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AMERICAN INTELLECTUAL ATTITUDES TOWARD MEXICO

1908-1940

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

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The Ohio State University
1969

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The term "intellectual" is a nebulous one. It implies a high degree of intellect and a capacity for advanced thought. An intellectual is usually concerned more with ideas than action. Naturally he acts, as everyone must act (just the task of making known one's ideas is a form of action), but it is the intellectual's contemplative and perhaps critical capabilities which separate him from the rest.

If two or more scholars were to publish their versions of "Who Was Who Among American Intellectuals," their lists would probably differ, given the varying criteria which people assign to the term "intellectual." But certain figures from America's past are generally recognized as intellectuals. Cotton Mather, Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson and in more recent times Reinhold Niebuhr, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and Walter Lippmann are just a few who are usually acknowledged among the intellectual group.

I began researching this paper using figures recognized as intellectuals by historians. From this group I ascertained which ones wrote on Mexico and concentrated on them.
I soon became aware that these intellectuals usually wrote of Mexican society, culture, or environment as it reflected their own outlook on living. In other words the intellectual was not interested in Mexico so much as a political force or an economic or religious entity but rather as an object through which he could express his ideas. My research soon made clear, however, that writers not generally acknowledged as intellectuals also wrote of Mexico in this manner. Whatever their background or reputation, I felt these writers were pertinent to this topic, for they provided added intellectual insight into American attitudes toward Mexico.

I wish to acknowledge the debt of gratitude I owe my adviser Dr. Robert H. Bremner. His direction and patience guided the research and writing of this dissertation. My wife Pat proofread and shared in the typing. Her efforts made my task that much easier.
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INTRODUCTION

The "New World" which Christopher Columbus avowedly discovered was the home of long established and advanced civilizations. But to the populations of Europe the Western Hemisphere was a new discovery, and since the agricultural peoples of the New World provided little resistance to the military might of the Old, Europeans began settling freely in America in search of a new life. In the process they either attempted to force their culture upon the inhabitants, as the Spanish did, or, like the English, they simply killed off or removed those who held original claim to the land.

Prominent among the motives leading people to the New World was a belief that Europe was corrupt, crowded, and bellicose. Men happy in a simple rural setting saw societies becoming materialistic and overly acquisitive. The rural folk sadly witnessed the development of the machine to satisfy a craving for possessions, and they watched as people left their lands to settle in the cities. Soon many of the observers were also forced from their lands into the cities. To the rustics a man working the land was close to Nature where he belonged. In harmony with Nature it was
felt that a man could be himself; he could create; he could learn the true lessons life held. But in the cities man was divorced from Nature. He became a servant of the machine, and the machine made life artificial. Life became a dull, mechanized routine, and man lost his humanity. The New World offered a chance to regain that humanity. The area was vast; there were no machines or crowded cities; there were no bloody wars. Land was plentiful, and a man could return to the land and to Nature and once again be a true, creating, living individual. The appeal was great, and many dissatisfied Europeans, anxious to return to a rural environment, took advantage of the opportunity.

These immigrants came to America and felt themselves superior to the inhabitants of Europe. The Old World was considered corrupt, mechanistic, and artificial. The New World was viewed as innocent and natural, a perfect refuge from the problems of the old civilization. But areas of the New World soon became like Europe. In North America the English killed or drove off the natives and established their new life on Old World patterns. Over a period of three centuries they established cities, developed machines, and soon found themselves in an environment similar to that which existed in Europe. Once again a portion of society expressed its discontent with a civilization that seemed to rob man of his humanity, but in the twentieth century there was no "New
World" to which one could escape.

Unable to find new horizons, the dissatisfied hoped to sway the New World from its industrialized path. Mechanization was not necessarily considered an evil in itself; in fact it served many useful functions. But once mechanization got out of hand, once society became a slave to the machine and oriented societal values toward material acquisition, then humanity was lost. There had to be some way to show that in the twentieth century man could happily exist with a minimum of technology and a close attachment to Nature. Somewhere there had to be a model which proved that man could be technologically backward and still be happy.

The model was discovered next door. Mexico was a backward country. The native populations were subjected to a forced acculturation by the Spanish, but the results were only superficial. Despite outward acquiescence to Spanish ways, the Indian populations clung to the practices of their ancestors. They remained farmers; they lived in small villages; they seemed to live self-sufficient lives, unconcerned about the problems and values of the world around them. True, they would be better off once sanitation, scientific agriculture, and education reached them, but in their backwardness they were free from the regimentation of clocks, machines, and modernization. They were not standardized. They did not suffer from unemployment caused by
world wide economic cycles. They seemed a contented people whose agricultural and handicraft culture enabled them to enjoy life to its fullest.

Unfortunately, this contented Mexico was more the creation of an American dream than the product of reality. Contented people do not revolt; yet beginning in 1911 the Mexicans engaged in a revolution which belied contentment. The Indians were revolting because while they worked the lands, they did not own them. The lands belonged to wealthy Creoles and foreigners, who helped keep the Indians poor, undernourished, and unhappy. The Indians and mestizos sought to overthrow their oppressors and strive for a better life for themselves. But it was hard for the discontented American to picture the Indian in this situation. The American was trapped in an unhappy urban environment where he felt the very humanity being drained from him. His goal was to return to the rural life, where he could once again function as a whole individual. The Mexican Indians lived in a rural environment free of the corruptions of a mechanized civilization. If one could close his eyes to the problems which plagued a backward people, one could see in Mexico whatever one wished.
In 1930 Moisez Saenz, a prominent Mexican educator, provided the opening essay in the book *The Genius of Mexico*. In his essay Saenz told his readers that while there is variety and contrast in the United States, one is impressed by the uniformity. "Everywhere," Saenz wrote, "I was confronted with the standard, the standard in language, in morals, in material comforts, in food." Throughout the country trains, servants, newspapers, cafeterias, and movie houses were all of standard appearance and quality. "And apparently all the one hundred and twenty millions of Americans listened to Amos 'n' Andy from 6:40 to 7 PM."

Saenz then pointed out that this standardization was not limited to the material, but was found in the spiritual as well. And he therefore concluded that "America has conquered her environment. She has created her world." But "either from fear or for efficiency's sake, she has rejected the variant and has made certain that this world be dominated by a convenient and readily imposed standard of
quality."

Saenz noted that this situation contrasted with what existed in Mexico. Mexico was still a land of much divergence, for Mexico continued to be a primitive country which had not made the gains in controlling her surroundings, as had the United States. But then, Saenz continued, Mexicans were not as eager. Perhaps Mexicans "share with some of the Oriental races the pantheistic feeling of identification between man and his world, between God and his universe." And this sense of understanding and kinship with the world was perhaps "a more subtle and more satisfactory kind of control."2

Saenz had characterized the divergent situations of uniformity and variety as being the difference between material progress and spiritual happiness, and in the process he crystallized a problem which American writers had pondered since the turn of the century. American writers were uncertain as to whether it was the American--living in a mechanized civilization with its impersonal machines, its driving pace, and its noisy and dirty cities--who was really getting the fullest meaning out of life. Or maybe it was the


2Ibid., p. 6.
Mexican—living in a seemingly backward country, using tools of the ancients, unconcerned about making rapid progress, and working close to nature—who knew life's true meaning. To many authors there was something about life in Mexico which, when compared to life in America, manifested a care-free innocence. Even those writers who sought to bring the benefits of an industrial civilization to the apparently backward Mexico often hesitated when they compared the life of their peaceful southern neighbor to their own hectic existence.

While Saenz, writing in 1930, was able to delineate the problem which confronted American authors, it was Charles Macomb Flandrau, writing some twenty-two years prior, who was perhaps most responsible for making Americans cognizant of what early twentieth century Mexico had to offer. Flandrau was an experienced author who began his writing career while at Harvard. By the time of his death, on March 28, 1938, Flandrau had written six books and numerous articles. One of his best known works was Viva Mexico, first published in 1908. A product of the many months Flandrau spent on his brother Blair's Mexican coffee plantation, the book reflected Flandrau's attachment to Mexico's rural areas and his affection for the Indians and mestizos who lived there. Flandrau depicted the "absorbing romance" which surrounded the country, and in doing so, as one of his
later admirers observed, "he bridged the gap that most Anglo-Saxon minds must hurdle if an understanding of Mexico is to be achieved." In a sympathetic and most readable manner, Flandrau made his readers aware that there existed in Mexico a people untroubled by many of the regrettable problems which faced the more "advanced" Americans. He did point out that there was much in Mexico which could stand improvement, but at the same time he made it clear that the adoption of American ways was not necessarily the type of improvement desired. Flandrau recognized that Mexico had its own inherent worth, and while he saw that there were aspects of American civilization which could benefit the Mexicans, he also felt that Mexico was capable of solving her own problems. He apparently wanted his readers to share his confidence in the Mexican character.

Flandrau's initial attempts at publishing *Viva Mexico* were met by reluctant publishers. It was felt that most Americans were not interested enough in Mexico to make publishing the book worthwhile. Yet once published, the book was not only a financial success, but it has since been

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often reprinted. Even as late as the 1960s the book was referred to as "what may well be the finest twentieth-century travel account of Mexico."\(^5\) That *Viva Mexico* has served to stimulate American thinking toward Mexico is manifested by the praise American writers have thrust upon it, as well as by the numerous times they refer to it and quote from it.\(^6\)

Because of the influence which this book has had upon American thinking with regard to Mexico, 1908 is an ideal date to begin consideration of American attitudes toward that country.

Not that 1908 marked the beginning of American interest in Mexico and Latin America. Throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century there was a sudden increase in interest in America's southern neighbors, and even this interest was a revival of an older concern. Historian Arthur P. Whitaker points out that Americans long maintained an interest in the rest of the Western Hemisphere, an interest which found expression as early as the eighteenth century. In fact the attempt was often made to establish a close alliance between the United States and the Latin American countries based on the principle that the peoples of the Western Hemisphere shared a relationship which set them

\(^{5}\)Gardiner, "Introduction," p. xi.

\(^{6}\)Ibid., pp. xxi-xxii.
apart from the rest of the world. This principle was known as "the Western Hemisphere idea," and Whitaker explained that while it was primarily political, it also had social and cultural, politico-geographical, and mystical and rational ideas. 7

The question then arises, if interest in Latin America has deep roots in history, why was there a sudden increase in interest around the turn of the century? There are several possible answers. For one, as various Latin American countries gained in prosperity and stability, American investors began to look southward. For another, the planning and opening of the Panama Canal diverted American attention toward Latin America. Interest was also stimulated by the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus' discoveries and by the several centennial celebrations of independence commemorated throughout the former Spanish-American colonies. Finally, despite America's long acquaintance with Latin America, there was still much about their southern neighbors which remained unknown to Americans. Latin America seemed shrouded in a romantic mystery which served to stimulate the imagination of numerous American authors. 8


8 "The Promise of Latin America," The Living Age, February 11, 1911, pp. 346-347.
Of equal influence in arousing interest was the political, social, and intellectual ideology which shaped the Progressive era. In an article discussing imperialism in the Progressive period, the historian William E. Leuchtenburg pointed out that the Progressives ardently supported imperialism. The reason is clear: both imperialism and Progressivism were manifestations of the same ideology, "a tendency to judge any action not by the means employed but by the results achieved...." And since Progressivism and imperialism both gave vent to the faith in America's democratic mission, it is not surprising that Progressives were all for extending the blessings of democracy to less favored lands.9

How does interest in Latin America fit here? Whitaker helped provide the answer. He pointed out that the Progressives' Western Hemisphere imperialism was based in part upon a belief in white supremacy, particularly the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race; hence they believed it the duty of America to carry out "the white man's burden." In Latin America, Whitaker continued, the burden was particularly heavy "where the only whites were 'decadent' Latins, and the majority of the population were Indians, Negroes, or (worst

of all, according to racist doctrine) mixed races.\textsuperscript{10} The Spanish-American War and its aftermath served to stimulate faith in "the new imperialist mission," and consequently numerous articles and books appeared discussing America's role in carrying the "white man's burden" south.\textsuperscript{11}

Dollar Diplomacy was regarded as one means of carrying the burden, and many writers regarded it as a noble policy which would aid the Latin American countries in raising their living standards as well as their political behavior. The ultimate result, it was believed, would be the achievement of internal order and democracy on the same level as the United States. This, Whitaker concluded, was perhaps rationalization, but it conformed to the terms of the "white man's burden" and the Hemisphere idea.\textsuperscript{12}

By the twentieth century, then, there was both historical precedent and current causes which led to the growing American interest in the Central and South American countries. And it was not only politicians, businessmen, and literary writers who displayed new interest in Latin America. In the academic world historians were coming to the

\textsuperscript{10}Whitaker, \textit{Western Hemisphere Idea}, p. 119.

\textsuperscript{11}Leuchtenburg, "Progressivism and Imperialism," p. 485.

\textsuperscript{12}Whitaker, \textit{Western Hemisphere Idea}, p. 120.
realization that Latin American history was a topic worthy of their trade.

The first American historian actually to engage in historical research in Latin America was Herbert Howe Bancroft. His goal was "to save to the world a mass of valuable human experiences, which otherwise, in the hurry and scramble attending the securing of wealth, power, or place in this new field of enterprise, would have dropped out of existence...." From the mass of material he collected Bancroft would extract that which he felt would be most interesting to his readers, and then condense the material into a historical narrative. Working toward his goal with the aid of approximately six hundred helpers, Bancroft turned out some fifty volumes of history on an assembly line basis.

Bancroft's major work on Mexico first appeared in 1887 under the title A Popular History of the Mexican People. The book reappeared in a condensed version in 1914 as History of Mexico: Being a Popular History of the Mexican People from the Earliest Primitive Civilization to the

\[\text{ary Industries, Vol.} \]
\[\text{Bancroft (39 vols.)} \]

\[\text{13 Hubert Howe Bancroft, Literary Industries, Vol. XXXIX of The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft (39 vols.; San Francisco, 1890), 2.}\]
Present Time. Except for the last chapters, the difference in content between the two editions was slight, since, as the historian explained in his preface to the 1914 edition, "No new facts not here presented have come to light since the author began his study of the subject now some sixty years ago."

For the most part Bancroft's account of Mexico was encyclopedic. In the first edition the major emphasis was on political and military events, with a few chapters, primarily the last two, devoted to social and cultural history. The 1914 edition followed the format of its 1887 predecessor, though on a condensed scale. However, the later edition neglected the last chapters on social and cultural history and instead undertook a discussion of General Porfirio Díaz, the President of Mexico from 1876 to 1911.

While most of the History was handled objectively, the discussion of Díaz was not. According to Bancroft, the former President made few mistakes in his career; he worked for the welfare of the people; and he was "neither blinded by

The Nation points out that "apart from introductions, some re-writing, and general direction, the larger 'History of Mexico' was prepared and composed by a number of assistants, including Nemos, Savage, Peatfield, Griffin, Harcourt, and Oak." Bancroft never gave credit to any of them. "History Abridged," The Nation, February 4, 1915, p. 144.

ambition, nor dazzled by power, nor puffed by success, he ever stood firmly to the principles which he avowed when entering on his political career."16

That Diaz deserved such praise was debatable. True, he was largely responsible for industrializing Mexico and bringing to it a remarkable degree of stability. Because he attracted foreign capital, manufacturing and agriculture flourished, railroads grew, mines opened (pouring their products into the United States), and the Mexican national budget was balanced. It was, as historian Lesley Byrd Simpson described it, the Silver Age for the Creole Aristocracy and the Golden Age for the foreigner. 17

But for the lesser classes it was a Dark Age. There was no law but that of Diaz. Elections were frauds, Indian lands were confiscated, and any opposition was quickly suppressed. Much of the money that came from industrial products went into the pockets of foreign investors, and the common people remained as downtrodden as ever.

That Diaz's industrial policies seemed to corrupt what once appeared to many as "innocent" Mexico and that this was accomplished at the expense of the poor, did little for

16Ibid., pp. 221-222.
Diaz's popularity among numerous American writers. Certainly the harsh methods he used to insure stability aroused the ire of Charles Flandrau. But there were others, such as Diaz's biographer, James Creelman and Hubert Howe Bancroft, who believed that the Diaz regime was the best type of government for Mexico at the time.

Bancroft's attitude was not surprising. He worshipped wealth and success, and Diaz represented both. Then, too, Bancroft spent two weeks with the Mexican President, and the hospitality shown him by the Diaz family may have had some influence on the way he treated Diaz in the History. Furthermore, when Bancroft first encountered Mexico in 1883, he saw much he did not like; the progress which Diaz later brought to Mexico appealed to the historian and helped change his opinion of the country, in addition to shaping his views of the President.

While Bancroft admired the progressiveness of Diaz's Mexico, he still had a longing for the old and picturesque, and in his autobiography he bemoaned the fact that Mexico City, once "the Venice of the continent," had lost much of

18Bancroft, Literary Industries, p. 100.
19Ibid., p. 739.
20Ibid., p. 700.
its splendor through modernization.\(^{21}\) The Mexico of old was no more to be found—except in historical documents and accounts. Much is owed to Bancroft for preserving that history. He and his aides attended book sales in Europe and the United States in search of works dealing with Mexico. Travelling throughout Mexico itself, they interviewed journalists and authors, rummaged through book galleries, libraries, and archives, collecting materials for Bancroft's personal library.\(^{22}\) This collection became a valuable source of reference for later generations. As the historian Howard F. Cline has recently observed, Bancroft's crew dug up "nearly every bibliographical item to his day, and many of his treatments have not been notably surpassed by more recent monographic volumes. His volumes are the point of departure for the areas he touched."\(^{23}\)

It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into the work of the historians who immediately followed Bancroft, since most of them wrote before 1908 and their topics

\(^{21}\text{Ibid.}, p. 713.\)

\(^{22}\text{For Bancroft's discussion of the work involved in collecting material see Ibid., pp. 190-197; 700-751. Most of Bancroft's papers are now at the University of California at Berkeley.}\)

usually include more of Latin America than just Mexico. 
Mention should be made, however, of scholars such as Bern­
ard Moses, Hiram Bingham, Roger Bigelow Merriman, William
R. Shepherd, Edward Gaylord Bourne, and Herbert Eugene
Bolton. These men were among the first American historians
to realize that there was much to be learned about American
history in the study of Latin American history and records.

While historians were slowly developing an interest in
their southern neighbors, their activities were closely paral­
leled by less scholarly writers. There was more to be dis­
covered in Mexico than could be dug out of the archives.
James Creelman and William E. Carson, for instance, were in­
terested in the disparities in wealth, material progress,
and political achievements between the two countries, and
they strove to explain the difference.

These writers, caught up in the Progressive spirit of
the superior Anglo-Saxon, rushed to judgment. Not taking
time to consider the question of spiritual happiness, they
pointed to America's material and political progress as the
way to a meaningful life and called on Mexicans to let
America show them the way.

Creelman and Carson explained the contrast between Ameri­
ca's progress and Mexico's backwardness as the result of

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24 For a good recent study of Latin American historio­
graphy see Ibid.
different racial characteristics. It was held that the Indian blood which flowed through the veins of most Mexicans was the primary cause of Mexico's backwardness, while the Anglo-Saxon blood, which American hearts proudly pumped, was a deciding factor in America's ingenuity, drive, and progress. Some of these writers were so convinced of the Indian's inferiority that they doubted if even the adoption of American customs would help.

James Creelman, an American newspaperman and an author, who wrote about Mexico in 1911, is representative of this group of writers. Contrasting America's successful political endeavor with Mexico's political backwardness, he wrote that Mexico's trouble lay in her Indian population. Six-sevenths of the United States belonged to the pure white and developed European races, Creelman affirmed, while three-fourths of Mexico's citizens were descendents of the Indians who, themselves, were perhaps of Oriental origin. This difference in origin, according to Creelman, accounted for the United States' political advancements and Mexico's inability to handle the democratic process. To Orientals, Creelman wrote, truly democratic political institutions are alien if not impossible, for they have no tradition of democratic customs. America's free institutions, on the other hand, were "won through a thousand years of Anglo-Saxon
growth and struggle.\(^ {25}\) Creelman concluded that Mexican adoption of the American form of Constitution was impractical because the Indians were not fit to handle their responsibilities as voters. What Mexico needed was a dictator, and General Díaz, "the greatest Latin-American leader," was amply filling the role.\(^ {26}\)

Not all writers, of course, saw the question in a strictly racial context; many viewed the disparity between the United States and Mexico as the result of a combination of circumstances. With regard to climate, geography, or history, Mexico was not as fortunate as the United States. But should the proper circumstances work in her favor, Mexico would clearly be capable of progress. Flandrau wrote in this vein when he declared Mexican "laziness" could be attributed partly to climate and partly to diet. "No people," he wrote, "whose diet consists chiefly of tortillas, chile, black coffee, and cigarettes are ever going to be lashed by the desire to accomplish." Flandrau held that education and a more healthful diet would free Mexicans from the reproach of laziness.\(^ {27}\)


\(^{26}\) James Creelman, Díaz: Master of Mexico (New York, 1911), p. v.

\(^{27}\) Flandrau, Viva Mexico, pp. 44-45.
Flandrau believed that not only Mexico's climate and diet but also her history tended to work against her. In this regard he placed particular emphasis on the "over-powering" influence of the Catholic Church. As a large landholder, as a money grabbing power, as an institution steeped in superstition, for three hundred years the Church had allied with the upper class to keep the lower classes suppressed. Those three hundred years left their imprint so that the mass of the people reflected "generations of mental and physical subjection." The subservient role played by the average Mexican and his "uncomfortable habit of vibrating between an attitude of doglike trust and one of the most exaggerated suspicion" were explained by Flandrau as products of Church domination. Furthermore, the Church's past role helped explain why throughout Mexico's history the people had never enjoyed real freedom. "Even now," commented Flandrau, "with an acute, patriotic, and enlightened president at the head of the nation, Mexico—and quite inevitable—is not a republic, but a military Diazpotism."29

Flandrau conceded, however, that the Church performed a useful role. It gave the people a sense of satisfaction

28Ibid., p. 59.
29Ibid., pp. 60-61.
or at least "an agreeable sensation," satiating a profound human want, which Flandrau doubted could be filled in any other way.\(^30\) For all the faults of the Church, Flandrau was ready to give it credit for its positive role on behalf of the people, who, in his judgment, were the most important aspect of Mexico.

One of the delightful parts of *Viva Mexico* is Flandrau's characterization of the Mexican population. Flandrau had an affection for the Mexicans, and he revealed this sentiment when he discussed the beauty of the people. He wrote, "At first, I confess, almost everybody in the republic looks like an home-made cigar. But when your eyes have become properly focused, it is difficult to remember having thought of so cheap a comparison." No matter what Flandrau's relations were with the people, some pleasant, some not, he still saw great beauty among all classes. True, he admitted, one encounters many who are ugly, but then, throughout the human race there are numerous examples of people who depart far from perfection and charm. "In Mexico," however, "although the departure can be as far, it is somehow not as frequent."\(^31\)

Flandrau was fascinated by all aspects of the country.

\(^{30}\)Ibid., pp. 58, 275.

\(^{31}\)Ibid., pp. 25-26.
Many travelers, he noted, are unhappy because in Mexico, unlike Europe, there are so few sights such as art galleries, castles, tombs "and the interminable museums crammed with a dead world's junk...." It is therefore difficult for the traveler to "accept the fact that the most notable sight in Mexico is simply Mexico."32 Flandrau did not have this difficulty. Attracted by the people and the scenery, he wanted his readers to share his enthusiasm. He filled his narrative with humorous incidents and provided numerous character sketches and discussions of the environment. To an unusual degree he succeeded in bringing his readers to share his love for the country.

Flandrau noted that certain reforms were needed in Mexico: dietetic and educational standards should be raised, and the power of the Church reduced. But overall, Mexico's apparent resistance to change appealed to him. While there had been changes and reforms, the great mass of people seemed to have been uninfluenced.33 The railroad provided a case in point:

A railway--an engineering marvel that in its construction again and again achieved the impossible--has bisected the country for almost thirty years; but I know many adult Mexicans of considerable intelligence, in their own

32Ibid., p. 269.
33Ibid., p. 150.
circumscribed, tropical way, who have lived all their lives within sixty or seventy miles of the track without ever having seen it. Sixty-six years ago France must have been decidedly more French, and Italy must have been infinitely more Italian, than they are to-day, yet Mexico apparently is but slightly less Mexican.34

And because Mexico was "but slightly less Mexican" Flandrau was attracted to her. Her resistance to change, her reliance upon outmoded and, to the American, illogical ways of handling problems at times infuriated the author, but he loved Mexico for these very traits.

By no means did all American authors share Flandrau's love of Mexico. Many were more concerned about the country's backwardness than were attracted by her quaintness. It was not uncommon to find authors describing the Indians as "naturally lazy," "ignorant," and having "no self-control." Nevin O. Winter, who according to The New York Times "ranked with Brand Whitlock as one of Toledo's Ohio most distinguished literary figures," was one who wrote in this manner.35 He published several articles and volumes on Latin America, including Mexico and Her People of Today,

34Ibid., pp. 151-152.

first published in 1907 and reprinted several times.  
Throughout the work Winter reiterated that racial conservatism and tradition caused Mexico to lag behind the rest of the world.

Sharing the same basic prejudice was William E. Carson who in 1909 wrote a travel book, *Mexico the Wonderland of the South*. Carson was impressed with Mexico because of the "wonderfully strange contrasts" which existed within her. Here was a country, he pointed out, which in a relatively short time had undergone notable progress. Yet at the same time there still existed, in patches, elements of the ancient order that gave the country the fascination of bygone days. These reminders of the past were pleasant but not as impressive to Carson as was progress, and he viewed the Indian as the basic check to Mexico's advancement.

Like Winter, Carson affirmed that the Indian had small intelligence, enjoyed being idle, and showed little desire to advance. Carson gave particular vent to his bias when

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38 Ibid., p. 290.
he discussed the Indians' drinking problem: "It acts
upon them as a poison," he stated, "and there is little
doubt that by its means their natural laziness and stupidity
have been increased a hundredfold, till they have lost all
ambition and have reached a point of animal degradation from
which it seems almost hopeless they will ever recover."39
But progress will come to Mexico, despite the Indian, and
in spite of "all attempts of Mexicans to halt the onward
march." Progress will come with the American settlers who
"are pouring into the country."40

Living during the Progressive era, when belief in white
supremacy created a rationale for Dollar Diplomacy, it is
not surprising that writers like Winter and Carson saw
little chance for Mexico to advance materially on her own.
They felt that outside influence, primarily American, would
bring a thriving civilization to Mexico. Winter believed
that the railroad was a particular boon in this respect:
railroads brought commercial progress, and this meant
higher wages, more consumption, and consequently a stimulus
for foreigners to invest; even more important, the railroad
enlarged Mexico's intercourse with other nations, particu-
larly with the United States. The result was an awakening

39Ibid., p. 104.
40Ibid., p. 86.
of the energies and ambitions of the Mexicans and the
dawning of a new era in Mexico. She was now installing
tings that other countries had for half a century. Cities
were now acquiring electric-light plants, modern sewerage
systems, and ice-plants. "It is said," Winter concluded,
"that wheat bread is even replacing the beloved tortilla...
and that Mexico may eventually take to eating prepared
breakfast foods. Add to this the wearing of American shoes,
and teach them to sleep on beds instead of mats, and their
civilization will be complete."^42

Carson agreed that it was the foreigner, and particu­
larly the American, who stimulated progress in Mexico.
After all, he wrote, the Mexican was not born to be a
businessman; in fact he hated the worry and hustle of busi­
ness life. This was why all the improvements in Mexico were
made by foreigners and with their capital. Today in Mexico
City, Carson noted, "one sees American banks, and agencies
for all kinds of American goods, such as sewing-machines,
typewriters and agricultural machinery; there are American
grocers, druggists, booksellers and fancy goods stores, also
tailors, hotels and restaurants."

^41 Winter, Mexico, p. 290.

^42 Nevin O. Winter, "The Progressive Mexico of To­
Americans were "swarming in" Carson said, bringing with them millions of dollars which were destined to have a profound effect on Mexican life. The result, as Carson foresaw it, was the eventual Americanization of Mexico. Through commercial and social ties Americans and Mexicans were steadily drawing closer. Carson saw the distinct possibility of Mexico being "peacefully annexed to the United States." Did these writers really feel that Mexico would be better off under America's industrial system? Carson apparently did; Winter was ambivalent. Despite his belief that Mexico needed material progress, Winter still saw in the old Indian ways something to admire and compare favorably with the United States. Winter noted that though the Indian was not ambitious and therefore made little progress, he was content.

"Their wants are small," Winter mused. A cigarette a day meant more to them than a whole new suit of clothes. Furthermore, the Indian did not suffer from "the mania for the almighty dollar," and therefore envy of others did not exist. "It is this envy," Winter admitted, "that makes

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43 Carson, Mexico, p. 80.
44 Ibid., p. 86.
45 Winter, Mexico, p. 194.
poverty a menace and element of danger in our own land." He asked: "Will the peon in the future wearing shoes, eating prepared breakfast foods and sleeping in a bed, be any happier than he is now barefooted and sleeping on a rush mat spread on an earthen floor?" Probably not, because these "wholly satisfied people with whom our essentials are non-essentials rather disprove the theory that modern civilization is necessary to true happiness." 

Alfred Henry Lewis, a muckraking journalist and author of the "Wolfville" stories, was another writer who questioned whether America's civilization was really more desirable than Mexico's. As a muckraker, Lewis was aware of many of the evils which plagued America's industrialized civilization in the first decade of the twentieth century. Seeing that Mexico was free of some of these drawbacks, he questioned which people were the freest to enjoy life. Lewis agreed with writers like Creelman, Winter, and Carson that the Mexican differed from the American in important respects. The Mexican lacked the force, fertility, and inventive genius of the American. But "the most enslaved and

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46Ibid., p. 184.
47Ibid., p. 194.
burden-broken Mexican is freer than the freest American of us all." The Mexican was not the servant of his railroads as were Americans, whose railroads "squeeze our enslaved pockets for their final dimes." The Mexican cities were not under the thumbs of Rockefellers who could withdraw their call loans and "blow business as flat as a field of turnips, and lay the common prosperity on its beam-ends." Nowhere in Mexico would one find a sugar trust, or a coal trust, or a wool and cotton trust, to cheat its government or steal from or leave naked its people. And thus, concluded Lewis, "Not Mexico, but we, are slaves."49

Writers who felt as Lewis did apparently believed it would be best for Mexico in the long run if Americans did not impose themselves upon their southern neighbor. Flandrau, certainly, was one who expressed his distaste for Americans living in Mexico,50 and he believed that even tourists brought unfortunate changes. Underbred American tourists, Flandrau wrote, have had an adverse affect on the Mexicans who wait upon them—cab drivers, hotel employees, guides, and the like. Influenced by the Americans, these Mexicans became "common, impudent, and a bore," and no longer did they manifest the qualities of Mexico. "One

50 Flandrau, Viva Mexico, pp. 217-222.
might almost as well see Naples and die."  

Another writer who questioned how beneficial American influence would be on Mexico was Emil Harry Blichfeldt. In 1912 Blichfeldt, assistant managing editor of the Chautauqua Press, wrote a book entitled Mexican Journey, using his articles in the Chautauquan as the basis for his work. In common with other writers Blichfeldt saw that the Mexicans "have less mechanical ability than American, less business invention or initiative and less general practicality." Having spent three years in Mexico, Blichfeldt was also quite aware of the poverty, the cruel laboring conditions, and the underdeveloped educational, political, and material environment which surrounded the common Mexican. Mexico's problem was to lift up these people. Blichfeldt lamented that in the process "one of the most beautiful to the imagination, of all the figures in the pageant of human life will have passed forever." Realizing that there were grounds for improvement, and noting that labor conditions on the plantations of Yucatan approached slavery, Blichfeldt recommended that "free labor and a fair share of its return" should be

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51 Ibid., p. 229.


