The Life and Times of Pancho Villa

Friedrich Katz

STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Stanford, California ≈ 1998

CHAPTER ONE

From the Frontier to the Border

> There is enormous animosity against the hacienda for which I have no explanation, and which would have seemed incredible to me, if I did not feel it every moment. Many of the servants whom we considered loyal have greatly disappointed us; they have been captivated by the promises made by the revolutionaries that the lands would be divided among them, and right now all they think about is the realization of such a beautiful dream. Many of them have received great benefits from the hacienda and they are the ones who demand land with the greatest eagerness, not because we have caused them any harm, but because of their desire for their own profit.
>
> —The administrator of the hacienda of Santa Catalina to its owner[1]

On the eve of the Spanish Conquest, what is today the state of Chihuahua had been part neither of the Aztec empire nor of the complex civilization known as Mesoamerica, which included the inhabitants of central and southern Mexico. In contrast to Mesoamerica, Chihuahua had no large cities, no dense population living on intensive agriculture, and no highly stratified social groups. Instead, it was thinly populated by groups of hunters, gatherers, and some agriculturists, loosely organized into different tribes. The Aztecs had shown no interest in conquering this nomadic population, to which they collectively referred in the most derisive way as *chichimecas*, the sons of dogs.

The Aztecs' lack of interest is not surprising. The vast state of Chihuahua consists mostly of deserts and inhospitable mountain ranges. Large parts of central Chihuahua are taken up by the sand dunes of Samalayuca, while the even more arid Bolsón de Mapimi is located in the southeastern part of the state. The huge Sierra Madre, in western Chihuahua, are mostly just as inhospitable. Agriculture could be practiced only in limited regions, irrigated by rivers and lakes, mainly in the northwestern part of the state and to a lesser degree in eastern Chihuahua near the Conchos River. Some of the most important resources of Chihuahua were of no interest to the Aztecs. There were no cattle to graze on the

fertile pastureland in the central part of the state, and the Aztecs lacked the technology to extract its rich mineral ores. They had no use either for its huge timber resources.

Initially, the Spaniards, too, showed little interest in the region. Their attitude changed at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, when large silver mines were discovered near the present cities of Chihuahua and Parral. Spanish settlements were soon established, and haciendas sprang up around them to supply the miners with food and to profit from the mining boom. Since it was difficult to attract laborers or immigrants from central Mexico or from Spain to this vast, undeveloped, and dangerous region, the Spaniards attempted to enslave the local population, most of whom were Tarahumara, whose way of life was predominantly nomadic. When Indian slavery proved to be both unsuccessful (many slaves fled into the Sierra Madre) and illegal (the Spanish Crown soon banned Indian slavery), new methods of influencing the Indians were attempted.

The Jesuits and Franciscans tried to settle them in missions. Although temporarily subdued, the Tarahumara staged a number of uprisings, however, and the majority of them finally faded into the Sierra Madre, where the Spaniards had great difficulty in locating them, and where they resumed their nomadic way of life.[2]

Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the population of Chihuahua gradually expanded as more mines were developed, new haciendas were set up, and migrants decided to settle there. That expansion abruptly halted in the mid eighteenth century, when Apache raiders began to make their presence felt in Chihuahua. Until then, the Apaches had lived far to the north of Chihuahua, but in the eighteenth century, they were pushed southward by the far more powerful Comanches, and they began raiding Spanish settlements. The few hundred soldiers that Spain had stationed on the frontier were unable to put up an effective resistance, and many of Spain's hacendados as well as its miners fled southward or into a few large towns.[3]

Faced with the possible loss of this potentially rich province, the Spanish crown decided to set up a series of fortified settlements inhabited by armed peasant freeholders. Extraordinary benefits were given to migrants from Spain and from central Mexico, as well as to local Indians, who were willing to settle in these military colonies. They were granted large amounts of land and exempted from paying taxes for ten years. Indian military colonists, in contrast to the Indian peasants of central Mexico, who were considered wards of the crown, were given full rights of Spanish citizenship.[4]

By the end of the eighteenth century, these colonists began to be a fighting force able effectively to resist the Apache raiders. When the crown held out not only a stick in the shape of these military colonies but a carrot as well, offering to supply all Apaches who settled near Spanish towns with food, clothing, and alcohol, many of the nomadic raiders settled down. Although it was never completely pacified, the region was more peaceful than ever before. For the first time, the peasant freeholders were able to fully enjoy the fruits of their land and labor, for which they gave credit to the Spanish crown. As a result, when the Mexican war of independence broke out in 1810, not only did the military colonists

along New Spain's northern frontier not join the revolutionaries in central and southern Mexico, but many of them decided to fight on the side of Spain.[5]

A century later, in 1910, after the Mexican government had again pacified the frontier, the descendants of these military colonists took a completely different attitude and fought in the forefront of the Mexican Revolution. The reason for that change in attitude can be found in the development of Chihuahua in the nineteenth century.

The peace the Spanish crown brought to the frontier did not survive Spanish colonial rule. By 1830, the Apaches were raiding again. Weak Mexican governments, generally toppled after one or two years by military coups or by rival political factions, had neither the means nor the will to fight the Apaches. The payments in food and in kind that had kept them peaceful were canceled just as the Apaches began to sense the military weakness of the new Mexican government. The Mexican army was far more adept at staging coups in Mexico City than at fighting Apache raiders. Attacks on haciendas increased to such a degree that by the mid nineteenth century, most hacendados had abandoned their estates. By contrast, the military colonists stayed and fought, since they had nowhere else to go.[6]

Describing this period, the inhabitants of the old military colony of Namiquipa proudly wrote in a petition they drafted at the end of the nineteenth century, "all neighboring haciendas had been abandoned because of the constant danger of aggression by the barbarians between 1832 and 1860 and only Namiquipa remained to fight the barbarians and to constitute a lonely bastion of civilization in this remote region."[7] This was true not only of Namiquipa but of many other military colonies and free villages in large parts of Chihuahua. In these years, they created what was in many respects a unique kind of society in Mexico, limited to northern Chihuahua and a few other regions that were prey to Apache attacks. It was a society that embodied a unique combination of savagery and democracy. Savagery was characteristic of both sides in the conflict. The Apaches frequently killed and tortured their prisoners, including women and children, and the Mexican authorities offered bounties for Apache scalps, also including those of women and children. The savagery at times extended to Tarahumara Indians, who did not raid Mexican settlements but frequently lost their lands and their properties to white and mestizo settlers.[8]

On the other hand, this Chihuahuan society of free *rancheros* perhaps most closely corresponded to the kind of U.S. frontier society painted in vivid colors by Frederick Jackson Turner. His hypothesis, which captured the minds of generations of Americans, was that the U.S. frontier created a unique kind of self-reliant, autonomous, independent farmer. These farmers, according to Turner, were unencumbered by the class differences and power structures of the eastern United States. The state was weak, the traditional wealthy families did not go west, and so a kind of egalitarian, self-reliant society was created in the west of the United States, which largely shaped the mentality of that country.

In recent years, this hypothesis has aroused much controversy in U.S. historiography.[9] Some historians argue that land speculators, wealthy landowners, and bankers were very much present in the settlement of what is generally considered the U.S. frontier—as was the state in the shape of the U.S. Army. In much of

Chihuahua and some other parts of northern Mexico, the contrary was the case in the period from about 1830 to the 1860s. The state, which in the shape of Spanish colonial authorities, the army, wealthy landowners, and the Catholic church had been present at the genesis of the northern Mexican frontier in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, had largely disappeared in northwestern Chihuahua by the 1830s. Many of the missions that the Jesuits had established vanished toward the end of the colonial period after the order was expelled from New Spain in 1767; the remaining missions were largely abandoned when Spanish rule ended in Mexico in 1821. Wealthy miners and hacendados fled as the Apaches advanced, and bankers and land speculators saw no value in lands that were constantly prey to nomadic attacks. The Mexican federal government and the federal army were far too weak and riven by internal dissension to have any significant presence in Chihuahua and northern Mexico, so the free rancheros were left to their own devices. The society they developed was poor but largely egalitarian. Chihuahuans were self-reliant and self-confident, with a fierce sense of pride in being able to maintain themselves in the face of such adversity. From the 1860s onward, that society would once again be transformed by the return of both the state and the hacendados to Chihuahua. The man who did most to engineer that return was one of the state's most important, flamboyant, and memorable figures, Luis Terrazas.

The Rise of Luis Terrazas

In the 1860s, after Mexico defeated the French invaders and put an end to Maximilian's empire, a more stable administration was established. Fearing that Chihuahua would be annexed by the United States if it was not brought firmly under Mexican control, the central government did everything in its power to fight the Apaches. New military colonies were established; settlers were given land if they were ready to fight against the Indian raiders; and, above all, the hacendados were induced to return. The man who was largely responsible for this new policy was Luis Terrazas.

The son of a well-to-do butcher, Terrazas did not come from one of Chihuahua's ruling families, although he soon married into one of them. He joined the Liberal party in Chihuahua, became one of its leaders, and, in the course of the civil wars between Liberals and Conservatives, became Liberal governor of the state in 1859. Being more adept than his predecessors at fighting off the Apache raiders, he quickly became popular.[10]

Terrazas's organizational talents were not the sole reason for his success. His chief innovation was to divert tax revenues earmarked for the federal government in Mexico City to setting up militias to fight the Indians. While this approach was unpopular in Mexico's capital, it gained Terrazas prestige and support among many segments of Chihuahua's population, including its military colonists, who regarded the central authorities as useless exploiters and parasites.

Terrazas did not devote all of his energies to fighting the Apaches. He also used the governorship to acquire some of the largest haciendas in the state. He acquired his largest estate by expropriating the property of another hacendado,

Pablo Martínez del Río, who had the misfortune to choose the wrong side in the war between the French and Mexico. He obtained other estates by buying them cheap from hacendados who had abandoned them and saw no way of settling them again. Since he was governor of the state, Terrazas controlled the militia and was able to attract many laborers who had fled the countryside to work on his estates, because he was able to offer them a greater degree of protection than other hacendados. There is no evidence that when he began forming his empire in the 1860s, Terrazas expropriated any of the lands of the peasant freeholders in the military colonies. There were sufficient abandoned estate lands to meet his ambitions, and he needed the fighting power of the military colonists. While Terrazas was governor of the state, his cousin Joaquín Terrazas commanded militia units composed of peasant freeholders who were far more effective in fighting the Apaches than the few federal troops stationed in Chihuahua. The activities of this cousin reflected to the credit of Terrazas, and he gained a large measure of popularity in his native state.

In 1876, the situations of Terrazas and of Mexico profoundly changed when General Porfirio Díaz, one of the heroes of Mexico's struggle for independence against Napoleon III, carried out a successful military coup and assumed power in Mexico. It was the beginning of the longest dictatorship in the history of Mexico. With the exception of four years from 1880 to 1884 when an ally of Díaz's, Manuel González, assumed the country's presidency, Díaz would rule Mexico until 1911, when he was overthrown by a popular uprising. In many respects, the Díaz regime met the fondest hopes of Mexico's wealthiest men, such as Luis Terrazas.

