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MANIFESTATIONS OF DEMOCRACY
AMONG
MEXICAN INDIANS DURING
THE COLONIAL PERIOD

By Prof. Luis Chavez Orozco

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FOREWORD

This report deals with the political institutions of the Indians during the colonial period and has been completed with the cooperation and assistance of the United States National Indian Institute. The original suggestion that this investigation be undertaken was made by the present Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Mr. John Collier.

I wish to express in these preliminary words my profound gratitude for the opportunity afforded to investigate this never before explored field of research, and for the economic assistance which made it possible. My appreciation is even greater because I was given the responsibility of undertaking an assignment that has so much political and social importance for the countries of America.

In order to explain in some degree the deficiencies of the present report, I wish to point out the difficulties met during the course of the investigation. Of course the fact must be emphasized, well known to those versed in research of this type, that this phase of novo-hispanic history has never before been investigated. Actually, it is useless to consult past chronicles or recent reports, for both are lacking in this respect. We know more or less adequately something of the economic aspects of the life of the Indians; we have a wealth of information on their cultural and educational organizations; we have learned, in short, about many aspects of Indian life during the colonial period; but we know practically nothing of their political activities.

Even the Laws of the Indies, the principal source of information on the social structure of the colonial epoch, are of small value for the purpose of this investigation. Only a very few laws on the subject of the investigation, certainly the least important, are included in this code which is so complete in its other aspects. And what is true of the Laws of the Indies can also be said of other national compilations, from the Cedulario de Puga to the work of Montemayor and Beleña. Thus, in accepting the responsibility, we faced a rather difficult problem of historic investigation. The only possibility of carrying out the assignment was by original research--by consultation of the documents and papers under the custody of the General Archives of the Nation in the City of Mexico. Fortunately, because of the cooperation of the personnel of that organization, it was not too difficult to locate among two very important sections entitled Section on Indians and Section on the Civil Branch, the documentation that resulted in the present report. The appendix contains reference to the meager bibliographical sources and the numerous documents examined.

Sixteenth Century

The institution of the "cacicazgo". What was the political status of the Indians immediately after the conquest? Theoretically, at least, we can state that the Indian communities of New Spain continued to be governed according to their own ancient customs. Solórzano y Pereira corroborates this when he states in his Politica Indiana that "although the control, government and protection of all the extensive provinces of the New World belongs to our Catholic Kings of Spain....(by the grant of Pope Alexander VI)....it was always their royal will that in the Indian communities having some form of political organization or policy, or that had such policy established by our own peoples to be complied with by them....there should be retained for their government and direction, the same chiefs and captains that performed such offices during their infidelity, or those who proved to be their descendants". (1) Following the native Antillean nomenclature, the name of "casiques" was bestowed upon such governors. (2)

The institution of "gobernación". This, as an official designation, was short-lived--the decree of February 26, 1538, addressed to the Viceroyalty of Mexico stated that "it is provided that they should not be addressed as lords of the towns and municipalities over which they preside, but just governors or principals". (3)

This concept of the institution of gobernacion among the Indians, instead of the cacicazgo, was implemented in 1549, by the decree of October 9 of that year, where it is ordered that "from among the Indians themselves there be selected some petty judges and aldermen, constables and scribes, and other law enforcement officers who, following their customs

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1. Solórzano y Pereira, Política Indiana, Book II, Chapter XXVII.

2. "In Hispaniola, the first land discovered by Columbus, they called them in their native tongue by the title of caciques, and our own men applied the same term to the Indians who occupied a similar rank, though as can be understood each group in their own language had different terms; we know that in Peru they are called curacas and in Mexico tecles....." Solórzano y Pereira, cited above, Book II, Chapter XXVII, par. 2.

3. Solórzano y Pereira, op. cit.

and ways, be charged with the administration of the affairs of their communities and reservations". (4)

Following this policy, the viceroys of New Spain faced the problem of deciding whether such municipal authorities were to be appointed by succession or through election. They decided on the latter. (5)

The institution of municipal government by election. The system of municipal government by election dates, as far as the Indian jurisdiction of the city of Mexico is concerned, from 1555. In fact, the four traditional pre-hispanic wards named Santa María, San Sebastian, San Pablo, and San Juan (located outside the original boundaries set aside for Spanish habitation) began from that date "to have charge of order and law enforcement in the election of governor, mayor, and aldermen, and in the provisions of the affairs of their republic, and it was so ordered at the wish of Our Lord and His Majesty, as recorded in the town register". (6)

Roster of municipal authorities in the City of Mexico--16th century. We have the roster of the Indian municipal authorities of the City of Mexico who served for twenty consecutive years, from 1555 to 1575. The most ancient municipal staff was as follows:

Mayors: Miguel Diaz and Alonso de San Miguel.

Aldermen: Cristobal de Guzmán, Juan Ramírez, Diego Tlacapanecal, Juan García Totococ, Martín Jacobo, Pedro de Gante, Antonio Mexicaytoa, Pedro de Santa María, Gabriel Xalacatl, Baltazar Atiacapanecatl, Francisco Concuís and Sebastian Ticoquiaguacatl.

Procedure for the election of the Indian municipal authorities of the City of Mexico--16th Century. From the text of the charges preferred against the Indian authorities of the City of Mexico during the year 1564, we can reconstruct the procedure followed in the annual elections. These

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4. Solorzano y Pereira, op. cit., par. 12.

5. Solórzano y Pereira, op. cit., par. 15.

6. All reference to the Indian municipal government during the sixteenth century has been taken from an old file in the General Archives of the Nation, Section on the Civil Branch, Vol. 644.

accusations are made in the following terms: "The aforementioned mayors and aldermen have the custom each year, when it is time to elect the new mayors, aldermen and other officers for that period, of nominating them secretly without discussing it in a general assembly, and they naturally pick men of their own liking; men who know how to drink, and the Indian police or constables are brought from out of town, most of them so selected by the officials in order that they might better continue their knavery and roguery because out of town constables are prone to conceal them, which they would not do if these constables were from this town". Another witness swears to having seen "that before the election, the councilmen go about the town convincing the people to vote for the Indians they have already agreed upon and have nominated to become mayors, constables and aldermen for that year....and has also seen that they appoint constables from out of town in order that they might have entire freedom of action, and thus they appointed Diego and Baltasar, who are from Tlaxcala." From the text of the rebuttal to these charges a further clear picture is obtained of the election procedures. In this is found the following: "The mayors elected for the good administration of the City of Mexico are extremely capable persons, honest and good Christians, well versed in business affairs, particularly those of this community, all of them elected in good faith and by agreement and after due deliberation, which was free from passion or friendship. Only the ablest and most capable were elected, as has always been the case....and though they cannot read or write, this matters naught, because their knowledge of Indian affairs in spite of not knowing how to read and write is such that they can manage them with good dispatch because of their experience in such affairs, and the same is true of many locations, villages and cities of your kingdoms and provinces of Castille and all Spain, where there are many mayors who do not read or write and pursuant to the laws of your kingdom can be elected to such positions because they are persons versed in the customs and habits of their community, without any other knowledge...."

The election of the Indian municipal authorities of Mexico City was confirmed and approved by the Viceroy and Royal Assembly.

Duties of the Indian municipal authorities of the City of Mexico--16th Century. Their functions were as follows: To administer justice in the community, to judge and to sentence "in a public place of assembly, at the site designated for the hearing of these matters", at the appointed hours they visited the jail to "listen to and understand" the procedure at the trials of Indians, with "solicitude and diligence", to provide the necessary understanding "in all cases of justice and government that they may and should administer, pursuant to the laws, ordinances and instructions issued by those who govern in the name of His Majesty in this New Spain, in conformity with usage and custom, and with the approval of the decrees and laws of His Majesty, without receiving money, donations or promises or anything that might impair their rectitude and zeal"; to attend "engagements, baptisms, weddings and burials" for "it is the decent and virtuous thing to honor and to attend these, and to bury and to pray for the dead", to arrest those guilty of concubinage and vagrancy, ascertaining the source of their livelihood and what trades they pursue, to

"endeavor to close the pulque taverns and find where it is made, and arrest the culprits and those who sell and buy it and to prohibit drunkenness".

The Indian municipality charged with public works of the City of Mexico. Before taxation was established among the Indians of the City of Mexico in 1575, the municipal authorities of the different wards were charged with responsibility for the public works of the city (Coatequitl). For the better understanding of the importance of this function, there are cited below some of the works completed with material and human resources furnished by the Indian municipality during the year 1555. These were the following:

For the clock tower there were spent 210 loads of lime brought by the Indians of San Juan.

There were spent on the quarters of Dr. Herrera, formerly of the Royal Assembly, and now the domicile of Dr. Ceinos, 300 loads of lime for repairs and general work; also for whitewashing and other works; furnished by the Indians of Ocelo Tzontecotitlan, Moyotlan, Texocuclo, Antenponasco, Tuzaytlan, Apanoyan, and Culhuacatongo.

Six hundred forty loads of lime from Zupango, for His Majesty's hospital, were delivered at different intervals. These were brought by the Indians of the four wards and each one was paid one half a tomín (one half tomín equals fifteen hundredths of a peseta).

For the home of His Excellency the Viceroy, the wards of Atlaupa, Tlacomulco and Tepetitlan furnished 150 loads of lime, for repairs and general work.

There were brought 400 loads of lime for the quarters of Dr. Montalegra for such work as might be necessary; these were royal quarters and the lime was brought by the Indians of the 15 wards of Necaltitlan, Necaltitlan, Xolocoyacatlan, Tetepilco, Tlaxquititlan, Temascaltitla, Tomatlan, Coatlan, Zacatlan, Aguatongo, Cuitlahuacatongo, Teocaltitlan, Zacualco, Cotulco, Populco, and Quepona.

