

The Mexican Revolution: Revolutionary Leaders and Working-Class Ideologies

History 490

Submitted in partial fulfillment for the B.A. in History

California State University, Dominguez Hills

May 16, 2019

Abstract: This paper will analyze the Mexican Revolution and investigate the relationship between the working class and the Revolutionary leaders in Mexico's northern states. Generally, the working class resided in the northern states due to the massive industrialization in those areas by the United States and other foreign entities. Emphasizing the importance of the working class and its relationship with United States investors and Mexican Revolutionaries, I argue that because of massive American influence in the North the working class supported policies that benefited them such as opposing U.S. involvement and labor reform. Thereby, motivating Revolutionary leaders to align their political views with those of the working class to build alliances and consolidate power.

Introduction

In 1876 the people of Mexico elected General Porfirio Diaz to the presidency commencing what many historians call the *Porfiriato*. During his seven-term administration, he oversaw the creation of the railroad system, telegraph, and phone lines bringing significant amounts of economic prosperity to the nation. However, this prosperity came at the price of the exploitation of the working and peasant class. During the 1880s the government instituted new mining codes allowing many foreign investors to revive the mining industry in the northern states of Mexico. In 1906 mining workers in the state of Sonora staged a protest against their employers. This protest by the miners caused the Arizona Rangers to be sent down across the border to take control of the situation. Noticing the exploitation of labor, the Flores Magon began publishing the *Regeneracion* which heavily criticized the Porfiriato causing governmental authorities to chase them out of Mexico.¹ In 1910 after Diaz promised to step down from the presidency, he ran against his political opponent Francisco Madero. Winning the presidency once more Porfirio Diaz arrested Madero, but upon his release, Madero called for a revolt against the *Porfiriato* commencing the Mexican Revolution.² My research will place the focus on Mexican industrial workers and their relationships with revolutionary leaders. The industrial worker of Mexico usually lived in the northern states of; Sonora, Durango, and Chihuahua, where the

¹. Thomas, Benjamin, *La Revolucion: Mexico's great revolution as memory, myth, and history* (Austin, TX: University of Texas, 2000), 11.

². Benjamin, *Mexico's great revolution*, 12.

United States influenced the industrialization of those areas. Furthermore, the paper will examine the conflicts brought on by United States foreign investments like copper and the ideologies many revolutionaries adopted to gain working class support in the revolutionary era.

For many years' scholars in the field of Mexican history have focused mainly on the big names of the Revolution such as; Pancho Villa, Francisco Madero, Alvaro Obregon, and Venustiano Carranza. Only in the past couple of decades scholars have begun to consider the experiences of the Mexican wage worker in the Mexican Revolution. Most of these historians have looked at the conflicts between the wage worker and the foreign capital, where many of them do agree that wage workers influenced the course of the revolution. Furthermore, other historians have instead examined the impact created by the United States by investing in Mexican railroads and copper industries. My research, although acknowledges and reaffirms many claims made by past authors, I attempt to analyze this topic through the experiences of the industrial working class. Choosing a political and class lens to this topic, revolutionary leader and ideologies will be examined to attempt to understand the political views of Mexican industrial worker and how revolutionary leaders constructed their policies to cater to the working class.

One of the first significant themes in Revolutionary literature studies the working class and their influences on the Mexican government. Michael J. Gonzales examines the Copper Mine Workers' Movement in Sonora during the Mexican Revolution. Gonzales uses sources such as public announcements, the employer notices reports from field inspectors, and memorandums to build his argument. Gonzales states that the protesting miners sought out help

from rebel chiefs to obtain a higher standard of living, but they were not lent support until 1915. He argues that wage earners were not an insignificant group but they contributed to the revolution by influencing the political and military outcome and helped with much of the success of the Revolution.³ In the northern state of Sonora, the copper mine workers were successful in bringing their grievances to the revolutionary stage. Thereby, influencing Maderista leaders to strike against Victoriano Huerta and support campaigns against the privileging of the foreign interest.

Similarly, other historians examined the influence cotton textile workers had on the government during the revolution. Jeffery Bortz explains that during the Mexican Revolution, cotton textile workers took advantage of the situation that the country was in to attempt to better their working conditions. To construct his argument, Bortz looks at private instructions, letters, newspapers and memorandums. Although stating that the working class took advantage of the revolution instead of influencing it, he does argue that the working conditions for the textile workers improved significantly. Furthermore, he states that the revolutionary leaders that took power changed the system of labor because the workers refused to listen and work as before. As a result, Bortz explains the workers received a shorter working day, medical care, and union control over hiring and firing.⁴

³. Michael J. Gonzales, "U.S. Copper Companies, the Mine Workers' Movement, and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (1996): accessed February 16, 2019, 504.

