ZAPATA

and the Mexican Revolution

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PROLOGUE

A People Chooses a Leader

"Like a wound, the country's history
opens in Anenecuilco."
—Gastón García Cantú

THE OLD MAN WAS ABOUT TO SPEAK NOW, and the crowd of farmers waiting under the arcades behind the village church quieted down to hear him. They knew the meeting must be important. To make sure everyone could come, the elders had called it for this evening, on a Sunday. And to hide it from the hacienda foremen, they had passed the word around in private instead of ringing the church bell.[1]

Almost all the family men in the village were there, and most of the other grown but single men. Some seventy-five or eighty had come, kinfolk, in-laws, cronies, and feudists. And now, waiting together in the shadows of the September evening, they listened carefully for what the wrinkled old man would say. They knew José Merino was never a man to ignore. Uncle or cousin to many of them, respected for miles around, he was chief elder in the village that late summer of 1909 and president of the village council. The crowd could see he was too tired not to go

[1] For an account of this meeting, see Jesús Sotelo Inclán: *Raíz y razón de Zapata. Anenecuilco. Investigación histórica* (México, 1943), pp. 175–6.

straight to the point, and as he spoke they listened, quietly and intently.

He was telling them he was too old, over seventy, and too worn-out, that all the elders were too old and worn-out. In the last year, he said, the job had just gotten to be too much for them. To defend the village's land titles and water rights in the fields as well as in the courts required energy they could no longer muster. Traveling back and forth to the state capital in Cuernavaca, journeying even to Mexico City, arranging for lawyers, facing the jefe político (the district prefect) in Cuautla, dealing with the hacienda managers and foremen and field guards—it was too much for old men. And with the new real-estate law passed in Cuernavaca three months before, reforming taxes and titles, the job was getting worse.[2] The elders had served the village as best they could for years, and they served it best now by resigning. The times were changing so fast the village needed more than the wisdom of age. The people of Anenecuilco would have to elect new men—younger men—to stand up for them. That was all, he said, and then he asked for nominations for his own office, the council presidency.

The four old men who composed the council began to take names and prepare for the vote. They needed to offer no advice or admonition: their presence alone guaranteed that the choice would be free, serious, and respected. For seven hundred years Anenecuilco had lived by the strength of will of men like them, and it had no better strength to trust in now. One of the elders, Carmen Quintero, had taken an active and independent part in local politics for twenty-five years, having started his career before some of the men at the meeting were born. Another, Eugenio Pérez, had loaded his rifle to defend village lands as early as 1887. As for the other two, Merino and Andrés Montes, they had been firm and faithful leaders for well over a decade.[3] Nearly four hundred souls made up Anenecuilco, and probably every one of them could look on at least one of the four elders as uncle, great-uncle, cousin, brother, father, or grandfather.[4] Before those four solemn, independent old men, no one would dare try to steam-

[2] Ibid., 173–4. For the text of the law, see *Semanario Oficial del Gobierno de Morelos,* XVIII, 26, 2.

[3] Quintero had been elected to a district electoral college for federal elections as early as 1884. *Periódico Oficial del Gobierno del Estado de Morelos,* XVI, 23, 5. He was also elected to an electoral college for federal elections in 1900. *Semanario Oficial,* VI, 28, 7. For Pérez, Merino, and Montes, see Sotelo Inclán: op. cit., pp. 155, 159.

[4] Elizabeth Holt Büttner: "Evolución de las localidades en el estado de Morelos según los censos de población, 1900–1950" (Maestría de Geografía thesis, U.N.A.M., 1962), pp. 94–7.

roll a vote, or to walk out if defeated. In Anenecuilco village business was too important for muscles or tempers to interfere with.

The nominations were in. Modesto González's had been first. Then Bartolo Parral had proposed Emiliano Zapata, and Zapata had in turn proposed Parral. A vote was called, and Zapata won easily.

It could not have been a surprise. Zapata was young, having just turned thirty a month before, but the men voting knew him and they knew his family; and they judged that if they wanted a young man to lead them, they would find no one else with a truer sense of what it meant to be responsible for the village.[5] He had had his troubles with the district authorities, the first time when he was only seventeen, a year or two after both his parents died. He had had to leave the state for several months then, hiding out on a family friend's ranch in southern Puebla.[6] But no one held that against him: in the countryside troubles with the police were almost a puberty rite. Anyway for the last three years he had been one of the leaders in the group of young men active in village defense, signing protests, taking a junior part in delegations to the jefe político, generally helping to keep up village morale.[7] Recently he had helped to organize the local campaign of an opposition candidate for governor; and though his party had suffered a disastrous defeat—voters intimidated, votes not counted, leaders arrested and deported to labor camps in Yucatán—he had met opposition politicians from all over the state and established connections with them.[8] After the enactment of the new real-estate law, he had begun working regularly with the council.[9]

[5] Dates for Zapata's birth vary. For 1873, see Alfonso Taracena: *Mi vida en el vértigo de la revolución. Anales sintéticos, 1900–1930* (México, 1936), p. 86. For "around 1877," see Gildardo Magaña: *Emiliano Zapata y el agrarismo en México,* 3 vols. (México, 1934–41), I, 104, and the second, posthumous edition of his work, 5 vols. (México, 1951–2), I, 94. For the same guess, see Baltasar Dromundo: *Vida de Emiliano Zapata* (México, 1961), p. 27. For "around 1879," see Baltasar Dromundo: *Emiliano Zapata. Biografía* (México, 1934), p. 21. For 1883, see Octavio Paz: "Emiliano Zapata," in José T. Meléndez, ed.: *Historia de la revolución mexicana,* 2 vols. (México, 1936–40), I, 319. The two most conscientious historians of matters Zapatista, Sotelo Inclán and Porfirio Palacios, both agree on August 8, 1879, for which see respectively: op. cit., p. 169, and *Emiliano Zapata. Datos biográficos-históricos* (México, 1960), pp. 16–17. Following them are Alfonso Reyes H.: *Emiliano Zapata. Su Vida y su Obra* (México, 1963), and Mario Mena: *Zapata* (México, 1959), p. 169.

[6] Palacios: op. cit., p. 20.

[7] Sotelo Inclán: op. cit., pp. 162–6, 172–3.

[8] See Chapter I for an account of this election.

[9] Sotelo Inclán: op. cit., pp. 174–5.

In country terms, the villagers knew, he was not a poor man: the Zapatas lived in a solid adobe-and-stone house, not a hut. Neither he nor his older brother, Eufemio, had ever worked as day laborers on the haciendas, and both had inherited a little land and some livestock when their parents died. Eufemio had liquidated his for capital to start business in Veracruz State—peddling, hawking, marketing, no one knew quite what. But Emiliano had stayed around Anenecuilco. He worked his land, sharecropped a few acres more from a local hacienda, and in slack seasons ran a string of mules through the settlements south along the Cuautla River.[1] He also bought and sold horses in a small way. For lack of land the Zapata family had years before started dealing in livestock, and Emiliano had learned the trade young. He had also learned the pride horses stir in men, and so as he made money he used it on them—buying a new one, outfitting a favorite with a fancy saddle, outfitting himself to sit, worthily booted and spurred, on the shining back of the horse he most admired.

The reputation he earned with horses paid, for hacienda owners throughout central and eastern Morelos and western Puebla, and even in Mexico City, spoke of him as the best trainer around and competed for his services.[2] But their flattering attention never won him over; people always sensed a painful independence about him. Anenecuilcans recalled a story of his childhood—that once as a child he had seen his father break down and cry in frustration at a local hacienda's enclosure of a village orchard, and that he had promised his father he would get the land back.[3] If the incident occurred, he was nine years old at the time, the ninth of ten children, only four of whom lived to adulthood.[4] If the story was apocryphal, still the determination that it chronicled did burn in his glance; and sometimes, though he was as tough as nails and no one fooled with him, he did look near tears. A quiet man, he drank less than most of the other men in the village and got quieter when he did. Once for several weeks he managed the ornate Mexico City stables of a Morelos sugar planter. It was a good chance to start climbing socially and eco-

[1] Serafín M. Robles: "El General Zapata. Agricultor y Arriero," *El Campesino,* October 1951.

[2] Sotelo Inclán: op. cit., pp. 170, 172. Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama: *La revolución agraria del Sur y EMILIANO ZAPATA, su Caudillo* (México, 1960), pp. 245–6.

[3] Dromundo: *Vida,* p. 29.

[4] Surviving besides Emiliano were Eufemio and two sisters, María de Jesús and María de Luz. Sotelo Inclán: op. cit., pp. 169–70. Mario Gill: *Episodios mexicanos. México en la hoguera* (3rd edn., México, 1960), p. 50–1.

nomically—to feather his nest and wind up with his own stables and maybe even a little ranch. But toadying, wheedling petty obligations, maneuvering, operating, pulling deals—it sickened him, literally. Uneasy and depressed, he was soon back in Anenecuilco, remarking bitterly how in the capital horses lived in stalls that would put to shame the house of any workingman in the whole state of Morelos.[5] If he dandied up on holidays and trotted around the village and into the nearby town of Villa de Ayala on a silver-saddled horse, the people never questioned that he was still one of them. Despite his fine horses and suits, Anenecuilcans never referred to him as Don Emiliano, which would have removed him from the guts and flies and manure and mud of local life, sterilizing the real respect they felt for him into a squire's vague respectability. He was one of their own, they felt in Anenecuilco, and it never made them uncomfortable to treat him so. 'Miliano, they called him, and when he died, *pobrecito*—poor little thing. To them he was a neighbor, a younger cousin who could lead the clan, a beloved nephew as rough and true as seasoned timber.