53 Ibid., p. 13.
"honestly, bravely, persistently tried." The ignorance and superstition which surrounded the Catholic Church also had to be altered, and here Blichfeldt believed that Protestant influence was helping. Blichfeldt had become acquainted with many Protestant missionaries in Mexico, and he admired their work. Protestant influence had brought part of the Catholic service into Spanish, he observed, and Protestant missions reached the neglected and unchurched. "Catholicism," he concluded, "has improved most where Protestantism has been most active."55

Blichfeldt hoped that the people would learn to exercise more "restraint of taste." Women overdressed, the men made "display puppets of themselves," and even the architecture tended to be ornate, and "overglorified."56 But Blichfeldt saw a great possibility for improvement within the Mexicans themselves. In fact he believed that they were perhaps better qualified to undertake aesthetic refinements than were the foreigners. The Mexican possessed "the emotional susceptibility, the responsiveness, the manual dexterity, the mental ingenuity, and the temperamental patience" which, under the proper circumstances, would bring about "larger

54 Ibid., p. 55.
55 Ibid., p. 125.
56 Ibid., p. 141.
creativity than we matter-of-fact Americans have yet attained."\(^\text{57}\)

Although Blichfeldt saw that change had to come to Mexico, and though he recognized that modernization had brought many benefits to the country, such as railroads, harbors, oil-burning engines, and agricultural chemicals, he wrote: "we will not reproach ourselves for having paused over old, forgotten, far-off things."\(^\text{58}\) These "old, forgotten, far-off things" reminded Blichfeldt that there was a certain simplicity and authenticity about Mexico which America, with her striving for progress, lacked. Progress has its advantages, he wrote, but "It seems a pity that while learning a few things of undoubted advantage, we should have learned so many tending only to complication and unnaturalness."\(^\text{59}\) It was Blichfeldt's hope that this "unnaturalness," which the foreigner represented, would never affect Mexico. He perhaps best expressed his hope when he wrote of the Mexican woman: "Her modesty is as real and her sense of decorum as definite as that of the civilized and sophisticated American or European. Her neatness, cleanliness, and fitness of

\(^\text{57}\)Ibid., pp. 141-142. The proper circumstances meant an "increase of general culture, and a fuller liberation of the spirit of the nation as democracy advances."

\(^\text{58}\)Ibid., p. 82.

\(^\text{59}\)Ibid., p. 107.
personal ornament are such as to give one a pang when the inevitable result of outside influence is thought of."  

Although Moises Saenz wrote much later than did the group of authors under discussion, he seemed to clarify the dilemma which confronted many writers interested in Mexico during the Progressive era. True, there were writers like Carson and Creelman who suffered no ambivalence. For them, Anglo-Saxon America had something to offer its backward, Indian-dominated neighbor, and it would be to Mexico's advantage to allow for the penetration of American influence whenever possible. Writers like Blichfeldt, Winter, and Flandrau, realizing that change had to come to Mexico, wanted Mexico to evolve on her own. There was much in America's system that could benefit the Mexicans, these writers recognized, but they were uncertain as to how much progress was desirable. They felt, as would Saenz twenty years later, that American society was too standardized, too artificial. Blichfeldt, Winter, and Flandrau expressed a dissatisfaction with the exactness of American life and longed for the more easy-going, natural ways of their southern neighbor. Fixed rules do not exist there, Flandrau noted, and "in just this, I feel sure, lies much of the indisputable charm of Mexico." Because, "if one is not inclined to exaggerate the importance of exactitude and is

\[60\text{Ibid.}, \text{ pp. 77-78.}\]
perpetually interested in the casual, the florid, and the problematic, Mexico is one long, carelessly written but absorbing romance."\(^6\)

That Mexico had something to learn from the United States was not denied. But for America to thrust the unfortunate manifestations of progress upon Mexico would only serve to corrupt an innocent nation. The fear that learning the beneficial would also mean accepting the sordid created the ambivalent tone which underlay the attitudes of American writers when they wrote of Mexico and thought of the United States.

\(^6\) Flandrau, *Viva Mexico*, p. 21.
Chapter II
American Liberals Exploit the Mexican Revolution
1914-1919

The years 1914-1917 were significant ones for American-Mexican relations, for during these years the continuing Mexican Revolution directly affected United States citizens. Francisco I. Madero, the popular reformist who ousted Porfirio Diaz, was assassinated by his own Chief General, Victoriano Huerta, who assumed power in February 1913. Huerta's action caused much unrest, and almost immediately an opposition movement, the Constitutionalists, formed in a coalition under General Venustiano Carranza. While Carranza was acknowledged as the First Chief, he relied heavily on the forces of three of his leaders, whose support was always tenuous. The most formidable army was provided by Alvaro Obregon of Sonora. A remarkable leader, Obregon's forces were better disciplined and uniformed than the other armies of the coalition; Obregon, himself, never lost a battle. In the South Carranza was backed by the Zapatistas, agrarian radicals who had earlier withdrawn their support from Madero, feeling he neglected agrarian demands. The Zapatistas were led by Emiliano Zapata, a product of the
exploited class whose leadership qualities drew the masses to him. In the North Carranza relied on the armies of Pancho Villa, a man whose origins and leadership capabilities were strikingly similar to Zapata's. The coalition barely held together, and once Huerta was overthrown in August 1914, the leaders faced each other in the struggle for ultimate power. ¹

The United States found itself taking sides early in the struggle. The assassination of Madero appalled Americans, particularly President Wilson. Carranza therefore let it be known that he would accept American aid in ousting Huerta, if America would not intervene militarily and would allow Mexico to run her own affairs. Wilson, however, was determined to have Huerta ousted and a popularly elected President installed, even if it meant American participation on a larger scale than envisioned by Carranza. An incident at Vera Cruz provided Wilson with the excuse to intervene, and in 1914 he sent in American troops which helped force Huerta's abdication.

Wilson's policies were not popular. Carranza was particularly upset by America's meddling; consequently, Wilson

decided to support a leader who would be more amiable to his advice. He chose Pancho Villa. General Villa had allied himself with Carranza, but while Villa acknowledged Carranza as leader of the revolutionary armies, he hoped he could overthrow Carranza and eventually rule all Mexico. Backing Villa was a mistake. Villa was "politically naive;" many of those who supported him were unsavory characters; and Carranza proved to be the more popular with the people. Wilson's support of Villa fostered three years of war in Mexico and unhappiness in the United States, including Mexican raids on American soil in 1916. By 1917 Wilson had to reverse himself and lend his backing to Carranza.

The American people, for the most part, did not react favorably to the Revolution, and with such notable exceptions as the occupation of Vera Cruz in 1914 and General John J. Pershing's expedition into Mexico in 1916, the Wilson administration tried to keep American forces out of Mexico. But the pressure on Wilson for intervention was strong, even after he finally recognized Carranza's government in 1917. The revolutionary Carranza worried American investors who pressured Wilson to help oust Carranza and bring in someone more amiable to American interests. The general public also

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2Cline, The United States and Mexico, pp. 147-149, 151-155.
demanded that their government actively intervene in Mexico, as they were upset with the course of the Revolution with its confiscations of American property, attacks on the Catholic Church, assassinations of political leaders, various insults to American citizens, raids on American soil, and the general horrors which accompanied the battles. But the demands were not unanimous. Distrusting the motives of American businessmen who urged intervention or else fearing possible repercussions such as war, many Americans, particularly the liberals, denounced American meddling in Mexican affairs.\(^3\)

While Americans were concerned about the course of the Mexican Revolution, they also realized that the European war was adversely affecting their ties with their southern neighbor. As early as 1915, the United States was aware that German agents were active south of its border, and as the war progressed, American concern grew to anxiety. By 1917 the United States was committed to the Allied Powers, and in February of that year the news broke that the German Foreign Secretary, Alfred Zimmermann, had told his Minister in Mexico City that if Germany and the United States went to war, Mexico would receive her former territories in Texas.

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 160, 171-172. Cline points out that over all the American public had no real will to go to war with Mexico.
New Mexico, and Arizona, if Mexico sided with Germany in the struggle.

The Zimmerman message combined with the events of the Revolution to shock Americans into a new awareness of Mexico, and American writers—including John Reed, Lincoln Steffens, Jack London, and Alvin Johnson—undertook to discuss what role they felt America should play in directing the course of Mexico's future. Primarily concerned with the Revolution, these authors saw in the Mexican struggle a chance to promote their attitudes concerning America's civilization. Less noted writers also expressed their views about Mexico. Carl W. Ackerman, a contributor to the Saturday Evening Post, Thomas Edward Gibbon, a lawyer and railroad executive, and Leander J. de Bekker, an editor and publisher of the New York Tribune, were three such writers. Brief mention should be given to these last three, for their works probably reflected the attitudes of their readers.

Ackerman published his book, Mexico's Dilemma, in 1917, after America entered the war against Germany, and fear of the German threat in Mexico pervaded his work. As Ackerman saw it, Mexico's dilemma included the need for foreign capital in order to develop. Unfortunately the American, English, and French capitalists were driven out of Mexico by the Revolution which ousted Diaz, and the vacuum created was filled by Germans. While some Germans were honest, Ackerman warned,
they all bore the burdens of "a corrupt, dishonest, deceitful government in Berlin," the Zimmermann note being a prime example of Berlin treachery. What had to be done, Ackerman concluded, was for Mexico to reject German conquest and invite back America and her allies with their financial resources. However, if German intrigue continued to stir up Mexican hatred, eventually leading to an attack upon the United States, then armed intervention in Mexico would be justified.

Ackerman's fears proved ill-founded, as nothing came of "the German threat" in Mexico, but the settlement of the European conflict did not still others in their demands that America should send forces into Mexico. The threat to American interests still existed under Carranza, and stimulated the writings of such books as Thomas Edward Gibbon's *Mexico Under Carranza*, published in 1919. Gibbon attempted to appeal to the humanitarian impulses of his readers. He wrote of the long-oppressed Mexican peons who were stymied in developing a civilization by the Latin rulers whom Gibbon characterized as "conscienceless demagogues" bringing

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5Ibid., pp. 136, 139.
profound misfortunes upon the masses. What was needed, Gibbon argued, was to rid the "majority race" of its oppressors and give it its freedom.

Gibbon perhaps saw great potential in the peon, but one is not to assume that Gibbon believed the downtrodden Mexican could overthrow the Latin oppressor on his own. No, the only salvation for Mexico was through "the intervention in her affairs of some saving power such as...our nation has afforded to the Philippines, and to Cuba...." Why America? Obviously it was not because of the white man's burden; such reasoning would have been inconsistent with Gibbon's argument concerning the worth of the peon. Rather, and this was the major message Gibbon sought to promote, Americans had property in Mexico which Carranza (being of Latin descent) threatened with confiscation, and Gibbon believed that the United States government had a duty to protect its own citizens and their interests.7 Since the native "majority race" was unable to rid itself of its oppressors alone, Gibbon told his readers, Americans should help these people. If there was humanitarianism here, it was overshadowed by Gibbon's real purpose, namely to get the


7 Ibid., pp. 231, 233.
American government to intervene in Mexico to save American lives and property.

Leander J. de Bekker of The New York Tribune was dubious about the arguments which businessmen such as Gibbon promoted. In his book The Plot Against Mexico, which he published in 1919, Bekker viewed intervention as a plot by "a handful of plutocratic Americans" who wished to occupy Mexico that they might exploit its natural wealth to their own interest. He concluded that it was his duty to warn his fellow citizens about these interests, that Americans might avoid being led into an unnecessary war "by a few score of greedy capitalistic adventurers."  

Bekker was not alone in advocating that America remain aloof from the internal affairs of Mexico. Radical writers, such as John Reed and Lincoln Steffans of The Masses, also opposed American intervention, arguing that it would be better that America's life not be foisted off on an innocent people. Their views were apparently indicative not of a growing affection for Mexico but rather of a growing dissatisfaction with conditions in the United States.

John Reed's concern for Mexico was not long in developing. Apparently the Mexican Revolution held little interest for him before he left for that country in late 1913. His

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8L. J. de Bekker, "The Author's Preface," The Plot Against Mexico (New York, 1919).
biographers feel that Reed's relations with Mrs. Mable Dodge Luhman, a wealthy and eccentric divorcee, played a major role in his decision to venture south. People questioned the sincerity of a professed liberal who decried the sufferings of the proletariat, yet was the lover of a wealthy woman. To justify himself, Reed felt he needed a fighting cause, and late in November 1913 he found it in Pancho Villa. Until then it appears that there was little in Reed's writings, correspondence, or remembered conversations to indicate that he ever really concerned himself with the Revolution.  

Reed went to Mexico in November 1913 as a correspondent for the Metropolitan Magazine and the New York World. He undertook his assignments with great enthusiasm, and for the next three months his life centered around the revolutionary armies with which he traveled. He never held himself aloof from the peon soldiers; he slept with them; shared their food, drank their liquor, and risked his life in their revolution. All of this he recorded in his dispatches home, and when he later returned to the United States in 1914, he compiled these adventures into his book Insurgent Mexico.

The book itself was well written and provided an

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insight into the Revolution and the people who fought it; yet the work was marred by Reed's overly zealous treatment of Pancho Villa whom he admired as "a peon" who knew the people's needs and thereby understood the Revolution's real significance.  

While Villa in fact did much for his followers, he was socially insensitive, essentially a bandit, and an opportunist who sought to be the eventual ruler of Mexico. Reed failed to see this; rather, he wrote that it was "incredible" that Villa did not wish the high office of President. As Reed saw him, Villa wanted only to help his people; he wanted to build schools for the children and have his army develop the country to fit the people's needs. Therefore, when Villa robbed, he robbed for the people, and when he murdered, it was only for the cause. Yet the atrocities Villa and his men committed belied Reed's accounts. Even in the military sphere Reed exaggerated.

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12 Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, pp. 127, 137.

13 O'Connor and Walker, *The Lost Revolutionary*, pp. 108-109. An example of Villa's atrocities was the execution of any captured soldier. He viewed these peons as determined opponents, not taking into consideration the fact that many peons were forced to fight against him. A man of the people would have perhaps been more sympathetic.
He compared the guerrilla Villa to Napoleon and credited him with inventing tactics, such as night fighting, which had been in practice for centuries. Evidently Reed was taken in by Villa's lower class status. Certainly the humble beginnings from which Villa stemmed, as well as his activities as a bandit had more appeal for the radical Reed than did Carranza's status as a landholder. A sympathizer with the lower classes, Reed apparently had trouble seeing their shortcomings. As Walter Lippmann put it in 1914, "Wherever his sympathies marched with the facts, Reed was superb.... But where his feelings conflicted with the facts, his vision flickered. He seems totally to have misjudged the power of Villa."  

When Reed returned home after three months in Mexico, he found himself nationally famous. His articles, Lippmann reported, did much to awaken American interest in the Mexican situation, and at the same time they served to bring Reed, as a writer, to America's attention. Reed sought to make use of this fame. Now back in the United States, one of his major concerns was to insure that America would not

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14Reed, Insurgent Mexico, pp. 140-142.


16Ibid.
intervene in Mexico's internal struggle. Intervention, he believed, would result in Mexico's forced adoption of America's way of life; Reed's disgust with the capitalist system stimulated his drive to prevent its expansion into a nation he believed to be still relatively free of corruption and artificiality. For several months following his return from Mexico, then, Reed did all he could to counteract the agitation for intervention. He persuaded Joseph Pulitzer, publisher of the New York World, to oppose intervention; he argued against intervention with Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan and President Wilson, impressing them both, and, naturally, he expressed his sentiments to his reading public.

In the Metropolitan Magazine and The Masses Reed continually alluded to the evils of capitalism and the harm they could bring to Mexico. When he wrote in 1914, he pictured the Mexican people as being "notoriously the most warm-hearted and generous of peoples." They were normally an agrarian people who sought only "personal ownership of their homes and tools." The Revolution was their fight for their way of life, and for America to intervene in the struggle would only promote the interests of American businessmen and eventually force upon Mexico the system for

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which these businessmen stood. Unfortunately, Reed lamented, we would probably intervene, for a government of rebels would mean confiscations, and the United States government, itself under the thumb of business, could not permit this. We would then head toward the policy of "civilizing 'em with a 'Kreg'" --a process which consists in forcing upon alien temperaments our own Grand Democratic Institutions: I refer to Trust Government, Unemployment, and Wage Slavery." 18

Reed's aversion to capitalism was influenced in part by Lincoln Steffens who shared Reed's determination to keep America out of the Mexican Revolution. The two men agreed that America could not reach her destiny until she cleared up the evils of capitalism, and until these evils were corrected, America had to be restrained from corrupting others. 19

Steffens was in Italy, "Muckraking Europe" when the Great War broke out in 1914, and believing that "the inevitable war" would bring on a European revolution, Steffens resolved that while he would avoid the war, he would witness and report the Revolution. The Revolution was important to Steffens, for it was against "the established conditions"

18 John Reed, "What About Mexico?" The Masses, June 14, 1914, pp. 11, 14.
19 O'Connor and Walker, The Lost Revolutionary, p. 54.
and their recurring patterns—the conditions in which the wealthy reaped the rewards of the poor man’s labor, in which the privileged stayed on top and kept the poor man down—that Steffens campaigned. Reform was not enough. Reformers only sought to replace the corrupt, privileged leaders with honest men. But soon the privileged found ways to influence the reformers and things continued as before. Unless the Revolution brought a new system, Steffens reminisced in his autobiography, which he wrote in 1931, privileges would soon return and with them the unhappiness that gripped the world.20

The hope for a new system made the "inevitable revolution" important to Steffens, and he knew he had to view this revolution and report it. But Steffens also realized that he had to prepare himself for such a task, for he believed that one needed to witness several revolutions before understanding could be achieved. With this in mind, Steffens traveled to Mexico in 1914.21

When Steffens arrived in Mexico in December, he wrote his wife from Vera Cruz that he was witnessing "the


revolution, not only the Mexican revolution, but the very same they had in France and long for in England and Germany and Russia." The Mexicans wanted important things, he noted, "things which we all ought to want: economic, not alone political independence and liberty." This enthusiasm for the Revolution on Steffens' part was inspired largely by General Carranza. Steffens' Communist friends did not feel that Carranza, a landholder, deserved their support; they, like Reed, favored Pancho Villa. Steffens considered siding with Villa, but, he noted, learning that Wall Street also favored Villa and believing Wall Street to be "steadily wrong" on social questions, one could support Carranza "with the certainty of being right." The choice was a fortunate one, for the two men shared views which enabled them to form a close relationship. They were both revolutionaries; they both wanted the Revolution to be a Mexican Revolution and not one influenced by outside sources, and perhaps most important from Steffens' point of view, they both realized that there were lessons to be learned in history. Carranza


used history in a practical way, Steffens sought to use it in a scientific way. Both used it, and this helped draw them together.

In the articles Steffens wrote on Mexico in 1915 and 1916, he continually alluded to the cyclical course of Mexican history and explained how it compared to America's. Mexican reform movements rarely made much progress, he argued, for the Mexican establishment, as well as foreign investors, were always able to swing new leaders in a direction which perpetuated the system. The best example, of course, was provided by the reign of Porfirio Diaz. When Diaz first came into office, Steffens explained, his intentions were directed toward the good of Mexico. But to stay in power he aligned himself with the wealthy and powerful, and they saw to it that the system of exploitation was perpetuated. This was the same process Steffens witnessed in the United States. The political bosses remained in power by supporting the commercial, clerical, financial, political, and newspaper leaders of the people. Thus the American government did not represent the people but rather the privileged persons and classes. "That's the system." Steffens believed that Carranza was above the system.

Carranza seemed determined to stand by the people and the purposes of the Revolution, for he knew that his support came from the illiterate majority. Since the people were illiterate, they knew only what they wanted. They were not concerned with higher wages and job security; they wanted land. Carranza promised land, and he was determined to keep his promise. He would not "knowingly" yield one inch of his power to the old rulers. But, Steffens continued, most leaders yielded unknowingly. Diaz did, as did American political bosses. When looking for support, new leaders attract interests who will help them with force and profit. Carranza, however, seemed different. By studying history he knew that Benito Juarez, Porfirio Diaz, and Francisco Madero came to power with good intentions, but since they did not change the system, the privileged were soon back in power making slaves of the Mexican people. Carranza was determined to prevent this occurrence.25

Writing in Everybody's Magazine, Steffens explained how Carranza sought to avoid the historical cycle. Steffens explained that the Carranzistas believed civilized society's problem was not poverty but riches; therefore, they sought "not to cure or nurse the poor, but to prevent the accumulation of enormous individual wealth." They wished to close

the holes through which profits seeped through the workers into the hands of the privileged. They wanted to reopen the mines and keep oil-fields flowing and revive agriculture and industry, but they wanted the wealth to stay in Mexico and go, as much as possible, to the people who did the actual work. They were working, then, not for political democracy and equality but rather for economic freedom. They were trying, Steffens concluded, "to change the rules of the game, their game, our game, the game as it is played all over the civilized world." They wanted "to knock out 'the system.'" 26

The road would be a tough one, Steffens noted later, in The Masses, because the United States sought to perpetuate the system, even in Mexico. Law, order, and business were all important to the United States, Steffens wrote, and it wanted to insure those things in its southern neighbor. 27 But, as he noted earlier, the Mexicans did not want these things, and this was why they hated us. The Mexicans saw that Americans liked the old Diaz regime and were against the Mexican revolutionary movement. What Americans wanted was a Huerta or a Villa, a strong man like Diaz or an American boss—a tyrant that would keep the Mexican people


down and make them work for America. But the Mexicans did not want our boss system in their politics or our rushing industrial organization "which turns out a few rich and many poor." They preferred their own ideas, better or worse. But we, certain that we were superior to them, continued to force upon them "our ideals, our ideas, our virtues, and also (as they see) our vices, and our methods, and our corruption and all for their good. This is the height of our offending: our philanthropy."28

It was against the philanthropic attempts of America to perpetuate "the system" in Mexico that Steffens argued. Yet, he later realized in his autobiography that America was not entirely to blame for "the system's" existence; actually it was almost unbreakable. Even Carranza, the last apparent flicker of hope for the Revolution and for the spiral of change, brought his revolution out of the spiral and into a circle. True, he did not repeat Madero's mistake of giving lands, mines, and other privileges to the old possessors, but he did give these things to friends and to various individuals. The natural result was that the privileges corrupted the new possessors, and a new privileged class was born. Carranza's mistake was his failure to abolish privileges and other sources of corruption; "so his 'good' men

soon became his 'bad' men," and they ultimately turned against him and the Revolution. Carranza himself a landholder and employer eventually developed "the psychology of a capitalist," and turned against labor. As Steffens saw it, unless "the system" was changed completely, progress of any kind would be minimal.

While Villa and Carranza drew the attention of writers like Reed and Steffens, the activities of Emiliano Zapata, in the state of Morelos, also created interest in the United States. The agrarian leader was treated almost as a myth by American writers. He was either viewed as a butcher who killed at will or a modern day Robin Hood whose activities were always on behalf of the poor. He was apparently not befriended by a well-meaning American writer, like Reed or Steffens, but was usually observed from a distance, and his image, favorable or unfavorable, developed from that perspective.

George Harvey, the editor and president of Harper's Weekly (1900-1915) and owner and editor of The North American Review (1899-1926), was particularly hostile to Zapata. In a 1912 issue of Harper's Weekly one of his journalists, apparently reflecting the sentiments of the editor,

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characterized Zapata as a debauched, depraved, murdering bandit whose elimination the world awaited. Two years later Harvey personally wrote an article on Zapata, characterizing him as a thoughtless, ignorant killer who took, at will, the "lives, wives, children and properties" of the inhabitants of Morelos.

Not all who expressed interest in Zapata were hostile. Even Harper's Weekly, once it changed to the editorship of Norman Hapgood in 1915, printed a laudatory article on Zapata by Allene Tupper Wilkes. Writing in the January 16, 1915 issue, Miss Wilkes wrote of her adventures in Mexico City when Zapata rode in, and she expressed her favorable opinion of the friendliness and orderly manner in which the Zapatistas conducted themselves.

Albert Shaw, the editor of The American Review of Reviews, was also favorably impressed with Zapata. Writing in November 1914, Shaw pointed out that despite the adverse comments bestowed upon Zapata, one should not forget that Morelos, "a rich, populous, agricultural state" supported him year after year, proving that he had a deep purpose and

program which held a popular appeal. Zapata, Shaw continued, stood for an agrarian revolution and demanded immediate and effective results. Although one might disagree with Zapata's disregard for vested rights, one had to admit that he was aware of the wrongs bestowed upon the down-trodden poor and was aware how to rectify the evil.33

The remaining Constitutionalist General, Alvaro Obregon, received the least publicity of the four. The fact that he was active in Western Mexico perhaps explains his lack of recognition in the United States, for he was not easily viewed by war correspondents, due to the geographical barriers and numerous transportation problems. Yet what recognition Obregon received was usually favorable. He was presented as a farmer turned soldier who loved the soil and hated war, but he would fight for his country if the need arose. He was also viewed as a wealthy man who was aware of the problems of the poor and hoped to see them rectified. He seemed, in many ways, to fit the American dream of the ideal man.34

The four generals were presented with a myth-like


quality, with emphasis on their reckless and dashing characters. In fact the Revolution itself inspired a sense of adventure among many of the American writers, and they lived vicariously through their Mexican heroes. Certainly Reed was attracted to Villa in part by the sense of adventure, and another writer of note who apparently was attracted to Villa and travelled to Mexico in search of excitement was the author Ambrose Bierce.

Bierce was an elderly man when he left Washington D.C. on October 2, 1913. At the age of seventy-one, he decided to take a trip through the old Civil War battle fields in the South and then journey to Mexico. He was aware of the fighting in Mexico, but, he wrote an intimate friend, it would be better to be shot against a wall in Mexico than to die in bed. 35

The several letters which followed all gave indication that Bierce saw death in a Mexican struggle as a fitting end to his career. He wrote his niece that being shot against a stone wall would be "a pretty good way to depart this life. It beats old age, disease, or falling down the cellar stairs. To be a Gringo in Mexico--ah, that is euthanasia." 36


36Ambrose Bierce to Laura Bierce, October 1, 1913, in Pope, Letters, pp. 196-197.
Looking back on Bierce's journey, George Sterling, a close friend, wrote that Bierce's reasons for the trip were a conjecture. They may have included the spirit of adventure, boredom, or the desire to die a violent death. Whatever, Bierce's letters revealed that once in Mexico he unofficially attached himself to a section of Villa's army, even engaging in the actual struggle. There never has been any method of proving what really happened to Bierce in Mexico, for after a few letters to close friends, he was never heard from again.37

Another writer who viewed the Mexican Revolution as a source of adventure was Jack London. London was an avowed Socialist, but he did not share Steffens' pessimistic outlook concerning "the system." Actually, the extent of London's Socialism was debatable, as he was inconsistent in his socialistic practices. London advocated the proletariat's cause; yet he strove to attain wealth as a writer and a landholder. While Socialism espoused the cause of the weak and ignorant, London was a disciple of Nietzsche; white supremacy and the blond Nordic superman crept into London's thinking and writings, and the unfortunate were often the victims of his scorn.38 With a history of such

inconsistencies, it is not surprising that while Socialists sought to protect the revolutionaries in Mexico from American intervention, London advocated American intervention to help put the revolutionaries down.

When the Revolution broke out in 1911, London, like his fellow Socialists, supported Madero in his efforts to redistribute the land and expropriate foreign holdings. London even published a short story in a 1911 issue of The Saturday Evening Post which dramatized the desire of the revolutionaries to win their cause. The story, "The Mexican," depicted a scrawny Mexican lad who earned money for the Revolution by prize fighting. The climax of the story came when the Mexican met an American heavyweight champion. In a brutal fight the thought of the Revolution gave strength to the outweighed, outclassed Mexican, and he finally knocked the champion out.

But London's early support of the Revolution gradually faded. By 1913 he was a prosperous author, the owner of a large ranch at Glen Ellen in California, and a member of the landed gentry. This success colored his thinking, as well as his Socialism. But the desire for further profit,

39 Ibid., p. 351.
adventure, and fame did not elude him, and London hoped that someone would give him the opportunity to cover the Revolution as a war correspondent. The publisher William Randolph Hearst, an owner of extensive property in Mexico and an opponent of the Revolution, was the first to contact London. That Hearst favored American intervention to end the Revolution did not bother London; the professed Socialist refused the offer because Hearst did not pay enough. But Collier's Weekly did; in April 1914 it offered London $1,100 a week to travel to Mexico with the American forces that intervened in Vera Cruz over an alleged insult to the American flag. The "insult," a minor incident in itself, was overplayed by President Wilson because it provided an excuse for American intervention to help overthrow the unpopular Huerta government. Unfortunately, Wilson failed to make his reasoning for the intervention public. As a result, the American people were forced to assign their own interpretations to the event. Some conservatives, such as Hearst, supported Wilson, but liberals, including Reed and Steffens, generally accused the United States government of trying to protect American interests in Mexico from confiscation, as

42Ibid., p. 354.
43Ibid., p. 355.
44Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson, pp. 107-144. Link points out that most Americans were opposed to the intervention. See footnote, Ibid., p. 125.
well as trying to impose the American way of life upon a sovereign nation.

London did not sway with the liberal tide. He accepted Collier's offer, and during the months of May and June he sent back seven articles which supported the President's action. In fact London's only complaint was that the intervention had not been forceful enough. The Americans who resided in Mexico, he argued, did much for that country. They provided capital for development, jobs for the people, and overall they were better qualified to develop Mexico and its resources than the current Mexican leaders. Our intervention, he wrote, was justified to protect American lives and property, and he supported his stand with testimony from Americans who resided in Mexico and had interests there; no space was devoted to a justification of the Revolution.

London's stay in Mexico was neither as heroic nor as exciting as John Reed's. While Reed spent most of his time living, traveling, and fighting with the peons, London spent most of his time with Americans in Vera Cruz—drinking,

46 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
nursing a fever, and talking about his plans for writing a novel about the Revolution, a novel he never wrote.  

But his stay in Vera Cruz did allow him to observe the occupation at first hand, and in his reports back home he lauded the efforts of the American forces in taking over, cleaning up, and correcting the graft and corruption of the city.  

"Verily," he wrote, "The Vera Cruzans will long remember this being conquered by the Americans, and yearn for the blissful day when the Americans will conquer them again. They would not mind thus being conquered to the end of time."  

The roots of London's pro-intervention stand went deeper than the desire to help the Vera Cruzans. Convinced of the depravity of mixed-races, London believed that only white America could save Mexico from its incompetent mixed-breed rulers. Mexico had to be saved from her rulers, London explained, because these leaders were what all mixed-breeds are: "neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. They are neither white men nor Indians. Like the Eurasians, they possess all the vices of their various commingled bloods and  

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none of the virtues." Their leadership made "a shambles and a chaos of the land." These men lied, quarreled, and fought among themselves for privileges. It was this group that fomented "all the trouble" and that for centuries deprived Mexico of a developed civilization. As an advocate of white supremacy, London felt the duty of white, civilized America was to help save this country from those of mixed-breed who led her astray.