⁴ Jeffery Bortz "The Revolution, the Labour Regime and Conditions of Work in the Cotton Textile Industry in Mexico, 1910-1927." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32 (2000): accessed February 25, 2019, 671.

Another important theme that academics have highlighted during the revolution are labor unions. John M. Hart, in his article, looks at the urban working class during the Mexican Revolution, specifically the organization called *La Casa del Obrero Mundial*. Hart states that *Casa* advocated for programs that proposed policies of far-reaching political, economic and cultural change.⁵ To create his argument, he examines transcribed interviews, meeting notes and newspaper articles. Hart argues that one can split the experience of the working class into three different stages.⁶ Therefore, his article reconsiders the working class' organization, development, and role in the revolutionary process.

One of the last significant themes scholars look at are the economic interests in the country of Mexico before and during the Revolutionary era. John Skirius looks at the most extensive foreign investments in Mexico, such as railroads and oil. Skirius examines sources like newspaper articles from the *New York Times* and *El Independiente*, letters from political figures, government documents and scrapbook clippings. He argues that the United States intervention at the ports of Veracruz was the outcome of business lobbying, which had the most considerable influence on the results of the Revolution benefitting Carranza, leader of the Constitutionalist Army.⁷

⁵. John M. Hart. "The Urban Working Class and the Mexican Revolution: The Case of the Casa Del Obrero Mundial." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 58, no. 1 (1978): accessed February 13, 2019. 2.

⁶. Hart, "The Urban Working Class and the Mexican Revolution,"2.

⁷. John Skirius. "Railroad, Oil and Other Foreign Interests in the Mexican Revolution, 1911-1914." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 35, no. 1 (2003): 25.

This research paper, although acknowledging and reaffirming many claims made by these past authors, will be analyzing the experiences of the working class and their relationships with their American employers and the Revolutionary leaders. A variety of primary sources will be examined such as newspaper articles, speeches and *corridos* (Mexican ballads) to piece together the conflicts brought on by foreign investment and the ideologies adopted by revolutionary leaders. Speeches and letters by the Revolutionary leaders are used to demonstrate how they responded to the needs of the industrial working class. Newspaper articles from the *LA Times* represent an American point of view that sided more with the interests of the business owners. The newspaper *Regeneracion* was a revolutionary newspaper ran by Ricardo Flores Magon, a well-known anarchist and social activists who spent most of his time in exile in the United States. The revolutionary paper mostly represented the working class and published many of the ideas of the *Partido Liberal Mexicano* (Mexican Liberal Party). Lastly, *corridos* are ballads native to the northern parts of Mexico. According to scholars Juan Pablo Villalobos and Juan Carlos Ramirez- Pimienta, *corridos* may not represent a factual account, but they are part of the people and they work as an extension of their voices.⁸ Therefore, the *corridos* used in this paper represent the experiences of the working class and how they understood their role in the events that transpired in the Revolution. In an era where many of the working class did not have a significant political platform, they became dependent on their songs to voice their opinions.

⁸. Villalobos, José Pablo, and Juan Carlos Ramírez-Pimienta. "'Corridos' and 'la Pura Verdad': Myths and Realities of the Mexican Ballad." *South Central Review* 21, no. 3 (2004): 129-49. <http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.csudh.edu/stable/40039894>.

The analysis of these sources are used to answer a set of questions concerning the working class and their relationship with the Revolutionary leaders. The first question, what were the concerns of the working class that came out of their relationship with their American employer during the Mexican Revolution? Secondly, what specific actions did Revolutionary leaders take to receive and maintain the support from wage workers? I conclude that the industrial working class because of unjust labor practices, held strong animosity toward the United States and pushed for labor reform. Being of aware of the sentiments held by the working-class, Carranza and Obregon took diplomatic measures to resist United States involvement in the Revolution while Villa pushed for violent retaliation. Furthermore, Carranza and Madero promised in their manifestos to their supporters to implement massive labor reform.

My research is divided into two sections that focus on the issues concerning the industrial working class. The first section is dedicated to the animosity the industrial worker held toward the United States. The second section looks at the issue of labor reform that much of the industrial working forced supported. Each section begins by looking at sources that document the frustrations and criticism industrial workers had toward their systems of oppressions. Then to conclude the section, sources that document the responses of the revolutionary leaders are examined.