In economic terms, Mexico underwent unprecedented economic growth. Newly constructed railroads linked Mexico to the United States, as well as to port cities in Mexico. The result was a tremendous increase in foreign investment in Mexico, as well as spectacular economic growth. Between 1884 and 1900, about $1,200,000,000 worth of foreign investment flooded into the country, and the gross national product rose at an annual rate of 8 percent. Mexico now enjoyed an unprecedented era of political stability. Uprisings by members of the elite and the military, which had been the hallmark of Mexico's history since independence, practically ceased. This was owing not only to the power of the state, whose revenues increased significantly thanks to economic growth and foreign investment, but also to the fact that members of the elite became intermediaries for foreign investors and thus had a major stake in maintaining the political stability that was a precondition for foreign investment. The increasing power of the state and the existence of railroads that greatly increased the mobility of government military forces allowed the regime to crush popular and middle-class uprisings wherever they occurred. Possibilities of political instability were drastically reduced by falsified elections, which led to a rubber-stamp congress that Díaz completely controlled. The result of political growth and economic stability was that Mexico's upper class were now able to accumulate enormous wealth. They did so not only by becoming intermediaries for foreign investors but also because they were able, thanks to the communication revolution that had taken place in Mexico, to export large amounts of goods both to the United States and to Europe. Díaz's policies of keeping down popular protest,

muzzling the opposition press, preventing the formation of labor unions, and not allowing strikes greatly contributed to this enrichment. So did another of Porfirio Díaz's policies: large-scale expropriation of land that belonged to village communities.

Unlike other members of Mexico's ruling class, Luis Terrazas by no means found Díaz's assumption of power an unmitigated blessing. In 1876, his political acumen had failed him, and instead of siding with Díaz, he had supported his rival, President Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada. As a result supporters of Terrazas were ousted from the governorship of Chihuahua, which was now occupied by a powerful rival of Terrazas's, Angel Trias. Terrazas thus suffered a setback, but it was by no means a decisive defeat. Díaz's policy was not to kill or exterminate members of the elite who had opposed him, but to remove them from power, allowing them to enrich themselves by all means at their disposal in the hope that they would thus be dissuaded from engaging in costly and destabilizing uprisings. Thanks to the newly built railroads, Terrazas was able to export huge numbers of cattle to the United States. His family also controlled the largest bank in Chihuahua, the Banco Minero, and played a major role as an intermediary or even as a partner for foreign entrepreneurs who invested in Chihuahua. Terrazas profited, too, from another aspect of Porfirian "modernization," the confiscation on a vast scale of lands belonging to communal villages or to small landowners, which would play a decisive role in both Terrazas's and Díaz's downfall in 1911.

The fact that he had become one of the richest men in Mexico did not, however, satisfy Terrazas. He wanted to regain political power in his native state. In 1879, he briefly succeeded in doing so. In that year, Terrazas's rival Angel Trias suffered a sharp decline in popularity when he raised taxes in order to fight the Apaches but had little success to show for it. The people of rural western Chihuahua staged a revolt and forced Trias to resign in favor of Terrazas, and as a consequence the latter once more became governor of Chihuahua. Díaz, who was on the verge of handing power over to his temporary successor Manuel González, was not willing to intervene, and González had no problem with tolerating Terrazas's assumption of power. In 1884, when Díaz once again became president of Mexico, Terrazas once more lost control of his native state, and it would take eighteen years, until 1903, for him to regain it. In the meantime, though, he would become the wealthiest man in Mexico.

Two developments greatly contributed to Terrazas's accumulation of new wealth but would have devastating consequences for Chihuahua's peasant freeholders. In 1885, U.S. troops captured the last major Apache leader, Geronimo, and Apache raids into Mexico practically ceased. And in the same year, Chihuahua was linked by railroads both to central Mexico and to the United States.

All this resulted in an enormous economic boom. Chihuahua's miners and cattle ranchers were able to sell their products across the border in the United States, and U.S. investors discovered that returns on investments could be very large in Chihuahua. Land prices rose, and the situation of Chihuahua's peasant freeholders underwent a dramatic change.

The Seeds of Revolution: The Offensive Against Chihuahua's Free Villages

For years the military colonists who had fought against Apache raiders had been considered the heroes of Chihuahua. Their deeds were sung in *corridos* (popular ballads). They had marched in triumph through the streets of Ciudad Chihuahua, and governor after governor had praised them for their exploits. The free villagers of Chihuahua saw themselves as "defenders of civilization against the barbarians."[11] Ironically, however, the destruction of their enemies, the Apaches, also heralded their own elimination as a social class. After the capture of Geronimo, the rulers of Mexico and Chihuahua no longer had any need for the fighting skill and spirit of the military colonists. What they now wanted was their land, the value of which had increased enormously as a result of railway construction, foreign investment, and the economic boom.

In contrast to what had happened a century earlier, when peace between the Spaniards and Apaches gave Chihuahua's free villagers the possibility of enjoying their lands and rights and had converted them into grateful adherents of the Spanish colonial government, a very different situation arose once peace was established in late-nineteenth-century Chihuahua.

In the years between 1884 and 1910, the state's free villagers lost most of their lands and their traditional rights and suffered an attack upon their sense of dignity, which was based on their economic independence and freedom from outside interference. These tendencies affected not only the former military colonists but all of Chihuahua's peasant freeholders. The composition of this population was by no means homogeneous. It embraced at least five groups.

At the top—in a certain sense, the aristocracy of Chihuahua's free villagers—were the inhabitants of the first five military colonies that Viceroy Teodoro de Croix had set up in 1776. These were Namiquipa, Cruces, Casas Grandes, Janos, and Galeana. These colonies had received a huge amount of land: 112,359 hectares each.[12]

The second group consisted of colonies, such as San Andrés and Cuchillo Parado, that had been founded later, either by the Spanish colonial administration or by the Mexican government, and whose recipients had received far less land than the original five colonies. While the lands of these communities were in part individually owned and sections could be sold either to inhabitants of these villages and towns or to outsiders who wanted to settle there, much of the land was communal and was either utilized jointly—this was the case with pastureland—or rented out to individual community members.

The third group of free villagers consisted of Indians, mainly Tarahumara. They had obtained their lands from two different sources. Some had received it from the colonial authorities on the same terms under which Indian villages had been allowed to keep their common land in central and southern Mexico. The lands belonged to the community, could not be sold, and were far smaller in extent than those of the military colonies. A second group of Indians had originally possessed no lands of their own but had been settled on missions that officially belonged to the Jesuit order. After the expulsion of the Jesuits by the Spanish

crown in 1767, some of them were given the same status as those Indian villages dependent upon the crown. Many of them soon lost their land, because the Jesuits were not there to protect their holdings. The expulsion of some Indians from the former Jesuit properties was followed in the nineteenth century by a more massive process whereby mestizos and whites, who came either from other parts of Chihuahua, from other parts of Mexico, or, after 1848, from territories annexed by the United States, took over much land that had originally belonged to the Indians. Many Indians were forced onto marginal land or into remote mountain regions of the Sierra Madre. Nevertheless, a substantial number of Indian villages still managed to retain land of their own.

The fourth group comprised communities inhabited mainly by squatters who lived either on public land or on abandoned haciendas—at times with the tacit approval of the estate owners, who could thus count on more men to defend their properties from Apache raids.

Finally, there were groups of landless villagers who grazed their cattle on unclaimed public lands.[13]

The expropriation and subjugation of Chihuahua's free villagers did not proceed smoothly and without major obstacles. Not only were these northern villagers armed, but they had a long fighting tradition. After all, the Apaches, whom they had fought for more than a century, were considered by some observers to be the best guerrilla fighters in the world.

The resentment and shock that the attacks by the federal government, the state government, and the hacendados on their lands and their rights produced among Chihuahua's peasant freeholders were all the greater since, unlike the situation that existed in central and southern Mexico, these attacks were to a large degree unexpected.

In southern and central Mexico, conflicts over land between hacendados and free villages had a long tradition, going back all the way to the colonial period, and perhaps even to precolonial times. While such conflicts were not absent in the north, they tended until the 1880s to be overshadowed by the common interest of landowners and free villagers in fending off Apache attacks. Land values were low as long as the Indian wars raged, and this had also tended to reduce conflicts between the villagers and the hacendados. In the 1860s, under the governorship of Terrazas and at the initiative of President Benito Juárez, lands were granted to new military colonists and to veterans of the war against the French.[14]

In the 1880s, however, the attitudes of both the central government and of the state administration of Chihuahua toward these military colonists underwent a change. The first indication of this was a new government policy with respect to public lands, where traditionally anyone had been able to graze cattle or collect wood.

A large part of the state consisted of such unclaimed land belonging to the central government, which had two different options for disposing of it. The first was to do what the U.S. government had done after the Civil War and proclaim a homestead act to open the land to farmers and small ranchers, which would have contributed, as it did in the United States,[15] to the easing of social tensions and the creation of a kind of safety valve for landless peasants from central Mexico. Such a policy would not have created a predominant class of small landowners in Chihuahua, since the government-owned lands were largely inappropriate for small-scale agriculture, but it would have helped to stabilize the social situation in the state.

The Mexican government instead opted for a very different policy, which was to play a major role in the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution 25 years later. Instead of being opened up or even sold to small settlers, the land was given away or sold in huge chunks. As payment for their work, surveying companies were allowed to keep a third of the public lands they surveyed. The other two-thirds were sold by the government to hacendados or foreign entrepreneurs, with the vague understanding that in return they would bring in colonists from Europe.

The surveying companies began their work on a large scale in 1884. Chihuahua's free villagers rapidly felt the effects of their activity. With the approval of the federal government, the surveying companies launched their first attack on the five original and largest military colonies, each of which had been adjudicated 112,359 hectares by the Spanish colonial authorities. The surveying companies refused to recognize these properties and attempted (not always successfully) to limit the collective holdings of these five military colonies to 28,080 hectares each. Other communities were affected in more indirect ways by the activities of the surveying companies. Grazing lands that had been part of the public domain, and had thus been accessible to all inhabitants, were suddenly closed off. Wild cattle and game, which could be hunted by everyone at will as long as the land where they roamed was public property, were now closed to Chihuahua's free villagers. They also lost the right to exploit the woodlands and other resources they had freely enjoyed.[16]

The activities of the surveying companies in the years between 1884 and 1892 weakened but did not destroy the economic basis of Chihuahua's free peasantry.[17] Chihuahua's landowners knew the fighting capacities of their erstwhile allies and were afraid of provoking them. A series of measures taken by both the federal and the state governments had already aroused the anger of many of Chihuahua's villagers. They had lost much of the independence and freedom that they had enjoyed throughout most of the nineteenth century. A law passed in 1884 stated that *jefes políticos* (i.e., district administrators) would not be elected anymore, but would be appointed by the state authorities. At the same time, their power over the villages was greatly strengthened. In many cases, villagers were not allowed to take cases to the courts without getting prior approval of the new jefes políticos.[18]

In 1891, the state government struck another blow at the traditional autonomy of the inhabitants of Chihuahua. A decree was passed whereby district capitals would not elect their own mayors; henceforth, these officials too would be appointed by the state governor. While these measures had generated dissatisfaction among many of Chihuahua's free villagers, they had, with a few exceptions, not led to any violent reactions. In the first years after they were implemented, some villagers found compensation for the losses they had suffered. Many went to work in newly opened mines or in railway construction. Others utilized the newly built railroads to find work across the border in the United States. Between 1890 and 1893, however, a series of violent uprisings shook Chihuahua, shattering the Porfirian peace in the state.