Mexico needed American intervention, London argued, to help lift the standard of the peon society, and this could only be accomplished by overthrowing the half-breed rulers, something the peons could not do alone. The peon soldiers, London wrote, were "merely descendants of the millions of stupid ones who could not withstand the several hundred ragamuffins of Cortez and who passed stupidly from the harsh slavery of the Montezuma to the no less harsh slavery of the Spaniards and of the later Mexicans. Why were these peons stupid and apathetic slaves? London blamed the peon's fate on "the will of God, the law of existence." In Darwinian fashion London explained that for generations the stronger elements in Mexican society, "by a cruel and

52 Ibid., p. 13.
ruthless selection," eliminated the peons who displayed initiative and posed a threat to the ruling powers. Consequently, the present generation of peons was apathetic and offered little hope for resistance. However, future generations could produce a new and more responsive class of peons, should favorable conditions exist. But these conditions could not exist unless the peons were granted "a square deal," such as they would receive in a civilized country. Mexico was not able to offer this "square deal," because her mixed-breed leaders were not civilized. But America was civilized, and through America would come salvation. After all, what measure of civilization existed in Mexico was introduced by North Europeans and Americans, and by them it had been maintained.

Unlike Steffens or Reed, London did not envision America as a threat to Mexico's innocence; rather he felt that developing Mexico's civilization was America's problem. Throughout his articles London reiterated this belief in America's mission, and he launched attacks against those who opposed American intervention as being immoral. A policeman could stop a man from beating his wife, and a humane officer could come between a cruel master and his horse. Why then

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55 Ibid., p. 7.
could not "a powerful and self-alleged enlightened nation" like the United States intervene between the incompetent rulers of Mexico and the "fair land" which they were reducing to a shambles? Such interference, he concluded, "is logically the duty of the United States as the big brother of the countries of the New World."

Alvin S. Johnson, a noted economist, author, educator, and editor of The New Republic from 1917 to 1923, reversed London's position, concluding that it was Mexico that could help the United States. Resembling Reed and Steffens in his outlook on American life, Johnson displayed a sympathetic approach to Mexico when he discussed that country's relationship with the United States. On one thing Johnson was emphatic: there was no difference between the races of Mexico and America. In a 1916 New Republic article entitled "Mexico in San Antonio," Johnson explained to his readers that in San Antonio, Texas, a town which had a large Mexican population and no racial prejudice, the Mexicans proved themselves to be intelligent, artistic, and cooperative. Perhaps even more important, they proved themselves

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56Ibid.

able to live without the need for individual accumulation which marred America's "unsocial, unkind" race. Mexico's trouble was that she had fallen on evil days, and it was to America's benefit to see to it that Mexico did not continue to sink into barbarism. Mexico offered a contrast to America's way of life, and if there was one thing needed "to enrich our life," it was a neighboring country "with something other than the real estate, railroad, banking trust-organizing interests to live for." Such a civilization was possible if the United States would forget its concepts of racial inferiority and the white man's burden and strive in more cooperative and sympathetic ways to help Mexico develop. ⁵⁸

In the arguments put forth by Alvin Johnson, John Reed, and Lincoln Steffens, one finds a continuation of the pattern which was obvious in the works of earlier writers, including Charles Flandrau and Emil Harry Blichfeldt. These men saw something artificial in American life, an unnaturalness promoted by American businessmen. At the same time they saw an enviable naturalness in Mexico. It was logical, then, that when writers such as Steffens and Reed wrote in opposition to American intervention in the Mexican Revolution, they wrote with the greedy American investor in mind.

Mexico was an innocent country, they believed; American intervention would only corrupt this innocence, for American businessmen would soon impose upon Mexico the same burdens of trust, corruption, and unnatural values which they imposed upon the American people.

But these men tended to present a one-sided view of the Mexican picture. The extent of Mexico's innocence was debatable, as was the belief that America could do Mexico no good. According to reports in the New York Times from April to June 1914, Jack London was not completely wrong in alluding to the benefits which the American occupation forces brought to Vera Cruz. The soldiers did help sanitize the area, introduce new forms of justice, and clean up some of the more sordid practices of the city, including gambling. By bringing in aspects of America's civilization, the occupation forces served to help modernize the Mexican people. In other respects, too, Americans were helpful if not absolutely needed. Even Alvin Johnson, who was loud in his denunciations of American capitalism, had to admit in 1916 that American investments were necessary in Mexico if that country were ever to pull out of "the morass and disorder" in which she dwelled.


60 Alvin Johnson, "Capitalism of the Camp," New Republic, April 1, 1916, p. 239.
This is not to say that the blessing of America's civilization was a panacea for all of Mexico's ills. Most certainly wrongs existed in America's capitalist system. The dichotomy between rich and poor, the plight of the miners of Colorado, and the poverty and backwardness which confronted the American Negro, all served to point out that America had a long way to go before she could honestly serve as a model for the rest of the world.

America's duty, according to London, was to help her lesser brethren, and also to protect her own businessmen who held investments south of the border. These arguments were noticeably similar to Thomas Edward Gibbon's and strikingly different from Lincoln Steffens' and John Reed's. Gibbon was a businessman who sought American intervention to protect American property; Steffens and Reed were radicals who sought to protect Mexico from the influence of America's property holders. Jack London at one time shared the arguments of the radicals, but by 1914, his biographer pointed out, "he had simply started to look upon threats to the rights of property from the viewpoint of the squire of Glen Ellen...." 61 The revolution in Mexico presented him with an opportunity to express his views.

Reed and Steffens, though differing in viewpoint from London, followed a similar method of expressing their views.

Both sought to express their unfavorable opinion of American life, and they found the means in Mexico. In describing the Mexican Revolution Reed and Steffens compared the favorable aspects of Mexican life to the unfavorable sides of America's civilization, thereby giving vent to their disgust with the United States. Yet these writers were doing what writers had done before them and what writers were increasingly to do after them. They viewed poor, backward Mexico according to their own preconceived ideas, using it to "prove" either how good or how bad the United States "really" was.
Chapter III
Mexico: the Pastoral Image, 1914-1929

When Americans look back on the 1920's, the memory conjured up is often an exciting one. Images of flappers, gangsters, cops, and marathon dancers mix with memories of technological advancements, business successes, and stock market gains. Later historians have shown that there was more to the "Roaring Twenties" than excitement, wealth, and technological advancement; they allude to the poverty of wage earners, coal miners, and peoples in the rural regions of the West and South in general.¹ But there was wealth, and it did purchase the products of an advancing industrial civilization. As one recent historian phrased it, "In the twenties there were cellophane and rayon, toasters and washing machines, vacuum cleaners and electric bathroom heaters, and automobiles in the millions."² The rapid pace which characterized this industrialized decade led numerous Americans,

²Ibid., p. 3.
including stockbrokers, businessmen, and politicians to express pride in their country and to voice optimism for the future. But not all America shared this feeling of euphoria, and among those who expressed dissatisfaction with American life during the twenties were numerous intellectuals.

The intellectuals were frustrated by the industrialization, mechanization, and standardization which they felt characterized their country. To the young Harold E. Stearns, America was "pollyanna optimism; prohibition; blue laws; exaggerated reverence for woman"; standardization, and loss of individuality. Many of Stearns's intellectual comrades, including Lewis Mumford, Van Wyck Brooks, and H. W. Van Loon, characterized America in this manner. They felt America was oriented toward material gain, and they pointed out that in a society devoted to technology and physical acquisition, man loses his natural desire for non-material pleasures, including those which come from cultural or from personal creativity. In their place man assumes the characteristics of a machine; he loses his individuality and


5Harold E. Stearns, America and the Young Intellectual (New York, 1921), pp. 19; 154.
his ability to create. His life becomes centered only on producing and spending, and without the stimulation of cultural and aesthetic appreciation, his very existence loses its meaning, and living becomes sheer boredom.\(^6\)

This anxiety toward mechanization was not initiated in the 1920's. Rather, it was partly the frustration which accompanies the realization that the United States was no longer a pastoral refuge from an industrial-burdened world. From its discovery America had represented an escape from mechanization, industrialism, and urban strife. To the European America offered a refuge from the old civilization with its growing powers and complexities. America was a new, peaceful haven; it was a place to seek a "natural" environment; it was a move from the "artificial" to the "natural"; from sophistication toward simplicity.\(^7\) Americans came to share this conception of their country as a pastoral paradise, and certainly the writings of men like Thomas Jefferson indicated that the preference was for the "natural" farmer over the "unnatural" city dweller.

Progress, however, held little respect for the pastoral image. America could not contain itself on the farm. By the 1840's technology was already defiling the rural setting, producing anxiety. Even men who seemed to favor

\(^6\)Stearns, Civilization, p. vii.

technological advancement in these pre-Civil War days manifested "doubt, fear and hostility" when they discussed mechanical progress. The use of power seemed to imply that nature was not the source of man's happiness but rather a hostile force that man had to dominate. Such a conception of nature was hardly consistent with the belief that in America men and nature worked in harmony.

The writers of the 1920's, then, were simply expressing, in a more sophisticated manner, a long developing concern. If America lost its pastoral image, if man succeeded in dominating nature through technology, what happens to man? In considering this problem intellectuals reached some unhappy conclusions. Lewis Mumford concluded that man acquired the characteristics of a machine; his life became so regimented and pre-planned as to become boring. Harold Stearns viewed man as becoming a slave to the habit of making money, not because he needed money but because he knew nothing else; and Hendrick Willem Van Loon noted that Americans became so dependent on their "iron servants" that


they could not rid themselves of "these ungainly companions." Man became the servant, the machine the master. In all it might be concluded that American intellectuals and writers were concerned that in the civilization of which they were a part—a civilization no longer in harmony with nature, no longer adhering to its pastoral image—man was losing his humanity. To live close to nature, to create, to be an individual seemed to be what constituted the ingredients for a natural, enjoyable life. But mechanization was taking these attributes away from man. He was becoming not an individual but a cog in the vast machine of physical production. To live in an industrialized society seemed to be a dehumanizing existence—or was it?

Looking south of their border, Americans were aware that Mexico also was engaged in industrial activity. But the Mexicans were retaining their pastoral image. In fact during the 1920's they were putting more emphasis on the individual than they had in the past, and they were redeveloping their culture within the context of the heritage and culture which


12 Helen Sahler, "Rivera and Mexican Nationalism," The Outlook, January 18, 1928, p. 93. Mexico did not really begin industrializing until World War II; however, by the end of the Diaz regime, Mexico had several large industries, mostly in the hands of foreigners. See Frank Tannenbaum, Peace by Revolution: Mexico after 1910 (New York, 1966), pp. 225-235.
had been handed down since pre-Hispanic pastoral days. The
discovery that the Mexicans were undergoing this Renaissance,
that they were reviving respect for art, music, and litera-
ture and were doing it within the framework of their own
people, their own country, and their own heritage, stimu-
lated the imagination of American writers like Frances
Toor, Ernest Gruening, and Helen Sahler. Mexico, they be-
lieved, was not becoming a nation of conformity, false values,
and mechanized humans.

This Mexican Renaissance was partially the result of
political factors. Mexico's President, Venustiano Carranza
(1917-1920), who evaded certain provisions of the Constitu-
tion of 1917, particularly those dealing with labor and
land, was assassinated by political opponents in 1920. He
was succeeded by the provisional President, Adolpho de la
Huerta and then by the newly-elected President, Alvaro
Obregon.13

Obregon and his colleagues, known as the Northern dynas-
ty, were to remain in office from 1920 to 1934 with the sup-
port of the common people. To maintain this support efforts
had to be made to fulfill the needs of the populace, including
those of the rural areas whose welfare had long been

13 Howard F. Cline, The United States and Mexico, pp. 189-193.
neglected. Part of this program included developing in the Indian a sense of pride for Mexico, and this in turn meant recognizing the pre-Hispanic culture which the Indian had maintained, practically unnoticed, since the Conquest. The trend, then, was to place an emphasis on developing Mexico's aesthetic and intellectual life on a Mexican foundation, for the Northern dynasty realized that in the aesthetic and intellectual spheres they could bring around national integration without endangering national, economic, or political interests. Furthermore, by rejecting the European culture, which had been a hallmark of the Diaz period, and developing the pre-Hispanic culture of the ancient Indians, the dynasty could continue one important goal of the Revolution, namely to reject the Diaz regime.

From this program an historic art movement was born, a movement sponsored largely by government funds. The artists held themselves aloof from foreign theories and were influenced by the legacy of native cultures and the work of preceding generations. These artists—including such renowned figures as Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, and Alfaro Siqueiros—concentrated on the genuine spirit of the

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15Cline, United States and Mexico, pp. 189-193.
people. They used their own country and countrymen as their subjects and depicted the people engaged in the great social events of the day. Their heroes were the workers, the peasants, the hungry, and of course the Indian. Pictured was not always the beautiful but also the ugly, the real, and the secret beauty of grief. Their themes often dealt with poverty, exploitation, and illiteracy, and, despising an economic system which deprived the lower classes of their just rewards, the painters frequently depicted scenes which manifested the ideas of Socialism and Communism. Literature, too, developed these themes, as articles, novels, short stories, and plays discussed the oppressions of the Diaz period and of the battles, struggles, and glories of the Revolution. The Mexican intellectuals were becoming aware that Mexico had within her soil and people a heritage which suited her far better than any transplant. 16

American writers, including Toor, Sahler, and Gruening, were impressed with Mexican efforts to retain a connection with the past. This heritage, after all, remained relatively intact despite four hundred years of European conquest and dominance, and it provided a connection with a less hectic period, a more natural day when man was more in harmony with nature. Mexico was impressive because she could retain contact with antiquity despite modernization.

16 DeVore, Land and Liberty, pp. 312-319.
Helen Sahler, an American painter and sculptor, noted that in Mexico, as in the rest of the world, industrialism was spreading, with its monotony stifling individuality and its machine products killing the crafts. But Mexico was not to fall victim to the machine, Miss Sahler explained, for the country was undergoing "a sudden hectic glow of appreciation for the dying arts." This would serve to give the Mexican pride in his past, his history, and his culture; he would not lose touch with his pastoral heritage. Furthermore, Miss Sahler noted, in an obvious comparison with the United States, Mexico would make the machine the friend of man, not his enemy. The machine would be used to free people from poverty and thus allow them to create. It would not be used to produce "futilities" which created artificial appetites and useless, back-breaking labor. Miss Sahler did not see mechanization as an evil in itself, as long as man tempered his use of it. Mexico was learning this; America had yet to grasp the lesson.

Other writers shared Miss Sahler's envy of the Mexican's ability to avoid the dehumanizing pitfalls of industrialization. The author, editor, journalist, and former rancher Owen P. White was one such writer. The Mexican, White pointed out in 1925, lives in a natural situation where

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17 Sahler, "Riviera," pp. 93, 120.
things like clothes and houses are unimportant, where food and drink are abundant, and where life is "carefree."

These people do as they please— including killing their neighbor— while Americans are burdened with such ugly responsibilities as "having to vote, sweat, worry, think, and live within the law"— responsibilities established by the colonial fathers. The point is, White continued, the Mexican is of an artistic temperament and ability and therefore cannot take unpleasant things seriously; he has to take things easy. He instinctively resists all unnecessary knowledge and develops a wall around himself against civilization and lives the life of an artist. To White this type of life was far superior to the life led by the working, worrying, thinking, regulated American. 18

White's and Sahler's comments demonstrate that the Mexican Revolution and Renaissance served to create an American interest in Mexico as a model for an ideal life in an industrial world. But many Americans, in the twenties, were interested in Mexico as more than a model to emulate. They were interested in her as a country, as a history, and as an economic entity. Many feared the economic implications of Mexican nationalism, and it must not be forgotten that

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economics played a major role in drawing American interest toward Mexico and all Latin America. After all, it was largely economic necessities which prompted politicians like President Coolidge and Secretary Hoover to point to the need for increased Spanish language studies. It was also the realization that economics and political ties were creating the need for further familiarity with Latin America that various universities began, in the late teens and twenties, to establish courses in Latin American studies. Between the years 1914 and 1929, practical considerations, including commercial and political necessities, made it apparent that Americans had to be made more cognizant of Latin America and its people.

These practical considerations tended to overshadow interest in Latin American culture during the twenties, though cultural ties increased as the twenties progressed. Perhaps an indication of the change which occurred within

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19 Cline, United States and Mexico, pp. 205-206; also see Henry Grattan Doyle, "Cultural Relations with Hispanic America," Hispanic American Historical Review, 8 (1928), p. 243.

20 Ibid.

the span of a decade can be seen in comparing two articles, one written in 1916, the other in 1928. In 1916 Florence Finch Kelly, a reviewer for the New York Times "Review of Books" and for The Bookman, discussed the shame of American writers that they failed honestly to understand Mexico. Too few writers, Miss Kelly complained, really went beneath the surface to study the Mexican people. True, many wrote of the beauties of Mexico and of the quaintness of Mexican life, but these observations were often made from a car window or some other superficial spot. Writers who turned their attention to Mexico, Miss Kelly lamented, were usually hasty in their survey, and their work merited little notice.22

Miss Kelly was perhaps a bit unfair to America's authors; certainly such writers as Charles Flandrau, Lincoln Steffens, and John Reed had more than superficial acquaintance with Mexico, and they wrote of the country and its people with understanding. But Miss Kelly was correct in noting that there was still much written about Mexico which was based on prejudice and ignorance. G. L. Morrill, Pastor of the People's Church in Minneapolis, provided an excellent example of this prejudice and ignorance in his 1917 publication The Devil in Mexico. Morrill was quick to note the

By the later 1920's, while the change was not drastic, at least there was increased American interest in and knowledge of Mexico—as well as all Latin America. Henry Grattan Doyle, a Professor of Romance Languages, discussed this in 1928. Increasing numbers of American travelers, exchange students, and professors were going to Mexico, he noted; there was expanded knowledge and appreciation for Latin American music, from tangos to symphonies; art journals and exhibitions showed increased interest in Latin American art; newspapers devoted more space to Latin American affairs, and various journals and bulletins dealing exclusively with the Western Hemisphere began appearing, including the historical journal the *Hispanic American Historical Review* which first appeared in February 1918. While there was a long way to go, Doyle concluded, the nucleus was there for "infinite

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development" in contacts in the fields of cultural and intellec
tual activity.\textsuperscript{24}

In the historical field, during the early decades of the twentieth century, American historians lagged far behind their Mexican counterparts in writing on Mexico, though they surpassed the Europeans in output. The major area to receive attention from the Americans was the diplomatic field where between 1913 and 1932 historians G. L. Rives, W. R. Manning, J. H. Smith, J. F. Rippy, and J. M. Callahan produced the standard works which discussed United States-Mexican relations from the viewpoint of the United States. Interest in political history was also apparent, though H. H. Bancroft's work of the 1880's remained the classic as well as a valuable source of reference. Supplementing Bancroft's production were such works as A. H. Noll's \textit{A Short History of Mexico} (Chicago, 1890); Bancroft's \textit{History of Mexico: A Popular History} (New York, 1914); H. I. Priestly's \textit{The Mexican Nation, A History} (New York, 1923); and H. B. Parkes, \textit{A History of Mexico} (Boston, 1938). With the exception of Bancroft's first effort, these books quickly became obsolete.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{24}Doyle, "Cultural Relations," pp. 244-247.

Herbert Ingram Priestley's *The Mexican Nation, A History*, was published in 1923, and its anti-Spanish bias is illustrative of what several liberal American scholars, including Edward A. Ross and Ernest Gruening, were saying about Mexico during the twenties, in their efforts to condemn Spain for its lack of progressiveness and liberalism. Priestley's book probably took its pro-Anglo-Saxon anti-Spanish theme from the temper of the times. In the years surrounding World War I, there still existed in American thought a belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority, and centering his work on the colonial period to better explain the effects of the Spanish Conquest on Mexican development, Priestley emphasized the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon colonial institutions in America over those of the Spanish in Mexico.

Racially, Priestley noted that the Latin was less aggressive in the struggle against nature. Institutionally, Priestley gave the Spaniards credit for transplanting a valuable culture, but he reached the conclusion that Spain's strict colonial policies, her autocratic, militaristic ideals, her emphasis on personalism, her promotion of class consciousness and friction were among the important factors

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which helped place Mexico behind the United States in political, economic, and social development. Priestley explained that liberal English institutions allowed America to develop a Republican form of government gradually, thereby giving her a head start over Mexico's Republicanism which, hindered by Spanish colonial policies, came abruptly with her independence. Priestley noted also that the spirit and essence of colonial autocracy continued to his time to reign in Mexican political and social organizations.\(^{28}\)

Priestley was to alter his line of thinking in 1928 when, in a review of Ernest Gruening's *Mexico and Its Heritage*, he pointed out that Spain's colonial policy actually had not differed significantly from other colonial powers, including England's; it was Mexico's environment which explained the difference between her development and the United States.\(^{29}\)

In 1929, in his book *The Coming of the White Man: 1492-1848*, Priestley continued to point to the contributions Spain brought to the New World, though he alluded to the incidents of absolutism and benevolent despotism in local government which he felt contrasted sharply with the practices in the English colonies. But he blamed the results of atrophy and


decay on the inability of the Indian masses to absorb the European civilization. In 1923, however, Priestley felt that Spain's colonial policies were a major cause of Mexico's backwardness.

This anti-Spanish, pro-Anglo-Saxon theme was shared by the progressive University of Wisconsin sociologist, Edward A. Ross. In his book The Social Revolution in Mexico, written in 1923, Ross pointed to the Indian population as the prime retarding factor in Mexico, but, he noted, the Spaniards left a legacy of contempt for manual labor, a scorn for the useful, and a dependence on menial services which made most Mexicans "spiritual cripples," incapable of looking after themselves. In the moral vein, the Spanish emphasis on masculinism, with its neglect of the needs and wishes of women, enabled Mexican men to an indulgence in sexual gratification which would be hard to match anywhere else. Ross's solution for Mexico's problems lay in the immigration of Anglo-Saxons; there was little doubt as to where his bias lay.

Ernest Gruening, author of Mexico and Its Heritage (published in 1928), also blamed Mexico's backwardness

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partially upon its Spanish institutions. Gruening believed that militarism, corrupt practices by Mexico's politicians, and the Church were Spanish legacies. He felt they were potent factors which stymied Mexico's democratic, political, social, and economic growth, just as they brought to twentieth century Spain the military dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, with its martial law, summary executions, suppressed liberties, and tyranny.  

Gruening's unfavorable view of Spain's role in Mexican history coincided with contemporary Mexican historiography. The twenties was a period when the Marxist philosophy had strong influence, given the recent success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Consequently there was a trend toward writing history along class lines, a trend which in Mexican historiography, tended to cast the upper-class Spaniards in the role of villains in order to emphasize the contribution of the Indian masses. Mexican historians who followed this approach were termed "Indianists." The Indianists not only worked on the assumption that the Indian population made the major contribution to Mexican culture, but they also reflected the basic orientation that the Revolution was following. The goal of the Indianists was to

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stress the idea that Mexican nationality was the product of Indian heritage, a heritage which had to be preserved and strengthened.\textsuperscript{33} In American writing, some liberal writers, such as Ernest Gruening and Frances Toor, sympathized with this approach.

Gruening graduated from Harvard Medical School, but his interest lay in journalism. He therefore gave up a medical career and became editor of various periodicals during the 1920's, including \textit{La Prensa}, the Spanish language daily published in New York City. A major interest of Gruening's was Latin America where he did much traveling, and although he never joined the extreme radicals, he did actively crusade against United States military intervention and financial exploitation in Central and South America. The Latin country Gruening knew best was Mexico, and his book \textit{Mexico and Its Heritage} expresses his views on that country's history and conditions, a view strikingly similar to the Indianists of Mexico.\textsuperscript{34}

Gruening saw the pre-Hispanic period as a vital one in Mexican history, for he believed that present events in Mexico were shaped by forces derived from the past. The talent, the language, the racial urge, and the traditions of

\textsuperscript{33}Potash, "Historiography of Mexico," p. 401.

\textsuperscript{34}It might be of interest to note that Gruening served as Democratic Governor of Alaska and later as that state's Senator.
the ancient peoples had not been suppressed during the colonial period, Gruening argued, and, he concluded, "race persistence is the dominant fact in Mexico today." As Gruening saw it, Mexico's past and present were of one piece. True, all nations were products of their history, but Mexico's present had not far outdistanced its ancient past.35

Americans, Gruening explained, had to understand this tie of past and present before they could understand Mexico. This understanding would be difficult to achieve. Americans thought in terms of decades, Gruening explained, for their rapid-paced society brought so many changes in a decade that their civilization outraced its history.36 This drive for rapid change and escape from the past was a product of their Western temperament and outlook. The American, a Western European in origin, was active, aggressive, restless, ambitious, and ruthless in what he considered a good cause. He sought outlet in the imposition of his will, be it on the forces of nature or on his fellow man. But the Indian, Gruening wrote, did not share this outlook. The Indian was submissive; his outlook was Oriental: he was calm, courteous, passive, reflective, artistic, and self-sufficient;


36Gruening, Mexico, p. x.
he flowered in artistic creation and in the unfolding of mind and soul. This Oriental outlook and temperament helped explain the Indian's noble heritage in art, architecture, mathematics, and civilization. \(^{37}\) It also helped explain why the Indian did not wish to keep pace with the Westerner. The Indian, like the Oriental, thought not in terms of decades but of centuries. He saw his past and heritage not as a burden to throw off but as a part of him which had to be preserved. The Westerner's attempt, then, to impose his will upon the Indian and to make the Mexican forget his past met with cold rejection. The Revolution, Gruening affirmed, was a manifestation of this rejection— it was not an uprising against a particular abuse or regime. The Westerner had to learn to understand this. \(^{38}\)

Gruening was pleased to see the Mexican reject the Westerner's approach, for he realized that by holding on to his culture and heritage, the Indian played a vital role in preventing the United States from absorbing Mexico. \(^{39}\) Gruening felt this check on America's expanding influence was important, for he did not wish to see the United States


\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., pp. 520-521.
impose its standards, culture, and way of life upon its southern neighbor.  

This attitude was in part conditioned by Gruening's belief that the Mexican possessed a worthy culture and heritage of his own. But apparently Gruening was also swayed by the disillusionment with American idealism which pervaded the twenties. The World War, with its hatred and frustration, created a feeling of revulsion for the Wilsonian ideal that America should be the lamp of democracy, the promoter of constitutional democracy everywhere, and the unselfish economic uplifter of backward countries.  

Gruening evidently felt that America had not yet proven herself worthy of being the guiding light of the world. True, he admitted, the United States had enjoyed many successes, but favorable factors, including a select immigration, an empty and boundless land, and a congenial political concept helped make these successes possible. Also, and most important, the United States chose its way of life; Mexico had her systems thrust upon her, and it was in reaction to this concept of thrust that Gruening and many other liberals of the twenties and thirties wrote.  

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40 Ibid., p. 535.
Gruening expressed disillusionment with American life when he discussed Mexico in relation to the United States. He admitted that Mexico could gain from adopting certain American practices, including its methods of sanitation, irrigation, farming, education, and scientific research, but to allow the complete imposition of American traits could only work to Mexico's detriment. American methods of industrialization, for instance, meant factories and cities like Gary and Pittsburg. American commercialism would mean commercializing the very essences of Mexican life, including her art. Commercialization would destroy this art, Gruening argued, and destroy the worker's joy in making it and thereby its justification, "and to kill these," he wrote, "would be likewise to kill the soul, the spirit, and the raison d'etre of Mexico in the coming evolution of the human race." He further pointed out that to adopt the concept of freedom as practiced in America would mean placing more restrictions upon the Mexican than already existed, for over all the Mexican was a freer individual than the American. In Mexico, Gruening explained, there was an atmosphere of personal independence which was unknown in parts of the United States; a man did more of what he wanted to do and said what he wished to say. He was not affected greatly by convention or social

mores, nor was he concerned about his neighbor's opinion of his actions. Besides, numerous Americans noted that there existed greater intellectual freedom in Mexico than was experienced in the "land 'of liberty' and of professed individualists." After all, nowhere in America would one find murals hostile to the ruling system painted at government expense on government buildings. Along the lines of freedom of expression and tolerance, Gruening concluded, the United States could learn much from Mexico.\textsuperscript{44}

Observing the virtues of Mexican life, Gruening concluded that Mexico should develop without outside interference. Outside interference would mean once again imposition of the Western outlook, while it was the Eastern outlook which had given Mexico its character. What Mexico needed was an appreciation of herself, a knowledge of her worthy pre-Columbian past. She should develop her local crafts and color, for it was in the arts, Gruening felt, in painting, perhaps soon in music, but above all in her emphasis on individual craftsmanship, that Mexico would make its most notable contribution to the Americas and to the world.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{44}Gruening, Mexico, p. 641. This observation gains added interest when one considers the efforts of Diego Rivera, in the 1930's, to attack the capitalist system with a mural on Rockefeller Center. See Chapter 6.

\textsuperscript{45}Ibid., p. 635.
It would be a welcomed and needed contrast to the mechanized, industrialized, commercialized, and standardized life of the United States.

Gruening's arguments provided strong indication that he was influenced by the Indianist movement. The major thrust of his articles was directed at emphasizing the role of the Indians' culture in shaping modern Mexico, and the need to preserve their heritage, and he was careful to develop his arguments at the expense of the Westerner. But there was apparently more influencing Gruening than just the events and ideologies of Mexico. His anti-"thrust" stand seemed to be a product of liberal dissatisfaction with American idealism, but even this might be taken a step further. What Gruening seemed to admire most about the Indian was his Oriental outlook which he characterized as being spiritual, contemplative, and creative—the outlook responsible for producing and enjoying great art. This admiration stood in marked contrast to Gruening's rather unfavorable characterization of the Western outlook which he felt was aggressive, imposing, restless, and ambitious—the outlook responsible for establishing factories, dirty cities, and an art designed not for joy but for profit. Like Lewis Mumford, Harold Stearns, or the other intellectuals of the 1920's who expressed dissatisfaction with American life, Gruening, too, seemed unhappy with the dehumanizing, mechanized civilization
of the United States; he hoped that it would not corrupt a
more innocent, natural nation.

A writer whose point of view closely paralleled
Gruening's was Miss Frances Toor. Miss Toor was the founder
and editor of the magazine Mexican Folkways which first
went to press in 1928. She traveled alone through many re-
 mote regions of Mexico searching for material which provi-
ded insight into Mexican life. She was interested in pre-
serving what was traditionally and indigenously Mexican in
art, as well as encouraging the cause of Mexican artists.
Like Gruening, Miss Toor was deeply impressed by the dura-
bility of the Indian art tradition, and she pointed out that
it was because the Indian kept his folk expression through
the Conquest that he did not degenerate into a mere beast
of burden.46

Frances Toor was impressed with Indian art because she
saw something special about the Indian which made his art so
worthy. She felt there was something instinctive, "almost
automatic" about the Indian's artistic expression, an expres-
sion rooted deep inside his very being; it seemed as if his
hand was guided by the ghosts of the past.47 And what makes

46Frances Toor, "Editor's Foreword," Mexican Folkways,
1 (1925), 3. Also see William Spratling, "Figures in a Mexi-

47Frances Toor, "The Children Artists in the Mexican
this art excellent, Miss Toor concluded, is that "the primitive Indian producer has not made the unfortunate separation between utility and beauty which so greatly distorts our modern life."\textsuperscript{48}

In alluding to the "unfortunate" American trait of separating utility and beauty, Miss Toor was expressing her dissatisfaction with American life. She shared the arguments of writers like Mumford and Gruening that American society emphasized the useful at the expense of other values. To these writers the ideal life was that life in which beauty was as important as utility, for these were the values of the artist. But, they felt, in a mechanized society, like the United States, where utility and commercialization took precedence over beauty, these values simply could not flourish, because art and artistic values were the expression of an internal, natural emotion, an emotion which could not be artificially stimulated by monetary or utilitarian considerations. The true artist was one who understood and savored the natural life, not the material one.

Mumford learned that the artist did not exist in American life by looking at his own society. Toor and Gruening became aware of the absence of the artist in their country by seeing his presence in Mexico. There was something about Mexican life, they concluded, which enabled a man to create, to appreciate art, to love life, to be an artist. It was the

\textsuperscript{48}Toor, Editor's Foreword," p. 3.
environment, the simplicity of existence in Mexico which allowed the artist to exist there and not in the technologically complex United States. This comparison of Mexico and America was a major theme of American writers interested in Mexico; Gruening and Toor were not alone.

