and the authorities had deteriorated throughout the State.

These questions were presumably raised, at least in private, when the Minister of Education, Lic. Gonzalo Vázquez Vela, visited Campeche at the end of November, (2) accompanied by other politicians and educational officials (including Claudio Cortés, Inspector General of Education in the South-east of the Republic, and Septimio Pérez Palacios, later to become Director of Federal Education in Campeche); but the results of their visit were not revealed.

(1) "El Machete", 21st Sept. 1935.

(2) "El Nacional", 5th Dec. 1935.

The Strike Threat of January 1936

Serious discontent became apparent in January 1936 in the north of the State, particularly in the village of Dzitbalché. A letter to President Cárdenas dated 8th January, is signed by over 100 residents including Dionisio Ek (committee member of the "Federación de Cooperativas Revolucionarias") and Ramón Berzunza Pinto of the B.R.M. They allege that the State Government attempted to impose unpopular candidates as "Comisarios Municipales" in Dzitbalché, and that the Municipal President, Hector Caamal, had come under attack from "the reaction" because he allowed a free election. (1) Later in the month the situation reached a crisis, and there was a violent encounter between rival factions, as explained in a letter written by Caamal himself to General Múgica on 24th January. (2) In a subsequent letter (3) Caamal indicates that the underlying cause of the dispute was the Governor's attempt to impose an unpopular justice of the peace, whom he describes as "an unconditional servant of the Government presided over by Eduardo Mena Córdova and of the 'cacique máximo' of Campeche, Senator Angel Castillo Lanz." He says that the State Government has tried to lay all the blame for the incident on the municipal authorities, arresting the Municipal Vice-President and five other municipal officials and four members of the peasant Cooperative. This appears to have been one of the few examples of independent municipal authorities, hence the attempt of the State Government to suppress it.

But the Dzitbalché incident was only one of a number of grievances which came to a head at this time. On 13th January a list of demands was sent to the Governor by the "Federación de Cooperativas Revolucionarias", the B.R.M., the "Frente Unico de Obreros y Campesinos de Palizada" and the "Sindicato de Agricultores 'Emiliano Zapata'" of Seybaplaya; they threatened a 48-hour stoppage and possibly an indefinite strike if a favourable reply were not forthcoming within three days. Some of the demands reveal a great deal about prevailing conditions in the State. The first two concern only the teachers:

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- (1) Múgica, archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular 1935-36, correspondiente a la letra 'F'", p.28.
 (2) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular 1935-1936, correspondiente a la letra 'C'", p.1.
 (3) Ibid., p.2.

first, the immediate reinstatement with back pay of two municipal teachers in Ciudad del Carmen, arbitrarily dismissed by the Municipal President "as an act of reprisal for their revolutionary activity"; and second, equal pay for teachers employed by the State in relation to those employed by the Federation, and the abolition of certain deductions imposed on the former. Some of the later points are more political:-(1)

"3. Expulsion ('Desafuero') of the Deputy José León Montero and the immediate expulsion from the village of B'cal of the said 'cacique' enemy of the school of socialist orientation, a popish 'callista', exploiter of the peasants, etc., who systematically obstructs the cooperative societies and the 'Comité Ejidal'....."

"7. Absolute respect for local authorities which genuinely represent the workers, created by popular election....."

"11. The punishment of the authorities of Dzilbalchén who exercise a brutal repression against the workers....."

The Government's response to this was apparently negative since on the 22nd the B.R.M. announced through its General Secretary, Ramón Berzunza Pinto, that on the 27th it would declare a "Revolutionary General Strike" because its demands on behalf of the teachers and the masses in general had not been attended to. (2)

The situation had by now become sufficiently serious to arouse the concern of the Federal Government, and from 31st January to 4th February a series of meetings took place in the Governor's house in Campeche City on the initiative of Claudio Cortés, who was acting on instructions from Cárdenas and Vázquez Vela. (3) Those present at the first meeting included Cortés, the Governor, the Federal Delegate of Public Health in the State, the Chief of the State Agrarian Department, the Chief of the local Agency of the National Economy, the Director of Federal Education in the State (Prof. Leonarda Gómez de G. Franchi, who had replaced Alvarez Barret) and three Inspectors of Schools. Cortés said he had instructions to resolve quickly "the conflict

(1) Méjica archive, volume "Correspondencia Particular 1935-1936....."F" p.30.

(2) Méjica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular 1935-1936....."C", p.111.

(3) Méjica archive, unclassified report - "Asuntos Educativos de Campeche - Prof. Claudio Cortés".

of teachers, workers and peasants" so as not to give an opportunity to the enemies of Cárdenas' Government to criticize him in the eyes of the U.S. Government (an interesting consideration); he went on to explain the B.R.M.'s motives (apparently speaking on their behalf) for supporting the economic and social demands of the teachers and the workers' and peasants' organisations, since "the President does not sympathise with those demands which are considered as political". After this curious introduction there was a general discussion, and later in the day there was an intervention by the strike Committee of the B.R.M.

Little was discussed at the second meeting, but at the third (on 2nd February) the question of the two dismissed teachers of Ciudad del Carmen was brought up. Then Cortés went on to make "a just defence of the teaching profession, wrongly criticised by people unaware of the high-minded mission entrusted to its members by the revolutionary Government". This seems to have been the cue for various other grievances to be raised; thus the teacher Alejandro Jiménez of Seybaplaya denounced certain violent incidents in which peasants had been injured, to which the Governor replied that he was never told about such cases. Juan Segundo Gúemes of the B.R.M. then mentioned again the arrests of peasants in Dzitbalché and other places, and the Governor promised to investigate the charges brought against them. An inhabitant of Bécual made various complaints against the local deputy José León Montero, but the Governor said such cases were the exclusive concern of the P.N.R.; and he then spoke of irregularities in certain consumer Cooperatives on account of the presence in them of "certain exploiters of the people" and requested the teachers' cooperation to prevent this.

Thus far the Governor's astuteness had averted an open clash, but at the following meeting he was confronted with a veritable barrage of complaints. Ramón Berrunza Pinto began by denouncing certain false Cooperatives which operated outside the law and to the detriment of the workers, and went on to say that "there exists generally in the villages a small group of people who live

by exploitation and politicking and entirely on official support, and another group which constitutes the real people...." In this he was seconded by Cortés, Dionisio Ek of the "Federación de Cooperativas Revolucionarias", the Director of Federal Education and others. Cortés requested that specific cases should be brought forward, and a whole series of complaints followed, about all kinds of abuses committed by the authorities. The Governor replied that all these problems would be dealt with at a forthcoming peasants' Congress, but Güemes alleged that the Congress would be manipulated. Finally, Güemes asked the Chief Executive to give categorical answers to the B.R.M.'s list of demands, and the Governor, apparently cornered, offered to answer "those points which were related to his administration". A compromise would seem to have been worked out behind the scenes, for at the next (and last) meeting on 4th February, an agreement was arrived at dealing with all the points raised. The Governor gave way on a number of points, and he declared "categorically" that the "teachers, students, workers and peasants have the right to strike and to free expression of their revolutionary ideology, and that he had never opposed nor would oppose the complete liberation of these important sectors of society".

The Hopelchén Incident and the Visit of General Múgica (February-March 1936)

But it was soon evident that this truce was really a false one, for the State authorities had little intention of keeping their pledges, and the B.R.M. and its allies were determined to continue their campaign for reform. Indeed, scarcely four days had gone by when (on 8th February) conservative elements in the village of Hopelchén fired on an assembly of members of the peasant Cooperative, wounding 27 and killing two (more according to some reports), one of the victims being a teacher.⁽¹⁾ A large number of peasants

(1) Personal interview with Prof. Ramón Berzunza Herrera, 11th Dec. 1968.

from the surrounding villages were celebrating the anniversary of the foundation of the Cooperative, and had just received a telegram of congratulations from Governor Mena Córdova, when they were fired upon. News of this was telegraphed to General Múgica by another teacher: (1)

"Reactionary Callista faction governing our State foully murdered teacher Joaquín Solís together with four peasants teachers of this town threatened with death by government thugs stop Urgently request you intervene to obtain guarantees for teachers stop."

This was a rare case where belated justice was done, since in August of the same year the widow of Solís Moguel was given 1,000 pesos compensation by the Ministry. (2) In any case more attention was soon to be paid to the situation in Campeche, for Múgica replied to the above telegram that he would soon be visiting the area - officially on a tour of inspection as Secretary of Communications, but also to investigate local politics and popular grievances.

In fact Múgica arrived by air in Ciudad del Carmen on 9th March, and according to an official communiqué he "took note of the disastrous condition of education there, since there exists only one rural school (3) with 25 pupils and where the teachers receive a maximum salary of 1 peso 75 centavos a day"; he therefore promised to ask the S.E.P. to attend to the matter. (4) Another report says that he visited all the schools in the town, and listened to petitions for the construction of a modern Central School for 1,400 pupils with laboratories and other equipment; (5) he immediately persuaded the Municipal

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- (1) Telegram, 11th Feb. 1936, from H. Moreno Martínez, director of the school of Champoton, to General Múgica. Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular 1935-1936.....C", p.121.
- (2) "Diario de Yucatán", 20th Aug. 1936. However, the local authorities appear to have followed up their repression by arresting some of the victims and trying to make them appear as the culprits; in December the "Francisco J. Múgica" Cooperative of Nunkiní protested to Mena Córdova, demanding the release of "the workers unjustly imprisoned on account of the events of Hopelchén" ("Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Senadores", 26th Dec. 1936).
- (3) This apparently did not include schools in the town itself, but referred to the surrounding countryside ("municipio").
- (4) "Diario del Sureste", 14th March 1936; and in Múgica archive, file "Recortes de Periódicos Sobre su Viaje al Sureste, marzo 1936".
- (5) "Diario de Yucatán", 11th March 1936; and in Múgica archive, loc. cit.

President and the Chief Engineer of the works of the Southeastern Railway to draw up provisional plans for this, and offered to donate clocks, sports equipment and a printing press to the existing schools. Later, in an assembly the teachers explained to him the aims of the strike movement, saying that it had been "woefully misrepresented" by a certain political group, and that the agreement arrived at with the Governor had not been fulfilled in all its points. Múgica agreed to investigate further and to report the matter to the President, and before leaving he presented them with two typewriters, a sewing machine, a radio and a collection of books "of socialist tendencies".

The next day he arrived in Campeche City, where he was received by various officials and many students, workers and peasants,⁽¹⁾ and made a speech praising the teachers:-⁽²⁾

"...Two powerful forces uphold the postulates of the Revolution: the intellectual force corresponding to the revolutionary teachers and the force of the National Army, which is formed by the soldiers of the Revolution, moulded on the battlefields, who handed over the banner of our conquests to the workers and the peasants, for these to preserve them in all their majestic dignity.

"With the help of the Army and of the teachers, the workers and the peasants are winning a more equitable life and a better distribution of their work. It is today that these benefits are beginning to be positively felt....."

After this, it was reported that Múgica "intervened in the settlement of latent difficulties of a social character in the State, carrying out active attempts at conciliation".⁽³⁾ In particular he attended a special meeting of the B.R.M.⁽⁴⁾ at which popular grievances were aired by a workers' representative, Eduardo Negrín of the "Federación Estudiantil Campechana", Dionisio Ek. of the peasant cooperatives of the "Camino Real", and the teacher Oscar González of the B.R.M. In reply Múgica promised to look into those matters which came under his jurisdiction and to proceed with justice; and in particular

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- (1) "Diario del Sureste", 11th March 1936; & in Múgica archive, loc.cit.
 (2) "Exélsior", 13th March 1936; also in "El Universal" and "El Nacional" of the same date, and in Múgica archive, file 10/110(726/-1.Legajo 5 ("Viaje al Sureste").
 (3) "Diario del Sureste", 12th March 1936; and in Múgica archive, file "Recortes de Periódicos...."
 (4) "Diario de Yucatán", 11th March 1936; and in Múgica archive, loc.cit.

offered to help the "Ferromax" labourers, for which he was warmly applauded. He then left for Yucatán, making brief stops in Hecelchakán and Bécal. (1)

During and shortly after his visit, a large number of letters and petitions were communicated to Múgica revealing further details of the situation in the State. A letter from the Union of Socialist Students of the "Escuela Regional Campesina" (previously "Escuela Normal Rural") of Hecelchakán, contained various interesting requests. First they asked that students in their final year should be provided with pistols, since "they will be the next to go out and struggle as rural teachers" (a fair indication of the occupational risks anticipated). They then demanded "ample guarantees" for local popular organisations which they themselves claimed to have formed - a peasant Cooperative, a Union of Workers and Peasants, a Union of Roadmen and Waggoners, and a Committee for the Defence of Women's Rights. Finally, they requested that Múgica use his influence with the State Government to bring about the dissolution of the "bosses' union" ("Sindicato Blanco") maintained by certain politicians "at the service of the reaction" who obstructed the work of the School and had re-opened the local Church. (2) These allegations were supported by another letter, from the Union of Workers and Peasants ("Sindicato de Obreros y Campesinos de Hecelchakán") and bearing over 150 signatures. (3)

This demanded:-

"I.- The closure of the other Union called 'SINDICATO ROJO DE CAMPESINOS', whose General Secretary is Sr. José del C. Ortega, a general supplier, who is not known as a Peasant but as a Tradesman, the same as with other Members, who are of the same ilk, and who work against the 'Escuela Regional Campesina'....(and) To whose work the opening of the Catholic Church is to be attributed....

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- (1) "Diario de Yucatán", 12th March 1936; and in Múgica archive, loc.cit.
 (2) Letter to Múgica from the "Unión de Estudiantes Socialistas de la E.R.C. de Hecelchakán"; undated, but appears to be early March 1936 from the context. In Múgica archive, unclassified file ("Viaje al Sureste").
 (3) Letter to Múgica, 10th March 1936, from the "Sindicato de Obreros y Campesinos de Hecelchakán"; Múgica archive, loc.cit.

"II - Immediate punishment of the suspected authors of the outrages and crimes committed in the Town of Hopelohén....

"III - We insist on the resolution of the List of Demands sent to the Governor of the State by the Revolutionary Teachers and the Revolutionary Organisations, demanding the dismissal of the Acting Justice of the Peace and the Deputy Justice ('Suplente') and also of the Secretary of the said Court..."

The problems of the "Ferromex" labourers also had political overtones and caused many petitions and counter-petitions. Among other things, the B.R.M. offered their full collaboration in supplying teachers to work among the labourers constructing the Southeastern Railway.⁽¹⁾ But in fact the situation among the construction workers on the Railway was full of political tensions, as was to become apparent later when the teachers became more closely involved in it.

The Growth of the Independent Unions and their Conflict with the F.R.C.C.

March-August 1936

The background to all these disputes was the steady growth of independent organisations of peasants and workers all over Campeche, frequently organised and helped by the teachers; and by the spring of 1936 the relationship of the State authorities with these independent groups was one of undeclared war. At the beginning of April a letter from the B.R.M. and other organisations⁽²⁾ in Ciudad del Carmen complained of the non-fulfilment of many agreements. Nothing had been done about the repairs to school buildings, promised by the Municipal President during Múgica's visit; the teachers' minimum salary had not been raised to 80 pesos a month as provided in the agreement signed on February 4th; and the two reinstated teachers of the town had not received their back pay. Finally, several Unions "organised by the teachers to

(1) Múgica archive, file 10/110(726)/-1 ("Viaje al Sureste"), legajos 4 & 6.

(2) Letter to Múgica, 26th March 1936, from Ciudad del Carmen, signed by a representative of the B.R.M., the Secretary General of the "Sindicato Independiente de Marineros", and the Secretary General of the "Sindicato Independiente de Agricultores" and the Secretary General of the "Sindicato de Chieleros del Municipio del Carmen". In Múgica archive, loc.cit.

achieve the workers' independence" from local political tutelage had been denied recognition. The opposition saw in this a deliberate policy of repression, and in the succeeding months the protests against Mena Córdova and his associates multiplied.

A favourite target of invective was the F.R.O.C. ("Federación Regional de Obreros y Campesinos"), a labour federation to which most of the official Unions in the State belonged; thus a letter from several teachers and independent leaders, dated 23rd April,⁽¹⁾ protested against the counter-revolutionary activities of the local section of the F.R.O.C. led by Arturo Vázquez and Dionisio Basulto, "men lacking in common sense and who have long been known as enemies of the unification of the workers in the State". The opposition maintained that the Unions affiliated to the F.R.O.C. were weak or non-existent creations of the State Government, and although it is difficult to prove this, there is strong evidence that the independent unions were gaining ground. Both factions attempted to organise Labour Day demonstrations for the 1st of May, and the independent groups put out a "Manifiesto to the Proletariat of Campeche", which is interesting chiefly for the list of organisations signing it; these included unions of electricians, truck drivers, railway construction workers, taxi drivers, carpenters, mechanics, teachers and students. This list probably gives some idea of where the strength of the independent unions lay, ⁽²⁾ although it is not complete (no peasant organisations are mentioned, and the important "Federación de Cooperativas Revolucionarias" is missing). The manifesto itself is very brief, and calls for higher wages, a halt to rising prices, and a struggle against the monopolist "caciques"; it also, interestingly, inveighs against Calles, Morones and their followers. This was of course fashionable in the national political climate of 1935-1936; but undoubtedly many of the local political bosses in Mexico were, at that time, "callistas" at least in the sense that they had originally risen to power under Calles and had since trimmed their sails to the prevailing wind.

(1) Méjica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular 1935-1936...C", p.130.

(2) "Manifiesto al Proletariado Campechano" by the "Comité Pro-Primer de Mayo", 26th April 1936 in Campeche City. Méjica archive, file 10/110/-16 legajo 3, "Viaje al Norte", p.38.

Interesting light is thrown on the national context of the situation in Campeche by a letter sent to Múgica in May 1936 from a certain Sr. José J. Cabrera of Mérida, Yucatán.⁽¹⁾ Cabrera warned that the P.N.R. was pursuing in the Southeastern States a policy contrary to the interests of Cárdenas. He alleged that the President of the P.N.R. (Portes Gil, who was shortly to come under attack from the Left Wing of the Senate) was intriguing with the most prominent "callistas" of the region in order that they should help him to absorb the popular organisations of Yucatán, Campeche and Tabasco into the C.G.T. ("Confederación General de Trabajadores"), "which they have already done in the State of Campeche, where by means of a false manoeuvre they took over the most important and best organised group in the State" (probably meaning the F.R.O.C.), which had originally been formed under the banner of "cardenismo". To achieve this, said Cabrera, they had made the popular organisations believe that their absorption by the C.G.T. was a tacit agreement of Cárdenas.

The inter-union conflict caused a brief polemic at the end of June in the columns of the pro-Cárdenas newspaper "Diario del Sureste". The leaders of the F.R.O.C., Vicente Peraza C. and Arturo Vázquez L. made a statement referring to "recent declarations of General Cárdenas" with which they claimed to agree, and then referred to the work of the teachers, who they said should give orientation to the children and workers, helping them to organise and to win their social and economic liberation, but should on no account "become involved in their political struggles".⁽²⁾ This brought a prompt reply from Juan Segundo Güemes of the B.R.M., who sent in "important documents" about the activities of the teachers and the workers' delegates in a recent Congress in Campeche.

These declarations were only a reflection of the agitation going on throughout the State; a few days later the student leader Eduardo Negrín Basza

(1) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular 1935-1936.... 'C'", pp. 26-32.

(2) "Diario del Sureste", 1st July 1936.

declared the students' support for a strike by the Road Labourers' Union and the Agrarian Committee of Bolonchenticul, and protested against unspecified abuses committed by the local authorities against students of the E.R.C. of Hecelchakán and against peasants and students of Bolonchenticul. (1) Juan Segundo Güemes was also involved in a demand for "amparo" on behalf of the same students.

Some of these and similar conflicts were probably connected with the recent election of a Senator to represent the first and second electoral districts of the State, the official candidate being Lic. Pablo E. Sotelo Regil with Benjamín Romero Esquivel as substitute ("suplente"), and the opposition being represented by Carlos Góngora Gala and Carlos Manzanilla Uribe of the "Gran Partido Socialista Pro-Campeche". First reports indicated the predictable victory of the official ticket, although admitting the opposition's strength in Mécal and Calkiní, (2) but this verdict was later reversed by the Senate in Mexico City, (3) a rare decision which implies that the voting strength of the independents was overwhelming and that they had some important friends in the Federal Government (probably Múgica and the left-wing block of the Senate led by Ernesto Soto Reyes; and Cárdenas may well have been sympathetic). In the next three years, Góngora Gala was to be a valuable ally of the opposition in the State.

Towards the end of July the State was honoured by a visit from the leaders of the new "cardenista" labour federation, the C.T.M. Rubén Magaña and Fidel Velázquez (just embarking on a profitable career as a life-long labour leader) (4) arrived on 23rd July from a congress in Mérida and inaugurated an assembly of the F.R.O.C.; later they visited the independent unions and

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 10th July 1936.

(2) Ibid., 12th July 1936.

(3) Ibid., 24th, 25th and 27th Aug. 1936.

(4) Velázquez is now Secretary-General of the C.T.M., a position he has held since 1940 and which is reputed to have brought him considerable personal gain.

optimistically expressed the hope that a united labour federation could be formed in Campeche by the end of the year.⁽¹⁾ They did achieve, remarkably enough, the signing of a "non-aggression pact" between the F.R.O.C. and the independent unions "adhering to the 'Bloque de Maestros Federales'" (sic).

But the worthlessness of this pact was soon apparent as the F.R.O.C. began a concerted propaganda campaign against the most active teachers. Already its leaders had announced that they were petitioning the Federal Government for the removal of Claudio Cortés and Juan Pacheco Torres (Director of the E.R.C. of Hecelchakán).⁽²⁾ On 12th August they followed this up with a complaint from one of their unions, the "Sindicato de Agricultores" of Bécál, requesting the removal of the local teachers Fernando Moguel and Francisco Villanueva for having assaulted the "comrade" Carlos Laviada.⁽³⁾ But according to other reports, Carlos Laviada Montero was the aggressor, not the victim; and he was well known as a "cacique" connected with local landowners. The correspondent of the "Diario del Sureste" reported on 15th August⁽⁴⁾ that one Matilde Chí of the Cooperative "Sombrereros Becaleños" had been stoned by Laviada, and that the teacher Moguel was demanding safeguards from the Governor for the workers who were "constantly insulted" by the said individual. The correspondent also alleged that Laviada had made threats on his life for reporting the "just complaints" of the peasants. Two days later he reported further complaints from the peasants, and another assault by Laviada on Matilde Chí.⁽⁵⁾

The F.R.O.C. failed to achieve its aim and therefore on 3rd September made further charges against Moguel,⁽⁶⁾ claiming that he had interfered in the affairs of their affiliated unions and demanding his removal. Moguel was

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 25th and 26th July 1936.

(2) Ibid., 18th July 1936.

(3) "Diario de Yucatán", 13th Aug. 1936 (report dated 12th Aug.).

(4) "Diario del Sureste", 16th Aug. 1936 (report dated 15th Aug.).

(5) Ibid., 19th Aug. 1936 (report dated 17th Aug.).

(6) "Diario de Yucatán", 3rd Sept. 1936.

evidently very active, for as late as October they were still attempting to get rid of him.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, the situation in Bécal has evidently become very tense, for on 14th September the F.R.O.C. alleged that another teacher, José Guadalupe Novelo, had instigated an attack the previous night on the office of their affiliates.⁽²⁾ At the same time they extended their complaints to teachers in other villages, in particular Nunkiní and Calkiní.⁽³⁾

In Hecelchakán there was a continuous conflict between the "Sindicato Rojo de Campesinos" (F.R.O.C.) and the "Sindicato de Obreros y Campesinos" (independent, organised by teachers from the E.R.C.). It will be remembered that in March General Múgica had received a letter from 150 members of the independent union, describing the "Sindicato Rojo" as a bosses' union whose leader, Sr. Urtegón, was not a peasant but a local tradesman. In August this dispute reached a critical stage; the teacher Juan Segundo Gúemes visited Hecelchakán on behalf of the "Regional Committee for Proletarian Defence", a left-wing organisation backed by the teachers, and after complex negotiations a compromise was reached.⁽⁴⁾ But on 20th October the "Sindicato Rojo" made further complaints, and Governor Mena Córdova visited the town on the 21st. Under heavy pressure from a mass meeting of peasants belonging to the independent union and organised by the teachers, he arranged a new compromise;⁽⁵⁾ but this did not last, and the inter-union dispute was still causing trouble in January 1937.⁽⁶⁾

(1) *Ibid.*, 7th Oct. 1936.

(2) "Diario de Yucatán", 15th Sept. 1936 (report dated 14th Sept.).

(3) *Ibid.*, 12th Sept. 1936.

(4) "Diario del Sureste", 10th Aug. 1936; "Diario de Yucatán", 14th, 17th, 19th and 28th Aug. 1936.

(5) "Diario de Yucatán", 20th Aug. and 22nd and 28th Oct. 1936.

(6) *Ibid.*, 28th Jan. 1937.

The Victory of Senator Góngora Gala and the Increased Militancy of the Independents, August-October 1936

It was towards the end of August 1936 that the Left in Campeche won an important victory on the political front with the recognition by the Senate of Góngora Gala's triumph in the senatorial elections of the previous month. News of this was cause for immediate celebration amongst the independent organisations. On August 21st a large meeting was organised in Independence Square in Campeche City by the "Federación Estudiantil Revolucionaria" and the "Partido Socialista Pro-Campeche".⁽¹⁾ A labourer who addressed the meeting described the sad situation of the workers in the State as a result of "political continuism", and said that the triumph of Góngora Gala was that of the workers. He was followed by two teachers of the B.R.M., Fernando Trejo C. and José Guadalupe Novelo, who called on the people of Campeche to organise a "Popular Alliance" (this "Alianza Popular" was in fact later created and became the main political expression of the independent groups).

Similar meetings were held in other parts of the State; one was organised on 23rd August in Dixitbalché, by the "Federación de Cooperativas Revolucionarias".⁽²⁾ It was agreed to congratulate the federal Congress for having recognised "the credential of the candidate of the people of Campeche for Senator, Colonel Carlos Góngora Gala". It was also decided to send a petition to the President calling for the expulsion ("desafuero") of Senator Angel Castillo Lanz, and another petition to the State Congress calling for the expulsion of the local deputies José León Montero, Juan Barbosa and José Centurión. Four teachers were also among those who spoke at this meeting (Manuel Burgos, Arsenio Ek, Fernando Salazar and Fernando Turriza). In Hecolchakan a demonstration was organised on the same day by the "Federación de Cooperativas Revolucionarias" and the "Sindicato de Obreros y Campesinos", as a gesture of support to the Left-wing

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(1) "Diario del Sureste", 24th Aug. 1936.

(2) Ibid., 25th Aug. 1936.

of the Senate" for having favoured Góngora Gala, and attacking the same three local deputies. (1) A few days later a demonstration was organised in Bécál by a group called the Popular Front, which embraced two local Cooperatives, a peasant union and a straw-hat makers' union (this was a local craft). (2) Here too there were attacks on Castillo Lanz and the local deputies, and support for Góngora Gala; the teacher Fernando Moguel (a favourite target of the F.R.O.C., as has been seen) said optimistically that with Góngora Gala's victory the oppressive "cacicazgos" of the region would soon come to an end.

The B.R.M. seems at this stage to have been gaining in confidence and militancy. Following another broadside from the F.R.O.C. which called for the dismissal of teachers who "interfere in political matters, neglecting their educational work", a strong statement was issued by Gláfiro Molina Redio and Fernando Trejo Carrillo of the B.R.M.'s Committee. (3) They condemned "this organisation known as the F.R.O.C., of frankly reactionary tendencies" for opposing the teachers who were only carrying out "disinterested work" to create a "well-defined class consciousness" in the proletariat, which would have to achieve its emancipation by means of national unity. The statement continued:-

"This F.R.O.C., an enemy of unification as it has shown in various talks intended to unite the workers of Campeche beneath the banner of the C.T.M., is in this case simply making intense propaganda in order to carry on deceiving large groups of workers and diverting genuine revolutionary work towards personal political ends, something which it will not achieve; because the workers already know the tricks used by the said F.R.O.C., always accusing the teachers of politicking, without taking into account that the task of the teachers is that of consolidating the postulates of the School of Socialist Orientation to the benefit of the labouring masses and in collaboration with General Lázaro Cárdenas, in his Government, which has as its basis the Six Year Plan".

This polemic was only a reflection of the B.R.M.'s expanding activities which were also manifest in its participation in a conference of militant teachers in Mexico City early in September. These "Jornadas Magisteriales"

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- (1) Ibid., 27th Aug.1936.
 (2) Ibid., 1st Sept.1936.
 (3) Ibid., 27th Aug.1936.

were organised by the C.N.T.E., to which the B.R.M. was now affiliated, and there was a large delegation from Campeche.⁽¹⁾ It was also the main force behind the growth in Campeche of the C.R.D.P. (Regional Committee for Proletarian Defence), to which several independent groups were affiliated, and whose main function was to denounce and prevent abuses or attacks on peasants and workers. On 14th September⁽²⁾ it denounced the arrest the previous day in Champotón of Juan Denegri and the attempted arrest of Manuel Denegri, General Secretary of the "Society of Friends of the School", by "hired agents of the municipal authorities". A few days later a certain Claudio Espina registered a complaint with the local branch of the "Departamento Agrario", accusing the teachers of Champotón of divisive activities among the workers;⁽³⁾ the teachers replied that Espina was well known in Champotón and in the "ejidos" of Palizada as a counter-revolutionary and enemy of the peasants. They also claimed that Espina was acting because of a personal grudge against the teacher José María Nar.

In all this work of agitation and opposition to the State authorities, it is difficult to tell how much practical help the independent organisations received from sympathetic national politicians; their most direct support appears to have come from General Múgica. Thus his Ministry financed the construction of the new buildings of the "Escuela Regional Campesina" of Hecelchakán; on 29th September the Administrative Council in charge of the construction was created on Múgica's instructions.⁽⁴⁾ The E.R.C., still working in its old quarters, had played a prominent part right from the start of the independent unions in Campeche, and it was also very active in terms of social work in the surrounding villages - thus in September it helped to instal an electricity generating plant in the village of Dzitnúp.⁽⁵⁾ In

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- (1) *Ibid.*, 15th Sept. 1936; and "Diario de Yucatán", 26th Aug. 1936.
 (2) "Diario del Sureste" 18th Sept. 1936 (report dated 14th Sept.).
 (3) *Ibid.*, 26th Sept. 1936.
 (4) "Diario de Yucatán", 2nd Oct. 1936 (report dated 30th Sept.).
 (5) *Ibid.*, 20th Sept. 1936.

addition to helping the E.R.C., Múgica often donated equipment of one kind or another to primary schools in different parts of the State.⁽¹⁾

As a result of such gestures and of their correspondence with him, many activists among the opposition in Campeche became enthusiastic "mugiquistas"; thus on 25th October the "Federación de Estudiantes Revolucionarios" declared its support for his "revolutionary work" as Secretary of Communications, condemning the "reactionary wave" of criticism directed against him on account of his identification with the working classes.⁽²⁾ Towards the end of October Múgica sent his Chief Clerk, Fernando Angli Lara (himself an ex-teacher and originally from Campeche) on a tour of inspection through the South-Eastern States. Angli Lara reported on 24th October,⁽³⁾ about the situation in Hecolchakán, where he said he had attempted to help in the solution of the difficult inter-union conflict between "the peasants.....who control Hecolchakán", whom he described as "our friends", and the "small group adhering to the F.R.O.C. and aided by Mena Córdova". He had evidently visited the place shortly after Mena Córdova's visit of 21st October, and his version of events is very interesting:-

"....I expected to come across him in that pleasant Town; unfortunately our peasants are in such a serious state of excitement and so angry because of the tricks which have been played on them by the Government of the State, that when I arrived the Governor had already been literally thrown out of the village by the Indians who accompanied him as far as the Station shouting improprieties at him and demanding that he put an end to the situation there.

