THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MEXICO'S CRISTERO REBELLION, 1926-1929

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ABSTRACT

For the past 450 years, Church-State relations have figured prominently in the public affairs of Mexico. During 1925 and early 1926, relations between the Catholic Church and the government of President Plutarco Calles became increasingly critical. In opposition to the anti-clerical policies of the Calles administration, thousands of Mexican Catholics moved from the arena of political conflict to the field of armed insurrection. When neither Catholic economic boycott activity nor suspension of public worship services by the clergy succeeded in forcing the President to change his policy of implementing previously unenforced provisions of the Constitution of 1917, some militant Catholics resorted to armed resistance in the name of Cristo Rey, or Christ the King.

Despite the fact that Cristero forces were able to control large areas of rural Mexico in the central and western regions, these guerrilla bands never occupied a major city or posed a serious threat to the security of the national government. Finally, as a result of mediating efforts by U.S. Ambassador Dwight Morrow, a modus vivendi was negotiated by the Papal Delegate, Archbishop Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, and Calles' successor, President Emilio Portes

Gil. Subsequently, priests returned to their pulpits and armed resistance ceased.

Catholic spokesmen have claimed that the Vatican, the Mexican Episcopacy, and the clergy bear no responsibility for the Cristero Rebellion. They argue that the revolt was led by laymen who acted without direction by the Church. This study seeks to determine the role of the Catholic Church in the insurrection. Attention is focused on statements and actions of the Pope and other Vatican officials, the Mexican bishops and archbishops, and other members of the Mexican clergy.

Results of this study indicate that while the Catholic hierarchy did not specifically call for armed revolt, it did encourage such a development. In fact, it is apparent that the Vatican and the Episcopacy hoped that the resort to arms would force a change in the religious policy of the government or would result in its overthrow. Only after three years of unsuccessful armed struggle, in which several priests participated as Cristero chaplains or as military commanders, was the Church prepared to come to terms with the government. Meanwhile, thousands of lives had been sacrificed and millions of Catholics had been forced to live without the regular services of the clergy.

PREFACE

Although nearly forty years have passed since the end of the Cristero Rebellion, American scholars have given little attention to the subject. Mexican writers have produced a large volume of material on the 1926-1929 conflict, but most of their writing has been distinctly partisan in nature. The objective of this writer has been to examine available Spanish and English language sources for the purpose of preparing a concise and objective description of the role played by the Vatican, the Mexican Episcopacy, and the clergy in this civil war.

This study begins with a survey of Mexican Church-State relations from the colonial era to the Calles period. Special attention is given to the attitude of the Catholic Church toward the Revolution of 1910 and the anti-clerical provisions of the Constitution of 1917. The second chapter of the thesis describes regulations imposed on the Church by President Calles and the mounting Catholic opposition which eventually produced an armed insurrection. Chapter III concerns the nature and scope of the military campaign waged by the Cristeros and the roles of bishops, priests, and lay leaders in this armed resistance. The fourth chapter describes the peace-making efforts of U.S. Ambassador Dwight

Morrow, who played a major role in arranging negotiations between Church and State officials. The result of these negotiations was not a settlement but a modus vivendi whereby priests returned to their pulpits and the way was paved for an end to the armed conflict. In a final chapter, the author sums up the results of his investigation.

Research involved work at the Carroll and Tidwell Libraries of Baylor University and the Latin American Collection of the University of Texas Library; however, most of the materials used in this study were made available by Dr. Lyle C. Brown from his personal library. Dr. James W. Wilkie, Director of the Latin American Oral History Center at Ohio State University, kindly furnished copies of recorded interviews with Lic. Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, Lic. Vicente Lombardo Toledano, and Lic. Emilio Portes Gil.

Sincere appreciation is expressed for all assistance which the writer has received. A special word of thanks is due to members of my thesis committee for their valuable guidance and encouragement. Credit must also be given to Miss Teresa Johnson and Miss Judy Johnson for their typing skill which made possible the preparation of the thesis manuscript within a limited period of time. Finally, I wish to express gratitude for the patience and understanding of my wife, Carey; without her help and forbearance, this study could not have been completed.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE REBELLION

Conflict between Church and State has been a common occurrence in Mexico, but during the 1926-1929 period a struggle took place that involved great bloodshed and destruction. Opposition by the Catholic hierarchy to revolutionary provisions of the Constitution of 1917 resulted in determined government action designed to enforce the supreme law of the land. Such pressure provoked further clerical resistance, and this defiance prompted some Mexican Catholics to undertake passive resistance and, finally, armed revolt. At the end of three years of bitter strife, Mexican army forces succeeded in suppressing the rebellion and the Catholic Church was forced to come to terms with the government. However, friction between Church and State did not end in 1929; neither did it begin in 1926. As in other parts of Latin America, the seeds of Church-State conflict were planted in Mexico at the time of the Conquest.

Pre-Twentieth Century Relations Between Church and State

Following the discovery of America, the Papacy conferred upon the Spanish monarch the exclusive privileges

of christianizing the Indians, collecting tithes, and appointing religious personnel. By this action, the Catholic Church in the New World was placed under the civil power. Protected by the armed forces of the Spanish king, members of the clergy came to Mexico with Cortez and began extensive missionary operations. Coerced by military power, millions of Mexican natives were converted to Catholicism--or at least made a pretense of embracing the religion of the Europeans. They accepted images of the saints as replacements for lost idols, and they worshipped in newly constructed Catholic churches erected on the ruins of Aztec temples.[1]

In addition to their missionary role, the Catholic clergy served the State by building schools, operating hospitals, caring for orphans, and performing other welfare functions. Organized under an ecclesiastical hierarchy paralleling the structure of colonial government, the bishops, priests, and friars constituted a powerful group

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[1]For authoritative accounts of the colonial era, see J. Lloyd Mecham, Church and State in Latin America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), pp. 1-44; and Herbert Ingram Priestley, The Mexican Nation, A History (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1923), pp. 1-191. An excellent description of sixteenth-century Christianity and the conversion of the Aztecs is found in William Madsen, Christo-Paganism: A Study of Mexican Religious Syncretism (New Orleans, La.: Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, 1947), pp. 126-137. Another account of the Aztec heritage, Spanish conquest, and conversion of the Indians is given by Madsen in his The Virgin's Children: Life in an Aztec Village Today (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960), pp. 3-33.

with political as well as economic interests. In some instances, spiritual authorities exercised temporal power; bishops might serve as viceroys or provincial governors, and the lower clergy sometimes held lesser government positions. Rivalry between civil and religious personnel was inevitable, although in theory civil-religious relations were supposed to feature cooperation between Church and State. Perhaps the principal tie between the two organizations was that of finance, but competition for funds also served as a divisive force. The clergy at all levels looked to the State for grants of money, land, and Indians with which to support their many activities. Although such grants were extensive, the churchmen were seldom satisfied with what they received; and although many members of the secular and regular clergy served both king and parishoners with loyalty and zeal, others were greedy for gain and unworthy of their calling. At first servile, the clergy soon became a powerful, organized group that dominated much of the economic, social, intellectual, and political life in New Spain. Armed with the power of the Inquisition and taking advantage of the confessional, clergymen played a leading role in controlling the thoughts and actions of

Mexicans of all classes and races.[2] Even viceroys were not immune from pressure by the clergy.[3]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the invasion of Spain by Napoleon's armies caused a crisis for the Spanish colonial system. Trans-Atlantic communication and transportation became more difficult; colonies were forced to deal with local problems of defense and civil administration. Under these circumstances, criollos (persons of pure Spanish blood who had been born in the New World) sought to replace the gachupines (Spaniards born in Spain) for whom the highest offices in both Church and State had been reserved. Unsuccessful independence movements were launched by Hidalgo and Morelos, both of whom were parish priests. Finally, Mexican independence was obtained after conservative criollo elements, including church officials, became alarmed over a rebellion in Spain which resulted in restoration of the liberal Spanish constitution of 1812. Proclaimed Emperor of Mexico in 1822, General Iturbide

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[2]See Hubert Herring, A History of Latin America from the Beginnings to the Present (2d ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 173-186; and Lic. Alfonso Toro, La Iglesia y el Estado en México (Estudio sobre los Conflictos entre el Clero Católico y los Gobiernos Mexicanos desde la Independencia hasta Nuestros Días) (México, D.F.: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1927), pp. 14-44.

[3]For example, see Hubert Howe Bancroft, "The Struggle Between an Archbishop and a Viceroy in Seventeenth-Century New Spain," in The Conflict Between Church and State in Latin America, ed. by Frederick B. Pike (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), pp. 78-88.

established an independent government which guaranteed continued establishment of the Catholic Church and privileges for the clergy.[4]

With the overthrow of Iturbide in 1823, liberal political forces began to play a prominent role in national affairs. Fearful of political democracy, the clergy took the side of the conservatives; and for nearly half a century Mexico was convulsed with military strife. Eventual triumph by the liberals resulted in the adoption of the Constitution of 1857, which contained several anti-clerical provisions. Article 27 prohibited ecclesiastical corporations from acquiring real estate other than that used directly for religious purposes, and Article 123 stipulated that matters of religious worship could be regulated by law. Ecclesiastical privileges were abolished and religious vows were prohibited. French military intervention on behalf of the conservatives was welcomed by the clergy; but this intervention ended in 1866 with the expulsion of French troops, execution of Emperor Maxmillian, and victory for Benito Juárez, champion of Mexican liberalism and anti-clericalism.[5] Although Juárez' successor, Lerdo de Tejada,

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[4]For accounts of the independence movement, see Priestly, op. cit., pp. 192-253; and Henry Bamford Parkes, A History of Mexico (2d ed.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950), pp. 133-187.

[5]The best treatment of these events is found in two books by Wilfrid Hardy Callcott: Church and State in Mexico, 1822-1857 (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), passim, and Liberalism in Mexico, 1857-1929 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965), pp. 1-76.

continued a program of separation of Church and State, his overthrow by General Porfirio Díaz marked the beginning of a new era of Church-State relations in Mexico. Although Díaz did not change laws restricting the Church, he did not enforce them. His policy of conciliation made possible the restoration of Catholic power and influence. It is not surprising that the Mexican clergy were less than enthusiastic supporters of the Revolution of 1910 which swept away the old order.[6]

The Revolution of 1910

As Porfirio Díaz approached the age of eighty, a wealthy young landowner named Francisco Madero published a book criticizing the Díaz regime.[7] Subsequently, Madero opposed Díaz in the election of 1910. Alarmed at the popularity of his opponent, the dictator imprisoned Madero until after the election had been held and Díaz had been declared the winner by an overwhelming margin. Subsequently, Madero fled to the United States where he proclaimed his Plan of San Luis Potosí dated October 5, 1910.[8] In the

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[6]See Callcott, Liberalism in Mexico, 1857-1929, pp. 77-195; and Toro, op. cit., pp. 347-360.

[7]See Francisco I. Madero, La Sucesión Presidencial en 1910 (3d ed.; México, D.F.: Editora Nacional, 1960), passim.

[8]The text of this document is printed in Fuentes para la Historia de la Revolución Mexicana, Vol. I: Planes Políticos y Otros Documentos, ed. by Manuel González Ramírez (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1954), pp. 33-41.

months that followed, thousands of discontented Mexicans rallied to the support of the revolutionary movement; and on May 21, 1911, an agreement was signed between representatives of the two forces. Under the terms of this agreement Díaz resigned and Francisco de la Barra was named to head an interim government pending the holding of national elections.[9]

Nominated as presidential candidate by the Constitutional Progressive Party, Madero was assured of election. Even the Catholic Party formally endorsed Madero's candidacy, although it opposed the election of José María Pino Suárez, Madero's vice-presidential running mate.[10] However, in the months that followed, the Catholic clergy became openly antagonistic to Madero, and the Catholic Party worked for the election of De la Barra as president.[11] Nevertheless, on November 6, 1911, Madero took office after winning the election by a large margin of vote over his opponents

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[9]An excellent account of the fall of Díaz and the rise of Madero is found in Charles Curtis Cumberland, Mexican Revolution: Genesis under Madero (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1952), pp. 3-171.

[10]For the text of Madero's telegram of August 19, 1911, to Gabriel Fernández Somellera, President of the Catholic Party, in which he expresses appreciation for action by the Catholic Party Convention endorsing his candidacy, see Lic. Genaro Ma. González, Catholicism y Revolución (México, D.F.: Imprenta Murguía, 1960), p. 412.

[11]See Mecham, op. cit., pp. 460-461; and Callcott, Liberalism in Mexico, 1857-1929, p. 200.

[12]Cumberland, op. cit., p. 170.

In the months that followed, the new President was confronted with revolts within the Revolutionary ranks and with attacks from former supporters of Porfirio Díaz. In February, 1913, Díaz elements marched on the Presidential Palace but were repulsed by defending troops lead by General Lauro Villar. When Villar was wounded, Madero named General Victoriano Huerta to assume command of loyal forces in the Mexico City area. Subsequently, Huerta ordered the arrest of President Madero and Vice President Pino Suárez, and on February 22 both were shot by Huerta's men. Almost immediately Huerta occupied the Presidency and dispatched telegrams to state governors and military zone commanders informing them of the change.[13] While most Mexican politicians and army officers were prepared to accept Huerta, Governor Venustiano Carranza of Coahuila called for his overthrow. Proclaiming themselves to be the defenders of constitutional government, Carranza and his supporters issued their Plan of Guadalupe on March 26, 1913. Under the terms of this plan, Carranza was recognized as First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army.[14]

Among the members of Huerta's cabinet were some prominent Catholic conservatives. Also, it appears that Huerta obtained financial support from Catholic elements;

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[13]For a detailed description of these events, see ibid., pp. 172-243.

[14]The text of the Plan of Guadalupe is printed in González Ramírez, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

some writers insist that as much as twenty-five thousand pesos was loaned by the Archbishop of Mexico.[15] Certainly the clergy favored the new regime, and Huerta allowed the hierarchy to dedicate the nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.[16] Consequently, Mexican anti-clericals aligned themselves with Carranza's Constitutionalist movement, and Huerta's overthrow in 1915 was interpreted as a defeat for the Church. In that same year Carranza announced that he would enforce the principle of separation of Church and State as provided by the Constitution of 1857. At the same time he promised that freedom of religion would be protected. However, in 1916 a law was enacted by the Carranza regime which declared that all churches were national property and could be put to such use as the government might direct. Certainly Carranza was determined to subordinate the Catholic Church to government control, but during this period he was preoccupied with the task of suppressing revolts by Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa; consequently, the First Chief paid little attention to his enemies within the ranks of the clergy.

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[15]See Toro, op. cit., p. 360; and Alicia Olivera Sedano, Aspectos del Conflicto Religioso de 1926 a 1929, Sus Antecedentes y Consecuencias (México, D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1966), p. 59.

[16]Details concerning the national consecration are found in Antonio Rius Facius, De don Porfirio a Plutarco: Historia de la A.C.J.M. (México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1958), pp. 47-54.

However, in the Constitutional Convention that convened late in 1916, anti-clerical elements proposed sweeping restrictions on the Church.[17]

Constitution of 1917

Under the terms of the draft constitution which Carranza presented to the Constitutional Convention, various restraints on religious institutions and the clergy were proposed;[18] but the reaction of the convention majority was to insist on even more severe restrictions. Speaking for this radical element, Francisco J. Múgica declared, "I am the enemy of the clergy because I consider it to be the lamentable and most perverse enemy of the fatherland."[19] Consequently, the following article relating to education was adopted:

> Art. 3. Instruction is free; that given in public institutions of learning shall be secular. Primary instruction, whether higher or lower, given in private institutions shall likewise be secular.
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> No religious corporation nor minister of any religious creed shall establish or direct schools of primary instruction.

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[17] Mecham, op. cit., pp. 465-467.

[18] For the text of Carranza's draft, see Diario de los Debates del Congreso Constituyente (2 vols.; México, D.F.: Imprenta de la Cámara de Diputados, 1922), I, 345-364.

[19] Ibid., p. 438.

> Private primary schools may be established only subject to official supervision.
> Primary instruction in public institutions shall be gratuitous.[20]

Also adopted was Article 5 which prohibits the enforcement of religious vows and asserts, "The law . . . does not permit the establishment of monastic orders, of whatever denomination, or for whatever purpose contemplated." Under the terms of Article 24, freedom of religious choice and worship is guaranteed "either in places of public worshi or at home, provided they do not constitute an offense punishable by law." Further, this article stipulates that "Every religious act of public worship shall be performed strictly within the places of public worship, which shall be at all times under governmental supervision."

Two sections of Article 27, which deals with property, are specifically directed at the Church:

> II. The religious institutions known as churches, irrespective of creed, shall in no case have legal capacity to acquire, hold or administer real property or loans made on such real property; all such real property or loans as may be at present held by the said religious institutions, either on their own behalf or through third parties, shall vest in the Nation, and any one shall have the right to denounce property so held. Presumptive proof shall be sufficient to declare the denunciation well-founded. Places of public worship are the property of the Nation, as represented by the Federal Government, which shall determine which of them may continue

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[20]The English translation of this article and subsequent quotations from the Constitution of 1917 is that of H. N. Branch found in The Mexican Constitution of 1917 Compared with the Constitution of 1857 (Philadelphia: The American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1917).

> to be devoted to their present purposes. Episcopal residences, rectories, seminaries, orphan asylums or collegiate establishments of religious institutions, convents or any other buildings built or designed for the administration, propaganda, or teaching of the tenets of any religious creed shall forthwith vest, as of full right, directly in the Nation, to be used exclusively for the public services of the Federation or of the States, within their respective jurisdictions. All places of public worship which shall later be erected shall be the property of the Nation.
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> III. Public and private charitable institutions for the sick and needy, for scientific research, or for the diffusion of knowledge, mutual aid societies or organizations formed for any other lawful purpose shall in no case acquire, hold or administer loans made on real property unless the mortage terms do not exceed ten years. In no case shall institutions of this character be under the patronage, direction, administration, charge or supervision of religious corporations or institutions, nor of ministers of any religious creed or of their dependents, even though either the former or the latter shall not be in active service.

Most detailed of the constitutional articles relating to religion is Article 130. While declaring that Federal authorities are empowered "to exercise in matter of religious worship and outward ecclesiastical forms such intervention as by law authorized," it is specified that "Congress shall not enact any law establishing or forbidding any religion whatsoever." Also, this article declares marriage to be a civil contract regulated by law, and asserts that "The law recognizes no juridical personality in the religious institutions known as churches." Further, members of the clergy are "considered as persons exercising a profession, and shall be directly subject to the laws enacted on the matter." Only native-born Mexicans may serve as "a minister of any religious creed" and to the state legislatures

is given "the exclusive power of determining the maximum number of ministers of religious creeds, according to the needs of each locality." Members of the clergy are barred from voting, holding public office, assembling for political purposes, or criticizing "the fundamental laws of the country, the authorities in particular, or the Government in general." Periodicals of a religious character are prohibited from commenting upon Mexican political affairs; neither may they "publish any information regarding the acts of the authorities of the country or of private individuals, in so far as the latter have to do with public affairs." Political associations may not bear names relating to religious beliefs, and "assemblies of any political character" are banned "within places of public worship." Not only is it provided that clergymen may not inherit "real property occupied by any association of religious propaganda or religious or charitable purposes," but also "ministers of religious creeds are incapable legally of inheriting by will from ministers of the same religious creed or from any private individual to whom they are not related by blood within the fourth degree." Finally, it stipulates that infractions of any of the provisions of Article 130 shall not be subject to jury trial.[21]

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[21]For more details concerning these articles, see E. V. Niemeyer, Jr., "Anticlericalism in the Mexican Constitutional Convention of 1916-1917," The Americas, XI (July, 1954), 31-49.