The writer who perhaps best expressed the arguments forwarded by those who sought to compare the Mexicans and the Americans as artists and as humans was the British-born novelist, playwright, traveler, and war correspondent Oliver Madox Hueffer. Hueffer agreed that the Mexican understood the art of life far better than the American and was centuries ahead as an artist, and the reasons Hueffer advanced for the Mexican's superiority were similar to the conclusions reached by Gruening, Toor, and others who made the comparison. Hueffer explained that the Mexican lived in a backward and homogeneous country, a country which afforded its tradition to remain untrampled by modernization or on-rushing immigrants. In this tradition, Hueffer explained, lay a love for beauty and an inherent ability for art, both of which were as much a part of the Mexican as breathing. As a result of this feeling for beauty, the Indian saw life as

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49Hueffer spent enough time in London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, and New York to be called a resident of each. During the Mexican Revolution, he traveled in Mexico where he was officially reported executed as an American spy. Actually he had been court-martialed, but the British intervened in time to save his life. The New York Times, June 23, 1931, p. 25.
given to be enjoyed, and through beauty he reached his highest enjoyment.  

Americans, on the other hand, never held a high place in the arts, Hueffer continued, because they held worldly success, not beauty, as the supreme end in life. One need only compare the Indian arranging the wreath of flowers for his burro and the American florist preparing a bill to help one "say it with flowers" to realize the difference. Had the Mexican our Anglo-Saxon enterprise, many of the beautiful churches which decorate Mexican cities would never have been built, or they would have been torn down to make way for an office building. True, Mexico's cities might have been cleaner and more sanitary, but they would also have been more hideous. Had Mexico sacrificed beauty for business and efficiency, she would have earned the admiration of her neighbors and would in the process have turned her quaint cities with their noble churches and palaces into nightmares of skyscrapers, factories, and elevateds. Perhaps the advocates of progress and efficiency might yet have their way. But if so, Hueffer lamented, it would be a bad day for

51 Ibid., p. 793.
52 Ibid., p. 798.
Mexico and a worse day for the rest of the Western Hemisphere, for it would "herald the final victory of materialism in the New World and the permanent disappearance of that religion of beauty which is called art."\(^{53}\)

The tone of Hueffer's argument was that of disgust, disgust with materialism and with skyscrapers, factories, and elevateds. These physical structures were viewed as taking man away from life's true meaning, not bringing him closer to it. This was the same tone of frustration which characterized Mumford's arguments when he voiced his dissatisfaction with America's mechanized civilization. "The principal institutions of the American city," Mumford wrote in 1922, "are merely distractions that take our eyes off the environment, instead of instruments which would help us to mould it creatively a little nearer to human hopes and desires." The major attractions and achievements of our cities, he continued, such as our Broadways, our lights, our hotels, department stores, and Woolworth towers—-are symptoms of our spiritual failure, they are compensatory devices for the elements left out of our industrialized life.\(^{54}\) Gruening and Toor also saw America's spiritual

\(^{53}\)Ibid.

failure, be it in her Garys and Pittsburgs, as Gruening maintained, or in her separation of utility and beauty as Toor described it. American society manifested a superfluous life; on this Mumford, Hueffer, Gruening, and Toor agreed. That this life was not inevitable, Hueffer, Gruening and Toor demonstrated by pointing to Mexico.

Although Gruening, Toor, and Hueffer were representative of a number of writers who were impressed by the Indian Renaissance, not all Americans shared such confidence in the Indian's ability to help Mexico progress. This skeptical group was often influenced by the prevailing belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority, a belief which by 1917 was being "proven" by science. Edward A. Ross, who has already been shown as an advocate of Anglo-Saxon superiority, was one such writer who denounced the role of the Indian in Mexico's future. Ross relied upon the results of intelligence tests to prove that the Indian was less intelligent than the white and most other races except possibly the Negro. The Indian's ignorance, backwardness, and low intelligence, Ross argued, made Mexico a sick society, plagued with diseases from which it could not recover by its own

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55May, American Innocence, p. 348.
56Ross, Social Revolution, p. 11.
efforts. Not even education could help these people who were intellectually incapable of learning. Add to this the contempt for hard, useful work on the part of the upper classes, and it became obvious why Mexico could not keep up with the "onward countries" of the world. The only solution for Mexico, Ross concluded, was the immigration of "a large and capable element," particularly a large immigration of "bona fide American farmers" who, with the help of machines would demonstrate the value of a man doing hard, honest work on his own, without relying on the labor of others.

Although Ross believed in Anglo-Saxon superiority, there existed in his writings, as in the writings of others during this period, a sense of anxiety concerning the future of the Anglo-Saxon race and institutions, and as far as Ross was concerned, the Oriental posed the major threat. A writer who shared this anxiety was the author, editor, and authority on Latin American affairs, Wallace Thompson. Thompson spent much time in Mexico as the news editor of the Mexican Herald in Mexico City (1904-1910), as a

57 Ibid., p. 18.
58 Ibid., p. 13.
59 Ibid., p. 29.
60 See Edward A. Ross, The Old World and the New (New York, 1914); and Edward A. Ross, Standing Room Only? (New York, 1927). Also see May, American Innocence, p. 347.
correspondent for the *Kansas City Journal* (1911-1913), and as United States vice consul in 1919. From his experiences six books and numerous articles emerged dealing with Latin America, particularly Mexico. The bias which ran through these works was not flattering to the peoples of these countries, as Thompson's prejudices obviously ran toward white supremacy. He was also strongly motivated by a concern for the American economy and how the Latin American countries could best enhance it, and he was worried that the culture of the Latin American could be subverted by the yellow races.

When Thompson wrote in the 1920's about Mexico, he reminded his readers, in Jack London fashion, that the Mexicans were not a race but a nation of mixed breeds who adopted the worst traits of the Indian and Spaniard and buried the virtues. Of course, as far as Thompson was concerned, the Indian—the primary strain in the Mexican—did not have that many virtues to begin with; at best he was one step above an animal.\(^6\) Believing this, Thompson found little to admire in the Mexican, either in his character or his culture. In fact, Thompson wrote, the animal inheritances of fear, self-assertion, sex, and greed were developed to the fullest in the Mexican, and since there was "a relative paucity of higher instincts in the Mexican mind," his

\(^{6}\)Wallace Thompson, *Trading with Mexico* (New York, 1921) p. 55.
efforts were devoted almost entirely to satiating these drives.\textsuperscript{62} This emphasis on satiating the natural instincts, the Indians' basic lack of intelligence, and the fact that the Mexican was a product of two races, resulted in the Mexican being a follower, not a leader. In both the upper and lower classes, Thompson noted, there was a search for authority, and this was true in culture as well as in other areas of Mexican life. Lacking leadership and creative ability, the Mexican's music and dress necessarily lacked originality, and their art and literature, while praiseworthy, were imitative.\textsuperscript{63}

These unfortunate traits of the Mexican, Thompson wrote, were "perhaps the most sinister threat against the civilization of the white man" which existed in the world.\textsuperscript{64} To begin with, the conservative and backward Mexican was reluctant to use new implements; as a result, a potential market for American manufacturing was stymied in its development.\textsuperscript{65} But even more serious was the tenacity of the Indian culture. The Spanish had never completely been successful in implanting their culture, the white culture, into the Indian

\textsuperscript{63}Ibid., pp. 104-107; 139-143.
\textsuperscript{64}Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{65}Thompson, \textit{Trading with Mexico}, p. 50.
and Negro masses. Thus the white culture, existing pre-
- cariously in Mexico, could fall back as the yellow race,
which was clamoring for a place in the southern continent,
made its advances. Should this occur, the yellow races
would gain the garden which America needed and wanted. This
threat had to be stopped and could only be done so by making
the Indians "real true wards and supporters of white civil-
ization." This would take education through a system that
would be "the mightiest plan ever devised or even executed
by human minds in the history of the world." Education was
important to Thompson, because he felt that the white man's
culture could not be imposed or painted on; it had to be im-
planted. And it had to be implanted soon, given the threat
of the yellow race.66

It is interesting to note that the traits Thompson
labelled faults were what American intellectuals classified
as virtues, hopefully to be acquired by Americans. Thompson
argued that over-indulgence in the natural instincts caused
the Mexicans to be imitators. The Indian looked inward, not
outward; consequently he was a follower, not a leader. The
intellectuals, on the other hand, felt that Americans were
imitative because they did not indulge enough in satiating
their natural drives. The American concentrated so much on

66Thompson, Mexican Mind, p. 18.
material success that he could not look inward in order to develop the creative spirit. By denying his natural drives, Mumford wrote, man takes on the characteristics of a machine.\textsuperscript{67} Van Wyck Brooks agreed. America's environment tells men to fight for their place in the sun; this hinders the creative and stimulates the competitive impulses of life.\textsuperscript{68} To Thompson lack of aggressive impulses made the Mexicans followers and imitators. To the intellectuals Mumford and Brooks, an abundance of aggressive impulses thwarted the creative spirit.

Thompson often directed his writing toward businessmen, and he tended to share their impatience with the customs and values of the Mexican.\textsuperscript{69} This impatience was largely the product of frustration and lack of understanding. Eva Frank, an American who traveled in Mexico in 1927, analyzed this attitude on the part of businessmen. They were frustrated, she wrote, because the values and incentives which motivated Americans to work, such as owning automobiles, would not work with the Mexican who was content with a simple plot of land and a few animals. Unable to obtain

\textsuperscript{67}\textsuperscript{67} Peroni, "Social Thought," p. 32.


\textsuperscript{69}\textsuperscript{69} Thompson, \textit{Trading with Mexico}, p. 1.
cheap labor then it was difficult for the American to exploit Mexico and this furthered the frustration. 70 What the businessman apparently did not understand was that the difference in incentives was due to differences in heritage and temperament. 71

In explaining the basic differences between the motivations of the Indian and the American, Miss Frank pointed out that neither the pre-Hispanic Indian nor the Spaniard put the worker in an exalted position, as did America's forefathers with their "a penny saved is a penny earned" philosophy. Rather, the ancient Indian and the Spaniard sought to pawn the work off on the lower classes. Work to the Mexican, then, was not viewed as a positive good but as an evil. The Mexican savored life day by day and existed in a stage of culture similar in many ways to the Garden of Eden. While the American, banished from the Garden long ago, worked and played under pressure—the punishment for disobedience—and rationalized the pressure as being a moral good, the Indian rejected this pressure, since it acted upon him as if he were in bondage. The fewer things the Indian had to do the better, then he could follow his own dictates and his own desires. It was this difference in attitude,

71 Ibid., p. 155.
Miss Frank explained, which upset the American. Business to the American was an end in itself, and thus the American became annoyed at the Mexican and looked with impatience and 'irritated superiority' at the entire Mexican nation.\textsuperscript{72}

In her analysis Miss Frank advanced arguments similar to Gruening's, Toor's and Hueffer's. She viewed American society as an artificial creation which was under constant pressure to work and achieve, while the Mexican, in his pastoral and natural setting, was able to gain more from life than simply the pleasures of labor. Of course, Miss Frank pointed out, Mexico would have to make changes, as it emerged from a feudal society to an industrial one, but these changes did not mean it had to give up its past. Rather, if Mexico was to remain free, it had to reject America's individualistic, mechanistic culture, and build upon the foundations of her Aztec-Spanish heritage.\textsuperscript{73}

The issue of heritage was an important one. A writer with Thompson's economic and racial bias denounced the Mexican heritage because it was viewed as a burden to progress. But to writers like Gruening, Toor, Hueffer, and Frank, Mexico's past, with its ties to nature and its apparent simplicity, seemed to promise Mexico a creative and

\textsuperscript{72}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 156.

\textsuperscript{73}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 157.
happy future. One reason these writers supported Mexico's Renaissance was that they understood Mexico's pride in her past, a pride they could not feel for their own. America's heritage, with its history of pioneering and striving, seemed to produce an unhappy and non-creative life, and it was difficult to create a sense of pride in this. The hostile attitude toward this heritage was shared by other writers, including the intellectuals Van Wyck Brooks and Harold Stearns. Brooks, in his 1922 essay "The Literary Life," pointed out that our pioneering heritage, with its burdens of isolation, nervous strain, and excessive work, contributed to the impotence of our creative spirit. Stearns agreed. Our pioneering motto, he pointed out, was "Be active, be bold, and above all, work." Following this motto, there was no time for the distractions of art or the amenities of literature. Our pioneering spirit crimped our cultural efforts then, and that spirit has remained with us.

It was in protest to a civilization which crimped the creative spirit that the writers under consideration wrote, and they were united by one basic interest, the interest in art. This interest apparently stemmed largely from the notion that only an artist could really know the satisfactions

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75 Stearns, "Intellectual Life," pp. 138-140.
which life held, but these satisfactions could never be realized in the United States, since the United States lacked the heritage, the ingredients, and the temperament necessary for artistic development. America, to these writers, was developing in an artificial direction; it was pulling away from nature; it was diverging from its pastoral, natural image.

The problem was, these writers felt, Americans were too active, their pace was too fast to develop the creative instincts or even to develop a taste for art. This was partly the result of events in the past. Formerly Western Europeans, Americans came from an industrialized civilization which had pulled away from the sod. They came to a new continent which they wanted to develop quickly, and thus they did not take time to develop a love for their new soil. Yet it is from a love for the soil that art develops. Mexico's achievement in art and in art appreciation was explained largely by her adherence to the pastoral image, her adherence to the natural life, her love for the soil. The divergence in attitudes toward the soil helped explain the difference between the Mexican's love for art and the American's indifference.

This argument was probably a manifestation of the remnants of the Western Hemisphere idea and the frustration which Americans shared over losing their pastoral image.
There existed in the Western Hemisphere, it was believed, an environment far superior to the industrial environment of the Eastern Hemisphere. By adhering to the soil of this hemisphere, the Mexicans became great artists. By rejecting the soil and adhering instead to the European traditions of acquisition and power, the Americans lost their artistic abilities.

Walter Pach and William Spratling, both American painters and art critics, shared this view, as did Edgar L. Hewett, a professor of Archeology from San Diego. In an essay published in 1922 Pach pointed out that as conquerors Americans had neither the racial nor historical foundation upon which to build an art. Their only hope was to keep alive the art traditions of Europe, but the distance from Europe and the need to develop a new continent caused Americans to lose interest in art, an interest which actually never found a propitious soil among the British forebears. And not only was it their heritage but their environment cramped artistic development. In Europe, for instance, an old church or house or some object or print on a wall, a history of interesting costumes, these were enough to stimulate a person of artistic talent. But America, Pach noted, had none of these things; most Americans had to receive their stimulation from books.76

In Mexico, Pach noted in 1923, things were different. The Mexican did not have to go to books for his artistic stimulation. Despite the Conquest, despite changes in government, despite changes in land ownership, the Mexicans were able to maintain the character of their popular art because, unlike the Americans, they maintained access to the soil. True, Spain left its mark on Mexican art, as seen in the architecture and in the works of Mexican artists and sculptors who were influenced by European ideas. But adherence to the soil and the fact that Mexico remained an Indian country—even the European was almost completely assimilated—made Mexico as different from the United States—which became European—as any Asiatic country would be. One need only look at the popular arts, the pottery, glassware, baskets, furniture, and toys to realize how much Mexico's past and isolation meant to her. Found in Mexico were the things sought in Japan before she became industrialized and the things found in Europe of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In no other country were past and present so closely linked as in Mexico. The link between past and present was important to Pach because this link proved that the Mexican had been successful in rejecting Europe's industrial influence; the link also meant that the soil was as

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77 Walter Pach, "The Popular Arts of Mexico," The Freeman, January 13, 1923, pp. 496-497.
important to the Mexican in the present as in his history, and it was the soil which stimulated art.

When Pach lauded the soil for its stimulating qualities, he was not limiting his praise to Mexican soil; rather, he was discussing American soil. It was all America, which was different from Europe, not just Mexico. But whereas Mexico retained her Indian heritage and absorbed the foreigner, the United States became Europeanized. This explains the difference between the two countries. The soil retained its stimulating qualities, but the Europeanized American was too busy to notice.

William Spratling, writing in 1927, shared this awe for the art-inspiring qualities of the American soil. The Spaniards brought with them the impulses of the Renaissance and the Gothic, he wrote, but once the actual construction of the architectural models were put into the hands of the natives, they implanted in these structures the spirit of the Indian, "a quality very rich in beauty, a little savage, and even in some instances bearing the unmistakable outward symbolism developed by this deeply mysterious race." The domes of Spain, for example, became something new, something

78Ibid., p. 496.

79Ibid.

closer to the earth, something which expressed a deep personal passion. Perhaps, Spratling noted, it was something from the rhythms of the mountains, a reference, perhaps, to the special qualities of American environment.

This belief in the special quality of the American environment and soil provided, of course, the basis for the pastoral image and the Western Hemisphere idea. These in turn provided the foundations for the arguments of most of the writers under consideration, and perhaps Edgar L. Hewett summed them up best.

Hewett, an anthropologist who had traveled and studied in Mexico, pointed out in 1922 that in Europe an advanced material civilization quickly developed, resulting from the early discovery and utilization of metals and the mastery of forces constructive and destructive. The consequence of this civilization, Hewett wrote, was constant struggle for subsistence as well as conflict of interest over trade routes, open seas, economic advantages, and for strategic positions of defense. These conflicts produced the "seething caldron of warring nations that is Europe today." The conflicts also were manifestations of a people which enjoyed, or at least maintained, the pinnacle of material supremacy.

81 Ibid.

While Europe was engaged in this activity, Hewett con-
tinued, America kept the more tranquil ways of the Stone
Age. America was a vast, isolated land, and it invited an
expansive culture. It did not have the problems of over-
population, or conflicts between tribes that existed else-
where. Everywhere conditions of nature stimulated the
imagination, induced reverent contemplation, and bound men
to their soil. There was not the intense struggle or con-
licts of interest which centered thought upon material
things and intensified the practical activities. Thus the
racial mind in America was developed equal to any in the
world, but it was developed in a spiritual rather than a
material way.\textsuperscript{83} While Europeans were the people of vast
material achievements and great mechanical inventions, the
Orientals and Indian races developed "great religious concep-
tions and high esthetic values."\textsuperscript{84} The result was that
from the standpoint of achievements other than material,
America was a continent of distinguished culture while
Europe was barbarian, and while the art of the earliest
Americans was the product of a Stone Age, the material civi-
lizations of today, with all their modern advances, could

\textsuperscript{83}Ibid., pp. 289-290.

\textsuperscript{84}Ibid., p. 290.
perhaps imitate but could never reproduce the spirit of their art. \(^{85}\)

Given the differences between Europe and the Western Hemisphere, which writers such as Hewett noted, the question naturally arose, what happened to the United States? The answer obviously lay in the fact that it had been too strongly influenced by the European materialistic model, it had let go of its pastoral and natural heritage. But the Mexican had rejected this influence and had kept his allegiance to his heritage, despite the Conquest and the adverse forces working on him. Anita Brenner, a Mexican born of an American father, was perhaps the most recognized authority on this subject of the tenacity of the Indian culture through the periods of strong European influence. \(^{86}\)

In 1926 Miss Brenner wrote an article for *The Nation* in which she pointed out that the Indian had never become a European because he had never left his heritage. The best example of this, Miss Brenner explained, was found in the realm of religion. Outwardly the Indian was Catholic, but a close observation of Indian religious practices showed that the Indian had really just adapted Catholic ways to fit

\(^{85}\) Ibid., p. 293.

his own religion. The Indian now worshipped wind and rain saints instead of gods. 87

Miss Brenner developed her thesis further in a book entitled *Idols Behind Altars* which she published in 1929. It was the difference in thought and temperament, she wrote, which has caused the Indian to reject the European, to ignore him, and to repudiate the system of thought which was different from his. Mexico had a natural tendency to reject things which were false and inconsistent with its traditions. It rejected "the impositions and artificial transplantations." Yet, on the other hand, Mexico accepted the real things for which there was a need or sympathy, and what she accepted was eventually assimilated into native mold, including religion and people. 88 What Miss Brenner admired about Mexico was its basic honesty. It did not accept artificial values or traditions inconsistent with its heritage. Its people understood their land because they were a part of it and did not attempt to reject it. The land was their religion, and it was their religion which gave them their integrity and kept them in contact with their ancestors. Because the Mexican was honest and knew life, he was an artist


with an artist's integrity. He could be judged by no other standards than those of an artist. Art was organically a part of his life.  

To the American writer of the 1920's interested in Mexico from a cultural standpoint, Mexican art was something to be admired. These writers did not tend to laud the style of the arts, nor were they especially concerned with the subject matter. (Those Americans interested in Mexican politics were more interested in this aspect of Mexican art.) What they admired about the Mexican's artistry was its honesty and sincerity, and they were impressed by the joy which the artist manifested when he indulged in creation. This fascination with Mexican art, however, was more a reaction to conditions at home than a respect for Mexican creativity. By alluding to the qualities of Mexican art, the writer could express his discontent with what he felt were the artificial values of American life. Art was important to these writers because art represented honesty; if a nation could not produce good art, it obviously was not in tune with itself.

That America was not in tune with itself was obvious to these writers. The United States had become too mechanically oriented. The creative capacities of the Americans had been

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89 Ibid., p. 31.
90 See Chapter IV.
subdued by the artificial drives of acquisition and by the boring routine of a machine oriented life. Man was losing his humanity in this mechanized culture. He was losing his understanding of the meaning of life, the meaning of which had been clear when America was a pastoral refuge from the industrialized Europe.

The Mexican, however, had escaped this dilemma. His country was beginning to industrialize, but by refusing to give up his pastoral heritage, he kept his hold on humanity. The Western Hemisphere still retained its pastoral image. The United States had violated this image by adopting the Eastern Hemisphere's values of industrialization. That Mexico had maintained the image made it a nation to respect and to emulate.
Chapter IV
Mexico and the New World Culture
1920-1929

General Alvaro Obregon, a former mechanic and farmer, entered military service in 1912 and fought on the sides of Madero and later Carranza. Although Carranza advanced Obregon to the rank of General in April 1915, it was Obregon who led the successful revolt against Carranza in April 1920 and then was elected President himself on December 1, 1920. He remained in office until 1924 when he was succeeded by Plutarco Elias Calles, a man of his own choosing. In 1928 Obregon was re-elected but was assassinated by a religious fanatic on July 17, 1928. His followers remained in office, however, until 1934. While in office, Obregon felt secure enough to allow freedom of speech and press, and members of his Congress enjoyed complete freedom of expression.\(^1\) Intelligent, practical, and hard-headed, Obregon meant to restore peace and prosperity and make the Revolution respectable.\(^2\)


Respectability meant moderation. So while labor made gains and the peasants were provided with a favorable land policy, Obregon's program was more moderate than radicals advocated. Even in the realm of expropriating foreign owned lands and returning them to the people—a measure which Obregon pushed to incorporate into the Constitution of 1917—the practice fell short of initial expectations, and many foreigners and large landholders maintained control over their holdings.

Though moderate in most reforms, Obregon placed much emphasis on advancing public education. With the help of his Minister of Education, Jose Vasconcelos, a man who believed that the schools should be for adults as well as children, he set up new secular schools. Both practical and traditional education were stressed. The new learning came to embrace vocational training and emphasized the importance of personal health. Folklore and Indian traditions were revived, and native art was promoted. It would be a long time before the educational system was adequate, but corrective steps were made.

It was under Obregon's administration also that

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5De Vore, Land and Liberty, pp. 211-213.
Mexico's latent artistic genius developed into a renaissance. Mexican artists rebelled against the bourgeois art of the Diaz period, and for inspiration they turned instead to the sculpture and wall paintings of the pre-Hispanic civilizations and to the art of the present as expressed on cantina walls. The artists' goals included teaching the Mexican people the blessings of the New Order and interpreting history to suit the needs of the Revolution.6

The leading Mexican painter was Diego Rivera. Rivera returned to Mexico in 1921 after spending thirteen years studying and working in Europe. As he observed the results of the Revolution, he hoped to contribute to its cause and felt he could best do so by speaking to the people through painting.7 His first major project was to convince the Minister of Education, Vasconcelos, to grant him permission to cover the walls of a prominent public building with a work in fresco, an art form used by the Indians on their pyramids over a thousand years earlier. His request was honored, and, at the end of 1922, the wall in the auditorium of the National Preparatory School at the University of Mexico was completed. Much controversy erupted in Mexico over the work, but the painting helped signal the renaissance.

6Simpson, Many Mexicos, p. 281.

Painters now united around Rivera to begin their battle for a new art form in Mexico—the mural, and they began clamoring for government walls on which they could promote the Revolution's message.  

Reflecting the mood of the Revolution, Rivera and fellow artists formed the Revolutionary Union of Technical Workers, Painters, Sculptors, and Allied Trades and affiliated themselves with the Communist Party. The Party itself was losing its political support in Mexico, and the Union soon became the Party's last bastion. The Union's purpose was to help transform the world through art and to bring art down to the people. The members also dedicated themselves to advancing the class struggle, as well as promoting the interests of the various allied crafts. Rivera was looked upon as the Union's leader, though the painter David Alfaro Siqueiros was the major promoter. The Union's career was brief and tempestuous. While the proletarian solidarity remained on the surface, rivalry and jealousy cut deeply, particularly over the issue of who got what wall and how many. Yet, if nothing else, the Union's formation served to draw the attention of many Americans to Mexican art.

Liberal writers in the United States, including Carleton Beals, John Dos Passos, Bertram D. Wolfe, and William

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8 Ibid., pp. 134-144.
9 Ibid., pp. 150-164.
Spratling were particularly interested in the Union and the talent which formed it. During the twenties American intellectuals experienced a general dissatisfaction with the values and traditions of the middle and upper classes. It was perhaps natural, then, that the decade found many intellectuals turning to Communism or at least sympathizing with its proletarian aims. When the Mexican artists formed a union and aligned themselves with the International, these dissatisfied American intellectuals were quick to recognize it. The Union also represented great talent which drew its inspiration from native sources. It was apparent that the Mexican artists were proud of their non-industrialized people and were determined to cast aside the influences of capitalistic oriented foreigners. These goals fit well with the attitudes of the American intellectual.

Carleton Beals was one of the most prolific of the liberal writers interested in Mexico. A University of California graduate with a Masters from Columbia University, Beals did advanced study at the University of Madrid (1920), the University of Rome (1922), and the University of Mexico (1923). He first journeyed to Mexico in 1918 where for two


years he lived with the people, taught in their schools, serving as principal of the American High School in Mexico City from 1919 to 1920. He even served as an instructor to President Carranza's staff. These experiences, as well as later visits to Mexico, served as the basis for numerous books and articles.

Beals admired Mexico primarily because it was an Indian country. He saw in Indian life a happier and more natural existence than that experienced in more industrialized civilizations. He regretted the foreign influences which Spain, the United States, and other powers imposed upon Mexico, and he hoped to see these influences tempered by a revival of interest and respect for the pre-Hispanic past. The Union members, with their efforts to promote the renaissance, seemed to provide the tempering force needed. The painters were particularly important, for they enabled the people to always remember their heritage. The "powerful paintings" of Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco, Beals noted, would always be visible on the walls to express the trials and tribulations of the natives "in a truly national art."^12

Beals was also impressed with Mexican literature, primarily because it tore away from the European current and

centered on Mexico. This literature proved, Beals wrote, that Mexico had become "important enough, dramatic enough, terrible enough, for its writers to seek native themes, native characters, native styles, and tell the story in a native way." Of course, the language was still an amalgamation of Indian dialects, foreign intrusions, and Castillian. Yet for Beals the Mexican novel had always been more native, always more rooted in local soil than other kinds of writing. 13

It was painting, however, that struck Beals as the most important medium, and Rivera, he felt, was Mexico's best painter. Rivera loved the common crowds; so did Beals. 14 Then, too, Beals was attracted by Rivera's massive frescoes, his narrative style which reached the simple man, and his Communist philosophy. But Rivera's most impressive trait was that he was motivated by Mexico in revolution, a Mexico tortuously discovering itself at the cost of brutality, bloodshed, and thwarted ideals. Though Rivera was influenced by European Communism, which gave him his sympathy with the struggling underdogs, his interpretations were fundamentally quite native—neo-Aztecan. 15 It was primarily Rivera's

14 Ibid., p. 246.
15 Ibid., p. 282.
Mexicanism—his devotion to things Indian, things Mexican—which earned him Beals' admiration.

Since Rivera appreciated the Mexican spirit, American writers appreciated him. Rivera was of the people and worked for them. He snubbed the bourgeoisie and their values, while he glorified the needs of the masses. Never one to ask for excessive compensation, Rivera's Communist philosophy was judged to be not a product of Europe but a product of the man.

John Dos Passos, considered one of America's leading radical novelists, admired Rivera for these proletarian traits. Dos Passos recorded his impressions of Rivera's work in 1927, after seeing the mural at the Court of the Secretaria of Public Education. This was real painting, Dos Passos noted; it showed people in action; it was not the still life "stuff" of Cezanne, Renoir, or Picasso which draped the galleries of New York and that "a man's afraid to be seen looking at." Perhaps most important, it was not produced for the wealthy to store in their attics. It was a picture of the people, for the people, placed where all could see. 16

An admirer of Mexico's heritage and a sympathizer with

Communism, Dos Passos lauded the goals of Rivera's Union, in part because it was aligned with the International and in part because its purpose was to approach the art of Mexican antiquity while rejecting the art of the bourgeois epoch. The Union was important, Dos Passos wrote, for in a land of illiterate people, the Revolution's message had to be painted on the wall; it was the Union's artists who explained the Revolution to the masses. Unfortunately there was too much opposition from those who feared the hammer and sickle, particularly among upper-class students, intellectuals, newspapers, and the government, and the Union was forced to disband. But even with the Union's passing, the important work had been accomplished. In our day, Dos Passos wrote, it was proven that graphic art was possible. In America there was nothing to compare.  

Bertram D. Wolfe, who would write a biography of Rivera in the 1930's, had already joined the painter's admirers in the twenties. Wolfe was born in New York City and received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the City College of New York in 1916. After teaching English in a Brooklyn high school for a year, he traveled to Mexico City. Here he served as an English teacher from 1922-1925; while also attending the University of Mexico where he received a

\[17\text{Ibid.}\]
Masters degree. He returned to New York in 1925 and
served as director of the Workers School. Wolfe lauded
Rivera's Union for supplying badly needed unity to the Revo-
lution, and he applauded its rejection of upper and middle
class values. Rivera, Wolfe wrote, believed the bourgeoi-
sie's taste was "execrable," and he and his Union refused to
paint for them despite their pay but sought to paint for
the people and never accept more than a laborer's wage.

William Spratling, an American art critic, silversmith,
and writer who spent nearly thirty years in Mexico, also
admired the Union members for their singular contribution
and welcomed their growing emphasis on native artistic
ability and their rejection of foreign influence.

Rivera's actions won plaudits from these American
writers, since his repudiation of bourgeois values rein-
forced the prevalent mood of American intellectuals toward
bourgeois life in general. Where a goal of the Mexican
intellectual was to create a sense of pride within the
people for their past, in America the trend was in the
opposite direction. America in the teens and twenties was
going through a period of soul searching. Prewar stability
and convention came under attack, and the 1920's were marked

19 William P. Spratling, "Some Impressions of Mexico,
by intellectual disrespect for tradition and middle class platitudes. The customs and manners of the bourgeoisie were criticized by disinherited sons and daughters of the middle class who condemned the fact that the acquisition of money had become a religion and a morality.\textsuperscript{20} As indicated in the previous chapter, the most abused targets were the effects of industrialism upon America's culture and psychology and the obsessive societal emphasis upon commercial life and material possessions. To the intellectual these unfortunate aspects of American life were the obvious product of a Puritan, pioneering past.

