

The CHURCH IN MEXICO PROTESTS

By WILLIAM F. MONTAVON

“I HAVE stood unflinchingly on the side of the Mexican Government in their theoretical position regarding the Catholic Church, but I was almost deported from Mexico because I dared to speak of the personal abuse of Catholics in that struggle. Every personal right of every Catholic was violated. They were held by the police, they had no legal protection, no protection whatever from the courts of Mexico. Often a Catholic was arrested and fined; and if he could not pay his fine he was sent to Islas Tres Marias, the Pacific Coast penal colony. It was a glorious moment for arbitrary robbing of Catholics in Mexico. They were jailed and mulcted of their properties without due process of law. If you can take away the personal liberty of a Catholic, you can take away the personal liberty of everybody else.”—Fifth Seminar—Mexico City, 1929. Address by Carleton Beals.



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THE CHURCH IN MEXICO

PROTESTS

THE following facts explain the protest of the Catholic Church and its Bishops and faithful in Mexico against the persecution of religion by the present Mexican Government. The facts are enumerated briefly and are allowed to speak for themselves.

The Catholic Church in Mexico is not opposed to universal education nor to the agrarian, industrial and general economic betterment of all the citizens of Mexico. The Catholic Church asks liberty of religious worship, liberty to teach those Christian truths upon which the eternal salvation of the individual depends and upon which civilization and national stability rest.

The Catholic Church in Mexico has been compelled to protest and to publish her protest to all the world because of the following facts. It will be seen from their enumeration that the Catholic Church has done all in her power, and in a legal way, with the Mexican Government; has endured for years a loss of one right after another: one liberty after another: has been content to accept the mere necessities of life. Now even the necessities are denied her and the Catholics are told they may no longer practice their religion in Mexico; that the Government, itself hostile to Christianity, is determined to mould on anti-religious and purely secular lines the minds and consciences of all its citizens.

* * * * *

Before
1917

The Constitution which governed Mexico prior to 1917 was that of President Juarez, adopted in 1857.

This Constitution, while in many ways inimical to the Church, recognized the Church as a religious society and as having a legal personality. Under this Constitution the Church might legally acquire, hold and administer property: organize and direct her ministry: direct her own internal affairs.

Through the long Diaz regime this Constitution was the Constitution of Mexico.

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- 1906 Spanish-speaking syndicalists meet in Saint Louis, Missouri. They issue a manifesto denouncing the regime of Porfirio Diaz and also denouncing religion. Many of its articles were incorporated into the 1917 Constitution of Mexico.
- These syndicalists may be defined as those who, while believing in organization—as their name implies—yet champion anarchy with regard to the whole present social system—educational, economic, religious, governmental—and preach that in some way out of the destruction which anarchy will effect, man will rise to a new social life.
- 1911 Francisco Madero elected to succeed Diaz. Too moderate for syndicalists. Denounced by their leader Magon, 1911.
- 1913 Madero assassinated. Victoriano Huerta usurps the Presidency and asks popular support.
- 1913 Venustiano Carranza, then Governor of Coahuila, leads an armed insurrection against Huerta.
- 1914 The President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, declares the United States is in favor of Carranza: gives the support of the United States to Carranza. Huerta flees the country.
- 1914 Seven Archbishops and six Bishops of Mexico meet in Havana, Cuba, and issue a joint pastoral. "Persecution," they declare, "drove us into hiding, even out of our country." The pastoral terms as "pure calumnies" the charge that the clergy contributed money for the defeat of Madero and supported Huerta with their moral influence. "Neither we nor our priests have had any part in political controversies. We have limited ourselves to instructing the faithful, and in this we have done our plain duty."
- 1914 Carranza fails to gain support of other insurgent leaders whom he met at Aguas Calientes. Establishes his headquarters at Vera Cruz—issues his promise that he will

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enforce Constitution of 1857, "a liberal spirit and form of government will be preserved."

But the syndicalists—the Casa del Obrero Mundial (COM)—opposes this programme, demanding new Constitution for Mexico.