The First Revolts in the Chihuahuan Countryside

Several factors contributed to transforming the deep dissatisfaction of Chihuahua's villagers into violent upheavals. Beginning in 1891, many mines in the state closed or sharply reduced the number of their employees, either because of a cyclical economic crisis or because of new tariffs imposed by the United States. At the same time, owing to bad harvests, food prices rose.[19]

Chihuahua's hacendados had been cautious about pressing their claims to village lands. One of the state's wealthiest hacendados, Enrique Muller, for example, had not yet used coercion to force the inhabitants of Namiquipa from some of their lands he now claimed as his own.[20] Some outsiders, however, showed less restraint. These outsiders included the brothers Limantour, one of whom, José Yves Limantour, was by then one of the most powerful men in the Díaz administration. Their father, José Yves Limantour Sr., a financial genius regarded by many of his contemporaries as a genial crook, had migrated from France to California in the 1840s and established close personal ties to the Mexican governor of that province, Micheltorena. He acquired large amounts of land, both in what was to become the U.S. part of California and in Baja California, which remained part of Mexico. In the 1850s, he claimed to own most of the San Francisco Bay area, as well as large parts of present-day Los Angeles. U.S. courts discounted his claims, stating that his certificates of ownership were faked.[21]

The Mexican authorities, on the other hand, recognized his claims to lands in Mexico, and the value of his properties there was greatly enhanced when he bought large amounts of former church property from the Mexican state in the 1850s and 1860s. After his death, his sons struck a deal with the Mexican government. They exchanged their father's lands, which were spread out over diverse parts of Mexico, for one huge chunk of public land in the mountain region of western Chihuahua. The Limantour brothers did not respect the rights of the villagers living there. According to their lawyers, "they could not occupy these lands because they had to fight the natives who occupy the major part of the towns and villages which are part of this property."[22]

The uprisings on the Limantour properties were part of a more general wave of revolts that erupted in the mountain region of western Chihuahua between 1889 and 1893. They were brought about, not only by the dissatisfaction of the villagers, but also because the latter were firmly convinced that they enjoyed the support of their traditional patron and ally, Luis Terrazas, and thus felt that they had a genuine chance of succeeding.

In spite of his removal from political power in 1884, Terrazas had not done at all badly in the years that followed. His economic empire had grown by leaps and bounds. Demand for Mexican cattle had increased rapidly in the United States, and as the main cattle exporter in Chihuahua, Terrazas profited from the boom. At the same time, he secured a concession for the establishment of the Banco Minero, which was to become the largest bank in the state.

Not satisfied with mere economic success, Terrazas began plotting to regain control of his native state. Economic considerations may have played an important role in his decision, since as foreign capital began streaming into Chihuahua, the political elite that dominated the state had a unique opportunity to profit by acting as intermediaries. However, regaining political power was no easy undertaking. In order to prevent Terrazas from accumulating too much power, Díaz had named a rival, Lauro Carrillo, as governor of the state. Carrillo's term of office expired in 1891, when new elections were due, but he had announced his candidacy for another term.

Terrazas knew the rules of the political game as it was played in Porfirian Mexico. Votes counted for very little and could not force a governor from power. If he wanted to defeat his rival, Terrazas had to convince Porfirio Díaz that Carrillo was incapable of maintaining peace in Chihuahua. Terrazas's hopes for a political turnabout were strengthened in March 1891, when Carrillo's protector, Carlos Pacheco, an influential minister in the Díaz government, was ousted from his post in the cabinet and died a few weeks later. The possibility that Díaz might drop Carrillo thus increased, and Terrazas became even more intent on proving that Carrillo was incapable of keeping order in Chihuahua. To that end, he surreptitiously encouraged rebellions, and when they erupted, he urged the rebels to hold out against the efforts to suppress them.[23]

Carrillo was by no means ignorant of Terrazas's plans. On the one hand, he realized what was at stake and was intent on securing a peaceful settlement with the rebellious villagers. On the other, although willing to make some concessions, he could not afford to be labeled a weakling by either Díaz or the state's upper classes. The dilemma he faced was clearly expressed by the way Carrillo dealt with a series of peasant uprisings in Chihuahua. He did not carry out the kind of search-and-destroy operations so characteristic of the Díaz administration's war against the rebellious Yaqui Indians in neighboring Sonora. Most prisoners were not shot, the civilian population was not decimated or imprisoned, and rebellious villages were not razed. Carrillo offered most rebels an amnesty if they would lay down their arms, but generally did not accede to their demands. In some exceptional cases, however, he proved flexible. In Temosachic, for example, he removed the mayor, against whom the villagers had rebelled.[24]

On the whole, Carrillo's tactics paid off. His willingness to grant amnesty persuaded many villagers who had fled into the mountains in order to engage in guerrilla warfare, and who felt isolated because other villagers had not joined their rebellion, to accept the government's offer. By avoiding attacks on the civilian population and not carrying out mass reprisals, Carrillo prevented the kind of escalation of violence and counterviolence so characteristic of many guerrilla struggles.

There was, however, one exception to this generally peaceful denouement. It occurred in the small village of Tomóchi in the western mountains of Chihuahua. The Tomóchi revolt led to the fall of Carrillo, after the villagers inflicted on the Porfirian army the greatest defeat it suffered prior to the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution of 1910–11. In many ways, the Tomóchi revolt prepared Chihuahua's countryfolk for the revolutionary upheaval that was to occur twenty years later.

The Revolt That Shook Chihuahua

Tomóchi was not a well known and prestigious military colony like Namiquipa, Cruces, or Janos. It was an obscure village of scarcely 200 inhabitants in a small

valley in the western mountain district of Guerrero. The economic and social grievances of its inhabitants were no different from those that had led other villages to revolt. A regional strongman, Joaquín Chávez, had named a relative of his, Juan Ignacio Chávez, an outsider, as mayor of Tomóchi. The resentment the villagers felt at this imposition was further strengthened by Mayor Chávez's behavior. He grazed his cattle on the villagers' land without paying rent or asking permission. He forced the villagers to work either for him or for the Limantours at very low wages, and when a few young men went to work at a nearby mine, where they were better paid, he threatened them with the *leva*—that is, conscription into the army, which many considered akin to slavery or deportation. When the villagers continued to protest, Joaquín Chávez inflicted a profound humiliation upon them. He rerouted the annual silver transport, the *conducta*, which regularly passed through Tomóchi on its way from the mine of Pinos Altos to the capital of Chihuahua. This was an insult, for it implied that the villagers were thieves and outlaws who could not be relied upon to respect property rights.[25]

When the villagers reacted to this insult by staging a noisy demonstration in front of the mayor's office, the latter sent an alarming report to his superior, claiming that the villagers were rebelling against the federal government and were intent on capturing the silver transport. He requested federal troops to quell them. There is not the slightest evidence that the villagers ever attacked the silver transport or ever intended to do so, but it was a cunning tactic on the mayor's part. It is unlikely that the government would have sent federal troops to quell a dispute between the mayor and the inhabitants of a small village. In all probability, the mayor would have been discredited for provoking such unrest. Once the government became convinced that foreign mines and foreign capital were threatened, however, the situation changed completely. Díaz approved the governor's decision to send troops to Tomóchi as rapidly as possible so that Mexico's reputation abroad would not suffer.[26] A detachment of 50 soldiers arrived in Tomóchi, a skirmish occurred, there were some casualties, and most of the village's men withdrew into the mountains. Governor Carrillo sent a triumphant message to Díaz stating that the rebellion had been quelled, and that while some of the participants had disappeared into the countryside, many were surrendering. Díaz congratulated the governor on his success.[27] The governor was mistaken. This small village was to prove one of the greatest challenges that the Díaz regime would face during its long tenure in office.

Up to this point, the behavior of the villagers of Tomóchi had been similar to that of other rebellious communities, but from the moment they left Tomóchi, the villagers were guided by other considerations and reacted in different ways from most villagers in Chihuahua. Their rebellion was inspired, not only by social and economic considerations, but by religious factors and convictions as well.

In the course of the nineteenth century, the influence of the Catholic church seems to have been eroding in the mountain region of western Chihuahua. In the colonial period, Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries had been active in this part of New Spain. In fact, a missionary had settled for many years in Tomóchi itself and converted the Tarahumara Indians who originally lived there. When they intermarried with Spaniards, the roots of Catholicism seemed firm and unshakable. The expulsion of the Jesuits by the colonial authorities and the weakening of the church in independent Mexico eroded the church's position. In many villages such as Tomóchi, there were no resident priests. After the Jesuits' expulsion, clergy only came to Tomóchi on rare occasions to say mass and officiate at deaths, marriages, and burials. The weakening of Catholicism was reflected in conversions to Protestantism and the appearance of autonomous religions. In San Isidro, for example, some of the most prominent families, such as the Orozcos, were receptive to the teachings of missionaries from the United States and converted to Protestantism.[28]

In Tomóchi, a kind of dissident offshoot of Catholicism with popular roots had developed by the time of the rebellion. Most villagers were adherents of a cult that had developed around an 18-year-old girl in Sonora, Teresita, known as the Saint of Cabora (the village where she lived).[29] Teresita had visions of Christ, preached a humanistic creed, and was said to perform miracles and cures. She did not at that time call for rebellion or social revolt. The interpretation given to her teachings by the inhabitants of Tomóchi owed more to their leader and spokesman, Cruz Chávez, than to the Saint of Cabora. Chávez (no relation of either the regional strongman or the mayor), who was 34 years old in 1891, was a born leader. As one witness who knew him put it, "he was a handsome and friendly man . . . when he gave orders though, his capacity to dominate came out very clearly. His eyes became like a lances, and no one could resist them, so that he could frequently gain obedience just by looking at someone."[30] It was Chávez who declared in the name of most of the villagers that after their conflict with the mayor, they would recognize no other authority than the law of God, and it was he who persuaded his supporters that Teresita legitimized their resistance to authority. In order to confirm this view and to renew their faith, once they left Tomóchi, the villagers decided to make a pilgrimage to Cabora in order to meet Teresita.

It was a hazardous journey. Troops from Chihuahua pursued them, and other troops mobilized by the governor of the neighboring state of Sonora tried to intercept them. In one battle, the men of Tomóchi defeated one contingent of Sonoran troops sent to intercept them, eluded another, and finally arrived in Cabora only to find that Teresita was not there. Their religious faith was nevertheless reinforced when Cruz Chávez celebrated a rousing mass in the chapel of the Saint of Cabora. The men of Tomóchi now returned to their village along the same arduous route by which they had come, crossing the western Sierra Madre and again eluding both Sonoran and Chihuahuan troops. The trip further strengthened their desire to resist the federal government. Paradoxically, the fact that they had not met the Saint of Cabora may have reinforced this resolve. Had they met Teresita, another interpretation of her teachings might have emerged, but since this was not the case, Cruz Chávez's views prevailed.