Promulgation of the Constitution resulted in prompt publication of a "Protest" dated February 24 and signed by all members of the Mexican Episcopacy, with the exception of Archbishop Francisco Orozco y Jiménez of Guadalajara.[22] At the time that the "Protest" was issued, Orozco y Jiménez was in hiding after illegal re-entry into Mexico following his earlier expulsion by Carranza. Subsequently, the Archbhisop of Guadalajara issued a pastoral letter voicing his personal protest against the new Constitution.[23]

Carranza neither implemented the anti-clerical provisions of the fundamental law nor took notice of the protests by the Mexican bishops. His attention was focused on the problems of rebuilding the wartorn nation and suppressing rebel bands operating in many parts of the country. Zapata was slain on April 10, 1919, but Villa continued to control large areas of northern Mexico. As Carranza's term of office neared its end, the President was deeply concerned about the election of his successor. General Obregón seemed to be the most logical choice; however, Carranza decided to

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[22]For the text of this "Protest," see "Protesta del Episcopado Mexicano" printed in Toro, op. cit., pp. 399-402.

[23]Vicente Camberos Vizcaino, Francisco el Grande, Mons. Francisco Orozco y Jiménez, Biografía (2 vols.; México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1966), I, 246; Rius Facius, op. cit., p. 90.

impose Ignacio Bonillas, a civilian who was then serving as Mexico's ambassador to the United States. Led by Adolfo de la Huerta, governor of Sonora, Obregón's followers revolted and issued the Plan of Agua Prieta on April 23, 1920. Soon a large number of irregular forces and most of the army were marching against the national capital; thus, on May 7, 1920, Carranza left Mexico City for Veracruz. Transported with the President were large numbers of military and civilian personnel, the contents of the national treasury, and quantities of archival materials. Several trains were required to move the fleeing government, but the expedition never reached its destination. When his train was attacked by hostile forces, Carranza sought refuge in the mountains of Puebla. There in the village of Tlaxcalantongo on the night of May 21, 1920, he was betrayed and killed. Subsequently, De la Huerta was named Provisional President by Congress while Obregón embarked on a presidential election campaign which resulted in his election for a four-year term.[24]

Some members of the Catholic clergy were active in opposing Obregón's candidacy,[25] but when he became President in November, 1920, he was not regarded as being radically

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[24]See John W. F. Dulles, Yesterday in Mexico: A Chronicle of the Revolution, 1919-1936 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), pp. 17-87.

[25]Narciso Bassols Batalla, El Pensamiento Político de Alvaro Obregón (México, D.F.: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, 1967), p. 93.

anti-clerical. To be sure, as a military leader during the Revolution he had dealt firmly with those members of the clergy who had supported the enemy or violated his orders;[26] but the new President was expected to follow a moderate policy in regard to religious affairs. However, on January 11, 1923, eleven bishops, many priests, and over 40,000 other Catholics assembled at the hill of Cubilete in the state of Guanajuato to celebrate the laying of the cornerstone for a monument to Cristo Rey (Christ the King). Mons. Ernesto Filippi, the Apostolic Delegate, was present as the Bishop of San Luis Potosí proclaimed Christ to be King of Mexico. This was the culmination of a movement that had begun with dedication of the nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus during the period of the counter-revolutionary Huerta regime.[27] Angered by the religious demonstration, which he interpreted as a challenge to his government and to the Constitution, Obregón promptly ordered the deportation of the Apostolic Delegate;[28] and to the Mexican bishops he

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[26]See Alvaro Obregón, Ocho Mil Kilometros en Campaña (México, D.F.: Fondo de la Cultura Económica, 1959), p. 123; and Dulles, op. cit., pp. 296-297.

[27]See Olivera Sedano, op. cit., pp. 90-91; and Dulles, op. cit., pp. 298-299.

[28]For Obregón's explanation of his action, see XLVI Legislatura de la Cámara de Diputados, Los Presidentes de México ante la Nación; Informes, Manifiestos y Documentos de 1821 a 1966, comp. Luis González y González et al. (5 vols.; México, D.F.: Imprenta de la Cámara de Diputados, 1966), V, 673-674. (Hereafter cited as Los Presidentes de México.)

addressed a letter complaining about their failure to cooperate with his administration and expressing regret that "certain members of the high Catholic clergy have not sensed the transformation which has occurred in the minds of the people toward a modern outlook, in the course of which ineffectively abstract doctrines have day by day lost their influence, while effective social programs have gained strength."[29]

When it became known that Obregón was prepared to endorse the candidacy of General Plutarco Elías Calles, his Minister of War, in the 1924 presidential election, several generals revolted in December, 1923, and proclaimed De la Huerta as Supreme Chief of the Revolution. Obregón took personal command of loyal army forces. Within a few weeks the De la Huerta revolt was suppressed and the way was cleared for Calles' election in the summer of 1924.[30]

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[29]Quoted in Dulles, op. cit., p. 299.

[30]Ibid., pp. 218-263.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL CONFLICT

When Calles became President of Mexico on December 1, 1924, the Catholic Church still operated schools and orphanages, possessed extensive real estate holdings, and controlled business enterprises that were registered under the names of fictitious individuals. Although some state legislatures had imposed restrictions on the Catholic clergy, for the most part, the anti-clerical provisions of the Constitution of 1917 were not enforced by the federal government and relations between Church and State were relatively peaceful. During the following two years this situation changed rapidly. Early in 1925 the Calles government gave evidence of encouraging a schismatic Catholic group. Alarmed by this development, some Catholic laymen organized to resist the policies of the Calles regime while the hierarchy called for reform of anti-clerical provisions of the Constitution of 1917. As the government increased legal restrictions on religious activities, Catholic forces responded with boycott tactics, a strike by the clergy, and petitions for legal changes. In the absence of a willingness to compromise differences, Mexico moved from the arena of political conflict toward the field of armed revolt.

The Schismatic Church

On February 22, 1925, a group of about one hundred followers of Patriarch José Joaquín Pérez took possession of Soledad Church in Mexico City. When this leader of the schismatic Mexican Catholic Apostolic Church[1] attempted to conduct a mass on the following day, a group of laymen loyal to Rome sought to regain possession of the Soledad Church through use of force. Government troops, police, and firemen intervened to protect the schismatics. Subsequently, Calles ordered that the Soledad Church should be converted into a public library and that the Church of Corpus Christi should be turned over to the schismatics.[2]

Various attempts had been made at different times in nineteenth-century Mexico to establish a national Catholic Church with complete independence from Rome. Although these efforts had failed, the Mexican Episcopacy had a great fear of schismatic divisions. Thus, it was natural that the Roman Catholic clergy should view with alarm Calles' support of Patriarch Pérez.[3] As for President Calles, it was apparent that he was determined to undermine the power of the Catholic

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[1]For the text of the ten-point creed of the Mexican Catholic Apostolic Church, see Mecham, op. cit., pp. 477-478.

[2]See Dulles, op. cit., p. 300; and Alfonso Taracena, La Verdadera Revolución, Décima Etapa (1924-1925) (México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1962), pp. 213-219.

[3]Olivera Sedano, op. cit., pp. 103-105.

Church, although he insisted that "all religious creeds are respected equally by the government and to all of them it gives equal guarantees."[4]

Protest by the Episcopacy

In reaction to Calles' policies, on March 14, 1925, militant Catholic laymen organized the National Religious Defense League (later known as the National Defense League of Religious Liberty) for the purpose of "detaining the enemy and reconquering religious liberty and other liberties that are derived from it."[5] Shortly thereafter, the League sent one of its leaders, Lic. Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, to Rome to explain to the Vatican the problems of the faithful in Mexico. Palomar subsequently claimed credit for influencing the drafting of a papal letter addressed to the Mexican Episcopacy and dated February 2, 1926.[6] Reaffirming Pope Benedict XV's earlier condemnation of the laws and Constitution of Mexico, Pope Pius XI directed that the Episcopacy, the clergy, and all Catholic associations should remain apart

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[4]See Calles's message to Congress, September 1, 1925, in Los Presidentes de México, III, 654; for a bitter Catholic account of Calles's action, see Aquiles P. Moctezuma [Eduardo Iglesias], El Conflicto Religioso de 1926: Sus Origenes, Su Desarrollo, Su Solución (2d ed., 2 vols.: México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1960), II, 309-313.

[5]For the text of the League's program, see Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, El Caso Ejemplar Mexicano (2d ed.; México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1966), pp. 144-147.

[6]James W. Wilkie, "The Meaning of the Cristero Religious War Against the Mexican Revolution," A Journal of Church and State, VIII (Spring, 1966), 221-222.

from the activities of any political party; furthermore, Mexican Catholics should not organize a political party calling itself Catholic. However, the Pope urged that laymen should make full use of their political rights for the good of religion and of the country. As for the clergy, while remaining aloof from political contests, they should "contribute to the welfare of the Nation, whether by the example of a scrupulous observance of the civil rights and duties with which they are vested or by forming the consciences of the Catholics, according to the exact fulfillment of their public duties." Repeating that the clergy must remain free from the strife of political parties, the Pope explained that the clergy "will still have before it a vast field of religious, moral, cultural, economic and social action leading to the formation of the conscience of the citizens and above all of the youth, whether they be scholars or workers."[7]

As might have been expected, the Calles regime was highly displeased with this letter when it was made public on April 19. However, by that time Church-State relations had already reached a point of acute hostility as a result of re-publication of the February, 1917, "Protest" of the

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[7]For the text of Pope Pius XI's apostolic letter entitled "Paterna Sane Sollicitudo," see Joaquín Blanco Gil [Andrés Barquín y Ruíz], El Clamor de la Sangre (México, D.F.: Editorial "Rex-Mex," 1947), pp. 69-71.

Mexican Episcopacy. Although the "Protest" against Articles 3, 5, 24, 27, and 130 of the Constitution had been given little attention by Carranza,[8] when republished in the January 27, 1926, issue of El Universal, the "Protest" aroused the wrath of President Calles. Apparently the "Protest" was republished on the initiative of an El Universal reporter and not as a result of Episcopal action; however, when questioned about the document, Archbishop Mora y del Río publicly reaffirmed the Church's opposition to the Revolutionary articles and the "Protest" was published again by El Universal on February 4.[9] On the following day Ing. Adalberto Tejeda, Secretary of Gobernación,[10] issued a public statement declaring that "the attitude of the Archbishop manifests rebellion against the fundamental laws and institutions of the Republic."[11] Immediately thereafter federal officials took steps to arrest and deport alien priests, to nationalize such church property as had not already been taken

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[8] Supra, p. 14.

[9] See Wilkie, loc. cit., pp. 221-222.

[10] Gobernación may be translated as "Government," but the original Spanish is used because there is no equivalent agency in the United States Government. Among the more significant affairs falling under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Gobernación, who traditionally is considered as the principal official in the President's cabinet, are federal-state relations, political activities, elections, and enforcement of federal criminal statutes.

[11] The text of Tejeda's declaration is printed in Toro, op. cit., pp. 402-403.

by the government, and to close convents, schools, and asylums operated by the Catholic Church.[12] Then on February 13, Tejeda wired state governors and requested that they take appropriate actions to impose necessary restrictions on the clergy in accordance with the Constitution. On February 22 the Secretary of Public Education issued an order entitled "Provisional Regulation for Private Primary Schools of the Federal District and Territories." Under the terms of the regulation, all private schools were ordered to register with the Department of Public Instruction; at the same time these institutions were forbidden to teach religion, to have any connection with religious organizations or to allow members of the clergy to serve as teachers.[13]

In reaction to these measures, the Catholic hierarchy issued pastoral letters voicing opposition to the government's religious policies and calling on the faithful to organize for the defense of their rights. One of the boldest critics of the Calles regime was Mons. José de Jesús Manríquez y Zárate, Bishop of Huejutla. On March 10 he issued his Sixth Pastoral Letter charging that "Mexican Jacobinism" had decreed

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[12]For the text of Tejeda's comments concerning the closing of convents, see ibid., pp. 403-404.

[13]The regulation, together with an explanatory note from Secretary of Public Education J. M. Puig Casauranc to Prof. Alfredo E. Uruchurtu, Chief Administrator of the Department of Public Education, is printed in J. M. Puig Casauranc, La Cuestión Religiosa en Relación con la Educación Pública en México (México, D.F.: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1928), pp. 11-12.

the death of the Mexican Catholic Church. Asserting that he feared "neither prison cells nor assassin's rifles," Manríquez condemned and anathematized "each and every one of the crimes and attacks committed by the Mexican Government against the Catholic Church in recent days. . . ." He announced that he did not limit himself to rejecting Articles 3, 5, 27, and 130 of the "so-called Constitution," but that "we extend our rebuke and anathema to each and all of the laws and to each and all of the precepts violative of the Divine Law, of the Natural Law, and of the Most Holy Dispositions of the Church." Attacking a recent statement by Calles to an American newspaperman in which the President had charged the Mexican Catholic clergy with intervention in the country's political affairs, the Bishop of Huejutla branded the President as a liar and declared:

> If we have committed an offense, it is precisely that of not having taken any participation in the fundamental politics of the country; that is, in the dirty and crooked politics by which are elected as representatives of the people those subjects who are unknown and unloved by the people. . . . Because of this non-intervention or criminal abstention, we are now suffering the terrible lashes of the Divine Providence of which Mexican Jacobinism is only a simple instrument. . . .

Manríquez concluded his pastoral letter with a call for the faithful to "follow our steps and go resolutely to martyrdom if it is necessary in order to sustain the cause of Jesus Christ and of His Church."[14]

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[14]For the text of Manríquez's pastoral letter, see Luis Alvarez Flores et al., José de Jesús Manríquez y Zárate, Gran Defensor de la Iglesia (México, D.F.: Editorial "Rex-Mex," 1952), pp. 42-46.

Mons. Leopoldo Lara y Torres, Bishop of Tacámbaro, was another outspoken critic of Calles' religious policies. From his diocese in southern Michoacán, on March 16 Lara addressed a "Memorial" to the President and Congress of the Federal government and to the governor and legislature of the state. The "Memorial" complained about government action resulting in the closing of a seminary, a secondary school, and an elementary school; also, he protested against the expulsion of foreign priests, nuns, and teachers. To the federal government he petitioned for reform of Articles 3, 5, 27, and 130 of the national constitution; and from Michoacán officials he sought repeal of legislation limiting the number of priests to ninety-six for the whole state.[15] Ten days later Bishop Lara issued a pastoral letter outlining his instructions to the secular clergy and to "the faithful" of his diocese. Citing with approval a recent pastoral letter by J. Juan de Jesús Herrera y Piña, in which the Archbishop of Monterrey had declared "only the Roman Pontiff has the right and the power to legislate for all Christianity," Lara condemned state and federal legislation imposing restrictions on the Catholic Church. Emphasizing that he wished "neither to provoke conflicts nor for our part to expose you to useless and disasterous vexations and

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[15]The text of the "Memorial" is printed in Mons. Leopoldo Lara y Torres, Documentos para la Historia de la Persecución Religiosa en México, comp. by Salvador Abascal (México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1954), pp. 91-105.

oppressions that would do nothing but exhaust your energies," the bishop called for organization of Catholic forces for struggle in the legal field. Specifically condemning "armed revolt," Lara directed that Catholics should form an organization having as its goals "the mitigation first, the reform next, and finally the suppression of the oppressive laws that we have. . . ." Also, he instructed that Catholics must participate in elections "in order to contribute with your vote to tilting the balance in favor of the candidates who offer security or better probabilities of protecting your Catholic interests." In conclusion, he raised the threat of excommunication for apostates, heretics, and cismatics; for those responsible for laws or orders "against the liberty and the rights of the Church, and those who impede the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction"; for those who take church property; for those who take members of the clergy before secular courts; and for "some others, as the priests can explain at an opportune time."[16]

Most important of the clerical protests was a collective pastoral dated April 21 and signed by all members of the Mexican Episcopacy, which included 8 archbishops, 24 bishops, and 4 titular bishops. Issued only two days after publication of the Pope's letter of February 2, the similarity of content of the two documents clearly showed

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[16]The text of this pastoral letter is printed in ibid., pp. 106-108.

that Mexico's bishops were prepared to implement the policy of the Vatican. After expounding on Catholic doctrine concerning relations between Church and State, and following a detailed description of the situation confronting the Catholic Church in Mexico, the letter explained that political action must be left to laymen. In conclusion, the Episcopacy declared: "In compliance with our duty, we exhort the Catholics that they work for the welfare of the nation; and we counsel them that they enroll in organizations which teach the people concerning theory and practice of their rights and obligations as citizens, and which organize the nation for the defense of religious liberty, but which keep apart from any party and above all parties."[17] To many militant Catholics, it seemed that the Episcopacy was endorsing two organizations which were developing as centers of opposition to the Calles regime: the Catholic Association of Mexican Youth (ACJM) and the League.[18]

New Restrictions on Catholic Activities

The "Provisional Regulation for Private Primary Schools of the Federal District and Territories," issued on February 22, allowed private schools a period of sixty days in which to register.[19] In response to this action, on

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[17]Quoted in Antonio Rius Facius, México Cristero: Historia de la ACJM, 1925 a 1931 (México, D.F.: Editorial Pátria, 1960), p. 57.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Supra, p. 5.

April 12 directors of Catholic Schools of the Federal District addressed a petition to Secretary of Public Education Puig Casauranc in which they upheld the right of parents to provide for the Christian education of their children; further, they insisted that they would not comply with the regulation and requested that it be withdrawn.[20] Subsequently, after the sixty-day time limit had expired, a Mixed Commission was named to resolve the conflict. Composed of representatives of the Department of Public Education and of the Union of Mexican Catholic Schools, the Commission was charged with the task of drawing up a new regulation that would be acceptable to both sides. After meeting on July 5 and 6, agreement was reached to all important points except for the refusal of Catholic members to accept two prohibitions: the first applied to any architectural connections between private school buildings and buildings where religious services were held; the second banned from school premises "decorations, paintings, images, statues or objects of a religious nature."[21]

Subsequent negotiations between Catholic representatives and government officials resulted in an agreement that private schools would be allowed to display images of Christ on the cross, not as a religious symbol, but as "a philosophical expression of morally redemptive doctrines." On

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[20]This petition is printed in Puig Casauranc, op. cit., pp. 12-16.

[21]See ibid., pp. 31-34, for the text of this proposed regulation.

August 13 the Minister of Education incorporated this compromise into a proposed presidential agreement and submitted it to Calles.[22] According to Puig, the document was never promulgated by the President "due to the attitude of the clerical elements that, beginning in 1926, converted the noble figure of the Crucified Christ into a banner of rebellion, placing in danger the most high philosophy of said figure with the war cry of 'Long Live Christ the King' with which they went not only to their revolutionary adventures but also to the most vulgar and repugnant crimes."[23] It appears that the conflict between Church and State over control of private schools might have been settled had it not been for a more serious disagreement regarding government registration of the clergy.

On June 24 it was announced that under emergency powers conferred on the President by a congressional act of January 7, the penal code for the Federal District and Territories was to be revised by executive decree so as to implement the various provisions of the Constitution relating to religion.[24] Specifying fines and imprisonments for violations, the decree included the following provisions:

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[22]For the text of this proposed agreement, see ibid., pp. 52-53.

[23]Ibid., p. 52.

[24]For a description of these constitutional provisions, see supra, pp. 10-13.

required clergymen to be native-born Mexican citizens; defined ministers as anyone administering religious acts or sacraments as well as anyone engaged in public preaching or proselytizing; specified that teaching in all government schools and in elementary and secondary private schools must be secular; prohibited establishment or direction of schools by religious corporations; placed all primary schools under direct government supervision; prohibited religious vows and monastic orders; provided for punishment of all persons, including parents, responsible for inducing minors to take religious vows; provided for a prison sentence of six years for clergymen found guilty of inciting readers or listeners to violate laws and disobey the orders of government authorities; specified punishment of persons employing threats or use of force against public officials as a result of incitement by members of the clergy; prohibited clergymen from criticizing the fundamental laws of Mexico in public or private gatherings, acts of worship, or religious propaganda; prohibited members of the clergy from organizing for political ends; banned any public recognition of credits earned in educational institutions devoted to the training of the clergy; prohibited religious periodicals from commenting on political affairs or reporting on acts of national and local authorities; specified the responsibility of persons involved in publishing unlawful materials; prohibited the formation of political organizations with titles indicating connection with any

religious body; banned meetings of any political character in churches; required that all public acts of worship must be performed within church buildings; prohibited the use of distinctive garb outside of church buildings by persons directing or professing religion; authorized all persons to report violations of provisions of this law; prohibited churches from administering real estate; declared that all churches and other buildings used by religious associations are property of the nation and specified that use of such property shall be controlled by the government; outlined the responsibilities of local government officials in enforcing provisions of the law; and specified penalties of fine and imprisonment for officials failing to perform their duties under the law.