1915 Carranza enters into formal agreement with the syndicalists which authorizes them to organize an army under General Obregon, to use the name, "the Red Army of Mexico."

1915 Carranza and Obregon in joint pronouncement promise amnesty to all who surrender and liberty of religious worship to all citizens.

Revolutionary hordes continue to devastate Mexico.

1915 Carranza, encouraged by the recognition of the United States, announces an election of delegates to a Constitutional convention to be held September 14, 1916. Carranza has been ruling as a dictator and by "decrees" of his own. His election decree declares no one is eligible for election to the coming Congress—that of Queretaro—unless he has actively and continuously supported the Carranza revolution.

1917 Constitution of Queretaro which now governs Mexico is adopted.

At the convention at Queretaro which adopted the Constitution, Carranza in his address declares: "The most important function of a political constitution is to guarantee the liberty of man in the most ample and complete degrees, making it impossible for the government in any circumstances to restrict human rights or refuse to permit their free exercise, or usurp the exclusive power of directing individual initiative or social activity."

The very first article of this Constitution wipes out all human rights and opens wide the road to state absolutism.

The Constitution of 1857 begins thus: "The Mexican people recognize that the rights of man are the basis and the purpose of social institutions."

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The Queretaro Constitution opens with this: "In the Republic of Mexico every individual shall have those rights which are granted to him by this Constitution."

1917 This new Constitution—and the one ever since in force—denies any corporate character before the law to churches and religious associations.

The 1917 Constitution gives to Federal authorities in Mexico the right to intervene and to state the conditions that must attend religious worship.

This Constitution prohibits the Church or any religious society from holding property. The churches, and all property used at any time for church purposes, are the property of the government.

Residences of bishops, rectories, seminaries, orphanages, schools, convents, any building wherein teaching should be given in religion, are vested as of full right directly in the government.

No citizen may erect a building or a church that would replace those thus confiscated by the government.

Against this and similar provisions of this Constitution, the Catholic Bishops of Mexico protest. They declare that even apart from her divine origin, the Church in her own right has a personality and a character proper to her, derived from the right of the individual to believe and to exercise the practices of worship: the violation of the right of the collectivity violates, in turn, the right of the individual.

The Bishops add they do not approve armed rebellion against constituted authority.

"We have no desire to raise any political question. With the little freedom now permitted us, we defend the religious liberty of the Christian people of our country against an attack on religion."

"We issue this statement in the simple performance of the duty we have to defend the rights of the Church and the liberty of religion."

1917 The Holy Father, Benedict XV, approves the Bishops' action and adds, "the new Constitution in some points

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ignores the sacred rights of the Church, and in others directly opposes them.”

1918 Carranza makes an effort to have repealed some of the anti-religious provisions in the 1917 Constitution. As a consequence, he is forced to flee Mexico City. On his way to Vera Cruz he is assassinated.

Obregon defeats Adolfo de la Huerta and succeeds to the Presidency of Mexico. He does not put into effect the anti-religious clauses of the Constitution.

1923 The Apostolic Delegate to Mexico, the Most Reverend Ernesto Filippi, is expelled by President Obregon. The Delegate is charged with conducting public religious service in violation of the law.

1924 Plutarco Elias Calles becomes President of Mexico. As soon as he is inaugurated, his followers attempt to set up a schismatic Catholic church in Mexico. The attempt fails. Calles allies himself with the C. R. O. M. (Confederacion Regional de Obreros Mexicanos), successor to the Casa del Obrero Mundial, with which Carranza and Obregon had already entered (1915) into alliance and which ever pressed for an enforcement of the anti-religious provisions of the Constitution.

1925 President Calles declares the anti-religious provisions would be enforced with greater severity.

1926 February. Pope Pius XI addresses an apostolic letter to the Bishops of Mexico confirming what Benedict XV had said in 1917: “The common rights of citizenship (if these hostile laws are enforced) will be denied to Catholics, and the function and ministry of the Christian religion will die.”