This was the man the villagers elected president of their council. But when they elected him, they were also laying bets that he would stay as they knew him. What convinced them that once in power he would not change and abuse their trust—what kept the question from rising in anyone's mind—was the reputation of his family. Zapata was an important name in Anenecuilco. It had first appeared in local affairs as a rebel name during the War of Independence in the 1810's.[6] Emiliano's father, Gabriel, a quiet, popular, hard-working man with a slight stutter, and his mother, Cleofas, were by all accounts plain folk, but they passed on to their son the rare, plain qualities of unambitious courage and dogged, abiding integrity that glint through the family history. The Zapatas and the Salazars (his mother's people) had it bred into their bones what Mexican history was about. When a Spanish army besieged the rebels in Cuautla during the War of Independence, boys from the neighboring villages sneaked back and forth across the lines for weeks, smuggling tortillas, salt, liquor, and gunpowder to the insurgents: one of the boys from Anenecuilco was José Salazar, Emiliano's maternal grandfather. Two of his father's brothers, Cristino and José, had fought in the War of Reform and against the French Intervention in the 1860's,

[5] Silvano Barba González: *La lucha por la tierra. Emiliano Zapata* (México, 1960), pp. 35–45. Sotelo Inclán: op. cit., p. 173.

[6] Ibid., pp. 138–42.

and years later Emiliano remembered the stories they used to tell him of their campaigns against the Reactionaries and the Imperialists.[7]

Besides, there was another José Zapata, whose career definitely fixed the Zapata family high in village esteem. In 1866–7 during the War of Intervention, the young Republican general Porfirio Díaz organized companies of men all over south-central Mexico to take part in the final push against the French. In every neighborhood he needed a reliable agent to mobilize and lead the local forces. His man in the country around Villa de Ayala was this other José Zapata.[8] Zapata was already an old man, but he knew the region and its people like the back of his hand, and he commanded respect wherever he passed. His home was in Anenecuilco, and after the war ended in 1867 in the restoration of the Republic, the people there and in Villa de Ayala naturally counted on him to lead them in reestablishing a popular peace and order. During the troubled times of the late 1860's and early 1870's he was chief elder in Anenecuilco and held elected posts in the Villa de Ayala municipal government as well.[9] Through these years José Zapata kept faithful connections with Díaz, now an ambitious but ill-advised and confused opposition politician. He organized a secret Porfirista club in Anenecuilco and carried on a clandestine correspondence with his old chief about defending the villagers' lands against the sugar plantations, which he described as a "malign infirmity."[1] Anenecuilcans revered him: when his comrades reported his death to Díaz in 1876, it was "the death of our beloved president, whom we considered almost as a father."[2] And for years afterward they continued along the political course he had marked for them, trusting, even after Díaz came to power and betrayed his earlier promises, that in the end he would remember to help them protect their fields. Still in 1892, in a bitter presidential election, young Anenecuilcans like Eufemio Zapata, Octaviano Gutiérrez, and Teodoro Placencia

[7] Ibid., p. 192.

[8] Victoriano Gómez to the auxiliary mayor of Anenecuilco, July 9, 1867, Archivo de Jesús Sotelo Inclán (henceforth ASI). José Zapata to Narcizo Medina, February 9, 1867, ASI.

[9] José Zapata to the municipal aide of Anenecuilco, October 10, 12, and 19, 1870, ASI.

[1] J. Zapata, A. Solares, and Teodosio Franco to Porfirio Díaz, June 14, 1874, cited in Alberto María Carreño, ed.: *Archivo del General Porfiro Díaz. Memorias y documentos,* 24 vols. (México, 1947–58), XI, 142–3.

[2] Teodosio Franco, Alfredo Solares, and Justino Arriaga to Porfirio Díaz, January 23, 1876, ibid., XI, 300–1. I owe this reference and the preceding one to the generosity of Jesús Sotelo Inclán.

considered it their civic duty to enroll in local Porfirista clubs and vote for the leader old José had given the villagers faith in.[3] Exactly how Emiliano was related to this patriarch, who died three years before he was born, is still unclear, but José Zapata was probably a brother of his grandfather, a great-uncle. In any case his part in village history served to establish Zapata as an honored name there.

Finally, the security of kinship was in the present meeting's very air: Emiliano was also a nephew of the incumbent chief, José Merino.[4] The villagers knew they were in for trouble for the next few years. They had no better bet than Zapata to see them through.

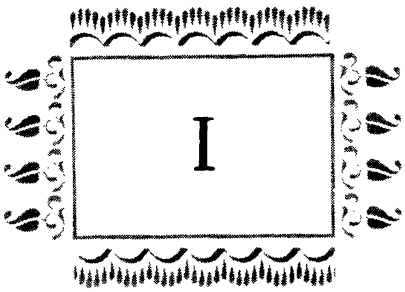
Other offices were then opened to nominations and filled by young men, the unofficial leaders for the last five years of the new generation in the village. Francisco Franco, a close friend of Emiliano's, was elected secretary; Eduwiges Sánchez and Rafael Merino, José's son, were named treasurers; and José Robles became *vocal*, a sort of member without portfolio. It was a short and simple ceremony—the assembly, election, and transfer of authority. Really it was not unusual, since in hard times the traditional procedure was for the elder "judges" to give way to the younger "warriors," and on that Sunday evening, September 12, 1909, the times in store for Anenecuilco looked grievously hard.

Zapata spoke briefly. He said that he accepted the difficult responsibility conferred upon him, but that he expected everyone to back him. "We'll back you," Francisco Franco thirty years later remembered someone in the crowd calling out to Zapata: "We just want a man with pants on, to defend us."[5]

[3] *La Idea Patriótica,* March 10, 1892.

[4] Dromundo: *Vida,* p. 36.

[5] Sotelo Inclán: op. cit., pp. 175–6.



President Díaz Elects a Governor

"Where the captain commands . . ."

THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION HAPPENED because the high politicians of the country openly failed to agree on who should rule when President Porfirio Díaz died. These politicians, nicknamed the científicos, believed it a natural law that the nation could progress only through their control and for their benefit. From the early 1890's on they lectured Mexico about the authority their special science entitled them to, and they eventually convinced great sections of the public of their infallibility. But by 1904 they were floundering in the test of arranging succession to Díaz, who had been president then for twenty consecutive years. In 1908, two years before the next presidential election, the test became a notorious affair of state. And with their maneuvers exposed, the powerful proved naïve, treacherous, and incompetent. In a short time their fashionable order collapsed.

What made the test a crisis was its publicity, and what made it public was Díaz's pride. In February 1908 Díaz had granted an interview to a well-known American "special correspondent," James Creelman, on assignment in Mexico for the popular American monthly *Pearson's Magazine*. Díaz told Creelman he was definitely retiring when his term ended in 1910 and would not, even if his "friends" begged him, "serve again." He "welcomed

. . . as a blessing" the formation of an opposition party, he said. "And if it can develop power, not to exploit, but to govern," he promised, "I will stand by it, support it, advise it and forget myself in the successful inauguration of complete democratic government in the country."[1]

Then seventy-eight years old, and pathetically obsessed with fixing his place in Mexican history, Díaz intended by these words only to strike the statesmanlike pose he believed worthy of the high rank he held in world esteem. He was sincere but not serious. Resigning, retiring, and promising free elections had long been his favorite gestures, always harmlessly performed for the same audience—for journalists, who could only report, never for Congress, which might accept. And no one had ever taken his words to heart. But there was a difference this time that charged what he said with unexpected significance: Díaz was getting old and could not hide it. Before, talk about retiring was only breath wasted and forgotten. Now, in 1908, it was a morbid reminder that whether he retired or not, he would soon die, and then times would change.

No important politicking had gone on in Mexico for over thirty years without Díaz involving himself in it. By this means he had become the only politician able to maneuver through the intricate maze of alliances and armistices. To ensure his control he kept all deals precarious: in 1908 practically everything central depended on him. The very idea of his departure unsettled people and sent shivers through officeholders high and low. For his own good Díaz should have avoided alarming the public, and he could have done so by turning Creelman away or by having the Mexican press suitably distort his words for Mexican readers. But now toward the end of his life he longed for the genuine gratitude of his compatriots even more than the respect of an Edwardian world, and out of a tardy and indiscreet hope that he might win it by liberal words, he allowed the most influential pro-government newspaper in the country, *El Imparcial*, to publish a full translation of the interview in early March. Like the sudden muffled tolling of a royal funeral bell, the report signaled the ending of one age in Mexico—Don Porfirio's—and the beginning of another (God knew whose), when those left in charge would have to act on their own and without precedents.

But in fact the ceremony was a fake: Díaz was still around. Staging scenes and watching people play them fascinated him. And in the Creelman interview he indulged himself again—asking people and politicians

[1] James Creelman: "President Díaz. Hero of the Americas," *Pearson's Magazine*, XIX, 3 (March 1908), 242.

to carry on as if he had left when he had not and was not about to, and anyway, as everyone knew, would not quit politicking until he lay stiff in his grave. The effect was worse than if he really had died. No politician in the country quite knew how to start acting. Científicos were at a loss whether to pretend the interview had never occurred, or to take it seriously and begin organizing independently for the 1910 elections, bargaining with Díaz for what support they might get. Reformers also worried over a strategy: was the interview a trick to get them to stick their necks out, or a legitimate invitation to bring their informal and amateurish activities into the open and coordinate them in professional parties? By talking about leaving and then not clearing out, Díaz made it hard for Mexican politicians to count on anything. Thus he confused the regular workings of the whole system.