America's Puritan heritage was attacked since such an assault provided for many writers a justification of their rebellion against convention. It gave the young critics great satisfaction to see in the American past continuous evidence of absurdity or to convince themselves that the past was responsible for the most unpleasant aspects of life in the present.\textsuperscript{21} The new Freudian psychology also supplied tools to shape their criticisms. The concept of "repression" was an important contribution to their thought, for the young critics saw many restrictions in American life. Repression to them stood for any social formula that

\textsuperscript{20}Hoffman, \textit{The Twenties}, pp. 32-33; 359-360.
\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 156.
prevented the natural expression of life impulses. Thus any force, societal or moral, which prevented a full, wholesome, primitive expression of natural impulses was considered evil, and there appeared to be many such forces in America's society.\textsuperscript{22}

Perhaps the most respected and influential of the young critics was Van Wyck Brooks. In his first major work, \textit{America's Coming of Age}, which he published in 1915, Brooks condemned American society for its lack of personality, its emphasis on acquisition, and its hostility to men of talent. America, Brooks complained, was a business-oriented civilization, this orientation being a product of its Puritanical past. Puritanism sacrificed all the graces and realities of life for the single goal of acquisition; it deprived them of the ability to appreciate life's warmth and pleasures. Because of Puritanism, Americans held in contempt all emotion except the experience of material gain.\textsuperscript{23}

Brooks, however, was not completely pessimistic. He felt that an enlightened future lay in the hands of America's writers who he hoped would form an academy and lead a great society. But apparently Brooks underestimated his influence. The main current of American literature adopted his findings

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., pp. 356-357.

\textsuperscript{23}Van Wyck Brooks, \textit{America's Coming of Age} (New York, 1915), pp. 8-35.
and methods completely and uncritically. American writers, accepting his thesis that Americans were inferior and their culture barren, base, and hostile to literature, came to constitute themselves a superior caste, and they repudiated American life. The result was an exhaustive study of America's industrial wealth and its spiritual poverty by such influential writers as Waldo Frank and Lewis Mumford. These writers were convinced that America's want of a civilization lay in her pioneer, Puritan heritage. They and others spread the word that Americans were a Puritanical, materialistic, acquisitive people, inhibited in emotion, uniform in thought, and mediocre, dull, dreary, and base.

The young Waldo Frank was a close associate of Brooks' and one much influenced by his outlook. Frank was born into a Jewish middle class family in New York. His father, a successful lawyer, often traveled to Europe on business, and young Waldo accompanied him on several occasions. The youngest of four children, Frank rebelled against most of the family's values, and he became "aggressively iconoclastic" in politics, religion, and art. This rebellious spirit

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25Ibid., p. 45.
perhaps explains his later dissatisfaction with bourgeois life. Frank was educated in New York public schools and received his college degrees from Yale, being made an honorary fellow and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. After college Frank toured Europe. During his travels he reached the conclusion that the Western World was deteriorating. Europe, once the center of a great Christian spirit, was waning into a materialistic civilization, one devoid of a worthy culture. However, Frank held an optimistic belief in a cyclical history. Out of death comes birth; out of the ashes of Europe a new culture-body would arise, and the soil of the New World would be its cradle. American society contained the materials, as yet inarticulate, which would congeal into a new culture-body. Before these materials could be made articulate, however, America had to reach a state of self-consciousness, and it was the job of the American writer to bring this state about. Probably influenced by Brooks in this regard, Frank joined Brooks in founding the \textit{Seven Arts} magazine in 1916, in part to provide encouragement for the growth of an indigenous American literature.\textsuperscript{27}

In his book, \textit{Our America}, which he published in 1919, Frank developed Brooks' thesis that the Puritan was responsible for the acquisitive nature of American life. The

\textsuperscript{27}Robert L. Perry, \textit{The Shared Vision of Waldo Frank and Hart Crane} (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1966), pp. 5-9.
Puritans, Frank wrote, were an intense people who came to an intense land, a land more vivid and vibrant than temperate Europe. They came to America because the spiritual energy of the Middle Ages had declined and was seeping into channels of material growth. They brought this European materialistic culture with them and established their colonies with the primary purpose of acquiring wealth. Even their God became the protector of the liberty to make money. As they struggled with nature along the frontier, they sublimated their natural, creative, and spiritual impulses, perverting these energies into a passion for wealth. Soon the machine became their god and master, and their soul became exteriorized. The result was "a sagging, uncreative world," evidence of a civilization which persisted by denying experience and mechanizing desire. Life had been drained away from these Puritan people; they were stripped for material possession and thus were stripped of the capacity to enjoy life.

Centuries earlier the Indian had learned to exist in America. He developed a passionate restraint, which this vivid life forced him to acquire. The white man, unable to develop this restraint, reverted to a rough mode of life

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28 Waldo Frank, Our America (New York, 1919), pp. 5-10; 13-14.
29 Ibid., pp. 45; 149.
long since overlaid in Europe. Vivid America caused the intense Puritan to become intenser; he could not adopt the very real culture of the Indian.  

Frank admired the ancient Indian culture, for he saw in it a favorable contrast to the materialistic culture of the white man. Frank observed that nature presided over the Indians' life, as they sought to live in harmony with their surroundings. They were uncorrupted and knew neither individual poverty nor wealth; the entire tribe was either rich or poor. There were no politics nor was there dynastic or industrial intrigue, except possibly on the personal level. The Indian's search for happiness was his search for beauty, and this search was evident in all he did, be it in his works, his dwelling, his art, his dress, or his person. It was always evident as he strove to achieve an inner harmony with the living world. The shame was that the white man came with his material prowess, for his presence caused the Indian to fade away.  

In Our America Frank discussed his impressions of Pueblo, Colorado, where he viewed the steel mills and "a dozen shafts belch smoke into the skies." The mills, Frank observed, were products of the white man who refused to learn of beauty from the Indian. But there were areas in

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30 Ibid., pp. 5-6; 13-14; 18.
this part of the country—a part which once belonged to Mexico—where beauty still existed. These areas were the domains of the Mexicans. Unlike the white man, the Mexican learned from the Indians, and much of what was beautiful in Mexican life had its source in the ancient Indian culture. Like the Indian, the Mexican was to be admired, for he too was in tune with nature. The Mexican became part of his soil and drew pleasure and beauty from it. His hut, in Pueblo, suggested that a man had settled down and sought happiness in harmony with his surroundings; sought life by cultivation rather than exploitation. The Mexican was articulate; he dwelt with his soil and cultivated his spirit in it.32

The white man, the pioneer, however, was constantly on the move. His home in Colorado, unlike the Mexicans', suggested impermanence, indifference to nature, absorption in other matters. The shame was that the white man triumphed and cowed the Mexican, just as he had the Indian. Since the stronger white man did not respect the Mexican, the Mexican did not respect himself. "The Mexican in the United States sank like one who has lost his faith and given up his pride."33

32 Ibid., pp. 94-96.
33 Ibid., p. 95.
Frank equated Puritanism with industrial capitalism which he regarded as part of the European or Old World heritage. As the Puritan-Capitalist extended his sway over both hemispheres, he either killed off the indigenous population or forced him to submit. Yet, Frank wrote in 1930, the Capitalist Industrialist could be confronted. Those men open to the spirit of the New World's message had a common enemy and a common goal upon which they could unite. The enemy was the business community which controlled relations between the respective countries; the goal was to achieve leadership in the New World. But unless the intellectuals united, they would continue to be the pawns of their adversary.34

Frank, after touring South America for six months in 1929, decided that the major obstacle to an effective alliance was a lack of understanding among the intellectual groups of the United States and Hispanic America. They had to understand in what realms each group could contribute to the other. The United States, due to a headstart in development, was superior to Hispano-America in the realm of political, economic, and national formations. It could help the Latins develop and mobilize their forces and to establish their communications so they could develop the

united Hispano-American body which their spirit called for. Yet in respect of vision, of cultural values, of personal sensibilities, of aesthetic expression, and of a common American ideal, the Latin Americans, through their intellectuals, were better able to develop the new culture which would replace the Old World culture of the Puritan.  

Frank emphasized the importance of the Latin American intelligensia, for apparently he felt it was through them that the New World culture would emerge. He believed the intelligensia of the United States was too wrapped up in the "superstitious dogmatisms of science" and had succumbed to the superficial comforts of industrial expansion. They were too economic in their orientation to be open to the influences of the New World. The Latins, on the other hand, also read modern science, but they held what America's intellectuals had lost, the sense and will toward wholeness. They inherited the spirit, energy, and tradition which, in a different form, created Christian Europe. They had a religion, a modern religion, an American religion. They believed in man not as an economic factor but in man the creator, the lover, the singer, "the son of the divinity within himself." They held a strong devotion to the American tradition of establishing a true new world. They realized that the universal menace was the uncontrolled dictatorship of

35Ibid.
economic forces, and they wished to establish a world where man was master and where he could create an order based on the needs of his own spirit, rather than on the blind forces of material production.36

To achieve this world, Frank continued, the Latin intellectuals had to attain a position of leadership, but two obstacles blocked their path. The problems inherent within Latin America—the geographical barriers, the cultural separateness of the Indians, and the illiteracy and economic backwardness of the masses—provided one obstacle. The second was the growing interference of American money and, when necessary, Marines, in the internal affairs of the Latin countries. American financiers, Frank pointed out, placed in power tyrants who were not from the people. The types of men who became these tyrants existed everywhere; in the United States they were referred to as "gunmen, bootleggers, racketeers, low-grade politicians." Such leaders introduced an alien element into the Latin nations, an element with which the people, including the intellectuals, were helpless to cope. American business was thus able to control Latin America, and it could do so since it maintained unchallenged mastery within its own borders.37

36Ibid., pp. 583-589.
37Ibid., p. 585.
Thus the bond among intellectuals. The Latin American intelligensia was not a ruling class but served the order of business. They were impotent against those American capitalistic forces which could destroy them and reduce the people to economic slaves. The intellgensia of the United States was in a similar situation. They too felt themselves to be "degraded pawns in the processes of American life." The two groups had to unite to supplant the business community as the ruling power. True, business played an important role in building up a world, but it lacked the equipment to rule. The intelligensia of the Americas need determine what the united American body would be—what kinds of men would make it and control it. It was up to "the men of values" working together to prevent the "blind energies of business (which work together indeed)" from making the body of America "the body of a death."\(^{38}\)

Frank's argument that the intellectuals had to unite against the business community was partly a manifestation of the fear shared by intellectuals like Van Wyck Brooks and Herbert Croly that the intellectual was losing his status in an industrialized society and was no longer appreciated. The Puritan emphasis on materialism was threatening once again to do to the intellectual in the New World what it had

\(^{38}\)Ibid., p. 586.
done in the Old, namely relegate him to a subservient position. If the intellectual wanted to achieve leadership he had to unite to thwart the capitalist. Frank believed the initial check should come over the issue of imperialism, for here the American intellectual could gain the support of his Latin neighbors. Herbert Croly also felt that the business community should be confronted over the issue of imperialism, though his reasoning was slightly different.

In common with Brooks and Frank, Croly was upset by the dilemma of the artist or intellectual in an industrial society. He saw intellectuals becoming mere specialists, mere cogs in an industrial machine. But he felt they could play a more positive role. Maintaining a view of civilization similar to Waldo Frank's, Croly discerned that the business community was an extension of the old European materialist civilization. The Western Hemisphere was the possible birthplace of a new culture, but before that culture could emerge, the business world had to be restrained. Consequently, Croly was concerned with the issue of economic exploitation, and he believed that the Progressives should restrain the business community from intervening in the affairs of other American countries, particularly Mexico.

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Yet the only manner that such interference could be stopped was through the influence of "humane scruples." These scruples had to be cultivated, Croly argued, and this could perhaps be accomplished by making known to the American people the difference between the circumstances and needs of Mexicans and Americans.40

Americans were more fortunate in their development than the Mexicans, Croly pointed out in 1927. The Americans successfully threw off the vestiges of the Old World and set out to develop themselves as free individuals. After their Revolution they set out to cultivate "newer-worldliness;" they developed their lands, divided their resources, expanded their industry and commerce, and accumulated capital. They associated their newer-worldliness with the new era of scientific discovery and felt that now people could beneficially control their own destiny. The Mexicans, however, were neither so fortunate nor so hopeful. Kept under Spain's close reign, they were never really able to shake off the influence of the old country. Their soil, though rich, was not developed for the general benefit. The peons were suppressed and treated as beasts of burden, and after their early nineteenth century Revolution, the Mexicans continued

in dispossession and subjugation. 41

The Revolution, however, did gain for the peons a degree of freedom and the right to rebel, and rebel they did when they felt exploited. Beginning around 1910, Croly wrote, the new Mexican governments, fearing rebellions, were forced to work to improve the peon's economic and social position; as a result, the new leaders built a popular interest in government. The peons were escaping their domestic oppressors. 42

Foreign loans, however, curbed many of these gains. Mexico could pay back her debts only by exporting goods which she could obtain in sufficient quantities, namely raw or crude products. Thus the capital would not be used to develop factories but would drift into such enterprises as mines which employed unskilled labor at low wages. Mexico, Croly argued, had to limit this invasion of American capital, capital which was indifferent to her national interests.

41 Ibid., pp. 159; 160.

42 Ibid., pp. 160-161. Historian James Wilkie points out that actually Francisco Madero did not make a sharp break from Diaz policies with regard to social expenditures. Succeeding governments continued to keep the government's role conservative. It was not until Lazaro Cardenas came into office in 1934 that the government began increasing social expenditures. James W. Wilkie, The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditures and Social Change Since 1910 (Berkeley, 1967), pp. 35-37. Croly apparently used more logic than fact in his argument.
Instead she should resort to benevolent collectivism. If Mexico's leaders were to create a higher standard of living, they had to encourage Mexican industry and agriculture and put large expenditures on education. This would anger America, but Mexico was justified in doing so.\textsuperscript{43}

Unfortunately, Croly continued, the United States had the interest, motivation, and power to convert all of Central America into an economic and political dependency. Mexico, in particular, could hardly control the threat of interference from the United States, a threat made great because it was motivated more from economic rather than political considerations. Because Mexico was so well situated for the investment of American capital, American investors could seek protection for their investments through a disguised form of extra-territoriality. They would want the same rights and protection south of the Rio Grande as they received from their own government. By forcing America's interests and civilization on Mexico and appropriating her natural resources the investors would continue the unpardonable subjugation of Mexico's inhabitants.\textsuperscript{44}

Apparently Croly believed that freeing the human from exploitation was part of the New World dream of America's forefathers, and he noted that the efforts of American

\textsuperscript{43}Croly, "Mexico and the United States," pp. 162-163.

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid.
capital to keep the Mexican subjected did not fit in with this dream. Rather, these efforts were more in line with the dreams of Cortez, the dreams of Old World Spain. Mexico, then, was the test case for America's Progressives. If the Progressives could not save the Mexicans, they would submit themselves to the same rough and unfair treatment which the oil interests and State Department were then subjecting the Mexican government. At the same time, America, influenced by economic imperialism, would cease to seek a moral equivalent for prosperity by promoting liberty, equality, and human brotherhood and would instead perpetuate the very form of civilization which the Old World was struggling to abandon. But should the Progressives succeed, they would be fostering the designs of their forefathers in establishing a new world.45

The differences between Frank's and Croly's arguments were minor. Frank argued that the business community could only be countered by the united effort of American and Hispano-American intellectuals striving to achieve New World leadership. Croly, believing the Mexicans to be at the mercy of America, argued that America's Progressives had the responsibility to confront the business interests alone. The apparent differences between the two arguments lay only

in the means. The ends were similar. Both men were concerned about Mexico's fate, but of even more importance, they were concerned about the status of the progressive-intellectual group threatened by the business community within the realms of the United States. If the progressive-intellectuals could confront the business community on the moral issue of imperialism, the road toward eventual leadership over that community would gradually open. In both arguments (or, as in the case of Frank, all Hispano-America) served as a means with which to rally intellectual and progressive support toward the end of challenging the capitalists.

Capitalism to Croly meant working for profit, and he felt that such motivation stymied individualism and creativity. He was influenced in this belief by the novel Unleavened Bread, written by Judge Robert Grant. The novel told the story of an American architect whose creative genius was thwarted by his need to fit into a materialistic world. This was America's tragedy, Croly felt. In the United States individual merit was based on cash considerations, and empty individualism ran riot. The unfortunate trait of architecture in the United States, he believed, lay in its constant struggle against a Philistine culture. Thus Croly developed his theory of cultural nationalism, hoping to develop a tradition where the individual could express
himself.\footnote{Forcey, \textit{Crossroads}, pp. 22-25.}

Mexico did not suffer from a Philistine culture, and Croly hoped that foreign influence would be halted before such a culture developed in that country. John Dewey, whose pragmatic theories had influenced much of Croly's thought, shared Croly's concern about the effects of a Philistine culture on individualism and creativity and about its possible effects on Mexico. Dewey traveled to Mexico in 1926 and discussed his impressions in articles which were published in the \textit{New Republic} and later combined into the book \textit{Impressions of the Soviet Union and the Revolutionary World}. Dewey was opposed to foreign interference into Mexico, particularly foreign industrialism. He was attracted by the ancient ways that the Mexicans still followed in creating their art work, and he was prone to compare the handmade Mexican products with "the monstrosities of commercialized Europe and North American 'art.'" He feared that with the rising standard of living among the common folk that conspicuous consumption would cause them to favor the use of industrialized produced products, and thus it would be increasingly difficult to maintain the native arts. Fortunately, he concluded, enlightened educators were working...
against the tide.\textsuperscript{47}

As an educator, Dewey was impressed with the gains made in Mexican education. The spirit of the Mexican schools was commendable, he noted, for they formed an intimate union with the community. The buildings and curriculum were simple, with the usual three "R's" being supplemented with a stress on industrial education, chiefly agricultural and such home industries as weaving and pottery making which were characteristic of the neighborhood. An admirer of things Mexican, Dewey lauded the Government for placing emphasis on these home industries. Carried on in the homes and cooperatively managed, these industries served to offset the invasion of large, capitalistic, foreign industries. If the rural schools could succeed in preserving the native culture and protect its arts from being influenced by industry, Dewey wrote, "they will in that respect alone render a great service to civilization."\textsuperscript{48}

Dewey shared with Croly and Frank a concern about the effects of Western industrialism on creativity and humanity. Their interests in Mexico were broad, but they agreed that the country was free of many of the adverse tinges of Western civilization, and they used it as a model to show how


\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., p. 162.
pleasant life would be in a less industrialized society. They strove, therefore, to unite support against an invasion of Western civilization into Mexico, this fight actually being a battle against capitalism. The Socialist writer Irwin Granich, more popularly known as Michael Gold, sought similar goals.

Gold was born into a poor Jewish neighborhood where, associating with various groups of radicals and anarchists, he developed a proletarian image. He quit school at the age of twelve and went to work for an express company for ten years. During this time he became interested in the radical movement and began contributing poems and articles to The Masses and The Liberator. In 1916 he entered Harvard as a special student but left within a few months. Gold found little satisfaction in a middle class oriented society, and there developed within him a compulsion to change the world and to assault the bourgeois defenders of what he felt was a rotten social order. He proposed, as his means of attack, a Social Revolution, which would assail all Western civilization, a civilization characterized by capitalism, industry, "great nervous cities...grey commercialism and shallow eager competitiveness." Like Frank, Croly, and


Dewey, Gold wished to protect Mexico from this civilization, for having spent the years 1917-1919 in Mexico as a draft dodger, he came to admire that country.

Mexican life, Gold wrote in 1920, offered a model for the future. The expected Social Revolution would attack all that was associated with western civilization, and perhaps "a more serene, less ambitious, a slower, more patient and nature-loving race would come forth," a race similar to the one found in Mexico. In Mexico there were no skyscrapers. Everyone moved slowly, and one had more time to know and meet the people and discover that they are "sunnier and sweeter and unconsciously comradely." Even the food was simple, the houses more beautiful, and the odor of flowers filled the air. Upon the ways of Mexico would the New World be built, Gold prophesized, for these ways were "nearer to the quieter, more natural and contented life of the future."\footnote{Ibid.}

Yet as much as Gold admired Mexican life, he was upset by their political situation. He went into Mexico with high hopes for their Revolution, feeling it would soon lead to a Social Revolution which would not only attack western civilization but would also place the workers in charge of the factories and establish the farmers on their land. But
the Carranza government disappointed him, as it became more militaristic and aristocratic. Other Americans were also upset with the Carranza regime. In 1920 internal problems in Mexico, combined with Republican efforts to discredit Wilson's Mexican policy, created the belief among the American populace that Mexico was slipping into anarchy, and the agitation for American intervention began to grow. But although Gold opposed the Carranza regime, he denounced the idea of American intervention to have Carranza replaced.

Gold's major interest was to achieve the Social Revolution, which to him meant a world run by the proletariat, and he felt that American intervention into Mexico would hurt the cause. Intervention, he argued, was an economic need of American capitalism and would be the first step toward world empire. At the same time, intervention would aid the capitalists in their fight against the working class; it would delay the Social Revolution in Mexico; it would arouse in the Mexicans the need to oust the invader and thus take their minds off the class war; and, finally, intervention would bring the imposition of western civilization upon Mexico and change the scope of its life and development which "for all its rags, filth, poverty, ignorance, and

52 Ibid., pp. 25, 28.
blood-shed," was something more serene and lovable than "the mad, helter-skelter, squirrel-cage twitching" that was the American ideal of life. American Socialists should join their Mexican comrades in denouncing Carranza, but they should actively oppose American intervention.  

To Gold Mexico offered a new way of life. Through its Revolution it offered a possible stimulus for the Social Revolution, and through its quiet culture it offered a model for the new order. But for Mexico to serve these roles effectively she had to be protected from the American businessmen who, to Gold, as to other intellectuals, like Croly and Frank, represented the decaying western civilization. In their arguments these intellectuals described Mexico as an innocent nation whose economic backwardness was the factor necessary for creating a better life and a common culture. Economic backwardness was equated with a greater awareness of the new world's meaning.

Not all writers, of course, shared this opinion. Eugene E. Rovillain, a French-born professor of French Literature at the University of Michigan, argued in 1930, that a backward Mexico was a divided Mexico, and a divided country could hardly produce a common culture. No stranger to Mexico, Rovillain served as Secretary to Carranza immediately

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54 Granich, "What about Mexico?" p. 28.
following the World War. He was forced to flee the country, however, when a letter to a friend discussing Mexican affairs was captured and published.

Unlike Frank and Gold, who stressed the sordid influence which western civilization could bring upon Mexico, Rovillain emphasized the positive role which foreign economic aid played in that country. Under Diaz, Rovillain pointed out, European finance served the purpose of uniting a diverse people upon the common goal of economic betterment. It brought about an economic awakening where railroads, trams, telephones, and highways multiplied, and where peace, material happiness, culture, and some liberalism reigned. Furthermore, he continued, class lines and communications opened, and a general mind was formed; education expanded, and Mexico City became the great financial and commercial center of the Republic, as well as a city steeped in beauty. 55

Unfortunately, Rovillain continued, much of the gains made during the Diaz administration were destroyed under Madero. "The hope for loot and unpunished murder" appealed to the Mexicans, heirs of the ferocious Spanish and Aztecs, their mixed ancestry often making them act like children.

They attempted to remove the foreigners from vital areas of their economy. The Government even attempted to take over the petroleum industry, a resource which the rest of the world needed. Fortunately, Rovillain pointed out, the United States stepped in, for the Mexican Government was unequipped to develop this resource and make it available to the other nations of the world. This type of action on the part of a major power cannot be condemned as imperialism. Every nation has its duty to the world of nations. If it falters in this duty as Mexico did, then the other nations have the right to step in; they are justified by the law of life.56

America should give little heed to the irresponsible talk about liberty and democracy for Mexico, Rovillain wrote, since Mexico is not ready for them. Rather, America should think more of the work of Diaz. It should insist, "without being oppressive," that Mexico center its efforts on economic development, and since Mexico now lacks the capital and capacities for such a development, foreigners should help bridge these deficiencies until Mexico is ready to go on her own.57 Only with successful economic development would the people gain enough time to think and acquire a

56Ibid., p. 245.
57Ibid., pp. 244-247.
culture, Rovillain argued. National unity and political evolution could occur only when the individual gave place to the association of all classes working toward their material wellbeing. 58

Rovillain's concern for the Mexican economy was shared by other Americans during the 1920's. There was a growing awareness among American commercial interests and statesmen over the economic changes occurring in Mexico, particularly as they challenged America's commercial interests in that country. The Brookings Institute, aware of this concern, financed a project, beginning in 1925, to study the changes which the Revolution had created. 59 The man who conducted this study was the young historian and economist Frank Tannenbaum.

Tannenbaum, a Socialist, attended Columbia University where he graduated with highest honors in history and economics. Between 1925 and 1927 he worked with the Brookings Institute surveying the land and agricultural conditions in Mexico, and from this experience came various articles and a book entitled The Mexican Agrarian Revolution which he published in 1929.

Tannenbaum's conclusions on Mexico were not in harmony

58Ibid., p. 236.

with Rovillain's. Rovillain felt that only through foreign financed economic and industrial development could Mexico raise her standard of living and thereby develop a culture. Tannenbaum, however, wrote in 1928 that since the Diaz days there was less emphasis in Mexico upon industrial development, and this was why more was accomplished toward raising the living standards and developing the well-being of the masses. Furthermore, the cultural revival occurred without European help, he noted, and he pointed to the revival of Indianism as revealed in the art work of Rivera, Orozco, and Pacheco and the emphasis on Indian culture in the schools as proof that the Mexican could now scorn the "insolent European prejudice of the superiority of the white race." 60

Tannenbaum was also impressed with the changes made in Mexico's political system, as the foreign-dominated landholder control of politics diminished, and the population as a whole gained increasing say in the running of its country. The result was land reforms, the abolition of serfdom, and gains made by the rural community, including the revival of the small agricultural village. 61 Tannenbaum was interested

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61 Ibid., pp. 215-216.
in these gains, for he believed that only with a successful solution to the land problem could Mexico progress.

Tannenbaum's book, *The Mexican Agrarian Revolution*, centered on the history of Mexico's land system. This history, he noted, was largely one of communal land development in which the population acted as a group. Unlike Rovillain, who lauded Diaz for his economic policies, Tannenbaum pointed out that much of Mexico's economic and land problems stemmed from the Diaz period, when the President broke up the long-maintained communal land system and concentrated land in fewer and fewer hands. The outcome was the perpetuation of the hacienda system, an inefficient system which served to keep Mexico backward.62

The Revolution, however, was bringing needed changes, chiefly, Tannenbaum noted, because of the growing organization among the masses. With wider land distribution came village organization for the collective solution of local problems. This was a carryover from Mexico's tradition. The agricultural worker traditionally belonged to a group and preferred acting through a group rather than as an isolated individual. The village, too, traditionally acted with unanimity. Thus the villages were easily organized. The growth in the power and membership of the organized

agricultural population in Mexico was, then, in large measure due to tradition. 63

The tone of Tannenbaum's work was one of admiration for the Mexican's communal heritage, and he showed the difficulties of reconciling this communal philosophy with the more commercially-minded philosophy of the Americans or the English. 64 Carleton Beals likewise felt the Mexican peon belonged back in a communal setting. Manifesting an attitude of disgust with America's industrialized civilization, a civilization which the Mexican upper classes tended to emulate, Beals extolled the virtues of the rural lower classes. The peons seemed to enjoy a more natural existence than that experienced in America, and the cause of this, Beals felt, was their adherence to a communal tradition. 65

The peons were used to communal relationships, Beals wrote in 1923. Before industrialization the Indian lived an ideal existence in a village surrounded by common lands, pasturage, woods, and water. Here, in his group environment, the Indian performed his handicrafts, while raising a few crops and animals, knowing nothing of private ownership or

63 Ibid., p. 414.

64 Moulton, "Director's Preface," p. viii.

of commercialization. Life was ruled by the heavy weight of customary law, where the lands were practically distributed according to need, and every man was assured enough to eat, a place to sleep, and clothes for his body without excessive toil. The "real beauty" of the Mexican's life, Beals concluded, was found in "those minute handicrafts of native communal life" which were as much a part of Mexico as her landscape.

This communal existence, Beals wrote, did not gag the individual with an inflexible standard or an envy of one's betters. The Mexicans manifested an inwardness of spirit and a desire for the simple. A quiet grace adorned their lives, as they were never swept into that demanding stream of progress. They were not weighed down by a frenzied desire to improve their living standards, nor were they envious of those endowed with this world's goods. Instead of material comforts, personality, individuality, and independence were cherished. The Mexicans did not fret because they did not sit in the social sun; nature's sun was sufficient.

This communal life, Beals pointed out, enabled the

68 Ibid., p. 117.
Mexican to enjoy a beauty of existence which the American could never know. The Mexican was far happier than the New York office clerk, cogged in eight hours of routine, flinging his pleasures into evenings that had no coordination with his day or tasks. The American lived in compartments. The Mexican peasant's life was one texture. Work was pleasure and pleasure was work. His day was woven into a unity, satisfying in its completeness. For the Indian work, pleasure, mind, home-life--these were all part and parcel of a religious experience. Someday the world would re-discover the values the Mexican cherished, for his was a far richer world than the world of automobiles, radio sets, telephones, and busy social preoccupations.  

Unfortunately, Beals noted, industrialism was threatening this idyllic existence, and, like Tannenbaum, he felt Diaz was to blame. The former President brought industrialism to Mexico without preparing the people for the transformation from a rural to an urban civilization, and, Beals believed, the Mexican people would perhaps never be able to adjust to this new way of life. Their entire social order was shattered, including the ejido or village communal system which, more than anything, served

69Ibid., pp. 117-118.
to preserve something of the social and moral fabric. 70

The major solution to Mexico's problems, Beals felt, was getting the people back on the land. But simple land distribution was obviously not enough. The heritage of communal life could not be forsaken. The peon had no knowledge of private ownership. The communal ejido had to be revived, for it was becoming increasingly apparent that the Mexican would resist the private ownership and "freedom-to-strive implications" of the industrial revolution which had invaded his country. 71 At the same time, constructive educational, financial, and development projects had to be undertaken. The people had to be made aware of scientific methods. Communalism did not mean regression to Beals. He simply believed that cooperative enterprise was the most feasible method through which Mexico could advance. The efforts of the Obregon government to implement such programs brought Beals' praise. 72

Both Tannenbaum and Beals felt the Indian was better off in a communal environment. They indicated that out of that environment the Indian was unable to function properly and often acquired undesirable traits. In a communal

70 Beals, Mexico: An Interpretation, pp. 83-84.
71 Ibid., p. 92.
72 Ibid., p. 109.
relationship, however, the Indian's life was viewed as an idyllic existence. Beals offered evidence in this regard by alluding to the out-of-the-way villages which still retained the early Indian customs and possessed their ejidos or commons. Here, Beals told his readers, people were industrious, ingenious, and of a true co-operative spirit. They all shared, and no one went hungry; nor did one person lord it over the others. The villagers were quiet, gentle, and polite, and they maintained the nobler human virtues; virtues which some of the greater nations lacked. 73

This description of Indian life as an idyllic communal existence was illustrative of a growing trend among American writers to describe Mexico in a glowing communal setting. In the 1930's books by Robert Redfield, Stuart Chase, and Waldo Frank presented further evidence that the Mexican was a happy individual when left to his communal ways. Certainly he was happier than the individualistic oriented American.