The Holy Father exhorts the Bishops to intensify Catholic action. “We say Catholic Action, for in the present conditions it is, above all, necessary, Venerable Brothers, that together with the whole clergy and every organization of Catholics, you studiously hold yourselves entirely aloof from every kind of political party. There-

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fore, all Catholics of the Republic of Mexico are forbidden as such to establish any political party under the name of Catholic."

1926 "El Universal" resurrects a statement made by the Archbishop of Mexico in 1917, objecting to the anti-religious provisions of the Constitution, and re-published it. The Archbishop is officially questioned by the Attorney General but the Attorney General declares there is no cause for prosecution.

A few days later the C. R. O. M., in convention assembled, demands that President Calles proceed at once to enforce drastically the anti-religious clauses of the Constitution.

1926 President Calles denies liberty of education to primary schools under the government; also denies liberty of publication to the religious press or any press having a religious tendency.

1926 President Calles issues the enabling decrees which reduce the Catholic Church in Mexico, and indeed any and every church, to the status of a dependency of the civil state. The authority of the Church to control her own clergy is wiped out. Religious education is prohibited. The number of priests within a geographical area is fixed by the National Congress and the State governments.

1926 Sincere endeavors are made by the Bishops in Mexico for some acceptable understanding. Every endeavor fails. Persecution increases.

1926 April 21. Bishops of Mexico declare the Government of Mexico has a solemn duty to recognize the liberty of the Church, at least to the extent of not enacting any law establishing or forbidding any religion whatsoever. In this manner, declare the Bishops, is established an absolute separation of Church and State, and liberty is given to all to profess religion according to the dictates of their own conscience.

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1926 July 25—A joint pastoral is issued by the Mexican Bishops. It states:

“Further concession by us is not possible. It would be criminal for us to tolerate longer this situation.”

“To convert into crimes by laws, acts which by God are commanded and ordained, to impose penalties for the performance of those acts, more severe than those imposed for crimes against morality, against life, against property or against other rights of citizens, is the unheard of outrage committed by this decree against divine rights, against natural rights, against the most precious and sacred interests of the Mexican nation.”

“Before God, before civilized humanity, before our country and before history, we protest against this decree. With the help of God and with your help, Catholic priests and people of Mexico, we will labor to have this decree, together with the anti-religious articles of the Constitution, amended, and we will not stop until we see that accomplished.”

“This is not rebellion. The Constitution itself points the way to its own amendment. Our action is but just respect for mandates superior over any human law and is but the just defence of human rights.”

1926 The Bishops of Mexico at the end of this joint pastoral order that public worship be suspended and all the churches of Mexico closed on and after July 31, the day the decree of President Calles went into effect.

1926 Petitions as provided for by the Constitution are duly drawn up and carry over 2,000,000 signatures of Mexican citizens, protesting against this enforcement of the anti-religious clauses in the Constitution—but to these petitions no answer is returned. Appeals are made to the courts. But the courts refuse a hearing.

1926 President Calles institutes a reign of terror—of bloodshed—of execution. Constant appeals are made by both Catholic citizens, those of other denominations and other champions of justice, attached to no church—to our United States Government to appeal to the Mexican Gov-

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ernment to lift its ban against religious tolerance and to extend liberty of worship and of the press to all its citizens irrespective of creed.

- 1926 November. An Encyclical Letter is issued by Pope Pius XI. It reviews the beginnings and continuation of the persecution of the Church in Mexico. The Encyclical supports the action of the Bishops of Mexico and encourages all the faithful in their days of trial and suffering.
- 1926 November. The Catholic hierarchy of the United States issues a joint pastoral letter on the situation facing the Catholic Church in Mexico and the grave injury it evidences against the practical application of the principles of freedom of religious worship.
- 1927-8 The United States can do nothing officially. President Coolidge informally states he would be pleased if our Ambassador to Mexico, Mr. Morrow, could, also informally, bring about a conference between the Mexican Government and the authorities of the Catholic Church. Such a conference is eventually arranged. The Reverend John J. Burke acts as the representative of the then Apostolic Delegate to Mexico. The first conference is held on the Island of San Juan de Ulua between President Calles and Father Burke, April 4, 1928. The second conference between President Calles and Archbishop Ruiz and Father Burke is held at Chapultepec Palace, May 17, 1928.
- A proposed agreement is reached which afterwards is the "adjustment" accepted and made public by President Portes Gil. The agreement has necessarily to receive the approval of the Holy See and this requires some time.
- Archbishop Ruiz journeys to Vatican City to present the proposed agreement.
- 1928 November 21. The Bishops of Mexico meet at San Antonio, Texas. They issue a joint pastoral. It declares that if any agreement as to the restoration of public worship in Mexico is entered into by the Mexican Govern-