All of these provisions were condemned by the Catholic clergy, but most obnoxious of the decree's requirements was that which called for ministers of any religious creed to register with the civil authorities. On July 2 the text of the decree, popularly known as the Calles Law, was published in the official organ of the federal government; July 31 was specified as the date when the measure would go into force.[25] Already, during the five previous months, several churches and chapels had been closed by government action in various

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[25]The official text of the decree is found in Diario Oficial, July 2, 1926, pp. 1-4.

parts of the country.[26] Thus, many laymen and clergy viewed the Calles Law as the signal for launching a final government attack designed to destroy religion in Mexico.

Catholic Reaction to the Calles Law

Shortly after the June 24 announcement concerning provisions of the Calles Law, the Directing Committee of the League proposed the calling of a nation-wide boycott designed to cause an economic crisis that would force the government to modify its policies concerning the Catholic Church. When presented to a committee of the Mexican Episcopacy on July 7, plans for the proposed boycott were approved and a letter signed by the Archbishop of Mexico and the Bishop of Tabasco was addressed to League officials. This letter states in part:

> Having carefully examined your project, it appears to us to be worthy of all praise, not only for the end that it seeks but also for the peaceful and orderly form in which it will be carried into effect.
>
> We are with you in this redeeming work relating to the most just rights, and we strongly recommend to our clergy and parishoners the most effective possible participation in such a laudable enterprise.[27]

On July 14 the Directing Committee of the League issued a circular calling on the Mexican people to support the boycott.

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[26]For specific examples of official announcements retiring churches and chapels from use, see ibid. for the following dates: May 19, 1926; June 7, 1926; June 12, 1926; and June 14, 1926.

[27]The letter is quoted in League Circular No. 2-A, which is printed in Gustavo Casasola, Historia Gráfica de la Revolución Mexicana, 1900-1960 (4 vols.; México, D.F.: Editorial F. Trillas, 1962), III, 1751.

The circular boldly announced:

> The purpose of this campaign is to create in the entire Nation a state of intense economic crisis so as to oblige the Government to end the condition of legal oppression in which the Catholic Church lives in our Country. It will be a demonstration of what the well-disciplined civic conscience can do in the destinies of a people. Therefore, it is not a matter of acting against specificially hostile elements but of creating a grave general situation which will paralyze as far as possible the social and economic life of the country.

As a program of action, the circular outlined the following steps:

> A) Abstention from advertising in and buying newspapers that oppose this action or that do not support it. It will be understood that silence means lack of support. In respect to the newspapers of Mexico City, no action shall be taken against them unless expressly determined by the League.
>
> B) Abstention from making purchases that are not indispensable for daily life (for example, do not buy luxurious articles and, as far as possible, articles of clothing; suppress the unnecessary which are: candy, fruit, ice cream, soda water, etc.; and even in regard to articles of necessity, acquire only that which is necessary).
>
> C) The greatest possible abstention of use of vehicles, especially private vehicles, and in case of necessity, use the least expensive.
>
> D) Abstention from attending all types of diversions, both public and private (theaters, movies, dances, paseos, etc.)
>
> E) Limitation of consumption of electricity.
>
> F) Total abstention from purchase of lottery tickets.
>
> G) Total abstention from attendance of secular schools.

Also, the circular emphasized that the above-listed enumeration did not exclude other measures which might be deemed opportune in different areas. Further, it declared that "all persons loving liberty shall convert themselves into effective propagandists in this action against interests or groups which are

enemies of liberty." Finally, the circular assured that the boycott "must not cause doubt or fright because it involves an extreme case of life or death for the Catholic Church in Mexico"; and it assured the people that "this action has been fully authorized by the Venerable National Episcopacy. . . ."[28] Following this statement was printed the text of the Episcopacy's letter of July 7 quoted above.[29]

Immediately the ACJM sprang into action to support the boycott. In Mexico City and nearby states of Hidalgo and Mexico, church bells summoned the faithful to hear members of the ACJM speak from the pulpit concerning their program of resistance.[30] Gladium, a weekly newspaper published in Guadalajara and edited by Anacleto González Flores, printed a black list of merchants accused of being Masons and exhorted Catholics not to patronize their establishments.[31] Gummed stickers were printed to advertise the boycott. The following are examples of the messages carried by this medium:

> Do you want to die without a priest to assist you? Avoid it! Your weapon is the boycott!
>
> He who in this time attends theaters and movies is truly irresponsible.

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Supra, p. 32.

[30] Rius Facius, Mexico Cristero, p. 72.

[31] Heriberto Navarrete, S. J., "Por Dios y por la Patria," Memorias de mi Participación en la Defensa de la Libertad de Conciencia y Culto durante la Persecución Religiosa en México de 1926 a 1929 (México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1961), p. 110.

Miss: You weaken the boycott by using powder, lipstick, and perfume.

Kissing is forbidden not only by the boycott but by decency.

Fruits, candies and cakes are luxurious delicacies which disgrace the table of a Catholic.

Wines and beer, even at mealtime, are articles of luxury. Intensify the boycott!

Miss: There are dresses of all prices; leave vanity for better times and choose the cheapest.

He who does not comply with the boycott is a shame and a disgrace to the Catholic cause!

Do you wish to have a child without God. Avoid it! Your weapon is the boycott![32]

There can be no doubt but what the boycott resulted in a decline of business activity and affected revenue collection. However, it proved to be a failure. Many Mexicans resented Catholic attempts to disrupt the national economy; others sympathized with the Church but were not prepared to endure inconveniencies for the sake of supporting the boycott.[33] However, in desperation the Episcopacy decided to employ another tactic which was expected to have a greater impact on the Mexican people: suspension of

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[32]Reproductions of these and other gummed stickers are printed in Casasola, op. cit., III, 1764. For an account of boycott activities by some of the young women of Guadalajara, see Silvano Barba González, La Rebelión de los Cristeros (México, D.F.: Manuel Casas, Impresor, 1967), pp. 111-114. Examples of anti-boycott propaganda are printed in Casasola, op. cit., III, 1765.

[33]See James W. and Edna Wilkie, Interviews with Lic. Emilio Portes Gil, Oral History Center for Latin America, Mexico City, 1964-1965; see also, Navarrete, op. cit., p. 115.

religious services in Catholic churches throughout the country.

The Mexican Catholic Church Calls a Strike

While refusing to give his blessing to the boycott, the Pope designated August 1 as a day of special prayer for termination of the Mexican Government's persecution of believers. Before this date, steps were taken to launch a nationwide strike of the Catholic clergy. Shortly after publication of the Calles Law, the Mexican Episcopacy prepared a message addressed to the Pope in which plans were revealed for issuing a collective pastoral letter condemning the law and announcing suspension of public worship throughout the country.[34] Manuel de la Peza, a prominent leader of the League, was commissioned to carry the message to Havana where it was delivered to Mons. Jorge José Caruana, the Apostolic Delegate to Mexico. Caruana then cabled a summary of the message to Rome. On July 22 the following reply was received from the Vatican:

> Holy See condemns the law and at the same time any act that can signify or be interpreted by the Catholic people as an acceptance or recognition of said law. To this norm the Episcopacy of Mexico must accomodate itself in its manner of working

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[34]For the text of this message, see Palomar y Vizcarra, op. cit., p. 155.

> so as to set an example of superiority, uniformity, and harmony.[35]

With this Papal authorization, the Episcopacy formulated its second collective pastoral letter dated July 25. Stating that earlier acts of persecution by the government had been endured with patience, the Episcopacy asserted that the Calles Law presented a more serious problem:

> The law of the Federal Executive promulgated on July 2 of this year strikes in such a vulnerable way the divine rights of the Church delivered to our custody; it is so contrary to the natural law . . . that it positively proscribes the individual and social obligation of worshipping God; it is so opposed, according to the opinion of emminent jurists, both Catholic and non-Catholic, to Mexican constitutional law, that in the face of such a violation of such sacred moral values, we are unable to comply at all. It would be a crime for us to tolerate such a situation; and we should not wish that at the time of God's judgment there should come to our memory that tardy lament of the prophet: "Vae mihi quia tacui."

Announcing its decision to suspend public worship, the Episcopacy explained:

> In view of the impossibility of continuing to exercise the Sacred Ministry under the conditions imposed by the cited decree, after having consulted with Our Most Holy Father, His Holiness Pius XI, and having obtained his approval, we order that, from the thirty-first day of July of the present year, until we decide something else, public worship which requires the intervention of the priest shall be suspended in all churches of the Republic.

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[35]The cablegram is printed in ibid., p. 156. In ibid., Palomar y Vizcarra, one of the founders and most prominent leaders of the League, has commented, "these memorable words . . . will always shine with letters of gold in the most splendorous pages of the history of the Motherland and of the history of the Church in Mexico."

Churches were to remain open and in the care of the faithful. Also, the collective pastoral letter spelled out in detail the circumstances under which Catholics could expect special and simple excommunication by the Holy See or excommunication by a bishop. In conclusion, the letter predicted that "after a brief period, the Mexican Catholic Church will be resurrected full of life, vigor, and health to the extent that our eyes have never seen before."[36]

Reactions to the Clerical Strike

Taking notice of the religious controversy in Mexico, New York Times editor L. C. Speers interviewed Calles on the evening of August 7. He was told that registration of priests was merely for the purpose of accounting for churches and church furniture, which were considered as national property. The President assured Speers that it was not the purpose of the government to interfere with the purely spiritual acts or teaching of the Catholic faith. At the same time, Calles condemned interference by the Pope in Mexico's internal affairs and justified the deportation of alien priests. "The Catholic clergy is most intolerant," asserted Calles; and he charged that if they could prevent the existence of other religions, they would do it because "for them there are no other religions that the Catholic."[37]

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[36]Printed in Luis C. Balderrama, El Clero y el Gobierno de México (2 vols.: México, D.F.: Editorial Cuauhtemoc, 1927), II, 17-21.

[37]New York Times, August 8, 1926. On August 10, Excelsior published a Spanish translation; this text is printed in Toro, op. cit., pp. 420-426.

The League was quick to come to the defense of the clerical strike. Bearing the seal of this Catholic action group, a handbill titled "Why the Priests Do Not Register" was circulated in the Mexico area early in August. This handbill explained the issue of registration of priests as follows:

> The adherents of the tyranny say that if the priests register, you will not be deprived of solemn worship in your churches and you will not be without the mass and sacraments.
>
> But how do men of honor answer? Listen to us: Those who are called priests do not register for a great many reasons, of which one, perhaps the least important in itself, but one that all honorable men must esteem in its righteousness, is this: The Catholic priests do not register because they wish to say resolutely to the advances of tyranny in Mexico, STOP HERE!
>
> And with this manly attitude, complying with an elementary responsibility as priests, as Christians, as citizens, as patriots, as honorable men . . . they wish to give an effective example to this nation of slaves. . . . Let us shout "Long live liberty, down with tyranny!"[38]

In Rome the August 11 issue of L'Osservatore Romano carried an article entitled "The True Cause of the Present Disorders in Mexico: Answer to President Calles." This voice of the Vatican declared that with the stroke of a pen, the Mexican government had decreed the immediate and violent suppression of all religious organizations. Pointing out that Mexican Catholics were forbidden to organize for defense by legal means, the newspaper article concluded that "for

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[38]The text of the League handbill (issued by the Propaganda Section of the Regional Representation of the Federal District as Bulletin No. 25) is printed in Toro, op. cit., pp. 430-433.

the masses who do not wish to submit to the tyranny, and for those who no longer are controlled by the peaceful exhortation of the clergy, there remains no other course but that of violent rebellion."[39] In an effort to bring diplomatic pressure to bear on Mexico, on August 14 the Secretary of State of the Holy See, Cardinal Gasparri, sent messages to all ambassadors accredited to the Vatican and to all Papal nuncios and apostolic delegates in various parts of the world. These messages called attention to the article published in L'Osservatore Romano.[40] According to one of the League leaders, within Mexico mimeographed copies of the article were widely distributed by the League, which "took care to attach a note indicating that what was stated in the article expressed the official opinion of the Holy See."[41]

Interpreting the strike of the clergy as a challenge to the authority of the Mexican government, the Calles regime responded with prompt action. On July 28, Secretary of Gobernación Tejeda issued a circular referring to the suspension of worship as "a boastful rebellion and a demonstration of disavowal of constitutional precepts. . . ." Local authorities were directed to ensure that priests did not

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[39]This article is printed in Palomar y Vizcarra, op. cit., pp. 165-166.

[40]Ibid., p. 164.

[41]Ibid., p. 166.

abandon their churches before a complete inventory of furniture and equipment had been taken.[42] On July 31 another circular was issued by Tejeda to all state governors. It specified that churches in which religious services had been suspended could not be returned to use for public worship without prior approval by the Department of Gobernación. Also, the circular advised that if state governors, municipal presidents, or village residents felt that some of the churches should be utilized for any public purpose, they should "communicate with this department for the necessary authorization."[43] As a result of this suggestion, many churches and church annexes were subsequently converted into schools, libraries, and other public buildings.[44] In some cases the faithful defended their churches when told by the clergy that government officials were coming to destroy the sanctuaries, burn the images, and kill the servants of God. One Catholic priest has reported a conversation with a Catholic woman who described the killing of a local police chief in the course of defending a church: "The Chapel of Jesus is

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[42]The text of the circular, as published in the July 29, 1926, issue of El Universal, is printed in Toro, op. cit., pp. 418-419.

[43]Department of Gobernación Circular No. 105 is printed in Toro, op. cit., pp. 418-419.

[44]For example, see official announcements concerning allocation of church buildings for such uses in issues of Diario Oficial published on the following dates in 1927: January 8, January 15, January 20, February 16, March 11, and December 29.

not closed, Father. This morning, with the help of God, we killed a disagreeable man."[45] In some areas, all strangers were suspected of being government officials and were considered as enemies of the faithful. Thus, it is reported that two engineers engaged in flood control activity in the vicinity of Acámbaro, Guanajuato, were slain by fanatics because the local priest "believed that they were not Catholics."[46]

On the other hand, strong support of the government's religious policies was voiced by labor unions. On July 29 the Federation of Labor Unions of the Federal District presented President Calles with a lengthy memorial pledging full allegiance to the Constitution and condemning actions of the Catholic clergy.[47] Three days later the Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM) organized a parade of more than 50,000 workers who passed before the National Palace bearing plackards voicing support of the government and opposition to clerical acts.[48] Also of importance at this time was ex-President

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[45]Navarrete, op. cit., p. 106.

[46]Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados, 32d Leg., November 25, 1926, p. 16.

[47]This document is printed in Balderrama, op. cit., II, 37-39.

[48]See Casasola, op. cit., III, 1752-1754. For a verbatim account of a series of public debates on the Church-State issue held at the Iris Thèater on the evenings of August 2, 5, and 9, 1926, see Balderrama, op. cit., II, 69-144. Spokesmen for both the Catholic Church and the government particıpated. CROM leader Luís N. Morones figured prominently in presented the government's side. Also, see Casasola, op. cit., III, 1755-1759.

Obregón's statement of August 2 in support of Calles. Because of his popularity with the army, Obregón's condemnation of the clergy was considered as evidence that the Calles regime could count on the loyalty of the nation's military forces.[49] He declared: "The conflict will disappear automatically when the directors of the Catholic Church in Mexico suppress their wounded vanity and declare themselves disposed to give obedience to the laws and to the authorities for enforcing them, recommending this same line of conduct to all the believers."[50]

Catholic Appeals and Government Action

In a memorial dated August 16, on behalf of the Mexican Episcopacy, Archbishop Mora y del Río and Bishop Díaz addressed themselves to President Calles. Asserting that the suspension of public worship by the clergy did not merit the charge of rebellion that had been made against them, the prelates also rejected the charge that they had not previously used the right of petition to secure repeal of those provisions of the Constitution of 1917 to which they were opposed. In regard to the latter point, they explained: "The principal reason for not having petitioned for the reform of the articles of the Constitution contrary to the Church and to the rights of the Catholic citizens was that the governors, for one

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[49]Mecham, op. cit., p. 490.

[50]Obregón's statement, as published in the August 3, 1926, issue of El Universal, is printed in Balderrama, op. cit., II, 47-48.

motive or another, did not insist upon the observance of such articles; in this regard there was created, in practice, sufficient mutual tolerance so that the public tranquility was not broken and so that the church was permitted a certain amount of liberty to live and carry out its actions." Stating that neither Carranza nor his successor had urged compliance with the questionable articles of the Constitution, the petitioners, "animated by the most sincere patriotism and desirous of a true and stable peace," requested reform of said articles together with repeal of those penal laws providing for enforcement of the Constitutional provisions. Calling for "the most sincere independence of Church and State," the spokesmen for the Episcopacy declared:

> Consequently, we ask for the following liberties: that we have rights as Christians, as citizens of a civilized nation and men--freedom of conscience, of thought, of worship, of education, of association, of press. All of this [we ask for] without antinomical restrictions that destroy the substance of constitutional principles. In a word, without asking for privileges we ask for recognition of that [judicial] personality necessary and indispensable [to the Church] so that the aforementioned liberties may be real.[51]

As might have been expected, Calles was not moved by the memorial. While recognizing the right of the Episcopacy to present their requests, he explained that he would not use his influence to secure the removal of Articles 3, 5, 24, 27, and 130 from the supreme law of the land because such articles are "in perfect accordance with my philosophical and political

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[51]The memorial is printed in Balderrama, op. cit., II, 51-53.

convictions."[52] In response to the President's words, the Mexican prelates drafted a document dated August 20 and entitled "Observations on the Reply that the President of the Republic Gave to the Memorial of the Committee of the Episcopacy." First published in various newspapers in the United States, the statement read in part as follows:

> Permit us, Mr. President, to observe that whatever may be your convictions, as well as whatever may have been the criteria that guided the framers of the Constitution of 1917, it is not possible to impose on a people, unless--by other means of peaceful propaganda that requires much time--they are so prepared that the Law comes to be the expression of popular tendencies.
>
> . . . the Church in Mexico is a fact that has formed a part of the national life for four hundred years. Facts are facts and cannot be denied. If you admit the facts, it is necessary to be prepared for the consequences, under penalty of provoking tremendous convulsions, unless four hundred years of history can be struck out with one stroke of a pen.
>
> The separation of Church and State does not require that one adopt the absurdity of a State within another State, as does not exist in civilized nations where the principles of separation reigns. . . .

In conclusion, the prelates observed: "The God, who imposed on man obligations so sacred in religion and obedience so complete to civil authority, could not commit such an absurdity; for this reason He said in the Gospel: 'Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's.'"[53]

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[52]For the text of Calles' reply of August 19, see ibid., pp. 55-58.

[53]These "Observations" are printed in ibid., pp. 63-65.