Anti-U.S. Sentiment

The growth of Mexico's economy during Diaz's regime mainly accumulated the wealth at the top of the social order and attracted many foreign investors from the United States, the

United Kingdom, and France.⁹ The United States government aware of the economic benefits of maintaining a corporate presence demonstrated concern over the effects of a revolution on their financial holdings. In 1909 both President Taft and Porfirio Diaz met in El Paso and in a letter to his wife, Taft expressed his concern over a possible revolution. President Taft explained in the letter that the United States had over 2 million dollars in investments in Mexico and due to the Porfirio Diaz's old age the United States might have to intervene to suppress any revolutionary activity that might threaten these investments.¹⁰ Toward the end of Taft's presidency in another letter, he described his relief that the United States did not have to intervene, but that the incoming president would have to deal with any issues that may arise in Mexico.¹¹

Table 1. The Value of American Investments in Mexico (1911)

Market	Value (U.S. Dollars)
Railroads	\$644, 300,000
Mining	\$249, 500, 000
Oil	\$15, 000, 000

Source and Notes: *America's Stake in International Investments*, by Cleona Lewis, Washington D.C., 1928. Table 3 in Hanrahan, Gene Z. *The Bad Yankee, El Peligro Yankee: American Entrepreneurs and Financiers in Mexico*. Documents on the Mexican Revolution; v. 9. Chapel Hill, NC: Documentary Publications, 1985.

⁹. Easterling, *The Mexican Revolution: A Short History*, 7.

¹⁰. Taft Papers, 17 October 1909, Series 2, Box 48, Page 1. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. mm 96083782

¹¹. Letter. Page 1. President William Howard Taft Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. mm 96083782

Table 1 demonstrates that the value of the top three U.S. financial investments in Mexico included railroads, mining, and oil. Railroads value in Mexico represented around \$644,300,000 dollars; Mining represented \$249,500, 000 dollars, and oil represented \$15,000,000 dollars. Therefore, President Taft and his concerns toward a possible revolution in Mexico were justifiable. The United States invested large sums of money in Mexico's economic market, and a possible revolution could have put their financial holdings in jeopardy. Furthermore, Henry Clay Pierce and other American investors such as Rockefeller and Aldrich purchased and withheld oil for political leverage and financial gain through the *mordida* (bribing) system.¹² Understanding that the U.S. and their investors made large sums of money through bribing Mexican government official helps in understanding why the industrial working class harbored large amounts of hatred toward the United States.

The United States being a significant investor in Mexico, employed much of the Mexican industrial workforce. However, the industrial working-class harbored resentment and wanted very little with their foreign employers. The workers from the mines of Cananea, Sonora in 1906 created one of the largest protests in the country of Mexico. The town of Cananea neighbors the U.S.-Mexico border where protestors influenced by the Western Federation of Miners pushed for labor reform policies. In response to the protest, the Sonora Mining Company with the approval

¹². John Skirius. "Railroad, Oil and Other Foreign Interests in the Mexican Revolution, 1911-1914." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 35, no. 1 (2003): accessed February 25, 2019, 25.

of Porfirio Diaz, enlisted the help of U.S. Army Rangers to suppress the workers.¹³ An article by the *Los Angeles Times* from January 1, 1906, explained the aftermath of the Cananea miner's work strike. The report stated that many of the Mexican workers returned to work, and the presence of federal troops calmed down the situation.¹⁴ In the revolutionary newspaper *Regeneracion* in an issue dated Feb 14 1906, one can see the hate and frustration the working class had toward their foreign employer. The article stated that Porfirio Diaz and his regime sold their government to foreigners. The article continued by saying that the Mexican government treated the foreigners better than the actual native Mexican. Furthermore, the authors claimed that the Mexican government did not protect the Mexican citizen, but they guaranteed the safety of foreigners.¹⁵ With the events that transpired in Cananea many of the mineworkers felt betrayed by the actions taken by Profirio Diaz.

These workers were justified in believing that the foreigners were receiving special privileges in Mexico. For example, Colonel William E. Greene was the man responsible for turning the small town of Cananea into a large mining town.¹⁶ Green created such a prosperous

¹³. Easterling, *The Mexican Revolution: A Short History*, 36.

¹⁴. "American Killed in Mexican Race War: Town of Cananea on Fire, Dead, and Wounded Strew its Streets" *Los Angeles Times*, Jan 1, 1906. <http://libproxy.csudh.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.csudh.edu/docview/164523665?accountid=10347>.

¹⁵. "La venta de la Nacion," *Regeneracion*, Feb 14, 1906. <http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e3n2.pdf> (accessed May 5, 2019).