One hundred loads of lime were delivered to the house of Dr. Bravo by the Indians of Toscaminga and Ometoxtitlan.

One hundred sixty-five loads of lime were used in repairs of the dwellings occupied by Licenciado Maldonado, Solicitor of the Royal Assembly, furnished by the Indians of the wards of Tlosalpa, Texcatzongo, Analpa, Estacalucan and Teocaltitlan.

Used 353 units of gravel to fill a swamp located near the place where the town buildings were started, which were contributed by common consent of all the Indians of the four wards of Mexico in order that there should be a municipal building, and it was thus ordered by his Excellency the Viceroy as a public work.

Fifty units of gravel issued for certain parts of the market of Mexico, as it was full of waterholes.

Fifty-three units of gravel used on the road that winds about the houses of Rodrigo de Castañeda and ends at the market of San Hipolito.

Thirty units of gravel placed back of the chapel of San Jose.

Twenty bars and 20 beams furnished by the Indians of the four wards to construct a small dam to stop the creek that runs from Excapotzalco to the city.

Ordered by His Excellency the Viceroy, the Indians of the four wards brought a good number of bars for the fence built next to Atarazanas; no record was made of the paint used.

Forty-nine units of gravel were brought to His Majesty's hospital which had been ordered closed, in order to fill in waterholes.

During the year there were brought 98 beams to dam the water in His Majesty's hospital in addition to the gravel brought, as a public works project.

Also during the year the Indians brought 9 beams for the house of His Majesty's Solicitor, which was part of the royal quarters.

The Indians furnished 11 large beams for the clock tower of the city.

This year the Indians furnished 149 units of heavy rocks.

Erected three huts for the use of the community.

Seventy units of heavy rock were used in repairs of the church fence which, together with the items referred to above, were brought by the Indians of the four wards.

Was there a democratic conscience in the Indian community? Naturally, it is unjust to state positively that there was a clearly defined democratic conscience in the Indian community, for that complex concept is a modern development. Nevertheless, the fact that there was in the community a movement of opposition to those in power, is in itself a clear indication that the Indian communities, had they been stimulated along these lines, would have matured and in time would have been qualified to exercise democracy. Let us examine how the opposition to and criticism of the municipal authorities of the wards of the City of Mexico about the middle of the sixteenth century were manifested. The knowledge of these criticisms may serve, in addition, to help us discern how far the pre-hispanic customs were continued in the new society that emerged from the conquest.

The accusers of the governors, mayors and councilmen of the Indian wards of the City of Mexico listed the following complaints: They, the officials, did not know how to read or write; they were "old timers of the type that in the past believed in idolatry; they had no knowledge of the laws; were rude and personally disliked in the assemblies; accepted monies from both sides in a controversy; though the money from fines was to be turned into His Majesty's treasury, they pilfered it; when somebody died they went to the deceased man's house to eat and drink and be merry as was the custom of the last century; on the occasion of dances and feasts they were in the habit of wearing costumes and dress typical of the old times when sacrificial and idolatrous practices were common; they had the custom and vice of going into the public thermal baths among the women, all naked and noisy; they did nothing against those who fled from other towns in the company of married women and on the pretext that they were married, lived in plain and open concubinage; protected the existence of places where thieves and rogues abounded; were in the habit of sending people to work in 'houses of Spaniards who earn their living by making native wines'; at certain times they ordered collections in cash in each ward from all officials to make feather headgear and other feather articles to be used in the dances and ceremonies. These cost as much as fifty or sixty pesos each, and are then rented at the time of the feast to the young men who thus makes themselves more attractive to the women."

The accusers were "Indians of the four wards of this City of Mexico, engaged in different trades; tailors, shoemakers, weavers, carpenters, painters, etc.", and in requesting removal of the authorities cited a long list of offenses, as can be seen in the appendix.

Legal jurisdiction of the Indian municipal authorities in the City of Mexico during the 16th century. From the act approved the 3rd of August, 1590 (7) reported by Beleña, the legal jurisdiction of these municipal officials was of importance, to the extent that it was necessary to regulate the internment of prisoners in the jails established on Indian lands. In an effort to avoid the abuses commonly practiced by governors, mayors and aldermen, it was provided that said jails "shall not accept or admit as prisoners therein any Indians, male or female, brought by any person, on their own authority, for debts due or for services to be performed, or for theft of which they are accused, nor for any other offenses; nor shall the jails admit and accept prisoners from constables, Span-

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7. Beleña, Eusebio Bentura, Summary of the Decrees of the Viceroyalty and Courts of New Spain, and Decisions of the High Government; of several royal writs and orders that were assembled here after publication of the Laws of the Indies, as well as others that, because of their importance, should not be ignored. Mexico, 1787.

ish or Indian, who bring such prisoners, if their confinement is not ordered by some of the officials and mayors of the Royal Assembly, or by a warrant of the warden of this city. If the warden must issue such a warrant against the Indians, it shall be for confinement in their own jails on the reservations and not for confinement in the City Jail, taking into account the inconvenience, costs and expenses that this entails and may follow". Thus, in this fashion, the decree provided that "in said jails they admit only those who by order of the Indian governors and mayors are brought thereto, the cause of such imprisonment must arise out of contention among the Indians themselves, and only when they are the principals".

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CHAPTER II

Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

If the knowledge of the origin of political institutions in the novohispanic Indian World is made difficult by the dearth of available materials, the study of their evolution during the following two centuries is a relatively easy task. We have sufficient documentary evidence for that purpose (1) and the problem confines itself to locating it. There is such a wealth of information that it is difficult to explain why up to this time it hadnot attracted the attention of the numerous investigators who have examined the treasures of the General Archives of the Nation.

It can be stated that the political institutions of the Indians, as is the case in most of the social aspects of colonial life, were already fully organized at the beginning of the seventeenth century. For this reason we shall study at some length the different manifestations of the Indian's political life during the two centuries referred to above.

Time of election. The elections were held annually, about the latter part of December. The Indians were so used to this date that they did not allow the alternate from Zacualpa to compel the residents of Acatlahuaya to advance their election; and in this connection they filed a complaint in very energetic terms. Because of this the Viceroy Revillagigedo ordered a complete investigation, and although the accused en-

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1. See list of documents listed in the appendix.

deavored to rationalize his action by pointing out the enormous distances between the principal town and parts of the rest of the province, in the end the Indians won their point, and it was decided that the established custom should be faithfully followed. (2)

The electors. According to the 1675 election law of the Indian Zone of Villa de San Miguel el Grande, the electors or voters were "the 'caciques' and principals, legitimate descendants of the first inhabitants and founders" of the village. (3) The petition signed in 1764 by the residents of the Pueblo de San Lucas, in the jurisdiction of Temascaltepec (4) stated that the voters were the "old men and others who have served in different capacities in the government"

The young Indians of Ixtlahuaca in 1768 initiated a struggle against this early tendency toward an aristocratic form; they also opposed the tendency to favor the old men. This can be seen from the suit filed by the old men of Temascaltepec against Pedro Lopez, who "because of his restless character, and in order to cause trouble for the principals, endeavored together with two or three others like him, to arouse the young Indians to vote, in order that they might join his faction and thus form a strong party". From this, the old men alleged, "discords arise and in addition it is against custom". (4) In view of this contention the Royal Assembly issued a decree on the 26th of October, 1742 in the following terms: "Whereas on behalf of the officials of the republic and voters of the Pueblo de San Pedro Texupildo, Jurisdiction of Temascaltepec, it has been brought to our attention that on the pretext of the forthcoming elections for governor, mayor and other officials of the government of that pueblo, the young men of the community have been creating disturbances and ill feeling for the purpose of controlling the elections, and so that the old men and past officers would not participate in the elec-

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2. Don Baltazar Juan, present governor of the Pueblo de San Juan Bautista Acapetlahuaya, versus the subdelegate in the matter of imprisonment of several Indians because they opposed the celebration of elections. Section of Civil Matters, Vol. 1686, General Archives of the Nation.

3. Report of election held in the Villa de San Miguel el Grande. 1675. Section of Civil Matters, Vol. 1661, General Archives of the Nation.

4. Report made on behalf of the people of San Lucas jurisdiction of Temascaltepec, ordering that the younger men refrain from voting or causing disturbances in the elections. 1768. Section of Civil Matters, Vol. 1661, General Archives of the Nation.

tion, which is against the established custom; and whereas these officials have requested that steps be taken to insure a peaceful and quiet election--Therefore, and pursuant to His Majesty's Solicitor's request, it is hereby ordered that the Lieutenant of the said jurisdiction forbid that the young men who have no right to vote interfere with the election or create disturbances and confusion, and that he see to it that the old men and past officers, who are legitimate voters, exercise their electoral rights with due liberty and tranquility; that he notify the leaders and advise them of the penalty that may be incurred, that they would be confined to the Royal Penitentiary and sentenced to forced labor. If it is necessary, the Lieutenant shall endeavor to secure the presence of the priest at the election to insure tranquility and peace, but without exercising any coercion and influence on the voters' choice, and allowing them liberty and freedom of action. The sum of two hundred pesos shall be levied against the Lieutenant as fine for violation of this writ".

The above decree was confirmed twenty-four years later, the 19th of February, 1768 by the Marquis de Croix.

The struggle between the Indian caciques and the landless Indians also was violent. This can be seen from the proceedings of the suit filed by the caciques of Xicotitlan in 1782. (6) These stated that "for the past thirteen years the landless Indians have succeeded each other in the government against the provisions of the royal decrees and orders of His Majesty (God bless him) which state that in the selection of governors and other public positions in the Indian governments, the caciques must give preference to the more substantial and that from among these, those best qualified, who know how to read, write and speak Castillian be selected. Exactly the opposite is being done in the aforementioned pueblo because inasmuch as the elections are controlled by the poor, they invariably elect the worst drunkards, idiots, and persons of the worst habits, and none of them know how to read, write or speak Spanish. They succeed each other and do not permit the election of a cacique, even though some have served as governors before".