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ment and the Holy See, "we Bishops give our word of honor that the clergy and people of Mexico without hesitation will accept whole-heartedly whatever agreement the Holy See may approve."

1928 President-elect Obregon assassinated. President Calles declares at once it is the concerted act of Catholics. Some days later, he retracts this statement.

1928 Emilio Portes Gil succeeds Calles as temporary President of Mexico—to act as such until a successor to the assassinated Obregon is elected.

A rebellion headed by some who were the trusted agents of Calles in the persecution of 1926-27, breaks out. It is led by General Escobar. The rebellious generals are defeated—1929.

1929 Conversations between the Government of Mexico and the authorities of the Catholic Church are continued.

In June, Archbishop Ruiz and Archbishop Diaz go to Mexico City and hold conferences with President Portes Gil.

1929 On June 21 President Portes Gil issues the following statement: "I have had conversations with Archbishop Ruiz y Flores and Bishop Pascual Diaz. These conversations took place as a result of the public statement made by Archbishop Ruiz y Flores on May 2 and the statement made by me on May 8.

"Archbishop Ruiz y Flores and Bishop Diaz informed me that the Mexican Bishops have felt that the Constitution and the laws, particularly the provision which requires the registration of ministers and the provision which grants the separate States the right to determine the maximum number of ministers, threaten the identity of the Church by giving the State the control of its spiritual offices.

"They assure me that the Mexican Bishops are animated by a sincere patriotism, and that they desire to resume public worship if this can be done consistently with their loyalty to the Mexican Republic and their con-

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sciences. They stated that it could be done if the Church could enjoy freedom within the law to live and exercise its spiritual offices.

"I am glad to take advantage of this opportunity to declare publicly and very clearly that it is not the purpose of the Constitution, nor of the laws, nor of the Government of the Republic to destroy the identity of the Catholic Church or of any other, or to interfere in any way with its spiritual functions. In accordance with the oath of office which I took when I assumed the provisional government of Mexico to observe and cause to be observed the Constitution of the Republic and the laws derived therefrom, my purpose has been at all times to fulfill honestly that oath and to see that the laws are applied without favor to any sect and without any bias whatever, my administration being disposed to hear from any person, be he dignitary of some church or merely a private individual, any complaints in regard to injustices arising from undue application of the laws.

"With reference to certain provisions of the law which have been misunderstood, I also take advantage of this opportunity to declare:

"One. 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 hierarchical superior of the religious creed in question or in accordance with its regulations.

"Two. 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.

"Three. That the Constitution as well as the laws of the country guarantees 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."

Accepting in good faith the words of President Portes Gil, Archbishop Ruiz, the authorized spokesman of the

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Church in Mexico, issued the following statement announcing that worship would be resumed:

"Bishop Diaz 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 the 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 cooperate in all moral efforts made for the benefit of all the people of our fatherland.

(Signed) LEOPOLDO RUIZ,
*Archbishop of Morelia,
Apostolic Delegate to Mexico."*

City of Mexico,
June 21, 1929.

The Catholic churches are reopened and the public worship resumed in accordance with the number of priests allowed by the different State Governments.

