Mexican Revolution of 1910

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Why did it start? / Pre-Revolution

- Widespread dissatisfaction with the power and control of Porfirio Diaz
  - Favored wealthy landlords and industrialists
- Disputes about what needed to be accomplished
  - Political chaos
- General public wanted expeditious and just solutions to Mexico’s problems
Mexico's Problems: Need for Land and Labor Reforms

- Land divided into large estates, or **haciendas**
  - Small portion of population owned land
  - Land given to those from Spain or Spanish descent (hacendados)
- Inaccurate/incomplete land ownership records
  - Diaz modernization goals; compensate/redistribute land taken from peasants
  - Land modernization system ultimately failed
- Peonage System (slavery debt or debt servitude)
  - Agriculturally: peons paid fee of produce to landowner
  - Industrialization: exploited peasants who migrated to cities in search of better paying work (peons of the cities)
Mexico’s Problems: The Church’s power in Society

Catholic Church was made state religion of Mexico after Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1824

- Church largely composed the hacendados; owned many large haciendas

- Church held all responsibility for education
  - Dictated what the people learned about their culture
  - Peon education and involvement in civic affairs made nearly impossible
  - [1910] 3/4 of population illiterate

- Taught people that to question political order was to defy God
Political Chaos

- After gaining independence from Spain, Mexico experienced constant shifts of power between different military groups
  - No stable political leadership until Porfirio Diaz
- Mexican Democracy
  - People had little influence in political system

Mexico’s Problems

Excessive Foreign Influence

- Porfirio Diaz encouraged foreign investment in Mexico
- Foreigners invested in key industries and essential networks
  - Essentially created
- Mexican economy flourished and became heavily dependent on foreign (especially American) capital
A decade of turmoil: The Revolution (1910-1920)
Revolution and Civil Wars timeline

Revolution typified by civil battles between the government and revolutionary armies and the constant shift of leadership between different caudillos

1910
Porfirio Díaz runs for reelection, defeats Francisco Madero.

Madero's troops led by Pancho Villa attack federal troops in Ciudad Juárez; Battle of Juárez lasts for three days (May 8-10); Victory Madero, Diaz resign

1911
Revolution begins with local uprisings in several states in northern México (Nov. 20)

1913
“La Decena Trágica” in México City; Huerta, Díaz*, and Reyes attack Madero’s army; Madero killed; Huerta presidency

1914
Villa defeats Huerta in Zacatecas; Huerta resigns (July); Venustiano Carranza declares himself president; Zapata and Villa break from Carranza and challenge him (September); Carranza flees to Veracruz

1915
Carranza’s supporters, under Álvaro Obregón, defeat Villa at the Battle of Celaya (April 13); Zapata’s supporters defeated (May); Carranza returns and formally recognized by US as president

1916
Villa raids Columbus, NM (March); U.S. General John J. Pershing leads soldiers into México, “Punitive Expedition” fails to capture Villa

1917
Villa defeated at last Battle of Juárez; Zapata assassinated

1919
Obregón presidency

1920
A new Mexican Constitution is drafted; Carranza is elected president

Timeline adapted from *Ringside Seat to a Revolution*
Porfirio Díaz
R. 1877-80, 1884-1911

- Regime held unshakable power since 1876
- Made huge economic changes
  - Foreign concessions in:
    - Mining
    - Railroads
- Allocated Mexican land to wealthy non-nationals
- Created impression of prosperity in the Mexican elite
- Forced to resign from presidency in 1911 by revolutionary forces
- Led rebel forces in February 1913
Francisco Madero

- Removed Díaz from power
- Put in prison by Díaz; revolted once he was released
- Declared President on November 6, 1911 by the revolutionary forces
- Was turned against by Emiliano Zapata and the US Government
- Replaced as President by Huerta in February of 1913
- Assassinated a few days after his replacement

R.1911-13
Pancho Villa

- Northern Leader
  - Troops consisted of small farmers, railroaders, and cowboys
- Took charge in raiding government troops
- Led a revolutionary movement in the North because of disappointment of reform by Madero
- Sided with Carranza and led a revolt against Huerta
- Attacked Columbus, New Mexico in January of 1916
Emiliano Zapata

- Southern Leader (Morelos)
  - Had been conflicts between Native Americans and large sugar estates
- Engaged in campaigns against local caciques
- Had goals of land reform: “Tierra y Libertad” (“Land and Liberty”)
- Represented peasant class
- Turned against Madero
- Plan of Ayala; basis of agrarian reform in 1917 Constitution
- Assassinated in 1919
Victoriano Huerta

- Joined rebel forces to overthrow Madero
- Replaced and assassinated Madero
- Established dictatorship
- Priority was to restore order in Mexico
  - Term marked by regional uprising
- Overthrown by Carranza in 1914
- Period of war followed
Venustiano Carranza

- Overthrew Huerta
- Formed Constitutional Army
- Received support from US
- Convened the Queretaro Convention
  - Did not want to draft new constitution
  - Wanted to amend constitution of 1857 to give president the control to make necessary changes
- Killed on May 21, 1920
Alvaro Obregón
R. 1920-1924

• A general that knew the tactics of machine guns and trenches
  ○ learned from the war in Europe
• Defeated Villa’s cavalry in 1915
• Emerged as leader of the government
• Officially elected in 1920
1. 1910—Francisco Madero runs against Porfirio Díaz
2. Madero arrested; Díaz back in power by a fixed election
3. Madero calls for revolt upon being released from prison
4. Revolts started in the north and the south
5. 1911—Díaz removed from power; Madero became President
6. Emiliano Zapata started a revolt
7. 1913—Madero removed from government and assassinated
8. Victoriano Huerta began rule and wanted a dictatorship
9. Villa and Zapata rose against and opposed Huerta
10. Period of warfare followed fight over the new regime by leaders
11. Alvaro Obregón became leader of government in Mexico City
12. 1920—War ended; Obregón elected president
Mexican Constitution of 1917

- Said to have ended the revolution
- Limited foreign ownership of key resources
- Guaranteed rights of workers
  - Workers were organized in a nation confederation and given representation
- Restricted clerical education and church ownership of property
- Educational Reforms
  - The government launched extensive programs of primary and rural education
- Land Reforms
  - Very slow but over 40 million acres were distributed and taken from communal holdings
What Type of Revolution?

War against government

People rose up against the government and altered it
Outcome

**POSITIVE**

- Revolution aimed to ensure a fairer way of life for farmers
- Ended dictatorship in Mexico
- Established constitutional republic
- Ended hacienda system
- Had mixed economy
- Mexican Constitution of 1917 established.

**NEGATIVE**

- 1.5 million died
- Major industries destroyed
- Ranching and farming disrupted
- Promises of change not always delivered

A rebel camp near the end of the Revolution
Why was it a war against the reigning government?

People rise up from government:

- Uprisings by farmers against government because of the land given to the United States

The government is altered:

- Ended dictatorship and established a constitutional republic