The fact that they had either defeated or eluded the troops sent out to pursue them must have strengthened their conviction that God and the Saint of Cabora were on their side and would protect them. Their hopes seemed to have come true for several months after their return to Tomóchi. The government, which had withdrawn its garrison from their village, left them alone. Governor Carrillo, who had suffered a considerable loss of prestige and power because of his inabil-

ity to resolve the dispute with Tomóchi, sent an emissary to the village and attempted to make a deal. He offered them amnesty and guaranteed their lives if they would lay down their arms and recognize the legitimacy of the municipal and regional authorities. The villagers refused. Their hatred of their former mayor was too strong to allow them to accept his return. Cruz Chávez had convinced them not only that God was on their side but that they were invincible. In addition, Luis Terrazas, who hoped that a continuing conflict with Tomóchi would weaken his rival, Carrillo, may have secretly encouraged them to resist.[31]

Terrazas's hopes and expectations proved to be justified. Porfirio Díaz, fearing a further exacerbation of the conflict in Chihuahua, removed Governor Carillo (as a consolation he was nominated to a seat in the senate) and replaced him with a compromise candidate, acceptable to both rival factions, Miguel Ahumada. The new governor now decided to stamp out the rebellion in Tomóchi once and for all. In his eyes, Tomóchi had become a festering sore. Rebels from other villages had begun to congregate there, and its example inspired other villagers.

The governor believed that subduing a village with fewer than 100 fighting men should not be too difficult. The federal commander sent to Tomóchi for this purpose, General José María Rangel, who led both a battalion of the regular army and auxiliary forces, was so confident of the superior power of his soldiers that he did not even wait for additional troops who were on their way to the village to join him before launching a frontal attack on the village. Rangel's forces suffered not just a defeat but a nearly complete rout. The men of Tomóchi, many of them veterans of the Apache wars, killed most of Rangel's officers and then decimated his retreating troops. Their inferiority in numbers was more than made up for by their superior morale and equipment. They were armed with Winchester repeating rifles in contrast to the one-shot rifles of the federal troops. Rangel was defeated, the commander of federal troops in Chihuahua reported, "because of his contempt for his enemy and the betrayal of many persons within this city and in Chihuahua who hold important positions."[32]

In addition, at a decisive moment in the battle, the auxiliary forces from Chihuahua refused to support the federal troops. Having fought the Apaches alongside Cruz Chávez and men from Tomóchi in the peasants' militias that Joaquín Terrazas had commanded, both the commander of the auxiliaries, Santana Pérez, and many of their number were unwilling to fight their former comrades, and some of them may have turned their guns on the federal soldiers.[33]

Rangel's defeat strengthened the conviction of the men of Tomóchi that God and the Saint of Cabora were indeed protecting them. The experiences of the next expedition that the government sent out to subdue them must have further reinforced this belief. After his defeat, Rangel was relieved of his command, and a personal friend of Porfirio Díaz's, General Felipe Cruz, was sent at the head of a cavalry detachment to subdue Tomóchi. Cruz never even reached the village. After marching for two days and drinking countless bottles of liquor, Cruz finally attained such a drunken stupor that he mistook a cornfield for the inhabitants of Tomóchi. Like Don Quijote attacking the windmills, Cruz at the head of his troops charged into the field, cutting down the corn with his sword. He then returned to Chihuahua and wrote in a glowing report to his superiors in Mexico City that he had finally subdued Tomóchi.[34]

The ridicule the government suffered when this episode became known in Chihuahua was among the motives that impelled both Díaz and Governor Ahumada to destroy Tomóchi once and for all. Opposition to Díaz was growing in many parts of Mexico. Local rebellions had erupted in the states of Mexico, Yucatán, and Guerrero, and Díaz feared that Tomóchi might become the rallying point for a national revolution.[35] This time 1,200 men, many of them veterans of the Yaqui campaign in neighboring Sonora, were sent from both Chihuahua and Sonora to subdue Tomóchi. For the villagers, who soon learned of this enormous expedition, there was only one rational way to survive: to retreat into the mountains and wage guerrilla warfare. But Cruz Chávez, convinced that God was on his side, decided to wait it out in the village itself. The troops were coming in two separate contingents from two sides, half of them from Sonora led by a veteran Indian fighter, Lorenzo Torres, the other half from Chihuahua under the command of General Rangel, who at all costs wanted to avenge the defeat he had suffered previously. Cruz Chávez rejected any suggestion that it might be better to attack the two troop contingents separately rather than to face the overwhelming reality of a united federal force. God and the Saint of Cabora were on their side, he reiterated, and they would triumph. They nearly did. The federal troops were gripped by a kind of superstitious terror. Heriberto Frías, one of Mexico's great writers, who took part in the expedition as a soldier, vividly describes the feelings of the federal troops: "all agreed that without any exaggeration, every rebel was worth ten federal soldiers."[36]

Soon after arriving in Tomóchi, the troops were met by 30 women dressed in black, slowly advancing toward them. Before the federal commander could make up his mind how to react to this unexpected demonstration, the "women," once they were close enough to the government troops, suddenly discarded their black shawls and turned out to be men, who immediately opened fire with their Winchester repeating rifles. This surprise attack seemed to confirm the superstitious fears of the soldiers, and the men of Tomóchi nearly provoked a federal rout. With the greatest difficulty, the officers forced their men to return to battle. In spite of the fact that the federal army had a cannon and fourteen times as many fighting men as the villagers, the battle lasted for nearly two weeks, with the government troops suffering hundreds of casualties. When only a handful of villagers were left alive, General Rangel sent an emissary to them promising to respect their lives if they surrendered. They refused. He then sent another emissary with an offer that they could retreat into the mountains, and that his troops would not interfere if they left Tomóchi of their own free will. Chávez again rejected the offer. Government troops finally stormed Chávez's house, the last bastion where the survivors still held out. Seven men, among them Cruz Chávez himself, were finally captured, offered cigarettes by their captors, and then shot in cold blood. "The conclusion of the Tomóchi campaign," the commander of federal forces in Chihuahua wrote Díaz, "was a horror story."[37]

It was a victory that bore all the hallmarks of a defeat. The government tried to obscure this fact by calling the destruction of an obscure village of fewer than 100 men by over 1,200 government soldiers "a heroic triumph." Strict censorship was imposed by the government on news about Tomóchi, but Heriberto Frías, from his vantage point as a participant, wrote a novel under an assumed name in

which the campaign was depicted. In the mountains of Chihuahua, countless corridos recounted the villagers' fight. "How courageous are the Tomóchis, who knew how to die in the face of a rain of bullets in defense of their home and their land" was typical of the many ballads Tomóchi inspired.[38] The story of Tomóchi became known all over Mexico. It had a profound effect on the country's peasants, and above all on the inhabitants of the mountain ranges of western Chihuahua. The conviction that one of them was worth ten federal soldiers would sustain them twenty years later, when in the first months of the revolution, they faced Díaz's federal army almost alone.

There were more immediate consequences of the uprisings. There is little doubt that on March 30, 1893, when Celso Anaya and Simon Amaya began an uprising in Santo Tomás that called for the overthrow of Porfirio Díaz, they were inspired by the resistance of Tomóchi. Their movement was crushed by government troops, but some of the survivors were able to find refuge in the United States. From there they mobilized new groups of sympathizers, and a few months later, they crossed back into Mexico again and occupied the border town of Palomas, where they issued a manifesto against the Díaz government that called for an uprising and concluded, "Long live Tomóchi!" Events in Tomóchi seem also to have influenced the men who in 1893 occupied the town of El Mulato. They were led by "Hermana María," who described herself as a saint and called on the peasants to recognize her as such. Government troops crushed the movement before it could garner further support.[39]

While sporadic local uprisings took place throughout the mountain ranges of western Chihuahua in the 1880s and early 1890s, the generalized revolt that the government feared never materialized. To a great degree, this was because the villagers remained largely isolated from the rest of Chihuahuan society in their violent opposition to both the state government and the Díaz administration. Wealthy patrons and traditional caudillos, above all, Luis Terrazas, who had given them support in the early stages of their revolt, withdrew it once they had achieved their main aim of toppling the Carrillo administration in Chihuahua. The new social classes that were developing at a rapid pace in the state after 1884, the middle classes and the industrial working class, had no desire to revolt against the government. The middle classes not only profited from the establishment of peace and the ensuing economic boom, they also benefited from the political structures that Díaz had set up in Chihuahua. Nationally, the Díaz government had grown more and more dictatorial, but paradoxically, in Chihuahua, a kind of genuine two-party system emerged as a result of Díaz's policies. Both Terrazas and his rivals sought the support of the newly emerging middle classes, and they were ready to make substantial concessions to secure it. Chihuahua's economic boom, increasing demands for labor by newly opened mines, industrial enterprises, and railway construction, sent wages soaring. As a result, the industrial workers saw no reason to revolt against the government, not even when the recession of 1892–94 plunged many of them into misery.

In 1903, a profound political change took place in Chihuahua. In that year, Porfirio Díaz, realizing how powerful erstwhile rivals such as Terrazas had become, decided to co-opt them into his regime. He realized that the fears that he had entertained at the beginning of his regime, that these regional strongmen might rise against him, no longer had any basis. These caudillos had become highly dependent on foreign investment, and any kind of uprising and the resulting instability would have put an end to that great source of income. In 1903, with the approval of Díaz, Luis Terrazas once again became governor of Chihuahua.

The Final Offensive Against Chihuahua's Free Villagers

For many of Chihuahua's free villagers and erstwhile military colonists, especially in western Chihuahua, June 3, 1903, was a day of hope and perhaps even of rejoicing. On that day, Luis Terrazas, their patron and protector of many years, the man under whose leadership they had fought the Apaches and for whom they had staged an uprising in 1879, reassumed the governorship of Chihuahua. Many villagers believed that now that he was in power again, after 20 years, he would do what he had done before: maintain their traditional rights and act as a shield against the increasing encroachment of the federal government upon them. What they did not see was that the conditions for the alliance between them and Terrazas that had existed a quarter of a century before had now disappeared.

In earlier times, Terrazas had needed the free villagers' help to ward off Apache attacks, to counteract the influence of the federal government, and to defend himself against rival power brokers in Chihuahua. By 1903, the Apaches were gone, the federal government had become Terrazas's closest ally, and Chihuahua's elite was linked to the Terrazas clan by a multiplicity of economic, family, and political ties. Terrazas had in fact turned against his erstwhile allies among the free villagers long before he became governor of Chihuahua again. Surveying companies controlled by the Terrazas clan participated in the expropriation of public lands.[40] Terrazas frequently abolished a traditional right granted to neighboring communities to graze their cattle on his estates. In addition, after having encouraged the villagers of Tomóchi to resist, he abandoned them to their fate. These facts were not known to many villagers in the western mountains of Chihuahua. His surveying company seemed to have concentrated its activities on regions outside of western Chihuahua, the restrictions he imposed on the grazing rights of villagers did not affect all villagers in the state, and his involvement in Tomóchi had largely remained a secret.

