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# Moisés Sáenz, Modern Mexican Educator

Pete D. Haikalis

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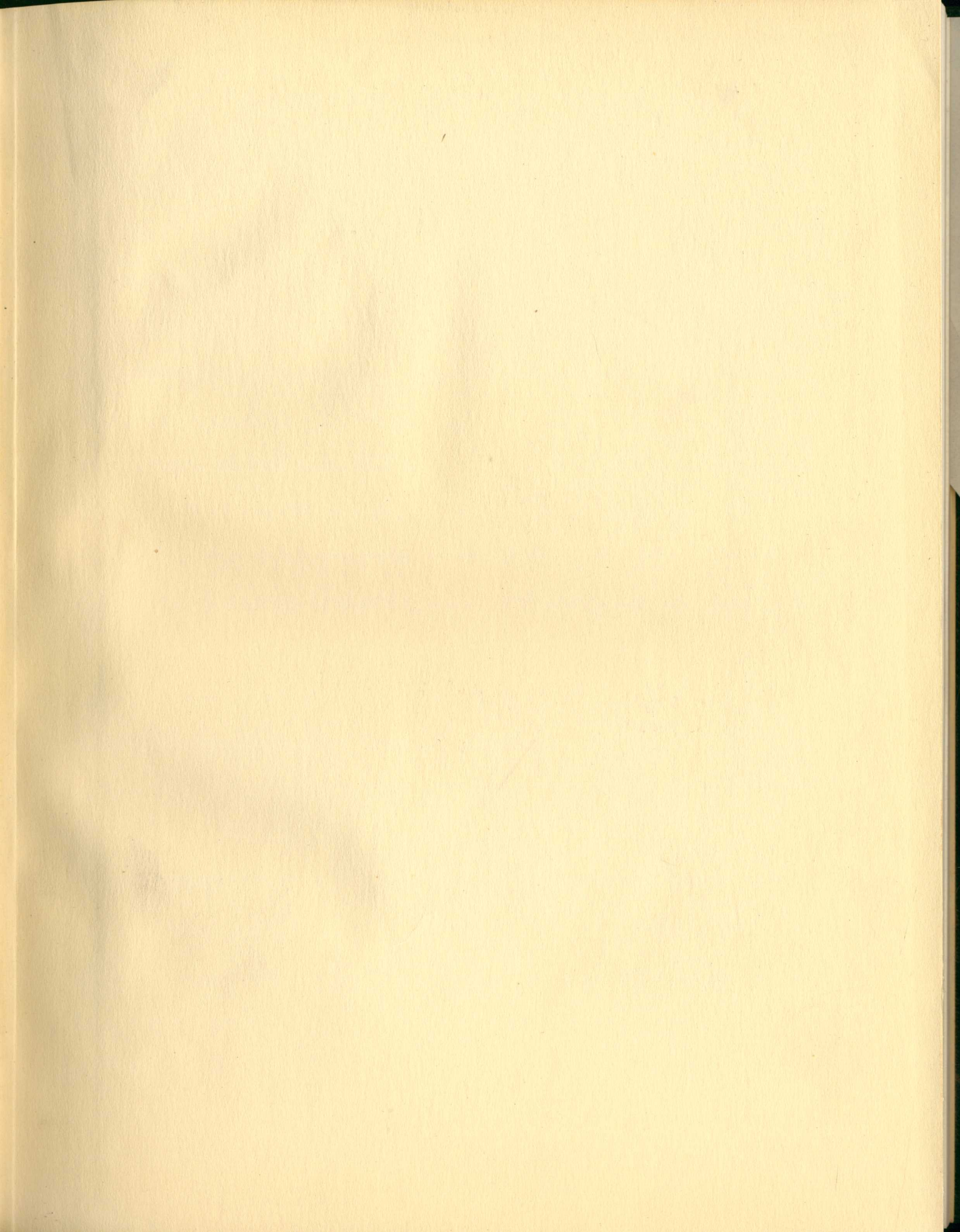
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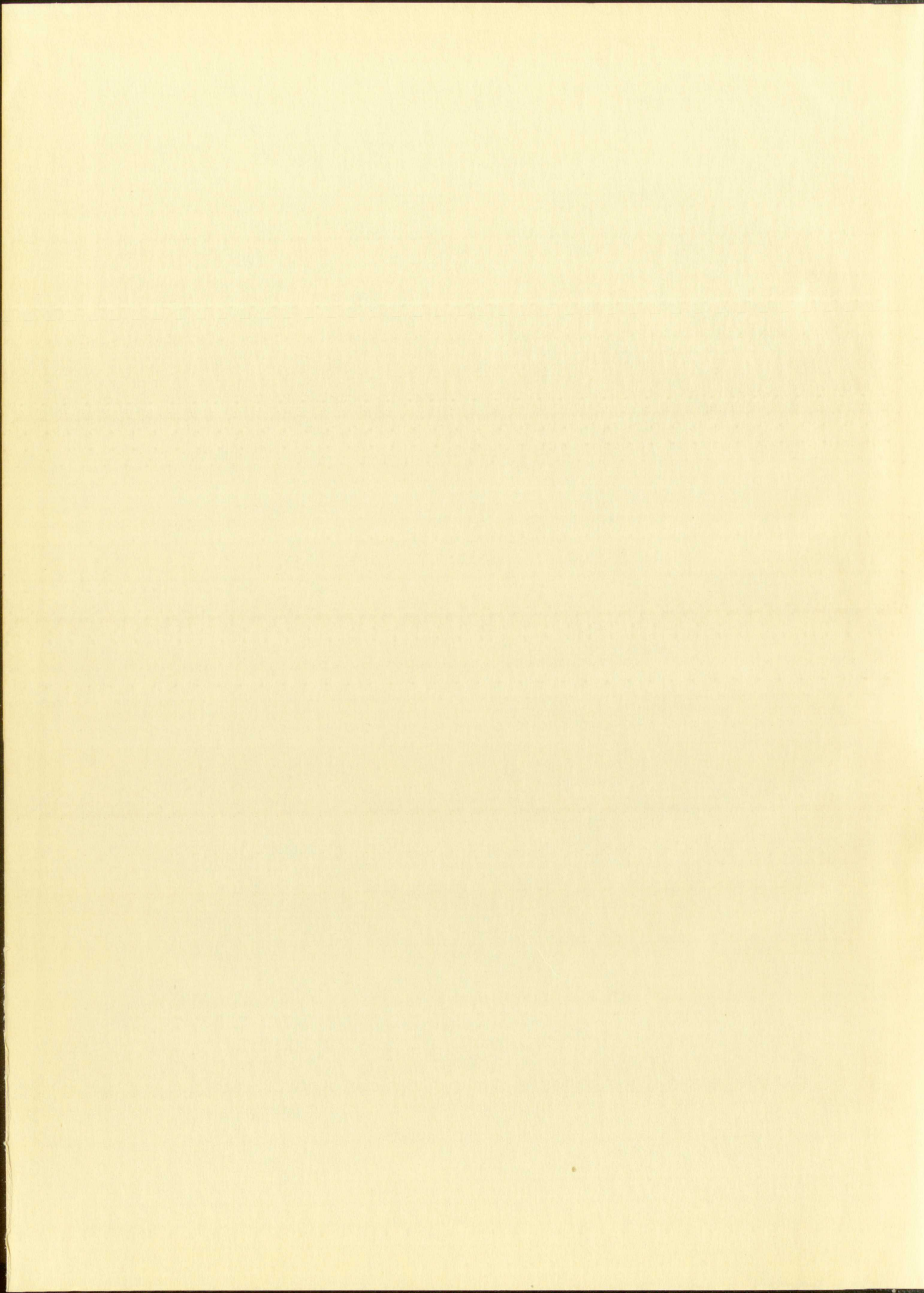
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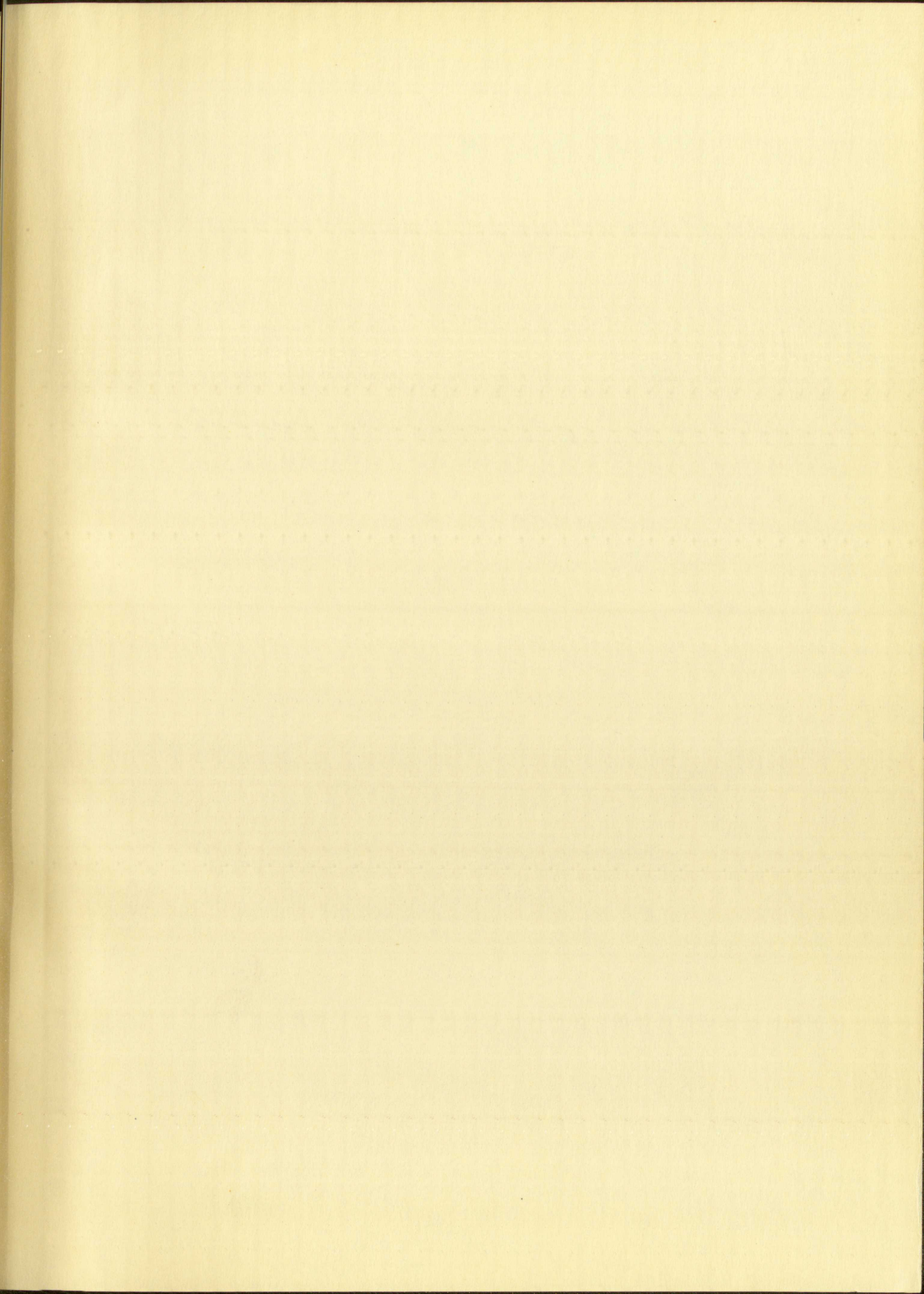
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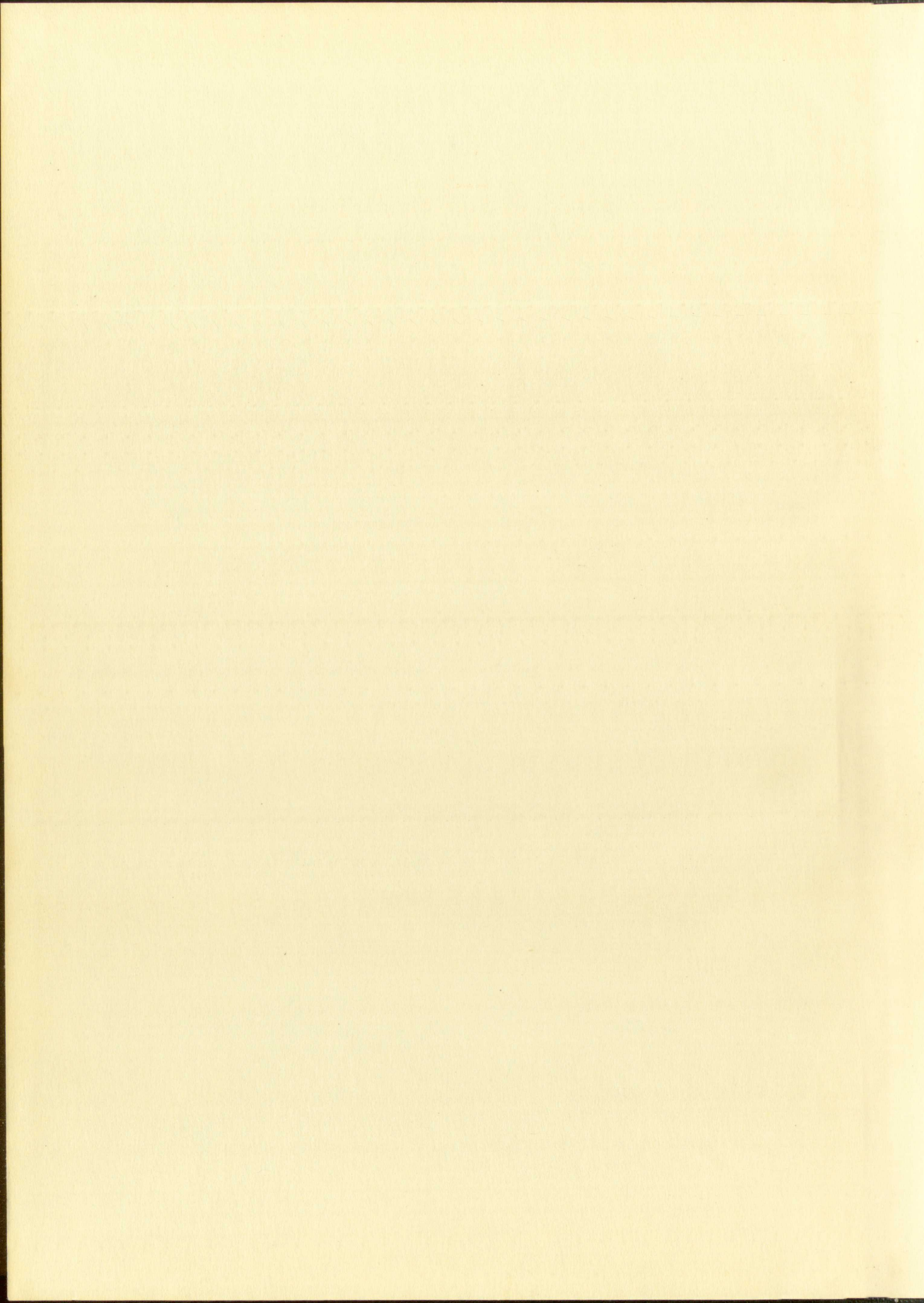