"The scandal was so great, that the Governor found himself obliged to sign a document in which he ordered the suspension of the tasks which on his orders had been given to the F.R.O.C.'s members to the detriment of the interests of the majority of the people.?"...."

Angli Lara said he had also visited Calkiní, and that there too the inhabitants had assumed "an aggressive attitude against Mena Córdova", forcing

(1) Ibid., 8th Oct.1936.

(2) "Diario del Sureste", 26th Oct.1936 (press release dated 25th Oct.).

(3) Múgica archive, file 10/101(726.4)/1 - letter to Múgica, 24th Oct.1936, from Prof.Fernando Enrique Angli Lara in Mérida, Yuc. Also "Diario de Yucatán", 23rd Oct.1936.

him to settle an inter-union conflict in the straw-hat trade. Angli was also given a memorandum by Ramón Berzunza Pinto of the B.R.M.⁽¹⁾ complaining of the activities of a certain priest in Bécal and Calkiní, who with the aid of the unpopular local deputy José León Montero, of Montero's nephew Mario (Municipal President of Bécal) and of Ignacio Reyes Ortega, was collecting money to help the Spanish falangists.

Increasing Tension and Outbreaks of Violence (November-December 1936)

During October and November the C.R.D.P. continued to gain ground at the expense of the official unions. At the end of October it was taking legal proceedings against the "Junta Central de Conciliación y Arbitraje", which had once again refused to register one of its member unions.⁽²⁾ A week later Juan Segundo Gúemes announced that the C.R.D.P. had received several new applications for membership, from unions of seamen, dockers and transport workers in Ciudad del Carmen and Lerma.⁽³⁾

On 15th November the F.R.O.C. issued a manifesto condemning the C.R.D.P., the B.R.M. and allied groups as "illegitimate" and in rebellion against the C.T.M., and claimed that it alone represented the workers of Campeche and had 109 affiliated organisations.⁽⁴⁾ In spite of this, a few days later the C.R.D.P. announced that another group, a Russian Workers Union of Matamoros, near Ciudad del Carmen, had applied for admission because it "considers this organisation to be representative of the revolutionary movement in the State".⁽⁵⁾ On 20th and 21st November the C.R.D.P. held a general meeting to discuss the problems of its member unions. At this meeting there were expressions of satisfaction at the growth of the organisation and its revolutionary prestige,

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- (1) Ibid., memorandum from Ramón Berzunza Pinto to F. Angli, 27th Oct. 1936.
 (2) "Diario de Yucatán", 30th Oct. 1936.
 (3) Ibid., 7th Nov. 1936, and "Diario del Sureste", 7th Nov. 1936.
 (4) Ibid., 15th Nov. 1936.
 (5) Ibid., 18th Nov. 1936.

and a monthly quota was fixed for the member unions. A new Executive Committee was elected, and it is interesting that two of its five members were teachers (José Guadalupe Novelo and Juan Segundo Guemes, the latter being General Secretary).⁽¹⁾

The activities of the C.R.D.P. also led in November to an inter-union conflict among the "Ferrerex" workers. Here the F.R.O.C. claimed to have won a new affiliated union, and one of its officials condemned the activities of the "Sindicato de Terraceros" for being "under the direction of the federal teachers".⁽²⁾ In fact this man was an accountant of the Company, and the "Sindicato de Terraceros" had just disaffiliated from the F.R.O.C., which explains his anger.⁽³⁾

Tension was rapidly increasing throughout the State, and led to a number of violent incidents. On 11th November various popular organisations protested on account of the incident in Hampolol (near Dzitbalché) in which several peasants were injured and Alejandro Hernández, a member of the local cooperative, was killed by "enemies of the organised workers".⁽⁴⁾ They also protested against other (unspecified) acts of violence committed against the peasants of Nunkirí, Dzibalchén, Hecelchakán and Bécal. On 18th November⁽⁵⁾ the "ejidatarios" of Bécal protested against an assault on the teacher José del Carmen Chí by señor Pablo Montero, and demanded that the authorities should put a stop to such incidents. On 2nd December there were serious disturbances in Peoboc, near Hecelchakán, involving Enrique Ortégón, the leader of the "Sindicato Rojo de Campesinos" affiliated to the F.R.O.C. (see above, pp. and). Initial reports⁽⁶⁾ indicated that at 10 p.m. on the 2nd, Ortégón's house was attacked by a group of people from Hecelchakán, armed with rifles and machetes. But on the evening of the 3rd two student leaders declared

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- (1) "Diario del Sureste", 25th Nov. 1936.
 (2) "Diario del Sureste", 14th Nov. 1936.
 (3) Ibid., 17th Nov. 1936.
 (4) Ibid., 14th Nov. 1936 (report dated 11th Nov.).
 (5) Ibid., 20th Nov. 1936 (report dated 18th Nov.).
 (6) Ibid., 3rd Dec. 1936 (report dated 2nd Dec.).

that they had gone to Pooboc that day to investigate the situation, (1) and had found that Ortegón was not the victim, since it was he who had shot on the crowd, wounding the peasant Drib Euán who was attending a village meeting in the school-house. Another declaration was made by the B.R.M., as follows:-

"Last night the federal rural school of Pooboc was assaulted and shot up by a group of political hacks led by Enrique Ortegón, ex municipal president of Hecelchakán and other official people; and as a result the peasant Florentino Ceh who was in the said school was seriously wounded....." (2)

On the 4th it was reported that Ortegón was under arrest in Campeche City, still maintaining his version of events. (3) From all this it would appear probable that Ortegón and a few of his supporters from the "Sindicato Rojo" had attacked a meeting of peasants organised by the teachers in the school-house, but had met with more resistance than they expected and had been outnumbered and besieged in Ortegón's house. The situation in parts of the State, notably the "Camino Real", was clearly becoming untenable, with such incidents liable to break out at the slightest provocation.

The Visit of the Senatorial Commission and the Dzitbalché Incident (5th-10th December 1936).

By this time the state of affairs in Campeche had aroused the concern of the Federal Government, and at the beginning of December the Senate sent a commission of three of its members to investigate. These three Senators, Julián Garza Tijerina of Nuevo León, Augusto Hernández Oliver of Tabasco, and Félix C. Rodríguez of Tlaxcala, arrived in Campeche by air on the evening of 5th December. (4)

(1) *Ibid.*, 4th Dec. 1936 (report dated 3rd Dec.).

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid.*, 5th Dec. 1936 (report dated 4th Dec.); & "El Machete", 2nd Jan. 1937.

(4) "Diario de Yucatán", 7th Dec. 1936, and "Diario del Sureste", 7th Dec. 1936.

The Senators were welcomed at the airfield by delegates of the B.R.M., the C.R.D.P. and the "Alianza Popular", and at 5 p.m. a mass meeting was held in Independence Square in Campeche City, at which sharp criticisms were made of Mena Córdova, Castillo Lanz and others. Among those speaking were Ramón Berzunza Pinto of the B.R.M., who is now revealed to be local delegate of the Mexican Communist Party; Jorge Burad in representation of the students; Claudio Cortés; the teacher Castillo Loria, Secretary General of the Mexican Communist Party in Campeche; and several peasants and workers who spoke in the Mayan language. Senator Félix Rodríguez congratulated the demonstrators on their frankness, and expressed his admiration for Góngora Gala. After one or two more speeches, Sr. Adrián Morales, President of the State Committee of the P.N.R., attempted to defend himself against an accusation of electoral fraud which had been levelled against him, but the meeting refused to hear him.

On the following day, the F.R.O.C. responded by holding an extraordinary meeting attended by the Senators, and according to the "Diario del Sureste,"⁽¹⁾ the room where the meeting took place was overflowing with representatives of the 110 unions affiliated to the F.R.O.C. Arturo Vázquez L. of the organisation's committee announced that the senatorial commission had come mainly in response to their own complaints against certain "political agitators", and made various allegations against the teachers and other leftist leaders.

In reply to Vázquez, Senator Rodríguez commented that he had noticed that the independents, in their criticisms of the State Government and its collaborators, used the hostile epithet "callistas". He wanted to stress that some time ago "callismo" had been entirely suppressed throughout the country, and therefore those who used the term against their political enemies were committing a grave error. Following this, Senator Hernández Oliver declared

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 8th Dec. 1936.

that if the teachers were found by the Commission to be guilty of the charges brought against them, they would be excluded from public life in the State; but that if the State Government was to blame, the Commission would call for its dissolution ("desecondimiento de los poderes") by the President.

On 7th December when the Senators began visiting the villages of the "Camino Real", serious trouble flared up. At 2 p.m. when they arrived by rail in Dzitbalché, there was a violent encounter leading to one death and several other casualties. Several telegrams were sent to the Governor, who requested military assistance, and the Commander of the 23rd Military Zone, General Lorenzo Muñoz Merino, ordered the immediate mobilisation of the federal detachment in Calkiní.⁽¹⁾

Further details of the incident were provided by Marcelo M. Poot, a committee member of the "Sindicato de Agricultores 'Paz y Unión'" of Dzitbalché, who arrived in Campeche City the next morning suffering from several wounds "apparently caused by stones". Poot declared that when the Senators arrived, he was at the local railway station with a group of peasants from his union, hoping to interview the Commission; but that when he began to address them, the teachers Claudio Cortés and Ramón Barzanza Pinto shouted "That isn't true!" and urged on a group of more than 100 peasants from the cooperative to attack them. At this point, according to Marcelo Poot, Hector Caamal (Municipal President of Dzitbalché) and Dionisio Ek, the president of the cooperative, shouted "Kill them!", and he noticed that José Patrón Miranda was firing his pistol at Julio Poot, who fell seriously wounded, while Claudio Cortés was also shooting at Julio Poot but missing. Julio Poot was the uncle of Marcelo, who fled rapidly from the scene. This story was backed by Guadalupe Carril, who also said that when he tried to arrest Patrón Miranda, one of the Senators prevented this saying that he would answer for Patrón.

(1) "Diario de Yucatán", 9th Dec.1936, and "Diario del Sureste", 9th Dec.1936.

However, a rather different version of events was given by two of the Senators themselves, Garza Tijerina and Rodríguez, when they arrived in Mérida on 9th December. Interviewed for the "Diario del Sureste", (1) Garza Tijerina declared that in Dzitbalché, they were met at the railway station by a group of "about three hundred" people, and there and then one man tried to speak but was prevented by various others; and since nothing could be resolved there, they decided to walk to the centre of the town to discuss the matter. But, continued the report:-

"They had scarcely walked twenty paces when they began to hear the shouting of the crowd, and indeed members of the local union, about fifteen in number, were already fighting with the group of cooperative peasants who numbered approximately three hundred. Later they learned that in the brawl there were four people wounded on the side of the union members and one from the co-operative; that most of the wounds inflicted on members of the cooperative were from knives. A little later they heard also that one of the victims had died. That the Commission deplures the events and considers that they were due to an imprudent action by the minority group."

A similar version of events, expressed in stronger terms, was given by the B.R.M. in a press release published in the "Diario del Sureste" on 10th December. (2) They stated that the truth of the matter had been shamefully distorted, making the teachers who accompanied the peasants appear as aggressors and murderers, when in fact everything was due to the "Criminal work of the leaders of the so-called F.R.O.C. and the venal State authorities". These people, they said, had told their agents to provoke disturbances during the Senatorial tour, and this had been achieved in Dzitbalché by inflaming a group of peasants with drink and sending them against "the great mass of the people" and against the Senators themselves. The statement went on as follows:-

".....This attitude which provoked the wrath of the multitude, produced the tragic and inevitable result of the useless sacrifice of the peasant Julio Poot, who was not murdered by the teachers Cortés and Patrón, as is asserted with criminal intent in the aforementioned account....."

This Statement was backed up by a telegram from Claudio Cortés himself to the "Diario del Sureste":- (3)

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- (1) "Diario del Sureste", 10th Dec. 1936.
 - (2) "Diario del Sureste", 10th Dec. 1936.
 - (3) Ibid.

".....Request space in People's Newspaper for protest this Inspector General against Marcelo Poot's statements published 'Diario Yucatán' by which said individual hopes to mislead public opinion (and) make pass unnoticed attack Marcelo Poot himself prepared with ten or twelve men against commission Senators, teachers and cooperative peasants plotting agreement enemies of Socialist Education and policy of General Cárdenas, disgusting manoeuvre saying I personally fired pistol, which did not have, without hitting target."

The following day the B.R.M. published another statement providing further evidence in favour of their accusations against Marcelo Poot and the F.R.O.C. (1)

Although there were no other incidents of violence during the senatorial tour, there was great tension everywhere. A few hours before arriving in Dzitbalché, the Senators had passed through Hecelchakán, accompanied by Colonel José J. Araiza (Migón's representative on the "Ferrosmex" Company, and an enemy of the F.R.O.C.) and the teachers Claudio Cortes, Carlos Castillo Loria, Ramon Berzunza Pinto, Rosario Utal Briseño, Guadalupe Chan Perera and Asunción Medina E. (2) They walked to the centre of the town amid "shouting, cheers, fireworks and protests against the present (State) Government and its agencies....." The same day, after the fatal incident at Dzitbalché, the Senators visited Calkiní, where they were well received by a crowd of peasants and workers. But, according to the "Diario de Yucatán", (3) "Since among those accompanying the Commission were certain teachers who are not welcome here", those present showed their discontent and asked for them to withdraw, although they were allowed to stay after a short argument.

The Senators, having first visited Mérida, returned by air to Mexico City on 10th December. (4) Later they made declarations to the national press, (5) to the effect that they were in serious danger of their lives in Dzitbalché,

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- (1) Ibid., 11th Dec. 1936 (statement dated 10th Dec.).
 (2) "Diario de Yucatán", 9th Dec. 1936 (report dated 8th Dec.).
 (3) Ibid.,
 (4) "Diario del Sureste", 11th Dec. 1936 (report dated 10th Dec.).
 (5) "La Prensa" 12th Dec. 1936.

owing to a clash between rival political groups. Senator Félix Rodríguez added that the attack was not directed intentionally against the Senators, but took place in their presence. Also in Mexico City, Senator Angel Castillo Lanz (who as an interested party had naturally not been included in the Commission), said that although he did not know what would be said in the Commission's report, he thought this would be "tendentious" to judge by the attitude of the Senators involved and the places they visited. Castillo Lanz had good reason to be concerned; while the opposition in Campeche remained purely local it could achieve little, but once it began to win support from national politicians, his power was seriously threatened.

The P.R.R.'s Internal Elections in Campeche (20th December 1936)

In Campeche the F.R.O.C. was evidently dissatisfied with the results of the Senators' visit, and on 11th December it announced a one-day strike for the 14th in protest against what it regarded as a biased investigation. It also announced, with surprising lack of tact, that "to protect its members" it was going to form two "brigadas de choque" of 100 men each. (1) At the same time several groups protested against the F.R.O.C. and against Sr. Adrián Morales, representative of the P.N.R. in Campeche. The "Alianza Popular Revolucionaria" declared:-

"This Alliance protests energetically at the forceful lock out which the F.R.O.C. wants to carry out on Monday the 14th of this month, caused according to them, by the partiality of the left wing Senators who came precisely to investigate the repressions committed by the State Government....."

"The 'Alianza Popular' considers that since the Advisor of the F.R.O.C., Arturo Vásquez, is a hired servant of the Government, the much-wanted strike of this skeleton organisation (which has no support among the workers, as it has shown in demonstrations), represents the defence of the Government in the face of the serene and just attitude of the Senatorial Commission....."

The strike was reported in the "Diario del Sureste" as having been

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 12th Dec. 1936 (report dated 11th Dec.).

quite successful, ⁽¹⁾ but the C.R.D.P. made a statement denying this and saying that a demonstration organised by the F.R.O.C. on the day of the strike consisted of only 80 people. ⁽²⁾

Further friction developed in relation to the elections for new municipal committees and a new State Committee of the P.N.R., held on 20th December. A report the following day ⁽³⁾ began by stating that in Campeche City the elections had taken place "in perfect order", but it went on to describe a situation of some confusion, which is perhaps not surprising since it was the custom to vote by a count of the people present at meetings organized by supporters of the different candidates. At a meeting of the supporters of the pro-Government candidates (led by Domingo Granados), a count was taken and came to over 2,000 and those present appear to have assumed that they had won. However, the "Alianza Popular" also seems to have assumed that victory was on its side, since its General Secretary, Rafael Alcalá Dondé, telegraphed the following message to the "Diario del Sureste", that night:-

"Request publication following information: By virtue overwhelming majority obtained in elections held today ticket proposed by this 'Alianza Popular', P.N.R. municipal committee installed itself in house number 152 twelfth street this city, because Adrián Morales, acting president State committee refused to facilitate appropriate building..." ⁽⁴⁾

The campaign is described in rather more colourful detail in a letter to Múgica from the teacher Natalia Ortiz Avila, the day after the elections. ⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) Ibid., 15th Dec. 1936.
 (2) Ibid., 16th Dec. 1936. About this time the opposition sent in a whole series of protests against the State Government, calling for its dissolution by the Federal Government. See "Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Senadores", 26th Dec. 1936.
 (3) "Diario del Sureste", 21st Dec. 1936 (report dated 20th Dec.).
 (4) Ibid., the same thing seems to have happened in Campeche, where the local branch of the "Alianza" wrote to the Senate in Mexico City saying it had set up a Municipal Committee on its own initiative, since the local authorities had prevented its members from voting ("Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Senadores" 26th Dec. 1936).
 (5) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937... 'C'"; letter to Múgica from Profa. Natalia Ortiz Avila of Campeche, dated 21st Dec. 1936. Múgica's reply (9th Jan. 1937) is addressed to the "srta. profas. Natalia Ortiz y Etelvina Calderón C.", hence the inclusion of both letters under "C".

During the last few days, she says, their struggle has been intense:-

"...we were touring the villages organizing the United Front for Women's Rights and yesterday....when we hoped to see our efforts partially rewarded, once again the reactionary Government of Mena Córdova, staked out its claim bribing and intoxicating the peasants so that, no longer conscious of their actions they would cast their votes in its favour and they paraded through the streets insulting the teachers shouting vulgarities at us and calling us 'Church burners' ('quemá-santos'). Our people were few in comparison with that group of drunkards and fanatics for whom the buses were waiting at the doors of the churches to take them to the 'Paseo de los Héroes' where the poll of the Government's supporters was to take place....

"The representative of the P.N.R. another one who had sold out to Mena Córdova (sic) did not answer our call when he was told he could come to carry out the poll because he had been before and he was not allowed to do it...."

Cases of electoral malpractice were not confined to Campeche City, and on 21st December the B.R.M. declared that the previous day, when the electors of Bécal were returning from Calkiní where they had to go to vote, the well known local deputy José León Montero, together with his nephew Mario Montero (Municipal President of Bécal) and "a group of thugs" provoked a violent clash as a result of which the teacher Francisco Villanueva was seriously wounded and four peasants were beaten up. (1) Montero then ordered the arrest of Villanueva, who was imprisoned in the local gaol at Bécal. There appear to have been irregularities in the elections in other places as well, notably in Tenabo where the fraud was denounced by the correspondent of the "Diario del Sureste". (2) Also, a few days later, writs were served on Ramón Berzunza Pinto and on two peasants of Hecelchakán, and the B.R.M. declared that this was a trick and that the accusations were false. (3)

Numerous irregularities were described to General Múgica in another letter from two teachers, Natalia Ortiz and Etelvina Calderón C. They said

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- (1) "Diario del Sureste", 22nd Dec.1936 (press release dated 21st Dec.) and "Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Senadores", (26th Dec.1936).
 (2) "Diario del Sureste", 22nd, 23rd and 24th Dec.1936.
 (3) Ibid., 27th Dec.1936.

that in Bécál and Tinún several members of peasant cooperatives were wounded, but that when the commander of the local detachment of federal troops was asked for assistance, he refused on the grounds that they should ask the municipal authorities. A few days before the elections, the Government faction had put out some leaflets purporting to come from the "Alianza Popular Revolucionaria" and misrepresenting the aims of this organisation. This, said the two teachers, was a desperate manoeuvre by the Government which knew that the triumph of the "Alianza" was certain. Finally, they said, the "old fanatics" ("viejas mochas") have declared war on us, for the priest, in yesterday's Mass, told them to vote for the Government or they would be excommunicated.⁽¹⁾"

The sense of frustration, bordering on despair, which prevailed among the militant teachers and the independents in general, is vividly illustrated by a letter to Mígica a few days later⁽²⁾ from Juan Pacheco Torres, Director of the E.R.C. of Hecelchakán and one of the best and most dedicated teachers in the whole country. This is worth quoting at length:-

"Most honourable General:

"With the year of 1937 in sight, we have more disappointments than could be imagined of the Government of General Cárdenas.

"Talking today with a peasant he remarked in unfavourable terms on those words of yours when you were chief of the 30th Military Zone to the effect that the army would support the work of the School-teachers, on seeing that such a beautiful thing is not true.

"The discontent which exists in our ranks has some degree of justification, when we live a life of real oppression, the peasants are more slaves than yesterday, and in speeches great boasts are made, we like to think in good faith, in the sense that the revolution is at the service at the people.

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- (1) Mígica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937...N° - '0°", p.244; letter to Mígica from Profas. Natalia Ortiz & Estelina Calderón C., 21st Dec. 1936. Mígica's reply (9th Jan. 1937) expresses sympathy for the teachers and Campeche and urges them to continue the struggle.
- (2) Mígica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937...P° - 'Q°"; letter to Mígica from Prof. Juan Pacheco Torres of Hecelchakán, dated 25th Dec. 1936.

"The latest thing to happen in Campeche, a place for whom (sic) you have great affection, is beyond words. The Government of Mena Córdova, authorises the victory of the catholics at the polls; that in Nunkiní they should expel the teachers because they work in conformity with the tendencies of the revolution; that in the presence of a federal platoon in Bocal a teacher should be beaten up by the deputy Hadero; that the leaders of independent peasant organisations should be reported as they are by today's press for the crime of carrying out the programmes of President Cárdenas.

"Our attacks are not directed against individuals; they are against an openly right-wing regime in opposition to groups frequently encouraged by the sector of the Left.

"I would cease to be a faithful servant of the good intentions of you yourself and of the President if I decided to remain silent..."

To this Múgica replied on 9th January⁽¹⁾ reprimanding Pacheco Torres for losing faith in the Government. It is probable that there had been a move, of which Múgica was thinking when he wrote this, by certain national politicians to prevent the State Government from imposing its candidates all along the line; for when the provisional results of the elections were announced, they were not as bad as Pacheco Torres seemed to fear.⁽²⁾ It seems that a compromise was arranged in which the voting strength of the "Alianza" was to some extent recognised owing to support from the radical element in the P.N.R.'s Central Committee in Mexico City (which had to give the final verdict on the results), but not enough entirely to defeat the conservative pressure of the State Government.

The Case of Campeche in the Federal Congress (December 1936-February 1937)

In fact, following the Senators' visit and the further disturbances during these elections, it appears that the Federal Government was seriously considering intervention in the politics of Campeche to prevent further conflict. Thus on 31st December⁽³⁾ the Senate began consideration of the report submitted

(1) *Ibid.*, letter from Múgica to Pacheco Torres, dated 9th Jan. 1937.

(2) "Diario del Sureste", 29th and 30th Dec. 1936, & 15th Feb. 1937.

(3) "Diario del Sureste", 1st Jan. 1937; "El Nacional", 1st Jan. 1937.

by the Commission which had visited the State. Senator Angel Castillo Lanz, the object of so many accusations by the opposition in his home State, rose to say that the report "suffered from serious inaccuracies" since the crimes attributed to Governor Mena Córdova had not been committed, the official unions of the area were not artificial creations ("sindicatos de paja") as had been alleged, and the State Government was not hated by the whole population. He added that in Campeche the workers received favourable treatment, and the Commission must have been prejudiced to present such a report. But the other Senator for Campeche, Carlos Góngora Gala - elected the previous July by the Independents after a bitter struggle - agreed with the report. He said that the "de facto" Government of Campeche was none other than Castillo Lanz himself, who settled all labour disputes in the State according to his own whims. Then Senator Garza Tijerina, a member of the Commission, levelled further charges against the State Government, which Castillo Lanz promptly denied. It was then agreed to continue discussing the case later in the Left-Wing Block of the Senate, which would make a more detailed study; and with that, according to the press report, "the case was virtually closed, for the Senators do not want to continue dealing with it" - which gives the impression that it was being shelved.

However, Cárdenas himself was now taking an interest in the question, and early in January Governor Mena Córdova flew to the capital for private consultations with the President; when he returned on the 9th he declared himself "highly satisfied" with the reception given him by Cárdenas, although what they decided is unknown.⁽¹⁾ Evidently the issue was far from being resolved, for on 13th January⁽²⁾ it was reported from Mexico City that Senator Góngora Gala did not intend to let the matter drop and "will ask the Permanent Comm-

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 11th Jan. 1937; and "Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados", 20th Jan. 1937.

(2) "Diario del Sureste", 14th Jan. 1937.

ission of the National Congress not to turn a blind eye ('que no se cruce los brazos') to the series of crimes being committed in Campeche".

Following this a Commission was appointed to investigate the matter further, consisting of Senators Castellanos and Figueroa and Deputy Donaciano Carreón. In spite of this little appears to have been done in Congress, but the State Government was now definitely in danger of losing power under pressure from the powerful "Left-Wing Block" of the P.N.R. Thus on 17th February⁽¹⁾ following further disturbances (which are examined in detail below), Mena Córdova went to the capital again "to inform the President of the Republic about various matters" appertaining to his State. After these discussions Cárdenas evidently decided to watch the situation and deal with it himself - this was to be one of the main reasons for his tour of the South-Eastern States five months later. On 24th February it was said in the Senate⁽²⁾ that neither that chamber nor the Permanent Commission would give further consideration to the case of Campeche, and unofficially it was reported that the President would deal with it directly.

The Teachers' and Students' Strikes of January 1937

An incident on 30th December underlined the continuing tension between rival political groups in the State. Early in the afternoon a young teacher, Jorge Burad, had a violent encounter with two leaders of the F.R.O.C., Arturo Vázquez L. and Miguel López Cazán, in 53rd Street in Campeche City. The first news of this was in the form of two contradictory telegrams to the "Diario de Yucatán",⁽³⁾ one from the C.R.D.P. and the other from the F.R.O.C. The former

(1) Ibid., 19th Feb. 1937 (report dated 18th Feb.).

(2) Ibid., 25th Feb. 1937.

(3) "Diario de Yucatán", 31st Dec. 1936. Protests were also sent to the Senate in Mexico City ("Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Senadores", 31st Dec. 1936).

accused Vázquez and López of being "at the service of the Campechan reaction led by the 'callista' Senator Castillo Lanz", and demanded the dissolution of the State Government; the latter said the aggression was caused by "the teachers led by Jorge Burad". On 1st January the "Diario del Sureste",⁽¹⁾ reported that Vázquez was suffering from severe blows on the face and López from a bullet wound in the left leg, while the "young man" Jorge Burad had been arrested by federal troops in the local offices of the Department of Education and was under detention in the town's main Police Station. But in the same paper a statement from the B.R.M. was published, protesting that Burad, a rural teacher and an active member of their organisation, had been fired on by Vázquez; and similar protests were issued by other organisations.⁽²⁾

On 2nd January it was reported⁽³⁾ that two days previously the teachers had organised a protest meeting in front of the Governor's Palace, and that shortly afterwards Burad was released on bail for 1,000 pesos. Meanwhile the different parties involved had made contradictory legal statements.⁽⁴⁾

Unfortunately the final outcome of this case is not clear, but it was far from being an isolated incident. A report sent to "El Machete" from Campeche on 23rd December⁽⁵⁾ spoke of a "wave of terror and persecution" against all independent organisations. Only a few days before, it said, several leaders - Herculano and Alberto Farfán, Matilde Chí, and the teachers Fernando Moguel, Carmen Chí and Francisco Villanueva - had been sentenced to a month's imprisonment in Bécal, chief of the local Deputy Montero. In Hampolol supporters of Castillo Lanz assaulted the peasant cooperative, killing two of its members,

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- (1) "Diario del Sureste", 1st Jan.1937 (report dated 31st Dec.).
 (2) "Diario de Yucatán", 1st Jan.1937 (report dated 31st Dec.).
 (3) "Diario del Sureste", 2nd Jan.1937 (report dated 1st Jan.).
 (4) "Diario de Yucatán", 2nd Jan.1937 (report dated 1st Jan.).
 (5) "El Machete", 2nd Jan.1937.

and in Nunkind peasants were imprisoned. Finally, the teacher Tiburcio Quinoñes had been murdered in Dzitbalché, along with two peasants; and the culprits had been "severely punished" by the enraged inhabitants. It seems as if the situation was verging on civil war.

On 3rd January many teachers along with students from the "Instituto Campechano" (a long-standing high school and "preparatoria" in Campeche City) made a demonstration against the State Government, demanding its dissolution.⁽¹⁾ The teachers were already talking of going on strike to win redress of their grievances resulting from recent events, and in opposition to this the F.R.O.C. denounced the strike as "counter-revolutionary". In spite of this the B.R.M. made a statement the next day.⁽²⁾ saying that in view of the "injustices, arrests and all kinds of repression" inflicted on teachers and peasants in the State, it was sending a list of petitions to the Governor "for the second time" (referring to its strike threat of a year earlier, in January 1936); its demands included all the agreements signed by the Governor on 5th February 1936 as a result of the previous movement, since these agreements had not been fulfilled. They also demanded the punishment of the intellectual and material authors of various "crimes and murders" including recent events such as "armed assaults on the schools of Champotón, Poeboc, the federal education offices" and other acts of violence. They also claimed to have the support of unions of teachers, peasants, railwaymen and other workers in Yucatán and Quintana Roo.

The B.R.M. was joined in its strike threat by the "Federación Estudiantil Campechana", and in fact the students' strike began first, starting on the 7th in the "Instituto Campechano".⁽³⁾ The B.R.M.'s list of demands was actually made public on the 6th, and included the fulfilment of the agreement signed the

(1) "Diario de Yucatán", 4th Jan. 1937.

(2) "Diario del Sureste", 5th Jan. 1937 (statement dated 4th Jan.).