On August 21 the Archbishop of Morelia, Mons. Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, accompanied by Bishop Díaz and Lic. Eduardo Mestre, had an interview with Calles. The prelates proposed that the President should declare officially that registration of priests was simply an administrative measure and that the government did not wish to become involved in matters of discipline and dogma; also, they insisted that he should suspend enforcement of the Calles Law while they would appeal to Congress for abolition or modification of the Constitutional articles which they opposed. According to the report of the interview which was drafted by Archbishop Ruiz y Flores and presented to the Episcopal Committee, Calles could not be moved but neither did he object to an Episcopal appeal to Congress. Thus, the Archbishop of Morelia reported:

> At the end of the interview, the Presidend said to us, while standing: "Now you know that you have no other choice expect Congress or arms"; and he [Bishop Díaz] answered him: "We are pleased, Mr. President, with what you tell us. The Church does not desire to defend her rights by violence, the triumphs of which are ephemeral; she wants something more solid and, therefore, prefers legal and pacific means.[54]

Immediately after the conclusion of this interview, within Mexico and abroad rumors were circulated which reported that the clergy had come to terms with the government and that the religious strike was to be ended. Alarmed by such rumors,

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[54]Archbishop Ruiz y Flores' report is printed in Alberto María Carreño, El Arzobispo de México, Exmo. Sr. Dr. Pascual Díaz, y el Conflicto Religioso (2d ed.; México, D.F.: Ediciones Victoria, 1943), pp. 126-135.

on August 24 Cardinal Gasparri sent the following cable to Archbishop Mora y del Río:

> Newspapers announce that a settlement has been made which does not conform with instructions given by the Holy See. We await a report. Meanwhile, do not depart from the decisions that the Episcopacy made with such firmness in the beginning and which have been praised by the whole world. Reply immediately and without delay via telegraph.[55]

The Archbishop of Mexico replied on that same day with the following message:

> The newspaper reports are absolutely false. With the help of God, under no circumstances shall we depart from the instructions given by the Holy See. Most firm in their convictions and absolutely obedient, with filial love all of the bishops implore the apostolic blessing of the Holy Father.[56]

On the following day Cardinal Gasparri acknowledged receipt of Mora y del Río's reply and assured him that "His Holiness is united with you in his prayers and benedictions."[57]

In his annual report to the Mexican Congress on September 1, Calles insisted that the actions of the clergy had presented no real problems for his government. The President described the Church-State conflict as "an affair of lively interest which has been given greater importance abroad than in our country"; and he charged that the affair

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[55]Gasparri's cable is printed in Rius Facius, México Cristero, p. 98.

[56]Mora y del Río's cable is printed in ibid.

[57]Printed in ibid. For another account of the exchange of cables between Rome and Mexico City, see Alberto María Carreño, El Arzobispo de México, Exmo. Sr. Dr. Don Pascual Díaz y el Conflicto Religioso, (2d ed.; México, D.F.: Ediciones Victoria, 1943), pp. 146-148.

"has been created by the clergy who, rebellious as ever to the institutions of the Republic and wishing to take advantage of a time which they thought propicious to their ends, declared their disavowal of the Constitution and the laws emanating from it which regulate the exercise of worship."[58] While denying that his government had been guilty of religious persecution, Calles insisted that he had enforced the laws and would continue to do so. As evidence of enforcement, he reported that within the past year his administration had closed 42 churches, 7 centers of religious propaganda, and 73 convents, of which 43 were located in the Federal District. Also, he announced that religious personnel had been banned from intervening in the affairs of hospitals and asylums, and that chapels located in such institutions had been closed. In regard to alien clergymen, the President stated that 185 had been expelled from the country as "pernicious foreigners."[59] Most significant, however, was his announcement that in the near future he would submit for the consideration of Congress a proposal implementing the various provisions of Article 130 of the Constitution and fixing the maximum number of priests allowed to function in the Federal District and Territories.[60]

Five days after Calles had delivered his message to Congress, the Episcopacy addressed a wordy petition to that

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[58] Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados, 32d Leg., September 1, 1926, p. 5.

[59] Ibid., p. 6.

[60] Ibid.

body. Referring to the right of petition guaranteed under the terms of Article 8 of the Constitution, the prelates asserted that "there is no tyranny worse than bad laws." Voicing their demand for reform of Articles 3, 5, 24, 27, and 130,[61] the bishops and archbishops asked, "What is it that we ask for?" Answering their own question, they replied: "Neither tolerance nor preferential treatment, not even perrogatives or favors. We demand liberty; liberty not only for ourselves but for all religions." Also, as a guide for delineating the areas of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the petition invoked the words of Jesus, "Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's."[62]

On September 9 the Chamber of Deputies acknowledged receipt of the petition but replied that the controversial articles of the Constitution would not be changed since they were considered to be "indispensable for the stability of the revolutionary conquests in the social order of the Nation."[63] Despite this negative attitude, on September 22 and 23 the prelates' petition was discussed at length by the Chamber of Deputies. Finally, by a vote of 171-1 the Chamber adopted a

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[61]Texts of the Episcopacy's proposed reforms of these articles are printed in Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Senadores, October 11, 1926, p. 15.

[62]For the full text of this petition, see ibid., pp. 13-15.

[63]Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados, 32d Leg., September 9, 1926, p. 2.

resolution which declared that only citizens were authorized to submit petitions, and since the signers of the Episcopal petition had disavowed the Constitution, they had thereby forfeited their Mexican citizenship and their right of petition.[64] In support of the Episcopacy, the Directing Committee of the League printed and distributed thousands of copies of a petition to be signed by individual citizens and then mailed to the Mexican Congress.[65] The September 23 issue of El Universal Gráfico, Mexico City's principal afternoon newspaper, reported, "Today the Administrative Office of the Chamber of Deputies received a shipment of fifty packages and three wood boxes sent by Sr. Juan Lainé, the former containing 162,830 signatures and the latter containing 4,052 cards with signatures of citizens who express their desire for the reform of some constitutional provision which, in their judgement, place limits on religious liberty." This report was discussed and denied on the floor of the Chamber of Deputies.[66] However, one Catholic writer has asserted that as a result of a campaign carried out by the ACJM, "the right arm of the League, [which] took charge of the collection

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[64]For a verbatim account of this lengthy debate, see ibid., September 22, 1926, pp. 3-29; and September 23, 1926, pp. 1-11.

[65]A reproduction of this form is printed in Rius Facius, México Cristero, p. 103.

[66]Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados, 32d Leg., September 23, 1926, p. 10.

of signatures in support of the petition," two million signatures were obtained and many telegrams were addressed to Congress.[67]

In spite of petitions by clergy and laymen, the Calles regime was not to be deterred from imposing further restrictions on public worship. As announced by the President in his address to Congress on September 1, steps were taken to formulate a law designed to implement further the provisions of Article 130 of the Constitution. Another measure initiated by the President provided for imposing a limitation on the number of priests allowed to function in the Federal District and in the Federal Territories. While the Constitution empowers each state legislature to limit the number of clergymen functioning within the boundaries of a state, the national Congress exercises jurisdiction over this matter within the Federal District and the Federal Territories of Quintana Roo, Baja California del Norte, and Baja California del Sur.

On October 16 the administration's plan for limiting the number of priests in the area of the national capital and within the territories was made public.[68] Subsequently, the project was brought before the Chamber of Deputies on November 24. Under the terms of the proposed legislation, it was assumed that a ratio of 1 clergyman per 6,000 inhabitants would be adequate for the needs of the people. Thus, a maximum of 90

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[67]Ruis Facius, México Cristero, p. 102.

[68]Mecham, op. cit., p. 492.

was established for the Federal District, 6 for Baja California del Norte, 8 for Baja California del Sur, and 3 for Quintana Roo.[69] More detailed was the proposed Article 130 Regulating Law which was debated in the Chamber of Deputies on November 24 and 25. Incorporating many regulations previously enacted, the measure was designed to impose greater restrictions on the clergy. For example, it defined marriage as a civil contract and forbade members of the clergy to perform a wedding ceremony unless the parties first presented certificates indicating that they had been married by the civil authority. Also, religious hierarchies were not recognized, members of the clergy receiving donations other than money were required to report such gifts to public authorities, and clergymen were considered as being members of a profession subject to government regulation as in the case of secular professions. Only native born Mexican citizens could function as ministers of religion, except in the case of clergymen serving non-Spanish-speaking foreign colonies. In regard to this situation, however, special dispensation was required from the Department of Gobernacion; and such foreign colonies were under the obligation to train a native Mexican to minister to their religious needs within a maximum period of six years.[70] After a lengthy debate on

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[69]Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados, 32d Leg., November 24, 1926, p. 13.

[70]See ibid., pp. 14-17.

November 25, the Chamber of Deputies passed the proposal by an overwhelming vote, with 148 out of 163 deputies voting for it.[71] Despite a strong protest incorporated in a memorandum submitted by the Executive Committee of the Mexican Episcopacy,[72] the measure was quickly passed by the Senate, promulgated on January 18, 1927, and put in force on February 2 of that year.[73]

Passage and promulation of the Article 130 Regulating Law marked an important milestone in the development of the Mexican Church-State conflict. Ten years after adoption of the Constitution of 1917, its more significant anti-clerical provisions had been put in force through Presidential initiative and Congressional action. The Regulating Law, together with other legislative measures that had been adopted during preceding months of the Calles administration, presented militant Mexican Catholics with a situation which they felt could be resolved only through use of force. Some of the faithful had taken up arms even before the end of 1926; many others were to follow this course at the beginning of 1927. Thus, the nation had drifted from bitter political strife to armed insurrection.

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[71]For the debate on this measure, see Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados, 32d Leg., November 25, 1926, pp. 4-21.

[72]For the text of this detailed episcopal document addressed to the Senate and dated December 28, 1925, see Lara y Torres, op. cit., pp. 499-555.

[73]Diario Oficial, January 18, 1927, pp. 1-4.

CHAPTER III

ARMED INSURRECTION

In view of the failures of the economic boycott, of the clerical strike, and of petitions for constitutional reform, militant Catholics concluded that the only way to defend their interests was through resort to arms. Since such action was fraught with great danger, ecclesiastical authorities were careful not to appear to be responsible for the rebellion of the faithful. However, a careful examination of events indicates that the clergy bore a great responsibility for the rebellious activities of Mexican Catholics. When laymen proposed to defend what they called their social and religious rights, the Episcopacy did not seek to stop them. Members of the ACJM, backed by the League, toured the country and spoke in churches where they called the masses to passive resistance at first, and later to armed revolt.[1]

Role of the Catholic Episcopacy

By the end of the summer of 1926, an insurrection seemed imminent. Apparently convinced that further negotiations with the government would have little chance of success,

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[1]Rius Facius, México Cristero, pp. 71-72.

and influenced by the League's increasing agitation for use of force, the Mexican Episcopacy sent a committee of bishops to Rome for the purpose of securing Papal approval for a resort to arms. Composed of Monsignors José María González y Valencia, Emeterio Valverde y Téllez, and Jenaro Méndez del Río, the committee left Mexico on September 19 and arrived in Rome on October 27. When the Pope received the Mexican prelates, he informed them that an encyclical was to be written on religious persecution in their country. As for the attitude of the Vatican in regard to armed conflict, the Pope was very clear when he stated: "We cannot remain impartial, we must always be on the side of justice."[2] Nevertheless, when Secretary of State Gasparri was asked if Church funds should be used to support an insurrection, he advised the committee that only money not designated for the performance of masses and other rites should be utilized. But he added that if he were a Mexican bishop, he would sell his jewelry to help the cause.[3]

The encyclical promised by the Pope was made public on November 18. Entitled "Concerning the Calamitous Conditions of the Catholic Religion in Mexico" and referred to as Inquis afflictisque, the Papal pronouncement condemned "the Mexican government's implacable hatred against religion" as manifested in its evil and oppressive restrictions. Referring to

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[2]Quoted in ibid., p. 160.

[3]Ibid., p. 162.

the refusal of the Calles regime to heed the protests and petitions of the Church, the Pope concluded:

> Nothing more remains, venerable brothers, but that we ask and implore of Our Lady and Celestial Patroness of the Mexican Nation, Santa Maria de Guadalupe, that pardoning the injuries committed against her, she may deign to grant to her people the return of peace and harmony; but if as a result of the mysterious design of God that greatly desired day is far off, that She shall wish to comfort the hearts of the faithful Mexicans and to strengthen them so that they may continue struggling on behalf of their freedom to profess the [Catholic] Religion.[4]

Although the Pope did not exhort Mexican Catholics to rebel against the government, it is significant that he took pains to praise those Catholic lay organizations that were most militant in their opposition to the government. The Pontiff asserted:

> With most singular praise we pay tribute to the Catholic associations that in the present conflict maintain themselves as an auxiliary militia on the flank of the Clergy. . . . And this is true of all, but we wish to say something about the principal associations so that each one of them may know that it is vehemently approved and praised by the Vicar of Jesus Christ.
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> . . . we refer also to the National Defense League of Religious Liberty, which was finally instituted when it appeared clearer than the sun that an immense accumulation of evils menaced Catholic life. Having extended itself throughout the Republic, its members work harmoniously and asssiduously with the end of directing and instructing all Catholics to oppose their adversaries with a most solid and united front.

And concerning the work of the Union of Catholic Women and the ACJM, the Pope commented: "In effect, both of these associations second and support, and make others second and support,

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[4]For this portion of the encyclical, see Blanco Gil, op. cit., p. 421.

in all parts the initiative taken by the cited National Defense League of Religious Liberty."[5]

Only eight days after publication of Inquis afflictisque, a memorable meeting took place on the afternoon of November 26 when sixteen members of the Episcopacy conferred in Mexico City with League representatives Lic. Rafael Ceniceros y Villarreal, Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, y Luis G. Bustos. On this occasion the Episcopacy was presented with the League's "Memorial" requesting positive support which would consist of Episcopal action designed to influence public opinion to accept armed rebellion as "lawful, laudable, meritorius, and legitimate." Also, the "Memorial" asked for appointment of military chaplains to serve with rebel forces according to canon law; and it requested that the prelates should encourage rich Catholics to make financial contributions to the Cristero cause.[6]

After studying the "Memorial," on November 30 Archbishop Ruiz y Flores and Bishop Díaz y Barreto presented the Episcopacy's reply to representatives of the Directing Committee of the League. While recognizing the legitimacy of the revolt, the Episcopacy was not prepared to undertake the task of soliciting financial support for the struggle from the wealthy. In regard to the matter of military chaplains,

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[5]This part of the encyclical is quoted in Palomar y Vizcarra, op. cit., pp. 149-159.

[6]The "Memorial" is printed in Olivera Sedano, op. cit., p. 133.

the League representatives were informed that individual priests desiring to minister to the Cristero forces in the field could seek permission from their bishops.[7]

Activities of Catholic Lay Leaders

Feeling that they had received significant encouragement from the Episcopacy, the Directing Committee of the League proceeded to choose a Supreme Chief to provide leadership for the movement. For this important post, René Capistrán Garza, President of the ACJM, was selected. Furthermore, a program of action was prepared by the Directing Committee with the assistance of Alfredo Méndez Medina and Rafael Martínez del Campo, both of whom were Jesuit priests. The basic points of the program called for freedom of religion and conscience, independence for both Church and State, freedom of education, political liberty, freedom of the press, freedom of association, guarantees for the working man, guarantees for national and foreign capital, prohibition of ex post facto legislation, respect for private property, just distribution of land to agricultural communities, and creation of small, privately owned farms. Also, the fundamental laws of the nation were attacked, a general political reorganization was offered, and a new set of basic laws was

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[7]For accounts of this meeting, see ibid., pp. 134-137; Carreño, op. cit., pp. 92-106; Rius Facius, México Cristero, pp. 153-155; and James W. and Edna M. Wilkie, Interviews with Lic. Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, Oral History Center for Latin America, Mexico City, 1964.

promised which would be based on selected portions of the 1857 and 1917 Constitutions. With slight modifications, this program was made known to the public in Captistrán Garza's "Manifiesto to the Nation," which was proclaimed in January, 1927.[8]

On August 15, more than three months before the Episcopacy gave its blessings to the League's activities, the first skirmish between government and Cristero forces took place at Chalchihuites, Zacatecas. Shortly thereafter, the revolt had spread to other villages; but during the first days of September the Cristeros were dispersed by a contingent of soldiers commanded by General Eulogio Ortíz. The next outbreak of Cristero activity took place in Guanajuato, where on September 28 a band of rebels lead by Luis Navarro Origel took the city of Pénjamo. On the following day Navarro Origel's force was defeated in skirmishes at Cueramo and Barajas; subsequently, he withdrew to the hills of northeastern Michoacán where he continued to wage guerilla warfare. José Trinidad Mora raised the Cristero standard at Bayacora, Durango, on September 29. Leading some two hundred poorly equipped and badly organized men, Mora was able to continue operations in that state for the remainder of the year in spite of strong opposition from government forces. Then on November 26, the day on which League representatives presented their "Memorial" requesting support from the Mexican

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[8]See Rius Facius, Mexico Cristero, pp. 163-166; and Barba González, op. cit., pp. 137-140.

Episcopacy, a band of fifty-seven Cristeros under the command of Herminio Sánchez were engaged by a much larger number of federal troops at Las Atargeas, Zacatecas. As a result of this combat, Sánchez was slain and both sides suffered heavy losses.[9]

At the time that he was appointed as Supreme Chief of the rebel movement, Capistrán Garza was in the United States. After crossing the border on September 7, he attempted to enlist the services of former Mexican army generals who had been forced into exile as a result of their participation on the side of De la Huerta in the unsuccessful 1923 revolt. Also, he was seeking financial assistance from American Catholic bishops.[10] Despite credentials issued by the Directing Committee of the League, which authorized him to represent the organization in the United States "before the Catholic hierarchy and before any association or private person of that country," together with a letter of introduction signed by Archbishop Mora y del Río which presented him to prelates of the American hierarchy as "our much beloved son,"[11] Capistrán Garza proved unsuccessful in achieving his objectives.

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[9]For an account of these early engagements, see Olivera Sedano, op. cit., pp. 140-141, 152-155, 165-166.

[10]Rius Facius, México Cristero, pp. 137-138.

[11]The texts of these letters of introduction are printed in ibid., pp. 138-139. Also printed is a letter of introduction from the Archbishop of Mexico to James A. Flaherty of New Haven, Connecticut, a prominent figure among leaders of the Knights of Columbus. See ibid., p. 138.

However, he sent optimistic reports concerning the possibilities of obtaining help from American Catholics and even from the United States government. Although his "Manifesto to the Nation" was not accompanied by any military achievements on his own part, it did provoke armed uprisings throughout the central and west-central areas of Mexico.[12] Early in May, 1927, Capistrán Garza was removed by the Directing Committee from his post as Supreme Chief of the League and of the armed revolt of Mexican Catholics.[13]

The most dynamic and influential lay leader within the Cristero movement was Anacleto González Flores, a young Guadalajara lawyer with unusual abilities as a writer and speaker.[14] In the Church-State struggle he proved his talents as an agitator, propagandist, and organizer. Called by his friends, "Master Anacleto," he was a bitter foe of the Revolution. While serving as editor of Catholic newspapers (El País in Mexico City, Gladium and El Heraldo in Guadalajara), he lashed the consciences of his readers with challenges to resist the government and its attempts to implement the Constitution of 1917, which he described as "blind and wild

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[12]For an account of these uprisings at the end of 1926 and the beginning of 1927, see Olivera Sedano, op. cit., pp. 157-180. Map no. 2, bound between pp. 178 and 179, pinpoints the places where the uprisings took place.

[13]Rius Facius, México Cristero, p. 239.

[14]See Anacleto González Flores, Ensayos--Discursos (2d ed.; México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1967), passim.

radicalism."[15] His article entitled "The Drunkenness of the Revolution" is a vivid example of his inflamatory literary ability. Describing the Revolution and the succeeding Revolutionary governments as "an orgy of savages," he charged that the Revolutionary regime "suffers from drunkenness, from despotism, and has touched the limits that Caligula reached on the day when he made his horse a senator and decreed that it be honored as a god."[16]

Although "Master Anacleto" emphasized the importance of non-violent political action, he spoke frequently of crusades and the necessity of organizing for action. In the minds of his enraptured readers and listeners, such words led to visions of armed revolt. In much of his writing and in many of his speeches, he emphasized the power of martyrdom;[17] in fact, he achieved this end for himself. With the outbreak of widespread armed combat, he was forced to go into hiding because of his connections with the League and the ACJM; but on April 1, 1927, he was arrested, and on the following day was killed by his captors after prolonged and brutal torture.[18]

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[15]Anacleto González Flores, La Cuestión Religiosa en Jalisco: Breve Estudio Filosófico-Histórico de la Persecución de los Católicos en Jalisco (2d ed.; México, D.F.: Editorial Luz, 1954), p. 51.