The Solicitor of the Viceroyalty felt that there was no explicit prohibition in the Laws of the Indies to prevent the landless poor from being elected, and consequently there was no other choice but to confirm

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5. Report of the election of Ambrosio Sanchez as governor of the Villa de Ixtlahuaca, and opinion requested in the matter by the head official. 1768. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1661, General Archives of the Nation.

6. The caciques of Xicotitlan against the young men of the same community, requesting their removal from office in the community government. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1639, General Archives of the Nation.

elections held within the regulations and in pursuance of the established custom. However, what was then the position of the different castes in this regard?

All through the centuries under study the tendency of the Indians was to believe that only full blooded Indians had a right to serve in the local government, but this tendency was completely disregarded with respect to the half-breeds, who were declared to have the same rights as the Indians. A different story, however, was that of the mulattoes. They had neither an active nor a passive voice in the elections, to say nothing of a right to be elected. (7)

Place of election. The elections were held in the community houses, to avoid any foreign influence that might sway the electors' will. (8)

Method of election. To conduct the election, the principal voters met in assembly. The election was on the basis of majority "and on behalf and in the name of all the principals and residents of the town". (9) All Indians with a right to vote were summoned. (7) To prevent friction, Viceroy Bucareli, on June 9, 1773, decreed that in all the Indian communities there should be "prepared a roster of the population, listing the Indian families—freemen (llanos), landless (macehuales) and leaders (caciques)—so that in this fashion might be determined those who could have an active or a passive voice in the elections. (10) The full text of the Bucareli resolution follows:

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7. Royal Decree directing the legal authorities of Zacualpan not to allow reelections nor to consent or admit mulattoes thereto; that in such elections the Indians of all the communities be summoned, and to take such steps as may be called for by the decree; as requested by the people of Ixcatepec. 1773. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1643, General Archives of the Nation.

8. Report made by the people of Santa Cruz, adjunct to the capital town of Ixmiquilpan, on the matter of the election of Agustín Bautista as mayor. 1768. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1661, General Archives of the Nation.

9. Report of election in the Villa de San Miguel el Grande. 1675. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1661, General Archives of the Nation.

10. Don Mariano Herrera, priest of Zilacayoapam, jurisdiction of Huajuapam, requesting that the election of governor and other positions in the government be held under his supervision. 1804. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1661, General Archives of the Nation.

"I have decided to issue this writ, whereby it is requested that in the Indian communities there be established lists of the population of each community, listing the Indian families--freemen, landless and leaders--so that in this fashion we may know who is to have active or passive participation in the elections, in which none can have the right to be elected unless he has three years' residence in the community. Anyone who wants to declare his residence in the community shall report his status as an Indian by his baptismal certificate and marriage record of his parents. A roster shall also be made of the families living in the above mentioned communities and a copy shall be filed in the archives of the municipality (the originals shall be kept in the communities). Copy of the Indian roster shall also be filed so that both records may be available and thereby prevent illegal voting by others than Indians, because in that manner the tranquility and peace of the community shall be preserved, and the local government will at all times know who are its legal citizens. The rosters of the non-Indian population shall contain a description of the castes and breeds, and those wishing to be listed as residents of the community shall also produce their baptismal certificates and marriage records, as well as those of their parents. I request and order the priests and church officials that in preparing these rosters they certify that there are no errors or defects in the baptismal certificates and marriage records, and these shall be endorsed only when they are true copies. They shall also sign the certificates of the elections which are to be held in their presence, and they shall witness them and certify that all qualified voters were notified so that no claim of ignorance thereof or of the dates of their celebration can be made. No fees shall be charged for their participation in the preparation of these rosters, or for any services connected therewith. Receipt shall be acknowledged of this writ and of its transmittal to the priests and church officials for appropriate compliance, which shall be effected with the least possible delay."

Non-intervention by outsiders in the elections. The elections were to be held without any intervention of the civil authorities, and requests for nullification were frequent because the civil officials frequently intervened in them. (11) Not even the presence of such civil officials was permitted.

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11. Report that the head officer of Coatepec submitted to His Excellency on the election of governor and other officers of the municipal government of that town for the year 1700.

Report made by the people of Santa Cruz, adjunct to the capital town of Ixmiquilpan, on the matter of the election of Agustín Bautista as mayor. 1768. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1661, General Archives of the Nation.

Upon the death of the governor of San Luis de la Paz, whose name was Pedro Atanasio Cano, the ranking civil official, don Pedro Antonio de Iturbide, felt that he had sufficient authority to recommend to the Viceroy who should be his successor. (12) Thereupon Iturbide indicated his wish to be allowed, as ranking civil official, to name the governor. He based his contention on the fact that the Indians were bankrupt and could not be held responsible for the assessments they collected as taxes. The arguments of this official were not valid, since by law "as soon as he receives them, the Indian governor shall turn in the sums collected from the taxpayers, and if there is any delay, he shall be forced to do so". It was also pointed out that "if in the election of governors it were intended to select only those financially capable, then the local boards were without function, inasmuch as then only Indians with property could be elected. These are rarely found in the communities and, as a rule, there would be no such Indian to elect and the established customs and uses would have to be disregarded".

How can we explain the interest of Pedro Antonio de Iturbide, the ranking official of the area, in the political affairs of the Indians of San Luis de la Paz? The reason is clear: Iturbide was godfather to the children of two of the larger land owners in the area, don Diego Zubieta and don Felipe Jimenez. The lands of both were bound by the holdings of San Felipe. The circumstance made it feasible for them to prohibit to the Indians "entrance to the mountains which from time immemorial they had used as a source of fire wood", with the idea that this would facilitate the expropriation.

The civil official, in order to facilitate the scheme of these men, lost no opportunity to coerce the Indians, and his best weapon was to fill the governor's vacancy with someone who would ignore the best interests of the community.

In their complaint addressed to the Viceroy the Indians pathetically stated: "Therefore, Sir, if this (the forcing upon them of the mayor's favorite) were to prevail, it would have deplorable effect upon our unfortunate Indian community, resulting in great suffering and maltreatment. We know that to prevent that Your Excellency will reject the request of the head civil official and order that the election be held in accordance with established custom, allowing the voters to exercise their right to vote freely for mayor and clerks, as they were duly confirmed by Your Excellency in this year's election. Otherwise it would infer dissatisfaction with the manner in which they have discharged their duties."

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12. The people of San Luis de la Paz, expressing their opposition to the reelection of the governor. 1783. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1661, General Archives of the Nation.

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In spite of the Viceroy's decision, Iturbide persisted in his policy of forcing candidates upon the electors. In effecting this policy, shortly before the elections of 1786, he made the community believe that the election of a certain person (José María Pérez) to the post of governor would be looked upon with pleasure by the authorities. The Indians reacted against this action in the most violent terms: "If our ignorant people were to be told by the principal civil official that he has been told by Your Excellency to propose certain candidates for the governing of our communities, they would construe it as a command that they be elected, the more so when that official shows his distrust and disapproval of those who do not think as he does."

Failure in his attempt did not stop Iturbide, for when he saw that he could not influence the election of the governors, he then attempted to control the election of mayors. But against this attempt, as against the prior ones, the Viceroy showed himself to be opposed. (13)

The intervention of priests in the elections also was the reason for the long continuing struggle on the part of the Indians. The Indians of Actopan claimed in 1774 that "there were decrees and ordinances from His Majesty and orders from the Viceroyalties to the effect that no ecclesiastic or secular official nor any other person may enter, disturb or prejudice the Indian caciques and principals in their community during their election of governors, mayors and other public officials of their government". (14)

One of the ordinances referred to above is the one issued by the Viceroy on January 13, 1622, which provided that "with reference to the election of officials for the government of the Indian communities, this shall be exercised by them freely and without any intervention or coercion by priests and other religious officers nor any other persons, not even the

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13. The aims of Iturbide are further explained by the fact that by having control of the Indian municipal authorities he could "cover his activities as smuggler of alcoholic beverages".

The people of San Luis de la Paz, expressing their opposition to the reelection of the governor. 1783. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1661, General Archives of the Nation.

14. Report made on behalf of the municipal government of San Salvador, in the jurisdiction of Octupa, regarding the election of Antonio Pérez as governor, and the participation therein of don Juan Miguel Pérez. 1774. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1661, General Archives of the Nation.

government officials, so that entire freedom may exist in their conduct as is their custom and also as has been ordered".

The illegal intervention of priests in the political life of the Indians aroused in them so much irritation and such violent objections that in 1791, those of San Juan Bautista Acapetlahuaya rebelled openly, with serious consequences. (2)

Qualifications of the candidates. The candidate for governor had to have the following qualifications: Be a "principal" and native of the community, and versed in the Spanish language, as well as in his native tongue. These requirements were deemed necessary "to teach and bring to the Indians the knowledge of our holy faith, compel them to attend church services, combat drunkenness and concubinage, as well as other public sins" and "to assure the proper collection and safeguarding of all royal levies". (11)

In addition, the prospective governor should be of good habits and reputation. When the elections were held in the community of Atlacomulco "the candidacies of Francisco de la Cruz, José Hernández and Pedro de Mendoza having been offered by the community, the caciques and other leading Indians rejected that of José Hernández and Pedro de Mendoza on the grounds that the former was an illegitimate son and the latter was accused of incest by church authorities, a fact which is known and public". A great deal of controversy resulted from this and from the fact that Francisco de Mendoza was rejected by the community government and the Indians of the principal town because he "had discharged the post of town crier in said town". "Finally"--according to the document quoted--"it was agreed by all that the other communities offer the candidacy of two other persons, and the final selection of the principal town went to don Matías de Sosa, and the other communities named Francisco de la Cruz and Santiago Martín. No further objections being made, the election was then held". (5)

Was it mandatory that the governors themselves be Indians? The consensus of the Indians was to that effect. In fact, the Indian Solicitor of the Viceroyalty (don Joaquín Guerrero) supported the view in 1758 that "in the elections for governor, mayor and other positions of the government there has been experienced in previous years grave discord and unrest because of the action on the part of the head officials as well as

by other parties, to propose mestizos, mixed bloods, and other persons who are not full blooded Indians" and therefore he requested that, in order to avoid situations of this nature in the future, there be admitted as candidates "only those who are full blooded Indians, and under no circumstances admit those who are not".