(3) "Diario del Sureste", 8th Jan. 1937.

previous year; safe conducts for all rural teachers; punishment of those responsible for the crimes mentioned; immediate arrest of Arturo Vázquez of the F.R.O.C., on a number of charges; and the dropping of unjustified charges against several teachers and peasant leaders.⁽¹⁾ The declaration was signed by the B.R.M.'s Executive Committee (Carlos Castillo Loria, José María Estrada M., Zolla Berzunza Pinto, Fernando Trejo Carrillo and Joaquín Barrera Misset). Two days later a Strike Committee, consisting of Nicolás Canto C., Aureliano Pinto, Amparo González, María Punares and Gláfiro Molina Recio, declared that if their petitions were not resolved they would have a 24-hour strike on the 11th as a warning of the indefinite strike planned to begin on the 15th.⁽²⁾ On the 9th the students and teachers, along with some visiting teachers from Yucatán, organised a meeting in the main square of Campeche City, and various speakers explained and defended their demands.⁽³⁾

While these preparations were going on, the defenders of the State Government were preparing a counter-offensive; thus on the 6th the F.R.O.C. declared its support for certain teachers who were said to oppose the B.R.M.⁽⁴⁾ A more serious manoeuvre took place on the 11th, when it was announced that the "majority" of the "Federación Estudiantil Campechana" had withdrawn its support from the existing committee led by Eduardo Negrín Baeza, and elected a new pro-Government committee led by Carlos Sansores Pérez.⁽⁵⁾ At the same time it was said that the State Government had sacked all the staff of the "Instituto Campechano", presumably for having supported the students' strike.⁽⁶⁾ On the 12th there was a violent clash between the striking students and their secessionist rivals, who tried to break the strike. Many of the former had occupied the "Instituto Campechano", and tried to prevent the entry of their rivals, but according to the "Diario de Yucatán"⁽⁷⁾ a group of the latter

(1) *Ibid.*, 9th Jan. 1937 (statement dated 6th Jan.).

(2) *Ibid.* 10th Jan. 1937 (statement dated 8th Jan.).

(3) "Diario de Yucatán", 11th Jan. 1937.

(4) *Ibid.*, 9th Jan. 1937 (statement dated 6th Jan.).

(5) "Diario del Sureste", 13th Jan. 1937; and "Diario de Yucatán", 12th Jan. 1937.

(6) "Diario del Sureste", 13th Jan. 1937.

(7) "Diario de Yucatán", 18th Jan. 1937.

managed to get through, and in the struggle one of the strikers was wounded, apparently by a bullet".

The next day the section of the F.E.C. led by Carlos Sansores protested against the strikers for what he called "the attack they made against the said F.E.C. when it was trying to return to classes with the support of the police,⁽¹⁾" and the F.R.O.C. issued a statement attacking the teachers.⁽²⁾ On the 15th it was announced that new staff had already been appointed to the Institute and that it had been re-opened, although the announcement added that the building was being guarded by a detachment of federal troops, which suggests that all was not well.⁽³⁾ This impression is strengthened by a report from Hecelchakán⁽⁴⁾ to the effect that meetings were being held every night in the local headquarters of the independent unions and in the public parks and squares, to express support for the B.R.M. and the strike movement and to protest against "the savage assault suffered by students of the 'Instituto Campechano' when trying to prevent the State Governor from breaking the strike with the help of the police".

This version of what happened on the 12th is confirmed by a telegram sent to Mexico City immediately after the incident by Carlos Castillo Loria, General Secretary of the B.R.M.⁽⁵⁾ He alleged that the students in the building had been assaulted at 9 a.m. by the State police armed with pistols and sub-machine guns, seriously wounding four of them who had been beaten "with great cruelty, using thick iron bars". This and other acts of repression are described in detail in a plaintive letter sent to General Múgica the same day by the teacher Elsie Medina.⁽⁶⁾ She complains bitterly of the clergy and the local authorities:-

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- (1) "Diario del Sureste", 14th Jan.1937.
 (2) Ibid.
 (3) Ibid., 15th Jan.1937.
 (4) "Diario de Yucatán", 15th Jan.1937 (report dated 13th Jan.).
 (5) Múgica archive, vol."Correspondencia Particular, 1937 ... 'M'", p.203; telegram 12th Jan.1937, to Mexico City from Carlos Castillo Loria. He explains that the action was undertaken on orders from the Inspector of Police, Salvador Hurtado, and that the Governor was responsible.
 (6) Ibid., p.204-6; letter to Múgica, 12th Jan.1937, from Elsie Medina in Campeche City.

".... they, no longer able to attack, have opened their fire on us, Lupe Naty Etelvina Charito Otah and on me....Dear General we have exhausted everything our group the 'Bloque Rev.de Maestros', is the Banner of all the pariahs...I am treasurer of the 'Bloque' and in the cash box I only have 20 pesos....On the 9th of this month there was a meeting in which a leader of the Froc(sic) was going to take a shot at me but another teacher struck his hand....Mena Córdoba arrived in his special boat on the day of the Meeting and made his declarations through the press saying that the President had given him instructions to act against all those who should show themselves to be against his government. And this morning my dear General the 'Instituto Campechano' was attacked wounding the Student Pablo González Lastra and Negrín with two more shots, etc., the police by order of our valiant governor fired on the students in volleys and with gratuitous cruelty, beat them, even children of 10 and 11 years of age are wounded. Dear General, can these be the instructions of the President?....If only we had some pistols, we'd know how to use them like the women of Madrid....The day Arturo Vázquez entered the Chief Education Offices and in the inside rooms fired his pistol on a teacher. The business changed somewhat because it appeared in the (legal) statements that a group of Teachers had attacked Vázquez with guns, the Teacher was taken to prison and Vázquez was left free.....

"My dear General, I ask you for help, on the 15th the Striks begins Yuc. and Quintana Roo are going with us, the Railwaymen's Union of Yuc., has given us full facilities and their indignation has now reached its limit, tomorrow they will come to Campeche and threaten Mena Córdoba...."

The following day (13th) Elsie Medina wrote again to Mígica (1) to inform him of further developments. After thanking him for his encouragement she goes on:-

"My dear General: the railwaymen of Yucatán came and gave everything whatever it might be moral and material railways etc. and they are prepared to make stoppages and if things get nasty to go on strike.

"My dear General: what we lack is publicity of everything that happens here for the 2 newspapers are for the Government.

"We need a scandal in Mexico City ours cannot be heard....."

The tone of this correspondence speaks for itself as regards the intense feelings of the teachers. Mígica later replied to these two letters reaffirming his solidarity with them and sending money for the cause. (2)

The Suppression of the Strike Movement

The B.R.M.'s strike began on 15th January as planned. The 24-hour stop

(1) Ibid., pp.207-8; letter to Mígica, 13th Jan.1937, from Elsie Medina.
 (2) Ibid., p.220; letter from Mígica to Elsie Medina, 26th Jan.1937.

page had also taken place on the 11th as anticipated, with the support of one of the teachers' unions of Yucatan,⁽¹⁾ and the main strike was immediately effective in most of the State. On the 17th there were messages of support,⁽²⁾ from the national teachers' unions and from teachers and railwaymen in Yucatán, where two of the three teachers' unions stopped work in sympathy.⁽³⁾ At the same time Governor Mena Córdova declared the strike illegal and threatened to dismiss all teachers who did not return to work by the 20th, he received prompt support from groups affiliated to the F.R.O.C.⁽⁴⁾

Throughout the State supporters of the Governor were mounting an offensive against the teachers; thus in Tenabo on the 12th, when the local teachers were addressing a large meeting of workers and peasants, several individuals appeared and "began to insult those assembled there"; the members of the meeting wanted to punish them, but this was not allowed by the teachers.⁽⁵⁾ On the 20th the B.R.M. complained of numerous injustices in Calkiní, in spite of previous protests by teachers and peasants.⁽⁶⁾ At the same time the C.R.D.P. denounced many injustices in other villages. On the other hand, the "Diario de Yucatán" appears to have been conducting a concerted campaign against the teachers; on the 21st the paper carried an editorial⁽⁷⁾ headed "Chaos in the Teaching Profession - Misguided Unionism" and calling on the authorities to unmask the "agitators disguised as teachers" and their "irritating idleness".

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- (1) "Diario del Sureste", 13th Jan. 1937; the union which gave support was the "Unión de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de Yucatán", See Also, "Diario del Sureste", 16th Jan. 1937; and "Diario de Yucatán", 16th Jan. 1937.
 (2) "Diario del Sureste", 17th Jan. 1937.
 (3) "Diario de Yucatán", 17th Jan. 1937.
 (4) Ibid., 18th Jan. 1937.
 (5) "Diario del Sureste", 18th Jan. 1937 (report dated 15th Jan. & referring to 12th Jan.).
 (6) Ibid., 20th Jan. 1937. The B.R.M. also said it would not yield to threats of dismissals.
 (7) "Diario de Yucatán", 21st Jan. 1937.

In spite of such local opposition the strike would probably have continued for some time, but on the 19th the national Secretary of Education, Vázquez Vela, and the Inspector General of Education in the South-East, Claudio Cortés, both sent telegrams urging the teachers to return to work. Vázquez Vela had made a public declaration, undoubtedly inspired by Cárdenas, saying that strike movements in the teaching profession in any part of the country were not in the national interest.⁽¹⁾ (There were in fact teachers' strikes in several States about this time - see above p.). But he also offered to give favourable consideration to the teachers' demands if they would send a delegation to Mexico City to speak with him. As a result of this, on the 21st the B.R.M. issued a statement announcing that the strike had been temporarily suspended while they sent a commission to deal directly with Vázquez Vela and if necessary with Cárdenas. They clarified their position by declaring that "we shall be with Cárdenas as we always have been, because he knows how to dispense justice.... Our attitude is not a step backwards, neither does it indicate defeat, We are only giving the Federal Government the opportunity to settle our dispute....."

Despite this conciliatory move, it soon became apparent that the State Government wanted to inflict drastic reprisals on its enemies. On the 24th the B.R.M. declared⁽²⁾ that although its members had returned to work in response to the call of Cárdenas and Vázquez Vela, far from enjoying guarantees for the proper execution of their educational mission, they continued to be victims of "the enemies of Socialist Education". Thus the teachers had been expelled from two schools in Ciudad del Carmen, and the municipal president had nominated new teaching staff "from among his followers". The teachers of Daibalchén had been thrown out of the village by the local authorities, who

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- (1) "Diario del Sureste", 23rd Jan.1937 (statement issued 21st Jan.); and "Diario de Yucatán", 24th Jan.1937 (report dated 23rd Jan.).
 (2) "Diario del Sureste", 26th Jan.1937 (statement dated 24th Jan.). See also "Diario de Yucatán", 23rd Jan.1937.

had also ransacked the school. In Hopelchén the teachers were given 24 hours to leave the town, otherwise the authorities "would not be responsible for their lives". In Campeche City an attempt was made on the life of the teacher Juan Segundo Güemes, General Secretary of the C.R.D.P. Finally, the B.R.M. said they were protesting to the President and to Vázquez Vela against "the collective dismissal imposed on 56 teachers employed by the Education Authority, on 4 teachers of the 'Instituto Campechano' for having supported the movement, and on all the school caretakers and employees of the Education Authority paid by the State...."

These and similar reprisals against the teachers and the students (whose strike was still continuing) were described further in a letter from another of Múgica's friends in Campeche, the teacher Alina Estrada. (1) She said their position was very difficult:-

"....Last night the leaders of the F.E.R. which is on strike were arrested, on an accusation presented by Doc. Ramos Hernández for defamation in the manifesto issued by the students, saying only the truth. On the 20th sixty teachers were dismissed, all of them teachers who have just finished their studies in the 'Normal Rural'. Also they have now warned that they will not continue paying for the buildings occupied by the schools and that the Education Offices must look for another place."

To this Múgica replied (2) that he had received similar news from other teachers, but however grim the situation, they would win in the end because "there is nothing more pure, or more legitimate, or more high-minded, than the attitude of the teachers of Campeche on the face of the corrupt charlatans".

The students, who had gone on strike before the teachers, were still holding out, in spite of the serious clash caused on the 12th by the attempt to reopen the "Instituto Campechano" with the help of the secessionist students under Carlos Sansores. This manoeuvre had not succeeded, and on the 21st there

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- (1) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937 ... 'E'-'F'"; letter to Múgica from srta. profa. Alina Estrada, of Campeche, 24th Jan. 1937. Ramos Hernández was the new Director of the "Instituto Campechano".
 (2) Ibid., letter to Alina Estrada from Múgica in Zamora, Michoacán, 31st Jan. 1937.

appeared a message of support for the strikers from the "Federación Estudiantil Yucateca".⁽¹⁾ The message condemned "the intolerance of the reactionary government of Campeche" and said that the students of Yucatán did not recognise the F.E.C. of Carlos Sansores, "formed by the Government of Campeche with sons of public employees who thus revealed themselves as blacklegs of the student movement and traitors to their class"; instead they recognised only the real F.E.C. "created by the will of the mass of students" and led by Eduardo Negrín Baeza and Pablo González Lastra. On the following day a commission arrived from the "Confederación Nacional de Estudiantes" (C.N.E.), led by its President, José E. Elizalde.⁽²⁾ But on the night of the 23rd, the leaders of the F.E.C. were imprisoned.⁽³⁾ The commission of the C.N.E. continued to investigate the situation, and on 1st February it issued a statement giving the results of a vote taken among students of the "Instituto Campechano": 137 were in favour of the strike and only 3 against.⁽⁴⁾ This casts light on the true position of the strike-breakers, and yet their leader Carlos Sansores Pérez continued to claim widespread support.⁽⁵⁾

Although the imprisoned student leaders were soon released, the strike had apparently been defeated, as had that of the teachers. Owing to the intervention of the Federal Government it seems that some of the teachers' demands were met; thus on 5th February it was reported from Mexico City that Cárdenas had suggested that the teachers dismissed by the local authorities should be reinstated.⁽⁶⁾ The Federal Government was prepared to protect the teachers and

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 21st Jan. 1937.

(2) "Diario del Sureste", 24th Jan. 1937.

(3) Ibid., 25th and 26th Jan. 1937. The imprisoned students were Eduardo Negrín Baeza and Guillermo Illescas.

(4) Ibid., 3rd Feb. 1937 (statement issued 1st Feb.). Carlos Sansores Pérez has since had a successful political career and is now Governor of Campeche.

(5) Ibid., 4th and 5th Feb. 1937 (statement issued 3rd Feb.). Negrín also says that he himself is Educational Secretary of the "Confederación de Estudiantes Socialistas de México", although he also supports the C.N.E.

(6) Ibid., 6th Feb. 1937.

their allies against the worst excesses of the local authorities, but little more could be achieved unless Cardenas was prepared to take the crucial decision of deposing Mena Córdova by decreeing (through the Senate) the "disappearance of powers" in the State; and this he did not do, for reasons of national politics which one can only speculate.

The Electoral Campaign for the P.N.R. Nominations for Local and Federal Deputies (March 1937)

The battle for power in Campeche was still far from being resolved, and soon came to the surface again as preparations were made for the P.N.R.'s primary elections to designate candidates for the posts of federal and local deputies, scheduled for 4th April. The situation some three weeks before this was described to General Múgica in a letter from Claudio Cortés in Campeche.⁽¹⁾

Cortés reported that the "Alianza Popular" was working with enthusiasm and intelligence, and its meetings in various parts of Campeche City had been a great success; and in Seybaplaya and the area of the "Camino Real", in spite of the deposition of the independent local authorities by the State Government, "the masses are more strongly united with us than ever". The trade unions were of great value in this battle, and had resisted attempts to subvert them by official elements in the State.

Electoral activity had begun early in March, and on the 7th it was announced that the independents had registered their nominees, under the banner of the "Alianza Popular Revolucionaria".⁽²⁾ These were led by General Calixto N. Ramírez Garrido and the ever-active Ramón Bersunsa Pinto, nominated for the two federal deputyships. The pro-Government forces later registered their nominees, headed by Dr. Héctor Pérez Martínez and Ignacio Reyes Ortega; this

(1) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937 - 10/110 '937°/1"; letter from Prof. Claudio Cortés, Inspector-General of Education in the South-East of the Republic, to Múgica, 15th March 1937.

(2) "Diario de Yucatán", 9th March 1937 (report dated 7th March).

was an astute move, since if Reyes was a local "cacique" and very unpopular, Pérez Martínez was an intellectual of local origins and moderately leftist tendencies, who had made a career in Mexico City as a journalist with the P.N.R. organ "El Nacional".⁽¹⁾

The inevitable local disputes and incidents were not long in appearing. On 12th March the "Alianza" made an energetic protest on account of an assault the previous afternoon on the Federal Primary School of Seybaplaya,⁽²⁾ but on 25th March the local correspondent of the "Diario de Yucatán" reported that some inhabitants of Seybaplaya had visited him to complain that political meetings were being held in the school building, and that the teachers were involved in openly political activities, "to the detriment of the pupils".⁽³⁾ Whether or not this was in fact harmful to the children, the teachers would not have denied that they were politically active; that same evening⁽⁴⁾ a meeting was held in the Rural School attached to the E.R.C. of Hecelchakán, by the United Front for Women's Rights (in which many teachers participated), and some of the 350 members present spoke demanding that they should be allowed to exercise the vote and saying that they were strong supporters of the "Alianza".

On 2nd April the correspondent of the "Diario de Yucatán", again claimed to have been visited by a "numerous group" of parents, this time from Campeche City, complaining that the teachers were dedicating themselves entirely to "personalist politics".⁽⁵⁾ The following day the same newspaper received a telegram⁽⁶⁾ from Vicente Peraza, a leader of the F.R.O.C. in Campeche, to the

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- (1) Rogelio Rivera Mena, "Semblanza de un Periodista: Héctor Pérez Martínez", Publicaciones del Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, Campeche 1966, pp.7-11.
 - (2) "Diario del Sureste", 13th March 1937 (statement dated 12th March).
 - (3) "Diario de Yucatán", 26th March 1937 (report dated 25th March).
 - (4) *Ibid.*, 28th March 1937 (report dated 26th March). In fact women were allowed to vote in the end.
 - (5) *Ibid.*, 3rd April 1937 (report dated 2nd April.).
 - (6) "Diario de Yucatán", 4th & 5th April 1937 (reports dated 3rd and 4th April, respectively).

effect that a group of teachers from the "so-called" B.R.M. had assaulted the printing press where his weekly journal "La Barricada" was printed. While the substance of those accusations against the teachers is not entirely improbable, the manner in which they were reported by the "Diario de Yucatán" leaves some room for doubt, given its extreme conservatism; for even the relatively independent "Diario del Sureste" depended in Campeche until February 1937 on a correspondent, Roberto L. Campos, who was now a novice of the "Comité Popular Electoral", the pro-State Government party. (1)

The independents, when deprived of publicity in the local press, tried to get a hearing at the national level. Thus on 28th March Manuel Berzunza Peña of Calidí wrote to General Múgica asking for protection and giving a vivid account of the situation:- (2)

"....The fact is, General, that since the beginning of the Government of Mena Córdova in our poor and hapless State of Campeche, (worthy of a better fate) a cruel tyranny has been exercised against all us independents who do not share his reactionary ideas; my only crimes are, being a supporter and propagandist of Socialist Education, being the Post and Telegraphs Agent and having two sons, both teachers and frankly Revolutionary, the outstanding one being Ramón Berzunza Pinto, who, as Pro-Candidate for Federal Deputy will enter the struggle against the notorious clerical leader, Ignacio Reyes, who will win with the support of the church, the local Government and the notorious Angel Castillo Lanz, if the P.N.R. does not make justice prevail....."

Múgica's reply to this (3) was very brief and promised nothing; but his views were well known. Thus at the end of February he declared in a letter that "the authorities of Campeche lack the necessary morality and responsibility to carry out their functions"; the President would surely realise very soon "The situation of anarchy which prevails in Campeche", for what had happened confirmed that the workers were justified in protesting against the "satrapy" which the State had become. (4)

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- (1) "Diario del Sureste", 29th March 1937. Campos was candidate in the second electoral district of Campeche City.
 (2) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937...B"; letter to Múgica from Manuel Berzunza Peña of Calidí, 28th March 1937.
 (3) Ibid., letter from Múgica to Manuel Berzunza Peña, 2nd April 1937.
 (4) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937...G6"; letter from Múgica to Engineer Jorge Gálvez, 1st March 1937.

As the election campaign progressed, Múgica was confirmed in his view by a whole series of indignant letters from the independents. Details of the campaign were related in a very personal style by the teacher Elsie Medina, writing on 29th March: (1)

"...Dear General: you cannot imagine how far these people will go, engineer Bazán will tell you, we went with him to Bolonchenticul and he saw what I am telling you, just imagine, since on the question of if they tell them to vote in favour of the government, not a single woman would do it, they take the churches for that purpose and there they tell them that God will punish them if they go with the teachers and that if the teachers' party wins the closure of the churches will follow immediately and the priests will be expelled, they give them a shawl 2 metres of white cloth and a belt, to the men 2 pesos a bottle of 'aguardiente' and a bull (2) so that they can eat before voting....."

"This is going to be very close they pay the drivers 25 pesos for the morning of that day (the elections), and as for us, well we shall ask Araiza for his van and everything Communications (3) has and that we can have to hand, for if not how shall we do it? We haven't got ANYTHING. You will say that we are always being a nuisance but dear General, the children depend on their father and you are ours and as we are daughters of the cause of the proletariat we come running to you, once more asking for 'Help'. I don't know but if our people come to lose at this moment of supreme struggle,.....then they would be demoralised for ever....."

This rather desperate appeal speaks for itself, and gives interesting evidence of the extent of bribery and other electoral malpractices - although these things had been common throughout the country for many years past. Múgica replied giving encouragement, (4) and regretting that he could not be of more effective help in ending the "trogloditism" which "oppresses the workers and their friends the teachers". He also offered to help in transporting their supporters to the polls. (Since the vote was counted by gathering the supporters of the various candidates into rallies at different places, it was quite common for an influential politician to provide transport to his rally; and this could often sway the result, especially if the opposition could not afford to do the same.)

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- (1) Múgica archive, "Correspondencia Particular, 1937... 'M'", pp.205-6; letter to Múgica from Elsie Medina, 29th March 1937.
 (2) Presumably one bull between all of them.
 (3) The local agency of the Department of Communications and Public Works (S.C.O.P.)
 (4) *Ibid.*, p.207; letter from Múgica to Elsie Medina, 3rd April 1937.

The P.N.R.'s Internal Elections of April 1937

The preliminary results of the elections, as reported to the press as soon as the polls had closed on Sunday 4th April⁽¹⁾ suggested that the supporters of Mena Córdova had almost swept the board, although in some cases the vote appears to have been very close. It was also reported that polling had taken place "without any alterations of public order" - a rather misleading statement, as we shall see. In the municipality of Campeche, Dr. Héctor Pérez Martínez defeated General Calixto Roldán Garrido of the "Alianza" for federal deputy. In the primaries for local deputies, in the second district of the city the pro-Government candidate (Roberto L. Campos) won overwhelmingly, but his companion in the first district of the city could only beat Rafael Alcalá Dondé of the Alianza by the small margin of 1,285 votes to 1,100. In Calkiní the "Centro Popular Electoral" triumphed over the "Alianza" by 2,914 votes to 1,737, but in Hecelchakán victory was conceded to the "Alianza" by 1,824 votes to 1,180.

The following day results came in from other parts of the State;⁽²⁾ in Palizada the "Alianza" registered another victory, but in El Carmen and Tenabo it was apparently soundly beaten. Late results from Hopalchán⁽³⁾ showed that Ramón Bermunza Pinto of the "Alianza" had been beaten by the notorious "cacique" Ignacio Reyes, but only by 31 votes. Indeed, it was now admitted that there had been electoral disturbances. In Calkiní a few minutes after the voting had finished, the car of Sr. Juan Chacón, the P.N.R. delegate who had come from Mexico City to supervise the elections, was stoned by the inhabitants of the suburb of Kilakán, but he managed to escape unhurt. In Tenabo it was said that the schools had been closed and the following day,⁽⁴⁾ after

(1) "Diario de Yucatán", 5th April 1937; "Diario del Sureste", 6th April 1937.

(2) "Diario de Yucatán", 6th April 1937.

(3) Ibid., 8th April 1937.

(4) Ibid., 7th April 1937 (report dated 6th April).

a meeting of the "Alianza" the teachers accompanied by a group of people had occupied the school building; whereupon the authorities then "made the teachers see that their lives were in danger", and for this reason they decided to leave.

When the results of the elections were finally confirmed by the P.N.R., over a month later, (1) victory was awarded to the "Centro Popular Electoral", in 7 of the 9 districts electing candidates for local deputies, and in both of the federal seats being contested. The "Alianza Popular Revolucionaria" won only the local candidacies of Hecelchakan and Tenabo. Moreover, victory in these primary elections was tantamount to victory in the final elections themselves (held on 6th June for local deputies and on 4th July for federal deputies (2) since the P.N.R. candidates invariably won; the real battle took place in the P.N.R. primaries. But it is very doubtful whether this defeat should be taken as a true indication of the voting strength of the independents, for supporters of the "Alianza" gave a very different version of the way in which the elections were carried out. The teacher Alina Estrada gave an account of the proceedings in Calkin' to Múgica:-(3)

"..... The deputy sent to witness the voting was nominated by the P.N.R. and is called Juan Chacón. We went there on the Saturday but we already had a bad impression of deputy Chacón for as soon as he arrived here (4) he started fraternizing with Government people and Castillo Lanz himself took him to the station and in Calkin' his attitude was completely one-sided in favour of the reactionary contingent. If deputy Chacón is your friend he must have the same ideology as you, and if so, why did he admit the votes of the women of Calkin' whose credentials were distributed inside the church, and when in order to have a bigger crowd of supporters they celebrated mass at 11 in the morning and then went to be counted? They were wineing and dining in his presence and mine and I pointed out these irregularities to him but he did not pay any attention....."

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- (1) "Diario del Sureste", 13th & 14th May 1937. It appears that in Tenabo the original decision was changed in favour of the "Alianza", but in Palizada it was changed the other way.
- (2) Ibid., 9th June & 6th July 1937; & "Diario de Yucatán", 8th June & 5th & 6th July 1937.
- (3) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937 ... E'-F'"; letter to Múgica from Alina Estrada in Campeche City. The letter is dated 6th March 1937, but this must be a mistake for 6th April since the elections were held on 4th April.
- (4) In Campeche City.

If these allegations were true, then one can understand why Chacón's car was later stoned by supporters of the independents, as reported in the press (see above). Alina Estrada went on to give further details in the same letter:

"Otherwise we are satisfied since our peasants showed that they have a clear vision of matters for they were not swayed by the two pesos, the coloured handkerchief and the two kilos of meat which were distributed and preferred to be with us, we who cannot even give them trucks to come in, we only gave them a meal, and they were with us beneath the burning sun.

"Yesterday, they (i.e. the other faction) attacked the school of Tenabo and drove out the teachers, shooting at some of their houses....."

The full story of what happened at Tenabo is given by another teacher, Elsie Medina, writing on 13th April.⁽¹⁾ First she related how the night before, she herself was assaulted on her way to a meeting of the executive committee of the B.R.M. by an individual who tried to strangle her, but she escaped because she was the "size of a horse" and because two people came to her aid. Then she gives details of the elections:-

"In Tenabo the teachers, both men and women, were expelled with threats to denude the latter, these people were assaulted by the Municipal President Luciano Muñoz and policeman of the same village using machetes and guns and they had to leave on foot to reach Hecelchakán at 3 in the morning and seek the protection of Pacheco Torres. But thirsty for revenge as they had not been able to lay hands on the teachers they (i.e. the assailants) amused themselves with the unfortunate unionised women and the President of the United Front for Women's Rights by name Matilde Cen who was stripped and driven all over Tenabo for people to see. Is this civilisation?...Just imagine dear General that before doing this in Tenabo, the Municipal President asked the Zone (i.e. the Chief of the Military Zone) for guarantees, and then did what I have told you. When we went to ask for guarantees, we were told that the Municipal President had already done so, and then they brought along a peasant woman and another under arrest for having tried to defend the naked woman..."

Later in the same letter Elsie says that a teacher called Berman was arrested and mutilated by the police of Nunkidí, while another, Fernando Moguel of Bocal was given 24 hours to leave the place. Her concluding remarks show that the State Government regarded the B.R.M. as its main enemy:-

(1) *Mágica* archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular", 1937... 'M', pp. 208-210; letter to *Mágica* from Elsie Medina in Campeche, 13th April 1937. Further details of the Tenabo incident were given in a statement by the B.R.M., published in the "Diario del Sureste", on 9th April 1937.

"And so dear General this is the work we are carrying out in the midst of a sea of dragons Capital Religion and Govt. And the worst of the matter is that Mena Cordova is already encouraging a division within the E.R.M. 'the Only Revolutionary Organisation capable of having put the Government in danger' but the way we are going....We cannot do it.

"Just imagine dear General that the Govt. is bringing out a newspaper in which its watchword is 'to expose to the public the crimes and vices of the teachers'.

"You can easily imagine they say that we give nudist education that we are whores and other things....."

The picture of the elections given by Elsie Medina is confirmed by Claudio Cortés, also writing shortly after the event. (1) In Hecelchakán he praised the work of Juan Pacheco Torres ("Juanito"), Director of the E.R.C., whose work he said had made possible the victory of the "Alianza" there; they had won in spite of widespread intimidation and bribery by their opponents, who had distributed a large number of shawls, lengths of cloth, rum and cash. (2)

Describing the voting in Calkiní, Cortés said that the "Alianza" had "1750 honest votes" but they were swamped by the mass of Catholic women, 1,500 in number, brought along by "the reaction". In Tenabo they had won but the authorities on seeing this had assaulted the school and destroyed the voting records (this apparently was the real cause of the violence there). In Palizada their triumph had been complete (although as has been seen, this was not recognised in the final results issued in May); in El Carmen they had lost for the same reasons as in Calkiní; and in Champotón they lost because they had no means to transport their supporters to the polls. If it had not been for the votes of the women, they would have won overall.

These letters from Alina Estrada, Elsie Medina and Claudio Cortés, coming a few days after the polls, still revealed the hope that justice would be done to their cause and that when the P.N.R.'s Central Committee issued its final

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- (1) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937-10/110 "937"/1"; letter to Múgica from Prof. Claudio Cortés in Campeche, 6th April 1937.
 (2) Ibid., letter to Múgica from Claudio Cortés, 19th April 1937.

verdict, it would give victory to the independents on account of all the electoral abuses they had denounced so indignantly. Thus when the final results were known, their indignation was greater still. On 5th June⁽¹⁾ Elsie wrote to Múgica in the following terms:-

".....you cannot imagine how painful the P.N.R.'s verdicts have been for our supporters, they have seen their hopes killed. TO IMAGINE that for the municipality of Calkin the resulting Federal Deputy is Nacho Reyes, a foul Clerical exploiter, enemy of the teachers and peasants, and for (the region of) 'Los Chenes' the Criminal José Lara the one who kills teachers and members of the peasant cooperative, who was responsible for the events of Hopelchén, and so on in all the municipalities.this my General is something dreadful, something like a two-edged sword for the poor peasant of Campeche. I say this to you with the feeling of the people, people who sacrificed themselves but for what?....."