Studies undertaken in later decades, however, by anthropologists George M. Foster (1942) and Oscar Lewis (1951) indicated that the Indians in a communal village did not live such an idealized communal existence as Beals, Tannenbaum, and the others believed they did. In fact the Indians actually led lives marked by strong individualistic attitudes

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73 Beals, Mexican Maze, pp. 117-118.
and characterized by a lack of cooperation, schisms within
the village, and a sense of fear, envy, and distrust in
interpersonal relations.74 Howard F. Cline, who wrote a
summary of these studies in 1952, concluded that the time
had obviously come to re-examine the interpretations of
Mexican history favored by those writing in the earlier de­
cades whose slant was based on a now dubious view of how
rural Mexicans felt and worked.75

The findings disclosed by those writing in the twenties
and thirties were apparently influenced by the discontent
with American life that existed then. As shown in the pre­
vvious chapter, the 1920's brought a questioning of the
values of an individualistic, industrialized society, and
many Americans expressed the desire to return to communal,
pastoral days. In the twenties and thirties, then, it was
not unusual to find discontented idealists, who saw ugliness
in the cities, advocating moves into country communities as
an escape, an avenue to nature and simplicity.76

Efforts to return to the land were not innovations of

74Oscar Lewis, Life in a Mexican Village (Urbana,

75Howard F. Cline, "Mexican Community Studies," Hispanic

76Paul K. Conkin, Tomorrow a New World: The New Deal
the twentieth century. Actually America had a history of movements designed to get people back to the land in collectivized communities. Even when the land was plentiful from the 1820's through the 1850's, numerous communitarian colonies were founded, most representing a desire for a peaceful separation from an increasingly complex and sinful world. After the Civil War the schemes grew in numbers. By the 1920's there were various schemes promoted to escape the industrial, capitalist world and to return to the soil, although as agricultural prices began to decline so did the seal for a communal paradise.

Tannenbaum's and Beals' emphasis on placing the Indian back in a communal setting seemed to be a reflection of this communal back-to-the-land dream which many Americans, unhappy with urban life, shared. But looking to Mexico as an escape from industrialization was not a trait peculiar to American writers. The English author D. H. Lawrence also came to know Mexico and to admire it as an isolated non-industrialized country. In an article written in 1926 Lawrence discussed the impression Mexico's solitude had on him. There, he wrote, one felt the pathos, the isolated tininess of human effort. In Mexico, more than anywhere else, human life became isolated and cut off from the

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77 Ibid., pp. 13-26.
environment. Even the churches had to have two towers "to keep each other company in this wilderness world." And "Thank God," he continued, "In Mexico at least one can't set off in the machine."  

Lawrence always had a great love for nature and the countryside, and the industrialism which was spreading throughout England upset him. He was also upset by the War, feeling it brought an end to the perfectability of man. This belief, combined with poor physical health, an unbalanced temperament, and distaste for industrialism helped explain his recoil from England which he felt clung to a dead religion, dead ideals, and a dead form of society. He began a search for some other way of life that would supersede what he believed to be a hopelessly outworn way of existence. He sought to identify himself with primitive communities which were still relatively unspoiled by industrialism. So in 1919, Lawrence and his wife began their travels in search of a new life. 

The Lawrences' initial residence in the Western Hemisphere began in September 1922 at Taos, New Mexico, where

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they were the guests of John Reed's former mistress, Mabel Dodge Luhan. Mrs. Luhan invited Lawrence to her ranch in hopes he could acquaint himself with the Pueblo Indians and interpret them to the English speaking world. But the six months spent at Taos were not pleasant, and the Lawrences decided to try and start a new life in Mexico, a country Lawrence had studied in Terry's *Guide*, a popular tour book. Lawrence was to make two trips into Mexico: in 1923 he journeyed through the country with his wife, and in 1924 he was in Mexico alone. The literary results of his two stays were various articles, a book entitled *Mornings in Mexico* (1927), and the novel *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) which is recognized as among his greatest works.

Although Lawrence was impressed with the Mexican people generally, he revealed in *Mornings in Mexico* that he found the Indians to be a cold, unloving people. Even the ancient Aztec gods and goddesses were an unlovable lot. The goddess of love, he wrote, was a prostitute and a dirt-eater, one who had to lay down before her lover "blatant and accessible," and the child produced from this love was a stone knife, the sacrificial knife. Today, Lawrence noted,

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most Mexican women continue to give birth to stone knives. "Look at them," he wrote, "these sons of incomprehensible mothers, with their black eyes, flints, and their stiff little bodies as taut and as keen as knives of obsidian. Take care they don't rip you up." 84

Yet as cold as the Indian was, Lawrence admired him, for his life was much less complex than the white man's and also much less silly. The Indian was not prisoner to exacting ways such as time and distance. The white man had his minute and hours and mile and miles; the Indian was only concerned with morning, noon, or night or whether a goal was near or far. No wonder, Lawrence wrote, the Indian saw the white man as being imbued with monkey-like invisible exactitudes, including money and honesty. The Indian cared nothing for those things. Actually he wanted nothing that he had to be responsible for, including his wife and children. All that he asked was that the present moment be disentangled. Yet the white monkey ruled, and the Mexican had to serve the great white monkey in order to live. He had to learn the white monkey's tricks, including "time of day, coin or money, machines that start at a second, work that is meaningless and yet is paid for with coin." All of these

84 D. H. Lawrence, Mornings in Mexico (New York, 1927), pp. 53-55.
were so unnatural, Lawrence observed; yet these were tricks of the monkey. 85

The Plumed Serpent represents, in many ways, a reflection of Lawrence's attitude toward Mexico. The heroine of the novel is a middle aged, twice-married Irish woman named Kate Leslie. Kate, like Lawrence, was horrified at first by the vulgar cruelty of modern Mexico and particularly with bull fighting. However, she soon became involved with Don Ramon and General Cipriano, two men who, for political reasons, decided to revive the ancient Aztec cult of Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent. Don Ramon assumed the role of Quetzalcoatl and General Cipriano became the war god Huitzelpochtli. Kate was asked to play the role of the cult's priestess and submit herself to Huitzelpochtli. Despite her rebellious character, she eventually submitted, a symbol for Lawrence of male dominance.

Lawrence was enthralled with this Aztec cult, for to him it was characterized by emotional depth, sexual awareness, dominance of the male over the female and the political leader over the masses. It represented a Nietzschean type of superman. There was also indication that Lawrence used the cult as an opportunity to express his attitudes toward a revived Mexican nationalism. Mexico could not solve her problems with foreign ideas, his hero Don Ramon noted. "The

85Fay, Lorenzo, p. 159.
old Dove of Europe will never hatch the eggs of dark-skinned America," nor could the United States. Each nation has its own Saviour and its own aristocracy. "So," said Ramon, "if I want Mexicans to learn the name of Quetzalcoatl, it is because I want them to speak with the tongues of their own blood."^86

Under Obregon and his successors, efforts were made to create pride in the Indian's "own blood," and like Lawrence, the American intellectuals supported these efforts. Self pride was viewed as a step toward rejecting foreign interference. Pride in Mexico's handicraft tradition symbolized isolation from industrialism, just as pride in economic backwardness symbolized an escape from the acquisitive, materialistic heritage of the Western world. Western civilization was closely identified with Europe. Mexico was associated with the New World. The New World gave hope for a new life and a new culture, a refuge from the decaying mechanized culture of Europe. But in order for the New World to express itself and develop the New World culture, it had to be free.

The American intellectual tended to identify himself with the New World. He felt that he was open enough to its spirit that he could understand its message. But the

^86David Herbert Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent Quetzalcoatl (New York, 1926), pp. 190; 246.
American intellectual also realized that he was not free to express that message. The United States was too much a product of the Old World. Established by the Puritans and controlled by their descendants, the United States carried on the tradition of materialistic Europe, and the intellectual felt powerless and unappreciated in a commercialized world.

But hope that the new culture would eventually predominate remained. Mexico, suppressed but never conquered by Old World Spain, was, with her Revolution, once again coming to her own. She was once again experiencing the New World's message through her Indian heritage. The government, the artists, and the teachers who promoted this revival were to be honored and aided. The people themselves were to be praised. Above all, Mexico was to be prevented from falling under the domain of the American financier. An intellectual victory over capitalist imperialism would mean a step toward intellectual leadership. This step would mean greater freedom to develop the new world's culture as expressed in backward, innocent Mexico. Until that culture reigned, the American intellectual would never be free.

Mexico became a rallying point. But it was, in many ways, a rallying point for retrogressive thought. The intellectuals admired Mexico for her backwardness, not her ability to adjust to the machine. When these writers lauded Mexico,
they were looking backward to what they felt was a happier, less hectic time. They were not advising Mexico on how to adequately deal with the twentieth century.
Chapter V
An Escape from the Machine Age

The 1930's witnessed the continuing search for a new order in the United States. Latin America still maintained an aura of contentment which American writers wanted transferred to the United States, and they attributed this contentment partly to Latin America's communal culture, a culture in which man worked harmoniously with his neighbor and nature. The American reliance on individualism seemed to curtail such harmony.

Latin America was not the only area that American writers looked to in their search for a new order. The Soviet Union also found many admirers in the United States. As the Depression traced its course through the 1930's, it confirmed the beliefs of liberals like Waldo Frank that individualistic capitalism was responsible for the economic problems and the concurring incidents of human suffering which plagued the decade. A new system, one which stressed unity, cooperation, and collectivism had to come forward. The successes which Communist Russia experienced, while America underwent economic crisis, served to convince these writers--
for a while anyway—that the future did not lie in capitalism, with its strong sense of individualism and haphazard production; rather, America should consider adopting collective action and planning. ¹

The major thrust for changing America's economic and social order came from intellectuals and radicals, usually journalists, writers, artists, and teachers from middle class backgrounds. They brought renewed interest in the westward expansion theses of Frederick Jackson Turner and William Graham Sumner that the curtailment of westward opportunity created economic stagnation and societal discontent. Despite numerous historical attacks on Turner's thesis, many writers assumed that the period of individualism, economic opportunity, and general freedom based on an advancing frontier had ended. America's economic system had reached its growth limits. The problem now was not how to stimulate new economic activity but how to achieve recovery, how to return to the "paradise of 1929." Many turned to the government for action. Influenced by Marx, these people felt that

¹Charles C. Alexander, Nationalism in American Thought, 1930-1945 (Chicago, 1969), pp. 6-7; 29. This admiration was not a capitulation to foreign-bred ideologies. There was much about the totalitarian features of Russian life of which the intellectuals did not approve. They opposed dictatorship and the hindrances placed on political dissent which characterized Russian politics.
America's historic dream of prosperity, opportunity, and democracy for all could only be realized in economic collectivism.\(^2\)

Waldo Frank was associated with this radical, intellectual group, having rebelled against the capitalist culture before his conversion to Marxism in the thirties. Frank held a mystic faith in the unity of Being, in an organic wholeness, and he believed an individual, by purifying himself of egocentricity and selfishness, would find love in all things. During the twenties he hoped America would overcome the false individualism of capitalism and develop instead a collective spirit. He was certain he witnessed this spirit in the Spanish, American Indian, and Russian cultures, and he devoted his literary efforts toward convincing his fellow Americans that such a spirit was possible for them as well.\(^3\)

Frank's *America Hispana*, published in 1931, was based on his continued search to find a New World culture to replace the decadent culture of Western civilization; the themes were not new. The United States was still judged to be unworthy of developing that culture because of its Puritanical, pioneering past. Latin America, firmly rooted in the medieval

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 3, 9.

culture of the conquistadores, remained as the most likely source from which this new culture could emanate.

Influenced by Thomas Aquinas and Dante, Frank hoped the New World could achieve the wonderful culture which he believed characterized the Middle Ages. He was convinced that at the end of the thirteenth century, under the aegis of the Roman Catholic Church, Europe had perfected a unified, harmonious world. This civilization was characterized by humanistic values, unity, and a worthy culture. Men felt at one with God, earth, and each other; their thoughts were free of anxiety, and they fit well into a rich physical and moral order.¹

Yet, according to Frank, there were forces seeking to break down this unity. While men sought harmony with earth and God, a state of heart and mind existed which hoped to use the earth for its own ends. It was this state which caused the Renaissance which shattered the unity of human thought and the Reformation which split the Church into warring elements; the unified body of medieval Europe dissolved into isolated parts. Men began to break away from the whole and became individually oriented. The civilization once close to God and soil became acquisitive. Man the human was

¹Robert C. Salaberry, "North America Looks South," The Living Age, June 1, 1930, p. 425.
replaced by man the machine. By the seventeenth century Europeans were acquisitive and mechanistic, and the creeds they subscribed to were Protestantism and Capitalism.\textsuperscript{5}

The Puritans were products of this seventeenth century Europe. Frank condemned the Puritans for their acquisitive, mechanistic, material ways. The settlers of the North, he wrote, were products of the Reformation. Atoms striving for themselves, they never enjoyed the sense of unity espoused by Catholicism. They were motivated by the machine, and the machine was the embodiment of physical action, not of thought and feeling. Such a foundation was "inadequate for the creating of whole human beings." If the United States continued in that direction, Frank warned, it headed for disaster, as the people became bereft of initiative. Even its technical progress could not last forever, for science received its intellectual energy from the whole man, and the typical American technician was out of touch with life's wholeness.\textsuperscript{6}

Frank favored the Mexican culture over the American, for the Mexican culture, stemming from the Middle Ages, was one of unity; the American, one of mechanistic individualism.

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid.; Waldo Frank, America Hispana: A Portrait and a Prospect (New York, 1931), p. 311.

\textsuperscript{6}Frank, America Hispana, p. 330.
The Mexican, heir of the Aztec and Spaniard, thought in terms of Nature, art and the absolute. He was not a product of the mechanistic Western civilization; the demands of time and the attributes of personal will, power, ambition, and sacrificing for some earthly future did not appeal to him. He was not interested in progress but sought, instead, the immediacy of art or mystic revelation. The Spanish blood which flowed through his veins was the blood of fifteenth and sixteenth century Spain, the Spain which sought to make the world one with Christ, and the American campaign was in part designed to fulfill this dream of unity. The values of the crusading Spaniard were Catholic and medieval. Product of the Renaissance, the Spaniard loved Rome and sought to carry on the Church's goal to make men at one with themselves and all mankind. He carried with him the "tragic essence of all wisdom" which was that the man living as a separate person was damned, and the life lived as part of the whole was "salvation and beauty."

The Mexican culture was not, however, without failings. A smoothly functioning society, according to Frank, required the integration of three elements: bread, power, and religion. He felt the Hispanic American placed too much

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7 Frank, America Hispana, p. 277.
8 Ibid., p. 315.
9 Ibid., pp. 332-336.
emphasis on religion. The Latin's ideas were a product of the Church, but since the Church was swept away, the Latin American lost his ability to bring his spirit to the modern world. He felt dispossessed and inferior to any nation that had a form and habitation for its spirit. Hispanic America needed discipline, technique and method. In the United States, on the other hand, bread and power completely overwhelmed religion. The American continent, then, presented two facets of a single problem. The United States had to free its impulses toward a fresh creative beginning, giving spirit to its form; Hispanic America had to find form for its spirit.

Frank's hope was that Hispanic America would be able to develop the new culture which lay within her. But he warned that capitalism from the North was a crucial menace to this goal. Resistance to capitalism required unity, and Frank hoped to see the establishment of a federation of Hispanic-American states united in a political and economic union, aiming toward the goal of human regeneration and truth.  

Frank's plan for a federation of Hispanic-American states was largely a product of his belief that Latin America was as yet uncorrupted by Old World values, values which

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10Frank, America Hispana, p. 369.
had demoralized the United States and prevented it from developing the New World culture. Latin America was viewed as an extension of a united world which had yet to be tainted by Protestant individualism and materialism. Frank hoped the federation would enable Hispanic America to maintain that purity.

Historically Frank was correct in discussing the dissimilar origins of the United States and Latin America. The Western Hemisphere colonies were the offspring of a Europe torn by religious wars, and the two major colonizing powers, Catholic Spain and Protestant England, were from the opposite roles of the melee. When Spain conquered Mexico and Peru in the early 1500's, Catholicism was still relatively unchallenged in Europe, for Luther and Henry VIII were just separating from Rome. Commercial and political considerations prevented England and the other European nations from sharing in these conquests. Therefore, it was almost a century after the conquest of Mexico that Protestant England settled in North America. In a sense, then, sixteenth century Spanish America did represent unity, since the conquistadores were from a Europe still relatively united in Catholicism. The North American colonies of the seventeenth century, to the contrary, could symbolize atomization
because the founding fathers were from a Europe split by the Reformation.\textsuperscript{11}

Despite the differences, there were important similarities which Frank ignored. He acknowledged the economic motives of the English, but he pushed aside the fact that these same motives dwelled within the Spaniards. In fact economic considerations were largely responsible for the brutality which pervaded the continental invasions of both groups. True, the Spaniard did not set out to annihilate the native populations, as the English almost succeeded in doing, but the Spanish did succeed in enslaving the natives and treating them in a degrading manner. This servitude, while justified on religious grounds, was motivated as much by the desire to obtain wealth from the mines and haciendas.

Frank condemned the Puritans for being individualistic, secular, and acquisitive, knowing nothing of life's meaning and joys. And indeed there was truth to Frank's charge that the Puritans were motivated by economic interests. The noted historian Perry Miller pointed out that the first group of Pilgrims who settled at Plymouth Rock came to America in part to spread the world of Christ to the heathen, but

\textsuperscript{11}Arthur P. Whitaker, \textit{The Western Hemisphere Idea} (Ithaca, New York, 1959), p. 8. It might be mentioned that Mexico was conquered in 1519, Peru in 1532-33. Luther posted his theses in 1517 and Henry VIII broke from Rome in 1529. The first English colonists landed in America in 1609.
they came mainly "for better advantage and for less danger, and to give their posterity the opportunity of success." 12

These motivations, however, scarcely differed from those of the **conquistadores** who conquered Mexico and Peru. True, the desire to strike down the heathen and win converts to Christ was a motivating force within the Spaniard. But the **conquistadores** were soldiers, bakers, carpenters, and blacksmiths, men seeking wealth and adventure. They were also those who feared the Inquisition, including Jews, Moors, and converts. Religion resided within many, but religion was not incompatible with a greed for gold and land, or a love of great deeds for their own sake. 13

The secular drives of the Spaniards were potent, certainly more so than Frank would have one believe. On the other hand, not all of the Puritans were as materialistically oriented as Frank described. The Puritans who came to Massachusetts in 1630 had strong religious motivations. They had to fulfill the pact made with God which obliged them to establish a community in America which all Europe could emulate. If they could establish the colony and have it perform as the saints in Europe predicted, the Calvinist

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internationale would know how to complete the stalled revo-
lution. As John Winthrop reminded his followers, this mis-
sion had little to do with acquiring wealth. Rewards would
come from God only if the colonists strove to fulfill their
side of the bargain and did not become distracted toward
making money. If they failed in their pact, God would
surely punish them.  

Religion, then, played an important role in Puritan
activity. The migrations to America had their religious
motivations, and once the Puritans landed in the New World,
religion kept them united within a group, just as Catholi-
cism played a role in uniting the Spaniards. Since the Puri-
tans believed in original sin, there had to be an overriding
government to marshall wayward men into unity. The lone
trapper, the horseman, or the hunter was not a figure of the
Puritan frontier. Nor were the individual businessman, shop-
keepers out for strict profits, or the conniving speculators
typical figures of the original Puritan society. Puritanism
was not an aggregation of individuals but was rather a
firmly governed organism working toward a definite goal with
all members contributing a definite share.  

14 Miller, Errand into the Wilderness, pp. 4-5.
15 Ibid., pp. 42-43.
non-communal was not based on fact and could probably be explained as part of an irrational search to explain the sor­did, individualistic, materialistic trends of America in the 1920's and 1930's.

Such irrationality did not stop with a discussion of the Puritans. Frank was also irrational in setting up the Middle Ages as a period which could be favorably contrasted with the twentieth century. Only superficially were the Middle Ages as ideally unified as Frank characterized them. True, the period was distinguished for its uniformity, as emphasized by feudalism, ecclesiasticism and scholasticism. Yet to see only uniformity during this period, as Frank did, was to ignore the tremendous economic changes, the unequal development of the various parts of Europe, the influx of the new Eastern learning, and the changes which medieval life and thought experienced during this time. But to call at­tention to these events would allude to the fact that men had had problems before the Reformation, and Frank, apparently wishing to demonstrate that man not confronted by the ma­chine was contented, looked back to a machineless period known for its apparent spiritual unity and tried to discuss it with little reference to its diversity.

It seems hardly logical to expect the Middle Ages to contain solutions for the problems of the Machine Age. The machine was, as Frank noted, a problem of modern centuries. Why, then, did he not try to find a solution for this problem within a contemporary context? Perhaps the influence which Marx had on Frank provides an answer. Frank turned more toward Marx as the thirties progressed. He may therefore have accepted the Marxian theory that man was a product of the forces working upon him. Given this assumption, one might conclude that Frank saw man in the Middle Ages existing as a contented and whole individual because of the overriding spiritual unity of the period. After the seventeenth century the machine prevented the reemergence of this unity, except in areas like Latin America where the machine had yet to make headway. The machine, then, was responsible for man's fall after the Reformation. Rather than propose a solution which would enable man to tame his creation, Frank viewed the machine as a force which manipulated man and argued against its establishment in uncorrupted areas. The future Frank sought for America-Hispana was retrogressive in that it would ban the machine which, when properly controlled, had proven its progressive worth.

Frank's backward glance was not characteristic of the

literary criticism of the thirties. Such criticism had undergone a transformation since the previous decade and was no longer apolitical or concerned with such abstractions as the Puritan tradition, Philistinism, or materialism. With the Depression, literary radicalism became associated with political radicalism, and social protest literature, focusing on downtrodden groups, experienced a remarkable renaissance. Social criticism dealt with both the economic basis of society and encompassed the great social aggregate. Individualism, exalted during the twenties, now acquired a derogatory connotation, and the people, denounced as common in the twenties, became heroic in their poverty.18

This social consciousness was shared by other disciplines. Even science devoted its efforts toward social improvement. Responding to the Depression, workers in all the social sciences devoted their scholarship to the service of American society. This was particularly true in sociology where the Great Depression did much to stimulate sociological research, particularly in the realms of urban and rural studies.19

Urban studies owed its success largely to the pioneering work done of the city of Chicago during the 1920's by

18Alexander, Nationalism in American Thought, p. 29.
19Ibid., p. 123.
Robert E. Park, Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago. Chicago, Park noted, had expanded rapidly within a few decades due to a heavy influx of immigrants and farmers who were unaccustomed to city ways. Accompanying this growth was a division of labor created by machine industry, and the mobility that came with new means of transportation. Thus the city seemed a hodge-podge of disorganization, individuality and mobility. The result of this as seen by Park's study, was that some of the sub-communities lacked effective social controls and appeared to suffer a loosening in their moral codes. At the same time the old lines of authority, the family, the neighborhood, and the local community were undermined and their influence diminished. Park viewed this as individualization and social disorganization.

The apparent adverse effects of urbanization and individualization led Park to emphasize the importance of significant communal ties. Human nature developed, Park explained, when people came closer together, such as in the family, the tribe, and the local community. Here one learned to respond to others, while in larger societies relationships were too superficial; one could not act with definiteness or assurance toward others, for one needed the

personality traits which were developed within intimate groups. 21

The association of rural life with intimacy, while connecting impersonality and superficiality with urbanity, was characteristic of the thinking of most sociologists in the twenties. Like Park, who was born in rural Pennsylvania, most of these sociologists came from rural backgrounds, and they sought to promote the virtues of rural life and castigate urban encroachment for corrupting those virtues. 22 Small wonder, then, that Park expressed his concern that the later stages of urbanization hindered opportunities for learning about oneself and others through intimate interchanges; he felt that standardization and the wearing of "social masks," typical of large societies, prohibited real intimacy. 23

Park's studies of Chicago were praiseworthy, and many of his methods are still considered valid. Yet he made the mistake of assuming that the transformations Chicago experienced as it became increasingly urbanized and industrialized were characteristic of any area which experienced such a change. Sociologist Maurice Stein of Brandeis University

22Stein, The Eclipse of Community, p. 15.
pointed out in 1960 that such generalizations were usually presumptuous. Park's studies were of a particular city undertaken at a particular time, Stein wrote, and "the urbanization process must always be defined in specific, substantive terms." Thus generalizations among various cities are not necessarily valid. However, this tendency to generalize was important for more than the erroneous conclusions which might have been drawn. Of equal importance was the influence Park had on the students and assistants who worked with him. One of these assistants, Robert Redfield, eventually undertook a study of a small Mexican village. His findings, obviously influenced by the methods he acquired from Park, had an important impact on American thinking toward Mexico.25

During the 1930's urban studies continued to flourish, and people from outside the Chicago group came to their own. The sociologists Robert S. Lynd of Columbia University and his wife Helen M. Lynd of Sarah Lawrence College were among this new group. Like Park, the Lynds were interested in the effects of industrialization on urban life. They chose for their study Muncie, Indiana, a Midwestern town which fell within the 25-50,000 population group and which had undergone

24Ibid., p. 29.  
25See pp. 13ff.
the transformation from country town to city with a few short decades. Using the years 1890 through 1924 for their survey, the Lynds studied the effects of industrialization on the population's occupations, mating and child raising habits, leisure, religion, and associations. The result of their study was the monumental work *Middletown* which they published in 1929.

The Lynds found that as Muncie transformed from a rural to an industrial society, the population had to reorient itself to a new class and economic system. The craftsmen, once high in status, were displaced by the new rising business leadership, and craft unions lost their authority in the community to such business clubs as the Booster, the Lions, and Rotary. To maintain status the workers were forced to alter their life plans toward acquiring position through money and commodity display. To purchase these commodities the workers found themselves accepting specialized job roles, and their wives and mothers also found themselves looking for work to obtain needed additional income. Work became less interesting and more routine, and the workers increasingly expressed their desire to escape. The community found itself relying heavily on mass produced facilities for enjoyment, such as radios, movies, and automobiles. Meanwhile, the newly established business class happily witnessed their way of life—"mobility, symbolized
by acquisition and display of commodities"—become the primary basis for achieving status in Middletown's social structure. While the Lynds refused to draw any definite conclusions as to which period in Muncie's history was preferable, the impression left was that life was more real and enjoyable before industrialization moved in.26

While the Lynds were engaged in their studies of Muncie, Robert Redfield, Park's former assistant referred to earlier, was in Mexico undertaking a similar anthropological survey of a small Mexican village. An Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, Redfield had graduated from that university in 1920 cum laude with a degree in law. During his undergraduate days he was brought to the attention of Professor Park. Park was impressed, and despite the fact that Redfield was practicing law, convinced the lawyer to leave the profession and enter sociology. In 1925 Redfield accepted an instructorship in sociology at the University of Colorado. He then returned to the University of Chicago in 1927 as an instructor in anthropology and received his Ph.D. in that field in 1928. From November 1926 to July 1927 he was in Mexico on a trip.

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sponsored by the Social Science Research Council. He dis­
cussed his findings in various articles and in his book
Tepoztlan: A Mexican Village, A Study of Folk Life, publ­
ished in 1930.

The purpose of the Mexican journey was to study Mexi­
can folkways in Tepoztlan, Mexico, a village about sixty
miles south of Mexico City. The inhabitants of the village,
Redfield noted, were primarily isolated country people who
shared the same culture, traditions, interests, and intellec­
tual attitudes. This rural population, Redfield believed,
differed little from isolated rural populations throughout
the world, and he therefore classified any such group as
folk. What Redfield wanted to know was what happened to folk
when they came in contact with an urban society.27 His aims
and methods in conducting his survey differed little from
Park's study of Chicago or Lynd's study of Muncie.

While many "pure" folk still existed in Mexico, Redfield
observed in Tepoztlan, the folk were breaking down as West­
tern civilization spread among the villages and Mexico be­
came more modern. In a folk culture one's loyalties were
tied to the village more than to the nation, but this
loyalty began to diminish as society became more urban and

27 Robert Redfield, Tepoztlan: A Mexican Village, A Study
of Folk Life (Chicago, 1930), pp. 1-2; 13.
mobile. Folk life, incompatible with national life, dis­
appeared as national life was attained. Villages became
more like each other, and the people within these villages
became increasingly different, more secular, more modern,
and more businesslike in their ways. Folk art changed its
color, and the applied arts became more commercial;
fiestas became less specialized and religiously oriented;
farmers declined in numbers as occupations became more spe­
cialized, and mechanization brought in new tradesmen and
professionals, people unhampered by tradition who thought in
terms of their occupation and continued to communicate with
the city and adopt its ways. This change from rustic to
civilized man, Redfield remarked, was not an unusual pro­
cess, and one would find elements of it in other countries
which were subject to the widening influence of modern Wes­
tern industrial civilization.28

In 1934 Redfield elaborated on his findings in the folk-
urban continuum. As one moved from village to city, he ex­
plained, one found the communities to be increasingly mobile
and heterogeneous. At the same time, communal labor, which
helped maintain village solidarity, broke down with the
introduction of money. Indeed, labor became more specialized

28Ibid., pp. 10, 95-96; 155. See also Robert Redfield,
"Folkways and City Ways," in Hubert Herring and Herbert
47-48.
and oriented less toward tradition and more toward economic competition. Redfield also observed that familial organizations tended to break down, as the chain of respect of women to men and young to old withered and the sense of responsibility of the individual to his family declined. Religion lost its impact both in the pagan and the Catholic realms, and there was a breakdown in superstition. These changes, Redfield concluded, were not limited to Mexico but occurred in other parts of the world as well; they could be compared with the gradual civilization of Europe.²⁹

The resemblance here to Park's findings on Chicago was striking. Equally significant in its similarity was Redfield's interpretation. Like Park, Redfield generalized his findings, pointing out that what he found in Tepoztlan was characteristic of the folk-urban transformations that occurred in other areas of the world. He also tended to describe the waning of rural society as an unfortunate occurrence, leaving the impression that rural traits were virtuous and the encroachment of urbanity a foreboding of evil. Given that Redfield was born in Chicago, it seems likely that he acquired the rural prejudice from Park. An example of this rural bias was provided in an article Redfield wrote in

1935. In folk culture, he wrote, the customs and institutions were not separate entities by themselves, as was true in the more mobile urban centers; rather, they were intertwined into an organization. Religious sacredness, for example, pervaded those activities which in city life existed merely as instruments for the achievement of practical ends. There was, then, something more noble about the way the folk undertook their tasks. Piety to them was more important than efficiency. One acted because one felt his actions were right and because they were sanctioned by morality and religion. Such a conclusion was obvious in its slant.

The rural-urban transformations which Redfield described in Tepoztlan were similar to those described by the Lynds in Middletown. Therefore a basis was laid for a comparative discussion of an American community and a Mexican village. Two American writers undertook such a comparison. One was Carleton Beals, whose article on Redfield and the Lynds appeared in 1930; the other was the economist Stuart Chase who published his conclusions in 1931.

Beals, who was usually quick to condemn American life, concluded that life was better and more beautiful in Tepoztlan than Middletown. True, he noted, Middletown was more advanced and practical in its culture, but the specialization

30Redfield, "Folkways and City Ways," p. 39.
and economic orientation which accompanied industrialization had compartmentalized American life. The "inner man" was denied by subverting personality and freedom to finance, industry and government. In Tepoztlan, on the one hand, life was still integrated, and the people had more fun as work, play and religion went hand in hand. 31

Stuart Chase was as much a critic of American society as Beals. Chase was born in Sommersworth, New Hampshire on March 8, 1888. He attended MIT for two years and then specialized in economics and statistics at Harvard, graduating cum laude in 1910. He criticized America's industrialized civilization not because he opposed industrial progress but because he felt America's industrialism was accompanied by too much waste through inefficient economic organization and poor planning. During the Depression Chase became associated with a group known as the "Technocrats." This group sought to turn America's economy over to technicians that they might plan and control it; this fit with Chase's theory that the elite should control American economic life. Chase became more militant during the Depression and repeatedly asserted that he preferred economic dictatorship to starvation and suffering. 32


Chase traveled to Mexico in 1930 for a rest and an opportunity to view the works of Diego Rivera. The trip was brief but impressive; therefore, he returned the same year and remained five months. His objective was to observe the life of the common man; consequently he traveled primarily in the rural areas of Mexico, avoiding the larger cities whenever possible. The trip emphasized to Chase the contrast between Mexican and American life during the Depression. In poverty stricken Mexico Chase viewed no destitution or unemployment but rather happy and healthy societies. Yet in the supposedly affluent United States there were breadlines everywhere. Furthermore, Chase observed that the Mexican handicraft culture allowed the Mexicans to live life to its fullest; each was an integral part of his community. People in the mechanized United States, however, were alienated from each other and participated only in a secondary way in society's whirlpool. Chase decided that the United States had far more to learn from Mexico about work, leisure, recreation, and living life in proper perspective than Mexico did from the United States about industry, public health, and technical innovations.