The prosecutor of the Royal Court rendered as his opinion that "in conformity with several decisions" of the government, the mestizos "could exercise the duties of governors, mayors and other positions in the government in the Indian communities" but not so the mulattoes (16) or "those of other castes".

The Indians were also opposed to having positions in the government go to individuals "living in a different community, even though it might be within the same jurisdiction" because this caused great difficulties and damage, and therefore asked that in future elections the governors and other public officials be residents of "their respective communities and not of others", not even those of the principal town of the area. (17)

The Viceroy, Marqués de las Amarillas, was in agreement with this point of view and in his decree of December 13, 1758 (17) established that policy. This decision was later confirmed by the Royal Decree of April 16, 1770. (14)

Approval of the election. Although the head civil officials did not intervene in the election, they nevertheless had the power of approval. This was done at a ceremony in which he presented a staff to the governor, the mayors and other officials of the local government, and where he pointed out to the elected officials their duty with respect to the well being of the people and to the administration of justice. (9)

Confirmation of the election. The final decision remained with the Viceroy, inasmuch as he wielded the supreme authority of the Colony, from which stemmed the authority of the governor and mayors in the legitimate discharge of their duties. (9 and 17)

16. See "León, Las Castas de la Nueva España".

17. Report by the community and people of Actopan, requesting that in the election of municipal officers the head officer refrain from submitting the names of those who are not full blooded Indians. 1759. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1689, General Archives of the Nation.

The Solicitor of the Royal Court opined on April 20, 1761, that all elections should be confirmed as early as possible, even though there might be differences of opinion among the Indians, unless the opposition to such confirmation was based upon a legal question.

Roster of authorities. In the City of Mexico the Indian authorities for the year 1675 were the following (18): Mateo Salvador, governor; don Juan de la Cruz, head officer; don José de Santiago, don Blas Nicholas, aldermen; don Tomás de San Miguel, mayor; don Juan Gaspar, mayor, don Juan Mateo, mayor; don Juan Loreto, head alderman; don Marcos de la Cruz, principal constable; don Jasilo Roque, head alderman; don Juan Lázaro, mayor; don José de la Cruz, mayor; don Agustín de Sandoval, mayor; don Gaspar Juárez, head alderman; and don Juan Bautista and Gerónimo Gomez, scribes.

That same year (1675) the roster for San Miguel el Grande shows the following entries: (9) Don Miguel Hernández, governor; don Rafael Hernández, mayor; don José de Castro, mayor; don Simón de Soria, head constable; don Juan Bautista, head constable in charge of religious discipline; and don Miguel de Soria, head constable in charge of the "R" Party of the community.

As the population of the Indian communities increased, so did the roster of their officers, as for example, in the community of Santa María Magdalena, in the parish of Huehuetlan, jurisdiction of Tepeji de la Seda, according to a document dated May 10, 1781 and signed by the Viceroy, Martín de Mayorga. (19)

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18. Data submitted by the mayors, aldermen and the municipality of the four reservations of San Juan, on the elections. 1675. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1688, General Archives of the Nation.

19. Action taken pursuant to a communication from His Excellency regarding the summons to the communities listed therein. 1781. Section on Civil Matters, Vol. 1661. General Archives of the Nation.

CHAPTER III

Community Assets

Origin. In addition to collecting taxes, it was the duty of the municipal Indian officials to administer the community property.

All of Chapter IV, Book VI, of the Laws of the Indies (Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de las Indias) deals with the administration of community property of the Indian settlements of America. Act No. IX defined the purposes to which the income from these properties could be devoted for the common good, and the rest deals with the protection against maladministration of Indian property by the mayors and other civil and ecclesiastic authorities. The Recopilación fails to state the origin of these properties and the only indication that might shed some light on the subject is the decree issued by Philip II, on June 4, 1582, in which it is ordered that "each Indian shall plant to corn 'ten brazas' of land a year in lieu of the money (real y medio) they pay to the communities." (1)

Maladministration. Regardless of their origin, it would appear that by 1619 the administration of Indian property was already extremely corrupt. (2) The disorderly state of the affairs of the Indian community funds and of their property is corroborated by the audit ordered by the King (3) and made in 1704 in New Spain.

In effect, Cristóbal de Castillo y Tejeda, Recorder of the General Court for the peoples of New Spain, stated that "there is no evidence from the books and records of the court that that office was charged with the collection of levies from the Indian communities, pueblos and provinces of the kingdom, nor has that been the case during the time that he (Castillo y Tejeda) has discharged his duties. The only knowledge he has is that at times there have appeared groups of Indians from the various com-

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1. Act XXXI, Title IV, Book VI of the Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de las Indias (Laws of the Indies).

2. Act I, Title IV, Book VI, of the Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de las Indias (Laws of the Indies).

3. His Majesty's Government, year of 1704. Report made pursuant to the Royal Decree of February 21, 1697, on the administration of the Royal Statistics Office, etc. General Archives of the Nation, Section on Indians, Vol. 97.

munities to request authority to lease or sell some tracts of land belonging to them individually or to the community in order to use the proceeds to meet the delinquent taxes and other obligations, stating that they have sufficient lands remaining to cultivate. Others have initiated legal action against the governors of their communities to compel them to submit to an accounting for the funds thereof, and in such instances and on the basis of such complaints there have been issued the necessary orders, as these cases normally are of little account because it is well known that the Indians of this kingdom are extremely poor and unable to acquire property. The fact that there are no Indian community funds as provided for in the royal decrees referred to reaffirms his (Castillo y Tejada's) belief that such decrees were never put into effect. The only income that the Indians obtain from the private tracts of land rented or of the community lands thus disposed of is used in paying the taxes and other levies in addition to the cost of the religious holidays of the Church; actually, their poverty does not permit them to do anything else."

Castillo y Tejada's statements coincided with the testimony of all the officials of the Viceroyalty who were questioned regarding the matter; all of them were in agreement that "Indian community property was generally slight or nonexistent. Where some property remained, they hardly could pay the taxes because of their extreme poverty, lack of wage work, and other factors such as the expenses of the religious fiestas that were borne by the communities, and other expenses incident to their religion. Proof of the above is the practice of collecting a yearly levy of half a "real" from each Indian, the so-called secretarial tax, from which the salaries of officials of the government and Viceroyalty were paid as a special payment for giving attention to the affairs of the Indians and for thus giving them the necessary protection."

From time immemorial the Viceroyalty had established that "all Indians shall plant some of their corn fields for the community, without excepting the principals, mayors and judicial officers, but excluding the sick, old and absent". The income from these labors was to be deposited in a locked case, and three keys issued: "one to the governor, another to the mayor, and the third to the scribe". There was to be an "accounting record so that statements could be made when ordered and no sum shall be expended over twenty 'pesos' a year, and this with the approval of the head official or mayor, and the latter cannot increase that amount....Because widows and single women who only pay half the tax do not have to work in the fields, nor do they render any other services, there shall be collected from them the sum of one 'real' which shall be added to the fund'.

Such was the legal formula, but its provisions were not observed nor practiced, and that explains why the officials claimed that there was no income from taxes. It was convenient for them to point to "the state of poverty of the Indian community properties in New Spain". (4)

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That was the ever present alibi and cloak of the royal bureaucracy but actually, the facts were quite different. In fact, it is known that the state of poverty of the Indians was not so acute, and although there were some communities that lacked means, there were many others with sufficient income to meet their tax obligations and those connected with religion, which were the heaviest. (5)

There is quoted below a list of the community property of some of the Indian communities, and the manner in which it was used.

1. Pueblo de San Miguel de Sola

Income

Three hundred five pesos and six reales as principal which we have in the community, all in cash.

Livestock. One hundred thirty-two milk cows valued at seven pesos per head, or a total of nine hundred twenty-five pesos.

Also twelve steers, at eight pesos per head, or a total of ninety-six pesos.

Also twenty-five bulls, one and one-half years old, at five pesos per head, or a total of one hundred twenty-five pesos.

Six calves were sold as the money was needed for yearly expenses. They were sold as follows: five at eleven pesos, and the other at ten pesos and two reales, which totals seventy-five pesos and two reales for the six calves.

Expenses

Payment of twenty-four pesos to purchase one-half "arroba" (The arroba is equal to 25 pounds) of wax at two pesos a pound, used in the fiesta de San Miguel of this town.

Ten pesos turned over to the priest to help defray the expense of buying a white robe.

Two pesos paid to the inspector when the Most Reverend came to audit the books of the church in this town.

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5. The report cited contains this important fact. This document is perhaps one of the most complete in data dealing with the economic status of the Indian communities of New Spain at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Four reales paid for a "bula" (bull) creating the holiday of the Santa Cruzada de las Animas Benditas.

Four pesos and six reales paid at the time the election was held in this town.

Four pesos and two reales for the purchase of a mare for the community.

Nine pesos paid to Nicolas Ruiz and Rodrigo de Santiago for two months work, the first at the rate of twenty reales and the other at two pesos, for herding the cattle.

Payment to Jerónimo, of the community of Santa Ines, for damages done by the cattle to his cactus grove.

Three pesos and four reales spent during the visit of the provincial official to this town.