Although in the interview Díaz referred exclusively to national politics and the presidential election of 1910, the confusion he aroused first took effect on the state level. This happened because of the especially complex nature of state political deals, involving deep local interests and clannish loyalties. Normally these deals were like iron. But whenever one cracked and it became necessary to renegotiate who should rule a state, the wrangling was fierce among entrenched local politicians and Don Porfirio's arbitrating agents. Once the exhausted contenders arrived at an agreement, they tried to make it last as long as possible. Through officially selected candidates and rigged elections, the state proceeded in political order. An agreement's durability, however, depended on meticulous attention to all its terms, which in turn depended on their clear definition. The Creelman interview blurred previously clear lines and led to independent movements in 1909 gubernatorial elections in Morelos, Sinaloa, Yucatán, and Coahuila. Officials let politicking get so out of hand that the federal government eventually had to drop its new pretense of neutrality and revert to the imposition of candidates.

The election in Morelos in February 1909 was the first after the Creelman interview in which a serious opposition organized. Ordinarily only the death of a governor in office moved the partners in a state deal to the nerve-racking strain of renegotiation, and that is what happened in Morelos. Governor Manuel Alarcón, having just been reelected for the fourth straight time in August 1908, died on December 15, 1908.[2] He had stayed in office so long partly because the people of his state respected him. As his replacement, they naturally wanted a man like him. And when,

[2] *Semanario Oficial,* XVII, 32, 1; 51, 1. *El País,* December 16, 1908.

through a preposterous miscalculation, they were presented with a very different sort, they resisted. Two years later Mexico began laboring through the first of those enormous, heaving spasms that ruptured central authority and let the revolution loose. What happened in Morelos during that national crisis was mainly determined by what had happened there during the 1909 election.

The affair began without a hint of becoming awkward. The December morning when Alarcón died was ten months after Díaz had intoned to Creelman and the ages that fantastic liturgy of self-sacrifice, liberalism, and democracy. There had already been six gubernatorial elections as well as federal and state congressional elections.[3] And although there were heated private debates and numerous pamphlets urging the formation of independent parties, no group had publicly appeared to take Díaz at his new, tolerant word. When, therefore, on the afternoon of December 21, the Monday following Alarcón's funeral, a clique of sugar planters, lawyers, and state politicians conferred with Díaz in his presidential office, they assumed their new governor would be elected, like those of the year before, according to the regular procedure: on election day the state government would see that the proper candidate won by whatever margin was considered suitable. Who the candidate was, the conference between Díaz and the state leaders would determine.[4]

Picking a worthy successor to Alarcón should have offered no problem. He was himself a perfect model, a native son whose career knitted firmly and vitally into the region's recent history.[5] Alarcón had been born in 1851 on Buenavista hacienda, near the village of Santa María, a few miles north of Cuernavaca, and had passed a childhood as poor and hard as Mexico then had to give. Seven years old when the War of Reform broke out, twelve when the French arrived to install Maximilian, he never had the chance to learn more than farming and fighting. At fifteen he joined the local Republican colonel to resist the occupying Imperialist army. His mother found him and brought him home, but he ran off again—this time farther, to Tepoztlán—and joined the Republicans there. After the war,

[3] In Hidalgo, Guerrero, Tlaxcala, Puebla, Mexico State, and Morelos, where Alarcón had just won. *México Nuevo,* April 2, 1909.

[4] For accounts of the conference, see *El Imparcial,* December 22, 1908; *Diario del Hogar,* January 3, 1909; *Mexican Herald,* December 22, 1908; *México Nuevo,* January 2, 1909; *Actualidades,* January 1, 1909.

[5] In her *Tempest over Mexico* (Boston, 1935), p. 35, Rosa E. King says the people of Morelos wanted "another Indian" for governor, "a popular man." What they meant was a native son.

in 1869, the old Third Military District of Mexico State became the independent state of Morelos. State jobs naturally went to local veterans of the war, and Alarcón, who had taken part in the sieges of Cuernavaca and Mexico City, got an appointment as head of the rurales, mounted federal police, in Yautepec and Tetecala districts.[6] The highwaymen and bandits who swarmed over Morelos at that time soon found it easier to do business elsewhere than in his zone.[7] A military Republican when civilian Republicans were looked on as jaded schemers, Alarcón disapproved of Juárez's successor, Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, "a Mexican version of Lord Chesterfield."[8] When Díaz, his former army boss, revolted in 1876 against President Lerdo, Alarcón, still a district police chief, bolted to his side and was commissioned to operate in Morelos, Guerrero, and Mexico State. Díaz's revolt triumphed, and a year later the new Porfirista governor in Morelos rewarded Alarcón with a promotion to state chief of rurales. This governor afterward enjoyed the reputation of having wiped out brigandage in the state; actually he only presided while Alarcón and his local officers did the work of running down the outlaws, shooting them on the spot, and slowly, season by season, returning the districts to order.

Porfirian Mexico prized tough policemen, and Alarcón's talents soon won him other posts. By 1883 he was a jefe político.[9] By 1884 he was elected to the state legislature, serving at the same time as lieutenant governor.[1] And he kept his job as state police chief. Despite his poor health, he visited all of Morelos's twenty-six municipalities, acquainted himself with the local notables, and cultivated their support.[2] During the late 1880's and early 1890's he emerged as the strongest politician in the state, and when the current governor died halfway through his term in 1894, Alarcón took over for the interim without hesitation or trouble, had himself elected in his own right two years later, and began a stern but benevolent rule that ended only with his death.[3]

[6] Ireneo Paz: *México actual. Galería de contemporáneos* (México, 1898), p. 43.

[7] J. Figueroa Doménech: *Guía general descriptiva de la República mexicana. Historia, geografía, estadística, etc., etc.,* 2 vols. (México, 1899), II, 370.

[8] The phrase comes from Frank A. Knapp, Jr.: *The Life of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, 1823–1889. A Study of Influence and Obscurity* (Austin, 1951), p. 154.

[9] Cuautla district was his. Paz: op. cit., p. 43.

[1] *Periódico Oficial,* XVI, 61, 1; 57, 3.

[2] See Cecilio A. Robelo: *Revistas Descriptivas del Estado de Morelos* (Cuernavaca, 1885), *passim.*

[3] *El Orden. Periódico Oficial del Estado de Morelos,* X, 49, 2–3; 50, 2. *Semanario Oficial,* II, 33, 1.

Before and after he became governor, Alarcón's life was one of public success. The secret was a profound shrewdness about the basic social problem of the state. This was the conflict between the few, powerful sugar planters (or, when as usual they were absent, their managers) and the scores of village leaders and small farmers. Both sides had always been zealous, but the struggle became desperate in the 1880's. Completion of the Veracruz–Mexico City railroad in 1873 had lowered freight rates in central Mexico, and with the extension of a branch line to Cuautla in 1881 and Yautepec in 1883 planters began importing heavy machinery and setting up big sugar mills to supply the large new markets now opened. To grow much more sugar than before, they considered it easier to farm more extensively rather than more efficiently. The race was on to grab land, water, and labor.[4] Through the 1890's and into the new century, the planters had immensely the better of it. But Alarcón gained popularity by at least listening to the villagers' petitions, and sometimes even granting one.[5] By then a plantation owner himself, he had the talent of the triumphant poor boy for inspiring in plain people a sense that he understood them.[6] This talent he needed, because he could not really help them. In Morelos in those years no governor could not have favored the planters, who increasingly resented even verbal tokens of respect for villagers and small farmers. In practice the only thing a politician could do was go through the motions of a compromise, pose, juggle, fake, do magic; at that Alarcón was a home-grown genius; hence his success. Had he lived—had that Mexican country diet not corroded his insides and killed him of gastroenteritis at fifty-seven—he might well have changed the course of rebellion in his state two years later, perhaps by some judicious deal prevented it altogether.

A popular policeman, born of the people and reader of their hearts—who could come after such a man? Four candidates were mentioned in the conference with Díaz on December 21. One was Luis Flores, Alarcón's regular stand-in, the lieutenant governor in Morelos off and on for the last thirty years. Two others were personal associates of Díaz's and leaders in the National Porfirista Party: Demetrio Salazar, a Mexico City lawyer

[4] Domingo Diez: *Bibliografía del estado de Morelos* (México, 1933), pp. clxix–clxxi. See Chapter ii for a detailed discussion of this process.

[5] Ibid., pp. clxxviii–clxxxi.

[6] His hacienda was Temilpa. See Domingo Diez: *Dos conferencias sobre el Estado de Morelos* (México, 1919), p. 56. For an interesting sketch of Governor Alarcón in action, see Mrs. Alec Tweedie: *Mexico As I Saw It* (New York, 1901), pp. 291–353.

who was the son-in-law of a former Morelos governor and especially influential in Cuautla, and Antonio Tovar, a colonel in the army and an old-time politician still popular in the state's villages and small towns. Another possibility was Agustín Aragón, a Jonacatepec native who had become one of Mexico's most distinguished intellectuals.[7] Any of these would have been a soun. candidate, a man supported in his own right and commanding statewide respect so that imposing him would not cause serious discontent. But during the talks another figure cropped up—one so unlikely that political gossips the next day confused him with his cousin, then governor of the Federal District.[8] This was Díaz's chief of staff, Pablo Escandón.