- 1929 The trial of Toral, who assassinated Obregon, is made the occasion of anti-religious outbreak led by Padilla, who had been appointed by the Government as special prosecutor. The jury resigns, but Toral is sentenced and executed.
- 1929 Pascual Ortiz Rubio elected President. He promises justice to all and religious freedom. But some States, Vera Cruz, for example, continue their bitter persecution of the Church.
- 1932 Celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the national shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Attended by Government officials. Calles favors the celebration. Im-

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mediately afterwards Calles is charged with yielding to "church" influences. He at once causes to be enacted the law for the Federal District of Mexico reducing the number of priests to 25 for 1,300,000 Catholics. Many State Governors follow this example.

Today, with a population of over 14,000,000 Catholics, less than 500 priests in all of Mexico are permitted to exercise their ministry. In Chiapas, with 320,000 Catholics, not one priest is allowed; in Sonora, 300,000 Catholics, no priest allowed; in Vera Cruz, 1,000,000 Catholics, no priest allowed. The Church is not allowed to conduct seminaries and therefore not permitted to train candidates for the priesthood. To give instruction on religion is to violate the penal code. The Church is forbidden to organize or direct her priests. The bishops and the priests are often peremptorily sent into exile—citizens banished from their own country without trial or hearing of any kind. Priests may not teach even in Government-controlled schools. Priests may not instruct children in the home.

1932 The Minister of Education in the Mexican Government declares the Government education programme "is based on an absolute prohibition of all religious instruction."

1932 Archbishop Diaz protests against this programme. Catholics as citizens present petition. As a result, Catholics are charged with sedition. The petition remains unanswered.

1932 September 4. President Rubio resigns. Congress names Abelardo Rodriguez as provisional President. In his final message the retiring President refers to two decrees issued in 1931 and 1932 which already forecasted the radical amendment adopted in 1934 with regard to education. The decree of 1931 suppressed more completely liberty of education in secondary schools, and that of 1932, the very existence of private primary schools.

1932 Pope Pius XI issues an Encyclical Letter to the Bishops of Mexico deploring the increased persecution of the

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Church. The 1929 arrangement, the Holy Father states, has not been adhered to by the Mexican Government.

"When in 1929," Pius XI declares, "the Supreme Magistrate of Mexico publicly declared that the Government, by applying the laws in question, had no intention of destroying the 'Identity of the Church,' or of ignoring the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, we thought it best, having no other intention but the good of souls, to profit by the occasion, which seemed to offer a possibility of having the rights of the Hierarchy duly recognized. Seeing, therefore, some hope of remedying greater evils, and judging that the principal motives that had induced the Episcopate to suspend public worship no longer existed, We asked Ourselves whether it were not advisable to order its resumption. In this there was no intention, certainly, of accepting the Mexican regulations of worship, nor of withdrawing Our protests against these regulations, much less of ceasing to combat them. It was merely a question of abandoning, in view of the Government's new declarations, one of the methods of resistance before it could bring harm to the faithful, and of having recourse instead to others deemed more opportune.

"Unfortunately, as all know, Our wishes and desires were not followed by the peace and favorable settlement We had hoped for. On the contrary, Bishops, priests and faithful Catholics continued to be penalized and imprisoned contrary to the spirit in which the *Modus Vivendi* had been established.

"Since any restriction whatever of the number of priests is a grave violation of Divine rights, it will be necessary for the Bishops, the clergy and the Catholic laity to continue to protest with all their energy against such violation, using every legitimate means. For even if these protests have no effect on those that govern the country, they will be effective in persuading the faithful, especially the uneducated, that by such action the State attacks the liberty of the Church, which liberty the Church can never renounce, no matter what may be the violence of the persecutors."