[16]Anacleto González Flores, El Plebiscito de los Mártires (México, D.F.: Comité Central de la ACJM, 1961), p. 199.

[17]See Antonio Gómez Robredo, Anacleto González Flores, El Maestro (2d ed.; México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1947), pp. 111-112.

[18] Ibid., 188-189.

Born in Guadalajara in 1880, Lic. Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra opposed the Mexican Revolutionary movement because of its anti-clerical orientation. In 1915 he was charged with subversive activity and his expulsion from the Jalisco-Colima area was ordered by General J. Ramos Cuadros. Notwithstanding great danger to his life, Vizcarra did not leave but hid in the home of a priest for many months. A strong foe of secular education, he was a co-founder of the Catholic Party and an active promoter of the ACJM. During the Calles era he participated in organizing the League, and became its first vice-president. While he did not participate in armed combat, Palomar was personally involved in negotiations with the hierarchy and the Papacy; also, he had a part in naming and exercising political direction over Cristero commanders in the field.[19]

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[19]James W. and Edna M. Wilkie, Interviews with Palomar y Vizcarra. Still a staunch foe of the Revolution and a champion of the lost cause of the Cristeros, Palomar y Vizcarra continues to hope for constitutional reform and a Catholic Mexico. Perhaps even more revealing than his tape-recorded oral history interview with the Wilkies is his letter of July 31, 1962, addressed to Mrs. John F. Kennedy shortly after the visit of President Kennedy and his wife to Mexico. In this letter he describes a suffering Catholic Church that has been suppressed for decades by a succession of revolutionary governments; and he implores Mrs. Kennedy to use her influence with her husband to stop all economic assistance to Mexico, because, as he explains, as long as the Mexican Constitution contains the hated anti-Church articles, all help will be used "to consolidate and give greater increase to pro-Soviet activities." (A copy of this letter is in the possession of Professor Lyle C. Brown, Baylor University.)

Catholic Organizations Involved in the Struggle

Popularly known by the initials ACJM, the Association of Mexican Catholic Youth was founded under the direction of Father Bernardo Bergoend on August 12, 1913.[20] The objective of this organization, as expressed in its constitution, was "none other than the coordination of the living force of Mexican Catholic youth for the purpose of restoring Christian social order in Mexico."[21] In later years the ACJM became the most militant Catholic youth organization in the country as it supported the League and the clergy in political activities designed to halt government interference in religious affairs. In view of the militancy of this organization, it is not surprising that the first armed uprisings usually occurred at places where the ACJM had previously established a regional or local center of operations. In fact, in many cases these insurrections were headed by adventuresome and idealistic ACJM members--most of whom had been reared in Catholic homes and had attended Catholic schools, and some of whom had been trained in Catholic seminaries.[22] In addition to recruiting

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[20]For an excellent and fully-documented account of the establishment and development of this organization, see Antonio Rius Facius, De Don Porfirio a Plutarco, Historia de la ACJM, pp. 7-37.

[21]Quoted in Antonio Rius Facius, La Juventud Católica y la Revolución Mejicana, 1910-1925 (México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1963), p. 44.

[22]Olivera Sedano, op. cit., pp. 179-180.

personnel for the Cristero cause, the ACJM served as the strong right arm of the League by transporting and distributing food, ammunition, and other necessary items to rebel troops; also, its members actively engaged in disseminating anti-government propaganda materials. In view of their role in the conflict, it is not surprising that members of the organization were often arrested and imprisoned or executed.[23]

Organized by Anacleto González Flores, the Popular Union came into existence as a result of a series of lectures delivered in Guadalajara in 1925 by Father Neck, a German priest. In these lectures, Father Neck described the struggle between Bismark and the German Catholic minority. Mexican Catholics were told that their situation under Calles was similar to that of the German Catholics, who had suffered under Protestant persecution. Through the pages of Gladium, organ of the Popular Union, the anti-government propaganda of "Master Anacleto" reached as many as 100,000 readers per week. Although the leadership of the Popular Union came from the ranks of the ACJM, there were no restrictions as to age or sex of its members. As a civic action group, the organization made a special effort to combat secular and anti-religious influences in public schools. Lead by a five-member Directory at the national level, the Popular Union had a detailed pattern of organization with zone, parish, and block units at the

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[23]Examples of detailed descriptions of ACJM activities are found in Navarrete, op. cit., pp. 66-75; and "J. Mercedes Anguiano," David, II (March 22, 1956), 323-326.

lower levels. In recognition of his meritorious work in founding this Catholic organization, "Master Anacleto" was given the "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice" award by Pope Pius XI in May, 1925. With the outbreak of armed conflict, civic action gave way to military force and many members of the Popular Union became involved in the conflict as soldiers or were employed in supply and support activities.[24]

The Union of Mexican Catholics, usually referred to as the "U," was a secret organization that included many members of other Catholic organizations. First organized in the states of Michoacan and Jalisco in 1920, the "U" was committed to what was referred to as "the restoration of the reign of Christ in our Motherland."[25] Various priests and militant laymen, such as Anacleto González Flores, became members of this elite organization. During the period of the armed revolt, friction developed between "U" members and non-members. Finally, at the end of the Cristero revolt the "U" was dissolved by order of the Holy See. Apparently this papal action was taken because of opposition from some members of the organization to the settlement agreed to by the government and the Episcopacy.[26]

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[24]Rius Facius, La Juventud Católica y la Revolución Mejicana, pp. 292-294; Navarrete, op. cit., pp. 87-91.

[25]Jesús Degollado Guizar, Memorias de Jesús Degollado Guizar, Ultimo General en Jefe del Ejército Cristero (México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1957), p. 12.

[26]See ibid., pp. 11-12; and Spectator [Father Enrique Ochoa], Los Cristeros del Volcán de Colima: Escenas de la Lucha por la Libertad Religiosa en México, 1926-1929 (2d ed.; México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1961), II, 11-26.

The National Defense League of Religious Liberty, which was praised so strongly in the encyclical Iniquis afflictisque, came into existence on March 14, 1925, under the original title of National Religious Defense League. Eight years earlier, Father Bernardo Bergoend had presented to the Mexican Episcopacy a plan to organize a Civic League of Religious Defense for the purpose of mobilizing Catholic laymen for political action. Largely because of opposition from Mons. Francisco Orozco y Jiménez, the plan was not approved. However, at the beginning of the Church-State conflict under the Calles administration, Father Bergoend's plan was put into effect as a result of the initiative taken by three militant Catholic laymen: Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, Luis G. Bustos, and René Capistrán Garza. In a manifesto explaining the reason for the organization and outlining its program, the assertion was made that "now is the time for Mexican Catholics to unite for the defense of the [Catholic] Religion and the Fatherland." After condemning the anti-clerical provisions of the Constitution, the manifesto declared:

> It is necessary, then, that we unite, concentrating all of our strength so that at the proper time and all together we can make an energetic, tenacious, supreme, and irresistible effort which once and for all will uproot from the Constitution all of its injustices, whatever they may be, and all of its tyrannies, regardless of from whence they may come.
>
> We have been called to combat. Unjust and tyrannical persecutions have forced us. We regret war, but our outraged dignity and our persecuted faith oblige us to rally to the defense on the same field where the attack is being launched.

> This is the only way in which we may have liberty and justice; and for precisely this reason the National League of Religious Defense is founded.

Declaring that the League was "an association of all true Mexican Catholics," the manifesto insisted that "the Catholic Hierarchy will have nothing to do with its organization, its government, or its action." However, this statement was qualified with the following explanation:

> This is not to say that this League is in opposition to the Ecclesiastical Authority and that it wishes to function with complete independence of the counsel and of the superior direction of this same authority; but, taking upon itself all the responsibility of its acts, it seeks simply to operate with reasonable freedom. (Enc. Il fermo Proposito of Pius X) The League knows the principles and orientations of the Holy See in civic matters; and it makes them its own; and it shall never depart from them in the smallest part.

Emphasizing that "the end of the League is . . . to detain the enemy and to reconquer religious liberty and other liberties derived from it," the manifesto asserted: "It has a Program that is neither a war cry nor a purposeless demand; it is only a synthesis of just and necessary vindications to which the Mexicans have a right in order to live as Catholics and which nobody in a democratic Republic can deny." More briefly put, the document's demands were reduced to the following four points:

1. Complete liberty of education:
2. Civil rights for Catholic citizens;
3. Civil rights for the Church;
4. Civil rights for Catholic workers.

In conclusion, the manifesto declared, "The Legal Means which the League shall use in order to make these rights respected

will be constitutional means and those means required by the public good."[27] According to one of the League's founders, the concluding statement, which refers to use of means "reguired by the public good," was of special significance because "in this manner the organization did not tie its hands." In other words, in the face of government persecution, even Catholic use of force and violence could be interpreted as a legitimate means for meeting the requirements of "the public good."[28]

By the end of November, 1926, at a time when some Cristero groups were already in the field, the League had been publicly praised by the Pope and had been assured by the Mexican Episcopacy that resort to arms would be considered legitimate. Therefore, the League took final steps to mobilize all Catholic lay organizations for the impending armed struggle against the Calles regime.[29] Reliable statistics concerning the size of the League's membership are not available. One Catholic writer has stated that by August 1, 1926, the League had extended its organization into all parts of Mexico and that more than 300,000 members were enrolled in

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[27]The text of the manifesto is printed in Palomar y Vizcarra, op. cit., pp. 144-147.

[28]Ibid., p. 147.

[29]For an account of the relationship between the Popular Union and the League on the eve of the revolt, see Navarrete, op. cit., pp. 119-125; and for an account of relations between the ACJM and the League, see Rius Facius, De Don Porfirio a Plutarco, pp. 305-318.

Mexico City alone.[30] Regardless of what the membership was, certainly only a small percentage took part in the actual fighting; since, in all probability, there were never more than 20,000 Cristeros in the field at any time between 1926 and 1929.[31] During this particular era, Mexico's total population amounted to roughly 16,000,000.[32] The League did not restrict its activities to Mexico. For the purpose of obtaining support for the Cristero cause in Europe, the International Union of Honorary Members of the League was organized. Another European group was founded by Antonio Lopez Ortega and titled International Union of Friends of the League, commonly referred to as VITA.[33]

The importance of the League in preparing the way for rebellion, in disseminating propaganda (handbills, pamphlets, stickers, and even balloons carrying anti-government statements), and in supplying and equipping guerrilla bands, cannot be underemphasized. Most important of all, however, was the role that the League played as an intermediate

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[30] Moctezuma, op. cit., II, 379.

[31] See Wilkie, "The Meaning of the Cristero Religious War," p. 230.

[32] Charles C. Cumberland, Mexico, The Struggle for Modernity (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 367. This rough estimate is derived from census totals of 14,334,000 for 1921 and 16,553,000 for 1930.

[33] Blanco Gil, El Clamor de la Sangre, p. 16. See also, "Organización Mundial Filial de la Liga N.D. de la L. Religosa," David, I (August, 1952), 6.

link between the Vatican and the Episcopacy, on one hand, and the Cristero troops in the field, on the other hand. Without assuming responsibility for directing the rebellion against the Mexican government, the Catholic hierarchy was able to exercise a controlling influence over Catholic laymen, both combatants and non-combatants, who were directly involved.

Guerrilla Warfare

Although small skirmishes between rebelling Catholics and government forces took place in Zacatecas during August, 1926, the origin of the Cristero Rebellion is commonly traced to the taking of the town of Pénjamo in the state of Guanajuato. Luis Navarro Origel lead the attack and has come to be known as the "First Cristero." Educated in the Conciliar Seminary at Morelia, Navarro was greatly impressed by the writings of the Spanish mystics, Santa Teresa de Jesús and San Juan de la Cruz. In his correspondence he mentioned frequently the possibility of being shot and dying for Christ.[34]

After entering public life at an early age, he was elected as mayor of Pénjamo while only twenty-four years old. However, he soon abandoned that office at about the same time that he participated in founding a unit of the ACJM in that city. Accompanied by three brothers (Jesús, Manuel, and Ignacio) and a few friends, Navarro took Pénjamo in a surprise attack on September 29, 1926; however, this victory was short-lived

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[34]See Martin Chowell [Alfonso Trueba], Luis Navarro Origel, El Primer Cristero (México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1959), pp. 19-26, 92-109.

because federal forces expelled the rebels on the following day. Subsequently, Navarro retreated into Michoacán where he allied himself with two notorious bandits, Serapio Cifuentes and "El Perro" Ibáñez. For a period of two years, until killed in battle on August 10, 1928, the former mayor of Pénjamo succeeded in inflicting heavy casualties on Mexican army forces in the Michoacán-Guanajuato area. Most of his troops were peasants, who could be depended upon for service for several months each year, but who often slipped away to their fields during the rainy season to plant crops.[35]

Until the last days of the rebellion, the most secure stronghold of the Cristeros was the Colima volcano area which included not only the state of Colima but also portions of western Michoacán and Jalisco. Lead by Dionisio Eduardo Ochoa, Rafaél G. Sánchez, and Antonio C. Vargas, guerrilla bands engaged federal forces in over two hundred skirmishes from January, 1926, to July, 1929. Familiar with the mountainous terrain, the Cristeros of the volcano region consistently succeeded in harrassing larger bodies of government troops and in raiding agrarian settlements where the people were loyal to the Calles regime. Unfortunately, objective accounts of these operations have yet to be written. In dealing with this subject, Catholic writers have tended to glorify the

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[35]See ibid., pp. 86-91, 115-149.

Cristeros and to exaggerate the losses of government forces; likewise, pro-government authors go to the opposite extreme.[36]

Contrary to the picture that is presented by some writers, Cristero soldiers were not always idealists or fanatics motivated by a religious zeal. Many were unsophisticated country boys who were skillfully recruited by parrish priests or by laymen representing the League, the ACJM, or some other Catholic group. Others were discontented peasants who had not shared in the benefits of the government's land reform program. Although few men of wealth were to be found in the Cristero ranks, some owners of large rural estates took up arms to defend their properties from plunder by Mexican army units. On occasion, unscrupulous army officers charged both merchants and land owners with Cristero activity merely to provide an excuse for seizing merchandise and grain or livestock, or for extorting payments of money as the price for escaping death before a firing squad. At the same time, former

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[36]For an account that is sympathetic toward the Cristero cause, see Spectator, op. cit., passim.; a rabidly anti-Cristero description is found in Gen. Cristóbal Rodríguez, La Iglesia Católica y la Rebelión Cristera en México, 1926-1929 (México, D.F.: Editorial "La Voz de Juarez," 1960), passim; and in his Cristeros contra Cristianos (México, D.F.: Editorial "Revolución," 1967), passim. Other violently anti-Catholic works by this author include La Influencia del Clero Romano en la América: La Cuestión de México (México, D.F.: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1931); Cauterios y Látigos (Jalapa, Ver.: Talleres Gráficos del Gobierno del Estado, 1933); "Banderillas de Fuego," Libro de Doctrina Desfanatizante (Tepic, Nay.: Talleres Gráficos del Estado, 1938); Los Maderos de San Juan: ¡Mujer, Confiésate y Verás! (México, D.F.: Editorial "La Fraternal," 1956).

bandit elements who were recruited to serve the Cristero cause often continued to practice the crimes to which they had been accustomed. Frequently chosen as targets for Cristero raids were villages to which the Calles regime had donated land taken from large landholders.[37] During the latter months of the conflict, a pro-government force of 15,000 armed peasants commanded by General Saturnino Cedillo was employed successfully in waging counter-guerrilla warfare against the Cristeros.[38]

Although priests were supposed to serve the Cristero cause only with the approval of their bishops and in the capacity of chaplains, in fact, many of them were directly involved in obtaining and transporting supplies to the guerrilla bands and even leading armed groups in combat. Most Catholic writers have insisted that priests accompanying the rebels limited themselves to ministering to the spiritual needs of the troops. For example, the editor of David lists Miguel Anguiano Marquez and Enrique Ochoa as among "the

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[37]See Olivera Sedano, op. cit., pp. 211-212; Dulles, op. cit., pp. 310-311.

[38]James W. and Edna Wilkie, Interviews with Portes Gil. Former President Portes Gil insists that Gobernación files contain reliable reports and photographs describing acts of brutality committed not only by Cristero soldiers but also by priests who accompanied them. On the other hand, in his oral history interview with the Wilkies, Lic. Palomar y Vizcarra has charged that government troops committed many acts of sadism, murder, and arson; extorted large amounts of property from persons falsely accused of being rebels; and raped women of all ages--often before the very eyes of parents, brothers, and husbands.

most virtuous priests who, without carrying any arms on the battlefield, encouraged our troops and imparted the sacraments of Our Holy Church to both friends and enemies."[39] Perhaps the statement is true, but this same publication carries a photograph of Father Enrique Ochoa with a heavy cartridge belt around his waist and what appears to be a pistol strapped to his hip.[40] In another photograph, Father Miguel Anguiano Marquez appears with rifle in hand, a bandolier slung over his right shoulder, and a pistol holster at his waist;[41] also, there is a photograph of this priest with sword in hand and a pistol holster hanging from his belt.[42]

Two priests who were well known for their exploits as military leaders were Fathers J. Reyes Vega and Aristeo Pedroza,[43] both of whom participated in the bloody destruction of a train en route from Mexico City to Guadalajara on April 19, 1927. Manuel J. Aguirre, a journalist who was aboard the train, is quoted as saying that soldiers who were not killed in the fighting were captured and brought before

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[39]"Como Comprobar la Veracidad," David, I (February, 1953), 112.

[40]See "Nuestros Capellanes," David, I (May, 1954), 355.

[41]See Spectator, op. cit., II, facing p. 16.

[42]See ibid., facing p. 129.

[43]See photographs of the two armed priests in Navarrete, op. cit., facing p. 145.

Father Vega; to each prisoner the priest said, "May God forgive you, my little son," and to the executioner he said, "Burn him!"[44]

Assassination of President-Elect Obregón

Long before the end of Calles' four-year term of office, it became apparent that Obregón desired a second presidential term. Constitutional prohibitions regarding re-election were removed by making necessary amendments to Articles 82 and 83;[45] then Generals Francisco R. Serrano and Arnulfo R. Gómez, Obregón's principal opponents, were removed in the course of a short-lived rebellion which resulted in the capture and execution of both of them.[46] Subsequently, on July 1, 1928, the former president was re-elected without opposition.[47]

Catholic leaders tended to oppose Obregón even more strongly than they opposed Calles. In an editorial entitled

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[44]J. Angel Moreno Ochoa, Semblanzas Revolucionarias: Díez Años de Agitación Política en Jalisco, 1920-1930 (Guadalajara, Jal.: Talleres Linotipográficos "Berni," 1959), pp. 234-235. For the text of the League's account of this affair, see ibid., pp. 236-237. Also, a Catholic author's description of this incident is found in Rius Facius, México Cristero, pp. 245-247. Silvano Barba González, op. cit., pp. 171-176, gives a much different account based on his personal observation and testimony of witnesses.

[45]See Casasola, op. cit., III, 1792.

[46]Ibid., pp. 1818-1828.

[47]Ibid., pp. 1850-1851.