Alarcón must have turned over in his grave. A man less like him could not have been found in the whole Republic. Escandóns had graced Maximilian's Imperial court, helped finance the Veracruz–Mexico City railroad, made haciendas famous, and recently, an Escandón having been appointed the Federal District governor, taken over metropolitan society. Among Mexico's fanciest showpieces, veritable luxury-rate tourist attractions, they had shown off so long that by 1900 they had almost lost their capacity for anything else. In the early years of the new century the name Escandón still appeared prominently in newspapers—but in the society columns. Of this mighty, dying tree, Pablo was the last frail twig.

He was only flimsily connected with Morelos politics, and the idea that he could govern in the agile but firm manner of Alarcón was absurd. A delicate soul, educated like many other youths of his class at the Jesuit College at Stonyhurst, England, Pablo had returned to Mexico and entered the family sugar business in Morelos around 1900.[9] He soon secured the Escandón reputation as "progressive." Planters all over the country considered Atlihuayán, the Escandón hacienda near Yautepec, "a model property."[1] Doing business and paying taxes in Morelos soon earned him

[7] *México Nuevo,* January 2, 1909. For Tovar and Salazar, see Ricardo García Granados: *Historia de México, desde la restauración de la República en 1867, hasta la caída de Huerta,* 2 vols. (2nd edn., México, 1956), II, 48. Aragón was an editor of the *Revista Positiva,* a Mexico City "philosophical, literary, social, and political" monthly bearing the motto "Order and Progress" and the date according to the Comteian calendar. See Eduardo Blanquel: "La *Revista Positiva* de D. Augustín Aragón y la Historia de la Ciencia en México," *Memorias del Primer Coloquio Mexicano de Historia de la Ciencia,* Vol. I (1964).

[8] *El Imparcial,* December 22, 1908.

[9] King: op. cit., p. 33. *Semanario Oficial,* VII, 28, 2–3.

[1] *Mexican Herald,* December 22, 1908.

minor political rewards. In 1902 he was elected the state's alternate senator and in 1906 was reelected.[2] He also served off and on as the federal deputy from Morelos. But he had not a political bone in his body. President Díaz recognized his real talents: from the time Pablo joined the army (as a captain), Díaz kept him on his staff.[3] A fine ornament, Pablo was to make sure the regime's style was right. He did well and over the years received regular promotions. By 1908 he was a lieutenant colonel.

There he was, one of Mexico's fanciest dukelings, prissy and fawning, looking forward to a long, rich life of fashionable and stately paradings.[4] Then—an apparently trivial assignment—Díaz sent him to Cuernavaca as his official representative to preside over Alarcón's funeral, and life went sour. While he was there tending to the ceremony, a group of planters and their agents, led by Antonio Barrios, Ramón Corona, and Fernando Noriega, visited him. They suggested he get interested in being Morelos's new governor.[5] He did not refuse, and, encouraged, they arranged the conference with Díaz the following Monday. When in Monday's talks it came time to agree on a man, they passed over the others and chose Pablo.

No one knew better than Pablo himself that the choice was politically ridiculous. Being a governor was the last thing he wanted, as he later lamented over tea with a friend in Cuernavaca, the English lady hotelier Rosa King. Mixing in what he called "those beastly local politics" would sicken the heart of any gentleman, he complained to her.[6] Friends generously observed that he was "too aristocratic" for hard work like governing. Others less generously remarked that his career had been limited to the "presidential reception room," and that if he ever saw what went on in Mexico, it was "only through palatial windows or through the crystal panes of his limousine."[7] Nervous civilian politicians worried that his candidacy might signify the predominance of the military party among Díaz's close advisers. But this was silly—imagine Pablo Escandón involved in such gross

[2] *Semanario Oficial,* VIII, 29, 1; XV, 28, 1.

[3] *México Nuevo,* January 2, 1909.

[4] Manuel Márquez Sterling, the Cuban writer and diplomat, penned acid lines on Escandón after meeting him in the National Palace in 1904. See his *Psicología profana* (Havana, 1905), pp. 79–80. See also his *Los últimos días del Presidente Madero (Mi gestión diplomática en México)* (2nd edn., México, 1958), pp. 15–16, 332–3.

[5] *El Imparcial,* December 22, 1908. *Diario del Hogar,* January 3, 1909.

[6] King: op. cit., p. 33. A widow, Mrs. King ran one of the two best hotels in Cuernavaca at that time, the Bella Vista.

[7] *Actualidades,* January 1, 1909.

maneuvers!—and they were quickly reassured. The new independent journal *México Nuevo* described exactly the meaning of his army life. "Colonel Escandón's prestige among the military," it said, "is only the prestige accorded a perfect sportsman."[8]

Why pick a "perfect sportsman" to run a state, especially when he had to follow a native-son governor who had been popular and down-to-earth? It made no obvious sense. But to the planters who conferred with Díaz that December afternoon, the question was not why but why not. Manuel Araoz, the leader of the commission (and vice president of the científico Reelectionist Party), was among the biggest planters in Morelos.[9] His three plantations already included over 31,000 of the state's most fertile acres; local government could have survived on the taxes he alone could have paid. But he wanted even more land under cultivation, to bring an even higher rate of return on his investment. The problem was not paying the price: although land in Morelos cost more than anywhere else in the country except the Federal District, the planters could afford it. What bothered Araoz and his fellow hacendados was getting the land put up for sale. Almost no public land remained available.[1] Even offering attractive terms, the planters could not induce villagers to traffic in the titles to their fields. To acquire the land, they had to resort to political and judicial maneuvers —condemnations, court orders, foreclosures, and defective-title rulings. Manuel Araoz wanted a governor he could use. He preferred to avoid someone like Tovar, a man with grass-roots appeal of his own, who might, even in trivial ways, stand against him. To Araoz and most other planters the Creelman interview meant they could drop the hypocrisy of being "responsible state fathers," organize along clear class lines, and still enjoy official backing. With Alarcón providentially removed, they were free to be as shortsighted as they pleased. So no Tovars for them: a "perfect sportsman," a planter like themselves, a good fellow at the Jockey Club, a tenderhearted socialite who would stay away and let them alone—that was what they were out for.

Díaz himself would probably have preferred someone with more local popularity. In the conference he told the planters he also approved of the

[8] *México Nuevo,* January 2, 1909.

[9] For Araoz's politics, see García Granados: op. cit., II, 48. For his landholdings, see the table of haciendas in Appendix A. He also owned two of the twenty-four sugar mills in Morelos.

[1] Manuel Mazari: "Bosquejo histórico del Estado de Morelos" (MS, 1930), p. 109. I consulted this work thanks to the generosity of Valentín López González.

other men mentioned. But Araoz and his friends were important men, and they wanted Pablo; Díaz knew that at least he would be harmless, and he gave way. Pablo protested feebly to Don Porfirio that he did not want the "appointment," but, told it was his duty, he accepted.[2] The next day the other men who had been proposed began denying their availability. And as of December 22 Pablo Escandón was the figure the people of Morelos believed they would have to get used to for at least the next three and a half years.

The Porfirista machine slipped quickly into gear. Barrios, Corona, and Noriega called a meeting of the state's principal businessmen and professionals for December 30 at the Hotel Moctezuma in Cuernavaca. There Corona, the commission secretary, informed them that Díaz had approved their request for Escandón's candidacy and that Escandón had accepted. The meeting at once reinstituted the familiar Central Porfirio Díaz Club, which formally nominated Pablo. The next day a less imposing bunch, local political and social notables from all six districts of the state, convened in Cuernavaca to learn about the club's formation and their candidate's nomination.[3] Escandón himself encouraged these faithful town and village bosses by a brief appearance.[4] And after discussing common local problems, exchanging gossip, and entertaining themselves as politicians away from home will, they returned home to start arranging his election.

At this point everything looked routine. Invitations were going out for the congratulatory banquets for Escandón in Mexico City.[5] True, disgruntled reminders appeared in the independent press that Escandón's candidacy did not necessarily exclude others, that Díaz had also spoken well of more popular men, that if Morelos were left to itself, it would pick Flores (or Tovar, or Salazar).[6] As early as December 23 *Diario del Hogar* had called for a formal opposition campaign. "The moment is precious," it pleaded. But these helpless protests quickly petered out. And even after the Escandonista convention on December 31 in Cuernavaca, there was no public sign of political objection. If the Creelman interview had disrupted the state's politics, the chief beneficiaries seemed to be the planters, who felt entitled to name a toady as governor.

But without fanfare or banquets something exceptional had already

[2] King: op. cit., p. 33.

[3] *Diario del Hogar,* January 3, 1909. *El Diario,* January 25, 1909.

[4] *Diario del Hogar,* January 1, 1909.

[5] *El Imparcial,* January 5 and 7, 1909.