¹⁶. Michael Gonzales, "United States Copper Companies, the State, and Labour Conflict in Mexico, 1900-1910," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 26 (1994):655.

mining town because of the concessions the Mexican government gave to him.¹⁷ These concessions he received from the Mexican government exempted his copper Company from

paying the production of copper and operations on the physical plant. Greene himself estimated that these exemptions saved his company hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.¹⁸

Authors who wrote *corridos* during the revolution also demonstrated the anger the industrial working class had toward the United States. In the *Corrido de Pancho Villa*, the author focused on the death of General Villa, he dedicates a verse to address foreign investors. He characterized these foreign investors as cowards and stated that they were the ones making most of the money in Mexico.¹⁹ In another song called *El Corrido del Petroleo*, the singer speaks about the foreign-run oil industry and how the white men made money off Mexico's natural resources. However, the song also claimed that the investors fled the areas of Mexico that contain oil due to the Revolution.²⁰ Lastly, in *the Corrido de Columbus*, the singers reflected on the attack on the border town of New Mexico. The singer described Pancho Villa's forces as heroic and fighting for the defense of the nation. The author of the *corrido* also claimed that the U.S. Military fled the battlefield at the sight of Villa's forces.²¹ While each ballad criticized the foreigners in different contexts, they all characterized them as cowards while glorifying the acts

¹⁷. Gonzales, "United States Copper Companies," 657.

¹⁸. Gonzales, "United States Copper Companies," 657.

¹⁹. "Corrido de Pancho Villa, 1998" in *Corridos y Cantares de la Revolucion Mexicana*, ed. Andres Henestrota (Gobierno Del Estado de Guerrero, 1998) 27-28.

²⁰. Ray & Laurita, "El Corrido del Petroleo," track 12 on *Corridos of the Mexican Revolution*, Arhoolie Productions Inc., 1998, Spotify.

²¹. "The Corrido of Columbus" in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: fighting words* ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press 2010)

of revolutionaries. Acknowledging this resentment toward foreign investors, many politicians and revolutionaries took actions against foreign investment or involvement in domestic affairs.

One begins to see policies against U.S. action taken by revolutionary leaders in 1914. Since the start of Huerta's regime, President Woodrow Wilson did not hold a favorable opinion of the Provisional President of Mexico. At the town of Tampico, the USS Dolphin was making a routine stop at a warehouse. Huerta's men mistook the U.S. ship as enemy rebels and arrested everyone on board. Eventually, after some explanation, Huerta's men released the U.S. Navy Soldiers. Outraged General Mayo of the U.S. Navy called for the punishment of Huerta's men. He also demanded that the U.S. Flag be raised in Tampico so that Huerta's army may give it a 21-gun salute. Huerta refused this demand for fear of sparking anti-American outrage in Mexico.²² President Wilson took this advantage and decided to invade the city of Veracruz explaining that they needed to intercept ammunition heading Huerta's way to force Huerta out of office.²³

After the invasion of Veracruz by the U.S. Navy, Revolutionary leaders held a Military Convention in Aguascalientes. The meeting limited participation to only military chiefs where the Constitutionalist faction of Carranza made up the majority. General Antonio I. Villareal addressed the Convention by discussing many topics, but he emphasized that their liberation as a

²². John S. D. Eisenhower. *Intervention!: The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1917*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993) 99.

²³. Eisenhower. *Intervention!: The United States and the Mexican Revolution*, 103.

people remained at risk as long as the United States flag flies over Veracruz.²⁴ In 1915 representatives from Chile, Argentina and Brazil met with U.S. official Robert Lansing to discuss a proposal to quell the revolutionary actions in Mexico. Venustiano Carranza, leader of the Constitutionalist Army, sent three separate letters to these various Latin American countries. Carranza stated that planned action against Mexico as an unforgivable act. He also warned about the dangers of interfering in the domestic affairs of a sovereign nation. However, Carranza does thank Chile and their representative for refusing to be part of any negotiations concerning Mexico. In another letter Carranza stated that Mexico does not have the resources to fight a war with the United States, but asked President Wilson to pull troops from Veracruz.²⁵

These sentiments over U.S. influence and involvement in Mexican affairs carried out into the following year. On March 9, 1916, Francisco Villa leader of the Northern Army, attacked the small border town of Columbus, New Mexico. In the attack, seventeen Americans and one hundred *Villistas* (Villa's Soldiers) were killed. Three hundred fifty citizens made up the small town of Columbus, reflecting the same number of troops stationed in the small town.²⁶ President Wilson quickly acted and reinforced border security. Both Carranza and Wilson did not want to look weak in front of their nation and its citizens. Wilson justified entering into Mexican

²⁴. Antonio I. Vallareal, "United Can Fulfill the Revolutionary Aspirations" in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: fighting words* ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press 2010) 177-180.