33Chase must have been impressed with Rivera's work, for Rivera illustrated his book Mexico: A Study of Two Americas.

Chase concluded that goods, not cash, governed the economy of Mexican villages. It was a handicraft culture, a culture free of machines, and he admired that culture because it was simple, honest, and uncluttered with useless gadgets. In this type of culture, Chase wrote, the people learned to come to terms with their world. In their village life crime was rare, unemployment unthinkable, and a Freudian complex unheard of. The Mexican Indian had an ideal personal philosophy: he did not work any harder than was necessary to provide for the physical needs and spiritual well-being of himself, his family, and his community. Comparing this culture with America's, Chase concluded that it would be a serious mistake to Americanize and break down this self-sufficient Mexican economy, specialize its labor, introduce pay checks, "substitute movies and bleacher seats for fiestas, and thrust into their hands motor cars, radios, tabloids, Arrow collars, Simmons beads, corrugated iron roofing, Listerine, and canned asparagus."\footnote{Stuart Chase, "Machineless Men," The Forum, 84 (1930), p. 384. Also see Chase, Mexico, p. 221.}

Shortly after Chase returned from his second trip to Mexico (which included a brief stay in Tepoztlan), he came across Redfield's book. Comparing notes with Redfield, Chase decided that their findings were in accordance. He then turned to the Lynd's study of Muncie and decided to compare
life in a Mexican village with life in an American town. The results of his comparison were published in 1931 in a book he wrote with the aid of his wife, Marian Tyler. The book, *Mexico: A Study of Two Americas*, was offered as a Literary Guild selection and in terms of sales was Chase's most popular work. 36

As Chase compared Middletown to Tepoztlán, Middletown came in a poor second. Middletown, Chase felt, represented the Machine Age, and that meant automobiles, mechanized fun, money concerns, anxiety over economic security, chronic unemployment, dependence on the entire mechanical civilization's economy cycles, growing attendance at social clubs, and a decline in church attendance. Furthermore, the mechanized American civilization was cluttered with a large number of meaningless items which caused the citizenry to grope for values which would bring meaning back to life. 37

Tepoztlán represented the handicraft culture. In that culture, Chase believed, people lived without economic lifts and nose dives. The Tepoztecs, as yet relatively unaffected by the machine, were slow paced, fun loving, communal minded, and hard working only when necessary. They were


patient, but then they could afford to be, since they were independent of what was perhaps "the most tyrannical engine ever invented"—the clock. Furthermore, Chase wrote, the Tepoztecs "prepare no job ticket, visit no employment office, receive no welfare work, say yessir to no boss. They work when they feel like it, stop when they feel like it, sleep when they feel like it." They desired the real things of life, seeking goods, not cash and striving for happiness and peace of mind. Their values centered in innately valuable things, rather than in the unreal artificial things of the machine culture, such as "rows of figures, ink marks on ledgers, pieces of engraved paper." Americans searched for life through a maze of symbols and were often unsuccessful in their search. But the village Mexican found life "clear and sharp beneath his eyes, its values uncoated with cash considerations." Tepoztlan never bothered about the meaning of life. It lived.38

The effects of the Depression in the United States played an important role in shaping Chase's admiration for Tepoztlan. In Middletown's machine culture, he noted, the gospel was work, and yet a good fraction of the population was unemployed and bowed down with fear and worry. These problems were partially the fault of the machine culture with

38 Ibid., pp. 130; 186-187; 221-224.
its individualism, poor planning, and dependence on the rest of the mechanized civilization.\textsuperscript{39} How much more pleasant was life in handicraft-oriented Tepoztlan, where the people were devoted to play, where unemployment was unheard of, the Depression was of little concern, and fear came only with earthquakes or Zapata. Chase believed that Tepoztlan escaped the effects of the Depression because it maintained the pre-Hispanic free village system, a communal economy in which everyone had his own milpa.\textsuperscript{40} The free village system, Chase wrote, for all its faults, maintained a balanced economy and thus enabled the village to be a self-sustained entity. Consequently, during the world Depression, which affected Mexico's international market, while no one in Tepoztlan had money, everyone was employed and no one was hungry. In fact, the third estate was unaware that a Depression existed.\textsuperscript{41}

What Chase admired most about the free village system was its apparent friendly communal atmosphere where neighbor helped neighbor and all worked toward the common good. Since this mode of life was rarely found in the mechanized,

\textsuperscript{39}Chase, \textit{Mexico}, p. 16

\textsuperscript{40}Milpa: small agricultural tract cultivated by an individual for his own benefit.

\textsuperscript{41}Chase, \textit{Mexico}, pp. 90; 131.
commercialized United States, Chase was concerned lest a machine culture be imposed on Tepoztlan. President Diaz had tried to change the traditional handicraft economy of Mexico with the machine, and where he succeeded, Chase believed he destroyed the traditional village conception of communal property and community responsibility and replaced the spirit of cooperation with unrestrained and greedy individualism.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 118; 171.}

Yet despite Chase's disgust with mechanization, he admitted he could not live among the Indians and be happy. For one thing, he was too used to American ways; for another, he was not so taken in by the Mexican handicraft system that he saw it free of errors. While he admired Tepoztlan for its economic stability and self-sufficiency, he realized that the price of stability was the absence of progress. Therefore, Chase proposed combining the manifest assets of Tepoztlan with those of Middletown, hoping Tepoztlan could thereby escape the sordid side of western civilization while beneficially adopting certain practices, including modern hygiene, sanitation, and scientific agriculture.\footnote{Chase, \textit{Mexico}, pp. 209; 331.}

Since Mexico was not a mechanized civilization, Chase wrote, it could evolve a master plan which would admit the
machine on good behavior. But Mexico had to be cautious. A complete industrial invasion would mean that pecuniary values would replace human values. Also, Mexico would eventually suffer the pangs of economic insecurity, as she became tied to the world's industrial system. What the Mexicans should do, Chase wrote, was strive for at least enough economic self-sufficiency for both the nation and its internal regions in order to save itself from the unfortunate aspects of the economic cycles of the outside world. And if they chose industrialization, they should avoid the development of "reeking factories and roaring industrial districts." Instead they should plan decentralized industry with small plants in the country where their workers could establish small truck gardens. Since Chase felt that America's problems stemmed from poor planning, he also advocated that the Mexicans adopt a National Planning Board and that they use the Russian planned economy as a model.44

Chase also had some advice for the people of Middletown. He did not ask them to return to the handicraft system, but there were aspects of Mexican culture they could adopt. For one, they could stop taking "back talk" from clocks. For another, their lines of unemployed proved the need for regional self-sufficiency. They should realize that

44 Ibid., pp. 323-326.
business leadership was bankrupt and that mechanical civilization could never provide their needs under the current policy. What was needed, Chase stipulated, was a masterplan, one that would prevent over-production and unemployment. Mexico was in the process of adopting such a plan, and Middle-town should follow its example. Chase also felt that Americans should abandon their childish forms of recreation and return to a genuine form of enjoyment "with something of the fiesta spirit in it." He urged his fellow Americans to find hobbies which involved handicrafts and perhaps the more gifted could actually make these handicrafts a major occupation, using the cheap electric power which was beginning to come fast in America. There was room for mass production and handicrafts in a genuine civilization.45

Unlike Waldo Frank, then, Chase did not seek to reject the machine. He seemed more willing to work within the context of his times. But like Frank, Chase condemned the machine—at least the uncontrolled machine—for leading the United States to the situation where its culture was mechanized, its economy static, and its population devoid of those qualities which led to happiness, comradeship, understanding, and the ability to live life fully. In the handicraft culture of Tepoztlán Chase saw the antithesis to this situation.

45Chase, Mexico, p. 326.
In this civilization, as yet practically untainted by mechanization, there existed a stable, self-sufficient economy where the population, if not completely prosperous, was at least employed, happy, and anxious to cooperate with others toward the good of all. In a changing world such a population could not withdraw into itself. There were advances being made, mechanical advances, which this civilization could beneficially adopt. But the machine, to be a positive good had to be properly controlled, with its functions carefully planned. Here, in other words, was a new beginning. Here one could take a handicraft culture and introduce the machine, and with proper controls and careful planning one could develop a civilization which enabled man to benefit from the machine's potential and yet remain close enough to the handicraft system that humanity did not become subdued. If successful perhaps the United States could learn from its example. Of course, for Chase's theory to be acceptable, one had to assume that a handicraft culture was as ideal as Chase described it.

Although Chase saw Tepoztlán for himself, his stay in the village was too short for careful observation; therefore, while his conclusions were his own, he apparently drew much of his material from Redfield's Tepoztlán. The question arises, then, as to the validity of Redfield's study. Were the motives, the life style, the culture, the
economy of rural Tepoztlan so different from an urban American city as to lend credence to Chase's theory? Were the people really that much better off in a handicraft culture?

Fourteen years after Redfield wrote Tepoztlan, Oscar Lewis, an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Illinois, traveled to Tepoztlan on a project aimed at helping Latin American governments understand the psychology and needs of the rural poor. A native of New York City, Lewis had majored in history at the City College of New York. When he entered Columbia University for graduate work, he developed an interest in anthropology and received a Ph.D. in that field in 1940. After Columbia, Lewis worked at Yale, the University of Havana, and with the Department of Justice and Agriculture before he joined the faculty at the University of Illinois. Once in Tepoztlan, Lewis planned to use Redfield's study as an ethnocentric base for his rural project, but the changes Tepoztlan had experienced since 1930 and various questionable conclusions in Redfield's work made a restudy necessary. In 1951 Lewis compiled his research into a book, Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied.

Redfield and Chase had painted a pleasant picture of Tepoztlan life. They left the impression that the village was a homogeneous, agricultural, relatively isolated
community, self-sufficient to a degree, and oriented around a handicraft culture. The Tepoztecans, themselves, were viewed as a communal, well-adjusted and contented people, working on their own milpas and contributing their share to the village communal lands. Such a life, Redfield and Chase concluded, was free from the economic concerns of a machine culture, enabling the people to work only when necessary and to enjoy what they did. The Redfield account, while indicating that problems existed, glossed lightly over evidence of violence, disruption, cruelty, disease, suffering, and maladjustment. Little mention was made of poverty, economic problems, or political schisms. Instead the emphasis was on the cooperative and unifying factors in Tepoztlan society.

Lewis' findings did not coincide with those of Redfield and Chase. His study found an underlying individualism within Tepoztlan institutions and character, as well as a lack of cooperation, with tensions and schisms existing within the village and in interpersonal relations. Lewis also discovered that the Tepoztlan economy was not self-sufficient and probably had not been even in pre-Hispanic days. An integral part of the larger national economy, national and world prices affected the village. Also the community

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relied heavily on the outside for certain basic elements in its diet, as well as for various manufactured goods.\textsuperscript{47}

Not only did Lewis reveal that Tepoztlan's economy was not isolated or self-sufficient, he also pointed out that it was not centered around a handicraft culture. The main source of livelihood was farming, but the agricultural resources were poor, and the village could not support itself by farming alone; there existed, then, small household producers, peasants, artisans, and merchants, but their primary motive for work was subsistence, not enjoyment, as Chase contended. Furthermore, Lewis noted that while Tepoztlan's economic system was primarily agricultural, the population was not a landed peasantry and therefore did not enjoy the economic security which Chase had assumed. Actually, Lewis found that there was a land shortage in the community, a fact Redfield had not mentioned; at least sixty-four percent of the families did not own private land in 1944, and Lewis saw no evidence which indicated that the situation differed in 1926.\textsuperscript{48}

Lewis also shattered the Redfield-Chase conception of the free village by showing that such an economic setup was not an ideal communal system where all had access to the land

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 18; 429.

\textsuperscript{48}Lewis, \textit{Life in a Mexican Village}, pp. 118-119; 126; 429.
and everyone worked in collective harmony. For one thing the peasants did not have automatic access to the communal lands; for another, the Tepoztecans, like most Mexican peasants, were a highly individualized group of farmers who engaged in a minimum of collectivization and cooperation. In fact the collective forms of land tenure caused much bickering between villages, and the growing tendency to market goods under a competitive system further weakened the factor of communal land as a unifying force.  

Lewis did find the Tepoztlan economy to be that of a peasant society with the virtues and problems which surrounded such a system. But he pointed out that the economy was neither simple nor primitive as Redfield and Chase would have one believe, for there were many characteristics in that economy similar to those found in western rural civilization. There existed, for instance, a well-developed concept of private property, "a high degree of individualism; a free market; the definition of wealth in terms of land, cattle, and other forms of property; a relatively wide range in wealth differences, the use of money...interest on capital, work for wages, pawning of property, renting of land...a specialization in part-time occupations." What superficially appeared as an ideal communal retreat from

49Ibid., p. 127.
western values was actually a system stimulated by many of the same concerns which motivated capitalists.  

The existence of these economic factors served to undermine the Redfield and Chase accounts of Tepoztlan as a friendly, community-oriented village. Lewis discovered that the Tepoztecans were a hard people to become acquainted with. They were not outgoing or expressive, and most of their interpersonal relations were characterized by "reserve, constriction, and carefully guarded behavior." In a description which sounded like something Chase, Waldo Frank, or even Van Wyck Brooks would write about America, Lewis pointed out that "work, industry, and thrift," aimed at accumulating land and animals, were the paramount values in Tepoztlan. The farmer, constantly reminded of the need to engage in brutalizing isolated work became an individualist, developed a faith in his own power, and was reluctant to seek or give economic aid or to cooperate with others in any form of enterprise. The family was the individual's only real source of rewarding personal contact.  

Yet, Lewis affirmed, Redfield and Chase were correct in seeing that the Tepoztecans did not have many of the problems which plagued modern industrial civilization. There was, for

50 Lewis, Life in a Mexican Village, p. 80.  
51 Ibid., pp. 287; 296.
example, little exploitation of man by man; no one held power over others; in fact the lust for power, wealth, or prestige was rarely a motivating force. Nor did the Tepoztecans suffer anxieties and frustrations which came from living in a highly competitive society. But, Lewis continued, the Tepoztecans had problems of their own. Their standard of living was low; their agricultural resources were limited and poor in quality; their technology was backward, for their land was not conducive to mechanization; and their production was minimal. They had taken on the more superficial aspects of modern life, such as aspirins, Coca Cola, and flashlights, but their real life orientation was still toward the sixteenth century. 52

Lewis, in acknowledging the differences between Redfield's study and his own, attributed the organizing principles in research as the major reason for the divergence. Redfield was concerned with folk culture and the folk-urban continuum. Such a conceptualization, Lewis noted, usually placed emphasis on the role of the city as a source of change and excluded or neglected other factors of an internal or external nature. Further, the folk-urban dichotomy presented the primitive in the role of a noble savage and assumed that with civilization came the fall of man.

52 Lewis, Life in a Mexican Village, pp. 177; 446-448.
Throughout Redfield's writing was the indication that folk societies were good and urban societies bad. Folk societies were viewed as integrated, while urban societies were the great disorganizing forces. Because of these presumptions, Redfield tended to overlook many of the internal forces working within Tepoztlan society which, when studied, showed that encroaching urbanity was not as completely responsible for Tepoztlan's problems as he assumed; rather, there were many forces working within the society itself which brought unsettling conditions.

To help explain why Redfield and Chase viewed Tepoztlan as they did, one should probably bear in mind that they wrote in the 1920's and thirties when mechanization, urbanization, and rapid individualism were blamed for the cultural bareness and apparent dehumanizing technology of the twenties and the demoralizing depression which followed. This was a time when men sought to escape the machine and return to the land. Rural life maintained a sanctity about it, and what corruption beset such a life was blamed on the city. Park operated under this assumption, and he apparently influenced Redfield. Thus Redfield's study of Tepoztlan, neglecting internal forces, showed change caused by urban forces and that change was not favorably viewed. How much

53Ibid., pp. 432; 435.
more pleasant life seemed in a rural setting where the folk were employed, apparently enjoyed their work, willingly aided their fellows, felt as important parts of their community, and cared little about the problems which plagued the rest of the world. It seemed a refreshing escape from urban civilization with its unemployment, dull routines, terse individualism, and dependence on the well-being of the rest of mechanized civilization. Perhaps Redfield and Chase needed Tepoztlan to prove that life need not be as harsh as it appeared in a mechanized world. Here was an opportunity, particularly for Redfield, to show that man's downfall came when he left the natural realm of rural society, and for Chase, Tepoztlan provided a clean slate with which to demonstrate the machine in a controlled and planned environment. Or perhaps it was simply the need for a refreshing escape from the problems of a troubled United States which caused Redfield and Chase to create a more perfect Mexican village. Whatever the reason, Redfield and Chase searched for a rural civilization to fit their needs, and by glossing over the sordid side of Tepoztlan life, they apparently found what they sought.

Their conclusions did not go unchallenged, even in their own day. The writers for The New Masses, the Communist
periodical of the United States, were particularly critical of Chase's descriptions of Tepoztlan. What upset them most was Chase's tendency to ignore the squalid aspects of Mexican life, for they felt Chase left his readers with the impression that there was little room in Mexico for improvement.

In September, 1931, Alberto Morales, a native of Mexico, expressed such an argument, cynically pointing out that while Chase described pleasantries he witnessed "on a swell vacation in Mexico," any Mexican could recite the poverty, superstition, and political demagogy which enslaved the people. Joseph Freeman, the Russian-born co-founder and editor of the magazine, furthered this argument in the October issue. Freeman had been a correspondent in Mexico in 1929, and remembering his experience, condemned Chase for ignoring the reality of oppressive politics and forgetting to mention such "trifles as poverty, misery, superstition, the Church, the army, and the new landlords." Chase, Freeman wrote, invented a Mexico without unemployment, paupers and old age problems, but with a definite artistic purpose. In short, Freeman concluded, Chase revived the

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54 The New Masses made no mention of Redfield's study, but this is not surprising, since Redfield's book was a technical study which Chase wrote for the general public.

false paradise of the eighteenth century "noble and happy savage," presenting a contented people, living in a perfect climate, in a land one would love to visit while being grateful he need not live there.56

While The New Masses condemned Chase for his descriptions of Tepoztlán, other writers were equally critical of the solutions he proposed for raising the village's standard of living, and not the least of these critics was Robert Redfield who wrote a review of Chase's book in 1931. While Redfield termed Chase's work a "felicitous combination of personal impression and secondhand information," and agreed with many of Chase's descriptions, he was upset with his evaluations. Chase, he felt, had overstated the facts in trying to prove that life in Tepoztlán was more enjoyable than life in Middletown. Despite Redfield's rural bias, his study had at least given mention to some of Tepoztlán's problems. Therefore, like the writers for The New Masses, he denounced Chase for alluding to the joys of Tepoztlán life while neglecting the fact that the villagers were usually underfed, underslept, and often sodden with drink. Even worse, Redfield wrote, some of these villagers were caught half-way between the folk and the modern worlds,  

causing them to feel "sensitive, and ashamed, and sometimes miserable." Concluding in a vein reflective of his anti-urban prejudice, Redfield questioned Chase's suggestion that the Tepoztecs keep their handicrafts and their disregard for clocks, hurry, and money and yet acquire hydroelectric power, scientific agriculture, and modern hygiene. How they could accept Chase's advice and yet reject hustle, Sunday motoring, and nervous breakdowns was incomprehensible to Redfield. 57

The famed English author, Aldous Huxley, in his book Beyond the Mexique Bay (1934), also expressed his doubts that Chase's suggestion to graft a certain amount of modern industrialism on the "noble savage" was workable, particularly if one wished to keep the savage "noble." Hygiene, for example, would increase the population, make cities of villages, and an urban mentality would develop. While scientific agricultural methods, electrification and roads would help lift the weight off bent backs, they would destroy the old stable, placid peasant psychology. Better, Huxley concluded, to graft some of the peasant's virtues on modern civilized man. 58 What Huxley and Redfield


58 Aldous Huxley, Beyond the Mexique Bay (New York, 1934), pp. 234-236.
demonstrated was that even Chase's proposal to orient Tepoztlan to the Machine Age through control and planning would still bring the values, the culture, the systems, and the problems which come with the machine.

It would appear that Mexico continued to serve as all things to American thinking. Its most important asset to the intellectual was that in its backwardness it continued to be a place for escape from the harsh realities of American life. To Frank it represented the thirteenth century, to Redfield the virtues of rurality, and to Chase a *tabla rasa* of sorts where one could begin the Machine Age again, but this time avoiding the errors of the past through planning and control. Yet the ardor of these men to seek a refuge from their Machine Age environment made them blind to the fallacious conclusions they drew. As *The New Masses*, and eventually Lewis, correctly demonstrated, not even the apparently isolated Mexican village could escape the problems of the twentieth century.

By 1936 even Redfield began to realize that he had exaggerated the extent of Tepoztlan's rural virtues. In that year Elsie Clews Parsons published a study under the title *Mitla: Town of the Souls*. Mrs. Parsons, soon to be President of the American Anthropological Association, graduated from Barnard and received a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1899. In 1916 her interests turned to anthropology, and
she worked with Professor Franz Boas at Columbia. She traveled all over the world doing field studies, her particular interest being Indian cultures. Mitla, a town much like Tepoztlan, Mrs. Parsons wrote, experienced change in the past through the influence of the Church, but more recently change was coming through capitalism and the idea of accumulating wealth. As this continued, Mrs. Parsons noted, old religious traits would begin to disappear; the system of communal services would break down; and class distinctions based on wealth would be made. "Within fifty years," Mrs. Parsons concluded, "Mitla will be a modern town, for good and bad, a backward modern town." 59

Robert Redfield reviewed Mrs. Parsons' work and admitted that it created some changes in his thinking. With Mrs. Parsons proving that one third of a folk town's population served as merchants and that pecuniary values on goods created as much interest among that population as among Americans, he could no longer view trade and market as antithetical to folk culture. "A stable folk culture is compatible with these facts," Redfield concluded, and he added

that the fact that the merchants had constant interchanges with other communities destroyed his conception of seculsiveness. Redfield was discovering what Chase and Frank had yet to learn, that Mexicans, like Americans, and indeed most of any population in the Western Hemisphere, were products of the Machine Age, and there was no way they could isolate themselves from the rest of the world.

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Chapter VI

Mexican Artists and
Hemispheric Solidarity: 1930-1940

The twenties gave Americans no preparation for the Depression decade. The country seemed prosperous; the stock market flourished; business boomed, and high society soared into the "jazz age." The idealism which surrounded the First World War crumbled against reality, and America lost her mood for further foreign crusades. The nation's concern was business, and American foreign policy and business were not hesitant to cross a boundary for a profit. American businessmen, backed by the power of America's military might, invested heavily in foreign countries, secure in the statements of Coolidge that American property in foreign countries was part of America's national domain. Such a policy had an adverse affect on United States-Latin American relations. American power and economic diplomacy created much resentment among the Latin countries, and by 1928 the concept of hemispheric solidarity was at its lowest point in history. 1

The 1930's brought a reversal of many of these trends. In 1929 the prosperity of the twenties collapsed, and by 1930 a decade of hardship was underway. In foreign policy the isolationist mood continued, but the growing power of totalitarianism in Germany, Italy, and Japan undermined the strength of that sentiment. The militaristic uprisings in Europe and Asia restored the presumption that the Western Hemisphere was historically a haven of peace in a war-torn world, and United States-Latin American tensions began to relax. The drawing together of North and South was facilitated by the actions of the Hoover Administration which reversed the policy of government intervention to protect American investments. Roosevelt continued this trend by furthering the Good Neighbor Policy which promised liberty, juridical equality, and fraternity to all the Americas. The idea of a united, peaceful, free America, separated from the conflicts of despot-ridden Europe, had never seemed more desirable than in the later 1930's.²

Carleton Beals's *America South*, published in 1937, followed a decade of increased communication between North and South. Appealing for political unity through the Western Hemisphere idea, he argued that the hemisphere was superior to Europe and should unite against it. There was a discernible difference between the Old World and the Western

²Ibid., pp. 134-135; 139-142.
Hemisphere, Beals reminded his readers. The countries of the Western Hemisphere were new, and in that capacity they manifested an atmosphere of hope. Furthermore, there was a sense of freedom in the New World. Even the most vicious Latin dictatorships did not close in on the human spirit as did the European tyrants. It was only natural, Beals concluded, that when the United States was menaced with the spectre of European war that she turned to the people of her continent, seeking to build something "in a spirit of peace and democracy, in an abiding spirit of hope, which is the stuff of the New World."  

This revival of interest in the Western Hemisphere idea was found in the realms of culture as well as politics. In 1930 James Alexander Robertson, Research Professor of American history at Stetson University, alluded to the new emphasis which scholarship was placing on Hispanic American cultural history. He concluded that the increase in scholarly interest was due to added locations for source material in the United States, publications of records, the emergence of new journals and periodicals, and the growing number of new textbooks.

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3 Carleton Beals, America South (New York, 1937), p. 27.

This growing scholarly interest in Hispanic America was manifested in the 1932 Presidential Address of Herbert Eugene Bolton, delivered before the Toronto meeting of the American Historical Association. Bolton was a leading advocate of an American history which would encompass the Spanish borderlands as well as the English. Entitling his speech "The Epic of Greater America," Bolton strove to convince his colleagues that to achieve hemispheric solidarity a historical synthesis was needed in relating the histories of the United States and Hispanic America. He referred to the growing European influence in South America, which he felt outweighed that of Saxon America, and he concluded that Europe was attempting to draw the Southern continent more toward Europe and away from its northern neighbors. If we wish to maintain close hemispheric ties, Bolton explained, we need a better cultural and historical understanding. With that understanding, Bolton felt, would come the realization that the histories of the United States and its southern neighbors stemmed from similar roots. Bolstering his argument with historical data, Bolton resolved that a synthetic view was important not only for political and commercial factors, but was desirable for correct historiography.5

Scholarly interest was only one manifestation of the growing cultural closeness between the United States and Hispanic America. Increased tourist traffic was another. Various writers advanced their theories as to why more Americans toured Mexico, and the theories varied from Ernest Gruening's belief that Mexico's combination of old and new entranced Americans, to Carleton Beals' theory that the growth in tourist traffic was due to Mexico's growing prosperity created through the policies of President Cardenas. 6

Not all of the American tourists were as pleased with Mexico as Gruening and Beals would have one believe. Grace Flandrau, sister-in-law of the writer Charles Flandrau, returned to Mexico after an absence of approximately fifteen years to find that Mexico City had undergone a change. It was no longer "the foreign city deluxe," she wrote in 1934. It was now a "great nondescript hard-working town," commercial and Americanized. The shops were full of "cheap and tasteless merchandise"; American cars and automobile salesrooms lined the streets, and gas stations, detective agencies, and dance studios occupied the sites of former palaces. The greatest change was in the women who were no longer the

isolated and protected beings they once were. Now they worked, drank, smoked, and dated unchaperoned. Apparently Mexican girls were going through the phase American girls passed through a decade earlier, and, Mrs. Flandrau decided, few of them were very happy about the change.\(^7\)

Despite the increased modernization described by Mrs. Flandrau, Katharine Dos Passos, wife of the novelist, found in the Mexico of the 1930's a refuge from the commonplace. Writing in 1932 Mrs. Dos Passos explained how a trip to Mexico was preferable to a European journey, since Mexico was not standardized or overly touristic and had much for one to discover. Mexico was purely American, she wrote; untouched by Europe for centuries, it was the origin of our native culture. Travel there was refreshing, for Mexico changed "the machine speed of life to a quieter and more primitive rhythm."\(^8\)

While Americans were touring Mexico, several Mexicans were visiting the United States, the artist Diego Rivera being one of the more distinguished. Rivera held ambivalent feelings toward the United States. He resented it because of its economic hold over his country, and yet he was

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\(^8\)Katherine Dos Passos, "Just Over the Border," *Woman's Home Companion*, 59 (September, 1932), pp. 12-13, 36.
attracted to it by its industrial progress. He was fascinated by the machine which he considered a work of art, and he knew that in the United States he could view the machine in a true industrial environment. Furthermore, the United States had a large working class, and as a Communist, Rivera hoped he could communicate with the proletariat. "For years," he wrote in 1934, "I had been waiting for the first opportunity offered me to enter the United States with my work...."^9

Rivera's paintings first appeared in the United States in 1915 when some of his Paris paintings were displayed in a small New York Art Gallery. But it was not until the mid-twenties that he achieved fame in the United States and his work was given due recognition. In 1925, while Rivera was in Mexico, his painting Flower Day won the Purchase Prize of $1,500 at the Pan-American Exhibition held in Los Angeles, and in 1929 the American Institute of Architects, realizing the important role frescoes could play in their profession, awarded him, in absentia, the Fine Arts Gold Medal, this being the second time it was awarded to a foreigner. 10 It was amid this growing fame that Rivera entered the United States in November 1930.

It was probably more than coincidental that California was the first state to extend the Mexican an invitation. An ideal climate and buildings which easily accommodated mural decoration enabled some of the leading California artists to devote themselves exclusively to mural painting. The proximity of California to Mexico enabled such artists as Paul O'Higgins, Ione Robinson, Earl Musick, and Maxine Albro to gain the benefit of Rivera's teaching and help spread the word of his talent.\footnote{California Discovers It has an Affinity for Mural Painting,\textit{ The Art Digest}, 3 (May 1929), p. 5.}

The San Francisco sculptor, Robert Stackpole, was perhaps most responsible for bringing Rivera to California. He introduced William Gerstle, President of the San Francisco Art Commission to Rivera's work, and Gerstle became so impressed that in 1926 he offered Rivera $1,500 to paint a mural for the California School of Fine Arts. Rivera, unable to travel to the United States at that time, waited until 1930. By then Gerstle and Stackpole had also convinced the architects of the San Francisco Stock Exchange to commission Rivera to paint a mural in their Luncheon Room.\footnote{Rivera, Portrait, pp. 13-14; Wolfe, \textit{Diego Rivera}, pp. 280-281.}

The decision to hire Rivera for these murals drew strong criticism from local artists who felt slighted at
being passed over in favor of a foreigner and who resented Rivera's communist ideologies. But Rivera had no intention of painting a picture of social protest. He was taken in by the beauties of California and sought to give artistic expression to them. In the Stock Exchange mural he pictured the productive resources of the state and typified the workers. Only the executives would view this work, Rivera explained, and he painted workers toiling in the fields to show the diners "that what they ate and what enriches them are the products of the toil of workers and not of financial speculation." 13 Such a message was mild compared to later developments.

While Rivera's fame spread throughout the United States, other forms of Mexican art also achieved recognition from American art enthusiasts. In October 1930 the American Federation of Arts sponsored a Mexican exhibition at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. The exhibition was initiated in large part by Dwight W. Morrow, the American Ambassador to Mexico, whose interest in Mexican art work led him to believe it should be more widely known. He persuaded Count Rene D'Harnoncourt, an Austrian familiar with Mexican art, to arrange an exhibition using only Mexican items. The stress was placed primarily on modern works, though fine

and applied arts of earlier centuries were also displayed. The exhibition was first shown in Mexico City under the patronage of the Mexican Government. The Carnegie Foundation then sponsored its tour of New York and other American cities. In New York the exhibition drew over 25,000 persons in three weeks, and it was widely and favorably noted in the press.