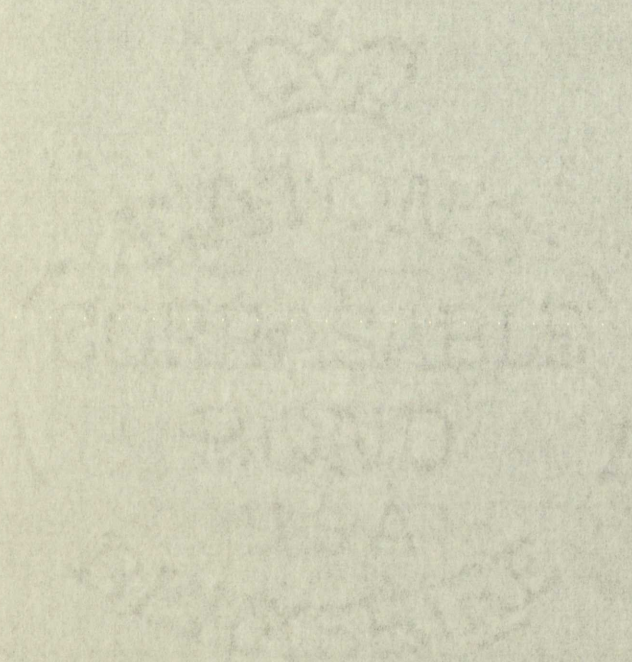
















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MOISÉS SÁENZ, MODERN MEXICAN EDUCATOR

by

Pete D. Haikalis

A Thesis

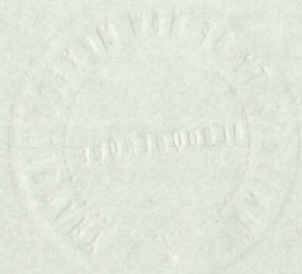
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The University of New Mexico

1957



JOHN S. BROWN, JUNIOR, EDITOR



BY

JOHN S. BROWN, JUNIOR

A Thesis

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

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The University of New Mexico

1957



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
I. EDUCATIONAL TRENDS IN MEXICO DURING THE COLONIAL AND NATIONAL PERIODS . . . . .	5
II. THE EARLY CAREER OF MOISÉS SÁENZ . . . . .	39
III. SÁENZ AS UNDERSECRETARY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION (PART ONE) . . . . .	55
IV. SÁENZ AS UNDERSECRETARY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION (PART TWO) . . . . .	77
V. THE LATER CAREER AND WRITINGS OF SÁENZ . . . . .	105
SUMMARY AND ESTIMATE . . . . .	131
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	137



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page	
1	INTRODUCTION . . . . .
3	I. EDUCATIONAL TRENDS IN MEXICO DURING THE COLONIAL AND NATIONAL PERIODS . . . . .
39	II. THE EARLY CAREER OF VON KROG . . . . .
55	III. KROG AS UNDERSECRETARY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION (PART ONE) . . . . .
77	IV. KROG AS UNDERSECRETARY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION (PART TWO) . . . . .
105	V. THE LATER CAREER AND WRITINGS OF KROG . . . . .
131	SUMMARY AND ESTIMATE . . . . .
137	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .



## INTRODUCTION

Mexico cannot be classified as being entirely typical of the Latin-American countries, for she has far outstripped most of them in the development of institutions and a philosophy of life best suited to the conditions of a large area of the world, which, in many respects, is singular in its problems. Since the Revolution of 1910, Mexico has undergone extraordinary social and economic changes. Power, which up to this time had been concentrated in the hands of an oligarchy of the Church and a few wealthy citizens, has now been dispersed over a much wider area. Opportunity for progress and material gain has also been more widely distributed. With considerable success, many new steps have been taken to remedy the inequalities and inadequacies of the Mexican state. The underlying philosophy of this great upheaval has been that of bringing about a far more reasonable distribution of wealth and opportunity for all Mexicans.

In order to raise the standard of living in Mexico, both economically and socially, the national government has most diligently worked in the areas of land reform, economic and industrial development, a better governmental system with adequate representation and protection of rights, improved



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church conditions, and the solution of health problems. Along with these fields of activity, the Mexican government has also given special emphasis to the problem of education. Correlated with this educational question is that of incorporating the Indian into the national medium.

The problem of reorienting the outlook of the Indian has been a concern of education since early colonial times. It has received more or less emphasis depending upon whether liberal or conservative groups have controlled power. Since the Revolution of 1910, the liberal groups by and large have assumed power in the federal government, and much of their efforts have been directed toward the solution of the dual question of education and the incorporation of the Indian. With the election of Obregón to the presidency in 1920, the federal government placed special emphasis on this question, and such experts as José Vasconcelos and Manuel Gamio were called upon to assist in working out adequate solutions.

Among the noted authorities called upon to help with this important and pressing problem was Moisés Sáenz, whom Hubert Herring has characterized as the "ablest educator in Mexican history."<sup>1</sup> Little has been written about Dr. Sáenz, perhaps because he was not as spectacular or colorful a personality as Vasconcelos. However, in the future he will

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by George F. Kneller, The Education of the Mexican Nation (New York, 1951), p. 49.



church conditions, and the solution of health problems. Along with these fields of activity, the Mexican Government has also given special emphasis to the problem of education. Correlated with this educational question is that of incorporating the Indian into the national system.