Similar sentiments of disappointment and anger were expressed by all Múgica's friends in Campeche, but he could only sympathise and encourage them to greater efforts.⁽²⁾ More specifically, he stressed that they must do more to win the support of the women; in another letter he repeated this:-⁽³⁾

"You yourselves do not hide the fact that there are people (Múgica's underlining) on the other side and the consequence of this is that so long as there is no constant and well-directed effort to convince these people that it is not in their interests to serve as instruments, we shall be in a very bad condition because we cannot feel victorious if the people are divided....."

In spite of these exhortations to continue the struggle the loss of these elections (unlike the municipal primaries the previous December, in which they had made some progress). was a serious setback for the independents. That they had lost only through gerrymandering, bribery and the use of force by their opponents, made little difference. There were only two ways in which they could hope to defeat the State Government: either by winning support among national politicians - in this case on the P.N.R.'s Central Committee - against the

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- (1) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937...M", pp.212-214; letter to Múgica from Elsie Medina in Campeche, 5th June 1937.
 - (2) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937-10/110 "937"/1"; letter from Múgica to Claudio Cortés in Campeche, 3rd May 1937.
 - (3) Ibid., letter from Múgica to Claudio Cortés, 18th May 1937. Múgica also said that "Every time I receive letters from Campeche and from the teachers, I feel strengthened, for I see that there is neither despair nor doubt in the struggle, but above all, there is a very precise vision of things".

Government of Ména Córdova, or by mobilizing such an overwhelming and militant mass movement among the people of Campeche that the State Government would be obliged to respect their will; and they were not succeeding in either of these tasks.

The Assault on the Teacher Mario Canepa and His Wife, 7th April 1937.

In the aftermath of the elections there was a persisting danger of outbreaks of violence. At about 7 p.m. on 7th April, in the village of Hool, municipality of Champotón, the wife of the local teacher Mario Canepa, was shot and killed while she was sitting with her husband in front of the school⁽¹⁾ Mario identified the assailants as Andrés Méndez, a local tradesman; Octavio Pérez, a municipal policeman; and Remigio Estrada, a farmer. The three men were arrested, and a few days later⁽²⁾ the judicial authorities brought formal charges of homicide against Méndez and Pérez, but Estrada was released owing to lack of evidence.

The incident was quickly taken up by the B.R.M., who mentioned it in a statement they made on 8th April⁽³⁾ saying that the Municipal President had ordered the murder of the teacher Canepa, "using the policeman Octaviano (sic) Pérez" to execute the crime; but that the teacher had escaped and his wife had been shot by mistake. According to Elsie Medina⁽⁴⁾ the affair was a direct result of the elections; the "Alianza" had a big majority in Hool because the manoeuvres of the pro-Government Party had misfired. The Government's agents were so furious at this, according to Elsie, that they confronted the teacher Canepa (whom they evidently considered to be largely responsible for

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- (1) "Diario de Yucatán", 9th & 10th April (reports dated 8th & 9th April respectively)
 (2) Ibid., 14th April 1937 (report dated 13th April).
 (3) "Diario del Sureste", 9th April 1937 (statement issued 8th April).
 (4) Múgica archive, col. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937...M", p.209; letter to Múgica from Elsie Medina in Campeche, 13th April 1937.

their defeat) shortly after the voting. At this point they did not go beyond threats, but rumour had it that an ex-deputy called Delio Banera and a police lieutenant nick-named "el Botado" had said they would kill him. At all events, on the evening of the 7th Canepa's wife was shot. Their friends ran to the school on hearing the shots and saw clearly that the assailants were "two policemen and a candidate for the municipal Presidency of that village". At least in this case justice appears to have been done, for Méndez and Pérez were imprisoned; and nearly six months later,⁽¹⁾ in a curious aftermath, Méndez confessed in prison that he and not Pérez was primarily responsible, and that he had meant to kill the teacher and not his wife.

The Transformation of the B.R.M. into the S.U.T.E.C., April 1937

The fear of a split of some kind within the B.R.M., mentioned by Elsie Medina in her letter of 13th April, did have some foundation, although it was not really very serious. An official statement on 24th March⁽²⁾ announced that they had decided to expel four women teachers, Adolfinia Mendoza de C., Delia Cu de Z., Concepción Durán L. and María Lavalle U., and were petitioning the educational authorities to dismiss these teachers or send them to other States.

Two days later it was reported that the four teachers concerned had visited the offices of the "Diario del Sureste" in Campeche City⁽³⁾ to express their surprise at the news of their expulsion. Three of them said that they had disowned the B.R.M. on the 15th of January last (the day the teachers' strike began), because they did not agree with "the mystification they (the B.R.M.) had made of the principles of the Revolution, constituting a most

(1) "Diario de Yucatán", 5th October 1937 (report dated 4th Oct.).

(2) "Diario del Sureste", 25th March 1937 (statement issued 24th March).

(3) Ibid., 27th March 1937 (report dated 26th March).

flagrant attack on Socialist Education". The description of the B.R.M. as anti-socialist may come as a surprise in view of its activities and propaganda, and the background to this dispute is explained once again by Elsie Medina. Writing to Múgica on 23rd June,⁽¹⁾ she complained that they had been re-employed on a non-union basis by Presidential decree. She lamented that "with great difficulties we succeeded in expelling from the teaching profession in Campeche" these four teachers who were "reviled by the proletariat" and had betrayed everything the union had done, only to find that "our good Governor speaks with General Cárdenas and tells who knows what kind of a tale about the question of these four traitors" and achieves their reinstatement. One of the four teachers was a niece of Castillo Lanz, another was a close friend of Héctor Pérez Martínez and had an enormous sum of money in the Bank of Canada, and a third was the wife of a Deputy; and all four of them were hostile to the workers.

A more important development was the second general Convention of the B.R.M., which was held in Campeche City from the 22nd to the 27th of April. The main purpose of the Convention was to achieve the complete unification of the teachers in the State, in accordance with the agreements arrived at on a national level at the Convention of the F.M.T.E. in Querétaro (see above p.) In practical terms this implied the transformation of the B.R.M. into a "Sindicato Único" on the lines of similar unions which were being set up in every State of the country; and for this reason the Convention was honoured with the presence of Octaviano Campos Salas of the national executive committee of the F.M.T.E.⁽²⁾ This was achieved, and on the last day of the assembly the United Union of Educational Workers of Campeche ("Sindicato Único de Trabajadores

(1) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937... 'M'", p.217; letter to Múgica from Elsie Medina in Campeche, 23rd June 1937.
 (2) "Diario del Sureste", 26th, 28th, and 29th April 1937.

de la Enseñanza de Campeche" or S.U.T.E.C.) was formed with Carlos Améndola Ruiz as General Secretary.

All teachers in the State were admitted to the S.U.T.E.C., but as was to be expected the ex-members of the B.R.M. (who constituted the vast majority) continued to dominate.⁽¹⁾ That this was so was confirmed by Elsie Medina,⁽²⁾ and by Claudio Cortés⁽³⁾ who said that leadership of the union had stayed in the hands of "honourable and well-trained teachers". As for the general situation of the independent unions, he admitted that they had a really solid union base only in Ciudad del Carmen, plus strong contingents of peasants in the area of the "Camino Real" (Hecelchakan-Dzitbalché-Bécal), Palizada and Seybaplaya; they were weak in Nunkini, Calkini and Champotón and not quite up to full strength in Dzibalchén, Hopachén and Tenabo. Even so, it is clear that they were dominant in many parts of the State.

In another letter⁽⁴⁾ Cortés returned to the question of the Convention, expressing satisfaction because the "divisionists" (the four women teachers recently expelled) had not joined the S.U.T.E.C. But later he had to change his mind⁽⁵⁾ when these teachers were reinstated, and, it would appear, admitted to the S.U.T.E.C. along with the leaders of a "puppet" pro-Government union. Cortés evidently found this hard to take, but Múgica replied⁽⁶⁾ that they must not be too worried by their political setbacks, since the more they were forced to concentrate on educational and social work, the stronger they would be. As they themselves admitted, the prestige and efficiency of the profession must be revived, although, he said "political action must be exercised methodically

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- (1) Ibid., 1st May 1937 (statement issued 27th April).
 (2) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937... 'M'", p.212; letter to Múgica from Elsie Medina in Campeche, 5th June 1937.
 (3) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937-10/110 '937'/1"; letter to Múgica from Prof. Claudio Cortés in Campeche, 29th April 1937.
 (4) Ibid., letter to Múgica from Claudio Cortés, 21st May 1937.
 (5) Ibid., letter to Múgica from Claudio Cortés, 15th June 1937.
 (6) Ibid., letter from Múgica to Claudio Cortés, 23rd June 1937.

in order to serve as a source of education for the masses", so that they would be prepared for victory when it came.

Much of the discussion which took place during the Convention was on a very general level and had little direct relevance to the situation in Campeche. But one informative document was presented by Eugenio Rivas and Fernando Moguel on behalf of the B.R.M. (1) Entitled "Guarantees for the Teachers", it spoke extensively of the revolutionary educational and social work carried out by the teachers and of the threats they faced from reactionary forces, and said they must be given arms to defend themselves. It then went on to give a list of the principal political bosses in the State:-

"..... We all know that when a Teacher tries to organize or give advice to a (peasant) Cooperative, how he is persecuted by the 'cacique' of the village who is generally the one who controls local trade in all its branches....As an example of this type of person we can quote the Monteros in Bocal, Ignacio Reyes Ortega in Calkin', Ricardo Marentes in Tenabo, where the Teachers were expelled, the Laras and the Calderóns of the 'Chenes' region, a place where Teachers and Peasants of the Cooperative are murdered, the Castillo Lanz family, the Romero Esquivels in Campeche City, intellectual authors of the present situation in the State, the Cabrals and the Imurreta Abrens in El Carmen and Palizada, people who have hidden in the ranks of the P.N.R. making themselves pass as real champions of the proletariat of Campeche and who are nothing but the destroyers of liberty....."

There was one other document, prepared by a special commission appointed by the B.R.M.'s executive committee, which is very significant. This was a discussion of tactics and of the relations of the teachers' union with other popular organizations in the State. (2) It gives a historical account of their work which is worth quoting at length. After describing the shortcomings of the old "leagues" set up in the time of General Alvarado and Felipe Carrillo Puerto, the document goes on:-

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- (1) Ibid., "Garantías para los Maestros - Ponencia presentada por los C. Profs. Eugenio Rivas y Fernando Moguel en la segunda Gran Convención Magisterial del Estado de Campeche - Abril 23 de 1937".
- (2) Ibid., "Ponencia 'El S.U.T.E.C. y sus Relaciones con las Organizaciones Obreras, Campesinas, de Estudiantes, Juveniles, de Empleados Públicos y de Mujeres' que presenta la Comisión Designada por el Comité Ejecutivo del 'Bloque Revolucionario de Maestros del Estado de Campeche', ante la 2a. Gran Convención Magisterial de Campeche". 22nd April 1937.

".....It is only in 1934 that trade union organisation in the correct sense of the term appears in the State of Campeche with the same social composition and human material as had formed the extinct 'Leagues' and having in consequence, as well as the vacillations due to their recent birth, the hereditary vices, characteristic of their predecessors in the field; but containing, carrying within them, at the same time, the constituting elements, the conditions which in a new structure with a new environment, were to favour the clarification of these tasks and the initial application of lines of action more consistent in a class-based movement, whose results, in spite of obstacles and difficulties, we are now seeing progress and take root in the consciousness of the labouring masses. It is necessary to make it quite clear that the transformation of the aforesaid 'Leagues' of a collaborationist type into organizations of trade union structure and class struggle, was due to a large extent to the constant pressure and tenacious criticism of the teachers.

"Let us go back a little and see the origins and the trajectory of our rôle in the trade union movement. In April of 1930 the 'Escuela Normal Rural' of Hecelchakán was created. Under the influence of the Cultural Missions and of this School there appear the outbreaks of struggle against the crimes of 'caciquismo' in the regions of the 'Camino Real' and of the whole State. The Cultural Mission led by the Teachers Gustavo Jarquín and José Luís Figueroa begins the formation of cooperatives which back up the policy of opposition followed by the 'Escuela Normal Rural'. In the heat of these events is born the 'Bloque Revolucionario de Maestros' which gathered together under the banner of unification almost the whole teaching profession. Months later there appear with the participation of the 'Bloque Revolucionario de Maestros' the 'Federación General de Trabajadores' with positive tendencies towards unification which, owing to various circumstances, are today in a period of retreat due to the manoeuvres of certain leaders at the service of reaction. Finally, there appears the 'Comité Regional de Defensa Proletaria' which at the moment only links together the previously dispersed forces of opposition which, nevertheless, on a platform of just demands, is trying to bring about the trade-union unity of all workers in the State.

"2. The Present Situation of the Movement -

"In 1936 the revolutionary movement reaches its highest stage of development since General Cárdenas reinitiated the onward march of the Mexican Social Revolution begun in 1910 and halted in its tracks by various leaders who betrayed it and are continuing to betray it in one form or another. Cárdenas in power, carrying out the provisions of the Six-Year Plan, has offered to safeguard national interests, giving the necessary guarantees for the unification of the workers. The Reform of Article 3 of the Constitution requires the teachers to take up their position in the class struggle, leaving the direction of the movement to the working class. In spite of these guarantees offered to the teachers, we have seen how national reaction unleashes upon them the blackest repression, on account of the fact that they are the tactical advisers of the struggle, especially that of the peasantry; we the Teachers of Campeche knew that the desires of General Cárdenas have not been fulfilled because the local authorities, often in connivance with the Federation and at the service of capitalists and 'caciques', have allowed and plotted a whole series of outrages, persecutions and murders of teachers who are carrying out their duty in the execution of Socialist Education. The B.R.M.E.C., now transformed into the S.U.T.E.C. has always called on all the workers without exception for unity in the struggle, without discriminating on account of beliefs of any kind..." (Underlining mine - D.L.R.).

This is the clearest and most complete statement available of the position of the B.R.M. or S.U.T.E.C. with regard to the social and political conflicts of Campeche, and although written by the teachers themselves, it gives a convincing impression of their central rôle in the development of a militant labour movement and of an organised political opposition in the State.

Continued Labour Disputes and Political Tension, May-June 1937.

One of the signs that the situation in Campeche was entering a new phase, with the Federal Government attempting to intervene to a greater extent and influence the course of events, was the arrival on 5th May of a new Director of Federal Education in the State, Benjamin P. Martínez.⁽¹⁾ The post had apparently been vacant for some time, and Martínez, who had held the post once before, some years previously, was appointed with the task of reorganising and revitalising public education in the State as soon as possible. Reporting this, the "Diario de Yucatán", said that education in the area was in a state of extreme abandon, and throughout the month of May it backed this up with reports of complaints against the teachers for absenteeism, politicking and so on, from all over Campeche. Some of the teachers themselves recognised a need for improvement, but the "Diario de Yucatán", was almost certainly painting an exaggerated picture of the situation as part of a systematic campaign against the teachers.

Despite such criticisms, it is clear that the social and political work of the teachers continued. About this time there were renewed difficulties among the construction workers of the Southeastern Railway, in whose unionisation they had played such a significant part. On 5th June Elsie Medina wrote to General Mígica⁽²⁾ that for some time the "Sindicato de Terraceros" had been

(1) "Diario de Yucatán", 6th May 1937 (report dated 5th May).

(2) Mígica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937 ...", pp. 212-214; letter to Mígica from Elsie Medina in Campeche, 5th June 1937.

maiding petitions to engineer Gálvez (Mígica's representative on the "FerroMex" Company which had been brought under his supervision the previous year), but the demands were not being conveyed to Mígica because Gálvez manipulated the union for his own purposes.

As the workers had received no reply to their petitions, they lost patience and voted to strike; Elsie said that the teachers had opposed this because they knew Mígica had not received news of the situation, but they could not stop the workers from striking and had to express support for their demands which they considered entirely just. Gálvez had interpreted the stoppage as being the work of the teachers, but he was quite wrong. To all this the General replied⁽¹⁾ in great surprise, confirming that he knew nothing of the workers' demands and their disgraceful working conditions. He immediately ordered that everything be done to improve working and living conditions, and offered to consider a small wage increase. As for the teachers, it had never occurred to him that they might have provoked the strike or could have prevented it. This conflict, which shows once again the intimate involvement of the teachers in all aspects of the labour movement in Campeche, indicates also that they by no means always used their influence to foment conflicts or exploit differences as was often alleged.

The teachers' participation in the struggles of the peasantry also involved them once again in a tense situation at the beginning of June. On June 6th it was reported from Dzitbalché⁽²⁾ that in the nearby community of Baca-bón there had been an affray in which "a group of rebellious women" had assaulted the mother and the sister of Gerardo Tún, the local justice of the peace. On the 9th it was reported⁽³⁾ that there had been further disturbances in

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 215; letter from Mígica to Elsie Medina, 7th June 1937.

(2) "Diario de Yucatán", 6th June 1937.

(3) *Ibid.*, 11th June 1937 (report dated 9th June); and "Diario del Sureste", 10th and 12th June 1937.

Bacabchón. When Gerardo Tún arrived in Campeche City, suffering from various injuries, he said that about midday he was returning from Dzitbalché, where he had been to make some purchases, when he came across a group of members of the peasant cooperative, carrying arms and led by the teacher of the local school, Francisco Ché, along with Gerardo Poot and Estebán Tún; the group insulted him and then Ché and Poot threw stones at him and knocked him down. Then he heard four shots, and he was wounded along with three other people. That afternoon a platoon of federal troops was sent to the village from Calixtlá to restore order.

Something of the background to this incident can be gathered from the fact that Tún's companions were members of the F.R.O.C.; and a later report⁽¹⁾ indicated that at "about 2 p.m." on the same day the headquarters of the village cooperative were assaulted by individuals obeying Tún's orders, using firearms and wounding the President of the "Comisariado Ejidal". Yet again a clash had been caused by friction between supporters of the F.R.O.C. and a peasant cooperative organized by the teachers. Shortly after this⁽²⁾ the New Director of Federal Education visited Dzitbalché, and, it was stated, offered to replace the teacher Francisco Ché - thus apparently lending support to the F.R.O.C. against the independents.

In Hecelchakán also, long-standing political differences were brought to a head once again about this time. On 16th June, the local justice of the peace and his secretary, Magdaleno Aguilar and Buenaventura Chan, were arrested in Campeche City for "usurpation of functions".⁽³⁾ They had held these posts since January, when Governor Mena Córdova had tried to impose a different justice of the peace, who had been unable to take up the appointment "owing to

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 13th June 1937 (report dated 9th June).

(2) "Diario de Yucatán", 16th June 1937.

(3) "Diario de Yucatán", 17th June 1937.

the hostility of the people". Now that Aguilar and Chan were being removed by the State authorities, there was once again "great discontent among the workers and peasants",⁽¹⁾ - the reason being that Hecelchakán was one of the few places which had consistently succeeded in electing independent, popular local authorities, partly because of the presence there of the E.R.C. directed by the radical Juan Pacheco Torres, and this was another step towards ending its independence.

Cárdenas Visits Campeche. July 1937

By this time the constant complaints and reports of disturbances in Campeche had convinced Cárdenas of the need to intervene personally. Since he also intended to visit the State of Yucatán to initiate a thorough-going land reform there, he decided to make a three week tour of the whole peninsula, beginning at the end of July. He began the tour in Campeche where he arrived by air on 25th July,⁽²⁾ and spent a week in the State, longer than any other President in the history of Mexico. He was met on arrival by Mena Córdova and other prominent officials, accompanied by a large crowd of workers, and his tour of inspection really began the following day, visiting the construction works of the Southeastern Railway.⁽³⁾ On the 27th⁽⁴⁾ his main attention was devoted to the "Instituto Campechano", where he listened to the point of view of the students who had led the strike in January and February. Since the State Government was strongly criticised by these leaders, Mena Córdova, who was present, hastened to put his side of the argument, levelling serious charges against the lecturers. When Cárdenas had heard all this, he repeated his desire to give every encouragement to education, and announced that the Federal Government would give the college a grant-in-aid which would double or treble its existing budget; he also

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- (1) Ibid., 18th June 1937; and "Diario del Sureste", 17th & 19th June 1937.
 (2) "Diario del Sureste", 26th July 1937, & "Diario de Yucatán", 26th July 1937.
 (3) "Diario de Yucatán", 27th July 1937.
 (4) Ibid., 28th July 1937; and "Diario del Sureste", 28th July 1937.

decreed certain changes in the course of studies. These announcements appear to have been enthusiastically received by the staff and students.

On 28th July Cárdenas visited various schools in the city and was received at a special teachers' meeting, of which unfortunately no details are given.⁽¹⁾ On the 29th and 30th he inspected public works in the city and the nearby village of Lerma, where he also visited another school.⁽²⁾ Then on the 31st he left for Mérida aboard a special train, making brief stops on the way at Tenabo, Hecelchakán, Dzitbalché, Calkiní and Bécál. The press reported only that in Hecelchakán several peasants including Higinio Chan and Héctor Caamal explained their problems to the President and registered complaints against the State Government;⁽³⁾ and that in the locality of Kilakán, Calkiní a group of workers "instigated by their leaders" made strong criticisms of the State Government, the municipal authorities, the "Banco de Crédito Ejidal" and certain local personalities, which "caused a very bad impression".⁽⁴⁾

Cárdenas' tour and especially his contacts with the teachers were described in greater detail by Claudio Cortés.⁽⁵⁾ The teachers, he said, had behaved "as always with a clear sense of responsibility and strong class consciousness". Cortés thought the teachers had given a very good impression:

".....the visit to the schools constituted a living demonstration of the effort to create a new world, the assemblies of pupils directed by the children themselves were quite moving and encouraging to behold, demonstrating the technical capacity and revolutionary preparation of the teachers, but where the work of the Teachers reached its greatest fulfilment was in the tour of the 'Camino Real' where the Hero of the Teachers' Struggles and their Programme of Action was Juan Pacheco Torres....."

Moreover, the peasants of Hecelchakán, Dzitbalché and Kilakán had according to Cortés been bold and loyal to the teachers when setting forth their problems to Cárdenas; and it is evident from Cortés' report that the State authorities had not been able to hide from Cárdenas the antagonism existing between them

(1) "Diario de Yucatán", 29th July 1937.

(2) Ibid., 30th and 31st July 1937.

(3) Ibid., 1st Aug. 1937.

(4) Ibid., 3rd Aug. 1937.

(5) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937-10/110"937"/1"; letter to Múgica from Claudio Cortés, 26th Aug. 1937.

and the independent groups, especially the teachers. This is confirmed by a letter to Múgica from Juan Pacheco Torres (1) vividly describing the visit to Hecelchakán:-

"...we got off the train in the midst of a huge crowd of people with the students of the 'Normal', their clenched fists raised, forming a guard of honour for the President and for a moment and because of the confidence he inspires, I felt more like calling him Comrade Cárdenas....."

"Castillo Lanz was the main objective of the attacks of all the speakers. Ignacio Reyes Ortega, the nephew of the priest of Calkiní and the fanatic Montero, people who have been living from politics for the last twenty years, were also subject to the attacks of the working class"

But it also seems that there was a new willingness to compromise on both sides, which was strongly encouraged by Cárdenas, for Pacheco Torres went on:-

"We are in the highest degree disposed towards an understanding with Mena Córdova, if he revises his ideas and takes up his place in the struggle towards which we the Teachers along with our organizations are directing our efforts". (Underlining mine - D.L.R.)

It seems that throughout this tour Cárdenas and his assistants took the line of encouraging the radical work of the teachers in speeches, while trying to bring about a "rapprochement" behind the scenes. On 30th July the Secretary of Public Education, Vázquez Vela, conceded an interview to Roberto L. Campos (the local deputy who appears to have been acting once again as correspondent of the "Diario del Sureste"). (2) He declared that he was very satisfied by the aptitude and enthusiasm of the teachers of Campeche and Yucatán and their "advanced understanding of the spirit which inspires socialist education". But having given this word of encouragement to the radicals, he then said that Benjamin P. Martínez, the new Director of Federal Education in Campeche, was doing excellent work in uniting the teachers and bringing about a "rapprochement with the local authorities"; and it was good to see that the teachers of

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- (1) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937... 'P'-'Q'"; letter to Múgica from Juan Pacheco Torres of Hecelchakán, 24th Aug. 1937.
 (2) "Diario del Sureste", 31st July 1937 (interview held on 30th July).

Campeche were overcoming their difficulties with the State Government and "have arrived at an understanding and esteem and respect Governor Mena Córdova just as the federal teachers of Yucatán look up to engineer Palomo Valencia.." Vázquez Vela must have known that this was an exaggeration, and it was presumably intended as a hint that the Federal Government wanted the teachers and the Governor to patch up most of their differences and work out a compromise programme of reforms rather than contemplate a radical change in the Government of Campeche.

The real position of the teachers can be understood from a memorandum given to Muñoz Cota by Juan Pacheco Torres, following a suggestion of Cárdenas. This document lists a number of specific grievances and petitions which were apparently considered to be the essential preliminaries to any programme of collaboration with the local authorities. (1) The most important points were as follows:-

"SECOND:- We shall consider as resolved our problems which previously existed with the Governor of the State, Mena Córdova, as and when he recognizes the majority rights of all organizations and supports the workers in their conquests and in their struggles towards their emancipation....."

"FIFTH:- We support in all its parts the petition raised by the workers, to the effect that the Estates surrounding the main villages of this Municipality (Hecelchakán) should be divided and be given over to the cultivation of henequén by means of a long-term loan....."

There were several other specific grievances, mainly of a local nature. Whether or not they were promptly resolved, Cárdenas' visit seems to have achieved its aim to the extent of bringing about some sort of collaboration between the State Government and the independent organizations, although the imposition of a settlement from above could not end the basic contradictions.

(1) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937-10/110°937°/1"; memorandum given to Lic. José Muñoz Cota in Merida, Yuc. by Juan Pacheco Torres, 1st Aug. 1937.

The Formation of the "Federación de Trabajadores de Campeche" and the
Municipal Primaries of September 1937.

Most of the political implications of the settlement imposed by Cárdenas were worked out and put into effect during the next two months. On 7th August Mena Córdova, giving his annual address to the opening session of the 35th State Legislature, claimed that his administration would have undertaken the construction of public works and the development of intense social work during the past year, were it not for the fact that they had been hindered by "the constant agitation" of "well-known individuals with ambitious political aims" who "fortunately found no response either in the majority groups of workers and peasants or in the federal authorities, but caused unnecessary expenses to the Public Treasury....."⁽¹⁾ However, this may have been, the will of the federal authorities soon made itself felt among the rival workers' and peasants' organizations, for on 9th August a "Congress of Working-Class Unification" began in the "Tbro" theatre of Campeche City under the auspices of the national labour federation, the C.T.M., and attended by delegates of the F.R.O.C. and of the independent unions.⁽²⁾

The express purpose of this Congress was the formation of a single united union federation in the State, affiliated to the C.T.M. There were over 140 delegations with more than 300 individual delegates.⁽³⁾ At the opening session there were difficulties over the approval of credentials, and several delegates had their credentials rejected, some because they did not fulfil the requirements of admission and others because, according to the press,⁽⁴⁾ they did not come from "militant working-class organizations". The procedure does not seem to have been excessively favourable to the independent unions; the admission of the teacher Juan Segundo Güemes caused much discussion and oppo-

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 8th Aug. 1937.

(2) "Diario de Yucatán", 10th Aug. 1937; and "Diario del Sureste", 12th Aug. 1937.

(3) "Diario de Yucatán", 11th Aug. 1937.

(4) "Diario del Sureste", 12th Aug. 1937.

sition from some delegates - it is not difficult to imagine who - although he was eventually admitted. But the main differences seem to have been resolved, and when the Congress closed on the 11th it was reported to have been "a resounding success" and a triumph of the C.T.M. and the workers of the State, resulting in the formation of the "Federación de Trabajadores de Campeche".⁽¹⁾ The last session began with "vivas" for Cárdenas and Lombardo Toledano,⁽²⁾ and was addressed on behalf of Cárdenas by Lic. José Muñoz Cota, who was thanked by the teacher Primitivo González, delegate for Ciudad del Carmen.

Following this, the Executive Committee of the "Federación de Trabajadores de Campeche" was elected, apparently including representatives of all the main factions⁽³⁾ and in conclusion several speakers referred to the need to give full support and loyalty to the new Federation. These speakers included Juan Segundo Güemes of the S.U.T.E.C., Dionisio Ek and Marcelo Poot (both peasants who spoke in Mayan) and Domingo Granados; since Güemes and Ek had long been leading figures among the independent unions, while Poot and Granados were supporters of the F.R.O.C. (Poot had been involved in the clash in Dzitbalché during the Senators' visit the previous December), there had certainly been a remarkable reconciliation.

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- (1) "Diario del Sureste", 14th Aug. 1937 (report dated 12th Aug.).
 (2) Lombardo Toledano was Secretary-General of the C.T.M.
 (3) "Diario de Yucatán", 12th Aug. 1937. The members of the Executive Committee were: Carlos Tapia (General Secretary), Candelario Güemes Sosa, Candelario Segura García, José de R. Méndez, Nicanor Cuc, Sóstenes Gómez, Manuel J. López, José del Carmen Ortigón (a well-known "cacique"), José de la Cruz Ceballos, Alfonso Pinzón, Domingo Granados, Espiridión Loria and Refugio Z. Farías. They appear to be a complete mixture of activists from the F.R.O.C. and the independent unions, although Carlos Tapia was a leader of the F.R.O.C. Tension had evidently been diminished since a more progressive faction led by Tapia had won control of the F.R.O.C. from the previous corrupt leadership headed by Peraza and Arturo Vázquez.

During the Presidential tour the independent unions did achieve the resolution of a number of specific grievances. Thus towards the end of August the S.U.T.E.C. announced ⁽¹⁾ that as a result of an interview with Cardenas and Vazquez Vela, they had obtained definite promises of the construction of a big "Central School" in Campeche City; scholarships for three teachers; the payment of the previous October's wages, which were owing to 50 teachers; a minimum wage of 100 pesos a month; and a study with regard to subsequent federalization of all education in the State (it seems that an earlier agreement to this effect had not been carried out). All of these were long-standing demands, and most of them had been raised during the strike in January.

But these victories of the independents on specific local or sectional issues were countered by setbacks or at best compromises at the level of State politics as a whole. On 26th September the P.N.R. held primary elections throughout Campeche to designate candidates for the Municipal Presidencies in 1938-1939, and in most places victory went to the official ticket (represented in Campeche City by Domingo Granados). ⁽²⁾ Nevertheless, the cracks were papered over and a compromise was achieved throughout the State.

The Consequences of the Political Compromise Imposed by Cárdenas in The Summer of 1937

In the months that followed, this new political settlement does seem to have been successful insofar as incidents involving open confrontation and violence between rival groups became much less frequent. One reason for this is that the attitude and tactics of the F.R.O.C. had changed - probably also

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 26th and 28th Aug. 1937.
 (2) Ibid., 27th and 28th Sept. 1937.

as a result of pressure from the Federal Government - and it was now more progressive. Interesting light is thrown on this question by a brief polemic between Carlos Tapia, the new General Secretary of both the F.R.O.C. and the "Federación de Trabajadores de Campeche", and the local deputy Roberto L. Campos, ex-correspondent of the "Diario del Sureste". In reply to allegations made by Tapia, Campos said in an open letter of 2nd October⁽¹⁾ that the F.R.O.C. under its previous Committee "took up arms against the teachers of the State" and sought publicity for its activities primarily in the conservative "Diario de Yucatán", neglecting the more progressive "Diario del Sureste" whose columns were always open to it.