The hopes that Chihuahua's free villagers pinned on Terrazas were clearly expressed by a flood of petitions and calls for redress that they addressed to him. Terrazas was willing to accede to a number of these demands. When Heliodoro Arias Olea wrote him in the name of the inhabitants of Bachiniva protesting against the abuses of the local caciques, Comaduran and Baray, Terrazas ordered new and free elections, in which Arias Olea was elected mayor.[41] Terrazas also acceded to the demands of 150 Tarahumara Indians from the village of Nonoava, who complained to him that for 40 years the owners of a neighboring hacienda, the Ochoa family, had been occupying their lands. Terrazas felt that the Indians' claims were justified and called on the Ochoas to return the disputed lands.[42]

Terrazas's attitude was partly based on political expediency. Comaduran had

been a political foe, and by removing him from power, Terrazas not only eliminated a potential enemy but also gained the support of the inhabitants of Bachiniva. Perhaps this was not the only reason for Terrazas's actions and attitude. To a certain degree, he may have wanted to abide by the rules of the game he had played for so long. In his many years as caudillo of Chihuahua, Terrazas had repeatedly called on the villagers for help, thus accumulating innumerable obligations, which the peasant freeholders were now cashing in on. But Terrazas had not become governor in order to redeem village rights. There was one convenient way of escaping his obligations without relinquishing power: this was to resign from office and have another family member, unburdened by Terrazas's political debts, assume control of Chihuahua.

Apart from his advanced age, this may have been one of the reasons why Terrazas, after serving as governor from 1903 to 1904, named his son-in-law Enrique Creel as interim governor and allowed him to rule Chihuahua. In the eyes of the Terrazas family clan, the slate had now been wiped clean. Once the head of the family had relinquished his office, they felt no obligation whatsoever to his former allies. Creel, who had never been a traditional caudillo, had no links to Chihuahua's free villagers. As a convinced social Darwinist, he despised them, and he now turned against them with a ruthlessness unmatched in the state's history. Within seven years, Creel's policies would provoke one of the most far-reaching rural uprisings in Mexico's history. In the short run, though, he achieved an astonishing degree of success.

Creel's attack on Chihuahua's free villagers was partly based on the fact that now that he and the family clan were in control of their native state, they wanted to make the most out of the enormous opportunities that the links between political and economic power presented. There were also more concrete motives for the governor's policies. After 1904, two railway companies, the Mexican Northwestern and the Kansas Orient and Pacific Railroad, were making plans and proceeding to build new lines to western Chihuahua. As a result, land prices rose again, creating a new incentive for land expropriation.[43]

The legal underpinnings for Creel's offensive were provided by two laws that the state legislature passed at the behest of the governor. The first was a law of 1904 that replaced the elected heads of municipalities with officials appointed by the state government. The motivations for this decree are easy to understand. Elected mayors had frequently been the first line of defense of villages and communities against land expropriations and other abuses by the state government. These elected officials repeatedly protested measures against their communities and at times even refused to implement them. By appointing his own men, often outsiders, to rule over local communities, Creel eliminated this obstacle to his policies.[44] In addition, state control of municipal government was necessary if Creel wanted to implement the second law that the legislature passed at his behest in 1905: a new land law.

Although the reform laws of 1857 had sufficed in most of Mexico to create the legal basis for large-scale expropriations of village lands and for the economic destruction of village communities, they nevertheless contained some restrictions that Creel wanted to eliminate. They established the federal government as the supreme arbiter in a large number of land questions. Creel's new law replaced the federal authorities with the state government—that is, with the Creel administration. According to the reform laws, the lands of village communities were to be sold in individual lots to members of the communities. Creel's land law opened the sale of community holdings to outsiders. The older laws had protected some municipal lands from expropriation; Creel's new law eliminated all of these restrictions.[45] This law had a catastrophic impact on the free villagers of Chihuahua. Earlier expropriations had already transformed many of them from freeholders who were relatively well-to-do or had sufficient land to become prosperous farmers into poor peasants practicing subsistence agriculture and eking out a living on relatively small plots of land. The new law made many of them landless laborers, forced to look for work outside their villages in order to survive. This may have been one of the reasons why Creel adopted it, since in boom times there was a labor shortage in Chihuahua.

Creel's measures provoked great resentment among Chihuahua's free villagers but did not immediately lead to armed resistance. The villagers at first sought peaceful means of redress. They sent innumerable petitions and letters of protest to the Secretaría de Fomento (ministry of development) in Mexico City and to Porfirio Díaz himself. These documents were invariably sent to the same section of the Secretaría, which in practically all cases gave a similar answer, which amounted to a kind of ping-pong game with the villagers. When the villagers protested the abuses of local authorities, they were told to address their complaints to the governor. When they stated that it was at the initiative of the governor or at least with his support that the local authorities were proceeding against them, they were told to call on the courts. When they replied that the judges were corrupt and biased appointees of the governor, they were again told they had no other recourse than to appeal either to these same courts or to the governor himself. The Secretaría did this even in cases where its own officials stated in internal memoranda that the grievances of the villagers were justified. This conviction was never expressed to the petitioners themselves. As a result, a vicious circle was created from which there was no way out for the villagers except full-scale capitulation or revolution.[46]

Creel developed what might be called a cumulative strategy in order to deal with Chihuahua's free villages. Both he and his allies concentrated their first efforts against small communities and against Tarahumara Indians, who constituted the poorest, least educated, and thus most vulnerable elements of Chihuahuan society. Not only were they the poorest of Chihuahua's free villagers, most were illiterate, and many could not speak Spanish. In May 1904, fifteen inhabitants of the village of Temeychic sent an urgent letter to the federal government protesting that Alberto Terrazas, the son of Luis Terrazas, and Felipe Terrazas, another relative, were selling land that belonged to them. They wrote that they had tried to deliver a protest resolution to the surveyor who was measuring their land, but that the latter had not accepted it. The ministry did not even find the case worth looking at and decided that it was not competent to deal with it.[47]

This attitude was characteristic of the Secretaría's policies toward Chihuahua's free villagers until 1908. In the name of 300 Tarahumara Indians, José Vega sent a bitterly worded petition to the federal government in June 1905. A company headed by a Señor Sandoval, which the villagers called "a company of hangmen,"

had forced the Indians to work without pay and then expelled them by force from their land.[48] The Secretaría's answer was short and brutal. It stated that their land had already been ceded to Sandoval in 1884. If they wanted to, the ministry wrote, the Indians could certainly buy it back from him. When the villagers again insisted on their rights to this land and demanded its division among them, the ministry told them to address their complaint to the governor, who, as was to be expected, refused to heed their claims.

A spokesman for the Indian peasants of Monterde y Arremoyo, Feliciano Ochoa, protested against the sale of lands that the village had possessed since "time immemorial." Ochoa's complaint arrived at the same time that the ministry received a letter from Governor Creel stating that a Mr. Rufus Bragg of the Monterde land company wanted to buy this land, and that the protesting Indians did not really object to the sale of their properties. "Their protests," Creel wrote, "were inspired by speculators who hoped in this way to drive up the price of the land." The ministry fully supported Creel's position, called the sale legal, and only included a vague declaration that the "legitimate rights" of the Indians should not be violated. The federal government, however, was not ready to take any action to protect these "legitimate rights." The Indians were told once again to recur to the governor, who was one of their main opponents.[49]

The success of the Creel government in expropriating the holdings of the Indian villages without encountering much active resistance led the hacendados and the authorities to adopt measures that gave a different dimension to the land problem in Chihuahua. The authorities no longer confined their attacks to Indians in remote regions, but began to stage a frontal attack on what might be called the core of Chihuahuan rural society: some of the most important former military colonies in the state.

Unwritten agreements, which had frequently existed for centuries, were renounced or broken. At the same time, there were attacks on legal guarantees that did have a basis in written law. The attacks on unwritten agreements consisted mainly in abolishing the rights of free communities to graze their cattle on hacienda land. As long as cattle exports were nonexistent, the open range was plentiful, and the fighting strength of free villages was needed to ward off the Apaches, the hacendados had no objection to allowing the cattle of free villages to graze on their large estates. Once cattle exports became of great importance to the economy of the haciendas, however, the hacendados frequently abolished these traditional rights and kept the inhabitants of neighboring free villages from grazing their cattle on the large estates. Sometimes this was done by installing barbed wire around the haciendas, sometimes in even more drastic form by confiscating cattle that found their way onto hacienda land. These measures by the hacendados were all the harder for the free villagers to bear since their access to public lands had also been undermined by the activities of the surveying companies. The second part of the offensive against the free villagers consisted in a direct attack on their ownership of their lands.

With the same stubbornness and endurance with which they had fought the Apaches, the military colonists resorted to every possible legal means to resist the attacks on their lands and their autonomy. They sent protests to the governor, to the Secretaría de Fomento in Mexico City, and to Porfirio Díaz. At times they

even hired expensive lawyers and litigated in the courts. They wrote letters of protests to the newspapers and demonstrated in the city of Chihuahua. When all this proved of no avail, they finally revolted and contributed decisively to toppling both the state and the federal governments.

One of the first villages attacked by Creel was the old and prestigious military colony of San Andrés. To many inhabitants of Chihuahua, San Andrés, located on the margins of the western mountains, epitomized the military colony. Reading the memoirs of Joaquín Terrazas, Chihuahua's greatest Indian fighter, is like reading the history of San Andrés.[50] There was scarcely an Indian campaign in which its riflemen, reputed to be the best shots in Chihuahua, did not participate. Nevertheless, a few years after the defeat of the Apaches, Joaquín Terrazas's relatives decided to accomplish what the Apaches could never do: the economic destruction of a substantial part of San Andrés's free villager. In 1904, in the name of 120 Indian inhabitants of San Andrés, their spokesman, Macario Nieto, wrote to the state government of Chihuahua and asked that the municipal lands that belonged to the Indian inhabitants of the village be divided among them. The interim governor, Cortazar, agreed and promised that each of the village's Indians would receive three hectares of land. It was a decision that would give the Indians a measure of security and assure their most urgent needs. Within a few months, however, the governor reversed his decision and sent a message to San Andrés stating that surveyors had found that there was not sufficient land to carry out the planned distribution.[51]

This argument was contested by Nieto, who stated that in reality the municipal authorities wanted "the lands that are ours to be taken over by the rich."[52] In Nieto's eyes, the villagers' main enemy was their own mayor, Lucas Murga, whose family owned the neighboring hacienda of San Juan Guadalupe. Not only had the mayor appropriated many of the common lands for himself, but in order to prevent the villagers from suing, he had stolen their property titles and refused to return them. Protests by the Indians of San Andrés to the state governor were of no avail. An appeal to the federal government drew the standard reply that it was a matter for the governor to decide.