[6] *México Nuevo,* January 2 and 4, 1909.

happened. At the news of the planters' offensive, a native resistance had quietly formed behind the scenes in Morelos.[7] If such ventures were rare, that was only because Díaz usually stymied them, not because there was lack of raw material. In every district of the state—as in every state in the Republic—there were families with grievances against local authorities. For some the grievance was simply poverty; for others, the long exclusion from serious politics because they or their fathers or uncles had joined the wrong side when Díaz first rose to power years before; for still others, a specific gripe against a specific official. These disaffected families formed a vague community of opposition. The oldest and most important knew each other, or at least knew of each other, and certain men were recognized from district to district as opposition leaders. The articulate and prominent among them were townfolk of course, with white collars, shoes, underwear, and important if shaky connections with the establishment. But mostly, and most firmly, the opposition was composed of rural families, dissident clans scattered around the countryside. They usually kept quiet and let the clerks and shopowners and editors and lawyers do the talking, but when they did act they meant business. They were no people to trifle or to trifle with—these villagers and small farmers, the common country people of Morelos. Their ancestors had taken part in some of the most dramatic and difficult episodes of Mexican history. They knew from experience what dignity and independence were, and how long patience and courtesy could legitimately suspend them. And they would not be intimidated. Díaz himself, who had fought and intrigued all through the region, often remarked that "those tramps in the South are tough."[8] When he took over the government in 1876 and began organizing his regime, the rural democrats gradually went underground and the city liberals reconciled themselves to being left out. But they and their sons held on to the liberal hopes of the Restored Republic of 1867. The opposition now springing up against Escandón—the town and country united, the town speaking for the country—was at once a renaissance, a reorganization, and a homecoming for them.

Mexico still belonged to Don Porfirio, however. And whether shopowners or farmers, the Morelos opposition knew better than to waste time on plans for a regular campaign. In the Porfiriato direct electoral con-

[7] Antonio Sedano: "Andanzas militares del Coronel Republicano Antonio Sedano y Algunos Relatos Históricos del Estado de Morelos" (MS, 1919), p. 18, ASI. The opposition was not fully reported in the press until January 7, 1909, by *México Nuevo*.

[8] Sotelo Inclán: op. cit., p. 186.

frontations rarely took place: practical politics was a matter of making deals. And to force the planters into new negotiations from which a more representative official candidate might emerge, the Morelos opposition had to show Díaz it deserved attention. Strategy required not a full-length campaign but simply one that started with a great burst of energy. If it looked strong enough early enough, Díaz might consider the trouble of suppressing it more costly than the embarrassment of coming to terms with it. The real question for the opposition leaders was whether they would have the time and freedom to impress Díaz. Having calculated their chances in the light of the Creelman interview, they were optimistic. If the planters felt the interview licensed them to act irresponsibly, the opposition leaders felt it guaranteed a longer and more extensive (though never absolute) protection for independent politicking.

The purpose of their work being a deal, there was one man they knew they could not do without. This was General Francisco Leyva, local hero of the War of Intervention and the state's first governor. Now seventy-three years old and residing in Mexico City, he had officially been on the outside looking in for the last thirty-odd years, but that did not mean he did not count. To the insiders in the capital, he represented the outsiders in Morelos, a kind of sergeant-at-arms in the pay of both the seated and the unseated. This post he held by virtue of being party to one of those informal armistices essential to Mexican politics. The armistice—it was with Díaz—had institutionalized and turned to good account a hostility that began in the late 1860's. After the War of Intervention Díaz was angling for a political base from which to challenge President Juárez. One of his most foolish ideas was to try for the governorship of Morelos in 1869.[9] Leyva had earned the office: during the war he had been military commander in the area, and afterward as the district's deputy to Congress he had managed its achievement of statehood.[1] But Díaz horned in, and lost in a free election by

[9] He also ran for president in these years, as well as for chief justice of the Supreme Court (the effective vice president) and for federal deputy of several districts. See Daniel Cosío Villegas: *Historia Moderna de México. La República Restaurada. La Vida Política* (México, 1955), pp. 86–9.

[1] See the Papeles de Francisco Leyva, Folder 8, in the Archivo General de la Nación (henceforth AGN); also Diez: *Bibliografía,* pp. cxlvii–cliii, and Manuel Rivera Cambas: *Historia de la intervención y del Imperio de Maximiliano,* 5 vols. (2nd edn., México, 1961), I, B, 736–7. Leyva had to betray the state he formally served in Congress, Mexico State, to split off its Morelos districts. See Pantaleón Tovar: *Historia parlamentaria del cuarto congreso constitucional,* 4 vols. (México, 1872–4), III, 284–5, 422, 452.

57 to 174.[2] Bad feelings between Leyva and Díaz worsened when Leyva's brother was killed two years later putting down a local rebellion in support of Díaz's revolt of La Noria.[3] After Díaz in 1876 overthrew President Lerdo, on whom Leyva depended, he abruptly dumped Leyva out of power in Morelos and never let him back in state politics. But that did not stop people from informally following Leyva's lead; to scores of Morelos families, Leyva remained the true chief. And this was why he mattered to Díaz. For Díaz ruled two republics—his own official Mexico of Victorian gentlemen in frock coats, and an estranged and frayed Mexico of pariahs. When there had to be words between Díaz and that other, frayed republic, the old chiefs outcast since the 1870's were the only ones who could mediate. If the opposition community scattered around Morelos in 1909 wanted to renegotiate the question of who would be governor, Leyva alone could talk for them.

Around Christmastime, opposition emissaries met the general at his home in Mexico City to discuss their plans. They knew the appeal of his name in Morelos, and they tried to get him to run. He refused, "because he was too old," but he proposed his two sons, Alfredo, a deputy inspector in the Federal District Police Department, and Patricio, an agronomist and official in the Water Division of the Ministry of Public Works.[4] The commission tentatively approved of Patricio.

General Leyva then arranged an appointment with Díaz. On December 28, a week after the planters, he saw the President and inquired how he would look on a rival campaign. That was easy for Díaz to answer: all Leyva could later report to the commission was the President's assurance that "anyone whom the citizens of Morelos freely elect would be welcome to him."[5] Díaz's tongue-in-cheek pieties about popular will and the electoral law were not very encouraging. The oppositionists hesitated to start work. They did not know whether they would be let alone long enough. Not until a week later, January 4, did the Cuernavaca group issue a call for a Leyvista convention on January 7.[6]

There was some last-minute guessing about an alternative to Patricio,

[2] For the most detailed reports on the campaign, see *La Opinión Nacional,* April 22 to July 15, 1869.

[3] Alberto Leduc, Luis Lara y Pardo, and Carlos Roumagnac: *Diccionario de geografía, historia y biografía mexicanas* (Paris, 1910), p. 558.

[4] *México Nuevo,* February 14, 1909. Diez: *Bibliografía,* p. clxxxiii.

[5] *México Nuevo,* January 7, 1909.

[6] Ibid., January 9, 1909.

but the magic of the old general's name settled the question for the convention.[7] The day before it met, dates for the election were officially announced: February 7 for the primary, when the electoral colleges were filled; February 21 for the secondary, when the colleges voted.[8] That meant only a couple of weeks to organize a fast-starting campaign strong enough to make Díaz reconsider. Names had appeal, and the opposition needed all the free appeal it could get: the junior Leyva was formally nominated.[9]

So by January 8, a little over three weeks after Alarcón's death, politics in Morelos had a new look. To resist the planters' open maneuvers for complete domination, an opposition had materialized. Whatever its strategy, it had convened and agreed on a candidate, and the national press was seriously reporting the affair. Merely by involving General Leyva, even through his son, the opposition looked likely to force a new deal. By January 10, just two days after the Leyvista convention, rumors were abroad. Escandón, it was reported, had dropped out of the race at his family's request, and Leyva would probably win Díaz's personal approval.[1] Politicians relaxed. True, the next day Escandón denied the report; and, with Leyvista charges of Escandón's ineligibility on grounds of nonresidence, it became clear that neither side would quit without heavier or sweeter pressures.[2] But this was only the initial test of nerves, and no one doubted that the contestants would soon find a politic way of settling their problem. It was incredible that any candidate would have the stamina to compete six weeks in a state election. Besides, there would be no reason to try—if the traditional opposition strategy worked.

But for the first time in thirty-odd years it did not work. Politics throughout the country had been operating out of kilter for several months. And here in Morelos the regular procedures finally broke down. The contest went on to the end, and when the electoral colleges voted six weeks later, the opposition had not only not traded itself into oblivion but had even won votes. As the campaigning went along, the whole character of the election changed. Political clubs formed outside the safe confines of Cuernavaca, and the original opposition came apart: the country people of Morelos slipped out of the sedate control of their town spokesmen and learned how—and more dangerously, why—to struggle independently.

[7] Ibid., January 6 and 7, 1909. *El Imparcial,* January 8, 1909.

[8] *Semanario Oficial,* XVIII, 2, 3.

[9] *México Nuevo,* January 11, 1909.

[1] *Diario del Hogar,* January 10, 1909.

[2] *México Nuevo,* January 11, 1909.

That the contest lasted at all was unsettling: recording any opposition vote, much less a sizable one, bothered the jefes políticos. But that the opposition worked free was downright alarming. The state's established powers had no fear of Morelos's town liberals. If these little traders, shopkeepers, lawyers, editors, and schoolteachers from the various district seats had plucked up their courage and resisted an offensive disposition of public affairs, they would remain orderly souls. The procedures they would try to keep to would be regular, and there were regular forms for accommodating their opposition. But for country people to speak up was shocking and fearful. When the common people of the state—the villagers, plantation workers, muleskinners, sharecroppers, and small farmers and ranchers —came out in the course of the campaign in open politicking of their own, they tore loose all the settled lines of state politics. The commotion they caused reopened ancient feuds and formed new grudges so intense that even in a calm era it would have taken years for them to die down.