"The Blood-soaked Togas," Anacleto González Flores condemned Obregón's bid for a second term with the following words:

> He intends to make a comedy of the memories of many of the dead and of the blood and the bitterness of many of the living; but he will not succeed, because the solemn sense of this tragedy is defended by the memories of the dead and the blood shed by those living. And public opinion--as Marcus Antonius, in order to demonstrate the wrath of the multitude, could do no more than to lift the ripped clothing of Caesar--shall do no more than to lift all of the blood-soaked togas to condemn, for the hundredth time, all the comedians.[48]

Following Obregón's nomination, the Directing Committee of the League resolved to arrange for his assassination; and this course of action was concurred in by Luís Segura Vilchis, the League's Chief of Military Control. With the cooperation of Manuel Velázquez Morales, who held offices both in the League and the ACJM, Segura Vilchis drew up a plan of assassination to be carried out with the aid of two other ACJM members, Nahum Lamberto Ruíz and Juan Antonio Tirado Arias. Subsequently, on the afternoon of November 13, 1927, the assassins succeeded in throwing a bomb into an automobile carrying the presidential candidate. Obregón was slightly wounded by the explosion, but Lamberto Ruíz was mortally wounded and the others were captured. In the course of the investigations that followed, Miguel Agustín Pro, a Jesuit priest, and his brother, Humberto, were implicated in the

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[48]González Flores, El Plebiscito de los Mártires, pp. 140-141.

affair. As a result, the brothers Pro were executed along with Segura Vilchis and Tirado Arias.[49]

In 1923 Mother Concepción Acevedo y de la Llata (popularly known as Mother Conchita) founded a Capuchin convent in Mexico City. Father Pro and various ACJM members visited the convent frequently and discussed the need for opposing the government's policies regarding religion. Early in 1927 the convent was raided by Mexico City police and forced to close. Mother Conchita then moved to another location in the national capital and continued to meet with militant opponents of the government. Among those persons who visited Mother Conchita's clandestine religious center was a young drawing instructor and League member named José de León Toral. As a result of Bible study, conversations with Mother Conchita, and meditation concerning the problems of the Catholic Church, Toral became convinced that he should sacrifice his life for the cause of Christ by assassinating Obregón. Early in July, shortly after Obregón's election victory, Toral borrowed a pistol from his

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[49]For accounts by Catholic writers who deny the guilt of Father Pro, see Rius Facius, México Cristero, pp. 315-330; and Joaquín Cardoso, S.J., Los Mártires Mexicanos: El Mártirologio Católico de Nuestros Días (2d ed.; México, D.F.: Buena Prensa, 1938), pp. 363-389. See also, Alberto María Carreño, El P. Miguel Agustín Pro, S.J. (México, D.F.: Editorial Helios, 1938), passim; and Andrés Barquín y Ruíz, Luís Segura Vilchis (México, D.F.: Editorial Jus, 1967), passim. For a pro-goverment account of the affair, see Jesús Romero Flores, Anales Históricos de la Revolución Méxicana, Vol. II: La Constitución de 1917 y los Primeros Gobiernos Revolucionarios (4 vols.; México, D.F.: Libro Mex, Editores, 1960), 310-311.

cousin, Manuel Trejo. After firing a few rounds in target practice, he took the weapon to his confessor, Father José Jiménez, who placed it on an altar and blessed it as he said mass. Subsequently, on July 17 Toral went to "La Bombilla" Restaurant where Obregón was celebrating his recent election victory with a group of friends. Posing as an artist making sketches of persons attending the banquet, Toral approached the President-elect from behind and at point-blank range fired five bullets into his body. Obregón died immediately and Toral was captured.[50]

During the course of the extensive investigation and trial that followed,[51] government officials dealt even more firmly with Catholic groups. At the same time, many Catholics were inspired by the martyrdom of Father Pro, of Toral, and of those Cristeros who were slain in battle. Thus, Toral's execution on February 9, 1929, came at a time when the acuteness of the Church-State conflict had reached a new high.[52] As for members of the Mexican Catholic hierarchy, most of them were convinced that continuation of the armed conflict held little promise of achieving desired objectives.

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[50]Good accounts of Obregón's assassination are found in Casasola, op. cit., III, 1853-1861; Dulles, op. cit., pp. 362-269; and Rius Facius, México Cristero, pp. 364-373.

[51]For the text of the trial proceedings, see El Jurado de Toral y la Madre Conchita (2 vols,; México, D.F.: Alducín y de Llano, n.d.).

[52]For details concerning the execution, see Casasola, op. cit., III, 1902-1906.

There was the very real danger that the government might, in fact, embark upon a program of complete extermination of all clerical personnel and religious institutions. In this respect, it is worth noting that Mons. Miguel M. de la Mora, Bishop of San Luis Potosí, issued a statement on August 5, 1928, which disclaimed all responsibility for Toral's action and the role played by Mother Conchita. Speaking in the name of the Episcopacy, he stated: "Concerning the nun, Concepción Acevedo de la Llata, we affirm, in defense of all other members of the Mexican clergy who have suffered so much and who are so completely unassociated with this class of activity, that it is public knowledge that her brain is not normal and that there have been some cases of insanity in her family."[53] Given a long prison sentence, Mother Conchita spent several years at the Tres Marías Penitentiary where eventually she married Carlos Castro Balda, a friend of Toral who had made bombs for use in terrorist bombings of government buildings in Mexico City.[54]

Last Stages of the Armed Revolt

Throughout 1927 a high level of military activity was maintained by various Cristero bands operating in

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[53]This document is printed in part in Hernán Robleto, Obregón, Toral and la Madre Conchita (México, D. F.: Ediciones Botas, 1935), pp. 358-360.

[54]Dulles, op. cit., p 561. For her personal account, see Ma. C. Acevedo y de la Llata, Obregón: Memorias Inéditas de la Madre Conchita, ed. Armando de María y Campos (México D.F.: Libro-Mex, Eidtores, 1957).

Central and Southwestern Mexico. However, by the end of the year the rebel movement showed the weakening effects of loss of many of its more important leaders, lack of unified direction, shortages of supplies, and increased pressure from government forces. Despite these adverse conditions, there were no indications that the rebels were contemplating surrender or that federal forces could suppress the insurrection in a short period of time. According to reports found in the archives of the League, at the end of 1927 major concentrations of Cristero troops were distributed as follows: Pacific coast region of Michoacán, 7,000; Central Michoacán, 1,000; Colima, Jalisco, Nayarit, and southern Zacatecas, 10,000; northern Zacatecas, 500; Aguascalientes, 500; Guanajuato, 800; and State of Mexico, 1,500. Smaller contingents were to be found in Durango, Tlaxcala, Oaxaca, San Luis Potosí, Puebla, Morelos, Sinaloa, Hidalgo, and Guerrero.[55] Neither the sparsely populated desert regions of the North nor the Isthmus of Tehuantepèc and other areas of the South were affected by Cristero operations.

Although the rebels controlled much of the rural area of Central and Southwestern Mexico, they were unable to seize and hold urban areas. As a result, little attempt was made by the Cristeros to establish a system of civil administration. Recently, a well-known Mexican political figure has published a lengthy document which he says was

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[55]Olivera Sedano, op. cit., pp. 184-185.

proclaimed as the Cristero Constitution on January 1, 1928, and signed by no less than 5,800 rebels in the mountains of Jalisco and Michoacán.[56] Although the authenticity of this document continues to be the subject of debate in Mexican political and academic circles, another reliable document exists which describes the pattern of government that the Cristeros sought to impose in those parts of Jalisco and Zacatecas controlled by forces under the command of General Pedro Quintanar. Named by the League as Provisional Governor of Zacatecas, Col. Aurelio R. Acevedo called a convention of League representatives and military chiefs of that region. Meeting in the village of Mezquitic, Jalisco, on May 22, 1928, the delegates adopted a document entitled "General Ordinance" which was to "remain in force until the return to normality." Two priests who attended as League delegates, Pablo López and José Félix, functioned as President and Secretary of the Convention, respectively. Under the provisions of Article 2 of the General Ordinance, the Constitution of 1857 was to serve as the law of the land, subject to such modifications as had been stipulated in Capistran Garza's manifesto of January, 1927. Articles 4 and 5 stipulated that the government "recognizes the Apostolic Roman Catholic Religion as the only true faith" and "recognizes the Apostolic

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[56] See Vicente Lombardo Toledano, La Constitucion de los Cristeros (México, D.F.: Libreria Popular, 1963), pp. 57-197; also, see James W. and Edna M. Wilkie, Interviews with Lic. Vicente Lombardo Toledano, Oral History Center for Latin America, Mexico City, 1964-1965.

Roman Catholic Church as a perfect society with rights and obligations as in the case of other societies." Municipal presidents were to be named by military chiefs responsible for the area and were to be subject to direction by the League, according to Article 8. Under the terms of Article 14, each municipal president was made responsible for "establishing Catholic schools everywhere in his municipality where at least ten children of school age might be found, providing in so far as possible that they be unmixed [i.e., not co-educational]."[57]

With members of the Directing Committee of the League meeting clandestinely in Mexico City, communications with commanders in the field presented serious problems. Capistrán Garza, the Supreme Chief of the Cristero movement, had been occupied in the United States until his dismissal; and throughout 1927 and for most of 1928 there was no military leader empowered to exercise command over all rebel forces. Finally, in October, 1928, General Enrique Gorostieta y Velarde, commander of Cristero troops in Jalisco, was named by the League as "Military Chief of the Liberating Movement." Thirty-nine years of age at the time he was placed in command of all Cristero forces, Gorostieta had been educated in Mexico's Military College and had served as an officer under

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[57]For a brief description of the convention, texts of speeches delivered, and the text of the General Ordinance, see La Epopeya Cristera y la Iniciación de un Derecho Nuevo (n.p., 1938).

the Huerta government. His successes in directing Cristero operations in Jalisco had resulted in selection as commander-in-chief.[58]

Assuming his new command on October 28, General Gorostieta issued on that date a "Manifesto to the Nation" explaining that the League had seen fit to appoint a "visible chief." The bases of the Cristero program were summarized in fourteen points. Included were provisions for reestablishing the Constitution of 1857 without the Reform Laws, conferring the name "National Guard" upon Cristero military forces, and creating the office of Civil Chief of the Liberating Movement to be filled by appointment of the Directing Committee of the League with the consent of the Military Chief. In conclusion, Gorostieta declared that "victory is near" and he exhorted his followers to strive so that "on all sides and at all hours, only our war cry will be heard: Long live Christ the King! Long live the Virgin of Guadalupe! Death to the bad Government!"[59]

As a result of the assassination of President-elect Obregón, it was the constitutional responsibility of the Mexican Congress to name a Provisional President who would hold office until another national election could be conducted.

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[58]Olivera Sedano, op. cit., pp. 193-196; Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra, "Gorostieta," David, II (October, 1955), 233-235.

[59]The text of the manifesto is printed in González Ramírez (ed.), Planes Políticos, pp. 280-287.

Thus, on September 25, 1938, the Senate and Chamber of Deputies chose Emilio Portes Gil, former Secretary of Gobernación, to become the nation's Chief Executive. Also on that day the Congress fixed November 20, 1929, as the date for holding a national election to choose a President to fill out the remainder of Obregón's term.[60]

Although most Mexicans assumed that the election would be conducted in such a way as to guarantee victory for a candidate picked by Calles, on November 10, 1928, Lic. José Vasconcelos announced his candidacy. Speaking at the border town of Nogales, Sonora, Vasconcelos voiced his opposition to the Calles regime and called for an end to the religious strife, "which for years has been tearing out the intestines of the fatherland. . . ." He added, "to feel hatreds for questions of supernatural creeds, or to impose laws that provoke rebellions for reasons of worship, is something so unusual, so sterile and anti-social, that now in none of the civilized nations of the earth--or in the uncivilized--are questions that transcend human reason itself carried to the extreme of bloodshed. . . ."[61] On that same day he commented that "fanaticism is combatted with books, not with machine guns."[62]

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[60]Dulles, op. cit., p. 393.

[61]Portions of this speech are printed in Casasola, op. cit., III, 1916-1917.

[62]Alfonso Tarcena, Mi Vida en el Vértigo de la Revolución Mexicana (México, D.F.: Ediciones Botas, 1936), p. 607.

In the course of his campaign, Vasconcelos arrived at Guadalajara on January 27, 1929. He reports that shortly thereafter he was sought out by two men carrying credentials issued by General Gorostieta and bearing an offer of asylum with Cristero forces in the region of Los Altos. According to Vasconcelos, he told the Cristero representatives that he expected to take to the battlefield against the Calles regime but that he would wait until after the election when he could claim to be President-elect. Despite the conviction that the government would not allow him to gain the Presidency by peaceful means, Vasconcelos felt certain that the nation would come to his support once he raised the standard of revolt. Thus, he writes that he told Gorostieta's men, "Tell the general that after the elections I shall escape toward his camp."[63] However, before the election Gorostieta had been killed and the Cristero revolt had ended.

On March 1, 1929, supporters of former President Calles gathered at Querétaro to organize a new political party and to nominate a presidential candidate. Consequently, the Mexican Revolutionary Party came into existence, and on March 3, Pascual Ortiz Rubio was nominated. That same day news reached

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[63]José Vasconcelos, El Proconsulado (3d ed.; México, D.F.: Ediciones Botas, 1946), p. 116. In another of his autobiographical works, Vasconcelos wrote: "The most distinguished of all the rebel chiefs, Gen. Gorostieta, . . . had promised his support. . . ." See La Flama: Los de Arriba en la Revolución, Historia y Tragedia (México, D.F.: Compañía Editorial Continental, 1959), p. 196.

Querétaro that General Jesús M. Aguirre had rebelled in Veracruz. Also at that time, it became known that a group of generals (all of whom had been close associates of Obregón) had signed the Plan of Hermosillo proclaiming themselves in revolt and recognizing General José Gonzalo Escobar as Supreme Chief of the movement. Commanding almost 30,000 men--or about a quarter of the troops in the army, including most of those forces in the northern part of the country--it was apparent that an alliance between these elements and the Cristeros would pose a real threat to Portes Gil's government.[64] In fact, some two weeks before the Plan of Hermosillo was issued, persons connected with the League's Directing Committee met with General Escobar and drew up a pact which later was approved by General Gorostieta.[65] The Plan of Hermosillo denounced Calles as "the Jew of the Revolution" and charged him with planning to impose his puppet in the Presidency.

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[64] Dulles, op. cit., pp. 427-432, 442.

[65] Rius Facius, México Cristero, p. 413. Another account of the Escobar revolt indicates that direct negotiations between Escobar and Gorostieta took place in Mexico City. Ricardo Topete, brother of General Fausto Topete who was also a signer of the Plan of Hermosillo, made the following statement to José C. Valades, publisher of La Prensa of San Antonio, Texas: "The thing improved when Fausto, my brother, won over General Enrique Gorostieta. The Cristeros were very suspicious, but since Fausto is a strong Catholic, it seems that they believed him; consequently, Gorostieta went to Mexico City to talk with General José Gonzalo Escobar, who named him Chief of the Army Corps of Central Mexico." Published in La Prensa, August 11, 1929, this account is printed in Froylán C. Manjarrez, La Jornada Institucional, Part II: La Crisis de la Violencia (México, D.F.: Talleres Gráficos Editorial, 1930), p. lix.

Also, for the purpose of appealing to Cristero elements for support, the Plan condemned "the massacre of fellow countrymen in the states of Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacán for the simple reason that they claim the sacred right in which liberty of conscience is based."[66]

Shortly after the Plan of Hermosillo was proclaimed, Gorostieta issued Circular Order No. 5 explaining to his forces the reasons why he had accepted the pact with Escobar. First, he pointed out that the agreement guaranteed full freedom of religion and of education; and, second, it recognized the National Guard as a military entity.[67] To strengthen his appeal to the Cristeros, on March 12 General Escobar issued a decree abolishing both the Article 130 Regulating Law and the Calles Law.[68] That this decree had an immediate effect is indicated by a March 13 message from General Francisco R. Manzo to Escobar, which stated: "Numerous groups previously taking up arms against the Calles regime, and for reasons of circumstances, unfurling the religious flag, have adhered to the revolution, accepting the fact that the revolutionary movement is essentially secular and will restore with all its purity the basic principles of liberalism which are freedom of conscience, freedom of worship, and the secular

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[66]For the text of the Plan of Sonora, see González Ramírez (ed.), Planes Políticos, pp. 295-300.

[67]A portion of the text of Circular Order No. 5 is printed in Rius Facius, op. cit., pp. 413-414.

[68]See Escobar's press release of March 12, 1929, printed in Manjarrez, op. cit., pp. xliii-xliv.

state--principles violated by the reactionary Calles regime which, in fact, has converted itself into a religious government by intervening directly in the internal affairs of religious sects."[69]

Since both Vasconcelos and the Plan of Hermosillo rebels had been closely associated with Obregón, it appears that Gorostieta and the League must have dealt with them out of sheer desperation. Because of its armed strength, the Escobar movement held forth the promise of badly needed military assistance; however, under the personal direction of Calles, who was named by Portes Gil as Secretary of Defense at the outbreak of the revolt, columns of loyal troops under the command of General Lázaro Cárdenas and General Juan Andreu Almazán soon smashed the rebel forces. By the beginning of May the revolt had been crushed.[70] At the same time that Escobar's units were being routed, early in April a force of 15,000 irregular armed peasants was sent to Jalisco under the command of General Saturnino Cedillo. Using counter-guerrilla tactics, Cedillo's men scored several successes over Gorostieta's hard-pressed Cristeros in the

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[69]This telegram is printed in ibid., p. xxxvi. Another of Escobar's generals did not find the Cristeros to be reliable allies. For an account of General Juan Gualberto Amaya's dealings with Colonel Aurelio R. Acevedo during the period of March 11-13, 1929, see Amaya's Los Gobiernos de Obregón, Calles y Regimenes "Peleles" Derivados del Callismo (México, D.F.: n.p., 1947), pp. 256-258, 262-264.

[70]See Dulles, op. cit., pp. 444-458; and Manjarrez, op. cit., passim.

region of Los Altos.[71] The most important blow was struck on June 2 when a detachment of Cedillo's troops engaged a small group of rebels at El Valle ranch about eighteen miles from Atotonilco. As a result of this skirmish, General Gorostieta was killed.[72]

With the death of Gorostieta, on June 4 the Directing Committee of the League appointed General Jesús Degollado Guízar as Supreme Chief of the National Guard.[73] Three days later the new Cristero commander issued his "Manifesto to the Nation" in which he declared: "I pick up the flag of Christ the King and I swear, before the corpse of General Gorostieta, to continue the struggle until I see our essential liberties won or until I perish in it."[74]

General Degollado's struggle was destined to end within less than three weeks. He did not win and he did not perish. Although hard-pressed by government forces, his guerrilla bands still operated in many states; however, the Vatican and the Episcopacy had decided that there was

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[71]For an account of the Cristero defeat at Tepatitlán on April 19, see portions of Cedillo' report to Secretary of War Calles printed in Manjarrez, op. cit., pp. 137-139. Among the Cristeros killed in this encounter was the famous fighting priest, J. Reyes Vega.

[72]Rius Facius, op. cit., pp. 425-429. For a first-hand account by a member of Gorostieta's staff who later became a Jesuit priest, see Navarrete, op. cit., pp. 242-254.

[73]The text of the communication naming Degollado Guizar to this post is printed in Degollado Guízar, op. cit., pp. 265-266.

[74]The manifesto is printed in ibid., pp. 266-267.

no chance of victory on the battlefield. Hopes that had been aroused by the Escobar revolt had faded fast as loyal forces crushed the rebelling federal troops. Gorostieta's death was the final blow.

CHAPTER IV

THE MODUS VIVENDI

Although the Cristeros did not pose a serious threat to government control of most parts of Mexico, the insurrection did distract federal authorities from other important matters, both domestic and international. In addition to pressures from within the country--especially from businessmen--for ending the conflict, the Mexican government was made aware of increased international concern over the continuing religious conflict. The United States government, in particular, on various occasions made known its interest in ending the rebellion and renewing public worship in Mexico. But for many months both the Papacy and the Mexican Episcopacy refused to consider negotiations unless there were assurances that the demands of the Church for constitutional reform and restoration of Church property would be met. Considerable progress toward ending the conflict was made during the first half of 1928, but this promising development ended abruptly with the assassination of President-elect Obregón. Nearly a year passed before a modus vivendi--not a settlement, but a mode of living or a temporary arrangement pending settlement of the dispute at some indefinite date in the future--was arranged. Subsequently, priests returned to the churches to preach and to administer the sacraments, and Cristero military operations ceased.