²⁵. Venustiano Carranza to Wenceslao J. Baceta, Victoriano de la Plaza, Ramon Barroso Luco, August 15 1915, in *The United States and the Mexican Revolution: "A Danger for All Latin American Countries," Letters from Venustiano Carranza*. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4940>.

²⁶. Eisenhower. *Intervention!: The United States and the Mexican Revolution*, 225.

territory by stating that the Mexican government could not maintain control of the state of Chihuahua and that the American people demanded that he pursue Villa.²⁷

The crossing of U.S. troops into Mexico prompted a response by Carranza and his advisors. General Candido Aguilar from Carranza's government states that the United States needs to understand that they have undermined the sovereignty of the nation. Aguilar continues by saying that an attack from irresponsible bandits does not justify the invasion, but it does open a discussion for reparations on behalf of the Mexican government. General Candido Aguilar reported that the meeting over U.S. troops in Mexico between General Alvaro Obregon from Mexico and General Hugh Scott and Fredrick Funston resulted in a disagreement. General Scott suggested that the United States would withdraw its troops if Mexico protects the border from bandits. Mexico refused this because it laid sovereignty of the nation in the hands of the United States. General Scott promised to withdraw U.S. forces after the dispersion of Villa and his troops, but the U.S. forces remained after the expulsion of Villa's army.²⁸ Therefore, to maintain the support of the working class, Carranza took a diplomatic route to limit the participation of the United States in Mexican domestic affairs.

The Mexican government of Carranza was not the only ones who responded to the U.S. invasion after the attack on Columbus. Pancho Villa, the man who led the attack on the New Mexico border town, criticized Carranza for not taking more action against the United States.

²⁷. Eisenhower. *Intervention!: The United States and the Mexican Revolution*, 226.

²⁸. Aguilar Candido, "Withdraw U.S. Troops from Mexican Territory, 1916" in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: Fighting Words*, ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2010) 208-214.

Villa, in October 1916 after evading the U.S. government, issued a statement stating that Mexico needed to unite and defend its national identity and to protect themselves from an unjustified invasion. He claimed that the United States began building an arms factory across the Rio Grande. He also stated that he and his troops remained in hiding to observe the actions Carranza took against the United States. Calling for violent retaliation, Pancho Villa reassured his audience that destiny was on their side.²⁹ Villa attempted to win over support by heavily criticizing the actions taken by Carranza and called for violent retaliation against the United States.

Furthermore, in the 1919 presidential election of Mexico, nominee General Alvaro Obregon describes the history of the liberal and conservative party, as well as the differences between the two.³⁰ Obregon, in his address to the nation, aligns with the liberals and working-class by stating that the reason why the liberal party always triumphs is that the conservatives rely heavily on the support of foreign entities.³¹ One can see that the working class supported the exclusion of the United States influence through the creation and popularity of corridos. In response, various leaders acted against the United States through diplomatic and violent means, which allowed them to maintain or receive working-class support.

Labor Reform

²⁹. Francisco Villa, "Mexico for the Mexicans! 1916" in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: Fighting Words*, ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press 2010) 218-222.

³⁰. Alvaro Obregon. *Manifiesto a La Nación Lanzado Por El C. Alvaro Obregon : Nogales, Sonora, Junio 1o. De 1919*. Latin American Pamphlet Digital Project at Harvard University. Nogales, Sonora]: Impr. Moderna, 1919.

³¹. Obregon, *Manifiesto a La Nacion Lanzado*,

Before the start of the Revolution in 1910, Diaz's efforts to economically expand Mexico created an industrial working class that did not exist before his regime.³² However, the treatment the American employers gave their Mexican workers was unfair. Managers of these mines hired foreign workers and, in many cases, assigned them to skilled positions.³³ These positions included boilermakers, plumbers, electricians, and pipe fitters. Furthermore, these foreign workers usually received higher wages than their native counterparts. The managers justified giving the Mexican worker's a lower salary by complaining that the Mexican workers did not want to work, and they took too many days to celebrate religious holidays. The wages for the Mexican worker were so low that many of them began moving across the border to work at the mines in the United States for a better salary.³⁴ Working conditions in American run businesses in Mexico were also deplorable. Mexican laborers working at the copper mines and textile factories ran the risk of losing their lives. In cases where workers would die, the American companies might pay the widows two weeks-worth of salary and possibly contribute a box to bury the deceased worker.³⁵

Since the Mexican industrial workers were victims of inequality at their places of work, their political views supported labor reform. Leading up to the start of the Revolution, worker's strikes began to become more frequent in industrialized areas. Textile workers began to hold

³². Easterling, *The Mexican Revolution: A Short History*, 30.