The problem of reorienting the outlook of the Indian has been a concern of education almost since its inception. It has received more or less emphasis depending upon whether liberal or conservative groups have controlled power. Since the Revolution of 1910, the liberal groups by and large have assumed power in the federal government, and much of their efforts have been directed toward the solution of the social question of education and the incorporation of the Indian. With the election of Obregon to the presidency in 1920,

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probably be recognized as one of the most important men in developing a sound philosophy for education in all of its aspects and phases and also for an understanding and worthwhile solution of the Indian problem. As we shall see later, Sáenz was neither extremely radical nor bound to the conservative ideas; he rather presented and endeavored to find a common-sense approach to these problems which have plagued Mexico for some four hundred years.

The purpose of this thesis is to give some account of the career of Dr. Sáenz and to present the essential features of his philosophy regarding education and the incorporation of the Indian into the modern state. As background for his services to Mexican education, Chapter I reviews educational trends in Mexico from colonial times to the decade of the 1920's. Chapter II describes Sáenz' professional training and experience prior to 1925. Chapters III and IV deal with his services as Undersecretary of Public Education, 1925-1930, with emphasis upon his ideas concerning secondary education in Mexico and rural education for the Indian masses. His later career from 1930 until his death in 1941, and his major publications during this period, are discussed in Chapter V. The final chapter consists of a summary and conclusions.

The principal sources utilized in the preparation of this thesis are the published and unpublished writings of



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Dr. Sáenz. Several of his unpublished papers were made available through the courtesy of his widow, Sra. Herlinda Treviño de Sáenz of Mexico City. Unfortunately it was not possible to consult some of Sáenz' articles published in the Mexican press during his tenure as Undersecretary of Education. The author believes, however, that the available materials adequately reflect the basic tenets of Sáenz' educational philosophy, as well as his views on the problem of the Indian in modern Latin America. It is hoped that this review of the career and the writings of Dr. Sáenz will provide the basis for an understanding of his contributions to an important phase of the development of the Mexican state since the Revolution of 1910.



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## CHAPTER I

### EDUCATIONAL TRENDS IN MEXICO DURING THE COLONIAL AND NATIONAL PERIODS

#### Education in the Colonial Period

It is interesting to note that a characteristic of Spanish intellectuals has been their tendency to sponsor and promote ideas, scientific, philosophical or educational, that are often ahead of their times. Certainly the views of Vitoria on the juridical status of the Indian, of Vives on social welfare, and of Las Casas on the justice of methods of conquest in the New World would seem to offer proof of this observation. As further evidence of this characteristic of the Spanish mind, one might also cite the educational philosophy of the early missionaries in sixteenth-century Mexico, who anticipated by four centuries programs for the education of the Indian masses which have been adopted during recent decades.

The agencies for the formal education of Indian youth in pre-conquest times reflected the major forces of Aztec civilization--war and religion. Children of the nobility were educated in the Telpuchcalli, a school for the training of military leaders, or in the Calmécac, an institution for preparation of the several ranks of the priesthood. Children



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of the lower classes received no formal education and were taught only those basic skills necessary for their economic survival. The same was true of the youth of the merchant and middle classes, who received practical instruction in the crafts, trades and business enterprises of their elders.<sup>1</sup> Consequently the closing of the temple and military schools subsequent to the Spanish conquest did not constitute a serious loss for the masses of the native populations. Moreover, the lack of an extensive system of education in pre-conquest Mexico gave the Spanish missionary clergy an excellent opportunity to evolve new educational programs for the Indians.

Leadership in the education of the Indian masses was exercised by the Franciscan friars, who were the first missionaries in New Spain.<sup>2</sup> A recent writer has defined the educational objectives of the Franciscans as follows:

- 1) Mass changes in theological concepts through Christian doctrine. . .
- 2) Mass changes in social institutions: monogamous family, private property.

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<sup>1</sup> George Sanchez, Mexico: A Revolution by Education (New York, 1936), pp. 34-35. Further information on Aztec education may be found in Francisco Larroyo, Historia Comparada de la Educación en México (México, 1956), pp. 32-37. This survey substantiates the statements of Sanchez concerning the character of pre-Hispanic education.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Ricard points out, in La Conquista Espiritual de México (México, 1947), p. 349, that the Franciscans are usually cited as leaders in the movement for Indian education because their schools were the most numerous, and that the other Orders, such as the Dominicans and the Augustinians, copied their techniques.



of the lower classes received no formal education and were taught only those basic skills necessary for their economic survival. The same was true of the youth of the rural and middle classes, who received vocational instruction in the crafts, trades and various other aspects of their future. Consequently the closing of the schools and military academies and subsequent to the Spanish conquest did not constitute a serious loss for the masses of the native population. Moreover, the lack of an extensive system of education in the country gave the Spanish influence a relatively easy and excellent opportunity to evolve new educational programs for the children. Leadership in the education of the Latin American was exercised by the Franciscan friars, who were the first missionaries in New Spain. A recent writer has defined the educational objectives of the Franciscans as follows:

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I George Sanchez, Mexico: A Revolution in Education (New York, 1938), pp. 54-55. Further information on Aztec education may be found in Francisco Ramirez, Historia del arte de la Educacion en Mexico (Mexico, 1937), pp. 37-38. This survey substantiates the statement of Sanchez concerning the character of pre-Hispanic education.

2 Robert Haines points out, in La Comandancia de Mexico de Mexico (Mexico, 1937), p. 143, that the Aztecs are usually cited as leaders in the movement for Indian education because their schools were the most numerous, and that the other Orders, such as the Dominicans and the Augustinians, copied their technique.



- 3) Mass acquisition of skills in singing, reading, and writing in Latin characters.
- 4) Local improvements in techniques of painting, drawing and sculpture.
- 5) Local acquisition and improvement of skills in architecture, carpentry, masonry, agriculture and cattle breeding.
- C) Selective acquisition by the specifically qualified of advanced training in Latin, the rudiments of grammar, arts, medicine and philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

The most famous of the Franciscan missionary teachers was Fray Pedro de Gante, who arrived in Mexico in 1523 and dedicated the remainder of his life, until his death in 1572, to the cause of Indian education.<sup>4</sup> He may justly be regarded as the prototype of the missionary friars who sought to effect social changes among the native peoples through education. With the aid of two Franciscan associates he established in Texcoco the first primary school in New Spain. This school, "a school of action," has been described by Sanchez in the following terms:

They [the friars] studied Indian customs and established cordial and friendly relations with the Indian nobles as well as the masses. Instruction in the school was carried on in Spanish and in the Indian languages. Fray Pedro made every

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<sup>3</sup> Pius Joseph Barth, Franciscan Education and the Social Order in Spanish North America, 1502-1821 (Chicago, 1945), p.42.

<sup>4</sup> Ricard, op. cit., pp. 376-379, gives a brief summary of Gante's career as an educator in New Spain. Cf. also Barth, op. cit., pp. 44-62.



- 3) Mass organization of Indians in schools, reading, and writing in Latin American.
- 4) Local improvement in technical schools of agriculture, drawing and architecture.
- 5) Local organization and improvement of health in architecture, agriculture, industry, and cattle breeding.
- 6) Selective organization of the population, qualified of advanced studies in Latin America, in the fields of agriculture, industry, and philosophy.

The most famous of the Latin American revolutionary teachers was Fray Pedro de Gante, who arrived in Mexico in 1523 and dedicated the remainder of his life, until his death in 1581, to the cause of Indian education. He was justly regarded as the prototype of the missionary teacher who sought to effect social changes among the native peoples through education. With the aid of two Franciscan missionaries he established in Mexico the first primary school in New Spain. This school, "a school of letters," has been described by others in the following terms:

They, the friars, started Indian children and established schools for the Indian population. The Indian children as well as the parents, were taken in the school and educated in Spanish and in the Indian language. They were also very

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3 Fray Joseph de Gante, *Franciscan Education and the Social Order in Spanish North America, 1523-1581* (Chicago, 1953), p. 12.

4 Ricardo, op. cit., pp. 275-276, gives a brief summary of Gante's career as an educator in New Spain. Cf. also Barth, op. cit., p. 100.



effort to relate his teachings to the natural life of his students. Through physical activities, through music and processions, by the use of pictorial illustrations and hieroglyphs, and through the medium of their own language, this far-seeing educator made the school as natural as possible for the Indians.<sup>5</sup>

In 1527 Gante moved his school from Texcoco to Mexico City, establishing his new institution at the Franciscan chapel of San José de Belén de los Naturales.<sup>6</sup> Here he could more easily integrate the program of his school with that of the Church and thus make it a potent agent of social control. According to Barth, Fray Pedro, in setting up his educational program, first learned the language of the natives. After accomplishing this, he studied at "first-hand their conditions, ideals of perfection, the peculiarities of their social relations, and the underlying psychology of their customs."<sup>7</sup> An example cited by Barth of this intensive study of Indian life before attempting any measure of education that would bring about change concerns the natives' means of worship. Gante learned that all of the Indians' worship centered around singing and dancing before their idols, and he therefore composed many didactic songs relating to Christianity which he taught the Indians to perform in conjunction with Catholic services. This activity not only maintained the

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<sup>5</sup> Sanchez, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Barth, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 51.



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<sup>5</sup> Sanchez, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Barth, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 51.



interest of the Indian in his new religion but also served as a means for making the transition from old to new culture patterns much smoother.<sup>8</sup> Fray Pedro taught not only new religious ideas and new social values at the school of St. Joseph, but he also promoted instruction in industrial and fine arts. Many of the techniques and psychological methods that were used are even today considered progressive by many contemporary educators. An insight into the training methods used by Gante's school is gained from the following statement of the Franciscan historian Mendieta regarding the understanding of individual differences in the student:

Attending to the talents and aptitudes of each individual and to progress and acceleration, they were first exercised in the more common duties and trades such as tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, and other similar occupations and then in those of greater acumen.<sup>9</sup>

Pedro de Gante spent the remainder of his life in New Spain at the school of St. Joseph, working in the field of education of the Indian. His approach to the entire problem was new and daring, for he understood that education could be successfully used as a method for bringing about a change in the values of a society and as a means of effectively presenting to native youth, and therefore indirectly to their adult parents, new principles, ideals, occupations,

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<sup>8</sup> Barth, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>9</sup> Mendieta as quoted by Barth, op. cit., p. 55.