This tends to confirm the close identification of the F.R.O.C. with conservative forces, at least before the summer of 1937. It also confirms that the "Diario del Sureste" was a journal of the moderate Left, open to both sides and favourable to the kind of compromise achieved in August. It favoured the reforming measures of the Cárdenas Government, whereas the "Diario de Yucatán" was the organ of those in the peninsula who paid lip-service to the Revolution for tactical reasons, but in reality were opposed to any kind of reform. On the other hand many of the teachers and most of the independent unions were socialists who wanted to push through a thoroughgoing social revolution and instal a workers' and peasants' State; this political line reached its fullest expression in the B.R.M., but was to some extent muted in the S.U.T.E.C., because of the latter's all-embracing constitution and its commitment to the August compromise.

This analysis is reinforced to some extent by the number of teachers who joined the Communist Party (possibly an even greater proportion in Campeche than in Mexico as a whole). On the 2nd and 3rd of October the Communist Party held its first regional conference in Campeche, and the teachers certainly

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 4th Oct. 1937 (letter dated 2nd. Oct.).

took a very prominent part in the proceedings.⁽¹⁾ At the opening session several delegates gave reports on different aspects of the Party's activity in the State, among them Gláfiro Molina Recio, Fernando Turriza P., Manuel Pavón B., José María Estrada, Filiberto Pindo and Fernando Moguel, all of whom had been active in the B.R.M. and in the struggles of the past three years. The numerous delegates at the opening session also elected a steering committee of five to run the conference, and this included the teacher Carmen Vargas Montes de Oca and the peasants Matilde Chi of Bécál and Dionisio Ek of Dzitbalché who had been so active in the "Federación de Cooperativas Revolucionarias".

Moreover, when the Party's Executive Committee for Campeche was elected at the final session, no less than six of its twelve members were teachers, including the General Secretary, Ramón Berzunza Pinto, and Filiberto Pabelo, Manuel Pavón B., Juan Segundo Gáemes, Ana María Otal B. and Antonio de María Alvarez.⁽²⁾ Indeed this session was attended by the majority of all the teachers in the State.⁽³⁾ During the conference proceedings the most important topic of debate was the tactic to be followed with regard to the State Government in the new situation resulting from the intervention of Cárdenas, and it is extremely interesting to see the line taken by the leading Party officials attending the conference. One of these was Hernán Escalante, General Secretary of the Party for the South-Eastern Region of the country (and, incidentally, a teacher from Yucatán). Escalante criticized some of the initiatives taken by members of the Party in Campeche, who, he said, went to the extreme of "working against a rapprochement" with the State Government"; these activities must cease because they would achieve nothing useful for the betterment of the workers and peasants. He went on to refer to the teachers directly, in these terms:-

(1) "Diario del Sureste", 3rd Oct. 1937 (report dated 2nd Oct.).

(2) Ibid., 6th Oct. 1937 (report dated 5th Oct.).

(3) Ibid., 5th Oct. 1937 (report dated 4th Oct.). The report actually says that "all the teachers" of the State attended, but this must be a slight exaggeration.

".....several teachers regard the present director of Public Education, Benjamín Martínez, as an enemy (this in itself is an interesting revelation - D.L.R.) because they believe him to be an unconditional agent of the State Government, without bearing in mind that the Director of Education constantly has to deal with official matters related to the Teaching Profession....."

Later Escalante said that the work of the Communist Party in Campeche was very irregular and that serious errors had been committed, "especially with regard to the students" who, during their strike "believing they had found the right course to overthrow the State Government, and bragging openly of their intentions, merely achieved defeat". This, he believed, was a serious mistake which must be corrected by a change of tactics.⁽¹⁾ In another speech⁽²⁾ he stressed the Party's official line of working for a united Popular Front, and its obligations to help the C.T.M. in view of the problems faced by this national labour federation; he praised the work of President Cárdenas and reminded members of the need to cooperate with Cárdenas' Government. Escalante was followed by the national General Secretary of the Party, Hernán Laborde, who, referring to the State Government of Campeche, praised Mena Córdova and called on those present to support him, arguing that "it was better to point out his mistakes, if he had any, while approaching him with a desire to cooperate....."

This emphasis on cooperation with Mena Córdova, coming from the leaders of a left-wing and supposedly revolutionary Party, may come as a surprise in view of the record of the Government of Campeche at that time - a record of electoral fraud, strike-breaking and suppression of popular organizations; and indeed there is evidence that many of those who had led the opposition to the State authorities, including several teachers, did find the Party's line hard to accept. Laborde and Escalante were supposedly following the official Soviet policy of those years, appealing for a "Popular Front" to unite all progressive

(1) Ibid., 3rd Oct. 1937 (report dated 2nd Oct.).

(2) Ibid., 4th Oct. 1937 (report dated 3rd Oct.).

groups and defend democratic régimes against the menace of fascism; and to justify their view they could point to the growth of the fanatical "Sinarquista" movement (although this did not reach serious proportions until 1939) and the often violent resistance of vested interests to the reforming measures of Cárdenas. But some people on the Left doubted the reality of the fascist threat in Mexico, and many who were prepared to support the national Government of Cárdenas as progressive and democratic, thought that it would be a distortion of the idea of the "Popular Front" to extend support to the State Government of Campeche, which they regarded as frankly reactionary.

In the remaining months of 1937 efforts to lower political tension continued, especially at a local level, with the Federal authorities, the State Government, the unions and the Communist Party all working towards this end. Early in October measures were taken to end the long-standing division of the inhabitants of Bécál.⁽¹⁾ On the 10th a special commission consisting of the Director of Federal Education, Nicanor Cuc of the "Federación de Trabajadores de Campeche" and Carlos Améndola Ruiz of the S.U.T.E.C. addressed a meeting attended by more than 1,000 people. It was agreed to organise a Council representing the community in order to supervise the functioning of the school. This Council consisted of representatives of the different local unions and cooperatives, - farmers, cartwrights, straw-weavers, hat-makers and peasants (the last two were represented by Barbaciano Chuc and Matilde Chi, both left-wing militants) - and a representative of the municipal authorities (Mario Montero, a relative of the local "cacique") - another case of a remarkable reconciliation.

Another place where old differences were resolved or at least moderated was Hecelchakán. Here, probably because of the influence of the E.R.C., it seems to have been recognised that the independent union, the "Sindicato de Obreros y Campesinos", was dominant. On 27th October this union held an as-

(1) "Diario de Yucatán", 13th Oct. 1937 (report dated 12th Oct.).

FIG. 4. Land Distribution in Campeche, 1918-1940.

(Source: De la Peña, "Campeche Económico", vol.1, pp.77-88).

Year	Dotaciones	Ampliaciones	Total area of land distributed (hectares)
1918	3	0	-
1919	1	0	-
1920	3	0	-
1921	2	0	-
1922	2	0	-
1923	1	2	-
1924	3	0	-
1925	5	1	-
1926	10	3	-
1927	12	2	-
1928	3	0	-
1929	3	0	-
1930	5	0	-
1931	4	3	-
1932	0	0	-
1933	2	0	-
1934	0	0	203,287*
1935	5	1	14,708
1936	13	7	42,652
1937	4	5	21,412
1938	32	29	178,006
1939	6	12	43,520
1940	0	28	1,153,108
Total	118	93	1,656,693

*Cumulative total, 1918-1934.

Note the sudden increase in 1938, and the huge areas of land distributed in the form of "ampliaciones" in 1940.

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embly attended by the great majority of its members, to elect a new committee, and a list of candidates led by Román Puch (local deputy of the "Alianza Popular") was elected without opposition. (1) Reconciliation was also achieved within the ranks of the students, for Carlos Sansores Pérez, who had led the small dissident group at the time of the strike, was now working together with Eduardo Negrín Baeza in the "Federación Estudiantil Campechana", which elected a new committee in December. (2) Within the S.U.T.E.C. political activity continued, although it was no longer directed openly against the State Government. The new spirit of cooperation was encouraged by the nomination on 29th December of a local teacher, Septimio Pérez Palacios, as Director of Federal Education in place of the controversial Benjamín Martínez. (3) But beneath the surface the old tensions continued, and they were to erupt again slightly over a year later when political issues, both local and national once more came to the fore.

1938: A Year of Calm in the Politics of Campeche

The year of 1938 seems to have been one of relative calm as regards the political situation in Campeche; the compromise arranged the previous year was apparently successful, and open disputes and clashes between the State authorities and the independent groups, or between rival unions appear to have been few.

One powerful reason for the successful reduction of tension was that the distribution of land to the peasants, so long delayed in Campeche, was at last being carried out on a large scale. The table opposite shows that the year 1938 saw a dramatic increase in the area of land distributed and the number of communities receiving it - between 3 and 4 times as much as in any previous year.

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- (1) Ibid., 29th Oct.1937 (report dated 28th Oct.).
 (2) "Diario del Sureste", 23rd Nov., 22nd & 28th Dec.1937. There appear to have been some difficulties since on 21st Dec. the student leaders announced that the counting of votes had been suspended indefinitely, but on 28th Dec. it was reported that the new committee had been elected and would take over on the 30th.
 (3) Ibid., 30th Dec.1937 (report dated 29th Dec.); and "Diario de Yucatán", 30th Dec.1937 (report dated 29th Dec.).

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In other words, the great impulse given to the agrarian reform, which was apparent on a national scale from the beginning of Cárdenas' Presidency, did not reach Campeche until 1938, when it was if anything beginning to decline in the country as a whole. (1) Agrarian reform is always a political event, and this was particularly true in this case, where the acceleration of change was clearly a result of the crisis of the previous year and the new distribution of power. As such it owed much to the personal intervention of Cárdenas, but it was also a vindication of the militant policies of the revolutionary teachers and the independent unions, whose pressure alone had obliged the Federal Government to intervene and resolve the conflict.

For the teachers and the left-wing unions and cooperatives the highlight of 1938 was the visit of General Múgica, who on 21st May set out from Mexico City on another tour of inspection of the operations of his Department in the South-Eastern States. (2) The main object of this visit to Campeche was to inspect the progress being made in the construction of the Southeastern Railway, which from San Dimas to the border with Tabasco was to pass through virgin jungle and swamps in the interior of the State. A journalist who accompanied Múgica, Luís Octavio Madero of "El Nacional", gives an idea of the obstacles faced by the workers (and, incidentally, by many rural teachers serving in these areas):- (3)

"The economic, physical and moral sacrifice demanded by an enterprise of such a scale is inconceivable: millions of cubic metres of supplies are lost in the swamps; hundreds of workers fall beneath the cruel blows of the tropics. Between Matamoros and Campeche, passing through Pixoyal and Santa Cruz, we obtained an impressive piece of information: sixty per cent of the 38th batallion, responsible for clearing the jungle, was decimated by the anopheles mosquitoes and the bacteria of the water supply. All despite the fact that the brigades.....are accompanied, by order of General Múgica, by a medical team which studies the conditions of the region and provides the workers with preventive and curative medicines."

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- (1) Shulgevski, op.cit., pp.402-403.
 (2) Armando de Maria y Campos, "Múgica: Crónica Biográfica" (Mexico City, Oct.1939, Compañía de Ediciones Populares, S.A., 384 pp.). pp.273 and 286.
 (3) Ibid., p.287.

Having inspected the progress of the railway, Múgica wanted to visit the poor and waterless area of the "Chenes" (Hopelchén, Dzibalchén, Sahcabchén, etc.) in the north-east of the State. At the time this area was completely devoid of modern communications, and the General's party travelled for a day in jeeps over rough tracks through the dense scrub.⁽¹⁾

From the "Chenes" region the General's party went to Hecelchakán where he received another warm welcome from Pacheco Torres and the students of the E.R.C., and then to Bécab and other villages of the "Camino Real" whose inhabitants met him with "overflowing demonstrations of joy". In Halachó and Calkiní teachers and pupils came out to greet him carrying posters with the slogan "Cárdenas and Múgica have been here!"⁽²⁾ - a significant indication of the esteem in which they held Múgica, who for many people on the Left was the President's most outstanding collaborator and ideal successor.

Campaigning Begins for the Gubernatorial and Presidential Elections, January - April 1939

Two factors combined to cause a revival of political strife in Campeche beginning in January 1939. These were, first, the campaign to elect a new Governor of the State to take office on 16th September 1939, and second, the beginning of electoral activity in connection with the Presidential succession of 1940. For the Governorship the State authorities launched the candidacy of the federal deputy Héctor Pérez Martínez, while the independents of the "Alianza Popular Revolucionaria" put forward Senator Carlos Góngora Gala. With regard to the Presidential succession, electoral activity really began on 17th January 1939 following the resignation of Múgica, Avila Camacho and Sánchez Tapia from their posts in the Cárdenas Government in order to become candidates.⁽³⁾

(1) Ibid., pp. 274-5 and 288-291. (Accounts of the journey are given by Luis Octavio Madero and by Carolina Escudero, Múgica's private secretary whom he was later to marry).

(2) Ibid., p. 292.

(3) Ibid., p. 341; and Agustín V. Casasola, "Historia Gráfica de la Revolución Mexicana" (Mexico, 1965, Editorial F. Trillas, S.A., 3002 pp.), p. 2409.

The impact of this in Campeche, where Múgica had so many contacts and friends, was immediate. In fact, two days before he announced his candidacy there was formed the "Comité Orientador 'Pro-Múgica' de Campeche", and its members included several figures who had long been active among the independent organizations - the teachers José Guadalupe Novelo, Fernando Trejo Carrillo, Fernando Turriza Pérez, Juan Pacheco Torres and Jorge Burad; and Lic. Agustín Avila Gala, José Patrón Miranda, Rafael Alcalá Dondé and Agustín R. de la Gala, all of whom had been local electoral candidates for the "Alianza Popular" at one time or another. (1) They rapidly gained the support of a large number of unions and popular organizations, including railwaymen, dockers, peasants and associations of women and young people in Campeche City, Hecelchakán, Seybaplaya, Ciudad del Carmen and other places. (2) But they also encountered very strong opposition from official quarters, and their correspondence reveals the growth once again of intense hostility to the Government of Mena Córdova on the part of many radicals like themselves. On 14th March they reported that Múgica's candidacy had been received with great enthusiasm, (3)

"... in spite of all the manoeuvres carried out by the Official Machinery of the Reactionary Government represented to the misfortune of our homeland by Sr. Eduarde Mena Córdova, who shamelessly and in connivance with Dr. Héctor Pérez Martínez, Pro-Candidate imposed by Mena Córdova himself for the Govt. of the State, is making a terrible campaign in favour of General Avila Camacho, in which they spend enormous amounts of money putting pressure on every person who does not want to support the said campaign....."

But the Committee stressed that they would not give way, even though:

".....the hostile forces make use of all the intrigues necessary for their bastard ends, in order to remove us from this State, believing that by this means they will be able to take control of the groups of workers and peasants which we direct and which will never for any reason be able to support the fatal policy being pursued by those who have revealed themselves for more than 20 years past as enemies of the labouring classes....."

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- (1) Múgica archive, vol. "Boletines y Literatura de la Campaña de 1939 Pro-Múgica, No. 2" report, 14th March 1939, from the "Comité Orientador 'Pro-Múgica' de Campeche" to Senator Ernesto Soto Reyes, Secretary for Political Action of the "Centro Nacional Director Pro-Múgica".
 - (2) Múgica archive, vol. "Campeche" (Campaña de 1939 Pro-Múgica); letter to Múgica, from the "Comité Orientador 'Pro-Múgica' de Campeche", 30th March 1939.
 - (3) Múgica archive, vol. "Boletines y Literatura de la Campaña de 1939 Pro-Múgica, No. 2"; report, 14th March 1939, from the "Comité Orientador 'Pro-Múgica' de Campeche" to Senator Ernesto Soto Reyes.

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- (2) Múgica archive, vol. "Campeche" (Campaña de 1939 Pro-Múgica); letter to Múgica, from the "Comité Orientador 'Pro-Múgica' de Campeche", 30th March 1939.
- (3) Múgica archive, vol. "Boletines y Literatura de la Campaña de 1939 Pro-Múgica, No. 2"; report, 14th March 1939, from the "Comité Orientador 'Pro-Múgica' de Campeche" to Senator Ernesto Soto Reyes.

The letter went on to specify some of the intrigues they were facing, which consisted mainly of attempts to remove leading activists from the State. Thus the teacher José Guadalupe Novelo, and the railwaymen's leader José Patrón Miranda both lost their jobs when they refused to move to Baja California, at the other end of the country; and other leading "mugiquistas" were subjected to similar pressures. But these were only the leaders; as for the rank-and-file supporters of the campaign, the Committee said they were subject to repressions and abuses of all kinds.

These allegations were confirmed by the Director of Federal Education in the State - a post that was now occupied by Aurora Caraveo de Illescas, an independent leftist who had militated in the B.R.M. and the S.U.T.E.C. and was now giving her valuable support to the Múgica campaign. On 12th February she told Múgica⁽¹⁾ that "a small group" of people had gone over to the other side; but, although the struggle was hard, the workers had responded to the call to join the ranks of the "mugiquistas". The previous Sunday they had organised a demonstration of support for Senator Góngora Gala on his arrival in the city, and it was attended by "no less than four thousand men full of enthusiasm" and chanting "vivas" to Múgica, Cárdenas and Góngora Gala.

Some time later, in another letter⁽²⁾ Aurora said that their efforts were producing good results, but expressed concern about the activities of their opponents. Most significantly, she revealed the existence of a serious split in the ranks of the teachers, most of whom remained loyal, but some of whom had gone over to the other side and were campaigning for Pérez Martínez and Avila Canache. They had done this under pressure from official circles and also, remarkably, from the Communist Party, which was calling on its members to support "moderate" candidates in the name of the unity of the Left and of the

(1) Múgica archive, vol. "1939. Campaña Presidencial - Política Electoral - Adhesiones del Edo. de Campeche"; letter to Múgica from Profa. Aurora Caraveo de Illescas in Campeche, 12th Feb. 1939.

(2) Ibid., letter to Múgica from Aurora Caraveo de Illescas in Campeche, 1st April 1939.

Popular Front. The extent of the division is shown by the fact that about one third of the roughly 350 teachers in the State were supporting the "official" candidates, and were led by one of the most prominent militants of the B.R.M./S.U.T.E.C., Ramón Berzunza Pinto.

Aurora goes on to describe the manoeuvres within the P.R.M. (as the P.N.R. was now called) which was then (1st April) in the process of holding its primary elections to determine who should be its official candidate for the Governorship:-

"The internal electoral function has been taking place, and despite the irregularities deliberately committed by the P.R.M.'s Delegate so as to favour the Government side, Senator Góngora Gala is leading the voting since the masses of the railway workers swamped our opponents. To this have to be added the votes of Posuch and Heeslehakán which we won. On the 28th of March the poll of the Teaching Sector took place, and the only people to be counted were 138 Teachers in favour of Pérez Martínez, for more than 210 Teachers refused to take part in the voting because of the tremendous pressure exerted by our enemies, who introduced Federal troops to intimidate the voters....."

It is clear that although the P.R.M. had not yet selected its official candidates, there was great pressure from the party machine in favour of adopting Avila Camacho as Presidential candidate, and gubernatorial candidates who would follow a similar line - in this case Pérez Martínez.

This was bound to cause tension among the ranks of the Mexican Left, since there was nothing in Avila Camacho's record to endear him to those who hoped for a continuation or radicalization of the socializing policies of Cardenas; and this tension was only increased by the decision of the Communist Party to take a similar line. This is illustrated by Múgica's reply to Aurora Caraveo:-⁽¹⁾

".... it grieves me that on the pretext of a stupid slogan such as is that of the Communist Party of unity at any price which is leading to a movement of irreconcilable disunity, there should be people who used to be our friends who attack and harass those who have been willing to resist the stupidity of the instructions given....."

"We (i.e. the organizers of his campaign) are making constant efforts to make sure that the Party (i.e. the P.R.M.) respects the will of majorities....."

"The factor of 138 teachers who voted in favour of Pérez Martínez is symptomatic and you must prevent their work from continuing to give such results, for this shows that pressure can achieve the unspeakable in the end....."

(1) Ibid., letter from Múgica to Aurora Caraveo Illescas, 13th April 1939.

The Split in the Teachers' Ranks Caused By the Election Campaign

These developments had clearly had a disastrous effect on the impressive spirit of unity and comradeship which previously existed among the radical teachers of Campeche. On 15th May those teachers who were strongest in their support of Múgica constituted a "Bloque Magisterial Izquierdista Pro-Francisco J. Múgica" at a meeting in Campeche City.⁽¹⁾ The 34 teachers present elected a Committee consisting of Alvaro Herrera Ramírez, Dolores Franco, José María Nar, Aurora Caraveo de Illescas, Francisco Valdés, Nicolás Chávez and Ana María Ojal Briceño; and others present included such old militants as Fernando Trejo Carrillo, José Guadalupe Novelo, Gláfiro Molina Redo, Guadalupe Chan Perera and Mercedes Vadto Lara. Presumably they were soon joined by most of the 210 who had refused to support Pérez Martínez.

The seriousness of the division among the ranks is confirmed by the number of militant radicals and old friends of Múgica who had followed Ramon Berzunza Pinto in going over to the other camp, several of whom were bitterly denounced by Jose Guadalupe Novelo writing to Senator Ernesto Soto Reyes on behalf of the "Comite Orientador 'Pro-Múgica' de Campeche" on 27th May.⁽²⁾

"....It must be pointed out to General Múgica that the systematic opponents of his Candidacy are those whom he believed to be his friends and who really ought to be...."

"The names of these traitors have already been indicated and they are known by their names as leaders like Ramon Berzunza Pinto, Septimio Perez Palacios, Claudio Cortes, Antonio de Maria Alvarez, Manuel Pavon B., Elsie Encarnacion Medina and other leaders as well who having united the workers by certain tricks, suggesting to them a revolutionary line, today advise them in quite the opposite way and oblige them in some places to declare themselves for Avila Camacho. All these activities are naturally patronized by the misgovernment of the hated Eduardo Mena Cordova....."

"....in order to control the whole of the south-east it is necessary at the cost of sacrifices to help Gongora Gala, because if the victory of the Government of Campeche were to be given to Perez Martinez, he would reinforce all over the South-East the efforts that are beginning to be made today for Avila Camacho....."

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- (1) Múgica archive, vol. "Campeche" (Campana, de 1939 Pro-Múgica); legal act constituting the "Bloque Magisterial Izquierdista Pro-Francisco J. Múgica" in Campeche City, 15th May 1939.
- (2) Ibid.; report by José Guadalupe Novelo C. on behalf of the "Comité Orientador 'Pro-Múgica' de Campeche" to Senator Ernesto Soto Reyes, 27th May 1939. Classified by the Committee as "Oficio No. 18., Exp. 6-O-P-M-06".

The teachers' leaders criticized by Novelo were all Communist militants and were clearly acting in this way largely because of the Communist Party's instructions; and given the powerful hold they had over many workers' and peasants' organizations in the State, the Communist Party must have contributed significantly to the election of the centrist Pérez Martínez as Governor of Campeche, as against the more radical Góngora Gala.

In the same letter Novelo gave more details of the official or semi-official pressure that was being exerted against the independent candidates. In particular he spoke of the visit of Señor Patiño Cruz, General Secretary of the Federation of Unions of Workers in Government Service (F.S.T.S.E.), who had been in Campeche after a tour of Yucatán and had tried "with all his cunning" to make the workers within his Federation declare themselves in favour of Avila Camacho, first of all "by means of union pressure" and then by threatening them with dismissal. This man also spoke to the teachers:-

"He applied this kind of pressure also among the Teachers of Campeche who are at present being subjected to the same pressure to accept the said Pre-Candidate or otherwise they will be dismissed from the posts they occupy; these activities of Sr. Patiño Cruz, are decisions according to his declaration, of the Communist Party which believes that because it controls a certain group of communistic teachers, it can influence the people of Campeche who long before and out of their own convictions declared themselves loyal 'mugiquistas' more than three months ago and will not allow themselves to be intimidated by individuals like Patiño Cruz who even made use of his capacity as member of the council of the Party of the Revolution (the P.R.M.) and in the name of that Party said that he was authorized to advance the Pre-Candidacy of General Avila Camacho...

"This individual left hurriedly in the midst of whistles and booing and said that he would soon use other means to influence the said employees.

"He said, in his own words, that if the local contest for State Governor had been resolved in favour of Pérez Martínez it was on the suggestion of the President of the Republic. This implies for Patiño Cruz quite unlimited audacity for he dares to use the name of Lázaro Cárdenas which he uses as a banner to win followers for Avila Camacho without realizing that his game is rather dangerous....."

The intense hostility manifested by Novelo and the ardent followers of Múgica against this man suggests that such pressure could at times be counter-productive; but in general it certainly achieved its end.

For most people on the Left in Campeche, the Government of Mena Córdova was frankly conservative; and it was assumed that his chosen successor, Pérez Martínez, would be similar. On a national scale Avila Camacho was known to represent the more conservative wing of Cárdenas' Government. Although it seems likely that Cárdenas had decided to give his tacit backing to Avila Camacho (or rather that he had been forced into such a choice by powerful political pressures), he had given no open indication of preference, and most of the left-wing rank and file had such faith in Cárdenas that they assumed he would back the candidate of their choice. They continued to believe this even when the P.R.M. machine had revealed its hostility to Múgica and Góngora Gala; and when the Communist Party took the same line it seems to have lost many members in Campeche. Evidence of this is provided by another letter of José Guadalupe Novelo, this time to Senator Góngora Gala.⁽¹⁾ After denouncing various instances of electoral fraud, he described the discredit into which the Communist Party had fallen among many radicals, and said ironically:-

"...What a pity for our wonderful Communist Party; and I who like a fool went into that Party really believing that it was a Party of workers which had as its base or programme the aim of raising the most heartfelt demands of the working and peasant class. But now that I know that it is a Party which has only copied the proceedings of the reactionary Parties, I rejoice to think that to be a revolutionary it is not necessary to be a Communist, because their well-known refrain nauseates me. They say: 'HOW AM I GOING TO BE AGAINST THE LINE OF THE C.P. IF IT HAS GIVEN ME ALL THAT I HAVE AND I OWE MY POSITION TO IT'. They no longer remember that they joined that Party to struggle for the conquest of a collective demand in favour of a better standard of living for the masses."

The effect of all this was to divide the ranks of the militant teachers of Campeche (not to mention other social groups), and to turn many of them against Communism; and in many cases it drove them back politically to a reliance on purely personal loyalties - a thoroughly retrograde move. Admirable though Múgica's stand undoubtedly was, by pinning all their hopes to him these ex-Communists of Campeche (and others elsewhere) avoided the necessity of building

(1) Ibid.; letter from José Guadalupe Novelo C. to Senator Carlos Góngora Gala in Mexico City, 15th June 1939.

a new organization to carry on the struggle of the Mexican Left.

The Election of Pérez Martínez (June 1939), the Withdrawal of Múgica and the Decline of the Radical Teachers' Movement in Campeche

Throughout May and June electoral activity was intense, since following the P.R.M. primary on 5th May, the actual election of the new Governor was scheduled for 4th June, and the final results would not be ratified by the P.R.M.'s National Executive Committee until about a month later. Amidst all the manifestoes and electoral propaganda, it is interesting to see that the "Federación de Trabajadores de Campeche" (F.T.C.), the union federation formed in August 1937 by an amalgamation of the F.R.O.C. with the independent unions, and which at the time had apparently been accepted by both sides, was now just as discredited in the eyes of the independents as the F.R.O.C. had been before. This was undoubtedly due to its association with the State Government and its support for official candidates in the elections.

However, as compared to the 1937 situation, the balance of forces was now more favourable to the State Government, a state of affairs which was accentuated by the split in the ranks of what had been the most active opposition group, the teaching profession. This is underlined by a letter written by Aurora Caraveo on 14th May, inveighing against the rôle of the F.T.C. and the pro-Government group of teachers:- (1)

"....the poll of the Popular Sector was a resounding success....., just as was the 1st of May Demonstration. Our Teaching comrades took the matter into their hands and nobody attended. They made complete fools of themselves, for we showed them once again that the Unions of the F.T.C. are nothing more than Sham Unions ('Sindicatos de Paja') and as the workers have already seen through the false line of the Teachers, not one of them wanted to go, not even when they were pleading with them to go. There were amusing incidents such as that they replied to Antonio de María Alvarez, (Educational) Inspector of the City Region 'we are going to the other one not to the (demonstration) of the traitors'. They offered them money but not even in that way....."

(1) Múgica archive, vol. "Campeche" (Campaña de 1939 Pro-Múgica); letter to Múgica from Aurora Caraveo de Illseas, 14th May 1939. The letter goes on to criticize Ramón Bermúdez Pinto and to repeat that the majority of the teachers support Múgica and Góngora Gala.

The electoral campaign revealed also that the dominant social and economic groups, the components of the local establishment, were by no means united. In fact there had long been a latent division between conservative and reforming wings or factions of the establishment, represented politically by the Senator (and ex-Governor) Angel Castillo Lanz and the outgoing Governor Eduardo Mena Córdova, respectively.⁽¹⁾ The latter had risen to power as a protégé of Castillo Lanz, but had broken with him following the crisis of 1937 and the intervention of Cárdenas, the effect of which had been to break the power of Castillo Lanz (or at least seriously weaken it) while keeping Mena Córdova in power to carry out reforms on the basis of a political compromise. This was why the settlement imposed in August 1937 had initially been acceptable to the left.

But the campaign for the gubernatorial succession also saw a last stand by the followers of Castillo Lanz, who were supporting a third candidate, Ignacio Reyes Ortega, the "cacique" of Calkiní. While the State authorities and a number of municipal authorities were using their influence on behalf of Pérez Martínez, it seems that some municipalities were still controlled by followers of Castillo Lanz and were working for Reyes Ortega. The nuances of the situation were explained in a letter of 30th April from Góngora Gala's electoral committee to the President of the National Executive Committee of the P.R.M.:⁽²⁾

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- (1) It should be made clear that the distinction is between conservative and reforming wings of the so-called "revolutionary family", to use Brandenburg's phrase, in Campeche - i.e. the rival tendencies among the bourgeois forces that had come to power in 1920 after the violent phase of the Revolution. Thus the conservatives referred to here were not identical with the landed oligarchy of Díaz' times, although in some cases the two did tend to merge or to form an unholy alliance.
- (2) Mígles archive, vol. "Campeche"; letter to Lic Luis I. Rodríguez (President of the Central Executive Committee of the P.R.M. in Mexico City) from the "Comité Central Pro-Electoral pro-Góngora Gala" in Campeche, 30th April 1939.

".....The political conditions of the State of Campeche, to sum them up in a few words, are reflected in the reality of administrative chaos, because the divisionist followers of Senator Castillo Lanz, in whose previous political strength the Government of Eduardo Mena Córdova had its origin, have been subdivided into two classes or categories, because if some authorities, still faithful to the policy of Castillo Lanz, have been kept out of the control of the present State Power, others which owe their existence to the mis-government of Mena Córdova, are in constant conflict with the first group of authorities; a state or situation of administrative confusion which maintains in certain important Municipalities, such as that of which Ciudad del Carmen is the chief town, a controlling force which still follows the political line of Castillo Lanz....."