Four pesos spent as our share in the expenses of Lent.

Seventeen reales for rent of a tract of land for seed beds to be used in connection with the corn fields of the community.

Twelve reales contributed during the General Visit to the community.

A steer and a heifer for the fiesta of the patron saint of this town.

A cow sold to pay the levies for the councilmen of the community in this town.

A cow used for needs of the community and expenses connected therewith.

1. Villa de Nexapa

This town has jurisdiction over twenty-two separate communities, those of Ocotepec, Juquilla, Ixcuintepec, San José Chiltepec, Coatlán, Acatlán, Acatlán de Chimaltepec, Mazatlán, Lachizila, San Pedro, Santiago, Cacalotepec, Totolapilla, San Francisco Jilotepec, Santiago Jilotepec, Santa Cruz, La Chixomaxi, Mazaltepec, San Sebastián, Nisa Viguiti, San Miguel and Santa Ana.

Income for all the communities

Six hundred thirty-seven cows, one hundred twenty-nine bulls, two hundred seven calves, fifty-five horses, and two hundred thirty-four pesos in cash.

All of the above property has been kept and maintained by the communities with little change from year to year. Each of the communities has planted every year a field to corn and another to beans, the proceeds of which average in the largest towns the sum of one hundred pesos, and in the smallest the sum of twelve pesos, according to the size of the community, and out of which they defray the expenses of their respective fiestas.

3. San Andrés Calpa

Income

The town of San Andrés Calpa has a yearly income of seven hundred eighty-five pesos from the following sources:

Three hundred sixty-five pesos from the corn of the communal fields, which are no longer cultivated, and in lieu thereof the heads of the families there have agreed to contribute four reales each.

One hundred fifty pesos from the interest on three thousand pesos, principal, payable to the order of the community for the community taxes assessed against the hacienda named Achatlayuela belonging to Petronila Marquez, and lying within the jurisdiction of that community.

One hundred pesos payable to the communities every year by Licenciado don Juan de Cuéllar Villa Rubia, Priest, as the annual interest on two thousand pesos of principal, payable as taxes to the community for the hacienda named Santa Cruz Tetimpan, within the community's jurisdiction.

One hundred twenty pesos payable to the community as taxes by José Sanchez Gordillo on the farm lands named Santa Elena.

Thirty pesos annual payment by Captain don Juan Dávila Galindo, of the city of La Puebla de los Angeles, as tax on a tract of land that the community sold him.

Twenty pesos from the yearly rental on two houses belonging to the community in the said town, one having an attic, and the other having a beam ceiling.

Expenses

Expenses during the fiesta of the patron saint of this town and of the Holy Week, the fiesta of Corpus Christi; wax and gunpowder used on those occasions, repairs made on the royal quarters and those of the priests of the town and on the church, water piping and found in the plaza; twenty pesos annual contribution to the Royal Hospital and the fees to the Viceroyalty; oil for the votive lamps of the Holy Ghost in the Church and

for different annual dinners, the expenses of which are defrayed from the income of the community during the fiestas referred to above.

There are in addition to the above, numerous documents showing that many of the Indian communities owned considerable property.

The Royal Decrees on Administration. Article 28 of the Royal Decrees on Administration (Real Ordenanza de Intendentes), issued in the year 1786, took away from the Viceroy "the management and distribution of finances and taxes of the Spanish cities and villages as well as of the property of the Indian communities of the Empire" and placed them under the control of the Superior Board of the Royal Treasury. (6)

The Royal Decree of September 14, 1778 restored the Viceroy's power in the General Superintendency of the Royal Treasury; however, the properties and assets of the Indian communities remained outside his jurisdiction and these remained under the management of the Royal Courts. This gave rise to "confusion, mistakes and slowness in the management and government thereof". (7)

Total amount of the proceeds of the community funds. We do not know, except in a very approximate manner, the total income of the Indian community funds in New Spain. This is explained by inaccuracies in the keeping of accounts. (8) At any rate, Revillagigedo estimates an annual income of half a million pesos. (9)

This estimate does not seem exaggerated if we consider that during the year 1784 the Indian communities were able to invest, by using their surpluses, the enormous sum of one hundred thirty-four thousand, three hundred pesos in stock of Banco de San Carlos, of Madrid. (10)

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6. Page 35 of the Real Ordenanza de Intendentes (Royal Decrees on Administration) provided for the appointment and training of "intendentes". Madrid, 1786.

7. Documentos para la Historia Económica de México, by Luis Chavez Orozco, Vol. IV, page 42.

8. Revillagigedo, Confidential Instructions furnished....his successor, Mexico, 1831, page 38.

9. Revillagigedo, op. et. loc. cit.

10. General state of the pueblos within the extension of the Viceroyalty of Mexico which invested their assets in the Banco Nacional de San Carlos, and of the profits earned during the years 1784, 1785 and 1786, with indication of those which invested their assets in the Real Compañía de Filipinas, México, 1788, page 24.

Expenses paid from the Indian community funds. From the large number of documents now in the General Archives of the Nation (11) we are able to get a more or less accurate picture of the state of the treasury in most of the Viceroyalty after the enactment and enforcement of the Royal Decrees on Administration. Copies of several accounts have been published by the author (12), and from these it is clear that by the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, most of the income went for expenses in connection with religious observances. The accounts, however, generally included an important item for the payment of the school teachers' wages. (13)

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11. Section on Indians, Vol. 72 and subsequent of the General Archives of the Nation.

12. See Vol. V of Documentos para la Historia Económica de México.

13. The rural school is a very old institution in Mexico. See pages 495 to 498 of the History Section of the General Archives of the Nation, which indicates their existence wherever the Indian communities had available the necessary resources to maintain them.

CHAPTER IV

Indian Self-government and Mexico's Independence

When the Viceroy, don José de Iturrigaray, with the support of the creoles of the municipal government of the City of Mexico, called a meeting of the corporate units of the kingdom to discuss the measures that New Spain should adopt to cope with the emergency created by the imprisonment of the Spanish monarchs, he also invited the Indian officials of the municipality of Santiago. The important position of these self-governed Indian groups, even at that late period, is also apparent from the fact that when the city heard of the uprising headed by Hidalgo, these Indian officials were invited to sign a manifesto against the revolutionaries. However, Hidalgo himself had found strong support among the Indian masses and in order to organize them, he used the strategem of military organization, placing them under the command of their own leaders.

Nevertheless, Hidalgo recognized the advisability of abolishing the Indian community funds. Morelos even went further. In his social philosophy it was essential to destroy the caste system: no more mestizos, no more mulattoes, no more creoles, no more Indians. To Morelos all these terms were degrading, offensive, and represented the expression of the racial criteria of the colonial era which it was necessary to destroy. He felt that there should no longer be a caste system, and consequently nobody thenceforth should pay tribute. All the people were to be equal under the law, they had rights and duties. The natives of the country were from now on to be called Americans.

However, what did the Indian push-cart vender of Xochimilco think, on coming into Mexico City burdened by his heavy load, when he heard the exalted phrases with which were described, in the plazas and in the streets, the exciting news of the political events of the times? One day he would hear about the Plan de Iguala; shortly afterward the talk was about His Majesty, Emperor Agustin I; then the Plan de Casa Mata and about Santa Anna, and finally about the Constitution of 1824. Many questions bothered him: what is a constitution? What is democracy? These terms, constitution and democracy, were repeated a thousand times, but no one attempted to make clear to him their implications and true meaning. The Indian did understand a few simple phrases that went straight to his heart: "Today we are all equal. There are no Indians, there are no castes, there are no creoles. Today we are all Mexican citizens." But what does it mean in the final analysis to be a Mexican citizen? To be a Mexican citizen meant to cease being Indian, and to become a being from then on that would assume equality with other segments of the population, with all rights and obligations inherent in citizenship.

Please take careful note: The Indian was to enjoy all the rights of any other citizen; he could fill public positions, reach the highest ecclesiastical rank; hope to attain wealth, to own land, to be a reputable merchant; he might even become a wealthy mine owner. Independence meant all that to the Indian, and for that reason he fought enthusiastically side by side with Hidalgo and Morelos.

At long last the abject status of the Indian was at an end, and his literary exaltation was about to begin. Don Carlos María de Bustamente undertook this task.

All rights as a human being were bestowed on the Indian in his capacity as a Mexican citizen.

The Indian was given all his rights as a human being and a Mexican citizen in accordance with the liberal ideas of the day. According to those same ideas, he was to assume all the duties and obligations inherent in citizenship; only thus could he become a good citizen, a complete citizen.

A few days after the arrival of the Trigarante army in Mexico City, the land owners of Puebla expressed themselves in the following terms: "The best thing that the Government can do for agriculture" they stated in a document dated December 18, 1821, "is to study and remedy the disorder in the affairs of the Indians. Assistance is being furnished them on the pretext of their poverty which results in detriment to themselves and to the farmers and agriculture in general."

And then the struggle began—an all out effort to abolish all these sections of the Laws of the Indies that furnished protection for the Indian, as well as all subsequent legislation enacted for that purpose. The principal aim of the attack was the abolition of the prohibition against cash advances to the Indians, which were used as the means of enslaving them on the estates and in the "obrajes", the primitive sweatshops that thrived on the blood and toil of the worker.

The arguments that don Juan Antonio Yermo offered in 1788 against the policy of Indian Protection were again revived on the landed classes and industrialists. While the Yermo petition did not succeed in the colonial period—inasmuch as Indian protective legislation remained in effect even though it was not adhered to strictly—the noisy clamor of the privileged classes in independent Mexico did attain its goal, and by that simple means the liberalism of that period smote down the great bulwark of human rights embodied in the Laws of the Indies.