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Attending to the talents and abilities of each individual and to progress and education, they were first exercised in the more common duties and trades, such as tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, and other similar occupations and then in those of higher learning.<sup>9</sup>

Pedro de Gante spent the remainder of the 15th and 16th centuries at the school of St. Joseph, working in the field of education of the Indian. His approach to the problem was new and daring, for he understood that education could be successfully used as a method for bringing about a change in the values of a society and as a means of effectively presenting to native youth, and therefore indirectly to their adult parents, new principles, habits, and activities.

<sup>8</sup> Barst, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>9</sup> Mendota as quoted by Barst, op. cit., p. 51.



and practices of life which were unknown to their antecedents. Gante also had a desire to prepare Indians to assume positions of minor importance in civic and political life. Moreover, he wanted his school to combine the better elements of both Aztec and European civilizations, thereby enabling students to accept and to understand the resulting culture and to live harmoniously and fruitfully with other racial groups in the new society. A striking similarity between these ideas of Pedro de Gante and the views held by Dr. Sáenz will later become quite obvious.

Other Franciscan leaders besides Pedro de Gante in the field of education include the first Bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga. After his arrival in New Spain, Bishop Zumárraga observed the work done by Gante and became an ardent follower of the Franciscan ideal of formal education as a means of civilizing the Indian. Besides writing several manuals on Christianity to be used in the instruction of the natives, he was also instrumental in the establishment of the College of Santa Cruz de Santiago de Tlalotelolco in 1533, which became more than simply an institution for elementary education. The historian Steck points out that this College was designed to fulfill two basic functions: (1) to provide an intellectual and moral education for those natives who showed an aptitude or inclination to join the priesthood, and (2) to form among the secular class of Indians a well-



and practices of life which were unknown to their ancestors. Gante also had a desire to present Indians to some position of minor importance in civil and political life. Moreover, he wanted his school to combine the better elements of both Aztec and European civilisations, thereby enabling students to accept and to understand the resulting culture and to live harmoniously and fruitfully with other racial groups in the new society. A striking similarity between these ideas of Pedro de Gante and the views held by Fr. Juan de Zumarraga will later become quite obvious.

Other Franciscan leaders besides Pedro de Gante in the field of education include the first Bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumarraga. After his arrival in New Spain, Zumarraga observed the work done by Gante and became an ardent follower of the Franciscan ideal of formal education as a means of civilizing the Indians. Besides writing several manuals on Christianity to be used in the instruction of natives, he was also instrumental in the establishment of the College of Santa Catalina de Valladolid in 1525, which became more than simply an institution for elementary education. The historian Stead points out that this College was designed to fulfill two basic functions: (1) to provide an intellectual and social education for these natives and showed an attitude of recognition for their progress, and (2) to form among the younger class of Indians a year-



informed and educated group. The students for the College of the Holy Cross were drawn in the main from cacique families. These families had held positions of local leadership in the time of the Aztec supremacy, and it was hoped that through education the future caciques would perform valuable service to both their people and to the Spaniards.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, because of rivalry and jealousy on the part of some of the Spanish clergy and lay officials, the objectives of the College were never completely realized.

This jealousy on the part of the various Spanish groups not only proved detrimental to the growth and progress of the College of the Holy Cross but was also a factor which negated many Franciscan efforts in education. Coupled with this envy of the success of the Franciscans in influencing natives and holding their affection and respect was the race prejudice of many Spaniards who refused to support equality of educational opportunity or to have the natives serve as priests and lesser administrative officials. Lack of adequate financial support and the misappropriation of funds by secular officials also proved to be severe handicaps. Other unfortunate incidents, such as the epidemic of 1545, which greatly reduced the population, or the preoccupation

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<sup>10</sup> Francis Borgia Steck, El Primer Colegio de América--Santa Cruz de Tlaltelolco (México, 1944), pp. 17-19.



informed and educated group. The students for the College of the Holy Cross were drawn in the main from Catholic families. These families had held positions of local leadership in the time of the Aztec empire, and it was hoped that through education the future leaders would continue to provide service to both their people and to the government. Unfortunately, because of rivalry and jealousy on the part of some of the Spanish clergy and lay officials, the objectives of the College were never completely realized.

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to Francis Xavier, S.J., Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco (Mexico), 1540, pp. 1-12.



of the friars with more spiritual matters rather than curriculum and instruction,<sup>11</sup> gradually brought about a reduction of the prestige and influence of their early institutions by the end of the seventeenth century. Yet despite these weaknesses it is important to note that the Franciscans chose formal institutionalized education as an important means of adjusting the aboriginal value system to the ideology of Christian Spain. This group of friars is significant because it concentrated on the improvement of the native peoples rather than that of the Spaniard, whose training and instruction were looked after either by secular groups or by members of other religious groups, such as the Jesuits. Converting the natives to Christianity, introducing and establishing Spanish civilization, promoting social mobility among the natives, and providing for more abundant individual and social living were the purposes of their educational attempts. Although they were unsuccessful in completely carrying out this plan of action, the friars did provide a good foundation and background for future efforts in the field of Indian education.

While Gante and the Franciscans were experimenting in the field of primary and secondary instruction for the Indians and mestizos, another pioneering figure, Vasco de

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<sup>11</sup> Barth, op. cit., pp. 178-179.



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Quiroga, had established his famous hospital-communities of Santa Fe as experiments for the social integration of the Indian. Quiroga, an Oidor of the Audiencia of Mexico and the first Bishop of Michoacán, established his first hospital-community in 1533. Each of these communities, placed under the direction of priests, was composed of a group of lower-class Indians of various skills and occupations. All worked approximately six hours a day and all property and profits were held on a community rather than an individual basis. Children of the families which comprised a hospital-community received a basic education at the hands of the friars and also training in the trade best suited to them. They had instruction in reading, writing, singing, and Christian doctrine; in fact all of their training was designed to produce a well-knit and prosperous rural community based whenever possible on both Spanish and Aztec civilization.<sup>12</sup> As Larroyo points out, the basis of Quiroga's whole system was, in brief, a simple and honest Christian religious life that revolved around principles of work, subjection to authority, and obedience to the rules of the community.<sup>13</sup> This type of rural life became popular in the more northern areas of New Spain, but since this life was not a society

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<sup>12</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 63-65.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 66.



Quirós, had established the famous hospital-community of Santa Fe as experiments for the social integration of the Indian. Quirós, on the other hand, had founded the first hospital-community of the Indians, established the first hospital-community in 1835. Each of these communities, located under the direction of Quirós, was composed of a group of lower-class Indians of various skills and occupations. All worked cooperatively for hours of day and night, and profits were held on a community rather than an individual basis. Children of the families were brought to the hospital-community received a basic education, the boys of the Indians and also training in the trades were given to them. They had instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, and other than domestic; in fact all of their training was designed to produce a well-trained and productive rural community member whenever possible on both Spanish and Aztec civilization. As Larroyo points out, the basis of Quirós's whole system was, in brief, a simple and honest Christian religion and that revolved around principles of love, justice, honesty, and obedience to the rules of the community. This type of rural life seems peculiar to the time and place of New Spain, but since this life was not a novelty

12 Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

13 Ibid., p. 66.



which was competitive or which stressed initiative and individual planning by the Indian, Quiroga's hospital-communities were successful only as long as they had strong leadership from the religious.

Despite the original and beneficial pioneering efforts of the Franciscans, Quiroga, and the other missionary leaders in the cause of Indian education, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed a steady deterioration in the education of the masses and a general lack of interest and support in any such projects by both the colonial governments and many of the religious leaders. The Indians developed into a group whose sole function was to serve as a giant labor pool to be exploited by the Spanish in haciendas, mines and workshops. By the end of the colonial period the Indians had become a submerged class, largely illiterate and set apart from the rest of the people of New Spain. Except for a few leaders from the cacique families, the program for social integration through education had failed.

Any review of primary and secondary education in colonial Mexico must also take into consideration the educational facilities available to the Spanish ruling classes. Training of Spanish youth was in the main in the hands of the Church and of religious orders. This was especially true of secondary education, which was largely controlled by the Jesuits. Latin grammar schools, seminaries and colleges



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were operated by this Order in many areas of New Spain until its expulsion in 1763. These schools emphasized training in the classics and in humanities, and particularly catered to the sons of upper-class Spanish families.<sup>14</sup>

There was also a certain amount of secular educational activity, particularly on the elementary level. An indication of the quality and character of much of this secular instruction can be gained from an examination of the Ordinances of 1600 which provided for the regulation of elementary education conducted outside of religious institutions. These ordinances provided that each city or district should choose its two best teachers to visit all secular schools, examine all teachers, and certify them. No mulattos, negros or Indians could be teachers, and only those Spaniards who could provide appropriate information on their life and background and who were "old Christians" could apply. Coeducation was prohibited, and the certified teacher had to operate the school in person and could not delegate his authority to others. Finally, the ordinances forbade those who operated markets or vegetable stores from having schools.<sup>15</sup> These ordinances are an interesting commentary on the social

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<sup>14</sup> For further information on Jesuit education, see Jerome V. Jacobsen, Educational Foundation of the Jesuits in Sixteenth Century New Spain (Berkeley, 1938).

<sup>15</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 73-74.



were operated by this Order in early years of the century until  
the exodus in 1965. These people engaged in farming in  
the estates and in agriculture, and eventually moved to  
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For further information on local education, see  
Jorge V. Jacobson, Educational Foundations of the Islands in  
Sixteenth Century and Early Nineteenth Century, 1965.  
is Larrero, pp. 13-14.



and cultural conditions of teachers, schools, education in general, and by logical extension, of the type of students produced.

An interesting development in the late eighteenth century was the establishment of the Colegio de las Vizcaínas, founded in 1767. This institution was similar to modern vocational schools, for it specialized in home economics courses for women. At first the school was open only to Spaniards, but by 1787 it would accept women from all racial groups. There was a conflict between clerical and secular authorities as to who should operate the school, but the secular group was victorious and there was never any Church interference in its operation.<sup>16</sup> The founding of Vizcaínas was one of the few heartening and far-seeing movements in the field of education in the eighteenth century.

By the end of the colonial period there were a great many weaknesses in the total educational system of New Spain. An almost complete neglect of the masses and very inadequate facilities for other groups in the colonial population were perhaps the most prominent faults. Leopoldo Zea, in his book entitled Del Liberalismo a la Revolución en la Educación Mexicana, makes a rather severe indictment of colonial education. He feels that colonial authorities were

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<sup>16</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 127-128.



and cultural conditions of teachers, students, and the general public, and by logical extension, of the type of education produced.