The villagers nevertheless felt that they had another iron in the fire. Nearly two centuries before, in 1735, the owners of the neighboring hacienda of San Juan Guadalupe, under constant siege by the Apaches, had called on the inhabitants of San Andrés to help them in the defense of the hacienda. The villagers had done so, the Apaches were repelled, and the grateful hacendado deeded them a large tract of land. The villagers occupied the land but were not in possession of the deed to it. It is not clear whether they lost the deed, or whether the hacendado, whether on purpose or not, had neglected to give it to them. In 1904, when an official came to survey the lands of San Andrés, the inhabitants asked him to respect the property they had received from the hacienda. Since they could produce no deed or title to the land, the surveyor refused to heed their request. Naively, the villagers then asked the Murga family, which had acquired the hacienda of San Juan Guadalupe, to give them a copy of the deed. It is not surprising that the hacienda's owners refused to consider this request.

Nieto then wrote to the Secretaría de Fomento in Mexico City asking for a copy of their property title from the National Archives. The federal government

was as unhelpful in this matter as it had been with respect to the communal lands of the village. It refused either to ask the National Archives for a deed or to suggest to the peasants in what other archives (for instance, the Notarial Archives in Chihuahua) they might find the deed. The correspondence between the village spokesman and the federal government dragged on for three years, between 1904 and 1907. It produced no results for the villagers, with one exception: Nieto himself was given some land. Obviously, the government had hoped to bribe him, but Nieto refused to be bought off. In 1907, the villagers presented their last petition to the federal government. As time passed, they finally gave up any hope of redress from Mexico City. Three years later, the riflemen of San Andrés were among the first to join the forces of a revolutionary leader operating near San Andrés, Francisco (Pancho) Villa.

Buoyed by the success of his campaigns against the free villagers, Creel now felt strong enough to deal with one of the most stubborn and recalcitrant military colonies in the state: Namiquipa. For many years the inhabitants of this old, prestigious military colony had been able to hold on to their lands in spite of massive claims on their property made by one of Chihuahua's wealthiest hacendados, Enrique Muller, a partner of Luis Terrazas's. Muller had gotten hold of bogus titles to properties in Namiquipa as well as in Galeana in 1865 but had enormous difficulty in forcing the inhabitants to give up their properties. Despite the demands of Muller and his heirs, the villagers had still managed to hold on to some of their lands, but with Creel at the helm of Chihuahua, they faced final defeat. Applying his own municipal land law of 1905, Creel now proceeded to sell large chunks of their remaining municipal property. In a letter to Porfirio Díaz, 120 inhabitants of Namiquipa wrote in July 1908 that "the government of the state has shown its contempt for us by stealing our lands, our pastures, and our woods, which we need in order to practice agriculture and livestock raising."[53]

Once again, as they had done so frequently in earlier times, the inhabitants of Namiquipa told of the long, heroic history of their village. Every piece of their land had been paid for with the blood of their ancestors: "All neighboring haciendas had been abandoned because of the constant danger of aggression by the barbarians between 1832 and 1860 and only Namiquipa remained to fight the barbarians and to constitute a lonely bastion of civilization in this remote region." They insisted that the merits of their ancestors consisted, not only in fighting the Apaches, but in the support they had given to the Liberals, and especially Luis Terrazas, in campaigns against the Conservatives and the French. Their letter to Díaz was a call for help, a call on the president to respect the promise he had given them in 1889 to safeguard their lands. It concluded by stating, "if you do not grant us your protection, we would have to leave our homes and emigrate in order to be able to survive."

What comes out clearly from this petition is that the villagers were victims, not only of Creel's land law, but of his reorganization of the state government as well. Previous petitions by the village had been signed by its municipal authorities. Creel had dismissed their elected officials and appointed his own men to municipal offices, so that the villagers could no longer count on the help of the mayor and the village administration.

The villagers first attempted to resist these attacks on their properties by writing protests to newspapers and staging nonviolent demonstrations. A spokesman for the inhabitants of Namiquipa, Delfino Ochoa from Bocoyna, and a number of other local leaders wrote letters describing the attacks against them and calling for redress to the opposition newspaper editor Silvestre Terrazas, whose *El Correo de Chihuahua* published all of them. Fifty inhabitants of Namiquipa staged a protest demonstration in Chihuahua. All to no avail.[54]

What is remarkable about the free villagers' resistance in the years between 1905 and 1908 is not its emergence but rather its limited scope in comparison to the wave of uprisings that had swept Chihuahua in the years 1891 to 1895. This contrast is all the more striking in that attacks on the autonomy and the land of the free villagers were greater and far more brutal after 1905 than they had been before. In the 1890s, only a few villages lost their municipal autonomy. Creel's laws, however, affected every village in the state. Nevertheless, the immediate reaction of the villagers to the harsh measures taken against them by Creel was far more restrained than their violent reaction to the relatively mild measures implemented in the 1890s.

This was partly because of the very different economic situations in the state in the two periods. Whereas the years between 1891 and 1895 had been years of recession and bad harvests, there was a great economic boom between 1905 and 1907. Demand for labor outstripped supply, and wages were rising. Expropriated villagers could find work in neighboring mines, in the cotton fields of the Laguna in neighboring Coahuila, or at even better-paid jobs across the border in the United States.

In 1891–95, Chihuahua's oligarchy was divided, and one of its main representatives, Luis Terrazas, the traditional patron of the villagers of western Chihuahua, was surreptitiously supporting their rebellion. Between 1905 and 1907, the villagers faced a united oligarchy, and their traditional patrons had turned against them. Perhaps an even more important explanation for the relative passivity of Chihuahua's villagers was the fact that Creel's political and economic measures succeeded in undermining village solidarity; they deepened cleavages within the communities. By replacing elected officials with his own appointees, Creel utilized existing divisions within villages for his own ends. His municipal land law of 1905, from which not only hacendados but wealthier villagers allied to his administration profited, further exacerbated these divisions. San Andrés was by no means the only village where a polarization took place between the poorest and the richer inhabitants, with the latter controlling the municipality and profiting from the expropriation of the poorest members of the community. In a similar way, Creel was able to divide what had once been the united community of Cuchillo Parado, the lands of which were threatened by a close associate of Luis Terrazas's, Carlos Muñoz.[55]

In 1903, when the villagers created an Association of Inhabitants of Cuchillo Parado in order to ward off Muñoz's attack on their land, they elected two men as their leaders and representatives, Toribio Ortega and Ezequiel Montes. Ortega was in many ways predestined to become a leader of his village. He belonged to one of the 31 families that had originally received land from Benito Juárez in 1865. His natural intelligence and leadership qualities were enhanced by his relatively higher degree of education and knowledge of the world beyond the village bor-

der. In 1884, Ortega had left his home to become an apprentice in a department store in the city of Chihuahua. Two years later, he returned to Cuchillo Parado and set up his own store. His store soon went bankrupt, perhaps because a hacendado expropriated the villagers' lands, causing them to lose buying power.[56] Ortega migrated to the United States, worked there for one year as a laborer, saved some money, and returned to Cuchillo Parado to buy some land and establish himself as a relatively well situated landowner, already recognized as a leader by many of the villagers.

His authority was soon challenged by an outsider who settled in the village: Ezequiel Montes. According to a village chronicler, he was "a gypsy without a fatherland."[57] He arrived in the village in 1890 as a liquor salesman "who played boring popular songs on an old harp in order to entertain the laborers who came to buy his liquor." He soon settled in the village, and since he was a man of "uncommon intelligence and refined hypocrisy" as well as an excellent speaker who ably "nurtured people's passions," he soon became an influential leader in Cuchillo Parado. In 1903, he was elected together with Toribio Ortega to head the Association of Inhabitants of Cuchillo Parado, whose primary aim was to ward off the hacendado Muñoz's attempt to take over the village lands. The unity between the two men disappeared when Creel co-opted Montes, appointing him mayor of Cuchillo Parado. Montes became a typical cacique, employed his newfound power and official support against the villagers, and began expropriating their lands.[58]

While Creel was a master at manipulating village divisions for his own ends, he rarely created them. Rather, he utilized existing cleavages. Unlike the Indian communities of central and southern Mexico, the military colonies of Chihuahua had never been egalitarian in character. Until the promulgation of the reform laws of the 1850s, the *ejidos* (public lands) of the core areas of Mexico were common property and could be neither sold nor bought, but land was more freely marketed in the north, although some restrictions existed and some communal land could not be sold. As a result, social differences in the northern communities were far greater than among the free peasantry in the rest of Mexico. This was clearly the case in Namiquipa. In 1892, when the villagers asked that Porfirio Díaz divide among them the lands that until then had belonged to the community, they did not ask for an egalitarian division. Different families controlled different amounts of land, which they wanted Díaz to adjudicate to them, and each family contributed a sum proportional to the land it occupied in order to pay the fees of the lawyer who finally secured Díaz's approval of their claims in 1893.[59] This division between rich and poor, however, was only one of the many cleavages that characterized the village.

Soon after the end of the Apache wars, new immigrants began settling in the village. In 1889, 32 of 195 families were recent immigrants. Their number had swelled to 111 by 1900. The divisions among the villagers had become so deep that by that time, the mayor did not know how to deal with them and went to the federal government for advice. Once the municipal lands had been divided, the mayor asked, should these newcomers also receive land? The mayor had pinpointed a problem that existed in his village, but his calls for advice from either the federal or the state government were more than naive. Neither gave him any advice, since neither had the slightest intention of ever dividing the lands of Namiquipa among its inhabitants.[60]

The Hesitations of the Federal Government

In the eyes of the state authorities, the mayor of Namiquipa's letter only emphasized the illegitimacy of many of the villagers' claims and revealed the scope offered by these divisions for an attack on traditional village structures and rights. In 1908, the attitudes of the state and federal governments toward Chihuahua's free villagers began to diverge. As dissatisfaction with the Díaz administration began to increase in much of Mexico, some officials of the federal government began to worry about a possible uprising in Chihuahua. They had not forgotten how effective the 100 or so men of Tomóchi had been when they had kept more than 1,000 federal troops at bay. The federal authorities on the one hand and Creel on the other envisaged two very different strategies to contain mounting rural discontent in Chihuahua. The federal government showed a readiness to make limited concessions to the free villagers: further expropriations of village lands should cease, and the status quo should be observed. Creel, on the other hand, felt that any concessions to the villagers would only encourage them to become more recalcitrant and rebellious. He advocated a policy of absolute inflexibility.

These different approaches were clearly expressed when the first serious clash between state and federal governments occurred with respect to the land question in 1908. At issue was the complaint of one of the oldest military colonies in Chihuahua, the village of Janos in the Galeana district in Chihuahua.