Mexican music also attracted large American audiences. On March 31, 1932 a distinguished audience packed the Metropolitan Opera House in Philadelphia to view the widely publicized ballet-symphony "H.P." as performed by the corps de ballet of the Philadelphia Grand Opera Company, with Leopold Stokowski conducting the orchestra. The general idea of the ballet was conceived by the Mexican composer Carlos Chavez, who wrote the music; the designs and costumes were created by Diego Rivera. The ballet depicted the close interrelation between the tropics, which produced things in their primitive state and the North, which produced the machinery to manufacture items from these products. The purpose of the ballet was to show that the North needed the tropics, just as the tropics needed the machinery of the North. After

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the performance Rivera expressed the hope that the Philadelphia performance opened the door to better cultural understanding between the United States and the Republics of the South. "There is undoubtedly a common destiny for all the men of America," he remarked. "The time will come when they will be held by a common bond in the achievements of art, beauty, and the mind." 15

Rivera's success in the United States was shared in varying degrees by other Mexican artists. In 1931 the hitherto conservative John Levy Galleries marked a turn toward modernism by making April Mexican month and displaying such Mexican artists as Jean Charlot, Rubino Tamayo, and Joaquin Clausell. 16 A more significant degree of recognition was afforded Jose Clemente Orozco. Orozco was associated with Rivera in the modern Mexican school of painting and like Rivera was radical in his political convictions. In February 1930 Orozco displayed his work at the Delphi Studios of New York; in July he had an exhibition at the Courvoisier Galleries of San Francisco; and in August he was commissioned to paint a mural at Pomona College in California. 17


Why Mexican artists received such recognition was difficult to explain. As Margaret Bruening of the Post pointed out, the interest appeared suddenly "like some long lost Atlantis, into which we could rush to discover the treasures which resisted the waves of oblivion and neglect so long washing over them...."18 Perhaps the explanation lay in the re-emergence of the Western Hemisphere idea and the emergence of nationalism in art, both products of the thirties. The Mexicans had indeed produced a national school of painting, proud of its heritage and identifying with the masses. Art Historian E. P. Richardson, describing the impact of Mexican art in the United States, wrote, "The effect was electric, for here was an art of meaning which at the same time embodied the stylistic discoveries of twentieth century painting."19 The significance here was not that the art was Mexican but that it was American. Orozco's attraction, wrote art critic Nadia Lavrova, lay in the "echoes of vanished races" which characterized his work. He received his impressions from deep in America's tradition and history. Orozco, Miss Lavrova concluded, "is an American painter par excellence."20

Of course much opposition surrounded the Mexican painters. The fact that they were Mexicans caused dissension among those American artists not feeling any particular attachment to the concept of hemispheric solidarity and obviously upset at being passed over by a foreigner. Then, too, Mexican painters like Rivera and Orozco were Communists, and in a capitalist country like the United States there was bound to be opposition to the message these artists sought to portray. Orozco was the first to stimulate such controversy with the mural he painted on the New School for Social Research in New York in 1931. In the mural's center he painted "Table of Universal Brotherhood" which depicted people of all races presided over by a Negro. On the side walls he had allegories of World Revolution with Gandhi, Carrillo Puerto, and Lenin being the leading distinguishable characters. The Negro leader and the portrait of Lenin upset several of the wealthier patrons who withdrew their support from the school. There were also numerous accusations of Communist propaganda thrown at Orozco from American artists. 21

Although the Communist ideologies of Orozco and Rivera

were well known, they did not weaken the desire of influential American art connoisseurs to display their murals. On December 9, 1930 a distinguished group of business executives and museum directors met at the home of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in New York City. These people held a common interest in Mexico and Mexican art, and they called their meeting that they might promote friendship between the two countries through the establishment of special exhibitions displaying the fine and applied arts of both countries. The committee also hoped to establish a permanent exhibition in the United States that would serve to stimulate an American interest in and a demand for Mexican arts. They further hoped they could encourage Mexican craftsmen to maintain traditions which were in danger of becoming lost. The group took the name Mexican Arts Association Inc. and included among their distinguished membership Mrs. John D. Rockefeller Jr. and her son Nelson, Mrs. Frances Flynn Paine, art dealer and art advisor to the Rockefellers, who founded the association, and Winthrop W. Aldrich, banker and brother of Mrs. Rockefeller; Aldrich was elected President.22

One of the Association's first moves was to contract Diego Rivera for a one man show to be held in the Museum of

Modern Art, then the mecca of modern artists. Rivera willingly accepted, for a one man exhibit at the museum was an honor granted only one other living artist, namely Henri Matisse, whose work was currently on display.  

Rivera arrived in New York on November 13, 1931. He did not bring his works with him, since his frescoes could not be safely shipped. Instead, in the month before opening, he undertook to recreate several of his Mexican scenes. He also painted three works which suggested American life, these being the pictures of an electric power plant, a group engaged in pneumatic drilling, and a three level cross section of New York City. For the most part the exhibition was favorably received, though his painting of New York, which the press entitled "Frozen Assets," drew much criticism as an attack on America's capitalist system. Within the first two weeks 31,625 people passed through the gates; this came within 5,000 of the entire five weeks of the Matisse show.  

Immediately after Rivera finished in New York, he journeyed to Detroit to paint a mural in the garden court of the Detroit Museum of Art. Rivera had come to the attention of  


W. R. Valentiner, the Director of the Detroit Institute of Art, when both were in California. The artist's interest in industry and machinery and his expressed desire to portray men and machine cooperating to master nature and liberate man convinced Valentiner that Rivera should paint a mural for the museum. Valentiner submitted his request to the Detroit Art Commission. Edsel Ford, a member of that commission, at first agreed to donate $10,000 for the project, but after viewing Rivera's initial sketches he raised his donation to $20,000 with an additional $5,000 to be used for materials.  

Rivera's first step was to tour Detroit where he experienced "full direct contact" with the proletariat and their methods of production. Such an experience, he later wrote, "made that single year worth at least ten in my development as an artist and in the clarification of my social outlook and mentality." The one year he spent in Detroit he termed "perhaps the best and most fruitful period of my life."  

Rivera finished the mural on March 13, 1933. The general subject was the steel industry with particular emphasis...
on automobile production; the chemical industry and its allied fields were also represented. The response to the mural was immediate. In one afternoon alone 27,000 visitors flocked to the museum. 27

But not all those who came were favorably impressed. The major point of contention was a scene entitled "The Vaccination Panel." Here a nurse was shown holding a child about to be vaccinated by a physician. Surrounding the trio was a variety of farm animals, ostensibly used for producing serum. The purpose of the scene, Rivera stated, was "to sanctify science as contributing to the saving of life." However, some people interpreted the trio and surrounding animals as a sacrilegious representation of the nativity scene. Led by Reverend H. Ralph Higgins, senior curate of St. Paul's Cathedral, large groups of Detroiters attacked the mural as irreligious and urged its destruction. 28

Further attacks developed from amidst the ranks of professional artists. Resenting the preference shown a foreigner, the American Artists Professional League widely denounced Rivera as a Communist, an atheist, and a foreigner incapable

27 New York Times, March 22, 1933; p. 15; Greenleaf, From These Beginnings, p. 167.

of truly depicting America's character and spirit. Yet for all their opposition the artists refused to countenance the mural's removal or destruction. Such action, they felt, would mark a return to the barbaric age, and, they conceded, "whether you like it or not, Rivera's work has power and strength of line." 29

Supporters, of course, came to Rivera's defense. Valentinier lauded the murals and Edsel Ford stated "I admire Mr. Rivera's spirit. I really believe he was trying to express his idea of the spirit of Detroit." Clyde H. Burroughs, the Secretary of the Detroit Arts Commission best summed up the controversy when he told a radio audience that the battle was not being conducted on artistic grounds but was rather a personal attack on Rivera from the established order who were upset with his stand in behalf of the working classes. They were the "hangers-on," Burroughs explained, who feared for their prerogatives. "Fear stimulates their imagination and they see bogies everywhere they turn." 30

Whatever their goal, it was doubtful that the critics


30 "The Rivera Squall," The Art Digest, April 15, 1933, p. 6; Greenleaf, From These Beginnings, p. 166.
were pleased with the controversy's outcome. Not only did the frescoes remain, but the accusations served to help bring a record attendance to the museum. In the month of March 1933, 86,522 visitors viewed the murals, most of them coming after the controversy developed. This topped the record of May 1930 when a Rembrandt exhibition drew 81,450. Furthermore, Rivera saw that the purpose of his work was to contribute to the "esthetic nourishment" of the proletariat by clarifying those things that class needed in its struggle for a classless society. That the "elegant clubwomen and preachers" resisted this work, Rivera wrote, helped provide "indirect proof" of the frescoes' value. 31

Although the Detroit murals created considerable controversy, the furor was minor to the reaction which followed Rivera's next endeavor. As early as January 1932 rumors spread that Rivera was being considered to provide a mural for the new Rockefeller Center, and the idea that a foreigner would be granted such an opportunity caused some dissention. But it was the Center's intention to have Rivera, Matisse, and Picasso paint murals in the Radio City Music Hall depicting the theme "Man at the Crossroads Looking with Hope and High Vision to the Choosing of a New and Better Future," this

31Greenleaf, From These Beginnings, pp. 167-168; Rivera, Portrait, pp. 19-20; "The Rivera Squall," The Art Digest, April 15, 1933, p. 6.
theme being Rockefeller's choice. Initially all three artists refused the invitation, but Nelson Rockefeller finally convinced Rivera to accept.  

From the beginning, Rivera later noted, there was no question what his interpretation of the theme would be. With a wall in public view, he could not let the opportunity pass. He would depict the struggle between the individualist, capitalist order against the collectivist, socialist order. The mural would portray man the skilled worker, the scientist, the classless individual controlling the means of production toward fulfilling human necessity. The machine would work for the producer, not the exploiter. Rivera sought to paint a fresco that would be useful to the working class of New York, for he felt it was to the working classes that the Rockefeller Center really belonged. Therefore he undertook to paint a picture of society as it then existed under capitalism and to show the road to follow if "hunger, oppression, disorder, and war" were to be liquidated.  

Rivera submitted a sketch and a written description of his planned mural. There would be some revision, but as Rivera's biographer, Bertram Wolfe, related, the description

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33 Rivera, Portrait, pp. 21-24.
left no doubt but that Rivera had a communist mural in mind. He was painting for a Rockefeller, and with the Communist Party attacking him as a millionaire's painter, he was determined to prove his Communist loyalties.

When Rivera submitted his sketches, one of the figures in the lower portion of the mural was vague. But the Center's administration seemed unconcerned, and with $21,000 as the established wage, Rivera began the mural on March 20, 1933. The work proceeded quickly and smoothly, but it was not until the middle of April that people became aware that the artist was putting a picture of far-reaching political implications on the wall. Right in the Rockefeller Center was an attack on the capitalist system: depicted were the germs of social disease swarming above a scene of night club life; capital's war machine was shown in Hitlerized German uniforms spreading poisonous gases; Communist demonstrators were pictured under the swinging clubs of iron-jawed police; and the color red dominated the entire scene. But of even greater significance was the picture of labor grouped in unity. In the center of the group was the hitherto vaguely sketched figure now clarified; it was a portrait of Lenin.35

34 Wolfe, Diego Rivera, p. 322.
Needless to say, a portrait of Lenin decorating a building established for capitalistic purposes raised a few eyebrows. As the New York Times so aptly phrased it, "An apotheosis of Lenin on the walls of Rockefeller Center is about as appropriate as a frieze of swastikas on the doors of a synagogue." On March 4, Rivera received a polite letter from Nelson Rockefeller commenting on the fine quality of Rivera's figures but reminding him that the Center was a public facility and such a painting "might seriously offend a great many people." Rockefeller regretfully requested a substitute of "some unknown man where Lenin's face now appears."

While perhaps not surprised, Rivera was upset with Rockefeller's request. "When I think of the supreme type of labor leader," he stated in an interview with New York Times columnist Anita Brenner, "I, of course, think of Lenin, and I also think of him because he is the man whom I have loved more than any other in the world. Whom could I substitute? And how could I put an 'unknown man' in the place of leader? The idea would lose all its meaning, and the

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37 Morris, Nelson Rockefeller, p. 102.
entire composition would be spoiled."\(^{38}\)

On March 6, Rivera replied to Rockefeller's letter. He defended his work stating that he had not deviated greatly from the sketch approved by the committee. Furthermore, a person with the mentality to be offended by the portrait of a "deceased great man" would be upset by the entire work. "Therefore, rather than mutilate the conception, I should prefer the physical destruction of the conception in its entirety, but preserving, at least, its integrity."\(^{39}\)

Much to Rivera's regret, the Center took him at his word.\(^{40}\) Casting aside the artist's offer for a compromise—a picture of Lincoln and other American heroes who symbolized unity, as a balance to Lenin—the Center's directors dismissed the artist on May 9, paying him in full and then placing a canvas over his work. The news of this action caused an immediate uproar. Students and radicals marched in protest to the Rockefeller's action and riots ensued.


\(^{40}\) In a letter to the editor of The New Republic Rivera and his supporters denounced the Center for taking his words literally, stating, "we protest indignantly and energetically against the stupid interpretation which has been placed upon the words of Diego Rivera.... The unfair interpretation which the Rockefellers made of this was that Diego Rivera thereby authorized the destruction of the mural." The letter never clarified what else Rivera might have meant. Diego Rivera and others, "Mexican Artists Against Rockefeller," New Republic, 41 (April 4, 1934), p. 218.
Three days later General Motors cancelled Rivera's commission to paint the mural on their building at the Chicago World Fair.  

Editorial response to the event was also immediate and generally unsympathetic. The New York American condemned the work for its Communist character. Semi-public murals should in some way represent the American spirit, it wrote, and "not even a flaming Red would pretend that Lenin belongs in the Pantheon of American heroes." Will Rogers, America's humorist, also sided with Rockefeller in his Times article. Rogers denounced Rivera's attempt at propaganda and concluded, "Now the above is said in no disparagement of the Mexican artist, for he is the best in the world, but you should never try to fool a Rockefeller in oil."  

Various American artist groups also voiced their displeasure. In mid-May the Fine Arts Federation of New York expressed their concern over Rivera's communist message, but their major point of contention was the choice of a foreigner to paint an American building, claiming that American artists were as talented as any foreigner. The

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42 Quoted in "Rivera Again," The Art Digest, May 15, 1933, p. 41.
National Commission to Advance American Art, which claimed representatives from over 200 art societies, also denounced "inferior" foreign artists and demanded that the press cease printing destructive criticism about American works. The Commission was determined to bring constant pressure on all levels of governing bodies to give due consideration to American art, arguing that American artists should be considered equal to any in the world. Actually, there was probably more emotion than fact in the arguments of these artistic societies, for during the years of the Depression, American muralists, with few exceptions, had produced disappointing results. As E. P. Richardson later explained, the American mural paintings of the thirties amounted to "rather unsuccessful illustrations, pasted on the wall with little understanding of architectural effect."

Not all artists opposed Rivera. Agreeing with his statement that his rights as an artist to create and express himself were violated, a group of artists and writers, including such renowned figures as Walter Pach, Lewis Mumford, Max Eastman, John Sloan, and George Biddle, wrote a letter to Rockefeller in May. Unconcerned with the content of Rivera's

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45"Native Vs. Alien," The Art Digest, June 1, 1933, pp. 7; 11.

46Richardson, Painting in America, p. 403.
work, the group requested only that Rockefeller permit Rivera to complete his project, even if the public was barred from viewing the results.\textsuperscript{47}

But such pleas were in vain. Rockefeller had often expressed his hope that the mural might be saved and transferred to the Museum of Modern Art. He had even issued a pledge in May that Rivera's fresco would not be destroyed nor mutilated but would be covered for an indefinite time.\textsuperscript{48} Yet at midnight on February 13, 1934, the Center sent workmen to systematically hack Rivera's creation to pieces, explaining that restructural changes necessitated the mural's removal and claiming that midnight was the time least likely to inconvenience the other tenants.\textsuperscript{49}

Opponents of the Rockefeller action immediately voiced their protest. Rivera called the destruction cultural vandalism.\textsuperscript{50} New York artists, led by John Sloan, sent in their protest and threatened to withdraw their works from the Municipal Art Show which was to be held in the Center


\textsuperscript{49} New York Times, February 13, 1934, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
from February 28 through March. And the New York Times expressed its belief that alternate action would have been preferable. Rivera should never have been hired in the first place, the paper editorialized. But since he was, the Rockefellers should have had the mural removed, a delicate and difficult process, but one proved possible. Or better, they could have forewarned Rivera of their restructural plans and had him remove the mural himself.

From the evidence, it appears as if the Rockefellers destroyed the mural in order to prevent public display, and they used the issue of structural changes as simply an excuse. True, an information desk was placed under the mural's former location, but as the New York Times indicated, had the Rockefellers so desired, they could have removed the mural intact and placed it elsewhere. Bertram Wolfe, writing in 1963, affirmed that experts could have removed the mural, and interested parties had agreed to meet the expense. Actually, it is doubtful if the mural had


53 Wolfe, Diego Rivera, p. 331.
to be removed at all. There was still ample space above
the information desk for the mural. In fact, on December
21, 1937 the Times announced that a mural by Jose Maria
Sert filled the wall space which had been left blank ever
since Rivera's work was destroyed.54

As for Rivera, he was determined that his message would
be given form. With the money paid him by the Rockefellers
he hoped to reproduce the Radio City mural, but the wall
at the New Worker's School in New York, where he sought to
recreate his work, was not of the right proportion. Thus
he planned a new work, Portrait of America, which presented
real and symbolic heroes of American history. The work
was painted for the workers, but even they eventually cen-
sored parts of it for being too communistic.55

It is difficult to evaluate the Radio City mural dispute.
The Rockefellers knew of Rivera's communist sympathies, and
the sketch which he forwarded to them, while vague in many
details, still lent evidence that his message would not be
sympathetic to capital. On the other hand Rivera could not
possibly have doubted the Rockefeller's capitalist orienta-
tion. Radio City Music Hall, part of a capitalist-oriented
facility, could hardly stand as a monument to Communist

55 Wolfe, Diego Rivera, p. 336.
heroes. A work of art may well be the property of posterity, as several of Rivera’s sympathizers contended, but maybe posterity, instead of the Rockefellers, should have footed the bill.

Rivera’s incident was not the last controversy to arise from a Rockefeller sponsorship of a Mexican muralist. Jose Clemente Orozco also drew criticism amidst praise with the mural he painted on the wall of Baker Library at Dartmouth College, a mural paid for by Rockefeller funds. Alma Reed, Orozco’s biographer, explained the Rockefellers’ decision to promote these two muralists as part of "a high-powered inter-American social 'build-up.'" This lends credence to the theory of the rising interest in the Western Hemisphere idea. Miss Reed also felt that an effort was being made by the Rockefeller family to wrest artistic pre-eminence from Paris to make New York the world’s leading modern art center.56

Rivera was the favorite of the two Mexican artists, as proven by the opportunities afforded him by Rockefeller influence. But Mrs. Rockefeller, an admirer of Orozco, perhaps hoped to balance her donations by defraying the cost of the mural at Dartmouth, the alma mater of Nelson Rockefeller.

It was made clear to Orozco that had Mrs. Rockefeller not agreed to grant financial aid, he would not have been commissioned for the mural. 57

Although Mrs. Rockefeller donated the money, the mural was the project of the Dartmouth Fine Arts Department, and it was they who hired Orozco at the salary of an assistant professor. The artist spent from 1932 to 1934 working on the mural, with a trip to Europe taking up part of the time. He described his experience at Dartmouth as "altogether agreeable and satisfactory," and affirmed that at no time were any suggestions or criticisms made to him about his project. He was granted complete freedom to paint what he wished. 58

The mural was based on Orozco's interpretation of Quetzalcoatl's prophecy of the white man's coming to the New World. Orozco's message warned of crushed personalities, standardization, and subservience of the masses if control of the machine were not wrested from the exploiters. 59

Orozco attacked what he felt were some of the more serious problems facing America: exploited patriotism,

57 Ibid.
58 Orozco, Autobiography, p. 158.
59 Reed, Orozco, p. 261.
ill-gotten wealth, hypocritical religion, sterile education, and controlled science. But in the final panels he offered a note of hope: education would eventually be reborn and the people would then enjoy their rightful inheritance of learning and leisure. In her analysis of the mural Miss Reed concluded that the criticism which Orozco painted about the dangers confronting American people were constructive criticisms and coincided with the views of such American intellectuals as Waldo Frank, Lewis Mumford, and Stuart Chase. Criticism from a foreigner, however, tends to stimulate patriotism, and Orozco's mural was no exception. Influential groups and individuals, some of them alumni of Dartmouth, questioned the right of anyone who was not a one hundred percent American to criticize America's sacred institutions.

The American Artists Professional League voiced displeasure with Orozco. As early as July 1933 they expressed concern that Orozco did not fit in American colleges "with his muddy brown and black obscurities, ugly in color, coarse in line, alien in spirit, interest and escution, and reflecting the Mexican peasant's point of view." The League felt that the Dartmouth College trustees "lost a great and

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60 Ibid., pp. 263-264.
constructive opportunity" to portray American mental life and conditions for posterity when they did not hire an American painter. The art of a people, the League concluded, "can only be produced with real understanding and sympathy by an artist of that people." 62

The criticism of Orozco's creation by H. M. Watts, a freelance journalist and art critic of Philadelphia, aroused the most controversial response. Writing in September 1934, Watts criticized the New England college for allowing a Mexican to satirize English speaking institutions and expound on "the same old claptrap" about mechanization. Watts' major complaint was directed at Orozco's portrayal of America's educational system, a system which the artist interpreted as a skeleton giving birth to stillborn learning. That a Mexican was permitted to indict "the inspiring development of American colleges and universities" Watts felt was "one of the curiosities of these parlous times." 63

Such criticism stimulated support for Orozco. E. B. Benson, the Associate Editor of The Magazine of Art accused Watts of sowing "the mandrake seeds of fascist rebellion"


63 Harvey M. Watts, "Dartmouth and American Civilization," The Art Digest, September 1, 1934, pp. 5-6.
with his one hundred percent Americanism. There could be no consequence, Benson wrote, of a satirist's name or nationality so long as he had the ability and idealism for the job. Benson concluded that Watts allowed his patriotism "to throw a black veil over his intelligence."  

Frederick S. Hynd, Director of the Hartford School of Art, also attacked Watts, pointing out that he avoided evaluating Orozco's mural as a work of art, "the grounds on which it will either live or perish." As far as Hynds was concerned, Orozco naturally filled the vacuum created by the lack of American mural painters. 

One of Orozco's more avid supporters was Lewis Mumford. Writing in October 1934, Mumford answered the major criticisms leveled at Orozco's work. Against charges that the paintings were not decorative and did not go with the architecture, Mumford replied that the mural was a major work of art. The contention that Dartmouth's impressionable adolescents should not be exposed to the images, even if they represented the truth, brought a strong retort from Mumford. He argued that it was better to be told of the evils of modern civilization than to be taken unaware by them. The purpose of the


65Frederick S. Hynd, n.t. The Art Digest, October 1, 1934, pp. 6, 21.
mural, he asserted, was "not to accentuate the horrors of our civilization but to provide the fierce determination necessary to overcome them." Finally, in response to those who felt the themes did not fit with the New England tradition, Mumford pointed out that there were two kinds of New England. One was that of "dead and moth eaten" Gift Shoppe furniture. The other was the New England of vital regional culture that had nurtured Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne. This New England, conscious of its own deep roots, never hesitated to go elsewhere to find what its own soil lacked. "In its more imaginative sons," he related, "the New England has always been at home on a world state, just as its merchants were at home in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Rio." A secure regionalism, he concluded, could seek "cosmopolitan breadth" without the danger of losing its virtue or integrity. Only a "sick regionalism" continually gazed upon its own face "praising its warts and pimples as beauty marks."66

The growing sense of hemispheric solidarity was in part a response to the militaristic activities in Europe and Asia. The growing realization that the neighbors to the south could provide the United States with both resources

and perhaps military aid gave stimulus to better relations within the hemisphere. At the same time, the sentiment once again pervaded that the Western Hemisphere was above the troubles of the Old World. In searching for this common bond culture and heritage acquired new importance, as Americans of both continents sought the unifying ties of history in the cultural and historical realms. The commissioning of Rivera and Orozco was part of this search. The desire of influential American art enthusiasts to portray the life of the United States through Mexican eyes was perhaps indicative of the belief that Saxon and Latin America shared a common outlook. The insight of the Mexicans into industrial life, however, belied the hopes of those who saw the United States and Mexico sharing a common ideology. America was modern, industrial, and capitalistic in its orientation. Mexico was backward, rural, and knew the pangs of peonage. It was the capitalist's hope to perpetuate the system which brought them status. It was the Mexican's hope to alter this system that it might bring all to an equal plane. The American was now reluctantly forced to acknowledge that others saw pitfalls in his world. His recourse was to destroy what he did not wish to see.
CONCLUSION

As American civilization moved further from the rural mold upon which it had been established, the intellectual found his position in society threatened. The commercial man became the recognized leader, as his material possessions lent him power. The mechanical life predominated, and to the intellectual that meant the supremacy of machines, time clocks and artificial values. People no longer seemed interested in such intellectual pursuits as art, literature, or simple contemplation. The intellectual no longer felt needed in American society, except as a pawn of the business world.

Resisting this subservient role, the intellectual sought ways either to defy the businessman or to reshape American life in a direction more suited to intellectual tastes. The attack took various forms. Sinclair Lewis, John Dos Passos, and John Steinbeck criticized and satirized their society through the novel. Other writers expressed their displeasure with American society in the columns of such magazines as The Liberator and The New Masses. The more radical intellectuals supported ideologies alien to
capitalism and attempted to promote these ideologies in the United States. Writers like Michael Gold and Joseph Freeman, for instance, joined the Communist Party and worked for its cause. Other writers, like Edmund Wilson and John Dos Passos sympathized with Socialism and Marx but were repelled by Communism's dogmatic character; still they were concerned with the social injustices which they witnessed in the United States, and they attributed much of the sordid life to the policies of the business world.

Less radical writers also saw evils in the business establishment, but their proposed changes were apolitical in tone. Thorstein Veblen, for example, attracted a large intellectual following when he advocated ridding industrial society of the price system and the profit motive and creating instead a planned society. In such a society ex-businessmen would be eliminated from positions of trust and responsibility. Veblen's theory was a forerunner of "Technocracy," a movement which proposed that engineers and technicians replace the industrial captains.

Flight was another method of demonstrating discontent with American life. Granville Hicks, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald were among the more prominent of the ex-patriots, establishing themselves abroad for a number of years. Others, like John Dewey and Stuart Chase, traveled to foreign countries simply to see if perhaps life was
sweeter on the other side. Those who traveled on the short stay plan usually found something nice to say about their host countries, but there was little intention to remain.

Among the countries visited were Russia and Mexico. Russia's attraction did not lie so much in Communism, as in the effective demonstration of the collective will at work. Coming from a country where individualism seemed to connote aggressive businessmen, the American visitors found Russia's experiment intriguing. Eventually many of these travelers lost their admiration for Russia, after witnessing its authoritarian regime, but they still saw a positive good in the planned economy which tended to obviate the need for the business class.

The writers who visited Mexico went for a variety of reasons. Lincoln Steffens wished to witness the Mexican Revolution, while the need for adventure influenced John Reed and Ambrose Bierce. The hope for recognition lay among Jack London's motives. Stuart Chase went at first for a rest and later returned on the hope of finding an economic system which would better adapt to his economic theories. Michael Gold went primarily to avoid his country's draft call. Other writers were attracted to Mexico by its rural, backward setting. Charles Flandrau, Ernest Gruening, and Robert Redfield were among this group, and they revived the old rural-urban conflict by comparing the virtues of rural
Mexico with the problems of the urbanized United States.

Despite Mexico's diverse attraction, most of the writers who traveled to or simply wrote of Mexico were impressed with its rural innocence. To the discontented American such innocence offered a refreshing contrast to America's decadent culture. They discovered in Mexico a people as yet uncorrupted by mechanization and urbanity. The Mexican seemed to live in a rural paradise. They lived and worked on the land close to Nature; they apparently maintained close familial and village ties, and they were uninhibited by artificially imposed urban values. If these people, backward in technology and yet apparently content with their life, could be kept free from the grasp of the American businessman and protected from the evils of mechanization, they could lead the way toward establishing a new culture, a culture which would have little use for the businessman and in which the intellectual could find an important niche. If the writer could only convince his countrymen of the values of Mexican life, perhaps the American people would see the folly of their industrial ways and allow the intellectual to lead them back toward a less standardized and more creative pastoral existence.

In looking to Mexico for a model the intellectual was looking backward. He was not seeking leadership in a modern, mechanized world, for he felt he could not fit in such a
situation. He rationalized his frustration by alluding to the industrial world's failings and tended to pass over the virtues which scientific and technological advancement promulgated. He strove, instead, to return to a less hectic, more contemplative civilization where a thinker, a creator, or an artist would be more welcome. In the process he concentrated on the virtues of this idealized past and neglected its failings. The rural life was seen in all its cooperative, natural, spiritual splendor. The hunger that accompanied poor crop yields, the diseases that resulted from poor sanitation, and the ignorance which accompanied little or no education were ignored.

Thus Mexico seemed a paradise to the American intellectual. Coming from an urban civilization, with its rapid pace, rigid schedules, unemployment, and standardization, the American found the slow paced, backward, rural life of Mexico ideal. He envied the carefree life that accompanied the handicraft culture, the small plot of land, and the communal society. The comparatively short time the American spent in Mexico convinced him that the rural folk were friendly, cooperative, happy, and creative. He was also impressed with their bravery and determination, as he witnessed them rise up against their oppressors. In all the American intellectual admired the Mexicans because to him they enjoyed the contentment he longed for, and they were
determined to live their lives as they pleased. But the American intellectual did not really see the entire Mexican, just as he did not really see all the facets which comprised rural life.

The intellectual in searching for a model that would fit his conception of an ideal existence, saw only what he needed to see. He apparently found a self-sufficient people working in communal harmony on their small plots of land; he saw a leisurely society amusing itself through the creation of artistic handicrafts; he saw villages contentedly following ancient tribal customs; he saw a people unbothered by urban problems. He admitted that all was not perfect in such a civilization, and he acknowledged the need for some modern improvements in the realms of hygiene, scientific agriculture, and education. But in describing this rural civilization the intellectual tended to ignore the abject poverty and malnutrition which plagued these people. He seemed unaware that what he described as a self-sufficient economy was really one dependent on outside products, and backward agricultural practices often hindered these people in their efforts to earn enough to meet their needs. Perhaps most important was the need of the writer to show a contented communal society unconcerned with urban values. This need apparently blinded the observer to
Indians were actually motivated by many of the same values as the city folk. Like the urban dweller, the Indian held individual aspirations; he experienced jealousies; he was ambitious. He sought wealth and private property and consequently engaged in a minimum of communal activity. Unfortunately, the backward situation in which the Indian existed made it most difficult for him to achieve his goals. He usually resigned himself to a day by day existence, but his deep aspirations belied his contentment.

The American intellectual, feeling superfluous in an individualistic, industrial society sought to prove the superiority of a communal civilization oriented toward pastoral, contemplative values. In failing to see the handicaps which plagued such society, he unintentionally proposed keeping a people in poverty and misery. Such was the manifestation of a rather selfish desire to combat a system which denied the intellectual a satisfying role.
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