An interesting development in the late nineteenth century was the establishment of the *Escuela Normal* in 1877. This institution was created to train modern vocational teachers for the normal schools. It was the first of its kind in the country, but by 1897 it would admit women for all levels of education. There was a conflict between the normal and vocational institutions as to the status of the normal schools. The normal group was victorious and there was never any further interference in its operation. The founding of *Escuela Normal* was one of the few noteworthy educational developments in the field of education in the nineteenth century.

By the end of the colonial period there were a great many weaknesses in the educational system of the country. An almost complete neglect of the sciences and very inadequate facilities for other groups in the colonial population were perhaps the most prominent features. In his book entitled *Del Libertador a la Independencia* in 1913, *Edgardo Mejía*, makes a rather severe assessment of colonial education. He feels that colonial education was



only interested in educating and training a class of people with docile spirits who would easily submit themselves to the demands of the controlling classes and of the representatives of Spain in Mexico. In Zea's opinion, both secular and religious training in the later colonial period only served the interests of the groups in power. Nothing that was taught encouraged the students to face realistically and practically the problems with which they were confronted. They were trained only to rely upon their class and the privileges they could derive from it.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Herbert Priestly maintains that for the time the conditions in the colonial areas of Spain were just as good as those of any other colonial power. Priestly states: "Spanish American civilization of the colonial period must be contrasted, if justly, only with English-American colonial culture. When this is done, disparities are minimized and discrepancies are found to be less important than popular tradition made them."<sup>18</sup> Therefore in view of these conflicting opinions, it is rather difficult to make a judgment on the merit of education in New Spain. More important to the understanding of this thesis is to keep in mind the fact that a basis for

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<sup>17</sup> Leopoldo Zea, Del Liberalismo a la Revolución en la Educación Mexicana (México, 1956), p. 61.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted by Sanchez, op. cit., pp. 47-48.



only interested in education in the sense of training the natives with local spirit who would be able to take care of themselves in the demands of the controlling officials and the demands of the natives of Spain in Mexico. In fact, the natives and religious training in the later colonial period only served the interests of the groups in power. Education was taught encouraged the natives to take advantage of the situation practically the problems with which they were confronted. They were trained only to rely upon their own strength and the allies they could derive from it. On the other hand, Herbert Priestly maintains that for the time the education in the colonial period of Spain was just as good as that of any other colonial power. Priestly asserts: "Spanish education of the colonial period must be considered as a failure, only with English-learned colonial culture. When this is done, education was hindered and the colonies were found to be less important than Spanish tradition made them." Therefore in view of these conflicting opinions it is rather difficult to make a judgment of the merit of education in New Spain. More important to the understanding of this thesis is to keep in mind the fact that a native

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17 Leopoldo Lee, La educacion en la Educacion Mexicana (Mexico, 1900), p. 11.  
18 Quoted by Sanchez, op. cit., p. 11.



further development had been established during the colonial period.

Education in the National Period prior  
to the Revolution of 1910

On the eve of the Wars of Independence the patriot Miguel de Hidalgo and a few others had made some effort to establish schools which reflected the aims of earlier colonial education. At Dolores, Hidalgo sought to promote the social welfare of the Indians of his parish and operated in conjunction with his church a school much like the one which Pedro de Gante had established in sixteenth-century Mexico.<sup>19</sup> His example represented, however, the exception rather than the rule, and education at the end of the colonial period was still dominated by conservative religious tradition.

The struggle for independence disrupted the political and economic life of the country, resulting in the curtailment of most educational endeavors. After independence was achieved, the contest for power between conservatives and liberals, centralists and federalists, the ineptness of political leaders such as Santa Anna, and the corruptness, inefficiency and mismanagement of many important officials presented serious obstacles to the development of educational programs.

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<sup>19</sup> Sanchez, op. cit., pp. 47-48.







Liberal leaders, like José María Luis Mora<sup>20</sup> and Valentín Gómez Farías, envisaged the nationalization of education and the organization of an educational system freed of religious fanaticism that would promote the principles of political liberalism, facilitate the development of a strong middle class, and bring about the creation of a new social order in which opportunity would be open to all who had the potentialities for achieving success. Mora also proposed that the most adequate media should be found for diffusing learning through the masses, but neither he nor other Creole leaders of the period faced up to the realities of the social and economic inequalities of the Indians.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the conservative and privileged groups, especially the army and the clergy, which dominated the government for many years prior to the 1850's, successfully blocked the development of a liberal educational program.

The most interesting phase of educational development during the decades immediately following independence was the introduction of the Lancastrian system of education, in which

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<sup>20</sup> Mora, a writer and politician, was born in Chamacuero in 1794. His book México y Sus Revoluciones, the most important of his writings, explains his political philosophy. He died in Paris in July, 1850. Larroyo, op. cit., p. 164. Cf. also Morris L. Simon, "The Political Thought of José María Luis Mora, 1794-1850" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Inter-American Affairs, University of New Mexico, 1951).

<sup>21</sup> Zea, op. cit., pp. 60-65; cf. Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 164-168.



Liberal leaders, like John Jay, were...  
Valentin Gómez Faria, organized the national...  
action and the organization of an educational...  
of religious fanaticism that...  
political liberalism, facilitated the...  
middle class, and...  
order in which...  
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that the most adequate...  
learning through the...  
leaders of the period...  
and economic...  
conservative and...  
the clergy, which...  
to the 1850's,...  
liberal educational...  
The most interesting...  
during the decades...  
introduction of the...

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30. Hays, a writer and...  
in 1904. His book...  
tant of his writings...  
died in Paris in 1850...  
also Morris L. Simon...  
late Hays, 1794-1850...  
of inter-American...  
31. See, for...  
pp. 154-155.



student teachers, acting as monitors under the supervision of a maestro, taught their fellow students. These schools, supported by private enterprise, made an important contribution to primary and secondary education among the middle and upper classes. This method of instruction has been severely criticized, however, on the ground that it resulted in mere routine repetition of material presented to the student monitors by the maestro.<sup>22</sup>

With the overthrow of the conservative government of Santa Anna in 1855, the liberal leaders--Juárez, the Lerdo de Tejado brothers, and others--enacted a series of reform measures influenced to a great extent by concepts characteristic of contemporary liberal thought in Europe and the United States: equality before the law, laissez-faire capitalism, and freedom of individual enterprise. In their zeal to achieve these objectives, which they deemed essential to the progress of the nation, the reform leaders, like those of the preceding decades, gave little attention to the conditions and the basic needs of the Indian masses.<sup>23</sup>

In the field of education Juárez and his associates sought to introduce a system of free, obligatory and secular

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<sup>22</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 150-156.

<sup>23</sup> See Walter V. Scholes, "El liberalismo reformista," Historia Mexicana, II (1952-1953), pp. 343-352, for an excellent exposition of the basic concepts of the Reform movement.



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22 Leroy, pp. 111, 112, 113-114.  
23 See Walter V. Schrieber, "The Liberalism of the Mexican Revolution,"  
*Historia Mexicana*, II (1955-1956), pp. 1-10, for an excellent  
exposition of the basic concepts of the liberal movement.



teaching: free, in the sense that any recognized agency, state or private, could engage in education; obligatory for all children at the primary level; and secular in the sense that religious instruction should be excluded from the curricula. The program envisioned the creation of an extensive system of state-supported schools, but little could be done to make the plans effective until the end of the period of foreign intervention and of the rule of Maximilian.<sup>24</sup>

When the French were finally driven out and Maximilian was deposed and executed, the liberals jubilantly felt that the day was at hand when education could be made to serve national needs. Juárez, among others, believed that success would depend in large measure upon the material progress of the country. The following comments by the Reform leader clearly indicate this point of view:

The man who cannot supply his family with food views the education of his sons, not only as something remote but as a positive impediment to his struggle for existence. Instead of sending them to school. . . he hires out their frail labor power to alleviate even if only to a slight extent the misery which engulfs them. If that man had a few conveniences, if he could squeeze the last profit from his toil, he would from that day on be eager to educate his children and provide them with solid instruction. The desire to learn and to become illustrious is innate in the heart of man. Strike off the fetters of misery and despotism that oppress him and he will naturally achieve greatness.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Wilfred Hardy Callcott, Liberalism in Mexico, 1857-1929 (Palo Alto, California, 1931), p. 80.

<sup>25</sup> As quoted by Nathaniel and Sylvia Weyl, The Reconquest of Mexico (New York, 1939), p. 321.







These statements reflected the opinions held by most of the liberal leaders that the economic progress of the nation based upon free enterprise was essential for the success of the larger Reform movement, and also explains in great part the popularity in Mexico of the philosophy of positivism set forth in the discussions, writings and speeches of such able men as Gabino Barreda, Francisco Cosmes, and others. This Comteian philosophy,<sup>26</sup> modified to suit the needs of Mexico, emphasized the values of peace, order and property. It also envisioned the creation of an enlightened bourgeoisie guided by a sense of moral responsibility to use their surplus wealth for the common good. The positivists, like the leaders of the Reform era, failed to realize the urgency of social reform for the masses, believing that material progress of the nation would eventually solve such problems. The Científicos<sup>27</sup> of the later period of the Porfirian regime emphasized economic development and neglected the Indian, who was regarded as an obstacle to the progress of the country. Their program may be

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<sup>26</sup> Positivism, as expounded by the French sociologist Auguste Comte, primarily was a condemnation of the theological and metaphysical philosophies as a basis for the solution of man's biological, social and economic problems. Through the use of the scientific method and the slogan "Love, Order and Progress" Comte felt that a better materialistic world could be achieved. Progress was the keynote of his entire philosophy, and the progress that Comte envisioned through a well-ordered and peaceful society particularly appealed to the Mexicans, who were just emerging from a period of great strife and civil war. For a detailed exposition of positivism, see Harold Hoffding, A History of Modern Philosophy (2 vols., London, 1924), II, pp. 293-355.

<sup>27</sup> The Científicos were members of the Unión Liberal, a



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27 The Comtean philosophy was one of the leading influences



regarded as a logical development of the positivist philosophy.