In August 1908, the villagers of Janos sent their spokesman and leader, Porfirio Talamantes, to Mexico City to lodge a protest with the federal government against the policies of Governor Creel. The villagers had asked that the community lands be divided among them. Instead, Creel's appointee, the mayor, was selling off most of the land to outsiders and wealthy villagers. In a bitterly worded protest, Talamantes called on the federal government for redress. He insisted that the division of communal lands was a federal and not a state responsibility and demanded that the Mexico City administration see to it that the village inhabitants and not outsiders should benefit from the division of communal lands. "We shall never receive land under the present circumstances," he concluded, "because outsiders and even foreigners will always get preference. We simply ask for the application of the federal laws of June 25, 1856. The owners of the colony of Fernández Leal [Americans who had bought land in Chihuahua], located two leagues from Janos, are enjoying a comfortable life in the United States, while we, who suffered from the invasion of barbarians, whom our fathers fought, cannot keep our land."[61]

The Secretaría de Fomento, the branch of the federal government in charge of public lands, was at first inclined to dismiss the whole matter. It had consulted with Creel, who had written the Mexico City officials that Talamantes was a "disturber of the public order" who had been punished for his misdeeds. These "misdeeds" amounted to sending a petition to the governor accusing the mayor of Janos of being "a coward . . . a man capable of petty vengeance . . . who forced

someone to confess either through inquisitorial means or by making false promises." As a result, Talamantes had been fined 30 pesos for "lack of respect for the authorities." In addition, Creel wrote, Talamantes did not represent the inhabitants of Janos, who approved of the division of their municipal lands.[62] The Secretaría accordingly sent a short note to Talamantes telling him that it would not consider his demands, since he did not speak for the inhabitants of his village, and since all of them welcomed the land distribution that Creel was carrying out.

A few days later, the Secretaría received a letter of protest signed by over 100 inhabitants of Janos. They wrote that Creel's statement—that their lands were being divided among them and that they fully agreed with that division—was a lie. There was no land division; the mayor was simply taking the best village lands for himself. They protested against the expropriation of their lands, insisted that Talamantes was their genuine representative, and told the federal government that the state law being applied to their village was illegal and that only the federal government had the authority to dispose of their communal property.[63]

This time the federal government did act. It asked Creel for a copy of the state's land law, stating that the federal authorities had never known of its existence (a somewhat strange argument, since more than four years had passed since the law had been signed and adopted by the Chihuahuan legislature, and countless protests against its application had been sent to Mexico City). After studying the law, the Secretaría came to a conclusion that, in the Porfirian setting, was nothing short of revolutionary. Undersecretary Andrés Aldasoro wrote Creel in March 1909 that his municipal land law of 1905 was "unconstitutional, since the transformation of all properties belonging to civilian communities is a federal matter."[64]

All property titles based on the 1905 law were illegal, Aldasoro said, and the application of that law to Janos was highly irregular. Creel was asked to take measures to correct the irregularities his government had created. A month later, the Secretaría sent an engineer named López Moctezuma to Janos to examine the situation in the village. The inhabitants of Janos were told of this decision, although Aldasoro's message to Creel that his land law was unconstitutional was kept a secret. Talamantes and his villagers were jubilant, feeling that they had finally won a victory in their long and arduous struggle.

Labeling Creel's law unconstitutional and sending a federal official to reverse his decision was a slap in the face to one of the most powerful men in Mexico. There is no clear explanation why the Secretaría de Fomento acted as it did. It had waited more than four years before even examining the law. It is doubtful that Aldasoro's boss, Olegario Molina, the minister, was motivated by an objection in principle to land expropriations. Molina, the most powerful cacique of the southeastern state of Yucatán, was himself one of the great expropriators of village lands in his native region. Were the attacks on Creel simply an expression of the constant struggle of rival cliques for power in Mexico? Was the administration of President Díaz genuinely concerned that attacks on villages in Chihuahua could lead to another Tomóchi? Díaz seems to have been involved in some way in the matter, for in his reply to Aldasoro's letter, Creel referred to the indications of the "Señor Presidente."

Creel's Counteroffensive

Creel's response was at first moderate and even humble and obsequious in tone. He stated that he was preoccupied by Aldasoro's letter, was consulting his lawyers, and would do whatever was necessary to change and adapt the law to the Mexican constitution. At the end of his reply, however, beneath its obsequiousness, there was a clear-cut threat. He stated that all property titles in Chihuahua were based on the same principles as the 1905 law. "Revoking that law," he wrote, "was a grave matter," and he spoke of the possibility of "serious disorders" and "great harm," since approximately 10,000 people had benefited from this law.[65]

Couched in diplomatic and deferential language, Creel had formulated a warning that the federal government understood all too well. A short time after he received Creel's reply, Aldasoro caved in. In a private letter to Creel, Aldasoro thanked him for his "goodwill," stated that he was going on a trip to Europe, and offered to bring Creel anything he asked for from any country he visited.[66] Although Creel had only promised to examine whatever legal possibilities existed for changing his law, the Secretaría never challenged him again. López Moctezuma, the official who was to have gone to Janos to hear the villagers' grievances, first went to see Creel and asked the governor whether he should proceed with his visit to the village. Creel told him, López Moctezuma reported to the Secretaría, "that he did not find it convenient that I should go to the village, since once the villagers whom Mr. Talamantes is representing see that the government is giving them some help, and that as a result of their petition this ministry is sending an official, this would be sufficient to increase their demands, which could finally lead to unrest in the village, which for thousands of motives should be prevented."[67] The Secretaría did not even notify the villagers that López Moctezuma's visit, on which they had based so many hopes, had been canceled.

Both Creel and the mayor now felt that they should show the villagers of Janos once and for all who was master of Chihuahua and how high the costs of protest were. In a letter dated nearly a year later, in May 1910, the villagers wrote that the mayor, "an official without a human heart, unjust and cruel with everyone who opposes him, a man who is the subject of terrible accusations, and who in spite of this still leads our now ruined village," was cutting off their water supplies and charging for use of pasture and wood that for a century the villagers had always been able to obtain free of charge. "In this year of 1910," they concluded, "when our independence will be a hundred years old, in our village we are treated far worse than when the viceroys ruled over our land."[68]

Now that the federal government had capitulated to his demands, Creel felt encouraged to proceed even more harshly against every rebellious village.

In 1908, when the federal government had begun to question Creel's conduct in Janos, it had expressed similar doubts about his policies in Namiquipa. Federal authorities had not, as they had done before, played the usual ping-pong game with the protests of the villagers of Namiquipa against the confiscation of their lands, and told them to submit their claims either to the judicial authorities or to the governor. The Secretaría de Fomento had on the contrary written Creel and asked him for an explanation of events in Namiquipa. When the gov-

ernor sent no reply, the Secretaría became insistent and time and time again reminded him that it wanted his opinion.[69]

Creel's hesitation in dealing with the case of Namiquipa was no coincidence. Not only was this community one of the oldest and most prestigious military colonies in Chihuahua, with documented claims going back to the Spanish colonial period. It was also one of the few instances in Chihuahua, if not the only one, where Porfirio Díaz had ratified a village's claims in 1893. Nevertheless, after Aldasoro's surrender, Creel felt the time had also come to put an end to Namiquipa's demands, and he sent a 14-page memorandum to the federal government listing "offenses" that the inhabitants of Namiquipa had committed over many years by refusing to hand over most of their lands to Enrique Muller. He considered it "monstrous" that villagers could lay claim to so much land. He dealt with the thorny problem of Díaz's recognition of the villagers' claim by denying that such a recognition had taken place. The Secretaría had written him that it had sent back all documents from Namiquipa to the state government, and Creel stated that he could not find any record of the 1893 decision in the Chihuahuan archives. Even if such records had existed, he doubted whether the present inhabitants of the village could lay claim to being the descendants of the original military colonists.

The main thrust of Creel's argument was that while lawyers might still examine the legality of the village's claims, the federal government should do everything in its power to discourage the villagers from further pressing their claims. "The government should do nothing," he wrote, "which might inspire the inhabitants of Namiquipa to continue with their complaints and the protests that they have so frequently sent to the government in the hope of confirming their claim to the sixty-four *sitios* that they demand."[70]

The last documents to be found in the files for Namiquipa and Janos are letters from the Secretaría written in January 1911, when most of Chihuahua was in the throes of revolution and Madero's army was on the verge of decisive victory, saying that new land surveys should be done both in Janos and Namiquipa.[71] It was a belated and now useless acknowledgment by the federal government that there might have been some justification for the villagers' claims. In the meantime, both villages had evolved into hotbeds of rebellion, and Talamantes had become one of the local revolutionary leaders.

Creel's Last Victory

In theory, the federal government had not capitulated to Creel. It had not given up its attitude that Creel's law was unconstitutional, that village lands should be divided among the villagers rather than sold, and that the ultimate authority in making decisions about village lands rested with the federal government rather than with the state authorities. In practice, however, it kept its reservations about Creel's land law a secret, and those most affected by it, the inhabitants of the free villages, were never told that the federal government even mildly disapproved of the way they were being treated by Creel and his administration. With the federal government effectively off his back, Creel's relentless attacks on the free villagers

of Chihuahua became even more virulent, especially where his own personal interests were concerned. Creel never showed any compunction about problems such as possible conflicts of interests. Two old Chihuahuan military colonies located in the northeastern part of the state, San Carlos and San Antonio, had for nearly a century pastured their livestock on lands that Creel, who owned the huge nearby hacienda of Los Orientales, claimed as his own. In 1908, without any warning, Creel's hacienda administrators told the villagers that they would no longer be allowed to graze their cattle on the pastures they had used for so long.

More than 100 peasants from San Carlos and San Antonio then sent a bitter letter of protest to the federal government.[72] Like other former military colonists in Chihuahua, they insisted that they had earned the right to their land with their blood. San Carlos had received its lands from the state government in 1829, and San Antonio in 1852. Their one obligation in return had been to fight the Apaches, and this they had done with zeal and energy. They recounted the dangerous lives their ancestors had led, facing the possibility of Indian attacks almost daily. In 1872 and in 1879, they had each time captured more than 100 "barbarians," whom they had handed over to armed government forces who had come to fight the Apaches. The villagers not only asked for redress and for protection from Creel's hacienda officials, they also requested the government to give them title to their lands.

Creel's reaction was swift. The mayor appointed by Creel wrote to the jefe político, who was also a Creel appointee, who in turn informed the federal authorities that no villager had ever protested lack of access to their pastureland. At the same time, Creel sent surveyors to the villages to apply his law of 1905 and to sell the villagers' lands.

Unlike other military colonists, the inhabitants of San Carlos and San Antonio decided they would work within the system. They sent a delegation of three men to Mexico City, who hired an expensive lawyer, General Manuel F. Loera, who had close connections to Olegario Molina, the head of the Secretaría de Fomento. Unlike other lawyers, who took money from villagers and then did nothing for them, Loera was ready to work for the sums paid to him. He sent a personal appeal to Molina, presented the villagers' petition to the Secretaría,[73] and sent a surveyor to both villages so as to be able to propose a concrete plan of action to the government. The surveyor went to San Carlos and San Antonio, drafted a plan for the division of the village lands in accordance with the colonists' wishes, and also suggested that vacant lands in the neighborhood of San Antonio should be distributed to 228 landless families who were living in the vicinity.[74]

Having just capitulated to Creel over Janos and Namiquipa, the Secretaría was not about the renew the struggle with one of Mexico's most powerful men over the fate of two obscure villages. Officials wrote Loera that his surveyor's plan could not be accepted, that he had no authority to send anyone to Chihuahua, and that the villagers would have to clear things with the governor.[75] Neither Loera nor the villagers were ever told that the federal authorities considered Creel's measures illegal. Only in August 1910 was a short note written to the governor stating that in the opinion of Porfirio Díaz, village lands should be divided rather than sold.[76] The governor did not bother to reply. With the same vindictiveness

he had shown in the case of Janos, Creel took his revenge on the protesting villagers of San Antonio and San Carlos.