³³. Michael J. Gonzales, "U.S. Copper Companies, the Mine Workers' Movement, and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (1996): accessed February 16, 2019, 506.

³⁴. Gonzales, "U.S. Copper Companies, the Mine Workers' Movement," 506.

³⁵. Easterling, *The Mexican Revolution: A Short History*, 34.

public demonstrations estimated around twenty-seven times, mine works around twenty-five, and mine workers demonstrated approximately seventeen times.³⁶ Consequently, in 1906, the revolutionary newspaper *Regeneracion* stated the views and sentiments of the industrial working class. One issue explained that workers had the obligation to labor for ten to fifteen hours a day which stripped them of their right to eat and live a happy life. Furthermore, the newspaper article draws a comparison between the oppression the workers faced and the oppression their ancestors faced at the hands of the Spanish Crown.³⁷ Another issue of *Regeneracion* stated the labor platform of the Mexican Liberal Party. The paper listed that the PLM supported an eight-hour workday and a set minimum wage dependent on the cost of living the worker resides in. Additionally children under fourteen years of age cannot be employed, and owners must keep workplace sanitary and safe. Lastly, those injured on the job must have the right to workmen's compensation, and employers cannot pay foreign employees more than their Mexican coworkers.³⁸

The *Partido Liberal Mexicano* (Mexican Liberal Party) was one of the few groups during the revolution that directly represented the working class. In 1906 this political organization stated many of their political positions such as shortened presidential elections and disagreed with mandatory military service. They also noted that the value of the working class has plummeted in society, causing them to support improved working conditions and the

³⁶. Easterling, *The Mexican Revolution: A Short History*, 36.

³⁷. La raza muere," *Regeneracion*, February 1, 1906. <http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e3n1.pdf> (accessed May 5, 2019).

³⁸. Anselmo E. Figueroa, "Programa del Partido Liberal," *Regeneracion*, September 3, 1910. <http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e4n1.pdf> (accessed March 3, 2019).

implementation of a minimum wage.³⁹ Ricardo Flores Magon a social reformer, activist and creator of the revolutionary newspaper *Regeneracion* in a letter to the Maderista soldiers stated that they should not be happy that Madero rose to power. Magon claimed that true happiness is only achieved through economic freedom and to obtain financial freedom, the people must seize the land and machinery.⁴⁰

Many of Mexico's leaders realized that they needed the support of the working class to consolidate political power, and one of the first revolutionary leaders to do so was Francisco Madero. Francisco Madero in 1909 was the only candidate to run against Porfirio Diaz in the Presidential Campaign. Madero was a man who belonged to one of Mexico's wealthiest land-owning families but was a strict believer in Liberal democracy.⁴¹ Quickly gaining the support of the working class, he became a threat to the regime of Porfirio Diaz. In a rally Madero held in the city of San Luis Potosi he was arrested for inciting a rebellion and insulting the government.⁴² Upon his escape from jail he gave his speech called *El Plan de San Luis Potosi* from San Antonio, Texas.⁴³ In his speech, he stated that he wanted to improve the material, moral, and intellectual conditions of the working class. He also wanted to provide the working class with industrial schools and to accelerate the Mexicanization of all railroads.⁴⁴

³⁹. "Program of the Liberal Party (1906)" in *The Mexican Revolution a Brief History with Documents* ed. Mark Wasserman (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's 2012) 31-33.

⁴⁰. Ricardo Flores Magon "To Maderista Soldiers: Repudiate Your Leaders! 1911" in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution* ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press 2010) 41-44.

⁴¹. Easterling, *The Mexican Revolution: A Short History*, 42.

⁴². Easterling, *The Mexican Revolution: A Short History*, 47.

⁴³. Easterling, *The Mexican Revolution: A Short History*, 42.

⁴⁴. Francisco Madero, "The Plan of San Luis Potosi 1910" in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: Fighting Words* ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press 2010) 28-32.