In 1867 Juárez called upon Barreda, the exponent of positivism, to serve on a commission to formulate plans for the reorganization of Mexican education. These plans, worked out under Barreda's leadership, called for a continuation of the policy of free and obligatory education, at least on the primary level, a unification and reorganization of secondary education, and, most important of all, the establishment of a National Preparatory School in Mexico City, which was subsequently used as a model for similar institutions in other urban areas. This program, expanded and developed during the Porfirian period, gave special attention to the larger centers of population at the expense of rural areas, and stressed secondary education along positivistic lines. In short, its principal purpose was the formation of a group of students with specific

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political party founded in 1892, which developed the positivistic philosophy to the fullest degree by relying completely on the scientific method as the only way possible to improve conditions in Mexico. The leader of the group was José Ives Limantour, Secretary of the Treasury and a student of Barreda. Unfortunately, as the Científicos became more powerful and affluent, less was said or done about the humanitarian ideals of Comte's philosophy, and the entire positivist movement in Mexico became subverted and incompatible with the desires of the great majority of Mexican people. The term científico was applied to members of the Unión Liberal by the opposition. See Sam Schulman, "A Study of the Political Aspects of Positivism in Mexico" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Inter-American Affairs, University of New Mexico, 1949). Cf. also Patrick Romanell, The Making of the Mexican Mind (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1952) and F.S.C. Northrop, ed., Ideological Differences and World Order (New Haven, 1949).



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training in those subjects that would directly serve the cause of material gain for the nation. By eliminating religious and political material from the curricula, the program sought to establish a kind of neutrality in controversial subjects in order to prepare as quickly as possible a new class of Mexican leaders.<sup>28</sup>

It should be noted, however, that during the Díaz period the positivist philosophy of education and teaching was challenged from time to time by educational leaders who called for new methods, techniques and philosophies and who envisioned some of the goals of the later Revolutionary program. One of the most important of these leaders calling for a re-appraisal and reorientation of the goals of education was Enrique Rébsamen.

Born in Switzerland in 1857, Rébsamen received his academic training at the University of Zurich. By 1884 he had come to León in the state of Guanajuato, where he served as a teacher in the local schools. In 1885 he was called to assist Enrique Laubscher with the education of teachers at the Escuela Modelo in Orizaba, a normal school which had been opened in 1883; Laubscher taught the practical courses while Rébsamen concentrated on teacher training. Rébsamen also served in the reorganization of the state-supported schools in the state of Veracruz and he established new primary institutions directed

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<sup>28</sup> Zea, op. cit., pp. 14-15.



training in those subjects that would directly serve the cause of material gain for the nation. By eliminating religious and political material from the curriculum, the program sought to establish a kind of neutrality in controversial subjects in order to prepare as quickly as possible a new class of Mexican leaders. 28

It should be noted, however, that during the 1920s period the positivist philosophy of education and teaching was challenged from time to time by educational leaders who called for new methods, techniques and philosophies and who envisioned some of the goals of the later revolutionary program. One of the most important of these leaders calling for a re-appraisal and reorientation of the goals of education was Enrique Llanusa. Born in Switzerland in 1857, Llanusa received his academic training at the University of Zurich. By 1883, he had come to lead in the state of Guanajuato, where he served as a teacher in the local schools. In 1885, he was called to assist Enrique Llanusa with the education of teachers at the Escuela Normal in Orizaba, a normal school which had been opened in 1883; Llanusa taught the practical courses while other men concentrated on teacher training. Llanusa also served in the reorganization of the state-supported schools in the state of Veracruz and he established new primary institutions directed



by students he had taught at Orizaba. In 1886 he was also instrumental in the founding of the Escuela Normal in Jalapa, which Larroyo feels was an important factor in assuring the reform of education in the state of Veracruz. At his death in 1904 Rébsamen was recognized as a leading Mexican educator of the nineteenth century, and his ideals and principles regarding education had spread to other progressive states of Mexico.<sup>29</sup>

In his pedagogical philosophy Rébsamen always carefully distinguished between education and instruction. By education he meant the gradual and progressive development of all the human faculties, whereas instruction was simply the acquisition of subject matter. He realized, of course, that education and instruction were interdependent, and that one served as a means of achieving the other. Along with this view Rébsamen also felt that through the medium of teaching the instructor ought to form not only an intelligent and enlightened man, but also a new man of noble and elevated ideals.<sup>30</sup> Rébsamen's philosophy of education was indicative of the coming spirit of the Revolution of 1910.

Another of the important early leaders was Carlos Carrillo. He was called by Rébsamen to a position in the Escuela Normal at Jalapa in 1887, and apparently he remained there

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<sup>29</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 228-235.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



by students he had taught at Oaxaca. In 1906 he was also instrumental in the founding of the Escuela Normal de Jalapa, which Larroyo feels was an important factor in securing the reform of education in the state of Veracruz. At his death in 1904 Reboredo was recognized as a leading Mexican educator of the nineteenth century, and his ideas and principles regarding education had served as a model for many of the states of Mexico.<sup>29</sup>

In his pedagogical philosophy Reboredo always carefully distinguished between education and instruction. By education he meant the gradual and progressive development of all the human faculties, whereas instruction was simply the acquisition of subject matter. He realized, of course, that education and instruction were interdependent, and that one served as a means of achieving the other. Along with this view Reboredo also felt that through the medium of teaching the instructor ought to form not only an intelligent and enlightened man, but also a new man of noble and elevated ideals.<sup>30</sup> Reboredo's philosophy of education was indicative of the early spirit of the Revolution of 1910.

Another of the important early leaders was Carlos Carrillo. He was called by Reboredo to a position in the Escuela Normal de Jalapa in 1907, and apparently he remained there

<sup>29</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 220-225.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



until about 1890, when he assumed a post at the newly established national normal school in Mexico City.<sup>31</sup> Carrillo, who also proved to be a forerunner of more modern educational policies, strongly opposed schools which by only presenting theoretical materials never benefited students in their ordinary everyday life. He felt that practical training as well as instruction in the obligations, duties and privileges of citizens of a democratic nation should be included in all programs of study. Carrillo expended all of his efforts on the reform of elementary schools; for him, the transformation of Mexico into a country certain of its goals and jealous of its rights hinged upon this reform. Carrillo also made a distinction similar to that of Rébsamen between instruction and education, and it was his belief that the latter should be the goal of the elementary school program.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately the ideas of both Carrillo and Rébsamen concerning the improvement of education were limited in the main to reforms in the larger population centers. Little was said about rural elementary education and even less regarding the training of the Indian.

Rébsamen also represented the growing realization of the need for the better training of teachers. This need was partially met with the establishment of state normal schools

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<sup>31</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 236-243.

<sup>32</sup> Zea, op. cit., pp. 136-137.



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<sup>31</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 232-243.

<sup>32</sup> See, op. cit., pp. 136-137.



such as those at Jalapa and Orizaba. As previously mentioned, these schools stressed not only the acquisition of knowledge of subject matter, but also instruction in the basic principles of the philosophy of education and in the best methods of carrying out these principles. This need for teacher-training institutions was carried to the national level during the term of Joaquín Baranda as Minister of Justice and Public Instruction.

Baranda believed that education should be an effective means for the impregnation of people with liberal ideals and for the creation of a true national unity. He felt that these goals could be achieved through a plan that involved three steps: the proper indoctrination and training of teachers, the availability of education to all people, and finally, a unification of all the educational systems of the nation.<sup>33</sup> The first step was carried out in 1885, when, at the request of Baranda and such intellectual leaders as Ignacio Altamirano and Justo Sierra, the National Congress passed legislation creating the national Escuela Normal para Profesores. This school was officially opened in Mexico City in 1887, and by 1890 a second normal school was established there.<sup>34</sup> The second step of Baranda's plan was effected in 1888, when the Mexican

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<sup>33</sup> Zea, op. cit., pp. 143-145.

<sup>34</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., p. 250.



such as those at Japan and Prussia. As previously mentioned, these schools stressed not only the acquisition of knowledge of subject matter, but also instruction in the basic principles of the philosophy of education and in the best methods of carrying out these principles. This need for teacher-training institutions was carried to the national level during the term of Josephine Bonaparte as Minister of Justice and Public Instruction.

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<sup>33</sup> See, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-146.  
<sup>34</sup> *Lauro, op. cit.*, p. 222.



Congress passed a law making education compulsory for all children between the ages of six and twelve. The final step was taken with the calling of the first national Congreso de Instrucción in 1889. The Congress, which was composed of delegates from all the Mexican states, had as one of its major objectives the unification of all legislation regarding education.<sup>35</sup>

The recommendations of two of the commissions of this Congress deserve some mention. The first (Comisión sobre Escuelas de Instrucción Primaria Superior) considered the need for advanced primary education to fill the gap between instruction on the primary level and that of the preparatory schools. Since it was acknowledged that to finance a program of studies in the preparatory schools required considerable time and resources, the Commission felt that an advanced primary school, whose curriculum would be neither as complete nor as lengthy as that of the Preparatoria, should be established for children of the poorer classes. This new school would be the primaria superior, which would endeavor to present a well-rounded terminal program of advanced instruction for students unable to attend the preparatory schools.<sup>36</sup>

The other commission of the Congress worthy of note was

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<sup>35</sup> Zea, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 160-161.



Congress passed a law making education compulsory for all children between the ages of six and twelve. The law was taken with the ceiling of the first national education act. The Congress, which was composed of delegates from all the states, had as one of its major objectives the unification of all legislation regarding education.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 146-147.



that regarding primary education (Comisión de Enseñanza Elemental Obligatoria). The thinking of this group was dominated by the idea of popular education rather than elementary instruction and is reflected adequately in the following statement of the commission which included Rébsamen among its members:

The word popular is more comprehensive because it does not determine this or that grade of instruction but instead refers to the general culture which is considered as indispensable to the people in all civilized countries. And as that which we have as our work is not only improving a particular grade of instruction, but also elevating the popular culture . . . we ought to use the term that includes all the different elements which contribute in the country to the complete education of the popular masses.<sup>37</sup>

With these statements one can see a new point of view developing and rising to challenge the older philosophies of education then being followed. Although little stress was placed on the Indian as such, the major emphasis of the commission's work was in the area of rural elementary education.<sup>38</sup> The time was not yet ripe, however, for change. The spokesman for the minority view of the commission was the old positivist, Francisco Cosmes. He made the following statement in defense of his stand which still represented the opinion of the majority of Mexicans in power and authority:

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted by Zea, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

<sup>38</sup> For a list of recommendations regarding the improvement of rural education, particularly regarding new laws, see Zea, op. cit., p. 152.



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<sup>37</sup> Quoted by Zee, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>38</sup> For a list of recommendations regarding the improve-  
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 see Zee, *op. cit.*, p. 162.