The Laws of the Indies were regarded as a sign of servitude to Spain, and in accordance with the romantic thinking of the times, it had to disappear. Independence, after all, had been achieved in large part by the landed and privileged classes, and they were determined to use it for their own benefit; there was no one to raise his voice on behalf of the Indians. Morelos was acclaimed a great military genius; his campaigns were studied and eulogized; but his social program, his agrarian policy in favor of the landless Indians, was forgotten, ignored by those whose clear intent was to exploit the Indians more than ever. The study of Las Casas, dealing with the "Destrucción de las Indias" was printed and commented upon as a political weapon against the dream of reconquest by Spain, but never as an instrument to make valid the rights of the Indians in their role as Mexican citizens.

Someone in the Sovereign Board of the Provisional Government, shortly after the independence, endeavored to discuss the social condition of the enslaved Indians of the "obrajes", but his interest was submerged and lost in an abyss of indifference. "It is indeed very curious" an anonymous writer commented in a pamphlet which was fiercely attacked by the newspapers "that the revolution has meant a loss rather than a gain to the Indian population of New Spain." In effect, independence took away from the Indian the privilege of exemption from paying certain parochial taxes and other levies. Because of this it was possible to feudalize the Indian and the peasants by means of their indebtedness to the landowners"

stores. Moreover, with the establishment of a democratic government in Mexico, there developed a public opinion that permitted the abolition of Indian democratic concepts and institutions which up to that time had been basic to their way of life.

"No more Indian self-governed municipalities" was the battlecry of liberal demagoguery, and under this slogan they slowly but surely undermined the Indian self-government rights, with the sole ambition of selling their influence to the landowners and to embezzle the monies of the Indian community funds.

On November 26, 1824, the Constitutional Congress discussed a report of its Commission on Government, which was more or less expressed in the following terms:

"1. The assets remaining in what were called Indian reservations of San Juan and Santiago will be turned over to the individuals of such reservations as their own property.

"2. The Government shall appoint a board made up of the same individuals of the reservations so that they may submit for approval; and with the least possible delay, regulations covering the manner in which these assets are to be invested or distributed."

Both articles were approved.

On December 13 of the same year, there was submitted to the consideration of the Mexican Congress a proposition which purported to place title to the common lands owned by the communities, and which were previously administered by them, in the hands of "Ayuntamientos" or Indian self-government councils. The newspaper "Aguila Mexicana" in its issue of December 20 commented on this as follows: "Let us adopt measures more in line with reality. We should allot productive lands that will not yield anything unless they are administered by those who have an active interest in them. We should allot these lands to the needy Indians--as was done by the Veracruz Congress--and we shall have benefited those who have a valid claim thereto, and at the same time contributed to the well being of a number of indigent families, increased the number of land owners and with it the numbers of the population that are supporters of peace, order and liberty in the State."

This was the beginning of a policy of encumbering the communal assets of the pueblos, the only basis on which the Indian democratic institutions could perpetuate themselves. There was a notion in that liberalism which nurtured the idea that with independence the Indians were no longer Indians but became citizens like the rest of the population, and this notion spread with the speed of an epidemic.

This thesis was used by the deputies of the Constitutional Congress in their arguments in favor of having the income of the old Royal Hospital, whose capital had been increasing with the accumulation of contributions from the Indian communities during the colonial period, should be used to improve the College of San Ildefonso, which was the center of education and culture for the youth of the aristocracy, the sons of the landed gentry of the republic. Deputy Gordoá, spokesman at the time for that aristocracy, was of the belief that it was inconvenient to foster class distinction between Indians and non-Indians and that, moreover, the institutions devoted exclusively to the education of the Indians were not very useful and that by placing the Indian youths in the regular colleges they would progress more rapidly, through example and imitation.

The opposition to Gordoá's viewpoints was led by don Carlos María de Bustamante, one of the most sincere Indianists, who was later to be the editor of Sahagún, and he was assisted by don Juan Rodríguez Puebla, professor of that later generation of mestizos and creoles who, led by Benito Juárez, were to accomplish the reform thirty-five years later.

Don Carlos, with fine irony, stated: "I listen in amusement to the joyful argument that now we have no Indians, that we are all Mexicans.... a glamorous illusion, it seems to me, that will not remedy great and serious social ills....We have no Indians....but we still have the same needs and problems that afflicted the Indians. What foolishness to feed on dreams and through them endeavor to deceive the people!"

For his part, Rodríguez Puebla showed a fine indignation in his defense of Indian interests. It was imperative to point out that to make a distinction as between Indians and non-Indians was not in opposition to the ideals of democratic equality. On the contrary, true equality meant equal justice for all under the law according to their needs. "It is not well, they say, to educate the Indian; great ills may result....This argument" Rodríguez Puebla continues, "is insulting and short sighted."

It is indeed very noteworthy that all the projects to reform the colonial schools were predicated on the seizure of the funds accumulated by the Indian communities during the colonial period, and originally set aside for the cultural advancement of the Indians. In fact, the general plan of public instruction formulated in 1826 and conceived with the idea of giving economic independence to the three colleges of San Ildefonso, San Juan de Letrán, and San Gregorio, was not even discussed in spite of its having been presented to the Congress and recommended by the Encyclopedic Review of Paris (*Revista Enciclopédica de París*). This was not true in the case of the proposal by Deputy Irigoyen that the three institutions be merged into one for the benefit of Mexican youth, without any racial distinction. Irigoyen's project was fervently received by those who had not been able to find the economic resources to defray the cost of higher learning but who were eager to grab the funds of the San Gregorio school, laboriously accumulated through the efforts of the Indians. However, the same aggressive spirit of the old Indian self-governed units,

which so zealously defended their rights during the colonial era, was still present, and it was therefore easy to foster a vigorous and at times bold opposition to this action. "It is imperative" the Indians stated in their plea to Congress "and indeed essential that we should not maintain a criminal silence. With extreme patience we see that there is always a tendency to dispose of our property without obtaining our approval, as if we didn't count. This, in spite of the fact that we are the majority in the Republic and because of the apparent belief that we do not know our rights. Therefore, if at this time we remained silent, we would then be liable to the just condemnation of posterity."

Because of the difficulties of enforcing the act of November 27, 1824, on July 5, 1830, the Senate ordered the committee on government to study the matter. The committee members readily found that the cause of the difficulties was the nature of Article II, which limited governmental action to the decisions of a private board, which in turn always construed the law as providing for the uniform administration of all the Indian communities and their properties. There existed great confusion in this matter. Some of the communities wanted the funds distributed; others insisted that they be kept in a common fund; while still others wanted separate incorporation and the appointment of a governing board from among themselves. The Commission's conclusions are embodied in a bill of law and read as follows:

"Article 1. The remaining assets and funds of what were the communities of San Juan and Santiago, corresponding to the same townships and villages within the Federal district shall be turned over to them as their own property.

"Article 2. The funds of the townships located in the State of Mexico shall be turned over to the government of that State, to be held as property of such townships.

"Article 3. When the properties of any township of the district are located in the State of Mexico, they shall be delivered to the township to which they belong.

"Article 4. Such community lands as might be subject to partition, located in the district, shall be divided in equal plots among the inhabitants of the town, provided the majority of the inhabitants so decide; otherwise they shall be retained undivided, to be leased to the highest bidder. If lands which are to be divided are now leased, such division shall be made when the leases expire in accordance with the terms of the deed.

"Article 5. The following should be benefitted by these provisions: (1) Those born and residing in the towns; (2) those born in the town but away from it for a period of not more than two years and who desire to re-

turn to their place of birth; and (3) those who have had residence in the town for not less than one year and have an established occupation or business. All beneficiaries should be married or widowed, with their own family or living with a son, or a widow needing assistance according to the judgment of the district government.

"Article 6. To determine these conditions the district governor shall call a meeting of the inhabitants of the towns on a predetermined day, and the beneficiaries shall bring a certificate from the priest or the municipal authority. No certificate or petition shall be accepted after the day set for the meeting.

"Article 7. When the lands to be divided are not of a size sufficient to provide a tract large enough for the maintenance of a family, they shall be retained undivided.

"Article 8. When, on the other hand, the lands are so extensive that they are more than sufficient for the maintenance of all the families in that community, only such part as may be necessary to provide each family with a sufficient tract of land will be allotted. The remaining land shall be leased until the number of inhabitants has increased so that the land may then be allotted in a way to provide each new family coming to the town with sufficient land.

"Article 9. The control of the lands thus divided shall remain in the town or ward to which they belong, and an annual levy of four per cent on their appraised value shall be paid.

"Article 10. The allottee shall not sell his share of land without previous permission of the municipal authorities where he resides if these have control of the lands. Where no such authorities exist, permission must be obtained from a board to be established under the provisions of the following articles. Violation of this stipulation or nonpayment of the taxes for a period of over one year is sufficient cause to have the lands taken away from the allottee, and assigned to another person under similar conditions.

"Article 11. Such lands as are not appropriate for allotment because they are marshy or for some other local conditions, shall remain undivided and shall be leased at a public auction under the same conditions provided in Article 4, applying to lands that are not allotted.

"Article 12. When a town owns lands located too far away for proper use, and it therefore appears convenient to sell or exchange them, it shall be permissible to do so only with the approval of the board established by subsequent articles of this act. The proceeds of the sale shall be invested in such a manner as to protect adequately the interests of the community.

"Article 13. In the towns where the lands have already been allotted, the provisions of Articles 8, 9 and 10 shall be observed, and the

lands so allotted shall be duly appraised as a basis for determining the appropriate tax levy, which shall be paid from the date of the allotment.