All this happened in Morelos because of the almost accidental simultaneity of more important political developments in Mexico City. No state opposition could last, even if it wanted to, without a powerful sponsor in the capital. Before 1908, the problem rarely arose: no independent groups of national importance existed. After the Creelman interview, efforts to form such groups multiplied, but not until December 1908 did one succeed in bringing together the proper combination of earnestness, respectability, and ambition. This group called itself the Organizing Club of the Democratic Party. The Democrats wanted to prevent the incumbent Vice President, Ramón Corral, from being reelected in 1910 and becoming president if Díaz died before his term ended in 1916. They hoped to convince Díaz of Corral's unworthiness by campaigning as a party to provoke and articulate an anti-Corral public opinion. The 1908 state and congressional elections had taken place too early for local opposition to benefit from their interference. But the scattered gubernatorial elections in 1909, they saw, would offer them both practice for 1910 and preliminary opportunities for educating the public and Díaz. The Morelos election coincided exactly with the moves of the Organizing Club's officers to form their new Democratic Party.[3] Had they organized it sooner, its role in Morelos would have been somewhat different. As it was, the party in early 1909 still had only a loosely defined organization and strategy, and its members were still free to act on their own. According to what Democrats thought their party was for, they joined either side in Morelos.

[3] García Granados: op. cit., II, 45–6.

The two most important Democrats to take part in the campaign were both eminent journalists and both secretaries of the Organizing Club's executive board. But they moved in opposite directions. One was Juan Sánchez Azcona, editor of the recently founded *México Nuevo,* who threw his support to Patricio Leyva on January 13 after an interview with him that day. He had held off until then because the Leyvistas, counting on the traditional pre-election deal, insisted on organizing as personal friends of the old general and refused to form an authentic party with a platform.[4] Sánchez Azcona had helped organize the Democrats precisely because he wanted to stop that kind of politics and introduce a new, impersonal system.[5] But he soon realized there was no time for such serious work in Morelos.[6] Politically independent and personally democratic, he must have been moved by Leyva's populist rhetoric. ("To guarantee the interests of the people is to guarantee the interests of the fatherland," Patricio affirmed.[7]) And Patricio had declared himself opposed to "reelectionism," not so much Díaz's and Corral's reinstallation in 1910 as the general habit of arranging deals instead of permitting and encouraging full-scale rival campaigns. That was probably the crux of the matter for Sánchez Azcona. Considering the origin of Pablo Escandón's candidacy and the hope dimly involved in Patricio Leyva's, he decided to give Patricio the influential support at his command. Also joining the Leyvistas then were Democrats Gabriel and Alfredo Robles Domínguez and Francisco Cosío Robelo.[8]

Other Democrats wanted to use the party to educate the public more specifically—to back the aging but powerful and enlightened governor of Nuevo León, General Bernardo Reyes, for the vice presidency.[9] General Reyes had long seemed a likely heir to Díaz; and under the new cover of a party, the Reyista Democrats now looked forward to a personal deal in the old style. For that, they might use Escandón's military and social connections. Chief among this group was the Organizing Club's other executive secretary, Heriberto Barrón, a notorious Reyes hatchetman. Working closely with him for Escandón was another Democrat and well-known

[4] *México Nuevo,* January 11, 1909.

[5] Juan Sánchez Azcona: *La etapa maderista de la revolución* (México, 1960), pp. 28–30.

[6] *México Nuevo,* January 13, 1909.

[7] Ibid., January 15, 1909.

[8] Alfredo Robles Domínguez: "Mis memorias políticas," serialized in *El Hombre Libre,* September 22, 1930.

[9] Sánchez Azcona: op. cit., p. 30.

Reyista, Diódoro Batalla. Barrón took his public stand on January 21, when he printed a long interview with Escandón in his Mexico City newspaper, *La República*. He was trying to recast Escandón's image to win back some of the independent sympathies Sánchez Azcona had already gained for Leyva. Escandón's cause had suffered especially since he had confessed in a recent interview with a popular magazine that he was totally ignorant about Morelos.[1] In *México Nuevo* Sánchez Azcona never tired of reminding readers of this blunder, nor of reporting jokes about Escandón's Morelos support, which he referred to as the "Cuernavaca Jockey and Sugar Club."[2] Most of all Sánchez Azcona played up Escandón's failure to present even a vague idea of what action he planned for the state should he be elected. Barrón then deftly turned the tables on *México Nuevo* with the January 21 interview in his own paper. Here he provided Escandón with an unimpeachable program—almost word for word the very program the Democratic Party had adopted the day before in its convention in Mexico City.[3]

Freedom for the municipalities from the control of the jefes políticos, increased attention to primary education, guarantees for free speech and press, civic improvements, abolition of a state poll tax—all this, which the *Mexican Herald* compared to Teddy Roosevelt's Square Deal, formed Escandón's program.[4] Few took him seriously, but still the interview was a fine coup for Barrón. The next day *México Nuevo* gallantly ate its words and praised Escandón's "democratic" courage in publishing such a worthy plan.

The interview aroused great interest in independent circles in Mexico City: Barrón had recast not only Escandón's image but also, irrevocably, the terms of the election. It had begun as a local contest tending toward a local deal. It had now become, as well, a war for prestige between the two main factions of Mexico's principal independent political group. And for them there could be no deal. Escandón was bound to win of course, but Democrats on both sides understood that having joined the fight, they had to keep it open and fair to the end. Freely getting out the vote was indeed the whole test. For them the fight was pointless without that final proof

[1] *Actualidades,* January 8, 1909.

[2] *México Nuevo,* January 5 and 14, 1909.

[3] See the "Programa político del partido Democrático," January 20, 1909, cited in [Luis Cabrera:] *Obras políticas del Lic. Blas Urrea* (México, 1921), pp. 391–4.

[4] *Mexican Herald,* February 10, 1909.

on election day, when Escandón would either win or, more or less embarrassingly, have to be imposed. (What they would do if the embarrassment—in plain words, the brutality—was extensive, they apparently did not consider.) The first step in getting out the vote was to publicize the need for it—that is, to forsake the regular procedures of opposition and go directly to the people. The operation was unprecedented, but both the Escandón and the Leyva Democrats went to work.

This complicated immeasurably the business of Morelos's native politicians. Both local teams already had the affair organized in their own terms in Cuernavaca, and publicity was the last thing they were handy at or cared about. But as the Democrats began arriving in the state about mid-January, the local leaders gradually resigned themselves to acting as their agents. The help from Mexico City was disruptive to their organizations, but too tempting to refuse.

The disruption meant less to the Escandonistas. As the official party, they had depended on Mexico City connections—President Díaz, above all—from the first. The jefes políticos, plantation managers, and city fathers arranging Escandón's election were already acting as agents for alien directors before the Democrats came. They simply kept their assigned parts. And the Reyista Democrats did not personally take over or move anyone out: they only made the drive for publicity more professional. With money, ideas, and speakers, they elaborated, refined, and extended the Escandonista campaign, but they did not change its center of control, which remained in Mexico City.

The Leyvistas in contrast, starting as free agents, went through a complete reformation. Their original base was in Cuernavaca, hardly a rebellious city. By ancient custom the weary powerful of the national capital always resorted there to enjoy the deference of the natives. The original leaders, Antonio Sedano and his sons, Ignacio and Enrique, were natives of Cuernavaca and fit products of its climate. Years before, during the War of Intervention, Antonio Sedano had served with General Leyva, and in the 1870's he had remained among his partisans. When Leyva fell in 1876, Sedano fell too—but not into misery or oblivion. Having resigned his commission in the army, he entered business in Cuernavaca and in time became a respected merchant there. For several years he served as a lower-court judge, without salary because he had no law degree, and in 1894 he was elected an alternate on the city council. His relatives also enjoyed a moderate prosperity, holding minor posts in the state bureaucracy, voting in

electoral colleges, and educating their children in the Cuernavaca secondary school alongside the children of the foremost families in Morelos.[5] The Sedanos knew the Porfirian modes, political as well as social, and they abided by them. Antonio Sedano and his sons never intended to parade around as "demagogues" or really compete with Escandón. Carefully restricting the whole procedure of negotiation to established channels, they worked only for an official invitation to put forth their terms. In the outlying districts poorer versions of the Sedanos followed the word from Cuernavaca. And dealings had gone as planned, until the Mexico City independents offered their help. The Cuernavaca Leyvistas could hardly turn it down, and as the Democrats infiltrated their organization, their monopoly on the local opposition broke up.

This happened not simply because the Democrats took part, but because they changed the essential point and direction of the Leyvista movement. Although traces of the original effort to get a deal never disappeared, after mid-January they were submerged in the activity of a full-fledged popular campaign. There was no other way for an opposition party to win a big vote without much money or the advantages of official connections. Certainly the Sedanos' methods, designed for very different purposes, would not work; nor, as it soon appeared, would the Mexico City method of informed debate. In practice the problem had an easy answer. What it took to get ordinary people so interested and excited that they might vote for the opposition was a direct promise to them to do something about what made their life hard. If followers could not be dragooned or bought, they could at least be talked into line. Once the movement's aim and strategy were redefined, the Democrats had to reform its organization as well. Generally the reform amounted to expansion—recruiting more members and setting up more clubs around the state. In the two weeks after the Democrats joined the campaign, Leyvistas organized about twenty-five regular clubs in almost as many towns and villages, and published claims to more than 1,500 members.[6] But in the process there also occurred a more significant shift of control, which eventually reorganized the structure of

[5] Sedano: op. cit., pp. 1–18. International Bureau of the American Republics: *Commercial Directory of the American Republics, Supplement, Containing Corrections of Errors in Volume Two of the Commercial Directory* (Washington, 1899), p. 268. *Periódico Oficial,* II, 7, 2; IX, 51, 3. *Semanario Oficial,* III, 51, 6; IV, 2, 2; 29, 2–3.