This letter also demanded the nullification of the forthcoming elections because of numerous irregularities which its authors claimed had been committed by supporters of both Pérez Martínez and Reyes Ortega.

Indeed during and after the campaign the radicals who were working for Góngora Gala made repeated appeals for the elections to be nullified, but the official verdict in both the P.R.M. primary and the election itself went to Pérez Martínez. After this Góngora Gala took legal action, and on 20th June Senator Ernesto Soto Reyes assured José Guadalupe Novelo that the election was going to be declared null and void because of the many protests that had been received.⁽¹⁾ But this did not happen, and the new Governor of Campeche was Dr. Héctor Pérez Martínez who took office on 16th September 1939.⁽²⁾ The power of Castillo Lanz was finally broken, but so for the time being was that of the militant Left. The indignation of the radicals knew no bounds, and it is eloquently expressed in the following letter to Cárdenas from a group of independent union leaders:-⁽³⁾

"Most honourable President:

"In view of the National clamour already revealed in the press, and already revealed in particular, in protest against the FABCE which the leaders of the Party of the Mexican Revolution are making of the SUFFRAGE and of the popular will, we who in all humility consider ourselves your sincere friends and servants want to explain to you the following:

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- (1) Ibid.; letter from Senator Ernesto Soto Reyes, 20th June 1939, to José Guadalupe Novelo C., in answer to the latter's communication of 14th June.
 - (2) Carlos J. Sierra, "Gobernadores de Campeche", p.136.
 - (3) Mágica archive, vol. "Campeche" (Campaña de 1939 Pre-Mágica); letter to Cárdenas (with a copy to Mágica), 23rd May 1939, signed by Joaquín Inurreta Mucel, Guillermo del Río Heredia, Ramón R. de la Gala P., Armando Rosado González, José Cámara Benítez and José María Cabrera Flores. These were all members of the 49th Branch of the Union of Employees of the Ministry of Communications and Public Works (S.C.O.P.) in Campeche.

"We the undersigned are all natives of Campeche, and are not politicians, but that does not mean that we are not fully aware of the bloody farce which the leaders of the P.R.M. have just made of the popular will of the whole people of Campeche and perhaps in the same way of the Republic.

"And if we dare to address ourselves to you Mr. President it is because the protests are mistakenly directed against you, and all the free, honourable and thinking people of Campeche do not know how to interpret this farce committed with the will of a whole People, and they all think that if there is already an Official candidate who does not need votes and who will be imposed even if the People do not elect him, it would be or it is a crime to divide a family or the Great Mexican Family only to impose a candidate afterwards and thus leave behind as is happening here, feelings of hate, rancour and revenge.....

"The farce, the barefaced contempt towards the popular will is so great, that the UNPOPULAR Candidate who has unduly been given the victory, he himself and his minions say in the squares and the meeting places, that the vote and the majorities are a myth, that the Government has a lot of money, that the Imperialist Chiclé Companies gave 250,000 pesos in the form of contributions for the campaign and victory of their candidate in the eyes of the leaders of the P.R.M.....

"To summarise all we have said Mr. President, with all due respect, but with our characteristic frankness, we venture to submit to you that we consider what is happening to be a CRIME, since even in the times of Dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, when a change of Governors took place it was already known beforehand who was the chosen one and in this way divisions and hatred were avoided...."

But such protests were of no avail, and not long after this, on 14th July 1939, General Múgica withdrew his candidacy for the Presidential nomination, (1) protesting against irregularities and dishonest tactics all over the country, of much the same kind as had been denounced in Campeche. For the independents in Campeche this was the end of the road. The teachers in the State naturally carried on much of their exemplary educational and social work, but they were never again to achieve the unity, the crusading spirit or the remarkable social and political influence which they had exercised in these years, especially in the time of the B.R.M. from September 1934 to April 1937.

(1) Maria y Campos, op.cit., pp.357-8. Múgica's speech announcing his withdrawal aroused a great deal of comment at the time, and few prominent institutions were spared from his criticism.

Thus the teachers of Campeche shared in the general fate of the Mexican Left both inside and outside the P.R.M., which was torn to shreds in the course of the momentous events of 1938 to 1941, years which witnessed an authentic national crisis and determined the course which the country was to take for the next three decades. (Indeed, the Mexican Left has still not really recovered from the dispersal and disintegration which it underwent at that time.) Many individual teachers were to have outstanding careers in education, academic life and politics, for most of them were still very young. But they did so in an environment very different from that which they had known and had helped to mould in the 'thirties.

As for the State of Campeche, which had awoken from its age-old slumber during the turmoil of these years, it had certainly made significant social and economic progress as a result of the work of the teachers in the countryside and of the construction of the Southeastern Railway; it had also benefited from the direct intervention of the Federal Government from 1937 onwards (which in turn occurred partly as a result of a political crisis which the teachers had done much to bring about). At the time of Cárdenas' visit a local observer wrote that the "Hour of Campeche" had come; ⁽¹⁾ this most abandoned part of the country, "forgotten by every government" since Charles II of Spain who had ordered the construction of the city walls, until it had become "virtually an archaeological relic"; this poor State was now promised federal aid in the form of a new wide sea-front for the city, a stadium, funds for the "Institute Campechano", schools and roads. Undoubtedly the State did benefit from all this - one indication is that its population, which had remained stationary from 1860 to 1930 at around 85,000 (extremely low for an area of some

(1) "Diario de Yucatán" 4th Aug. 1937; article "La Hora de Campeche" by Dr. Pedro F. Rivas.

30,000 square miles), was now on the increase (today it is over 200,000).⁽¹⁾

Great progress had been made in the field of education, although the system still left much to be desired. By 1942 there were 134 schools in the State;⁽²⁾ Primary school attendance had risen from 1,985 in 1903 to 6,439 in 1935 and 11,794 in 1940;⁽³⁾ illiteracy had fallen from 75% in 1900 to 50% in 1940, and "in any village which one visits, the school is immediately apparent as the best edifice in the place....."⁽⁴⁾ But De la Peña, writing in 1942, added that primary education over the last few years had been very deficient in Campeche, as indeed throughout the Republic; attendance was irregular and many pupils dropped out after one or two years at school, The teachers pointed out that this was due partly to the shortage of staff and schools, and the poor training of some teachers - in other words, to inadequate educational expenditure by the authorities; and, one might add, to the economic problems of the peasantry. Another factor, stressed by De la Peña, was "the bad influence which still persists among virtually the whole of the teaching body, of intervening more actively in politics than in their own elevated duties."⁽⁵⁾ and undeniably the political unrest of these years had taken its toll. But it would be quite misleading to place the blame for this primarily on the teachers, most of whom were struggling to improve the lot of the working population in the face of constant and often violent opposition from landowners, "caciques" and State and municipal authorities.

(1) The first two figures are from a speech on 28th July 1937 in Campeche City by Lic. González Aparicio, a member of the "Comisión de Estudios de la Presidencia" ("Diario del Sureste", 30th July 1937). The last is a current Government population estimate. The census of 1861 gave the population of Campeche as 86,455 (Amar & Carbó, op.cit., p.124); that of 1910 gave 86,661 and that of 1930 gave 84,630 (De la Peña, op.cit., vol.1, p.19.).

(2) De La Peña, op.cit., vol.1, p.44.

(3) Ibid., p.46.

(4) Ibid., pp.47-50.

(5) Ibid., pp.44-46.

Moreover, even the aid provided by the Federal Government was far from adequate; the showpiece of federal education in Campeche, the E.R.C. of Hece-lohakan, was reported in 1942⁽¹⁾ to be short of land, cattle and equipment, although it had modern premises; and to make matters worse, there were few job opportunities for its graduates owing to the low intake into the teaching profession dictated by the restriction of the educational budget.

"This year" states the report, "fifteen students graduated without any immediate prospect of their services being used, with the result that several of them decided to go to Escárcega to seek work as labourers in the construction of the Escárcega - Chetumal road....."

This was indeed a sad commentary on such a promising School; and in this case the failure was certainly not due to the staff, for the Director of the E.R.C., Juan Pacheco Torrea, was generally recognised as one of the most capable and dedicated teachers in the State, quite apart from his political activism.

This information helps to explain why many left-wing teachers and their allies in Campeche were disillusioned with the Government, despite the real progress made in 1937-1938. At that time the balance of power in State politics had altered somewhat, the official trade union structure had become more democratic and some important reforms were carried out. But already by 1939 it was becoming apparent that the fundamental character of the State Government had changed little; the independent unions had been incorporated into the system; they had not taken it over, and power was still exercised by the same commercial and bureaucratic interests.

The power of the old landowning class was severely weakened by the acceleration of the land reform in 1938, but in 1939 the redistribution of land slowed down again (see table, facing p.). In 1940 an unprecedented amount of land was distributed - six times as much as in 1938 - but virtually all of this came from national lands owned by the Government, and did not therefore

(1) De la Peña, loc.cit.

diminish the holdings of the big private landlords. Thus by 1942 there was still a minority of landless peasants in existence; and while most peasants now had some land, huge areas were still in the possession of a few private owners, who thus continued to dominate the rural economy. In January 1940 Cárdenas nullified the 1886 contract under which the three big American companies had acquired their vast holdings, but complex litigation followed and in 1942 the matter still had not been resolved. Official figures for July 1939 indicated that virtually all the rural population of the State now had "ejido" lands, but De la Peña pointed out that this was an exaggeration since many peasants were counted twice, once when receiving the initial "dotación", and again when receiving an "ampliación" (and the large grants of national lands made in 1940 were all in the form of "ampliaciones", to peasants who already had land, not to the landless). Also, there were many complaints of the non-execution of legal writs granting land to the villages.⁽¹⁾ But more important, in Campeche as in the whole of Mexico, the inadequacy of the land granted to the peasants and the individualistic structure of the ejidal system favoured the emergence in time of a rich peasant class at the expense of the impoverished majority, leading to the continuation and extension of capitalist relations in the countryside. Hence today Campeche remains neglected and undeveloped, and extreme poverty is still the lot of the majority of the peasantry, and the labouring population, although protest is no longer led to the same extent by the teachers.

(1) Ibid., vol.1, pp.88-90, and vol.2, p.298.

PART V

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER IXTHE MEXICAN RURAL TEACHER: CATALYST OF POPULAR ASPIRATIONS

It was stated in the synopsis (p. 3) that this study was intended to contribute towards a class analysis of Mexican politics since the Revolution, and this analysis has been implicit throughout the description of the complex events in which the teachers were involved. Some attempt was also made in Chapter I to define the author's terms of reference, and here it is intended to reformulate his general interpretation of the political conflicts of the period and of the teachers' rôle in them, in the light of the detailed evidence which has been presented.

The task of the Mexican rural teachers was demanding by any standards. In conditions of mass illiteracy, poor communications and social conflict, he (or she) was required to bring to the peasantry not merely the three "R's", but many of the benefits of modern civilization. Broadly speaking, the rôle of the rural teacher can be divided into three aspects: to provide education in the narrow sense, to act as a social worker, and to agitate on social and political issues affecting the rural population. In the early years, the emphasis was on the purely educational aspect, coupled with a certain amount of social work - the teaching of elementary hygiene, for example, and the encouragement of rural crafts. In the early 1930's, the emphasis on practical activities increased, and there was some guarded recognition of the teachers' right to agitate on behalf of the peasantry. But until 1933 the principal ideological characteristic of official education was nationalism, combined at times with anticlericalism - the former intended to win support for the régime and the latter to give it a radical image.

After 1934, with the introduction of "Socialist Education", the teachers' social and agitational rôles became much more prominent, and although official spokesmen were always reluctant to see them involved in political conflicts, in

practice they were often prepared to tolerate this in order to use the teachers as key elements in undermining the power of the old landed oligarchy. Already in the 'twenties the teachers had experienced opposition because of the Government's demagogic anticlerical policies (of which, it must be admitted, they were often willing tools); and in the 'thirties they became natural targets for the hostility of powerful vested interests, prepared to resort to violence to preserve their social and economic power. To the extent that the Government encouraged the teachers to occupy the front line in this social conflict, and yet failed to protect them against the consequences, it must bear some responsibility for the many tragic deaths which occurred.

The contribution of the teachers to the solution of the social problems of the peasantry, and particularly to the agrarian reform, must be recognized as being very important. There is abundant evidence to show their part in organizing leagues, formulating petitions for land, dealing with legal technicalities, organizing cooperatives, improving agricultural methods, and where necessary, leading the peasants in direct action. While their contribution should not be exaggerated, it can safely be said that they played a crucial rôle in the agrarian reform, and hence in the whole evolution of Mexico in this period - quite apart from their educational work. It is evident from the two local studies carried out that in Campeche a teachers' union with Communist leadership was the principal force in organizing independent trade unions and peasant leagues, which almost brought down an unpopular State Government and obliged that Government to carry out a land reform; and in Michoacán, while the teachers' rôle is not so clear-cut, they did play a significant part in local politics from a left-wing position, and contributed significantly to the organization of the main union federation in the State, the C.R.M.D.T. It may be objected that these two States are exceptional and that other regional studies would contradict these findings - that Morelos, for example, with its background of peasant organization from "sapatista" days, or the northern States, with their somewhat different social structure and outlook, would show a different pattern. But for most of the country

there is no obvious reason to postulate such a difference, and indeed the country-wide evidence presented in Part II tends to confirm that in many States the teachers' rôle in agrarian reform and local politics was similar. There appears to be good reason to accept the oft-repeated opinion of General Múgica, that "the teacher of today is the real vanguard of the revolutionary movement."⁽¹⁾ and that "the teaching profession, once united, will be the most effective social force which the Revolution has managed to create...."⁽²⁾ - although such praise does tend to exaggerate the teachers' rôle at the expense of other major groups such as organized workers, peasants and the Revolutionary army.

This study raises many questions about the rôle of the teaching profession and similar groups in developing countries and in revolutionary and post-revolutionary situations. It does not pretend to provide general answers to such questions; any analysis of comparative data and of the theoretical implications of these finds will have to be made elsewhere. However, a few remarks can be made concerning one possible source of disagreement: the class nature of the teaching profession. From a Marxist point of view, teachers would normally be regarded as petty-bourgeois, both in terms of their recruitment and even more because of their training and career expectations. But in the case of Mexico, this analysis has to be modified for a number of reasons. First, the original methods of recruitment of teachers, and the deliberate selection of students from poor peasant backgrounds for the Rural Normal Schools; secondly the ideological stress (at least in the 'thirties) on identification with the peasants and labourers; thirdly, the emphasis on practical activities, such as agriculture and rural crafts; and finally, the

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- (1) Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937... '81"; letter from Múgica to Prof. José Santos Valdés in Mexico City, 29 June 1937.
 (2) Ibid., vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937 (10/110"937"/1)"; speech by Múgica to a teachers' congress in Pátzcuare, Michoacán, April 1937.

experience of harsh conditions and class conflict in their work - all of these factors might be supposed to give them a thoroughly proletarian outlook, and they certainly help to explain why so many teachers joined the Communist Party. Moreover, it may be supposed that several of these factors would also apply to teachers elsewhere in the so-called "Third World", in countries facing very similar social and economic problems. However, as against this, it must be borne in mind that in the Mexican case, for all their radical and even Communist leanings, the teachers in the long run contributed to the consolidation of an essentially bourgeois régime by helping to subordinate mass revolutionary organizations to its control. At the time, it is true, it may not have been easy to recognize this; but the fact remains that this was one major long-term result of their work.

Following the re-establishment of the Ministry of Education in 1921, the rural schools programme appears to have been undertaken for three main reasons: to develop national consciousness and thus widen the power base of the régime, to incorporate the peasantry into the national market as part of a strategy of capitalist development, and to placate radical opinion by giving the Government's conservative policies a veneer of social reform. To achieve this the Government was able to draw on the popular enthusiasm aroused by the Revolution, and on the idealism of many young people who were prepared to serve as teachers. Interesting educational experiments were made and much was achieved, but in the absence of other plans to improve the economic and social conditions of the peasantry, rural education was bound to fail, as even Moisés Sáenz was obliged to recognize in 1932. ⁽¹⁾

With the breakdown of the class stalemate which was the basis of the Calles dictatorship, a more fluid situation developed in the early 'thirties. The Mexican national bourgeoisie, too weak on its own account to destroy the power of semi-feudal landowners and foreign-dominated commercial interests,

(1) See above, p. 40 .

was weakened still further by the events of 1929-1933. Threatened with being outflanked on the left by the growing tide of popular discontent, expressed in the rise of new workers' and peasants' movements which were sometimes under Communist leadership, the Revolutionary establishment split into two major groups. The radical left wing of the P.N.R., which came under the leadership of Lázaro Cárdenas, sought an alliance with the militant workers' and peasants' organizations on a broad anti-imperialist platform, while the "callista" wing rejected any such alliance and relied on a continuation of its demagogic policies - a perspective which would have led to increasing repression and subservience to foreign interests, and would surely have created an explosive situation before long.

Following the victory of the left wing of the P.N.R. in the crisis of 1933-1935, land reform at last became a reality, corruption and ostentation in official circles was attacked, and the leading politicians (particularly Cárdenas) entered into close contact with the common people. In the field of education, this change of policy was reflected in the adoption of "Socialist Education", which was proposed by left-wing teachers and intellectuals but was accepted, as a demagogic gesture, by Calles in 1934. From December 1934 onwards, with Cárdenas in power and with the land reform and other popular measures being put into practice, the rural education programme had more chance of success, since increasing sections of the rural population were in a position to benefit from it; moreover, the greater emphasis on the social rôle of the teacher and on his duty to support the peasantry in their everyday struggles, meant that they were more likely to accept the instruction he was offering.

These tendencies were becoming apparent in rural education even before the official adoption of the "Socialist Reform" of Article 3 of the Constitution, and the use of Marxist rhetoric by the Ministry of Education merely served to conform the new approach. Indeed, socialist rhetoric became

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fashionable to some extent in other spheres of Government as well, and combined with the radical measures of Cárdenas, gave rise to the impression in some circles that Mexico was "going Communist". This impression was quite common among right-wing groups both at home and abroad, and some sections of the Left in Mexico also appear to have believed that the Government was on the way to the complete transformation of the economy and the establishment of a workers' and peasants' State.

The Cárdenas Government, it is true, repeatedly denied any intention of destroying capitalism in Mexico - thus after the oil expropriation it went out of its way to reassure foreign interests that there would be no more nationalizations - but it also made frequent denunciations of capitalism and imperialism and encouraged militant unions and peasant leagues. In these circumstances its character can only be judged by its actions; and by this criterion it is clear that it never had a coherent plan for the socialization of the economy, although it is probable that Cárdenas and some of his close associates were increasingly influenced by Marxist ideas as time went on. Important though the expropriations and other measures were, they were confined to certain very specific fields; and even if the land reform had continued at its most intense rhythm (achieved in 1937), it would have taken many years to expropriate all the great estates. Indeed, in 1940 the Government itself admitted as much:-

"...despite the agrarian transformations carried out up to the present, and the division of the great landed properties effected by the Government with the purpose of creating small proprietorship, with regard to the concentration of landed property, Mexico continues to be fundamentally a country of great estates." (1)
(underlining mine - D.L.R.)

Moreover, as has been pointed out, even within the ejidal sector, truly collective or cooperative agriculture remained the exception, and most of the land was cultivated in small individual peasant plots, a system which was

(1) F.R.M., "Seis Años de Gobierno al Servicio de México, 1934-1940" (México, 1941), p. 327.

bound in the end to give rise to a new stratification among the peasantry and lead to the reinforcement of capitalist relationships.

All of this, however, was far from being apparent to most of those concerned in the mid-1930's, and it was inevitable that most of the militant workers' and peasants' organizations which had grown up in opposition to "callismo" should become ardent supporters of Cardenas; appealing to them for support against domestic reaction and foreign imperialist interests, he presented a programme with which they naturally felt identified, and from which they stood to make many tangible gains. In the process, however, they sacrificed their independence, and became incorporated into a Party and a State machine which was not under their control, and which in later years was to become more and more hostile to their interests. Having won a partial victory in its confrontation with the landed interest and with foreign capital, the Revolutionary establishment no longer felt the need to ally with the workers' and peasants' movements in the defence of their common interests; instead, after 1938, it increasingly regarded such movements as mere instruments to be manipulated in order to neutralize opposition to its rule.

The rôle of the teachers in this situation was fraught with contradictions. They acted both as agents of the Government, and as agitators supporting popular demands - land for the peasants, higher wages and better working conditions, the expropriation of foreign interests. The teachers did not create the radical unions and peasant leagues which arose in the early 'thirties, in the sense that prevailing conditions would undoubtedly have given rise to such movements even if there had been no teachers; but they did contribute powerfully to their organization and direction - they acted as a catalyst for popular aspirations which already existed. At all stages the teachers helped to arouse national feeling (although, admittedly, their nationalism was of a left-wing and not a right-wing variety); and they played a key rôle in disseminating

Government policy and rallying support for it on crucial issues - organizing meetings and demonstrations in support of the oil expropriation, for example. During the early, more radical years of the Cárdenas Government, the popular agitational aspect of their activity was dominant, but in 1939-1940 many of them in practice acted primarily as agents of the Government and only secondarily as popular leaders. Some, it is true, did not hesitate to agitate for land and other demands even if it meant going against the Government, but in most cases their opposition was confined to specific local demands, while advocating support for the régime's overall position. In this respect, many of them undoubtedly contributed considerably to the subordination of the trade unions and peasant leagues to the P.R.M., and thus to the emergence in Mexico of a social order very different from that for which they had hoped in the Cárdenas years. Today, many formerly left-wing teachers have become incorporated into the system, but a significant minority remain seriously alienated from the new order in which they live.

APPENDIX

The analysis in Chapter 6 of the character and motivation of opposition to official education is based largely on the evidence of specific instances in which this opposition was expressed in the form of physical assaults on individual teachers or groups of teachers. In order to facilitate such analysis, there follows a chronological list of all such incidents of violence known to the author, from 1931 to 1940. (There were undoubtedly a number of assaults in the 'twenties also, but they do not seem to have been widely reported and evidence of them is hard to find. This may be because education was not such a burning political issue in the 'twenties, and also because the rural teachers were not very numerous and were not organised into unions and pressure groups.)

It must be emphasised that this list makes no pretensions to being complete, and any statistical conclusions based on it must be very approximate and provisional. The evidence used comes from very diverse and possibly unreliable sources, and is often incomplete. A total of 223 individual cases of hostility are quoted, but sometimes a single "case" as quoted here represents several different incidents, indistinguishable owing to lack of information (such as case 155, reporting the imprisonment of several teachers in various parts of Sinaloa in 1938, but without giving details). Only in a minority of cases was it possible to find more than one report of a particular incident. Chapter 6 examines only those cases in which some detail is available with regard to the date and place of the incident, the name of the victim and the identity and probable motives of the assailants; but here the full picture is presented, as far as it is known to the author, so that those interested may draw their own conclusions.

The following abbreviations are used to indicate sources:-

- Bremauntz = Alberto Bremauntz, "La Educación Socialista en México" (México, 1943, Imprenta Rivadeneyra), pp.328-330.
- Ex = "Excelsior"
- Ma = "El Machete"
- Na = "El Nacional"
- P = "La Prensa"
- SEP(G) = Archive General de la Secretaría de Educación Pública, México, D.F.
- VM = "La Voz de México".

Cases

1. June 1931. MARÍA ASUNCIÓN NAVA Y GALÁN. Arrested by the municipal authorities in Tenango del Aire, "municipio" of Cortocan, State of Mexico, when she tried to open a federal school. Motives apparently political. Ex 5 July 1931.
2. June/July 1931. MARIA GUADALUPE JACOME. Subjected to threats and intrigues in San Simón, District of Chapingo, State of Mexico. Motives unknown. Ex 5 July 1931.
3. Sept. 1931. RAYMUNDO AGUILAR AND SEVERINO TORRES. Being members of the strike committee of the teachers of San Luis Potosí, they were arbitrarily arrested while on a political mission in Mexico City. Motives: political. Ex 23 & 26 Aug., 1, 6 & 9 Sept. 1931.
4. Nov. 1931. EMMA MARTÍNEZ and other women teachers. Abducted and imprisoned in San Luis Potosí by the State Government for going on strike. Motives: political. Ex 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 Dec. 1931.
5. 15 Sept. 1932. JOSE CORONA NÚÑEZ. Threatened by the people of Charo, Michoacán, who, incited by the secretary of the "ayuntamiento" and the local priest, wanted to stone him; but another section of the population defended him. Motives apparently religious. Interview with Corona Núñez in Mexico City, 21 22 & 23 Nov. 1968
6. 21 Oct. 1932. MARÍA MOHA. Murdered on the "Puga" hacienda, Nayarit, by Hilario Venegas. Motives: lust and/or the defence of vested interests. "El Maestro Rural" vol. 3, no. 14, 15 Dec. 1933.
7. 1932. JOSÉ SANTOS VALDES. Expelled from Sonora by the Governor Rodolfo Elías Calles for being "a dangerous Communist"; more specifically, because of his trade union activities. Motives: political. Correspondence with José Santos Valdés, March - July 1969.
8. 1932-1934. JOSÉ SANTOS VALDES. In Tamaulipas, he survived three attempts on his life, but finally had to flee the State. The attacks were motivated by his agrarian and trade union work. Correspondence with José Santos Valdés, March - July 1969.
9. 10 May 1933. JUAN MANUEL ESPINOSA. Murdered in Santiago Teshié, "municipio" of Aculco, State of Mexico, by Francisco González and Lucio Guerrero, leaders of the "Defensa Social" (in which he also had a position). Mixed motives (political, personal or other). "El Maestro Rural", vol. 3, no. 1, 1 June 1933.
10. 4 June 1933. FELIPE ALCOCER CASTILLO. Murdered in Xcalakdenot, Yucatán, by the "comisario municipal" of Cancun and others, apparently because of his agrarian activities. Motives: the defence of vested interests. "El Maestro Rural" vol. 3, no. 3, 1 July 1933; Na 8 June 1933.
11. Corpus Christi, 1933. JOSÉ CORONA NÚÑEZ. Threatened by a hostile crowd in Cuitzeo, Michoacán. Motives: religious. Interviews with Corona Núñez in Mexico City, 21, 22 & 23 Nov. 1968.
12. 1 Dec. 1933. FEDERICO GARCÍA. Prof. García, who was also Municipal President of Zitácuaro, was assaulted and thrown out of the municipal offices together with other officials by armed supporters of General Serrato, Governor of Michoacán. Motives: political. Mágica archive, file (letter to Mágica, 20 Jan. 1934, from Maftali N. Cejudo of Zitácuaro).

13. 1933. **MARÍA REMEDIOS ANDRADE.** Murdered near Pénjamo, Guanajuato; further details are not known. "El Maestro Rural", vol.3, no.13, 1 Dec.1933.

14. 1933. **JESÚS MÚGICA MARTÍNEZ.** Pursued across the mountains near Pátscuaro, Michoacán, by armed peasants in the service of local landowners, on account of his agrarian activities. Motives: defence of vested interests. Interview with Prof. Múgica in Morelia, Mich.

15. Sept.1934. **FLAVIO GÓMEZ, RUBÉN CERVANTES, ROGELIO ARELLANO** and others. Murdered near La Huacana, Michoacán, by bands of armed men led by the bandit Prodigius Pedraza. Motives: religion, and possibly the defence of vested interests. Bremauntz; interviews with Prof. Ignacio Tapia Rangel in Morelia, 28 & 29 Jan.1968; with Major Antonio Magaña García in Arío de Rosales, Mich., 2 Nov. 1967; and in La Huacana, Mich., with the family of Señor Santos Ponce and with Señor Samuel Vaca, employee of the "Secretaría de Hacienda", 14 Aug.1968.

16. Jan. -Feb.1935. **SAUL MALDONADO & GUILLERMO SURO.** Murdered in Tlaltenango, Zacatecas by a band of armed men. Motives apparently religious. Bremauntz; "El Maestro Rural", vol.6, no.4, 15 Feb.1935.

17. 22 Feb.1935. **PEDRO CASTILLA S.** Arrested in Sahcabchen, Campeche, by the local authorities, for having led a protest of the peasant members of a cooperative society. Motives: politics and the defence of vested interests. "El Diario de Yucatán", 24 and 25 Feb.1935.

18. 9 March 1935. **SARA POSADAS DE MAGAÑA** and one other teacher. She and the Director of the School of Galeana, near Puruandiro, Michoacán, were attacked in the school by "a crowd of fanatical, passionate, priest-ridden women..." Motives: religion. Múgica archive, file "Correspondencia Particular, 1934-5, 'M'-'Q'", pp.393-395. (letter to Múgica, 29th March 1935).

19. March 1935. **MANUEL UNZUETA AVILA.** Murdered in Canatlan, Durango, by "cristeros" under the command of one Francisco García. Motives politico-religious. Bremauntz; correspondence with José Santos Valdés, March - July 1969.

20. 1 Sept.1935. **ELENA RICO GARZA.** Murdered in San Jeronimo, Jalisco, by a band of armed men. Mixed motives. Ex 5 Sept.1935; Na 6 Sept. & 5 Dec.1935.

21. Sept.1935. **CARLOS BUEDA LEON.** Assaulted in Xamimilulco, Puebla, by the local population. Motives: religious. Ex 13 Sept.1935.

22. Sept.1935. **RICARDO GUZMAN.** Assaulted in El Sauz, Colima by bandits. Motives unknown. Ex 14 Sept.1935.

23. Sept.1935. **MARCELA SALVATIERRA.** Imprisoned in San Ignacio, Campeche by the local authorities, because of her agrarian activities. Motives: politics and the defence of vested interests. Ma 21 Sept.1935.

24. Sept.1935. **RAMON BERZUNZA PINTO** and **SALVADOR LIZARRAGA.** Arrested near San Ignacio, Campeche, on account of their union work. Motives: politics and the defence of vested interests. Ma 21 Sept.1935.

25. Sept.1935. **LEON FERNANDEZ.** Assaulted in Atoyac, Jalisco, by the enraged inhabitants. Motives: religious. Ex 18 Sept.1935; Na 23 Sept.1935.