"Article 14. The proceeds of the tax on the allotted lands, as well as the income accruing from the rental of the undivided tracts, shall be used for the following purposes: (1) In payment of legal debts or encumbrances on the lands; (2) for religious and other expenses which in the past it has been customary to defray from the community funds; (3) to set up a social security fund from which it will be possible to grant assistance to the settlers of the town or community during years of scarcity, famine or epidemics, and give relief to the needy ones; (4) to pay the costs of the schools; and (5) to pay other costs of municipal administration. The remainder shall be used for the construction of roads and water works, and the clearing of irrigation ditches, and for other activities of general benefit to the community.

"Article 15. The interest on the tax levies and the levies also when redeemed, shall be turned over to the communities according to their right to such levies, to be invested as stated in the foregoing article.

"Article 16. For the enforcement of this act, the district governor shall appoint a board of five members, of which he shall be chairman, with the oldest member as his alternate. This board shall be selected from among candidates proposed by the towns and communities participating, each community presenting three candidates to the governor. The powers of this board shall be: (1) To see to it that the allotment of lands, when effected, is performed in accordance with the provisions of Articles 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 13 of this act; (2) to determine when the lands are to remain unallotted; (3) to determine the advisability of the sale or barter of lands as provided in Article 12; and (4) to supervise the collection and investment of the proceeds of the levies and leases as provided in Article 14. Half of the membership of the board shall be renewed every two years; provided that the two younger ones shall be the first ones to leave office, and the other three to follow in turn, and so on successively. The secretary of the district government shall also serve as secretary of the board and shall receive remuneration as approved by the board. All the resolutions of the board shall be enforced by the governor and in the event of his disapproval thereof he shall report the matter to the president of the republic for his decision.

"Article 17. In communities that have a resident municipal administration, that government shall be in charge of the collection of taxes and the income from its leases. Both of these duties shall be discharged by a trustee appointed for that purpose by the municipality, with the approval of the board, and he shall provide the necessary sureties and bonds, with a three per cent premium on collections. The trustee cannot be removed except for sufficient cause, to be determined by the board.

"Article 18. In communities where there is no resident municipal administration the members of the community shall appoint the administrator of its funds and assets. This administrator must be approved by the board and must act under the same provisions and conditions as are provided in the foregoing article.

"Article 19. The persons appointed as trustees or administrators in accordance with the two previous articles, shall also be trustees of the assets of the respective communities pending division of the lands. Where two or more communities claim title to the same lands, the board shall name a trustee or administrator of the properties under litigation. He shall serve under the same conditions and for the same purposes indicated in the foregoing article, pending a decision of a court of competent jurisdiction or an agreement among the contestants.

"Article 20. The board shall determine the regular budget of the community or town referred to in Article 14 and the trustee shall be empowered to meet this by an order of the governor, copy of which shall be forwarded to the auditor's office for entry in his records. These expenses shall be debited against the appropriate accounts. The boards shall also determine how each community's income shall be distributed as provided in Article 14, and the trustee or administrator shall not make any payment of an unusual nature without the consent of the board, which shall decide upon the most desirable use or investment of the surplus funds, place of deposit, sureties required, etc. The board shall also determine the amount of the communities' contributions towards the expenses of the board and the salary of the secretary and clerks.

"Article 21. The trustees or administrators shall submit annual reports of the accounts and of collection and investment of funds, which shall be recorded and entered in the books of the auditor under the same conditions as are provided for in the case of the tax incomes of the municipalities.

"Article 22. The expenses of surveys, titles, and other incidentals that are furnished each allottee when the lands are divided shall be paid from the funds of each individual town, and when these payments are defrayed from the funds of towns whose lands have not yet been allotted, payment shall be made from the common funds. Such payments shall be reimbursed to the town from whose funds the advance is made.

"Article 23. Matters arising from the allotment of lands among the inhabitants of the community shall be settled through governmental channels, and for that purpose the surveyor charged with the allotting shall prepare a plan for submission to the board. When approved, the governor shall divide the lands and shall vest the people with title to them.

"Article 24. No recognition shall be granted to mass elected representations from the reservations because these have ceased to exist as

such; the board, and in certain cases the trustees and administrators, shall follow the provisions of this law in administering the funds and assets belonging to the several towns.

"Article 25. The individuals who in different capacities and with varying authority have managed the assets of the reservations, shall submit accounts and reports of such management, which shall be recorded in the auditor's books on the same basis as the tax incomes of the municipalities.

"Article 26. The government shall prepare an accurate statement of the finances of the reservations, including a list of the capital and assets belonging thereto, and indicating which lands have been allotted and which remain undivided. This statement shall be forwarded to the next regular session of Congress. In addition, a report shall be made regarding the enforcement of this law.

"Article 27. The government shall also issue the necessary regulations for the appropriate execution of the provisions of this law.

"Article 28. The Act of November 27, 1824 is hereby revoked."

The provisions of the above act, discussed and approved during the second week of August 1830, were reported upon in the following terms by the Official Register, the periodical through which the administration of don Anastasio Bustamante explained his policies: "Having reestablished the Indians to the status due them as free men, the equals of the rest of the population, in conformity with the liberal national policy of independence, they have attained their majority and emerged from the tutelage that under the guise of protection was pursued by the Spanish government. Ignorance and lack of education of most of them, the result of that tutelage which denied them the necessary schooling, has retarded their enjoyment of most of the advantages that belong to them from the liberty and equality restored to them. Since 1822 our legislators have been occupied in matters affecting the nation, and the press of events preceding and following independence has been such that they have been unable to give due consideration to this matter, and have not enacted the necessary legislation or developed any ideas so that this vast portion of our citizenry which heretofore has been termed 'Indian' may enjoy all their rights and privileges. Therefore, in the administration of their communal funds and assets; in the internal affairs of the communities; in the personal services which they gave to the church, to the governors and to the mayors in the establishment of schools and other institutions of learning; they remain more or less in the same unfortunate condition as when they were subjects of the Spanish Crown. It is necessary, therefore, that Congress and the different state governments in their deliberations, give preferential attention to this subject, abolishing privileges that encroach upon these peoples and which are detrimental to them or tend to keep them in virtual ignorance; enacting and amplifying necessary legis-

lation and taking such measures as will benefit them, and, above all, by furnishing the means for developing their intellectual faculties and improving their conditions so that future generations might truthfully say that there are no longer any Indians, inasmuch as all are Mexicans, equal under the law without any preferences or distinctions except those attained through virtue and knowledge, in which, as we have seen, many Indians have surpassed."

The progressive administration of don Valentín Gómez Farías differed in everything from that of don Anastasio Bustamante, which was very reactionary; but they did coincide in their outlook of the Indian problem. Dr. José María Luis Mora, in Volume I of his Miscellaneous Works (Obras Sueltas) describes his debates with don Juan Rodríguez Puebla, the Indianist previously mentioned: "The true reason for Rodríguez' opposition was that the new procedures in public education were in direct conflict with his wishes, purposes and objectives, and with his ideas regarding the future development of the Aztec race still remaining in Mexico; this gentleman, who claims to belong to that race, is one of the prominent men of this country and enjoys excellent political and personal qualities; in theory his party's platform is progress. He differs from the usual friends of the Indian race in that he does not limit his efforts to getting them true liberty, but goes on to attempt to exalt the Aztec race, and his main goal is to maintain it as a group distinct from the rest. To that effect he has supported and still supports the right of the Indians to old established civil and religious privileges, the retention of their communal wealth and assets, the provision of public assistance for their benefit, and the support of the school in which they received their education; in short, without admitting it, his purpose and objectives clearly indicate the desire to establish a strictly Indian system.

"The Farias administration and those that preceded it had a different policy: in the firm conviction that a difference of races within the society could and undoubtedly would be an eternal source of conflict, it ignored all the constitutional distinctions of long standing, and exerted all its effort to speed the assimilation of the Aztec race into the national society. Moreover, its policy was to reduce governmental action tending to differentiate between Indians and non-Indians and substituted instead a differentiation as between rich and poor, making available to all the benefits of government. In the new provisions for public education it adhered--properly so--to these principles, establishing schools, institutions of learning, and a common fund which absorbed the Indian schools and funds. None of this satisfied Sr. Rodríguez, and from that time he began to express an unfavorable attitude towards an administration which he had theretofore supported."

CONCLUSION

The Jacobin reformers of 1833 and 1834, headed by don Valentín Gómez Farías and Dr. José María Luis Mora, agreed in their policies and views with the conservatives under the leadership of don Lucas Alamán as regards the abolition of the Indian community funds. This strange harmony of opinion between two antagonistic political parties continued all through our history. The only difference between liberals and conservatives on this subject centered around the manner of disposing of these assets--the former wanted to dispose of the property of all the Indian associations without exception, including the wealthiest, that is, the religious ones; while the conservatives tended to exclude the Church properties.

The explanation of this is obvious: The liberalism of that time was exclusively political, ideological, and cultural in nature. The destruction of the economic base of the Church, through the freeing of its wealth, had as its main purpose the removal of a source of strength that allowed it to exercise direct and influential political pressure. Furthermore, the liberals wanted to take away from the Church the controls it had on civilian life and the exclusive monopoly on child and youth development through its control of education.

These objectives, in the political, cultural and educational fields, were attained by the liberals after a twenty-five year struggle. They were permanently embodied in the well known Reform Laws and the Constitution of 1857. But, after freeing the wealth of religious and civil communities--completed during the thirty-year dictatorship of General Porfirio Díaz--and after the establishment of new land tenure principles, the fact remained that Mexico's economy was distinctly feudal in character, perhaps more so than during the colonial period and the era of the Viceroyalty.

If this interpretation of the dissolution of the economic base of the Indian communities is reasonable; if, in fact, the nineteenth century is, in Mexican history, a period during the last phase of which there was no improvement over the productive capacity of the former feudalism--any improvement being limited to the seizure of the wealth of corporations, which served to consolidate the position of the landowners; if after the Reform the Indian communities were deprived of their accumulated funds, and in addition their communal lands were lost by seizure; it is then easy to explain why the political institutions of the Indian were weakened and in time were lost in the darkness of the past.