[6] *México Nuevo,* January 18, 20–23, 25–29, and 31, February 2 and 5, 1909.

opposition in the state and endured after the Democrats had returned to their Mexico City offices.

The shift was that the Cuernavaca Leyvistas moved over to admit the Cuautla Leyvistas to power. And it was significant because it could not remain just a shift, with the two bases then balancing each other. For even in opposition Cuernavaca was conformist, a colony of Don Porfirio's Mexico City. But Cuautla was the heart of Morelos, the real center of state pride and patriotism, with vital country traditions of populist democracy going back far beyond Don Porfirio's time to the earliest, bitter days of the struggle for national independence.[7] Sugar planters considered the peons around Cuautla the touchiest in Mexico.[8] And this defiant spirit even the local businessmen shared. A balance between Cuernavaca and Cuautla could not last, because Cuernavaca stood for a manipulated opposition and Cuautla for a vigorous and true resistance. There was not room enough in Morelos's politics for the two forces; and when the Democrats helped organize Cuautla, they doomed Cuernavaca—and the spirit of moderation.

In effect they had let loose Morelos's common people. On January 22, a Friday and a workday, in the first big demonstration in the campaign, some 1,500 persons attended a rally in Cuautla to celebrate the formation of the Leyvista Liberal Political Club there.[9] The crowd jammed the city's streets and squares cheering General Leyva and his son. It was a signal. All over the eastern and central part of the state—its traditionally independent part—men who had long suffered their own neighborhood's officially imposed boss watched Cuautla, took heart, and followed its lead.

What happened two days later and fifteen miles away in the little town of Villa de Ayala was typical. Refugio Yáñez was a former municipal president of the town, still popular and respected. Pablo Torres Burgos was a schoolteacher—when the town's school had money to stay open—who often helped local farmers on simple legal matters: they knew him to be a goodhearted man and they trusted him. Luciano Cabrera was another bookish Ayalan who had often served as advocate for villagers in land

[7] For some of the historical reasons for local pride, see Luis Chávez Orozco: *El Sitio de Cuautla. La epopeya de la guerra de independencia* (México, 1931), and Walter S. Logan: *The Siege of Cuautla, The Bunker Hill of Mexico* (New York, 1893).

[8] *Mexican Herald,* February 7, 1909.

[9] *México Nuevo,* January 25, 1909.

disputes.[1] Together these three formed a Leyvista group, which they named (for a nineteenth-century liberal hero) the Melchor Ocampo Club, and invited villagers in the area to join. Malcontented neighbors and kinfolk from the surrounding settlements flocked in to sign up, nearly eighty in all. Among them were the Anenecuilcans Francisco Franco, who became the club's secretary, Eduwiges Sánchez, Rafael Merino, Emiliano Zapata, and the now aging but once trusting Porfirista Teodoro Placencia.[2] That same day in Jojutla, sixty-five miles southwest, the local Free Vote Club held the campaign's second large Leyvista rally, drawing more than a thousand villagers and peons into the town.[3]

Only a little more than two weeks after it began as a carefully staged maneuver, the Escandón-Leyva dispute had thus become an agitated, public struggle for crowds. By all accounts the Escandonistas proved more professional: holding economic and political power, they could pay or force their employees to attend their demonstrations.[4] But the Leyvistas were more popular. It was an obvious tactic for them to play on rural discontent: posters with the militant village demand for "Land and Water" went up around the state, and "unauthorized" speakers began implying that Patricio would see to a general redistribution of land, even private property.[5] In response, village leaders like Santa María's Genovevo de la O declared for Leyva and began pressing their old claims against neighboring haciendas.[6] The Escandonistas grew jealous, indignant, and then nervous and bellicose; and the Leyvistas, in counterreaction, more provocative and fearless. In a little village northeast of Cuernavaca, for instance, a Leyvista leader, Fermín Bello, was called on by a Cuernavaca policeman and brought back to the city to see the jefe político. The jefe asked Bello how his campaign was going, and Bello told him—well. The jefe then

[1] For Yáñez, see *Semanario Oficial,* II, 15, 3, and XVII, 6, 3–4. For Torres Burgos, see Octavio Paz: "Estalla la bomba," *El Universal,* June 30, 1929, and Mazari: op. cit., p. 116. For the help all three gave to Anenecuilcans, see Sotelo Inclán: op. cit., pp. 159–61.

[2] *México Nuevo,* February 4, 1909.

[3] Ibid., January 28, 1909.

[4] Ibid., January 28 and 31, February 2 and 6, 1909.

[5] Diez: *Bibliografía,* p. clxxxiii. The Escandonista press reported these offers through late January and early February; the Leyvista press kept denying that they were authorized, and asking that the Escandonistas identify who made them. See, e.g., *El Diario,* January 30, 1909, and *México Nuevo,* January 31, 1909.

[6] Genovevo de la O: "Memorias," serialized in *Impacto,* December 31, 1949. Personal interview with Daniel de la O.

informed him that since Escandón had to win—"Don Porfirio has disposed it"—his village could not go for Leyva, and that unless Bello dissolved his club immediately, he and his fellows would be shipped off to labor camps in Yucatán as soon as Escandón took office. "Where the captain commands," the jefe concluded in fine Porfirian style, "no sailor gives orders." In any previous election Bello would have gone home and dissolved the club. Now, he refused and went directly to see the Sedanos. That same evening the executive board of the Cuernavaca Leyvista club called a protest meeting and sent a complaint to the minister of the interior.[7]

The drive for crowds strained tempers so severely that politicians, both Escandonista and Leyvista, both local and national, were hard put to confine the struggle to rallies and speeches. What increasingly struck observers as dangerous was not the planters' arrogance, which they took for granted, but the revival of bitterness and open sarcasm among the common people.[8] Impulses of state pride, national patriotism, and a vague but powerful class consciousness were brewing into an almost violent sentiment for Leyva. An old hotel maid in Cuernavaca told Alfredo Robles Domínguez how she felt about the campaign. "Figure it out!" she said. "How could we help liking that kid Patricio, him coming from right around here? Besides, Don Pancho"—she meant Patricio's father—"was a friend of the poor man. He even had a fellow shot when he was governor—a *gachupín* landlord who'd had a peon thrashed almost to death. You don't have any idea," she went on, "how the landlords and especially their *gachupín* managers abuse people around here."[9]

From the fusion of militant pride, heated tempers, raging arrogance, and plain, edgy resentment, there finally exploded on February 1 a riot in Cuautla. When it happened, people were stunned as if they had been half expecting it for a long time: they could not be surprised, but neither could they really believe it. This crucial episode set finally the essential meaning people saw in the campaign, and fixed irrevocably the mood in which they would remember it.

Events in Cuautla the week before the riot had primed the elements

[7] *Diario del Hogar,* February 12, 1909. Among those signing the letter were a few out-of-town Leyvistas in Cuernavaca on business. One was Emiliano Zapata, from Anenecuilco.

[8] *Mexican Herald,* February 3, 1909.

[9] Robles Domínguez in *El Hombre Libre,* September 24, 1930. *Gachupín* is a derogatory term for a Spaniard, or by extension for an arrogant (and white) person speaking Spanish.

of the explosion perfectly. The town's new Leyvista club had tried to stage a rally on a Sunday, January 24, when merchants and laboring people could come in full strength. But the jefe político, Enrique Dabbadie, had refused permission. Nervous because of the big opening-day celebration two days earlier when he had given the Leyvistas full liberty, he feared that if he allowed any more freedom Cuautla district might go for Leyva. The least he might then lose would be his job. Unless he got contrary orders, he was taking no chances: after the first crowd, he had practically put the city under martial law, with federal troops and police and municipal gendarmes everywhere.[1] But Democratic connections and the general pressure of public opinion moved the government in the Leyvistas' favor, and after the Cuautla club filed a complaint, Dabbadie gave way. The Leyvistas received permission to hold a rally the following Sunday, January 31. Through the week they elaborated their preparations, sending out notices and organizing a ladies' auxiliary.[2] Then, almost as a challenge, the pro-Escandón newspaper in Mexico City, *El Diario,* announced in midweek that Escandón's champions would shortly begin a whistle-stop tour through Morelos.[3] Nationally known orators like Barrón, Diódoro Batalla, and Hipólito Olea would speak from the back of the campaign train at the little stations and haciendas on the railroad line.[4] At larger towns the celebrities would parade into the main square and deliver formal speeches. Their first stop, *El Diario* noted, would be Cuautla, on Monday, February 1, the day after the Leyvista rally.[5] This was the riskiest place they could have chosen, and the timing was even stupider.