Given the differences in the races that populate our extensive territory, the intellectual capacity of each of them, the sociological conditions in which they find themselves, the climates in which they live, the financial resources and political ability which each state has at its disposal, is it advantageous to give the same form of instruction to all in the Republic. . . when the precocity of a certain group demands that instruction be given them much earlier than others. . .; when, finally, the sanction of obligatory education ought to be distinct according to the locality, the character and the intelligence of the inhabitants?<sup>39</sup>

In these statements of Cosmes one finds expression of an opinion which was quite popular among the ruling classes regarding the inferiority of rural groups and particularly the Indians. He goes so far as to see no need at all of schools or education for the masses. Cosmes apparently failed to realize that the lower classes, including the Indians, aspired to gain for themselves liberty, self-respect, independence and economic improvements. If the government failed to aid or support them to fulfill these desires, then the masses would eventually take them by themselves, as, indeed, they attempted to do some twenty years later.

Before completing any examination of educational trends prior to the Revolution of 1910, reference should be made to one more important personality, Justo Sierra. In 1905 public instruction was separated from the Department of Justice, and the new Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts was created.

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Justo Sierra, a noted historian, author, playwright, poet and politician, was chosen as the Ministry's head, a position he held until the Díaz government was overthrown. Although he remained faithful to the liberal and nationalist tradition of the Reform period of Juárez, Sierra also supported Díaz mainly because he felt that only after becoming strong could Mexico have the freedom and liberty he so desired, and that Mexico was gaining this strength under Díaz. Like other educators of the nineteenth century, Sierra also differentiated between education and instruction, stating that all instruction could be no more than a single factor in the individual's development, which was his education. For him the school should take on a wide series of functions to provide opportunity for the student to gain the most possible from his experiences.<sup>40</sup> Indicative of this attitude was his reorganization of elementary education into primaria and primaria secundaria, as had been recommended by one of the commissions of the Congreso de Instrucción of 1889, and also his recognition of the need for vocational education in the advanced schools. To remake Mexico but at the same time to have an awareness of the reality of the venture was Sierra's educational ideal. He sought a balance between reality and spiritual concepts in setting up a pattern of national education.

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<sup>40</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 270-271.



Justo Sierra, a noted historian, author, politician, poet and politician, was chosen as the Ministry's head, a position he held until the Diaz government was overthrown. Although he remained faithful to the liberal and nationalist tradition of the Reform period of Mexico, Sierra also supported Diaz mainly because he felt that only after becoming strong would Mexico have the freedom and liberty he so desired, and that Mexico was gaining this strength under Diaz. Like other educators of the nineteenth century, Sierra also distinguished between education and instruction, stating that all instruction could be no more than a single factor in the individual's development, which was his conviction. For him the school should take on a wide series of functions to provide opportunity for the student to gain the most benefits from his experience. Indicative of this attitude was his reorganization of elementary education into primary and secondary schools, as had been recommended by one of the commissions of the Congress of Instruction of 1887, and also his recognition of the need for vocational education in the advanced schools. To remove Mexico but at the same time to have an awareness of the reality of the venture was Sierra's educational ideal. He sought a balance between reality and spiritual concepts in setting up a pattern of national education.



### Trends in Mexican Education, 1910-1925

In 1910 Mexico experienced a revolution which was much more than a mere shifting of governments. It was a movement that brought about social and economic changes of a fundamental character. A complete collapse of the old ruling oligarchy occurred when its spokesman and standard-bearer, Porfirio Díaz, was deposed. Although the more reactionary forces tried to regain control of the government, they were not successful. Not until the election of Avila Camacho in 1940 did the tempo of revolutionary change begin to slow down due to the international situation, improved economic and social conditions of the Mexicans, and in part also to a decline in the early idealism of the Revolution. However, between 1910 and 1940 attention had been focused upon improving the economic, social and educational opportunities of the Mexican peoples and also upon bettering the status of the lower classes, especially the Indians.

The educational picture in 1910 was bleak, despite the efforts of such men as Rébsamen, Carrillo and Sierra to bring about reform in the late nineteenth century. Lack of facilities and qualified teachers proved a definite detriment to the advancement of education. Near the end of the Díaz administration slightly less than twenty-four per cent of the youth of the whole nation had even a chance to attend school.<sup>41</sup> Of these

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<sup>41</sup> Callcott, op. cit., p. 187.



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<sup>41</sup> Gallcott, op. cit., p. 107.



many more lived in urban than in rural areas where the percentage having adequate instruction or completing their course of study was much smaller. Bernstein states, on the basis of figures gathered for several Mexican states for the year 1910, that the illiteracy rate ranged from twenty-six per cent in the Federal District to fifty-five per cent in Guerrero.<sup>42</sup> The states with the largest rural population had the highest illiteracy figures, which serves as another indication of the deplorable lack of educational opportunities in non-urban areas.

The first few years following the Revolution saw Mexico swept by turmoil and constant fighting. Little could be done in the field of education or in legally extending any of the promised reforms of the revolutionaries until Carranza assumed control of the national government and brought about some stability. Owing to these disorders schools had been closed in large numbers, and as late as 1919 conditions were extremely bad. Carranza showed his interest in promoting education by sending in 1915 150 teachers to visit schools in the United States in order to become better acquainted with new techniques and methods.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Harry Bernstein, *Modern and Contemporary Latin America* (New York, 1932), p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> Callcott, op. cit., p. 236.



iterated the earlier liberal stand of the Reform period by declaring in Article Three that education was to be free, secular and obligatory. In an explicit definition of the term "secular education" this provision forbade all religious groups to establish or operate primary schools.<sup>44</sup> These provisions of the Constitution of 1917 regarding education, as well as other fields, were more a proposed program of future activity than a plan of action which could be immediately implemented. For example, it was then impossible to make all primary education completely secular. Instead these anti-clerical pronouncements were more in the nature of future aspirations which the convention hoped eventually would be achieved.

The greatest strides forward in education were made in the third decade of the twentieth century. With the election and inauguration of Obregón as President in 1920, education became a primary concern of the national government. Paper plans and revolutionary proclamations were discarded, and the problem of the education of the masses was carried forward under the slogan "Educar es redimir,"<sup>45</sup>--to educate is to redeem. José Vasconcelos<sup>46</sup> was chosen by Obregón to head the newly

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<sup>44</sup> Zea, op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>45</sup> Sanchez, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> Parkes gives the following description of Vasconcelos: "By profession a lawyer, by inclination a philosopher, and by temperament a man of letters, Vasconcelos was one of the most complex personalities of twentieth century Mexico. Intellectually he was a bundle of contradictions, worshipping Madero



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the third decade of the twentieth century. With the election  
and inauguration of Oregon as President in 1923, education  
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formed Ministry of Education and he immediately set to work to prove his conviction that education could be used as a force in rebuilding Mexico both materially and spiritually. In his attack upon the educational chaos in Mexico, Vasconcelos was faced with three basic problems: (1) the redemption of schools from conflicting state and national systems of education through the initiation of a federal program of regulation; (2) provision for adequate teacher-training programs; and (3) a revision of the activities of rural schools.<sup>47</sup> An indication of the support given Vasconcelos by the Obregón administration is shown by an examination of the national budget. During the Carranza regime one per cent of the national budget went for education, while this appropriation increased to twelve per cent in 1922 and fifteen per cent in 1923.<sup>48</sup>

Vasconcelos began the movement toward a solution of the problem of achieving standardization of the various sys-

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and at the same time regarding Lucas Alemán as the greatest statesman of the Mexican Republic. He was consistent only in two things--in his glorification of the civilization which Spain had brought to America and in his persecution complex towards the United States. . . . Intransigent both in his loves and in his hates--endowed with all of the mystical idealism and lack of realistic common sense of his Spanish ancestry, he was eventually to go out into the wilderness and to denounce everything that had been done in Mexico since the murder of Madero." Henry B. Parkes, A History of Mexico (Boston, 1950), p. 376.

<sup>47</sup> Kneller, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 47.



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#7 Knefel, op. cit., p. 17.  
#8 Ibid., p. 17.



tems of education with the introduction of such measures as a uniform grading system in all schools. Also through suggestions by the Ministry for improvement of educational programs in specific areas many systems would be brought more in accord with desired national patterns of education. Shortly before his resignation from the Ministry, Vasconcelos formulated plans for new teacher-training institutions, which were put into effect beginning in 1925. Most significant of the new institutions was the Escuela Nacional Normal de Maestros,<sup>49</sup> which will be discussed at some length in the following chapter. In the field of teacher-training programs for rural areas Vasconcelos promoted the founding of new rural normal schools and, in 1923, was instrumental in the establishment of a series of cultural missions. These missions were to serve the dual purpose of cultural and professional improvement of teachers in service and of the development of popular enthusiasm leading to the cultural, social and economic improvement of the communities in which the missions operated. In sessions of these cultural missions, which were held in outlying and remote areas, rural teachers were given first-hand experience in carrying out new educational ideas which they could later experiment with in their own local schools.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 351-353.

<sup>50</sup> Sanchez, op. cit., p. 73.



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schools. 50

49 Larrero, op. cit., pp. 241-242.  
50 Sanchez, op. cit., p. 78.



Regarding the new program of rural education developed under the Vasconcelos administration of the Ministry, Frank Tannenbaum makes the following statement:

It [rural education] attempts to reach deep into the spirit of the people and open the modern world to them without withering the culture they possess and have preserved. It is the most modern, yet the most delicate and sensitive, large-scale movement of cultural stimulus and social awakening that can be recorded in America and perhaps in the world.<sup>51</sup>

Under this program the Indian gained an equality of status with all other Mexicans and also an acceptance of his own system of culture values. Education thus had to take on the added function of preserving and developing Indian culture and, whenever possible, synthesizing it and Spanish culture. Thus the entire concept of Mexican education had in large measure completed a full circle and had returned to the ideals of the missionary school of Pedro de Gante.

In summarizing the career of José Vasconcelos, Larroyo lists the following accomplishments: effectively fighting illiteracy; increasing the number of rural schools; creating technical schools for the more talented of the working class; establishing agricultural schools; promoting rural education in any way possible--rural normal schools, cultural missions, etc.--and encouraging the arts and local handicrafts.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Frank Tannenbaum, Peace by Revolution (New York, 1933), p. 276.

<sup>52</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., p. 377.