26. Sept.1935. FACUNDO BONILLA and CAMERINO VALLE. Murdered in Morelos by followers of the rebel leader "El Tallarin". Mixed motives. Bremauntz; P 2 Oct.1935.
27. Early Oct.1935. MERCEDES ROLDAN. Attacked in Ignacio de la Llave, Veracruz, by a group of armed men. Mixed motives. P 7 Oct.1935.
28. 11 Oct.1935. SEVERAL TEACHERS. Dispersed by federal troops in Morelia, Michoacán while on strike. Motives: political. Ma 12 Oct.1935.
29. 17 Oct.1935. A SCHOOL IN JALISCO. The contents of the school of Tenasco de Abajo, Santa Maria, Jalisco, were burnt by "a band of fanatics". Motives: ostensibly religious, but possibly also the defence of vested interests. SEP(G), expediente 4-5-7-57.
30. 26 Oct.1935. A SCHOOL IN JALISCO. The school of Dolores, Colotlan, Jalisco, was burnt by "rebels", and the teacher was threatened. Motives: ostensibly religious, but possibly also the defence of vested interests. SEP(G), expediente 4-5-7-57.
31. 28 Oct.1935. INSPECTOR GILBERTO CEJA TORRES. Attacked in Bajio de los Alamos, Jalisco by a band of armed men. Motives: as in cases 29 & 30. SEP(G), expediente 4-2-7-25 & 4-5-7-57.
32. Oct.1935. JOSÉ GUADALUPE VACA MATA. Murdered between Coire and Coalcoman, Michoacán by men in the pay of the landowners Mendoza Soto and Guillen. Motives: the defence of vested interests. Bremauntz; interviews with Profa. Magdalena Delgado Toscano de Garcia in Morelia, 27 July 1968, and with Prof. Luis Torres Osorio in Uruapan, Mich., 15 Aug.1968.
33. 1 Nov.1935. JOSE SANTOS VALDÉS and others. In Teliman, Queretaro the "cristeros" attacked the village looking for the teachers, and killed the Municipal President, but the local teachers and the Cultural Mission led by Santos Valdés managed to hide. Motives apparently religious. Correspondence with Prof. José Santos Valdés, March-July 1969.
34. 9 Nov.1935. A WOMAN TEACHER. Several armed men entered Rancho de las Animas, Santa Maria, Jalisco, looking for her. Motives: as in cases 29-31. SEP(G), expedientes 4-2-7-25 & 4-5-7-57.
35. Nov/Dec.1935. VICTORIO POURETT. Hunted several times by "rebels" in Potteros, Colotlan, Jalisco. Motives: as in cases 29-31. SEP(G), expedientes 4-2-7-25 & 4-5-7-57.
36. Late 1935. A SCHOOL IN JALISCO. The school of Cienega Grande, Mesquitic, Jal., was burnt by "rebels". Motives: as in cases 29-31. SEP(G), expedientes 4-2-7-25 & 4-5-7-57.
37. Late 1935. MICAELA and ENRIQUETA PALACIOS. In the State of Puebla, their cars were cut off by "cristeros", apparently on orders from a local landowner. Motives: religion and the defence of vested interests. Bremauntz; "El Maestro Rural", vol.7, no.11, (1 Dec.1935); Na 5 Dec.1935.
38. Late 1935. CARLOS RAYAG, CARLOS PASTRANA and LIBRADO LABASTIDA. Murdered in the State of Puebla; no more details available. Bremauntz; "El Maestro Rural", vol.7, no.11 (1 Dec.1935).
39. 27 Dec.1935. MANUEL MONTES DE OCA and JUAN SEGUNDO GUÍMES. Assaulted in Campeche City by relatives of the teachers Arce and Muñoz. Motives: political. Múgica archive.

40. 1935. DAGOBERTO CANDANEDO. Murdered in the State of Puebla; no more details available. Bremaunts.
41. 1935. AGAPITO CONSTANTINO AVINA and others. Beaten in Jalostotitlan, Jalisco, by "sinarquistas". Mixed motives. Interview with Prof. Constantino in Chilchota, Michoacán, 2 Aug.1968.
42. 1935. VICENTE DÍAZ MARTÍNEZ. Assaulted in "El Jaralito", Mapimi, Durango, by one Teodulo Esquivel, who objected to his "agrarista" sympathies. Mixed motives. Correspondence with Prof. José Santos Valdés, March-July 1969.
43. 1935. JOSÉ GUADALUPE DOMINGUEZ. Assaulted. No more details available. Na 5 Dec.1935.
44. 1935. ALBERTO DURAN. Murdered in the State of Puebla; no more details available. Bremaunts.
45. 1935. VICENTE ESCUDERO. Murdered in the State of Zacatecas; no more details available. Bremaunts.
46. 1935. MICAELA ESTEVEZ. Kidnapped (and probably murdered, but this is not known) by "cristeros" in the 6th Educational Zone (Salamanca) of Guanajuato. Motives apparently religious. Na 5 Dec.1935.
47. 1935. MARÍA DEL REFUGIO GARCÍA. Mutilated, probably in Michoacán; no more details available. Na 5 Dec.1935.
48. 1935. SANTOS GOMEZ. Imprisoned in Ario de Rosales, Michoacán, by the "cacque" Jesús Britz. Motives unclear. Interviews with
49. 1935. APOLONIO GONZALEZ. Murdered in Jalisco; no more details available. Bremaunts.
50. 1935. SILVESTRE GONZÁLEZ. Murdered in Morelos; no more details available. Bremaunts.
51. 1935. JOSÉ GUADALUPE GUDINO. Shot at and abducted by 11 individuals in La Soledad, Zapotlan del Rio, near Ocotlan, Jalisco. Motives politico-religious. Na 5 Dec.1935.
52. 1935. MOISES A. HERNÁNDEZ. Murdered in the State of Queretaro; no more details available. Bremaunts.
53. 1935. PABLO JIMENEZ. His ears were cut off in the State of Veracruz; no more details available. Bremaunts.
54. 1935. FRANCISCO LOPEZ. Murdered in Tamaulipas; no more details available. Bremaunts.
55. 1935. PEDRO MARISCAL JIMENEZ. Murdered in Oaxaca; no more details available. Bremaunts.
56. 1935. RAMIRO MARTINEZ. Murdered in Jalisco; no more details available. Bremaunts.
57. 1935. ROSENDO MARTINEZ DE LA MATA. Murdered in Nayarit; no more details available. Bremaunts.

58. 1935. ANDRES MENDEZ. Wounded somewhere in the 8th ("La Sonaja") Educational Zone of Guanajuato, by "ignorant peasants who went to carry out the orders of the pulpit". Motives apparently religious. Na 5 Dec.1935.
59. 1935. GILBERTO MENDEZ. Murdered in Morelos; no more details available. Bremauntz.
60. 1935. SALUSTIO MIRANDA. Murdered in the State of Puebla; no more details available. Bremauntz.
61. 1935. JUAN MONTALVO. Murdered together with eight peasants in the State of Campeche; no more details available. Bremauntz.
62. 1935. FEDERICO MONTELONGO PINA. Murdered in Tamaulipas; no more details available. Bremauntz.
63. 1935. DAVID MORENO IBARRA. Murdered in the State of Aguascalientes; no more details available. Bremauntz.
64. 1935. MARIA MURILLO. Murdered in Tabasco, Zacatecas by a group of armed men because of her Communist and "agrarista" sympathies. Motives: politics and the defence of vested interests. Bremauntz; correspondence with Prof. José Santos Valdés, March-July 1969.
65. 1935. ALFONSO L. NEGRETE. Murdered in Jalisco; no more details available. Bremauntz.
66. 1935. TRINIDAD RAMIREZ. Lynched in Contepec, Michoacan by the local inhabitants. Motives: religion and the defence of vested interests. Interviews in Morelia, Mich. with Prof. J. Eleazar Bermudez, 1 Nov.1967, and with Prof. Enrique Villaseñor, 11 & 29 July 1968; and in Mexico City with Prof. José Corona Núñez, 21, 22 & 23 Nov.1968.
67. 1935. ENRIQUE RODRIGUEZ. Murdered in the State of Queretaro; no more details available. Bremauntz.
68. 1935. PROF. RODRIGUEZ and PROFA. JOSEFINA DÍAZ DOMINGUEZ DE RODRIGUEZ. He was stabbed to death by the "cristeros" in San Martín, La Barca, Jalisco, but she managed to escape. Motives unclear. Na 5 Dec.1935.
69. 1935. JUVENCIO SANCHEZ. Murdered in the State of Zacatecas; no more details available. Bremauntz.
70. 1935. LEODEGARIO SOLIS. Murdered in Morelos; no more details available. Bremauntz.
71. 1935. CARLOS TOLEDANO. Murdered in the State of Veracruz; no more details available. Bremauntz.
72. 1935. A YOUNG TEACHER. Castrated by a group of "cristeros" in Yagualica, Jalisco; mixed motives. Interview with Prof. Agapito Constantino Avina in Chilcheta, Michoacán, 2 Aug.1968.
73. 1935. AN 18-YEAR OLD GIRL TEACHER. Raped and killed by a band of "sinarquistas" in Los Angeles, Teocaltichi, Jalisco. Mixed motives (lust, religion, politics). Interview with Prof. Agapito Constantino Avina in Chilcheta, Michoacán, 2 Aug.1968.

74. 1935. SEVERAL TEACHERS. Besieged in the school of Tsintzuntzan, Michoacán, by the enraged inhabitants. Personal and religious motives. Interviews in Mexico City with Prof. José Corona Núñez, 21, 22 & 23 Nov. 1968.
75. Late 1935-early 1936. A SCHOOL IN JALISCO. The school of Minillas, Mezquitic, Jal., set on fire by "rebels". Motives: ostensibly religious, but probably also the defence of vested interests. SEP(G) 4-2-7-25 & 4-5-7-57.
76. Late 1935-early 1936. A SCHOOL IN JALISCO. The school of Bocas, Mezquitic, Jal., set on fire by "rebels". Motives: as in case 75. SEP(G), expedientes 4-2-7-25 & 4-5-7-57.
77. 25 Jan. 1936. A SCHOOL IN JALISCO. The school of Tenasco de Abajo, Santa Maria Jal., burnt for the second time by "fanatics". Motives and sources: as in case 75.
78. Jan. 1936. A SCHOOL IN JALISCO. The school of Ojo de Agua, Santa Maria, Jal., burnt by "rebels". Motives and sources: as in case 75.
79. Jan. 1936. A SCHOOL IN JALISCO. The school of Sotoles, Santa Maria, Jal., set on fire by "rebels". Motives and sources: as in case 75.
80. 8 Feb. 1936. JOAQUIN SOLIS MOGUEL. Murdered together with several peasants in Hopelchen, Campeche by local conservative leaders. Motives: politics and the defence of vested interests. Interview with Prof. Ramón Berzunza Herrera, in Campeche City, 11 Dec. 1968; Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular 1935-1936... 'C'", p. 121.
81. 2 March 1936. A SCHOOL IN CHIAPAS. The "Centro de Educación Indígena" of Huistán, Chiapas, assaulted by two armed men. Motives unknown. Múgica archive,
82. 29 March 1936. ANA MARIA PARIAS. Died in Campeche as a result of wounds received 12 days before. Motives: political. Múgica archive, unclassified file "Peticiones etc. al Gral. en su Viaje al Sureste".
83. 29 March 1936. A CULTURAL MISSION. Members of the Mission were attacked in Ciudad Gonzalez, Guanajuato by Catholics incited by the local priest. Motives: ostensibly religious. "El Maestro Rural", vol. 8, no. 8 (15 April 1936); W.C. Townsend, "Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexican Democrat" (Mexican edition, 1954, Biografías Gandesa; first published by George Wahr Publishing Co., Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952), pp. 133-135; Leopoldo Mendez, loc. cit.; and correspondence with Prof. José Santos Valdés, March-July 1969.
84. August 1936. FERNANDO MOGUEL and FRANCISCO VILLANUEVA. Involved in a brawl with the "cacique" Carlos Laviada in Bécál, Campeche. Motives: politics and agrarian disputes. "Diario de Yucatán", 13 Aug. 1936; "Diario del Sureste", 16 Aug. 1936.
85. August 1936. ALEJANDRO PEREZ SALAS. His house was assaulted in Los Reyes, Michoacán by 3 armed men led by one Juan Rodríguez; later they tried to poison him. Motives: the defence of vested interests (on account of his agrarian agitation). Interview with Perez Salas in Pátzcuaro, Mich., 26 July 1968.
86. 13 Sept. 1936. JOSE GUADALUPE NOVELO. Alleged to have led an attack on a rival trade union office (that of the PROOC) in Bécál, Campeche. Motives: political. "Diario de Yucatán", 15 Sept. 1936.

87. 18 Nov.1936. JOSE DEL CARMEN CHI. Assaulted by one Pablo Montero in Bécál, Campeche. Motives: politics and the defence of vested interests. "Diario del Sureste", 20 Nov.1936.

88. 2 Dec.1936. A SCHOOL IN CAMPECHE. The school of Pocheé, Campeche, assaulted by Enrique Ortega, a conservative politician and leader of the F.R.O.C., and several armed followers. Motives: politics and the defence of vested interests. Ma 2 Jan.1937; "Diario del Sureste", 3, 4 & 5 Dec.1936.

89. 7 Dec.1936. CLAUDIO CORTÉS and others. Together with a large number of peasants, he and other teachers were involved in a serious brawl with members of the F.R.O.C. (a pro-State-Government union). Motives: political. P 12 Dec.1936; "Diario de Yucatán", 9, 11 & 15 Dec.1936; "Diario del Sureste", 9, 10 & 11 Dec. 1936; Mágica archive, vol."Correspondencia Particular 1935-1936... 'C'" pp.55-57.

90. Early Dec.1936. ANTONIO TAPIA ZAMORA. Murdered in Arroyo Seco, Queretaro, by agents of the local "cacique". Motives: the defence of vested interests. Ma 2 Jan.1937.

91. 20 Dec.1936. FRANCISCO VILLANUEVA. Wounded together with four peasants by the local deputy José León Montero, Mario Montero and others in Bécál, Campeche, after a local election. Motives: political. "Diario del Sureste", 22 Dec.1936; and "Diario de los Debates de la Camara de Senadores", 26 Dec.1936.

92. 30 Dec.1936. JORGE BURAD. Involved in a brawl in Campeche City with leaders of the F.R.O.C. (a pro-State-Government union). Motives: political. "Diario de Yucatán", 31 Dec.1936; "Diario del Sureste", 1 & 2 Jan.1937; "Diario de los Debates de la Camara de Senadores", 31 Dec.1936.

93. Dec.1936. FERNANDO MOGUEL, CARMEN CHI and FRANCISCO VILLANUEVA. Imprisoned by local authorities in Bécál, Campeche, because of their trade union and agrarian activities. Motives: politics and the defence of vested interests. Ma 2 Jan.1937.

94. 14 Dec.1936. INSPECTOR MANUEL CORTINA VIZCAINO and others. Assaulted by agents of the local "caciques" in Arroyo Seco, Queretaro, because of their efforts to throw light on the murder of Prof. Tapia Zamora (case 90). Motives: the defence of vested interests. Ma 2 Jan.1937.

95. Late 1936. TIBURCIO QUINONES. Murdered in Dzitbalché, Campeche by agents of the local "caciques". Motives: probably political. Ma 2 Jan 1937.

96. 1936. ARTURO S. MORETT. Left hurriedly by air from La Paz, Baja California, pursued by soldiers of the Governor General Juan Dominguez Cota. Motives: political. Interview in Mexico City with Prof. Morett, 2, 3, 6 & 8 Jan.1968.

97. 1936. JOSÉ SANTOS VALDÉS and CLAUDIO CORTÉS. Expelled from Tabasco on orders from the Governor Dr. Enrique Fernández Manera, because of their agrarian and trade union agitation. Motives: politics and the defence of vested interests. Correspondence with Prof. José Santos Valdés, March-July 1969.

98. 1936. A SCHOOL IN MICHIOACÁN. The school of Chavinda, Mich., set on fire by a group of "eristeros". Motives: religion and/or the defence of vested interests. Interview in Pátzcuaro, Mich., with Prof. Damian Roman Hernández,

99. 1936/1937. EDUARDO GONZALEZ. Murdered in Los Herreros, Coalcoman, Mich. by a group of "fanaticos". Motives: religious. Interview with Prof. Luis Torres Osorio in Uruapan, Mich., 15 Aug. 1968.

100. 17 Jan. 1937. PALEMON DIAZ and GLAFIRA S. DE DIAZ. Attacked with firearms in Guayameo, Guerrero, by agents of the local landowners, on account of their agrarian activities. Motives: the defence of vested interests. Ma 27 Feb. 1937.

101. 19 Jan. 1937. A SCHOOL IN CAMPECHE. The school of Calkiní, Campeche, assaulted by "enemies of the proletariat" during a teachers' strike. Motives: political. "Diario del Sureste", 20 Jan. 1937.

102. 27 Jan. 1937. MAURO JIMENEZ UGALDE. Shot at by a local policeman in Villa Azueta, Veracruz. Motives unknown. Ma 20 Feb. 1937.

103. 31 Jan. 1937. MELITON RAMÍREZ. Murdered in Tehuacan, Puebla, by members of the "Falange Poblana". Motives unknown. Ma 6 Feb. 1937.

104. Jan. 1937. MARIA DEL REFUGIO HIGAREDA. Murdered in Cinco Minas, Jal. by a group of armed men. Mixed motives (lust/religion/politics/vested interests). Ex. 31 Jan. 1937; Na 7 Dec. 1937; P 31 Jan. 1937.

105. Jan. 1937. SEVERAL TEACHERS. Expelled from Dzibalchén, Campeche, by the local authorities. Motives: political. "Diario del Sureste", 20 Jan. 1937.

106. Jan. 1937. SEVERAL TEACHERS. Threatened and expelled from Hopelchén, Campeche by the local authorities. Motives: political. "Diario del Sureste", 26 Jan. 1937; Mágica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937... 'E'-'F'"; letter to Mágica from Profa. Alina Estrada of Campeche, 24 Jan. 1937.

107. Jan. 1937. JUAN SEGUNDO GUEMES. Assaulted in Campeche City. Motives: political. "Diario del Sureste". 26 Jan. 1937.

108. Jan. 1937. A WOMAN TEACHER. Kidnapped in San Emigdio, Colima by a band of armed men. Mixed motives. P 31 Jan. 1937.

109. 2 Feb. 1937. RICARDO SANCHEZ MORA. Murdered near Tula, Hidalgo; no more details available. Ma 6 Feb. 1937.

110. 16 Feb. 1937. CLEMENTE VALQUEZ. Murdered in Amelucan, Puebla by "bandits". No more details available. Ex 17 Feb. 1937.

111. 26 Feb. 1937. FABIAN ABITIA. Shot at in Santa Rosalia, Baja California, by agents of the Governor General Juan Dominguez Cota. Motives: political. Ma 13 & 18 March 1937.

112. Feb. 1937. MANUEL MONTES DE OCA. Wounded in Campeche by Olegario Castillo. Motives unknown. "Diario de Yucatán", 1937.

113. 11 March 1937. A SCHOOL IN CAMPECHE. A school in Seybaplaya, Camp., assaulted during an electoral campaign. Motives: political. "Diario del Sureste", 13 March 1937; "Diario de Yucatán", 26 March 1937.

114. March 1937. JOSE HERNANDEZ. Stoned to death in Tlaxco, Tlaxcala by "a group of enemies of the Socialist School". Motives: apparently religious. "Diario de Yucatán", 18 March 1937.
115. March 1937. J. JESUS FERREYRA BUIZ. Threatened in Tendebaracua, Michoacán, by "local reactionaries". Mixed motives. Ma 24 March 1937.
116. March 1937. A TEACHER. Wounded by "someone in the service of the Government" in La Paz, Baja California. Motives: political. Ex 17 March 1937.
117. March 1937. INSPECTOR FRANCISCO ZARATE and AGUSTIN FLORES. Imprisoned by the police of Huatabampo, Sonora, "merely because.... they held a meeting of a trade union character". Motives: political. Ex 17 March 1937.
118. March 1937. RAFAEL TAPIA S. Forced to flee from Baja California (Sur) by agents of the Governor, General Juan Dominguez Cota. Motives: political. Ma 24 March 1937.
119. 3 April 1937. AGGRESSIVE TEACHERS. A group of women teachers attacked the office of a pro-F.R.O.C. magazine in Campeche. Motives: political. "Diario de Yucatán", 4 & 5 April 1937.
120. 4/5 April 1937. A SCHOOL IN CAMPECHE. Supporters of the State Government attacked the school of Tenabo, Campeche, expelling the teachers. Motives: political. "Diario de Yucatán", 7 April 1937; Múgica archive, vol."Correspondencia Particular, 1937... 'M'-'F'"; letter to Múgica from Alina Estrada in Campeche City, 6 March (April?) 1937; and vol."Correspondencia Particular, 1937... 'M'", pp.208-210.
121. 6 April 1937. ARNULFO SOSA PORTILLO. Cut to death with machetes by a group of armed men in San Cristobal Xochimilca, Puebla. Motives unknown. "El Universal", 7 April 1937; Leopoldo Mendez, op.cit.
122. 7 April 1937. MARIO CANEPA. In Hool, Campeche, Andrés Méndez and the policeman Octavio Pérez tried to shoot him, but missed and killed his wife instead. Motives: political. "Diario de Yucatán", 9, 10 & 14 April & 5 Oct. 1937; "Diario del Sureste", 9 April 1937; Múgica archive, vol."Correspondencia Particular, 1937... 'M'", p.209.
123. 12 April 1937. ELSIE E. MEDINA. Assaulted in Campeche while on her way to a union meeting. Motives apparently political. Múgica archive, loc.cit.
124. 16 April 1937. LUIS VÁZQUEZ. Accused of having attacked a group of children in Dzitbalché, Campeche. Motives unknown. "Diario de Yucatán", 18 April 1937.
125. April 1937. PÁNFILO GÓMEZ. Murdered in Mismaloya, Jal. by Gilberto Goya; mixed motives. Ex 16 April 1937.
126. April 1937. SEÑOR BERMÁN. Arrested and mutilated by the police of Nunkiní, Campeche. Motives: political. Múgica archive, vol."Correspondencia Particular, 1937... 'M'", p.209.
127. April 1937. FERNANDO MOGUEL. Expelled from Becal, Campeche by the local authorities. Motives: political. Múgica archive, loc.cit.

128. 8 June 1937. FRANCISCO CHE. He led a group of peasants in a fracas with leaders of the F.R.O.C. in Bacabchén, Campeche, Motives: political. "Diario de Yucatán", 6, 11 & 16 June 1937; "Diario del Sureste", 10, 12 & 13 June 1937.

129. 14 June 1937. J. MARCIAL SALAZAR. Murdered in La Granja, Aguascalientes by an agent of the landlords. Motives: the defence of vested interests (his agrarian agitation). Ma 11 July 1937.

130. 16 June 1937. MARIA SALUD MORALES. Murdered near Tacámbaro, Michoacán, by a group of "cristeros". Motives: apparently religious. Ma 26 June 1937; Leopoldo Méndez, loc.cit.; interviews with Major Antonio Magaña García in Ario de Rosales, Mich., 2 Nov.1967; with Profa.María de la Luz Molina Zendejas in Tacámbaro, Mich., 4 Nov.1967; and with Prof.Maximiliano León Murillo in Mexico City, 3 Oct.1967.

131. July 1937. JOSÉ R. MEDINA & GUSTAVO SILVA. Withdrawn from Tarimoro, Guanajuato on account of the danger to their lives. No more details available. Ma 18 July 1937.

132. Oct.1937. CARLOS LÓPEZ. Imprisoned in Iguala, Guerrero on orders of the Municipal President, for having organised the Road Labourers' Union of Guerrero. Motives: politics and the defence of vested interests. Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1937, 'E'-'F'"; telegram to Múgica, 11 Oct.1937, and Múgica's reply, 18 Oct.1937.

133. 3 Dec.1937. A SCHOOL IN TAMAULIPAS. The rural school of Matamoros, attacked by a band of armed men. Motives unknown. Ma 15 Jan.1938.

134. 19 Dec.1937. CARLOS F. LÓPEZ. Assaulted in Arteaga, Michoacán, by people "known as enemies of popular organisations". Mixed motives (politics and the defence of vested interests). Múgica archive, vol. "Correspondencia Particular, 1938... 'H'-'L'"; pp.475-477.

135. 23 Dec.1937. AMADA CHÁVEZ. Her house in El Comedero, Guanajuato, was assaulted by "white guards" from the neighbouring hacienda. Motives: the defence of vested interests. Ma 15 Jan.1938.

136. 25 Dec.1937. EMILIA BELTRÁN. Murdered in San Antonio, Sinaloa by Javier Nava. Motive: personal jealousy. P 2 Jan.1938.

137. 27 Dec.1937. JOSÉ LUIS ALFARO & ANTONIO SÁNCHEZ RIVAS. Murdered near San Juan del Río, Querétaro by agents of a local "cacique". Motives: politics and/or the defence of vested interests. Ex 30 Dec.1937; "El Universal" 29 Dec.1937; Ma 8 Jan.1938.

138. 29 Dec.1937. FIDEL CASAS PÉREZ. Involved in a gunfight in Zacatecas, Zac., in which he appears to have been the aggressor. Motives: political. P 1 Jan.1938.

139. Dec.1937. LUCÍA CUBIEL. Murdered in Las Canoas, Jalisco by a band of armed men. Motives: religion and/or the defence of vested interests. Na 21 Dec.1937; interview in Morelia, Michoacán with the then Inspector of the Educational Zone, Gilberto Ceja Torres, 6 Nov.1967.

140. Dec.1937. CANDELARIA FIGUEROA & ELVIRA GUTIERREZ. Threatened in San Luis Coyatitlán, Jalisco, by a local judge. Mixed motives. Ma 1 Jan.1938.

141. Late 1937. LUIS BARAJAS & ROSENDO CRUZ. Imprisoned in Zitácuaro, Michoacán, on the basis of false charges, but really because of their agrarian agitation. Motives: the defence of vested interests. V.M. 25 April 1939 (when they were released because the charges were proved false.)

142. 1937. ALEJANDRO PÉREZ SALAS. Threatened in Tocuambo, Michoacán, by the Municipal President, Agustín Godínez, on account of a conflict over ejidos. Motives: the defence of vested interests. Interview with Alejandro Pérez Salas in Pátzcuaro, Mich., 26 July 1968.

143. 1937. A TEACHER IN MICHOACÁN. The teacher Marciano (surname unknown), murdered in Rancho de Tirio, Santiago Undameo, Michoacán, by peasants in the service of a local landlord. Motives: the defence of vested interests. Interview in Morelia, Mich. with Prof. Leonardo Nava Heras, 8 July 1968.

144. 1937-1939. LEONOR ALFONSO. Kidnapped near Coatepec, Veracruz by a group of armed men. Motives unknown. Ex 7 May 1939.

145. 4 Jan. 1938. REBECA GÓMEZ LUNA. Kidnapped in Tonila, Jalisco, by a group of armed men. Mixed motives. Ma 22 Jan. 1938; P 5 Jan. 1938.

146. 18 Jan. 1938. ALFREDO LOPEZ VILLAVICENCIO. Murdered in Zacamixtla, Veracruz; no more details available. Ma 23 July 1938.

147. 31 Jan. 1938. DAVID LARRAÑAGA. Murdered in Tuxpan, Veracruz, or in Veracruz, Ver. (according to other reports), by his colleagues. Motives: political. Ma 23 July 1938; Ex 2 Feb. 1938.

148. Jan. 1938. JESÚS HERNÁNDEZ. Beaten by police in Tlaquepaque, Jalisco, because of his sympathies with local peasants. Motives: politics and/or the defence of vested interests. P 5 Jan. 1938.

149. 7 Feb. 1938. CARLOS BETANCOURT. Murdered in Huamantitlán, Guerrero. No more details available. Ma 23 July 1938.

150. 28 Feb. 1938. JOSÉ MARTÍNEZ RAMÍREZ. Murdered in Cuatmatitla, Tochimilco, Puebla, by Enrique Rodríguez "El Tallarín" and his men. Mixed motives. Leopoldo Mendez, op.cit.

151. Feb. 1938. JOSÉ ANTONIO RIVERA. Murdered in El Derrumbe, Durango. No more details available. Ma 23 July 1938.

152. 13 Mar. 1938. INSPECTOR JUAN G. OROPEZA. Wounded by gunmen in Arispe, Sonora. Motives: political. Ma 23 & 28 July 1938.

153. Mar. 1938. A SCHOOL IN TAMAULIPAS. A rural school near Matamoros, Tamaulipas, set on fire. No more details available. Ma 26 Mar. 1938.

154. Mar. 1938. A GROUP OF TEACHERS. Women teachers picketing schools while on strike, beaten up by local police in Culiacán, Sinaloa. Motives: political. Ma 9 April 1938.

155. Mar/April 1938. SEVERAL TEACHERS IN SINALOA. Assaulted and imprisoned in Mazatlán, Culiacán, Los Mochis, Concordia, El Fuerte and other places, while on strike. Motives: political. Ex 5 April 1938.

156. 25 April 1938. ESPERANZA ROMÁN. Murdered in Tabasco by one Deyoces (sic) Pérez. Motives unknown. V.M. 26 April 1939.

157. 28 April 1938. JOSÉ RAMÍREZ MARTÍNEZ. Murdered in Cuautomatitla, Puebla. No more details available. Ma 23 July 1938.

158. April 1938. JOSE RIVERA ROMERO. Murdered in Sinaloa; no more details available. Ma 23 July 1938.

159. April 1938. FELIPE CARRILLO. Murdered in Sinaloa; no more details available. Ma 23 July 1938.

160. April 1938. EFRÉN MIRANDA. Murdered in Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca; no more details available. Ma 23 July 1938.

161. 10 May 1938. VALENTE LOZANO CENICEROS. Wounded in Ciudad de Nieves, Zacatecas; no more details available. Ma 23 July 1938.

162. May 1938. THREE SCHOOLS IN MICHOACÁN. The schools of Tzitzio, Queretanillo and Patámbaro, Mich., assaulted by a group of armed men. Mixed motives. Ma 26 May 1938.

163. 3 June 1938. RAMÓN ORTA DEL RÍO. Murdered in Barranca del Oro, Nayarit; no more details available. Ma 1 June & 23 July 1938; Ex 13 June 1938; Leopoldo Méndez, op.cit.

164. 12 June 1938. JUAN MARTÍNEZ DE ESCOBAR. Murdered in Acámbaro, Guanajuato, by a band of "rebels". Motives: the defence of vested interests. "El Maestro Rural", vol.12, no.5, May 1939; Ma 13 & 16 June 1938; Ex 15 June 1938; Leopoldo Méndez, op.cit.

165. 30 June 1938. GUILLERMO DE LA CRUZ. Murdered in Totolapam, Guerrero, by one Teófilo Márquez. Motives: the defence of vested interests. Ma 13 July 1938.

166. June 1938. LUIS CERVANTES BUSTAMANTE. Shot at in Ixtaquilpan, Hidalgo, by agents of local "caciques", on account of his union work among the miners. Ma 21 June 1938.

167. June 1938. JUAN GONZÁLEZ. Assaulted in Huajumbaro, Michoacán, by a band of armed men. Motives unknown. Ma 14 June 1938; Ex 14 June 1938; Ma 15 June 1938.

168. June 1938. ROSARIO TORRES CALVO. Arrested on false charges by the local authorities of Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca. Motives unknown. Ma 1 July 1938.

169. June-Aug. 1938. SEVERAL TEACHERS IN PUEBLA. Several teachers in the northern part of the State of Puebla, assaulted by bands of armed men. Motives: religion and/or the defence of vested interests. Ma 19 July 1938; P 16 Aug. 1938.

170. 2 July 1938. BERNARDO AGUILAR MARTÍNEZ. Murdered in Huajicori, Nayarit; no more details available. Ma 23 July 1938.

171. 13 July 1938. ILDEFONSO VARGAS. Murdered in Coahuictic, Puebla; motives apparently religious. Ma 23 July 1938; Leopoldo Méndez, op.cit.; Bremaunts, loc.cit.