Another revolutionary who aligned with the idea of labor reform for the working class was Venustiano Carranza. Carranza became a prominent figure in the revolution during the short reign of Victoriano Huerta. After Huerta overthrew Francisco Madero on February 13, 1913, and later assassinated him many pro- Maderista soldiers joined Carranza creating an anti-Huerta force called the Constitutionals.⁴⁵ Carranza was a landowner and the governor of the state of Coahuila. Once Carranza gathered enough forces, he gave a new plan called *El Plan de Guadalupe*, where he emphasized constitutional stability but stayed away from social issues that concerned the working class.⁴⁶ However, in late 1914, the leader of the Constitutionalist army had to prepare to fight against the generals of the Northern and Southern armies, Villa and Zapata. In an attempt to garner support Carranza revised the Plan de Guadalupe where he promised fair tax laws for rural peons, workers, miners, and low classes.⁴⁷ Furthermore, in 1915, after being pushed out of Mexico City by Villa and Zapata, Carranza managed to escape to the port city of Veracruz. In the city of Veracruz, Carranza gained support by creating a pact with the *Casa del Obrero Mundial* where they created the Red Battalion in exchange for the commitment to implement laws that improved working conditions.⁴⁸ The Constitutionalist government of Carranza also had to promise to consider any concerns workers had about their employers.⁴⁹ Furthermore, because the working class pushed for labor reform and many of the revolutionary

⁴⁵. Easterling, *The Mexican Revolution: A Short History*, 68.

⁴⁶. Easterling, *The Mexican Revolution: A Short History*, 69.

⁴⁷. Carranza, "Additions to The Plan of Guadalupe" in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: fighting words* ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press 2010)

⁴⁸. "Pact Between The Casa Del Obrero Mundial and the Constitutionals" in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: fighting words* ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press 2010) 194.

⁴⁹. "Pact Between The Casa Del Obrero Mundial and the Constitutionals" 195.

leaders began aligning with these ideals, the Constitution of 1917 became one of the most progressives of its time.⁵⁰ The Labor Provisions of Article 123 implement an 8-hour workday, parental leave, a minimum wage, gender wage equality, overtime pay, worker's compensation, adequate housing, the right to form a union.⁵¹

Conclusion

Overall, the Mexican Revolution consisted of many political and military men attempting to solidify their power. Revolutionary men such as Pancho Villa, Venustiano Carranza, Francisco Madero and Alvaro Obregon had to appeal to a large predominantly working class. In the northern states of Mexico issues revolved around the industrial working class since many of them worked in foreign run industries. Therefore, the revolutionary leaders had to align their views and push for policies that greatly benefited the industrial working class. These issues included the rejection of the United States in Mexico and massive labor reform. The newspaper *Regeneracion* called out the special treatment foreigners received in Mexico and *corridos* characterized the U.S. as cowards. These sentiments caused Carranza and Obregon to take diplomatic measures to ensure limited U.S. influence in domestic affairs while Villa took a more violent approach. Furthermore, *Regeneracion* and the *Partido Liberal Mexicano* highlighted the unjust treatment of industrial workers and called for massive labor reform. In the manifestos of both Madero and Carranza they promised to improve the working conditions of the average

⁵⁰. "The Constitution of 1917: The Labor Provisions of Article 123 1917) in *The Mexican Revolution a Brief History with Documents* ed. Mark Wasserman (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins' 2012) 126-128.

⁵¹. "The Constitution of 1917: The Labor Provisions of Article 123" 127.

Mexican industrial worker. The decisions made by these revolutionary leaders ultimately, led to the Constitution of 1917, as one of the most progressive of its time in terms of labor rights. Thereby, creating meaningful change even if it was only for a brief period of time.

Bibliography

Secondary

Benjamin, Thomas. *La Revolución: Mexico's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth, and History*.

1st ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.

Bortz, Jeffrey. "The Revolution, the Labour Regime and Conditions of Work in the Cotton

Textile Industry in Mexico, 1910-1927." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32 (2000):

671-703.

Easterling, Stuart. *The Mexican Revolution: A Short History, 1910-1920*. Chicago, Illinois:

Haymarket Books, 2012.

Eisenhower, John S. D. *Intervention!: The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913-*

1917. 1995.

Ficker, Sandra Kuntz. "The Export Boom of the Mexican Revolution: Characteristics and

Contributing Factors." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 36, no. 2 (2004): 267-96.

Gonzales, Michael J. "U.S. Copper Companies, the Mine Workers' Movement, and the Mexican

Revolution, 1910-1920." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (1996):

503-34. doi:10.2307/2517815

Gonzales, Michael. "United States Copper Companies, the State, and Labour Conflict in Mexico, 1900-1910." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 26 (1994): 651.

Hart, John M. "The Urban Working Class and the Mexican Revolution: The Case of the Casa Del Obrero Mundial." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 58, no. 1 (1978): 1-20.

Skirius, John. "Railroad, Oil and Other Foreign Interests in the Mexican Revolution, 1911-1914." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 35, no. 1 (2003): 25-51.