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- 1932 This Encyclical is declared by the editor of the official organ of the National Revolutionary Party, "a criminal interference by Rome in our internal affairs"; and Archbishop Ruiz, native-born citizen of Mexico, is sent out of the country by aeroplane.
- 1933 Further reduction of number of priests in many States. Further confiscation of Church, school and convent properties. Intensification of anti-religious propaganda in the schools.
- 1933-4 Discussion and final adoption by the National Revolutionary Party of Mexico of the "Six-Year Plan."
Under this Plan the State claims and declares it will exercise complete control of education, even to the smallest details of the curriculum, in all educational institutions and even in the home itself. It declares further the State has the right to direct the exercise of all "professions," that to exercise a profession is "a social question and not an individual right of the one who exercises the profession." Priests and all ministers of the gospel; teachers, college professors; directors and editors of newspapers are classified as professionals and must therefore be directed not by any ecclesiastical or educational authority but by the State.
- The Bishops earnestly protest against those provisions of the Six-Year Plan that thus deny liberty of religion and liberty of education and liberty of the press.
- 1934 February 20. Mexico's Attorney General, Portes Gil, issues instructions with regard to the nationalization of church property. A part of the instructions reads as follows:

"III. Property which by reason of the use it has been put to, is subject to the provisions of the Constitution, Article 27, section II. Included under this term "property" are all properties that at any time have served as

The residence of a bishop or priest;
Seminaries;
Asylums;

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Schools conducted by religious associations;
Convents;
Every other object in any way related to the administration, propaganda or teaching of a religious cult;
Places of worship.

“All these immovables should at once be transferred, as by full right, to the ownership of the nation.

“In cases where private persons claim ownership in the courts, the only evidence required to establish the title of the nation is proof that the immovable has been used as alleged.”

1934 In October a test case is brought before the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court upholds the rulings of the Attorney General.

1934 July 19. In a broadcast from Guadalajara, General Calles, speaking on education as outlined in the Six-Year Plan, declared:

“But the Revolution has not ended. The eternal enemies lie in ambush and are laying plans to nullify the triumphs of the Revolution. It is necessary that we enter a new period of the Revolution. I would call this new period the psychological period of the Revolution. We must now enter and take possession of the consciences of the children, of the consciences of the young, because they do belong and should belong to the Revolution.

“It is absolutely necessary that we dislodge the enemy from this trench where the clergy are now, where the conservatives are,—I refer to education, I refer to the school.

“It would be a very grave stupidity, it would be a crime for the men of the Revolution to fail to rescue the young from the claws of the clericals, from the claws of the conservatives; and, unfortunately, in many States of the Republic and even in the capital of the Republic itself the school is under the direction of clerical and reactionary elements.

“We cannot entrust to the hands of our enemies the

future of the country and the future of the Revolution. With every artfulness the reactionaries are saying and the clericals are saying that the children belong to the home and the youth to the family. This is a selfish doctrine, because the children and youth belong to the community; they belong to the collectivity, and it is the Revolution that has the inescapable duty to take possession of consciences, to drive out prejudices and to form the new soul of the nation.

“Therefore, I call upon all Governors throughout the Republic, on all public authorities and on all Revolutionary elements that we proceed at once to the field of battle which we must take because children and the young must belong to the Revolution.”

1934 The United States Ambassador to Mexico, in an address to members of a seminar from the United States, at the Embassy in Mexico City, refers to General Calles' speech at Guadalajara.

In this speech Calles had said: “We must now enter and take possession of the consciences of the children, of the consciences of the young, because they do belong and should belong to the Revolution.”

The Ambassador of the United States to Mexico—in other words, the official representative of the United States in Mexico—declares:

“The spirit of the Mexico of this day was clearly and succinctly stated last week in Guadalajara by General Calles in as brief a sentence as that employed by Jefferson decades ago. General Calles, speaking for the ear of all patriotic Mexicans, and particularly those entrusted with leadership, said:

“‘We must enter and take possession of the mind of childhood, the mind of youth.’”

Earnest protests are presented by the Catholic organizations of the United States, the Catholic press, and later by the non-Catholic press and non-Catholic organizations to the President of the United States against the statement of Ambassador Daniels. Mr. Daniels explains that he meant to do no more than support general education, and that he had no thought of excluding religious education.

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The protests multiply, but no answer as yet is given to them. The statement of our Ambassador is interpreted in Mexico as an implicit support of the present Mexican Administration and its policies.