Ambassador Morrow's First Efforts

In May, 1927, President Calles answered with the following words an American writer's question concerning conditions under which the Catholic clergy might return to their pulpits: "When the priests decide to obey the law they can come back."[1] At this early date, however, the Catholic hierarchy was not interested in such terms. Hoping for favorable political change within Mexico, for foreign intervention, for a Cristero military triumph--or for a combination of such possibilities--the Papacy and the Episcopacy were prepared to allow the struggle against the Calles regime to continue. Returning from Rome in July, 1927, Bishop Díaz was quoted as saying:

> The Pope is confident that eventually the Church will win her battle in Mexico. I went to Rome chiefly to obtain confidence and support for my faith, and I obtained it in an audience with the Pope. I told him of affairs as I viewed them, and he expressed the opinion that the Calles government must fall and that with it the Catholic Church will regain her old standing.[2]

On October 27, 1927, less than four months after Bishop Díaz's statement, Dwight W. Morrow presented his diplomatic credentials to President Calles. Although his banking background indicated qualifications for dealing with troublesome economic problems involving the United States and Mexico, probably few observers suspected that the new ambassador would

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[1]Quoted in Ernest Gruening, Mexico and Its Heritage (New York: Century Co., 1928), p. 286.

[2]Ibid. quoting New York Times, July 9, 1927.

concentrate first on resolving Mexico's Church-State conflict. But Morrow was convinced that resolution of questions involving land and oil depended on a quick settlement of the religious controversy.[3] According to one prominent historian, "Morrow offered his good, but unofficial, offices to mediate the controversy not only because he was moved by the plight of the Mexican people denied the consolation of their religion, but also by the conviction that orderly government, restored credit, and economic progress were threatened by the problem."[4] When Morrow arrived in Mexico City, public worship had been suspended for over a year and civil war had raged for almost as long a period in many parts of the country. To bring about peace under such circumstances, particularly in a country where traditionally American intervention had been unwelcome, presented a most difficult problem. Concerning this situation, the above-quoted authority has written:

> Accordingly, Morrow's aim was to displace distrust with confidence on both sides. He had to convince the clergy that the restoration of historic privilege was impossible and that if they would accept the Revolution as an accomplished fact, the Church would recover its essential liberties and be able to proceed to its spiritual mission. The government had to be convinced

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[3]Sister M. Elizabeth Ann Rice, The Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Mexico, as Affected by the Struggle for Religious Liberty in Mexico, 1925-1929 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of American Press, 1959), p. 109. For a biography of Morrow, see Harold Nicholson, Dwight Morrow (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1935). Chapters XVI and XVII deal with his years in Mexico.

[4]Stanley R. Ross, "Dwight W. Morrow, Ambassador to Mexico," The Americas, XIV (January, 1958), 285.

> that the clergy had made such an acceptance and would dissociate themselves from counter-revolutions and foreign interventions. To avoid continuation of the controversy the Church would have to accommodate itself to the laws which the government would have to be prepared to apply in a spirit of reasonableness.[5]

Shortly before departing for Mexico, Morrow met with a group of American Catholic leaders who expressed the hope that the new ambassador would be able to act unofficially but effectively in resolving the Mexican Church-State conflict. Included in this group was Rev. John J. Burke, Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.[6] Following a conversation with Calles on December 1 of that year, Morrow became convinced that a modus vivendi could be arranged if the Mexican President were able to deal with a liberal Catholic spokesman of Burke's type. Subsequently, consultation between Calles and Burke was arranged by Morrow; two meetings took place at Havana in January, 1928, during the Pan American Conference. Again in April of that year, Morrow arranged for additional talks between Burke and Calles, which were held at the San Juan de Ulúa fortress in Vera Cruz harbor. Denying Calles' charges that the Vatican had backed a movement to overthrow his government, Burke informed the Mexican President that the Holy See wanted to know if it would be

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[5]Stanley R. Ross, "Dwight Morrow and the Mexican Revolution," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXVIII (November, 1958), 516.

[6]Rice, op. cit., p. 111.

possible for the Church to enjoy free exercise of its spiritual functions and to have the guarantee that government registration of priests would not result in the placing of priests in positions not authorized by the Church. When Calles replied favorably and indicated that public worship might be resumed whenever the Catholic clergy were prepared to obey the laws, Burke obtained the chief executive's signature on a letter outlining these terms.[7]

After reporting the results of the Veracruz meeting to Archbishop Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi, the Papal Delegate in Washington, Burke returned to Mexico in May accompanied by Archbishop Ruiz y Flores, who had become the senior member of the Mexican Episcopacy as a result of the death of Archbishop Mora y del Río. Calles had been opposed to dealing with Ruiz y Flores, but Burke had insisted and Morrow was able to obtain Calles' consent. As a result of negotiations which took place on May 17, Burke sent a telegram to Fumasoni-Biondi (via U.S. diplomatic communications channels) stating that the meeting had been satisfactory and requesting authority for Ruiz y Flores to conclude an agreement with Calles which would, in essence, formalize the position taken by the President at the San Juan de Ulúa meeting. Much to the disappointment of Morrow and the Catholic representatives, the reply from Washington directed Burke and Ruiz to return to the United States immediately. Upon their arrival,

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[7]See ibid., pp. 114-127.

they were informed that Ruiz must travel to Rome to report on the meeting with Calles.[8]

Arriving in Rome in June, Ruiz found Pope Pius XI undecided as to the course that should be followed in Mexico. Apparently the Pontiff had been influenced by representatives of the League and by some members of the Episcopacy, who were opposed to any settlement that would not satisfy demands made by the Church at the beginning of the conflict.[9] Possibly the Pope was of the opinion that more favorable terms might be obtained from Calles' successor. At any event, July came; Obregón was elected; and the Cristero revolt continued to run its bloody course. Without encouragement from Rome, Morrow still was determined to do everything possible to end the conflict. Ironically, he was scheduled to have a conference with Obregón on the afternoon of July 17; but the President-elect was shot by Toral shortly before the meeting was to have taken place.[10]

Although this assassination and the subsequent trial of Toral and Mother Conchita served to increase the difficulty of arriving at a modus vivendi, Morrow continued his efforts

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[8]See ibid., pp. 128-133.

[9]For Ruiz's account of his mission to Rome, see Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, "Recuerdos de Mi Vida," in Recuerdo de Recuerdos. Homenaje de "Buena Prensa" a la Memoria del Excmo. y Rvmo. Sr. Dr. Don Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, Arzobispo de Morelia y Asistente al Solio Pontificio (México, D.F.: Buena Prensa, 1943), pp. 90-91.

[10]See Rice, op. cit., pp. 133-139.

to bring Church and State representatives to the negotiating table. Finally, on November 14, the American Ambassador received a telegram from Ruiz informing him that the Pope would allow the Mexican bishops (then exiled in the United States) to return to Mexico "provided 1) that the Government indicate its assent to their return and to their resuming their normal functions and 2) that the Government would indicate a willingness to discuss with an appropriate representative such changes in the Constitution or laws which might appear feasible."[11] Although Morrow was prepared to propose to Calles that he should confer again with Ruiz and Burke, and although Calles had informed Burke that he would allow an apostolic delegate to reside in Mexico City and carry out normal functions in the country, Archbishop Fumasoni-Biondi declared that the Vatican saw no "reason for changing its position which was stated some time ago, namely that the Holy See is not disposed to permit the resumption of worship unless and until the Mexican Government offers more favorable conditions than those expressed in the letter of President Calles to Father Burke."[12] With this turn of events, hope was lost for any solution to the conflict during the Calles administration. Time had run out. Provisional President Portes Gil took office as the month ended, and Morrow was faced with the necessity of cultivating close personal relations with another Mexican chief executive.

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[11]Quoted in ibid., pp. 156-157.

[12]Quoted in ibid., p. 160.

Negotiations with Portes Gil

As Secretary of Gobernación under Calles, Portes Gil had played a major role in making and implementing the administration's religious policy. In an autobiographical account, he reports that he recommended to Calles that a program of education, rather than restrictive laws, should be employed to combat the fanaticism that produced violence and bloodshed. Also, Portes Gil advised Calles that innumerable abuses had been committed by government officials, including the looting of churches, jailing of innocent people, and even the killing others. Thus his first act as Secretary of Gobernación had been to send a circular to all officials of his department and to all state governors, directing them to cease all acts of persecution and abuse while at the same time ensuring that persons arrested for seditious acts should be given due process of law.[13]

No progress toward resolving the Church-State conflict was made during the first five months of Portes Gil's administration. For one reason, Morrow left Mexico a few days after the new President's inauguration and did not return until early February;[14] then on February 10, 1929 (day after Toral's execution), the President's train was dynamited by League saboteurs as it crossed a bridge in the State of Guanajuato.

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[13]See Emilio Portes Gil, Quince Años de Política Mexicana (3d ed.; México, D.F.: Ediciones Botas, 1954), pp. 35-37.

[14]Rice, op. cit., p. 162.

Although Portes Gil and members of his official party escaped injury, the engine and two Pullman cars were destroyed and a train crewman was killed.[15] Needless-to-say, this event might have destroyed all possibilities of an early solution of the religious question. Another obstacle in the way of resolving the conflict was the Escobar revolt that was launched in the early days of March and which gave some promise of allying with and strengthening the Cristero movement. By the beginning of May, however, Escobar's forces had been routed and General Cedillo's peasant legions from San Luis Potosí were delivering heavy blows to Gorostieta's dwindling Cristero units in the Los Altos region.[16] At this point, Portes Gil made a public statement that raised hopes among the ranks of the peacemakers.

On May 1, during the course of an interview with a representative of American and European newspapers, the Mexican President made several conciliatory statements. Concerning the Escobar revolt, he remarked that the Church had not been implicated despite attempts by rebelling military figures to arouse Catholic support. As for the Cristero movement, the President commented that, with the exception of some priests and the Archbishop of Guadalajara, most of the Catholic

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[15]For a firsthand account of the incident, see Portes Gil, Quince Años de Política Mexicana, pp. 305-310.

[16]Supra, pp. 86-90.

clergy were not involved. Also, he took pains to commend recent declarations by the Secretary of the Bishopric of Oaxaca, which had emphaiszed that all Catholics had the duty of respecting public authorities. Finally, Portes Gil assured the press representatives that there was no reason why the Catholic Church should not renew public worship throughout the country as long as the clergy obeyed the laws and showed due respect for government authorities.[17]

Many observers were quick to interpret the President's remarks as being an invitation for Vatican representatives to enter into negotiations with the Mexican government. Regardless of what might have been Portes Gil's intentions, Ruiz conferred first with the Acting Apostolic Delegate in Washington and then made a public statement which appeared in the U.S. press on May 3 and asserted that the Mexican conflict "was not motivated by any cause which may not be corrected by men of sincere good will."[18] On that same day Morrow was visited by Miguel Cruchaga Tocornal, former Chilean Ambassador to the United States and at that time serving in Mexico with Spanish-Mexican and German-Mexican Claims Commissions.

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[17]For the text of this press interview, see Portes Gil, Quince Años de la Política Mexicana, pp. 321-327.

[18]Quoted in Rice, op. cit., p. 177. In his autobiographical account, Ruiz wrote that he suspected Portes Gil's statement was suggested by Ambassador Morrow. Concerning his reply, the Archbishop explained: "At the direction of the Apostolic Delegation in Washington, I answered Portes Gil through the press, stating that if his government sincerely wished to terminate the religious conflict, it could count on the good will of the Church." Ruiz y Flores, "Recuerdos de Mi Vida," p. 93.

Cruchaga explained that recently he had conferred with the Pope on two occasions concerning the Mexican religious problem; further, he informed Morrow that Father Edmund Walsh, S.J., Director of Georgetown University's Foreign Service School, had accompanied him to Mexico City from Washington for the purpose of investigating the religious situation and preparing a report for the Vatican. At a meeting with Walsh on May 4, Morrow was told that the Pope desired a quick settlement of the Mexican conflict.[19]

Encouraged by Ruiz's conciliatory remarks published on May 3, Morrow urged Portes Gil to make a public statement expressing his approval of the Archbishop's position. Morrow went so far as to prepare a draft of the recommended statement; that the Mexican President was strongly influenced by the American Ambassador can be seen in the fact that Portes Gil's subsequent statement of May 7 was almost identical to the wording of Morrow's draft. Lauding Ruiz's offer to cooperate with his government, the President noted that the Mexican Constitution prohibited official relations with the Vatican; however, he asserted that "if Archbishop Ruiz should desire to discuss with me the method of securing cooperation in the moral effort for the Mexican people, I shall have no objection to conferring with him on the subject."[20]

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[19]Rice, op. cit., pp. 175-176; Miguel Cruchaga Tocornal, "El Conflicto Religioso Mexicano," Revista Chileno de Historia y Geografia, CXIII (January-June, 1949), pp. 237-239; L. Ethan Ellis, "Dwight Morrow and the Church-State Controversy in Mexico," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXVIII (November, 1958), 498-499.

[20]Quoted in Rice, op. cit., pp. 177-178.

Believing that the President's words indicated a genuine desire on his part to resolve the religious question, Cruchaga cabled Ramón Subercaseaux, Chile's Ambassador at the Vatican, and requested that he call the matter to the attention of Vatican authorities, urging their acceptance of Portes Gil's offer. At the same time, Cruchaga recommended that the Holy See should send a cable to Walsh authorizing him to confer with the Mexican bishops and with government officials.[21] Four days later, on May 12, Cruchaga cabled Subercaseaux again; in this message he requested the urgent transmission of the following communication from Walsh to the Jesuit Superior General in Rome:

> After conversation with five bishops, various competent prelates and laymen and foreigners, I encounter divergent opinions reconciliable only by decision of His Holiness, to whom all would submit in a sincerely Catholic spirit.
>
> After calling on God and mature reflection, my personal opinion is as follows:
>
> The bloody Catholic revolution of Jalisco will be converted into a holocaust of the innocent within the course of two weeks, in view of the Government's decision to send 15,000 soldiers, well armed and vain with victory obtained in the Revolution of the North. I am of the opinion that inevitably the Government will triumph. Daily there are executions and deportations in reprisal. In view of the futility of resistance, it appears to me that this armed rebellion lacks one of the essential conditions required by Catholic theology; it must be terminated in order to prevent prolonged misery and shedding of blood.
>
> The first practical negotiation should be for the opening of churches and reestablishment of worship under conditions and reservations destined to safeguard imprescriptible rights of the Church; this would automatically bring about the disappearance of the causes of the rebellion.

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[21] For the text of the cable, see Cruchaga, loc. cit., p. 239.

> In conference with Señor Cruchaga and the American Ambassador, I have drawn up a proposal that we three believe acceptable and which I shall transmit in ciphered cable if it should be opportune.
>
> The American Ambassador has wished to present Prof. Walsh to President Portes Gil, but Walsh has refused so far, in view of the private character of his visit and lack of authorization.
>
> Simultaneously, the President of the Republic has made a conciliatory declaration in reply to equally conciliatory declarations by Archbishop Ruiz. The President invites the Church to begin negotiations, an attitude unanimously applauded by public opinion and all of the press. The American Ambassador will depart for New York on May 22 for six weeks. It is indispensible to take advantage immediately of the general optimism. If you should wish to send instruction, I invite you to use this same channel."[22]

Subsequently, the Holy See requested that Walsh send the proposal prepared in cooperation with Cruchaga and Morrow; at the same time, Walsh was directed to confer with Archbishop Ruiz and the Papal Delegate to the United States.[23] Meanwhile, on May 11, Morrow communicated with Archbishop Ruiz, suggesting that he seek an agreement with Portes Gil through an exchange of correspondence or by means of a meeting. Of the two procedures, Morrow recommended the former. For Ruiz's consideration, Morrow submitted the draft of a letter containing favorable comments on the President's statement of May 7 and requesting that the Mexican bishops be given assurance of a "toleration within the law permitting the Church freedom to live and to exercise its spiritual offices."

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[22]Printed in ibid., pp. 239-240.

[23]See Subercaseaux's cable printed in ibid., p. 240. For the text of the proposal prepared by Morrow, Cruchaga, and Walsh, see Cruchaga's telegram to Subercaseaux printed in ibid., pp. 242-243.

In particular, the draft requested that the President should make a statement setting forth the following interpretations:

1. That it is not the purpose of the Government to destroy the identity of the Church;
2. That the provision which requires the registration of priests does not contemplate that the Government would register a priest who has not been named by the Bishop of his Diocese;
3. That the laws, while requiring secular instruction in the schools, do not prohibit the giving of purely religious instruction in a suitable part of any church;
4. That in order to avoid unreasonable application of the laws, the Government would be willing to confer from time to time with the authorized head of the Church in Mexico;
5. That nothing in the Constitution or Laws and no policy of the Government denies to the clergy the right to apply to the appropriate constitutional authorities for modification of the laws and that in your opinion such application on their part should receive such impartial consideration as the reasons offered in support might deserve.

If you could make such a declaration, I am authorized to state that the Mexican clergy could forthwith resume their spiritual offices.[24]

Before returning to the United States to attend the marriage of his daughter, Ann, to Charles Lindberg, Morrow received a request from Ruiz, who had just been appointed as Apostolic Delegate to Mexico, to arrange an appointment with Portes Gil. June 12 was the date set for the meeting, so Morrow changed his plans for a long vacation. While in the United States he conferred with Ruiz and warned him that negotiation would be useless if the Vatican insisted on immediate changes in Mexican laws. On Morrow's return trip to Mexico, from St. Louis to San Antonio he was accompanied

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[24]Quoted in Rice, op. cit., pp. 179-180.

by Archbishop Ruiz and Bishop Díaz, thus affording additional opportunities for talks concerning negotiations with Portes Gil. Leaving their train on the outskirts of Mexico City, the two prelates were greeted by Walsh and Cruchaga; then they were taken to the home of the U.S. Naval Attaché, where they were secluded, except on occasions when they left to meet with the President at Chapultepec Castle.[25] Morrow played a key role; concerning this matter, one historian has written: "the problem was to establish harmony between the somewhat disparate Walsh/Cruchaga and Ruiz/Díaz pairs, to reconcile their wishes with what the President could reasonably grant, and, withal, to prevent further Mexican intransigence, never far below the surface, from erupting into open hostility."[26]

After three days of unfruitful negotiations, Morrow took the initiative by formulating statements for Portes Gil and Ruiz y Díaz; presented to these parties on May 15, the statements were drafted so as to include the five basic provisions included in Morrow's May 11 communication to Archbishop Ruiz. Morrow's proposals were acceptable to both parties, but the prelates insisted that final action must await papal approval. During the following five days,

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[25] Ibid., p. 181; Ellis, loc. cit., p. 501. Also, see Ruiz y Flores, "Recuerdos de Mi Vida," p. 94; and Eduardo J. Correa, Pascual Díaz, S.J., El Arzobispo Mártir (México, D.F.: Ediciones Minerva, 1945), pp. 150-151.

[26] Ellis, loc. cit., p. 501.

disquieting reports of both Catholic and anti-Catholic extremist opposition to the Chapultepec meetings reached the negotiators.[27] Finally, on June 20 a communication arrived from Rome. Walsh gave Morrow the following summary of the message from the Holy See:

1. The Holy Father is most anxious for a peaceful and laic solution.
2. Full amnesty for Bishops, priests and faithful.
3. Restoration of property--Churches, Bishops' and Priests' houses and Seminaries.
4. Free relations between Vatican and Mexican Church. Only on these understandings you may close if you think proper before God.[28]

Since President Portes Gil had not agreed on points 2 and 3, Morrow feared that the negotiations would break down. However, Archbishop Ruiz found no problem in interpreting the former to mean that amnesty meant simply the return of the clergy to their dioceses and parishes; as for the latter point, he construed it to mean that the Mexican clergy should attempt to obtain the use of as much Church property as possible.[29]

With these problems resolved, a final meeting was held on June 21 for the purpose of signing statements describing the modus vivendi.[30] Significant parts of Portes Gil's

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[27]Rice, op. cit., pp. 184-185.

[28]Quoted in ibid., p. 185.