Despite jitteriness the Leyvista rally took place without trouble on Sunday. At the last minute Dabbadie threatened to withdraw his permission for the show, then at four p.m. finally confirmed it, but only till six p.m., when, he said, the federal police would clear the streets. He also refused to let the Leyvistas' band play to welcome the speakers when they arrived at the train station. And he posted rurales around the main square once the rally started. Nevertheless Leyvista clubs from that part of the state—including Villa de Ayala's Melchor Ocampo Club—poured into Cuautla; and considering the provocations they were subjected to, they

[1] *México Nuevo,* January 31, 1909.
[2] Ibid., February 2, 1909.
[3] *El Diario,* January 28, 1909.
[4] Ibid., January 30, 1909.
[5] Ibid., January 28, 1909.

behaved remarkably well. They welcomed their speakers without a band, cheered for Díaz and Leyva senior and junior, stayed relatively sober, and got off the streets by six p.m.[6]

But Dabbadie had seen the elation of the crowd and, like a good policeman, sensed what might happen the next day when the Escandonistas came to town. That evening the Ministry of War sent a detachment from the 23rd Infantry Battalion to Cuautla under the command of Colonel Juvencio Robles.[7]

The Escandonista train arrived at Cuautla shortly before noon the next morning. Inauspiciously, cheers for Leyva went up as the distinguished party paraded along the route toward the plaza. Monday being a workday, many in the audience had come not on their own account but because of pressure from Dabbadie. The crowd was not very sympathetic to their elegant guest standing up on the platform with his well-paid rhetoricians. Sporadic shouts of *"Mueran los gachupines"*—death to the *gachupines*—unnerved the speakers. The crowd's enthusiasm lagged, and finally one speaker, Hipólito Olea, asked for a cheer for Escandón. To his outrage and embarrassment, several persons shouted back: "Viva Leyvaaaaa!" Olea flew into a tantrum and began cursing the crowd, calling them "imbeciles" and "ungrateful bums." Rocks sailed up toward him and the crowd quickly turned into a nasty, yelling mob. The rurales got ready to fire, and people scattered in wild disorder.[8]

That evening, the plaza occupied by troops and federal police, Dabbadie posted an official notice—to announce his revenge for the afternoon's spectacle. "It is strictly forbidden," he declared, "to utter insulting cries or to commit any act involving a breach of peace. Offenders," he wound up in an unashamed ex post facto menace, "will be sternly dealt with."[9] Arrests commenced immediately. Local merchants, workers, clerks, peons were marched off to jail—some without charges being filed, many without even having attended the rally, most simply because of their reputations. Local courts refused protection: the few like Pablo Torres Burgos from Villa de Ayala who asked for a restraining order were hustled off just as quickly and jailed for just as long. The arrests continued in following days, until

[6] *Diario del Hogar,* January 31 and February 2, 1909. *El Sufragio Libre,* February 3, 1909.

[7] *Mexican Herald,* February 3, 1909.

[8] *México Nuevo,* February 4, 1909. *La República,* February 4, 1909.

[9] *Mexican Herald,* February 7, 1909.

Cuautla had more Leyvistas behind bars than any other district in the state.[1] And repercussions extended far beyond Dabbadie's bailiwick. The day after the riot, Patricio Leyva lost his job in the Ministry of Public Works for not denying that his agents had promised land to villagers.[2]

In fact not much had happened—a few rocks thrown, some yelling, a lot of arrests and threats, but no bloodshed. But the incident seemed portentous: in the riot everyone thought he saw what he had feared the whole election would amount to. And that made the rest of the campaign an anticlimax. For "decent people," a científico editor in Mexico City lamented, the affair had begun as "a serene, educated, high-toned, and progressive struggle" and had degenerated into "a real war of the sandal against the shoe, of work pants against trousers," of the "saloon element" against "decent people."[3] Suitably reworded, this was how the "saloon element" felt as well. "A real war," a civil war, a class war—that was what haunted minds in Morelos, and in Cuautla the prospect was always most vivid. To such nervous souls the February 1 commotion seemed to put them right on the verge of the cataclysm.

For the election, what followed was irrelevant. To secure its control over the polls, the federal government stationed an unusually large detachment of thirty-five rurales in Morelos during February.[4] Yet local leaders, who knew that after all they would have to go on working and doing business in the state when the election was over, knew also that they could salvage something practical. At least they could reorder parts of the old, broken balance. Even the visiting Leyvista Democrats recognized what had happened and toned down their appeals. Although they defied the Cuernavaca jefe político's prohibition and went ahead with a big rally in the state capital on February 5, they worked to calm the crowd rather than excite it. And the more responsible government agents reciprocated.[5] General Luis C. Curiel, now the commander of the 23rd Infantry Battalion, sheltered two Leyvista speakers at the Cuernavaca rally when the jefe político threatened to hang them on the spot.[6] In the few days before the election the Escandón touring train moved on to Yautepec and Jojutla,

[1] *Diario del Hogar,* April 17, 1909.

[2] *El Diario,* February 5, 1909.

[3] Ibid., February 13, 1909.

[4] Reports on Morelos, 1909, AGN, Ramo de Gobernación (henceforth G): bundle 883.

[5] *Diario del Hogar,* February 9, 1909. Sedano: op. cit., p. 19.

[6] Robles Domínguez in *El Hombre Libre,* September 24, 1930.

at each stop playing to smaller, more sullen, but at least more restrained audiences.[7] And the Leyvista leaders changed their tune to harp on the virtues of regularity and order. In indignant letters Antonio Sedano explained how Patricio was no revolutionary or subversive, how irresponsible were "anarchistic" ideas of "giving away" the land and water of the rich planters, how "sacred and inviolable" the Leyvistas considered "the right of property."[8]

The obvious efforts at mutual accommodation revived speculation about a deal. When Colonel Tovar arrived in Cuernavaca on February 3, rumors immediately circulated that as someone personally close to Díaz and an old hand in state politics, he had been sent as an officially sanctioned compromise, and Escandón and Leyva would both quit.[9] Faint hopes for a deal still flickered among the most naïve (or desperate) even as late as mid-March, until Escandón had actually been sworn in.[1]

But no deal developed. The Cuautla riot scared opponents into accommodation everywhere except at the polls on February 7, where it scared the government into a firm and general brutality. The jefes políticos especially were determined to take no chances. They speedily and unabashedly resorted to extralegal or illegal measures to assure absolutely Escandón's election in their districts. On their orders federal police jailed many Leyvista leaders in the villages on election day; if, like Genovevo de la O in Santa María, the prey escaped, the police arrested his family as hostages.[2] In some places the jefes políticos arranged with municipal presidents not to post voting lists at all, much less at the proper time. They also rigged the distribution of ballots and packed local polling commissions. Troops and police refused entry to the polls to suspected Leyvistas. Against these abuses Leyvista leaders filed formal protests with the Ministry of the Interior, but to no avail.[3] As a final precaution General Curiel in Cuernavaca remained

[7] *El Diario,* February 3, 1909. *La República,* February 11, 1909. *Actualidades,* February 5, 1909.

[8] *Diario del Hogar,* February 9 and 11, 1909.

[9] Ibid., February 6, 1909.

[1] Later hopes still fastened on Colonel Tovar, though there was hope also for General Curiel. Both were considered "men who knew the problems of the state." *México Nuevo,* February 13, 1909.

[2] De la O in *Impacto,* December 31, 1949. Personal interview with Daniel de la O.

[3] *México Nuevo,* February 7, 1909. *Mexican Herald,* February 8, 1909. *Diario del Hogar,* February 18, 1909. See also Robles Domínguez in *El Hombre Libre,* September 29, 1930.

in hourly communication with Colonel Robles in Cuautla on election day, and federal troops stood on the alert in every district seat.[4]

The general result—Escandón's victory—was a matter of course, but so many interests hinged on its margin and distribution that reliable returns were hard to come by. The official state gazette opted out completely, simply announcing that Escandonista electors had won an "absolute majority" and leaving it at that.[5] Of all the reports of ballots counted, probably the most accurate was the *Mexican Herald*'s, which gave 201 for Escandón and 92 for Leyva.[6] To the planters and the state bureaucrats and policemen, an opposition vote of this size was a scandal tantamount to sedition, and they mounted a new attempt to restore control. Popular agitators responsible—at least those still free and at hand—were jailed; as their fellows signed protests on their behalf, they provided black lists for their own arrests. Peons who had voted for Leyva, or more likely who had not showed up to vote for Escandón, were turned away when they came to work on Monday and had to go further into debt for loans to bribe the foremen to give them back their jobs.[7] Two weeks later the electoral colleges voted, and the returns—again according to the *Mexican Herald,* there being no official count—were 235 to 20.[8] Threats, pressure, and jailings had pared Leyvista votes to less than one quarter of their original, already pared number. Again it was Cuautla that provided the most striking case. Here, even the wildly pro-Escandón *El Diario* had reported 13 Leyvista votes in the primary election. Now, in the secondary, these 13 had vanished completely.

On March 15, 1909, Pablo Escandón was officially sworn in as Morelos's new governor. He would end his term, the official gazette announced, on November 30, 1912.[9] Nobody doubted he would, or that he might win new terms, but however long he lasted, he would never be respected. His election was an insult imprinted in the annals of the state's history—and branded in the minds of its people.

[4] *Mexican Herald,* February 7, 1909.

[5] *Semanario Oficial,* XVIII, 11, 1.

[6] For other returns and their various breakdowns, see John Womack, Jr.: "Emiliano Zapata and the Revolution in Morelos, 1910–1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1965), pp. 60–1.

[7] For complaints, see *México Nuevo,* February 9–24, 1909.

[8] For a detailed breakdown, see Womack: op. cit., p. 62.

[9] *Semanario Oficial,* XVIII, 11, 1.