Villalobos, José Pablo, and Juan Carlos Ramírez-Pimienta. "'Corridos' and 'la Pura Verdad': Myths and Realities of the Mexican Ballad." *South Central Review* 21, no. 3 (2004): 129-49. <http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.csudh.edu/stable/40039894>.

Primary

Alvaro Obregon. *Manifiesto a La Nación Lanzado Por El C. Alvaro Obregón : Nogales, Sonora, Junio 1o. De 1919*. Latin American Pamphlet Digital Project at Harvard University. [Nogales, Sonora]: Impr. Moderna, 1919.

Aguilar Candido, "Withdraw U.S. Troops from Mexican Territory, 1916" in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: Fighting Words*, ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2010) 208-214.

Anselmo E. Figueroa, "Programa del Partido Liberal," *Regeneracion*, September 3, 1910. <http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e4n1.pdf> (accessed March 3, 2019).

“American Killed in Mexican Race War: Town of Cananea on Fire, Dead, and Wounded Strew its Streets” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan 1, 1906

<http://libproxy.csudh.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.csudh.edu/docview/164523665?accountid=10347>. (accessed March 15, 2019).

“Corrido de Columbus” in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: Fighting Words*, ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press 2010) 222-223.

Corrido de Pancho Villa, 1998” in *Corridos y Cantares de la Revolucion Mexicana*, ed. Andres Henestrosta (Gobierno Del Estado de Guerrero, 1998) 27-28.

Francisco Madero, “The Plan of San Luis Potosi 1910” in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: Fighting Words* ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press 2010) 28-32.

Francisco Villa, “Dreams for A Future Mexico 1913” in *The Mexican Revolution: A Brief History with Documents* ed. Mark Wasserman (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s 2012) 39-40.

Francisco Villa, “Mexico for the Mexicans! 1916” in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: Fighting Words*, ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press 2010)

Hanrahan, Gene Z. *The Bad Yankee, El Peligro Yankee: American Entrepreneurs and Financiers in Mexico*. Documents on the Mexican Revolution; v. 9. Chapel Hill, NC: Documentary Publications, 1985.

“La raza muere,” *Regeneracion*, February 1, 1906. <http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e3n1.pdf> (accessed May 5, 2019).

“La venta de la Nacion,” *Regeneracion*, Feb 14, 1906. <http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e3n2.pdf> (accessed May 5, 2019).

Letter. Page 1. President William Howard Taft Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. mm 96083782

“Program of the Liberal Party (1906)” in *The Mexican Revolution a Brief History with Documents* ed. Mark Wasserman (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s 2012) 31-33.

Ray & Laurita, “El Corrido del Petroleo,” track 12 on *Corridos of the Mexican Revolution*, Arhoolie Productions Inc., 1998, Spotify.

“The Constitution of 1917: The Labor Provisions of Article 123 1917) in *The Mexican Revolution a Brief History with Documents* ed. Mark Wasserman (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins’ 2012) 126-128.

Venustiano Carranza, “Additions to The Plan of Guadalupe 1914” in *Competing Voices from The Mexican Revolution: Fighting Words* ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press 2010) 186-189

Venustiano Carranza to Wenceslao J. Baceta, Victoriano de la Plaza, Ramon Barroso Luco, August 15 1915, in *The United States and the Mexican Revolution: “A Danger for All*

Latin American Countries,” Letters from Venustiano Carranza.

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4940>.

Villareal I. Antonio, “United Can Fulfill the Revolutionary Aspirations” in *Competing Voices*

from The Mexican Revolution: fighting words ed. Chris Frazer. Santa Barbara:

Greenwood Press, 2010.

Anselmo E. Figueroa, “Programa del Partido Liberal,” *Regeneracion*, September 3, 1910.

<http://archivomagon.net/wp-content/uploads/e4n1.pdf> (accessed March 3, 2019)

Ricardo Flores Magon “To Maderista Soldiers: Repudiate Your Leaders! 1911” in *Competing*

Voices from The Mexican Revolution ed. Chris Frazer (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press

2010) 41-44.

Special Correspondence of, The Times. "MEXICO FORGING AHEAD INSUGAR." *Los*

Angeles Times (1886-1922), Nov 27, 1910.

[http://libproxy.csudh.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-](http://libproxy.csudh.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.csudh.edu/docview/159509359?accountid=10347)

[com.libproxy.csudh.edu/docview/159509359?accountid=10347](http://libproxy.csudh.edu/docview/159509359?accountid=10347).

Taft Papers, 17 October 1909, Series 2, Box 48, Page 1. Manuscript Division, Library of

Congress. mm 9608378