[29]Ibid., p. 186.

[30]Some interesting portions of the shorthand version of the negotiation proceedings are printed in Emilio Portes Gil, Autogiografía de la Revolución Mexicana: Un Tratado de Interpretación Histórica (México, D.F.: Instituto Mexicano de Cultura, 1964), pp. 575-577.

statement read as follows:

> I am glad to take advantage of this opportunity to declare publicly and very clearly that it is not the purpose of the Government of the Republic to destroy the indentity of the Catholic Church or of any other, or to interfere in any way with its spiritual functions. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I also take advantage of this opportunity to declare:
>
> I. That the provision of the law which requires the registration of ministers does not mean that the Government can register those who have not been named by the hierarchial superior of the religious creed in question or in accordance with its regulations.
>
> II. With regard to religious instruction, the constitution and the laws in force definitely prohibit it in primary or higher schools, whether public or private but this does not prevent ministers of any religion from imparting its doctrines, within church confines, to adults or their children who may attend for that purpose.
>
> III. That the constitution as well as the laws relating to the country guarantee to all residents of the Republic the right of petition and therefore the members of any church may apply to the appropriate authorities for the amendment, repeal or passage of any law.[31]

In a much briefer statement, Ruiz asserted:

> Bishop Diáz and myself have had several conferences with the President of the Republic, the results of which are set forth in the statement which he issued today.
>
> I am glad to say that all of the conversations have been marked by a spirit of mutual good will and respect. As a consequence of said statement made by the President, the Mexican clergy will resume religious services pursuant to the laws in force.
>
> I entertain the hope that the resumption of religious services may lead the Mexican people, animated by a spirit of mutual good will, to

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[31]For an English translation of the entire text, see Ellis, loc. cit., pp. 503-504, f.n. 34; cf. Spanish text printed in Portes Gil, Autobiografía de la Revolución Mexicana, pp. 572-573.

> cooperate in all moral efforts made for the benefit of all the people of our fatherland.[32]

With these words the Papal Delegate sought to end a conflict for which both the Pope and the Mexican Episcopacy previously had denied any responsibility for starting. Having first encouraged the militant activities of the League and other Catholic lay organizations, and then having upheld the right of Catholics to revolt against a regime that the Church had condemned as unjust, the time had come when recognition of the superior power of the Mexican government was necessary. After three years without regular services administered by the clergy, and with most of the bishops in exile, Mexico's Catholics showed dangerous signs of drifting away from conventional Roman Catholicism as previously practiced in Mexico. Although the government was inconvenienced by the rebellion, it was stronger in June, 1929, than at any other time since the beginning of the conflict. Thus the Vatican and the Mexican Episcopacy had been forced to bargain from a position of weakness; and the results of the negotiations showed that the Church had gained nothing from three years of conflict with the State. The Constitution of 1917 and the statutes of the Revolutionary government remained unchanged; in fact, the *modus vivendi* simply restored the *status quo ante bellum*.

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[32] The English translation is taken from Ellis, *loc. cit.*, p. 504, f.n. 34; cf. Spanish version in Portes Gil, *Autobiografía de la Revolución*, p. 573.

Results of the Modus Vivendi

After coming to terms with Portes Gil, Archbishop Ruiz was faced with the necessity of explaining the need for this action to the clergy and to all Mexican Catholics, especially those who had risked life and property in support of unsuccessful political and military actions designed to resist, and if possible, to overthrow, the government. On June 25, only four days after concluding negotiations with Portes Gil, the Apostolic Delegate issued a pastoral letter in which he emphasized that the Pope had approved the modus vivendi; thus Ruiz stated: "We prelates and priests, by conviction and discipline, agree completely with the High Pontiff; therefore it is just that every sincere Catholic should accept wholeheartedly that which has been agreed upon." Further, he declared, "This arrangement is not in contradiction with that which has been said and taught by the Pope and the Mexican Episcopacy in matters of dogma; . . ." The Papal Delegate reported that the President had been advised that a definitive settlement of the religious question through action by Congress would have been preferred-- action based on "a friendly separation between the Church and the State. . . ." This, he explained, would have involved approval of Catholic petitions; and as a result, "with the Church recovering its judicial personality, with her rights and freedoms of association, of worship, of education, of sacraments, and of property necessary for her social functioning--the evils which we

deplore would be remedied effectively, and the fatherland would enjoy the blessings of sincere harmony between the Catholic people and the Government." However, Ruiz noted, "This solution not having been possible before resuming public worship, . . . we believed the case foreseen in the instructions of the High Pontiff had arrived, that of seeking an arrangement which, permitting the faithful of the Church to profess their religious belief and to practice legally our Catholic worship, will remedy the evils that the suspension of worship has caused and the even greater evils that would be caused to customs and public morals." While expressing the firm conviction that a definitive solution to the religious question would be reached in time, Ruiz emphasized that "it is not the desire of the Church to impose or to depose governments, nor to declare itself in favor of any political candidate, but rather to strengthen the principle of authority and to accept unquestionably the freedom that it needs from the hands of any government." In conclusion, the Archbishop of Morelia and principal representative of the Vatican in Mexico asserted:

> We have offered to cooperate with the Government in all just and moral efforts leading to the welfare and betterment of the people; in order to prove this in practice, the priests and the faithful will take care to heed with docility and self-denial the instructions that the Episcopacy may dictate for the purpose of achieving such an end.
>
> We give thanks to God with all our heart for this step in the pacification of spirits; let us ask Him that he may continue and finish His work, and we shall all cooperate with prayer, with a good example and Christian charity that excludes nobody from the sphere of his love, in order to hasten the

> day of solid and true peace within the Mexican family, with Most Holy Mary of Guadalupe as its Mother and Lady and with Christ as its Sovereign and its King. All of that we shall obtain from the Holy Spirit, to whom we, the Mexican Prelates, have consecrated our dioceses with all confidence that He will unite us with the sweet ties of Charity.[33]

On June 22, at the same time that Mexico's press was publishing the statements made by Ruiz and Portes Gil on the previous day, the following announcement appeared in Excelsior, one of the national capital's leading newspapers: "The Directing Committee of the National Defense League of Religious Liberty declares its unconditional, sincere, and filial submission to the resolutions of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, with respect to the Mexican religious question, and takes this opportunity to make public its sentiment of respect for and adherence to the Apostolic Delegate and the Mexican Episcopacy."[34] In the days that followed, however, there was much discussion and dissention within League ranks concerning the policy that the organization would pursue.[35] Finally, although it did not end the controversy, on July 12 a broadside entitled Manifiesto a la Nación was issued by the organization's Directing Committee. Emphasizing that "neither the Venerable Episcopacy, nor much less, the Holy See, had any responsibility for this armed struggle," the

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[33]For the full text of the pastoral letter, see Moctezuma, op. cit., II, 541-544.

[34]Quoted in ibid., p. 548.

[35]See Carreño, El Arzobispo de México, passim.

manifesto declared that League and National Guard chiefs must heed the decisions of the Pope regarding the liberties that they should struggle for. It pointed out that because of the recent arrangements made by Portes Gil and the Apostolic Delegate, public worship had been restored; however, note was made of the fact that freedom of "teaching, association, social action, etc." had not been obtained. Nevertheless, the Directing Committee explained, "because as Catholics we have full confidence in the high and delicate prudence of the Sovereign Pontiff and in his firmness, the League is of the opinion that the decisive moment has arrived for ending the armed struggle, in order to dedicate itself to another class of activities that will always be conducive to the welfare of the Fatherland and to our faith." According to the manifesto, in the future the League would involve itself in a program of "Catholic Action"; in this respect, it was proposed that the League should give special attention to arranging a national referendum for the purpose of petitioning Mexican authorities for changes in the nation's Constitution and laws.[36]

Even before the League's manifesto of July 12, some members of the National Guard, including a few high-ranking officers, surrendered to commanders of Mexican army units.

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[36]A copy of the broadside was made available to the writer by Dr. James W. Wilkie, Department of History, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. Portions of this document are quoted in Moctezuma, op. cit., II, 549-550.

Hearing of the arrangement for resumption of public worship and noting that the morale of his forces was unfavorably affected, General Degollado Guízar made his way to Mexico City for the purpose of conferring with the League's Directing Committee. Here he was informed that he must arrange for the disbanding of the Cristero troops.[37] Represented by Luis Beltrán y Mendoza, who was assisted by Archbishop Ruiz, the general obtained from President Portes Gil acceptance of the following terms: guarantees for the lives of National Guard personnel so that they might return to their homes; similar guarantees for civilians who had aided the movement; release of persons imprisoned for religious reasons, both civilian and military; repatriation of persons exiled for religious reasons; payment of twenty-five pesos for each rifle surrendered by National Guard soldiers; authorization for officers to keep their pistols and to receive such financial assistance as might be judged proper by Mexican Army chiefs; and disbanding of troops of the National Guard in the presence of Mexican Army chiefs.[38]

Shortly before his death, and at a time when much publicity was being given to the possibility of settling the Church-State conflict, General Gorostieta had issued a strongly-worded statement in opposition to any negotiations

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[37]See Degollado Guízar, op. cit., pp. 270-273.

[38]For the text of General Degollado Guízar's letter of instruction to Luis Beltrán y Mendoza, together with the appended terms presented to, and accepted by, Portes Gil, see ibid., pp. 268-270.

between Church representatives and the Mexican government.[39] But the statement had not prevented negotiations which produced the modus vivendi; and within a month after this arrangement had been made, Gorostieta's successor had been forced to take steps to dissolve the National Guard. Then in August, General Degollado Guízar issued a final order directing those Cristeros still in the field to lay down their arms. This order explained that "His Holiness, the Pope, by means of His Excellency, the Apostolic Delegate, for reasons which we do not know but which we accept as Catholics, has disposed that, without abolishing the laws, worship services be resumed and the priest . . . begin to exercise his public ministry." Such a development, the last Cristero General-in-Chief explained, had produced a special problem for the priest: "If he condemned our activities, he would perhaps condemn the best of his flock. . . . If, to the contrary, he shall declare himself in our favor, by this single act, in addition to placing himself in grave danger of perishing as a victim of our enemies, there will remain the impossibility of exercising his ministry among the noncombatant population." Such a situation, it was predicted, would lead to divisions among noncombatant supporters of the Cristero troops, with the result that the National Guard would loose its "most abundant and secure source of supply." Pointing out that the modus vivendi "has changed our situation,"

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[39]For the text of this statement dated May 16, 1929, see David, V (January 22, 1961), 174-177.

General Degollado Guízar declared that the time had come to cease combat. He emphasized that the "National Guard has assumed all responsibility for the conflict, but this responsibility will not be imputed to it for the period since the 21st of June. . . ." With another note of bitterness, the rebel commander asserted, "the National Guard disappears, not defeated by its enemies, but, in reality, abandoned by those who were the first to receive the most valuable fruit of its sacrifices and self-denials." His final words were those of a man who considered himself a martyr:

> Christ, help those of us who for Thee go to humilitation, to exile, and perhaps to an inglorious death, victims of our enemies; with all submissiveness, with the most fervent love, we hail Thee; and, once more, we acclaim Thee as King of our Fatherland!
>
> Long live Christ the King! Long live Holy Mary of Guadalupe![40]

According to Portes Gil, more than 14,000 Cristeros surrendered.[41] Some, like General Degollado Guízar, merely went into hiding;[42] others found their way home without the formality of laying down arms; and former bandits no doubt remained in the field where they had been operating when they

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[40]The text of this final order is printed in Degollado Guízar, op. cit., pp. 270-273

[41]Portes Gil, Quince Años de la Política Mexicana, p. 330.

[42]Degollado Guízar, op. cit., p. 278.

took up the Cristero cause.[43] Thousands of rebels who bore arms in the name of Christ the King were killed in combat or died of disease. Concerning these losses, Professor James W. Wilkie has written:

> No precise statistics concerning the number of Cristeros killed are available, but according to Portes Gil, the Ministry of War reported deaths on both sides as running about 800 to 1,000 monthly, including participants and noncombatants. Since the major action of the guerrilla war took place in 1927 and 1928 and in the first six months of 1929, total deaths may have reached 24,000 to 30,000. Assuming that the Cristeros suffered at least half of these casualties, their losses would have reached 12,000 to 15,000. A figure of 12,000 dead for the Cristeros would be roughly in line with the surrender of 14,000 Cristeros in 1929, if we accept the League's own count of 25,000 followers in 1927. All of these figures seem high, however, for no major battles were fought in the guerrilla war.[44]

Because of bitterness caused by the conflict, an unknown number of Cristero veterans were killed after laying down arms and returning to their homes. In some cases, the government did not fulfill the terms of the amnesty that had been agreed upon; in other cases, former members of the National Guard were assassinated by private citizens. At any event, all bloodshed did not end with the disbanding of rebel forces.[45]

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[43]For a firsthand account of one Cristero's experiences at the end of the conflict, see Navarrete, op. cit., pp. 260-270.

[44]Wilkie, loc. cit., pp. 230-231.

[45]Cardoso, op. cit., p. 453, states that within a year after the truce, five hundred Cristeros had been killed. For descriptions of various assassinations of Cristeros, see Barquín y Ruiz, op. cit., passim.

Since resumption of public worship was the key step toward ending the Cristero revolt, failure of the Vatican and the Episcopacy to come to terms with the Mexican government at an earlier date resulted in greater losses than would have been the case if Ambassador Morrow's first efforts to arrange a modus vivendi had succeeded. Ironically, the terms that the Church was able to obtain from Portes Gil in 1929 were essentially the same as those that Calles had been prepared to grant early in 1928. By not approving the work of Burke and Morrow, the Vatican had merely prolonged the agony of a loosing struggle. Eventually, in the face of certain defeat, Rome accepted the recommendations of Walsh and Morrow. In both cases, American priests and the American Ambassador had played key roles in diplomatic efforts to terminate the Church-State conflict.

V. CONCLUSION

From colonial times to the present, conflict between Church and State has been a common occurence in Mexico. As the established Church during the colonial period and for the first half century of Mexican independence, the Catholic Church sought to expand its privileges while resisting government controls. The Constitution of 1857 ended establishment but provoked bitter civil strife in the two decades that followed. Then for more than forty years the Church prospered under the Díaz dictatorship's policy of conciliation, which involved maintaining the anti-clerical laws of the Juárez era but not enforcing them. During the following years of the Revolution of 1910, the Church placed itself on the side of the counter-revolutionary forces; thus, it is not surprising that several strongly anti-clerical provisions were written into the Consititution of 1917. However, for nearly a decade little was done to implement these parts of the new constitution.

Following the election of President Plutarco Calles, the government gave support to a schismatic Catholic movement. Strong clerical opposition developed immediately and was countered by presidential decrees imposing serious restrictions on Catholic activities. From Rome, Pope Pius XI indicated his disapproval of the policy of the Mexican government. While

counselling against formation of a Mexican Catholic political party, the Pope urged the faithful to exercise their political rights for the defense of religious liberty. Arrest and deportation of foreign priests, closing of Catholic schools and convents, and a ban on religious instruction in private primary schools in areas under federal jurisdiction provoked a strong protest by the Mexican Episcopacy; however, President Calles refused to change his policy. Instead, he retorted with the Calles Law of June, 1926, which revised the Federal Penal Code to provide for various fines and imprisonments in cases involving violation of Constitutional provisions relating to religious activities. Most obnoxious to the Church was the provision of the Calles Law which required ministers of all religious creeds to register with civil authorities.

Catholic reaction to the Calles Law first took the form of a boycott organized by the League; the objective of this move was to bring about a national economic crisis. Although approved by a committee representing the Episcopacy, the boycott did not have the desired results. With the approval of the Pope, the Episcopacy announced the suspension of public worship throughout the country on August 1, the date that the Calles law was scheduled to go into effect. Further Catholic appeals to the President and to the Congress failed to achieve desired changes in the Constitution and laws of the country. Angered by the closing of churches and by official restrictions on the number of priests allowed to exercise their profession in the different states, the Federal District, and the

territories, a growing number of Catholics resorted to armed rebellion.

While not counselling the use of violence in opposing the religious policies of the Calles administration, the Pope's encyclical, Iniquis afflictisque, praised the militant activities of Catholic lay organizations like the League and the ACJM. Subsequently, the Episcopacy indicated to Catholic lay leaders that armed revolt against the government would be legitimate. As a result, the year 1927 saw armed resistance spread to over half of the states in the federal union, although the most significant rebel activity was concentrated in Jalisco, Colima, Michoacán and Zacatecas. Operating according to the principles of querilla warfare, some twenty thousand Cristeros carried out attacks against Mexican army units and small population centers. Included within these rebel bands were several priests, some of whom acted as chaplains while others bore arms and exercised command.

Through the efforts of U.S. Ambassador Dwight Morrow, President Calles met with Rev. John J. Burke during the early months of 1928. Some progress was made toward ending the conflict when Calles agreed to talk with Burke and Archbishop Ruiz y Flores in May. It is quite probable that an agreement could have been reached at this time if the Papacy had been willing to accept terms that were virtually identical with those that were forced upon it over a year later. However, in the summer of 1928 the Holy See was not prepared

to end the conflict except on its own terms. Possibly the Pope expected that more fruitful negotiations could be carried on with Calles's successor, General Obregón. The assassination of President-elect Obregón by a Catholic fanatic on July 17 eliminated such a possibility and caused the government to make a more determined effort to suppress the Cristero Rebellion.

Despite this turn of events, Ambassador Morrow continued to work for peace. With the failure of the Escobar Revolt in the spring of 1929 and the death of General Gorostieta, all hopes for a Cristero victory vanished. Acting on the recommendation of Father Edmund Walsh, Jesuit Director of Georgetown University's Foreign Service School, the Papacy availed itself of the good offices of Morrow and a Chilean diplomat, Miguel Cruchaga Tocornal. Subsequently, meetings took place between President Portes Gil and two Mexican prelates, Archbishop Ruiz y Flores and Bishop Díaz. As a result of these negotiations, on June 21 the Mexican President and Apostolic Delegate Ruiz y Flores announced the achievement of a modus vivendi whereby religious services would be resumed throughout Mexico. Shortly thereafter, under the terms of an amnesty proclaimed by the government, Cristero troops ended their guerrilla operations and disbanded.

While there may be some differences of opinion as to the roles of the Pope, the Episcopacy, and the priests in the Cristero Rebellion, there can be no doubt but that the suspension of religious services on August 1, 1926,

contributed greatly to the development of armed insurrection. Proposed by the Episcopacy, the measure had the full support of the Holy See. It is also a fact that the Vatican, through Apostolic Delegate Ruiz y Flores, assumed responsibility for arranging the resumption of religious services after three years of futile combat. Once the priests had been allowed to return to their pulpits, most Cristero rebels felt that there was no longer a justification for carrying on the armed struggle.

In conclusion, all evidence indicates that the Vatican and the Mexican Episcopacy did not openly call for armed revolt; on the other hand, neither did the heirarchy discourage such a development. In fact, Papal praise of militant lay organizations, which did so much to prepare many Catholics for rebellion against the government, was a significant factor in producing the revolt. Had the Pope and all members of the Mexican Episcopacy fearlessly and publicly called for a holy war against the Calles regime, perhaps a larger number of the faithful would have taken up arms; however, there was no guarantee that such a course of action would have assured a victory. Total war against the government would have raised the possibility of total defeat, with resulting liquidation of clerical personnel and an end of Catholic organizational activity in the country. Many priests and laymen were willing to take this gamble, but the Pope and the prelates were not prepared for such an extreme measure. As it turned out, half-way measures

were unsuccessful; but defeat did not prove to be disastrous.

Today, nearly forty years after the conclusion of the Cristero Rebellion, the Mexican Catholic Church enjoys more prosperity and influence than at any time since the outbreak of the Revolution of 1910. While the modus vivendi of 1929 did not provide a permanent settlement of the religious question in Mexico, it did mark the beginning of a gradual adjustment of the Catholic Church to the results of the Mexican Revolution and to the Anti-clerical provisions of the Constitution of 1917.

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