The surveyor Creel sent to carry out the expropriation of most of the villages' lands was accompanied, a report sent to Porfirio Díaz noted, "by workers whose task it was to place barbed wire along a line established by the surveyor." In addition, Creel replaced the mayor of San Carlos, who had sided with the villagers.[77]

In spite of all these efforts, Creel's men encountered such strong resistance that they could not implement their plan; seeing that the courts would not help them, the villagers armed themselves and told the invaders to go back to where they came from. Prudently, Creel decided to tolerate this attitude.

Creel now proceeded against the villagers at another level. For years, their cattle had been grazing on his lands and his on theirs. Overnight, he took away their grazing rights, and when the villagers continued to send some of their cattle onto his lands, a report to Porfirio Díaz noted, Creel "imprisoned the leader of these disobedient peasants, took away their cattle without paying them a cent for them, and only freed their leader after keeping him in jail for one month and after a long sermon, in which he told him that one of the reasons he would prevail was that he had 100 times more land than they had. . . . This man became the leader of the revolution in these two villages in 1910."[78]

Creel's persecution of Chihuahua's free villagers was not owing to cupidity alone. It was closely linked to the concept of order and progress that Creel shared with the small oligarchy of *científicos* whose influence was decisive in Porfirian Mexico. In his eyes, "progress" meant improving education, introducing the newest technology (i.e., electricity, street cars, etc.), granting paid vacations to civilian employees to improve their efficiency, and other such positivist reforms. It also meant the elimination of what Creel considered to be inefficient and antimodern groups—for example, the free villagers. In his opinion, only large estates and middle-sized ranches were effective and efficient producers. This explains his unusual display of emotion in his letter to the federal government concerning the demands of the inhabitants of Namiquipa, which he called "monstrous." Inefficient villagers, he obviously felt, had no right to such large resources.[79]

Creel and the Chihuahuan Middle Class

While the majority of free villagers had undergone a relentless series of attacks since 1884, significant segments of other social groups in Chihuahua, outside of the ruling oligarchy, had long benefited from the changes in the state during the Porfirian era. This was true for a large number of what, for want of a better term, might be called the middle class. It comprised such heterogeneous groups as small shopkeepers, small ranchers whose properties were larger than those of subsistence-oriented peasants, artisans, miners, teachers, and better-off employees of domestic and foreign corporations. As the economy developed, their numbers rose and so probably did their incomes. In three of the main districts in Chihuahua, 75 percent of small industrial establishments and artisan shops were founded between 1898 and 1907.[80] In Ciudad Chihuahua, 87 percent of such establishments began business between 1898 and 1906.[81] The number of industrial

workers (including miners) rose from 13,566 in 1895 to 24,333 in 1910, while the number of employees rose from 501 in 1895 to 4,399 in 1910.

The middle classes certainly benefited from the "modernization" that occurred in many parts of Chihuahua, a process in which Enrique Creel played an important role. Its manifestations were apparent all over Chihuahua: telegraph lines were built and electric lighting established in the state's major cities. New, modern construction could be seen in the capital city of Chihuahua, and the state's most distinguished educational institution, the Literary and Scientific Institute, took on new pupils and expanded its curriculum. In Chihuahua, primary education developed at a more rapid pace than elsewhere in Mexico. By the end of the Porfirian era, the literacy rate had jumped from 19 to 28 percent.[82]

In Chihuahua's villages, part of the middle class shared the profits from the expropriation of former military colonists with the oligarchy. They too were able to acquire lands that impoverished peasants were forced to sell. Nevertheless, even during the economic boom, a strong opposition developed among a not-insignificant sector of Chihuahua's middle classes. Some of the most embittered opponents of the regime were men who might be designated village notables, who, thanks to either greater wealth, greater literacy, or simply personal prestige, had been elected by their communities to direct their affairs. Once Creel abolished municipal autonomy, they were replaced by men the governor himself appointed.

One such village headman who became a relentless foe of the Creel administration, which he finally helped to overthrow, was Heliodoro Arias Olea of the town of Bachiniva. Sometime before Terrazas and Creel assumed the governorship of Chihuahua, Arias Olea had been displaced from his position as mayor by a neighboring hacendado, Luis J. Comaduran. When Terrazas became governor, Arias Olea sent a letter of protest to the state administration in the name of the villagers of Bachiniva, describing how the mayor, together with a close ally, Pedro Baray, exercised power over "the life and death" of the village's inhabitants. The petition accused Comaduran and Baray of having assumed control of irrigation installations in Bachiniva. When a neighboring hacienda claimed some village lands known as Rancho Viejo, the mayor told the villagers that he would protect their rights. In order to do so, he asked for and received from the community's inhabitants all deeds and documents that constituted proof of Bachiniva's possession of these lands. But soon the documents in Comaduran's care disappeared, the neighboring hacienda received control of Rancho Viejo, and the mayor obtained a large bribe. In addition, the villagers accused the municipal authorities of keeping all village revenues for themselves, so that no money remained to pay for a school.[83] Opponents of Comaduran and Baray were intimidated, and at times murdered, either by servants from Comaduran's Hacienda del Carmen or by four "bandits" who lived in the village.

Since Heliodoro Arias Olea had supported Terrazas during his fight for supremacy in Chihuahua, Terrazas allowed new elections to take place in 1904, and Arias Olea once more became mayor of Bachiniva. His administration did not, however, last long. Creel felt no sense of obligation to Terrazas's former ally, and he reversed the electoral results and again gave power to Comaduran and Baray. Arias Olea thus once again led the villagers' opposition to the government, and

he did so in a way that particularly angered Governor Creel. Arias Olea was an amateur poet, and at a public meeting, he recited a poem directed against both Porfirio Díaz and Enrique Creel. After praising Mexico's national heroes—Hidalgo, Morelos, and Juárez—he wrote:

> The basic constitution for which you gave your blood and for which you died has been torn to shreds like a flower battered by a hurricane.
> There are no individual guarantees anymore. Not even fragments of justice remain.
> It is being sold in the courts as the holy sacraments were sold in the church.
> The rulers commit thousands of arbitrary acts; your laws are myths to them.
> They make and unmake villages and cities, and they have become kings.
> In Chihuahua, the result is even worse. Without recurring to the farce of elections, Enrique Creel, thanks to his millions, has assumed the governorship.
> As soon as he began to control our destinies, his evil tendencies began.[84]

It did not take long for Creel to hear about the poem. Heliodoro Arias Olea was arrested and sentenced to spend one year in Mexico's most terrible prison, the subterranean dungeons of San Juan de Ulua off the port city of Veracruz. His spirit unbroken, Arias Olea wrote another poem castigating Governor Creel and the Porfirian government while in prison.[85]

The prison guards listened to the poem, and the next day, they took Arias Olea to a special cell, saying that he was mad and that they would cure him. For weeks, he was subjected to diverse kinds of torture. For many hours, he was put into a small room where the guards had installed four smoking ovens, so that the smoke nearly suffocated him. He was then sent to another room, prevented from sleeping for days, and cement was poured onto the floor. Electrodes were put onto the toilet seat, so that he suffered an electric shock when sitting down. Attempts were made to poison his food. The room in which he slept was converted into a toilet, with prisoners putting their excrement into it, so that the stench became unbearable. And still Heliodoro Arias Olea remained unbroken. When he was finally released, his sentence having expired, he told a commission of five officers who had come to take him from prison, "I may be near death, but I am not a worm." He so impressed them that they gave him a standing ovation. A huge crowd welcomed him back when he arrived in his hometown of Bachiniva. On that same day, Creel expressed to a friend the hope that Arias Olea had become a broken man; "Is he finally regretting his libelous remarks?" he asked him. Three years later, Arias Olea answered the question by becoming one of the leaders of the revolution in Bachiniva.[86]

Some of the most bitter opponents of the government belonged to a social group generally not prone to revolutionary sympathies: shopkeepers. The scion of one of Mexico's wealthiest hacendado families, Pablo Martínez del Río, went so far as to characterize the revolution as a movement of independent peasants led by shopkeepers.[87] This was an exaggeration, but there is little doubt that many Mexican shopkeepers had reasons for hostility to the government. Village shopkeepers such as Toribio Ortega in Cuchillo Parado were frequently ruined when their clients lost their land and with it their buying power. Other merchants could not prosper because hacienda peons and even industrial workers were frequently paid in scrip redeemable only at the company stores. Merchants who established themselves in large cities had difficulty competing with foreign shopkeepers, who in many cases were exempt from paying taxes.

Teachers made up another "middle-class" group, but one that benefited from Creel's reforms and his expansion of the school system in the state. Yet they produced some of the revolution's most able leaders. One reason is that teachers deeply resented the lack of freedom that the Creel administration imposed on the state.

Prior to the assumption of power by Terrazas and Creel, many local notables had benefited from some aspects of the political system Díaz had established in Chihuahua. As a result of his having removed Terrazas from power and turned it over to a rival clique, the situation of these notables had significantly improved. Both sides, Terrazas and his rivals, had vied for the political support of these notables and were willing to make concessions in order to secure it. Once Creel became governor and abolished municipal elections, however, local notables lost practically all bargaining power. Creel's control of the judicial system made it very difficult for anyone not connected to his administration to win a court case or for lawyers who were not part of a clique called "el Universal" to operate with any degree of success.[88]

Apart from their economic and political grievances, two ideological tendencies seem to have fueled the opposition of the middle classes to both the Creel administration at the local level and the Díaz administration at the national one. The first was a nostalgia for democratic institutions that had in fact existed during the heyday of the frontier in Chihuahua. The other was economic nationalism. In a report to the State Department in 1910, the U.S. consul in Chihuahua estimated "anti American feeling general over state particularly cities and along railways."[89] There were many ostensible reasons for this anti-American attitude: the huge economic influence of U.S. enterprises in Chihuahua; the privileges enjoyed by foreigners; and the discrimination to which Mexicans were subjected when looking for work in American-owned enterprises and when crossing the border into the United States. Anti-Americanism was especially widespread in the Galeana district, where Mormon colonists had settled and incurred antagonism because of their religion and their way of life.[90] Anti-American nationalism did not, however, express itself in manifestations of xenophobia as it did during the Boxer Rebellion in China. Mexicans who crossed the border tended to admire both the greater economic wealth of the United States and its democratic institutions.

The opposition of large segments of Chihuahua's middle classes to the Terrazas and Creel administration of the state was paralleled by a similar opposition of the industrial working class in Chihuahua, whose numbers had tripled between 1895 and 1910. More than any social group in Chihuahua, they responded favorably to the radical propaganda of the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), and the one type of organization they were allowed to form (unions were not permitted), mutual aid societies, soon became radicalized. Among these industrial workers, two groups would play a particularly important role during the Mexican revolution: the miners, who constituted about a third of the industrial working force in Chihuahua, and the state's railwaymen. While these two groups shared the griev-