The gigantic looting of Indian wealth following Mexican independence was accompanied by another fact, perhaps more tragic in its consequences. During the early nineteenth century the notion of the total incapacity of the Indian began to take root, and what is worse, the idea was gaining ground that if Mexico were backward, if it could not achieve true democracy, it was due to the dead weight represented by the Indians, which burdened the development and progress of the republic.

It was only after Mexico's development resulted in the abolition of feudalism in production; when the Mexican Revolution recognized the mistakes of the pseudo-liberal policies of the nineteenth century and destroyed the excessive concentration of wealth; with the destruction of those land holdings that were unjust, which had resulted from spoilation and were a hindrance to the economic development of the country, that the Indian reassumed his role as a human being in Mexican society.

One of the characteristics of the Mexican Revolution is its obvious desire, more or less sincere and at times perhaps sentimental, to improve the economic condition of the Indian and to assure his integration into the general culture of the nation. "Lands for the Indians and schools for the Indians." That is one of the generous aspirations of the Revolution.

It might be well to question ourselves as to why it is that to this date there has been no demand, no clamor in form, to allow political self-determination to the large Indian segment of our population. Why is it that today, as in the pre-Revolutionary period, the most progressive statesmen of the country not only tolerate but give aid to political regimes in which the Indian himself has no representation, but is simply the tool of the political bosses? How long will this anti-Indian prejudice exist? How long will this misconception, this myth that the Indian is incapable of political self-determination, and therefore a handicap in the development of democracy in our country persist?

If this report on manifestations of democracy among the Indians during the colonial period will in some measure contribute to dispel these prejudices, the author shall be more than satisfied.

Documents Consulted on Elections

(From the General Archives of the Nation)

- 1557 - Request by the Indians of the four wards of México bearing on damages from the actions of the governors. Vol. 644, Civil Branch.
- 1564 - The Indian officials of México, bearing on the complaint against the mayors, aldermen and principals. Vol. 644, Civil Branch.
- 1615 - 1632 - 1686 - Files on election of Governor, Mayor and other officials of the Village of Etla. Vol. 347, Sec. of Hospital de Jesús.
- 1674 - Elections among the chichimecos. Vol. 740, Civil Branch.
- 1675 - Information furnished by the mayors, aldermen and residents of the four wards of San Juan, in the City of Mexico. Vol. 1688, Civil Branch.
- 1683 - Providing for the municipal authorities of the Villa de Salamanca to comply and observe the ordinances issued and approved by Luis de Velasco. Vol. 68, Sec. of Duplicates of Royal Decrees.
- 1689 - Elections -- The City of Antequera in the Valley of Oaxaca is ordered to hold elections to fill the vacant positions with capable candidates and in the prescribed manner. Vol. 36, Sec. of Duplicates of Royal Decrees.
- 1700 - Election of the Governor of Coatepec. Files submitted by the mayor of Coatepec to His Excellency, on the election of governor and other minor officials in that town, for the current year. Vol. 1659, Civil Branch.
- 1727 - Files on elections in the four villages of Marquesado del Valle. Vol. 348, Sec. of Hospital de Jesús.
- 1732 - Files on the election of governor and other officials of Tacubaya and Coyoacán. Vol. 333, Sec. of Hospital de Jesús.
- 1733 - 1804 - Elections in the jurisdiction of Marquesado del Valle. Vol. 347, Sec. of Hospital de Jesús.
- 1740 - Files submitted to the Lieutenant General of Chicontepec on the election of governor and other officials, held that year, in the absence of the former governor, Domingo Gabriel. Vol. 166, Civil Branch.

- 1740 - Files on the election of governor, mayor and other officials of Tepeji de la Seda. Vol. 443, Historical Branch.
- 1754 - Files on elections held in Santa Ana Zagachi. Vol. 347, Sec. of Hospital de Jesús.
- 1759 - Petition by the residents of Actopan to the effect that only pure Indians be chosen for elective positions in that community. Vol. 1680, Civil Branch.
- 1760 - Election of governor in the Villa de Etla. Vol. 348, Sec. of Hospital de Jesús.
- 1762 - Julián Santiago, Governor of Calimaya, versus Pedro de Alcántara, on the latter's refusal to accept his resignation. Vol. 1689, Civil Branch.
- 1763 - Complaint by the communities of San Jerónimo and San Bartolomé on excessive levies on the possession of governors' canes, etc. Vol. 1675, Civil Branch.
- 1764 - Request by the residents of San Pedro Mesistepec to the effect that they be permitted to elect, without intervention, the officials of that community. Vol. 443, Historical Branch.
- 1765 - Complaint on the election of Pedro Ignacio de la Cruz as governor of Huichapán. Vol. 443, Historical Branch.
- 1765 - Opinion of the legal counsellors to the effect that no person be reelected as governor of Actopan unless he has resided formerly in that community. Vol. 443, Historical Branch.
- 1765 - 1766 - Complaint by the residents of Tepexoxuca on the election of governor. Vol. 443, Historical Branch.
- 1766 - Complaint by the residents of Huehetoca on the election of governor. Vol. 443, Historical Branch.
- 1767 - Files on the reelection of Antonio Melchor as governor of Coyotepec. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.
- 1768 - Election of Agustín Bautista as mayor of Santa Cruz de Ixmiquilpan. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.
- 1768 - Election of Agustín Bautista as mayor of Santa Cruz de Ixmiquilpan. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.
- 1768 - Election of Ambrosio Sanchez as governor of Ixtlahuaca, and inquiry made thereon by the head mayor. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.

- 1768 - Writ presented on behalf of the people of San Luis Temascaltepec, requesting that minors and children abstain from intervening in the elections and cease rioting and disturbing the peace. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.
- 1772 - Writ presented at the request of María Rita and María Angela and María Nicolasa, stating that the Governor had appointed them Mother Superior and assistants, respectively, and that as such they had to pay contributions in cash which, because of their poverty, they were unable to afford, etc. The three are Indians of Tlayacapa. Vol. 1736, Civil Branch.
- 1773 - Writ presented on behalf of the people of Santiago de Miahuatlán, jurisdiction of Tehuacán de las Granadas, requesting that the election of governor be held immediately and stating the reasons for such demand. Vol. 1677, Civil Branch. .
- 1773 - Demand of the people of Ixcatepec to the effect that the authorities of Zacualpán forbid reelections and exclude mulattoes from voting, and that the Indians of the jurisdiction be advised of the celebration of the elections. Vol. 1643, Civil Branch.
- 1774 - Writ presented at the request of San Salvador de Actopán regarding the election of Antonio Pérez and the appointment issued thereafter in the name of Juan Miguel Pérez. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.
- 1777 - 1778 - Writ prepared on behalf of the people of San Martín, requesting authority to elect their officials. Vol. 443, Historical Branch.
- 1778 - Writ on the election of governor of San Juan Bautista de Xichu. Vol. 443, Historical Branch.
- 1781 - Action taken pursuant to an official order establishing the site of hearings and justice in the town of Tepejí de la Seda. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.
- 1782 - Petition made by the caciques of Xicotitlán requesting the removal of macehuals from official positions in the government of the community. Vol. 1639, Civil Branch.
- 1783 - The people of San Luis de la Paz express their opposition to reelections. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.
- 1786 - Action taken by the people of Ostotipac on the matter of elections. Vol. 443, Historical Branch.

- 1789 - Report filed on the last election of governor and other officials for the remainder of the current year and the next one held by the town of Amecameca, in the jurisdiction of Chalco. Vol. 1686, Civil Branch.
- 1791 - Election of governor and other municipal officials in the town of Axuchitlán, Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.
- 1791 - Don Baltazar Juan, Governor of San Juan Bautista de Acapetlahuaya versus certain officials on the matter of imprisonment of several Indians who opposed the celebration of elections. Vol. 1686, Civil Branch.
- 1803 - The Indians of San Matías Tepetomatitlán and San Bernabé Amaxac, on discrepancies found in the election. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch
- 1803 - Discrepancies found in the elections held in San Nicolás Tetelcingo. Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1803 - 1804 - Discrepancies in the election held at San Juan Bautista Yolotepec. Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1803 - 1804 - Election of governor and other community officials in Querétaro. Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1803 - 1804 - Discrepancies in the elections held in San Felipe Quemango Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1804 - Discrepancies found in the elections held at Otumba. Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1804 - Petition to the effect that Indians who have not previously served as mayors be allowed to vote in the election of community officials at Malinalco. Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1804 - Report by a superior official on the appointment of a new mayor because of the misconduct of the one elected. Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1804 - Petition filed by Don Mariano Herrera, Priest of Zilacayoapán, requesting that he be allowed to be present at the election of governor and other community officials in that town. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.
- 1804 - Discrepancies in the elections of San Pedro Texupilco. Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1806 - Elections held at Yahualica during the current year. Vol. 1639, Civil Branch.

- 1807 - Petition filed by Anastasio Hernández de Orta, Indian of San Gregorio Cuaquilcingo, requesting the election of governor to be held. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.
- 1807 - 1808 - Petition by the people of San Juan Piñas requesting that the elections for governor be held. Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1808 - Petition by the people of San Mateo Ixcuintlapilco requesting
- 1808 - Petition by the people of San Mateo Ixcuintlapilco requesting that the elections for community officials be held. Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1808 - The community of Quihuítlán requesting return by the higher officials of a gold-handle cane used by its governor. Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1809 - The people of Santa María Anducayaco, San José de Gracia and Santo Domingo, requesting the election of governors. Vol. 444, Historical Branch.
- 1809 - The people of Santa María Apasco on the election of governor and other community officials. Vol. 1404, Land Division.
- 1820 - Approval by the people of Almoloya of the reelection of San José de la Luz Flores as governor. Vol. 1661, Civil Branch.