172. 27 July 1938. AURELIO MONTAÑO PIMENTEL. Murdered in Zinápero, Michoacán, by local gunmen. Motives unknown. Ma 6 Aug. 1938.

173. July 1938. JOSE DE LA FUENTE. Murdered in Huetamo, Michoacán, by agents of the landowners. Motives: the defence of vested interests. Ma 21 July 1938.
174. July 1938. GUSTAVO DOMINGUEZ. Assaulted in Tenancingo, State of Mexico, by a local tradesman, because he had denounced the latter to the Forestry Department for illegal trading. Motives: the defence of vested interests. Ex 15 July 1938.
175. July 1938. ROBERTO JACKSON. Threatened by landlords near Minatitlan, Veracruz. Motives: the defence of vested interests. Ma 21 July 1938.
176. July 1938. INSPECTOR HERIBERTO SALAZAR & OTHERS. Imprisoned in Hermosillo, Sonora, by the local authorities. Motives: political. Ma 28 July & 4 Aug. 1938; Ex 5 July 1938.
177. July 1938. ELIAS QUILJANO. Murdered in Paso del Macho, Veracruz, by a group of local inhabitants. Mixed motives. Ex 31 July 1938; P 2 Aug. 1938.
178. 16 Aug. 1938. DELFINO AGUILAR. Wounded in Metepec, Morelos by the followers of Enrique Rodríguez "El Tallarín", while participating in the "Defensa Rural" sent to capture Rodríguez. Motives: self-defence on the part of the rebels, but arising out of a deep-rooted hostility to the Government, the teachers and radical elements generally. Ma 20 Aug. 1938; P 19 Aug. 1938.
179. Aug. 1938. 21 TEACHERS IN MORELOS. Forced to take refuge for a time in the town of Yecapixtla because of the danger of attack by the men of "El Tallarín", who were motivated by a powerful hostility to official education. Ma 5 Aug. 1938.
180. Aug. 1938. RAFAEL ROJAS C. Brought to court by the local authorities of Champusco, Puebla, on charges arising out of his agitation among the peasants. Ma 11 & 13 Aug. 1938; "El Diario de Puebla", 10 Aug. 1938.
181. Aug. 1938. PALEMÓN DÍAZ & GLÁFIRA S. DE DÍAZ. Brought to court by a local judge on account of their agrarian activities in Santiago Tetipac, Guerrero. Motives: the defence of vested interests. Ma 19 Aug. 1938.
182. Aug. 1938. MARÍA DE LA LUZ AVALOS. Murdered in Tapalpa, Jalisco, by a band of armed men. Mixed motives. P 20 & 21 Aug. 1938.
183. Aug. 1938. CANDELARIA FIGUEROA. Subject to an intrigue on the part of a local official in Tlajemalco, Jalisco. Motives unknown. Ma 31 Aug. 1938.
184. 28 Sept. 1938. FRANCISCO TAPIA DÍAZ. His house was assaulted on the "Chuen" hacienda, Ario de Rosales, Michoacán, by armed followers of the Pedraza brothers. Motives: the defence of vested interests. Interviews in La Huacana, Mich., with Prof. Tapia and with Señor Samuel Vaca, civil servant, 14 Aug. 1938.
185. Sept. 1938. EDUARDO DOMINGUEZ. Murdered in Jalpa de Méndez, Tabasco; no more details available. V.M. 1 Oct. 1938.
186. 10 Oct. 1938. CARLOS LÓPEZ. Shot at by a group of armed men in Altamirano, Veracruz, because "he disseminated Socialist Education and was a friend of the peasants". Ex 12 Oct. 1938.
187. 13 Oct. 1938. A SCHOOL IN VERACRUZ. A school in Villa Cuauhtémoc, Veracruz, fired upon by a group of armed men. Motives unknown. V.M. 21 Oct. 1938.

188. Oct.1938. **JORGE MELTZER.** Murdered near Huiloapan, Veracruz; no more details available. Ex 2 Nov.1938.
189. Oct.1938. **ESPERANZA GONZÁLEZ, LUNA & OTHERS.** Threatened by groups of armed men in the region of Penjamo, Guanajuato. Motives unknown. V.M. 11 Oct.1938.
190. Oct.1938. **PEDRO LOYOLA.** Assaulted in Huayacocotla, Veracruz, by a group of armed men. Motives: the defence of vested interests. V.M. 20 Oct.1938.
191. 1 Nov.1938. **INSPECTOR LUIS N. CRUZ.** Murdered in Las Cruces, Guerrero, by a band of armed men. Motives unknown. Ex 3 Nov.1938.
192. Nov.1938. **MAURO RUIZ.** Murdered in Paso de Ovejas, Veracruz, possibly by agents of the municipal authorities. Motives unknown. Ex 17 Nov.1938.
193. 7/8 Dec.1938. **ALTAGRACIA RAMÍREZ.** Murdered in Los Pinos, Tamazula de Gordiano, Jalisco; no more details available. Ex 8 Dec.1938.
194. Dec.1938. **MARÍA DE LA LUZ CONTRERAS.** Kidnapped in Los Pinos, Tamazula de Gordiano, Jalisco, by a group of "villains". Motives unknown. Ex 8 Dec.1938.
195. 1938. **JOSE VILLAFUERTE.** Murdered in Coeneo, Michoacán, by a group of local people. Motives unknown. Interview with Leonora González Vda. de Villafuerte in Sahuayo, Michoacán, 2 Aug.1968.
196. 24 Jan.1939. **HONORIO HERNÁNDEZ LABASTIDA.** Murdered in Texcoco, State of Mexico, by "enemies of the Socialist School". Motives unknown (politics/religion/defence of vested interests?). V.M. 1 Feb.1939.
197. 26 Jan.1939. **THREE SCHOOLS IN COAHUILA.** Three schools in Saltillo, Coah., attacked by "divisionist teachers" during a strike. Motives: political. V.M. 27 Jan.1939; "El Porvenir" of Monterrey, 27 Jan.1939.
198. Jan.1939. **RAYMUNDO AVALOS.** Expelled from Morelos by the State Government. Motives: political. V.M. 1 Feb.1939.
199. Jan-Feb.1939. **INSPECTOR JOSE MARÍA FLORES GUTIÉRREZ.** Murdered in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco. No more details available. V.M. 9 Feb.1939.
200. 3 Feb.1939. **INSPECTOR GENARO HERNÁNDEZ AGUILAR.** Assaulted in Acámbaro, Guanajuato by a local gunman. Motives: the defence of vested interests. "El Maestro Rural", vol.12, no.5, May 1939; V.M. 10 Feb.1939; and interviews with Inspector Hernandez in Morelia, Michoacán, 30 Jan & 10 June 1968.
201. 21 Feb.1939. **ISIDRO MEZA.** Murdered in Acapulco, Guerrero by local gunmen. Motives: the defence of vested interests. V.M. 25 Feb.1939.
202. 24 Feb.1939. **A TEACHER.** Removed from Moleacán, Veracruz because he was in danger from armed rebels. V.M. 2 Mar.1939.
203. Feb.1939. **ENRIQUE LÓPEZ HUITRÓN.** Murdered in Los Tuxtlas, Veracruz by agents of local "enciques". Motives: politics and the defence of vested interests. V.M. 8 Mar.1939; Ex 28 Feb. & 18 & 24 Mar.1939.
204. Feb.1939. **A SCHOOL IN QUERÉTARO.** A school in Tequisquiapan, Qro. set on fire by "a drunkard". Mixed motives. Ex 24 Feb.1939.
205. Mar.1939. **A TEACHER CALLED RODRÍGUEZ.** Arrested in Unión Juárez, Chiapas, by agents of a local landlord. Motives: the defence of vested interests. V.M. 31 May 1939.

206. 6 April. 1939. A WOMAN TEACHER IN SAN LUIS POTOSÍ. Her house was set on fire near Río Verde, S.L.P. Motives: the defence of vested interests (on account of her participation in peasant movements). V.M. 20 April 1939.

207. 16 April 1939. UBALDO LOPEZ BERNABÉ. Murdered in Zacaupan, Veracruz, by agents of a local landlord. Motives: the defence of vested interests. V.M. 25 April, 20 May & 13 Aug. 1939.

208. April 1939. FELICITAS DELGADO M. Imprisoned in San Antonio, San Luis Potosí by the municipal authorities. There are conflicting versions as to the motives. V.M. 30 April 1939; P. 27 April 1939.

209. 15 May 1939. MANUEL LOZANO CENICEROS. Assaulted in Salinas, San Luis Potosí, by the municipal president, on account of his unionizing among the workers. Motives: the defence of vested interests. V.M. 23 May 1939.

210. 20 May 1939. JUAN PEGUERO GODÍNEZ. Murdered near Teluca, State of Mexico, by Pedro Asmara Constantino, Ciro Vega and others. Motives unknown. Ex 21 May 1939; V.M. 23 May & 8 June 1939.

211. 29 May 1939. AGUSTÍN MOCTEZUMA GONZÁLEZ. Wounded in Villa Cardel, Veracruz, by a band of armed men. Motives: the defence of vested interests. V.M. 5 June 1939.

212. June 1939. SOLEDAD GÓMEZ GARRIDO. Her house was assaulted and her husband was murdered (in the false belief that he and not she was the teacher) by "a band of villains" in San Antonio de la Cal, Toluca, Querétaro. Mixed motives. Ex 16 June 1939.

213. June 1939. AN AGGRESSIVE TEACHER. Prof. Salvador Valladares murdered the worker Manuel Mora in Amecameca, State of Mexico. Motives unknown. Ex 18 & 25 June 1939.

214. 21 July 1939. ALBERTO MARTÍNEZ MADRUENIS. Murdered near Penjamo, Guanajuato, by a member of the "Defensa Rural". Motives unknown. V.M. 6 Aug. 1939.

215. 22 Aug. 1939. JUAN FRANCISCO SÁNCHEZ. Murdered in San Isidro, Zacatecas by a group of armed men. Motives unknown. V.M. 10 Sept. 1939.

216. Oct. 1939. THE TEACHERS TOSCANO & GARCÍA. Threatened in Los Cues, Teotitlán, Oaxaca by the Lerín brothers, who had already murdered two "agrarristas". Motives: probably the defence of vested interests. Ex 25 Oct. 1939.

217. Mar. 1940. ERNESTO ESCAMILLA. Murdered near Tasquillo, Hidalgo by agents of the "caciques". Motives: the defence of vested interests. V.M. 24 Mar. & 26 May 1940.

218. 22 April 1940. INSPECTOR LEONARDO RAMÍREZ. Assaulted in Jonacatepec, Morelos by the Inspector of Schools Jesús Vides Mercado. Mixed motives (personal and political). Ex 25 April 1940.

219. 25 Aug. 1940. INSPECTOR ARCADIO LOZANO. Wounded in Tlaxcala, Tlax. by the teacher Clemente Pineda. Motives unknown. Ex 27 Aug. 1940.

220. Aug.1940. INSPECTOR JUAN CAMPUZANO & OTHERS. Imprisoned in Chilpancingo, Guerrero by the local authorities. Motives: political. V.M. 11 Aug.1940.

221. Sept.1940. ENRIQUE BLANCAS. Murdered in El Quelite, Sinaloa, by a group of armed men. Motives unknown. Ex 1 Oct.1940.

222. Oct.1940. Otilio Bibiano. Assaulted in San Marcos, Guerrero, by "an'almazanista". Motives unknown (politics/defence of vested interests?). V.M. 20 Oct.1940.

223. Nov.1940. ANTONIO LOZANO RUBIO. Murdered in Yuriria, Guanajuato, by agents of the local landlords. Motives: the defence of vested interests. V.M. 24 Nov. 1940.

GLOSSARY

- agrarista - militant peasant, member of a peasant league or of a group demanding land.
- amparo - a legal stay of execution; a device used by an aggrieved party to defend himself against a possible hostile decision.
- ampliación - an additional grant of lands; an extra grant of "ejido" lands made to a community which has already received one or more such grants.
- ayuntamiento - town council.
- cacique - local political boss and trading monopolist (originally an Aztec term for a chieftain).
- cristero - Catholic rebel, supporter of the pro-clerical groups which rebelled in 1926-1929 under the slogan "Viva Cristo Rey!" ("Long Live Christ the King!").
- defensa rural - rural defence force; peasant militia created by Cárdenas to defend revolutionary peasants and their lands against conservative attacks, and to keep order.
- dotación - grant of "ejido" land to a peasant community under the land reform programme.
- ejido - semi-communal land held traditionally by a peasant community or granted to it under the land reform programme; also applied to the community itself.
- ejidatario - member of an "ejido", one who holds land in an "ejido".
- hacendado - owner of a great estate.
- hacienda - big landed estate.
- municipio - municipality; administrative area governed from a small town. Each State is subdivided into districts ("distritos") and "municipios".
- presidente municipal - mayor; elected official presiding over a "municipio".
- profesor - teacher; abbreviated "Prof"; applied to anyone from a University Professor to a humble rural schoolteacher.
- ranchería - hamlet; small community (in fact there are dozens of different terms for villages in Mexico, reflecting minute differences in status).

regidor

- town councillor.

restitución

- act restoring "ejido" land to a community which had been deprived of it by the encroachment of the great estates in the 19th century.

ABBREVIATIONS

- A.M.M. - Alianza de Maestros de Michoacán (Teachers' Alliance of Michoacán).
- B.I.M.M. - Bloque de Izquierda del Magisterio Michoacano (Left-Wing Bloc of Michoacán Teachers).
- B.J.S.M. - Bloque de Jóvenes Socialistas de Michoacán (Bloc of Socialist Youth of Michoacán).
- B.M.S.M. - Bloque de Maestros Socialistas de Michoacán (Bloc of Socialist Teachers of Michoacán).
- B.R.M.E.C. - Bloque Revolucionario de Maestros del Estado de Campeche (Revolutionary Teachers' Bloc of the State of Campeche).
- C.C.M. - Confederación Campesina Mexicana (Mexican Peasant Confederation).
- C.G.T. - Confederación General de Trabajadores (General Confederation of Workers).
- C.M.M. - Confederación Mexicana de Maestros (Mexican Confederation of Teachers).
- C.N.C. - Confederación Nacional Campesina (National Peasant Confederation).
- C.N.E. - Confederación Nacional de Estudiantes (National Student Confederation).
- C.N.T.E. - Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza (National Confederation of Educational Workers).
- C.R.M.D.T. - Confederación Revolucionaria Michoacana Del Trabajo (Revolutionary Confederation of Labour of Michoacán).
- C.R.O.M. - Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana (Mexican Regional Confederation of Labour).
- C.T.M. - Confederación de Trabajadores de Mexico (Confederation of Mexican Workers).
- E.N.R. - Escuela Normal Rural (Rural Normal School).
- E.R.C. - Escuela Regional Campesina (Regional Agricultural and Teacher-training College; literally, "Regional Peasant School").
- F.M.T.E.(1) - Federación Mexicana de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza (Mexican Federation of Educational Workers).
- F.M.T.E.(2) - Federación Michoacana de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza (Michoacán Federation of Educational Workers).
- F.P.R.S.M. - Federación Política Radical Socialista de Michoacán (Radical Socialist Political Federation of Michoacán).

- F.R.O.C. - Federación Regional de Obreros y Campesinos (Regional Federation of Peasants and Workers).
- F.S.M.T.E. - Federación Sindical Michoacana de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza (Michoacán Union Federation of Educational Workers).
- F.S.T.S.E. - Federación de Sindicatos de los Trabajadores al Servicio del Estado (Federation of Unions of Workers in the Service of the State).
- F.T.C. - Federación de Trabajadores de Campeche (Federation of Workers of Campeche).
- F.U.M.M. - Frente Unico del Magisterio Michoacano (United Front of Teachers of Michoacán).
- G.A.S. - Grupo de Acción Socialista (Group of Socialist Action).
- L.M.M. - Liga de Maestros de Michoacán (League of Teachers of Michoacán).
- P.N.R. - Partido Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Party, predecessor of the P.R.M. and the P.R.I.; formed 1929).
- P.R.I. - Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party, formed 1946 as successor to the P.R.M.).
- P.R.M. - Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (Party of the Mexican Revolution, formed 1938 as successor to the P.N.R.; followed 1946 by the P.R.I.).
- S.C.O.P. - Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Obras Publicas (Secretariat, or Ministry, of Communications and Public Works).
- S.E.P. - Secretaría de Educación Publica (Secretariat, or Ministry, of Public Education).
- S.M.M. - Sindicato de Maestros de Michoacán (Union of Teachers of Michoacán).
- S.N.T.E. - Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza (National Union of Educational Workers).
- S.P.E.Y. - Sindicato de Profesores del Estado de Yucatán (Teachers' Union of the State of Yucatan).
- S.T.E.R.M. - Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de la Republica Mexicana (Union of Educational Workers of the Mexican Republic).
- S.U.T.E.C. - Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de Campeche (United Educational Workers' Union of Campeche).
- S.U.T.E.M. - Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de Michoacán (United Educational Workers' Union of Michoacán).
- S.U.T.E.S.C. - Sindicato Unico de los Trabajadores de la Enseñanza Superior Campesina (United Union of Workers in Rural Higher Education).

- S.U.T.E.Y. - Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de Yucatán
(United Educational Workers' Union of Yucatán).
- U.M.M. - Unión de Maestros de Michoacán (Union of Teachers of Michoacán).
- U.M.R.Y. - Unión Magisterial Revolucionaria de Yucatán (Revolutionary
Teachers' Union of Yucatán).
- U.N.E.T.E. - Unión Nacional de Encauzadores Técnicos de la Educación
(National Union of Technical Advisers of Education).
- U.T.E.Y. - Unión de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de Yucatán (Union of
Educational Workers of Yucatán).

INTERVIEWS

Some of the information used in this study, particularly in Part III, was obtained from personal interviews with rural teachers and others. As explained in Chapter I (p.), the technique used was relatively informal, consisting mainly of fact-finding questions concerning the subject's personal data and activities, and information on general political and social developments in the region. The average interview lasted from one to two hours, but in several cases they were longer, and often one or more follow-up interviews were conducted. Where the subject was a teacher, detailed questions were asked concerning his or her professional experience, and the following questionnaire was used as a basis for the interview:-

1. Name and address.
2. Date and place of birth.
3. Father's occupation.
4. Education.
5. Teaching career (posts held, with dates).
6. What were the most serious problems which you encountered on beginning your work as a teacher?
7. How were you received by the inhabitants of the communities in which you worked?
8. What did you do to help in the development of the communities in which you worked?
9. In what project or scheme did you have most success?
10. Was there an agrarian problem in these communities, and if so were you involved in its resolution?
11. Were you or your colleagues attacked in any way?
12. How and when did the unionization of the teaching profession begin in your area?
13. What is your opinion of :
 - (a) the "School of Action" of 1923-1930;
 - (b) the reform of Article 3 of the Constitution in 1934;
 - (c) the "Socialist Education" of 1934-1940; and,
 - (d) the petroleum expropriation of 1938?
14. What did you think of the work of the Cultural Missions?
15. Did you consider your professional training to be adequate?
16. Any other information.

It should be stressed that this questionnaire was only a rough guide, and where the subject showed a desire to expand at length on one particular aspect of his or her experience, or to give other information not covered here, they were encouraged to do so. Where the subject was not a teacher, many of these questions did not apply, and the emphasis was on discovering the attitude of other social groups to the teaching profession, particularly the rural teachers of the period under consideration. All subjects were encouraged to give information and opinions on the social and political developments of the period, both nationally and in their own localities.

The sample of teachers interviewed was too small and too arbitrarily selected to provide any statistical conclusions, but for what it is worth there was a consistent pattern in the answers to certain questions. Thus question 3, included in order to check on the social background of the teaching profession, confirmed that most teachers came from petty-bourgeois or peasant backgrounds; of the 50 teachers interviewed, 11 came from peasant families, 9 were sons or daughters of artisans and labourers, 11 of small tradesmen and local Government officials, and 3 of teachers; 4 came from various other backgrounds, and 12 did not answer this question. Most said they had participated in one way or another in the agrarian reform, and about half said they or their colleagues had faced violent opposition on occasions. In reply to question 13(d), virtually all of them were enthusiastic supporters of the petroleum expropriation, for nationalist and sometimes socialist reasons; on the matter of "Socialist Education", most agreed that it had been a failure in practice, although they were fairly evenly divided as to whether it was basically desirable.

The list of interviewees not in the teaching profession includes peasants, lawyers, politicians, Government officials and others; they were selected purely on the basis of personal contact and on their knowledge of relevant aspects of the events of the period. Three ex-teachers are included here, because most of their careers have been dedicated to other activities. The list does not include academic colleagues and friends in Mexico who gave particularly valuable advice on research methods, and facilitated private papers; their help is acknowledged elsewhere.

The full list of interviewees is as follows:-

Teachers

1. Aguilar Guzmán, José - Morelia, Michoacán, 29 July 1968.
2. Barragán, Josefina - Sahuayo, Mich., 2 Aug. 1968.
3. Barriso Valencia, Rafael - Morelia, Mich., 10 Nov. 1968.
4. Bermúdez, Fidencio - Jalapa, Veracruz, 5 Sept. & 1 Oct. 1967.
5. Bermúdez, J. Eleazar - Morelia, Mich., 1 Nov. 1967.
6. Berguessa Herrera, Ramón - Campeche City, 11 Dec. 1968.
7. Calderón, Juventina - Morelia, Mich., 7 Nov. 1968.
8. Carrasco Gutiérrez, Víctor Manuel - Mexico City, 25 Oct. 1967.
9. Celis Torres, Gilberto - Morelia, Mich., 6 Nov. 1967.

10. Cela Torres, Leobardo - Jiquilpan, Mich., 2 Aug.1968.
11. Constantino Aviña, Agapito - Chilchota, Mich., 2 Aug.1968.
12. Corona Núñez, José - Mexico City, 21, 22 & 23 Nov.1968.
13. Chávez López, Alfonso - Uruapan, Mich., 15 Aug.1968.
14. Delgado Tascano, Magdalena - Morelia, Mich., 27 July 1968.
15. Díaz, Fortunato - Morelia, Mich., 11 July 1968.
16. Flores Castillo, María Piedad - Morelia, Mich., 8 July 1968.
17. García Gallegos, J. Jesús - Morelia, Mich., 27 July 1968.
18. González, Aurelio - Campeche City, 11 Dec.1968.
19. González, Leonora - Sahuayo, Mich., 2 Aug.1968.
20. Gutiérrez Armas, Roberto - Uruapan, Mich., 15 Aug.1968.
21. Haro, Rafael C. - Morelia, Mich., 20 Dec.1967.
22. Hernández Aguilar, Genaro - Morelia, Mich., 30 Jan. & 10 June 1968.
23. Hernández Imbio, Paula - Mexico City, 12 & 13 Feb.1968.
24. Ibarra Checano, Antonio - Morelia, Mich., 29 Oct.1968.
25. Leal, Miguel - Mexico City, 6 March 1968.
26. León Murillo, Maximiliano - Mexico City, 3 Oct.1967.
27. López Zermeno, Ramón - Mexico City, 16 Aug.1969.
28. Maza Botello, Ricardo - Morelia, Mich., 5 Aug.1968.
29. Molina Zendejas, Maria de la Luz - Tacámbaro, Mich., 4 Nov.1967.
30. Mora Lomas, Daniel - Morelia, Mich., 29 Jan.1968.
31. Morett, Arturo S. - Mexico City, 2, 3, 6 & 8 Jan.1968.
32. Múgica Martínez, Jesús - Morelia, 30 Jan.1968.
33. Nava Heras, Leonardo - Morelia, Mich., 8 July 1968.
34. Navarro Rodríguez, Adolfo - Morelia, Mich., 20 Dec.1967.
35. Ordoña Vázquez, Miguel - Morelia, Mich., 18 Dec.1967 & 5 Aug.1968.
36. Paredes Higarada, Manuel - Nueva Italia, Mich., 16 Aug.1968.
37. Pérez Salas, Alejandro - Pátzcuaro, Mich., 26 July 1968.

38. Reyes Garibaldi, Hilario - Morelia, Mich., 9 & 10 July & 24 Aug. 1968.
39. Rodríguez Carbajal, Evangelina - Zitácuaro, Mich., 21 Dec. 1967.
40. Román Hernández, Damián - Pátzcuaro, Mich., 26 July 1968.
41. Homero Flores, Jesús (now a Senator) - Mexico City, 27 Dec. 1967; & Morelia, Mich., 31 Oct. 1967 & 28 July 1968.
42. Salas León, Antonio - Pátzcuaro, Mich., 18 July 1968.
43. Sánchez, Enrique W. - Mexico City, 27 Sept., 1967.
44. Santos Valdés, José - lives in Ciudad Lerdo, Durango; corresponded with the author from March to July 1969, and was interviewed in Torreón, Coahuila on 26 Aug. 1969.
45. Tapia Díaz, Francisco - La Huacana, Mich., 14 Aug. 1968.
46. Tapia Rangel, Ignacio - Morelia, Mich., 28 & 29 Jan. 1968.
47. Torre G., Rosa - Mexico City, 6 May 1968.
48. Torres Figueroa, Fidel - Morelia, Mich., 30 Jan. 1968.
49. Torres Osorio, Luis - Uruapan, Mich., 15 Aug. 1968.
50. Villaseñor, Enrique - Morelia, Mich., 11 & 29 July & 12 Aug. 1968.

Others (Not Teachers)

1. Arreola Cortés, Raúl (historian & union official) - Mexico City, 23 Aug. 1969.
2. Calderón Vega, Luis (lawyer) - Morelia, Mich., 11 Aug. 1968.
3. Cruickshank García, Jorge (union leader and politician; ex-teacher) - Mexico City, 3 Oct. 1967.
4. Chamery, Félix G. (secretary of the local court; ex-teacher and union leader) - Nueva Italia, Mich., 16 Aug. 1968.
5. Ek, Nicolás and others (peasants) - Hopelchén, Campeche, 12 Dec. 1968.
6. García Téllez, Ignacio (lawyer and politician; Minister of Education, 1934-1935) - Mexico City, 16 Oct. 1968.
7. Gutiérrez, Manuel (ex-"hacendado") - Hacienda Pacho, Veracruz, 4 Sept. 1967.
8. Hernández Topeta, Diego (Government official and politician; ex-teacher) - Mexico City, 9 Aug. 1969.
9. López Pérez, Manuel (local Government official) - Morelia, Mich., 9 & 10 July 1968.

10. Magaña García, Major Antonio (army officer) - Ario de Rosales, Mich., 2 Nov. 1967 & 13 Aug. 1968.
11. Magaña García, Nicolás (tradesman) - Tacámbaro, Mich., 4 Nov. 1967.
12. Mayés Navarro, Antonio (politician and Government official) - Celaya, Guanajuato, 21 Aug. 1969.
13. Morales, Marcelo Alejandro (peasant) - Zurumútaro, Mich., 13 Aug. 1968.
14. Muñoz Cota, José (intellectual and politician) - Mexico City, 20 May 1968.
15. Ponce, Santos (local official) and family - La Huacana, Mich., 14 Aug. 1968.
16. Ruiz, Mannel and others ("ejidatarios") - Tocumbo, Mich., 17 Aug. 1968.
17. Sanchez Martínez, Emiliano & Roberto, with Ramón Zambrano and Luis Velasco ("ejidatarios") - interviewed together in Chavinda, Mich., 4 Aug. 1968.
18. Yaca, Samuel (local Government official) - La Huacana, Mich., 14 Aug. 1968.

SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Apart from personal interviews (catalogued above), this study is based on the following sources: public and private archives, contemporary periodicals, and published works. Some attempt has been made to indicate the availability of material by the use of initials placed after each reference; thus "EM" after a reference indicates that the work in question is available in the British Museum Library ("G" means that the work is generally available in most University libraries).

The libraries and archives which were consulted, with the initials by which they are represented in the bibliography are as follows:-

1. Archivo General de la Nación (Ramo de los Presidentes), Palacio Nacional, México 1, D.F. Contains abundant information on the politics of the period, but little was found concerning the rôle of the teachers.
2. Archivo General de la Secretaría de Educación Pública, Argentina Y Luis González Obregón, México 1, D.F. (SEP(G)). Contains the annual "Memorias" and other official publications of the Ministry, and files on all individual schools and teachers. A number of individual files were used, mainly in connection with teachers or localities of interest mentioned in other sources.
3. Biblioteca Nacional, Isabel la Católica y República del Salvador, México 1, D.F. (BNM).
4. Hemeroteca Nacional, El Carmen 31, México 1, D.F. (HNM).
5. Biblioteca de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, Palacio Nacional, México 1, D.F. (BHM).
6. Biblioteca de México, Plaza de la Ciudadela, México 1, D.F. (EMM). The "Basave" collection has many rare books and pamphlets on politics since the Revolution.
7. Biblioteca del Congreso de la Unión, Tacuba 29, México 1, D.F. (BCU).
8. Biblioteca Iberoamericana, Luis González Obregón 18, México, 1, D.F. (BI).
9. Biblioteca de la Escuela Nacional de Maestros, Calzada México - Tacuba y Avenida de los Maestros, México 17, D.F. (ENM).
10. Biblioteca de la Escuela Normal Superior, Frenco 15, México 4, D.F. (ENS).
11. Biblioteca de El Colegio de México, Guanajuato 125, México 7, D.F. (BCM).
12. Centre de Estudios de Historia de México, c/o Condumex, S.A., México 16, D.F. (CEH).
13. Archivo General y Públicos del Estado de Michoacán, Palacio Municipal, Morelia. As with most provincial archives, this one is in considerable disarray, and only a few relevant files were found.
14. Biblioteca y Hemeroteca de la Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, Morelia. (UM).
15. Biblioteca de la Comisión Regional para la Educación Fundamental en América Latina, Pátzcuaro, Michoacán. (CREPAL).

16. Biblioteca de la Escuela Normal Urbana de Morelia, Michoacán. (ENUM)
17. The British Museum Library. (BM)
18. Latin American Collection of the University of Texas at Austin. (UT)
19. Personal archive of General Francisco J. Múgica, Pátzcuaro, Michoacán; kindly made available by Sra. Carolina Escudero Vda. de Múgica. Contains a wealth of unused material on national and local politics during the General's career (1904-1954). Although much of it is unsorted, his correspondence for the years 1934-1938 is classified and bound, and 20 volumes of this were consulted, together with miscellaneous files containing abundant data on local politics in Michoacán and on the teachers' movement in Campeche.
20. Books and papers of Lic. Narciso Bassols, consulted by courtesy of Sra. Clementina Batalla Vda. de Bassols and Ing. Narciso Bassols Batalla. (Bassols)
21. Private library of Prof. Tomás Rico Cano, Morelia, Michoacán; consulted by courtesy of the owner. (TRC)
22. Private library of Lic. Raúl Arreola Cortés, consulted in Mexico City by courtesy of the owner. (RAC)
23. Canning House Library, Belgrave Square, London. (CH)

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The bibliography is divided into the following sections:

- (a) reference works;
- (b) newspapers and periodicals;
- (c) general historical background;
- (d) the Revolution and politics, 1921-1940;
- (e) Mexican education;
- (f) the agrarian question;
- (g) Michoacán;
- (h) Campeche; and,
- (i) contemporary Mexico.

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(b) Newspapers and Periodicals

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SEP(G), UT

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(d) The Revolution and Politics, 1921-1940

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