1934 October 10. The third article of the Constitution of Mexico declares "instruction is free," and defines that education in public schools be secular.

The amendment to this Article Three, adopted in 1934, makes it obligatory that all public schools shall exclude every religious doctrine: that if there be any private schools permitted by the State to function, such private schools must conform to this obligation: that no religious organization or minister of any religion take any part in primary, secondary or normal schools, nor give such schools any economic support.

1934 October 19. The majority of the Chamber of Deputies, all members of the National Revolutionary Party, sitting as a "bloc," which right they have conferred on themselves, direct the Executive Board of the National Revolutionary Party to petition President Rodriguez to exile at once from Mexico all Catholic Archbishops and Bishops. Even before the petition is presented, the Federal and State Governments exile many. They then proceed to exile more. All the Archbishops and Bishops are native Mexican citizens. Those exiled never receive any hearing, or trial, but are ordered peremptorily to leave their country.

1934 October 20. Senator Ezequiel Padilla, Secretary of the National Revolutionary Party, supporting the constitutional amendment to Article Three, which provides for the complete laicizing of education, declares: "Religion is something that is in the heart, in the convictions of men. It cannot be destroyed by brute force. It can be destroyed, if at all, only by persuasion.

"For this reason the Mexican Revolution has made a chief instrument of its policy the diffusion of education which is eminently socialistic. Those who have studied history know too well that openly to fight religion would

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have gotten us nowhere. In the French Revolution priests were hanged and guillotined in every province. Who would have thought after this that clerical power would still live? Nevertheless, only a few decades were required for Catholicism once more to raise her powerful head in every part of France. Religion is to be combated with the book, by teaching and by persuasion."

1934 Protest of faculties and students of colleges and universities throughout Mexico is made against proposed amendment to Article Three of the Constitution. The protest declares the amendment destroyed academic freedom.

1934 November. The private correspondence of Archbishop Ruiz, exiled Apostolic Delegate to Mexico and now resident in the United States, is opened by the Government of Mexico. Directions which it contained concerning the conduct and attitude of Catholics under the present persecution are interpreted by the Mexican Federal Government as seditious. Archbishop Ruiz formally indicted November 14, 1934.

1934 In an open letter to President Rodriguez, Archbishop Ruiz explains the letters and then adds:

"The Bishops, the clergy and all the Catholics of Mexico know perfectly well that the Church does not desire to defend, and should never desire to defend, their rights by means of a revolution. If Catholics on their own initiative take up arms, they know what they are doing. The word 'defence,' therefore, as used in my letters, refers to the use of peaceful means."

"This is the explanation of everything, made with all the sincerity of my soul, which I beg you and all the people of Mexico to accept. And although the present circumstances seem unpropitious, I ask, with an equal sincerity, that you, Mr. President, the people of Mexico, and particularly the Catholics, put aside their hate, refuse to be guided by the evil counsels of passion, and aid in hastening the day of reconciliation and of peace, whereon our mutual rights will be respected and our mutual duties fulfilled."

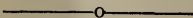
1934 November. Bishops of the United States issue statement emphasizing and extending their letter of 1926. "We have a duty to speak as Americans attached to the institutions of our country and loving them for the benefits they have conferred upon us all.' Present conditions make it necessary that we should no longer guard silence. . . . The full consequences of the persecution of the Church and of Catholics in Mexico can scarcely be foreseen at the present time. They cannot but eventually be very grave. . . . It is not without significance that in the present turmoil of the world and distress of nations, the basic truths of religion, from which has sprung the stability of nations, are flouted and denied by those who seek absolutism in government. The struggle, therefore, which arises from the persecution of the Church in Mexico today is an illustration of a crisis which may have far-reaching consequences.

"We would wish on the part of the entire American public, of our great secular press, a fuller knowledge of the actual conditions in Mexico. All would then more fully realize that we are pleading not only the cause of the Catholic Church, but the cause of human freedom and of human liberty for all the nations of the world."



N. C. W. C. PAMPHLETS ON MEXICO

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