Regarding the new program of rural education developed

under the Vocational Administration in the Ministry of Education

Sanabanda makes the following statement:

It is rural education, adapted to rural life, that the spirit of the people must have. It is not to them without interest the knowledge that comes and have preserved. It is the people's own most delicate and sensitive, their own movement of cultural evolution and their own movement. It is recorded in history and in the people's life.

Under this program the Indian groups in country of Mexico with all other Mexicans must have an opportunity of their own

form of culture values. Therefore this was to be done on the

added function of preserving and developing Indian culture

whenever possible, respecting its own Indian culture. This

the entire concept of Mexican education is to be done

completed a full circle and was referred to the people of the

missionary school of Pedro de Santa

In summarizing the course of development, Sanabanda

states the following recommendations: effectively, it is to

literacy; increasing the number of rural schools; organizing

technical schools for the rural population; and working closely

establishing agricultural schools; promoting rural education

in any way possible--rural normal schools, technical schools,

etc.--and encouraging the state and local authorities.

51. Frank Sanabanda, *Report on Education in Mexico* (1932),

p. 276.

52. *Lauro, op. cit.*, p. 277.



In 1925 Vasconcelos' services in the Ministry were terminated,<sup>53</sup> and he was replaced by Dr. José M. Puig Casauranc who served until 1928. Dr. Puig had been a supporter of Calles and manager of his presidential campaign, and he was rewarded with the Secretaryship of Education after assisting his friend through a successful election. Although Puig was an affable and intelligent man, he had no particular qualifications for the office and most of the responsibility lay with his Undersecretary.<sup>54</sup> To this post President Calles appointed Dr. Manuel Gamio, a distinguished anthropologist with a carefully thought out philosophy of indigenous education. However, a clash soon occurred between Gamio and Calles, and the former was forced out of office.<sup>55</sup> It was then that Moisés Sáenz, the official mayor of the Ministry, was named Undersecretary with the responsibility of carrying forward the educational program and developing it along new or different lines.

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<sup>53</sup> Gruening states that the reason for Vasconcelos' dismissal lay in the fact that he was "neutral during the De La Huerta rebellion, when other than active support of the Government was not improperly interpreted as verging on disloyalty." Ernest Gruening, Mexico and its Heritage (London, 1928), p. 117. Parkes, on the other hand, feels that Vasconcelos resigned his post in the cabinet as a result of the improper tactics used by the government in suppressing the conflict. "In January thugs in the pay of Morones assassinated the De La Huerta spokesman in Congress and kidnapped four of his associates, an act which caused the resignation in disgust of José Vasconcelos." Parkes, op. cit., p. 380.

<sup>54</sup> Gruening, op. cit., p. 660.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 661.



In 1888 Vassoncelos, previously in the Ministry of  
terminated, and he was replaced by Dr. João ...  
... who served until 1892. Dr. ...  
of Calicut and manager of the ...  
was rewarded with the ...  
ing his friend through a ...  
was an able and intelligent man, and he ...  
... for the office and ...  
with his Undersecretary, ...  
appointed Dr. Manoel ...  
with a carefully thought out ...  
tion. However, a ...  
and the former was forced out of office ...  
... the ...  
Undersecretary with the responsibility of ...  
educational program and developing it ...  
lines.

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53 Grunwald states that the reason for ...  
... in the fact that he was ...  
... rebellion, ...  
... was not ...  
... Grunwald, ...  
... on the other hand, ...  
... in the cabinet as a ...  
... by the government in ...  
... in the pay of ...  
... in Congress and ...  
... not which caused the ...  
... Parker, ...  
54 Grunwald, ...  
55 Ibid., ...



## CHAPTER II

### THE EARLY CAREER OF MOISÉS SÁENZ<sup>1</sup>

Moisés Sáenz was born on February 16, 1888, in the city of Monterrey in northern Mexico.<sup>2</sup> He was one of ten children of a family of modest circumstances, his father being a farmer. His early training was also colored by the fact that he came from a solidly evangelical family of the Presbyterian faith in a predominantly Catholic country.

After completing his primary education at the Colegio Civil, a public state school in Monterrey, Sáenz and his brother Aarón, with the help of one of the first evangelical missionaries in Mexico, a Presbyterian minister named Boyce, were admitted to the Presbyterian High School in Coyoacán,

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<sup>1</sup> Essential chronological data on the life and career of Moisés Sáenz are given in Percy A. Martin, ed., Who's Who in Latin America, vol. I (2d ed., Palo Alto, California, 1935), p. 364; obituary notices appear in Christian Century, December 17, 1941, p. 15862, and Bulletin of the Pan American Union, April, 1942, p. 76. Certain information included in this and succeeding chapters was obtained by Dr. France V. Scholes in personal interviews with Sáenz' widow, Sra. Herlinda Treviño de Sáenz, in Mexico City in the summer of 1956.

<sup>2</sup> Martin, op. cit., p. 364. It is interesting to note that the great majority of the leaders of the various phases of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 came from the northern states of Mexico, particularly those that border on the United States. The influence of North American political and social philosophy was doubtless marked in these areas and contributed to a much more progressive-thinking class of people.







D. F., for training on the secondary level.<sup>3</sup> From 1902 to 1906 he attended this school, which was directed by the Rev. William Wallace, a prominent and longtime Protestant missionary leader and teacher in Mexico. Upon his graduation in 1906 Sáenz received the diploma of maestro titulado which certified him as a teacher in an elementary primary school.

From the Presbyterian school in Coyoacán Sáenz went to the National Normal School at Jalapa, one of the most progressive educational institutions in Mexico, which carried on the pedagogical ideals and principles of Rébsamen and Carrillo<sup>4</sup> and to which reference has been made in the preceding chapter. After completing a three-year course of study, Sáenz was graduated with a diploma which qualified him to teach in an escuela primaria superior.<sup>5</sup>

At this time Sáenz was awarded a scholarship for study at Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania. His career at this college during the years 1909-1912 is of considerable importance, for he was permitted to follow a special program with emphasis on Greek and science, which

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<sup>3</sup> This school is now operated by the Mexican government under the name of the Instituto Juárez.

<sup>4</sup> Although Carrillo and Rébsamen were no longer alive by the time Sáenz entered the school at Jalapa, their teachings must still have served as an influence on the students.

<sup>5</sup> Escuela primaria superior was an advanced primary school which was officially established as a unit in Mexico's educational pattern during the service of Justo Sierra in the Secretariat of Public Instruction.



D. F., for training on the secondary level. From 1902 to 1906 he attended this school, which was directed by the Rev. William Wallace, a prominent and long-time Protestant missionary leader and teacher in Mexico. Upon his graduation in 1906, Adams received the diploma of Normal School which entitled him as a teacher in an elementary primary school.

From the preceding report in November Adams went to the National Normal School at Jalisco, one of the most progressive educational institutions in Mexico, which centered on the pedagogical ideals and principles of Rousseau and Pestalozzi, and to which reference has been made in the preceding chapter. After completing a three-year course of study, Adams was graduated with a diploma which qualified him to teach in a Normal School.

At this time Adams was awarded a scholarship for study at Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania. His career at this college during the years 1906-1912 is of considerable importance, for he was permitted to follow a special program with emphasis on Greek and Romance, which

3 This school is now operated by the Mexican government under the name of the Instituto Jalisco.

4 Although Carrillo and Adams were no longer alive by the time Adams entered the school at Jalisco, their teachings must still have served as an influence on the students.

5 Normal School was an advanced primary school which was officially established in 1902 in Jalisco, educational pattern during the service of Jesus Adams in the Secretariat of Public Instruction.



seems to explain in part the humanistic spirit reflected in some of his later writings. He was graduated in June, 1912, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts magna cum laude. Eighteen years later (1930) the trustees of Washington and Jefferson College voted to confer upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science in recognition of his distinguished services to the cause of education in Mexico.<sup>6</sup>

On his return to Mexico, Sáenz entered the educational service of his country, serving as a teacher in the state schools. In 1914 he married Srta. Herlinda Treviño Garza of Saltillo, whom he had known for several years. His wife had served as a teacher in a Presbyterian school for girls in Saltillo. Her background and interests were similar to those of her husband, and throughout his life and career she served and encouraged his efforts in behalf of Mexican education.

During the revolutionary years subsequent to 1910 Sáenz and his brother Aarón allied themselves first with the party of Madero and later with the constitutional groups led by Carranza, Obregón and others. Aarón had a military career, rose to high rank in the revolutionary armies, and later held important cabinet posts.<sup>7</sup> Moisés, after a brief period of

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<sup>6</sup> Data on Sáenz' academic history at Washington and Jefferson College were kindly supplied by the recorder of that school, Miss Ethel F. Decker, in a letter of April 15, 1957.

<sup>7</sup> Aarón Sáenz, who perhaps was not as dedicated to the principles of the Revolution as his brother Moisés, rose to a



seems to explain in part the unusually early retirement in  
some of his later writings. He was graduated in 1882, with  
the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Wisconsin.  
years later (1890) the trustees of the University of Wisconsin  
College voted to confer upon him the honorary degree of Doctor  
of Science in recognition of his distinguished services to  
the cause of education in Wisconsin.

On his return to Mexico, where he entered the educational  
service of his country, serving as a teacher in the state  
schools. In 1894 he married Mrs. Estelita Treviño, daughter of  
Saltillo, whom he had known for several years. His wife had  
served as a teacher in a Presbyterian school for girls in Sal-  
tillo. Her background and interests were similar to those of  
her husband, and throughout his life and career she served  
and encouraged his efforts in behalf of Mexican education.

During the revolutionary years subsequent to 1910  
Séane and his brother Ardon killed themselves first with the  
party of Madero and later with the constitutionalists, groups led  
by Carranza, Obregón and others. Ardon had a military career,  
rose to high rank in the revolutionary armies, and later held  
important cabinet posts. Séane, after a brief period of

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<sup>6</sup> Data on Séane's academic history at Washington and John-  
erson College were kindly supplied by the rector of that  
school, Miss Estelita Treviño, in a letter of April 15, 1937.  
<sup>7</sup> Ardon Séane, who, having been not in Mexico to the  
principles of the Revolution as his brother Ardon, was to a



military service, devoted himself to the new educational programs of the Revolution. During the years 1914-15 he served as Director of Public Education in the state of Guanajuato, by appointment of the revolutionary governor, Colonel José Siurob, and as a professor in the Colegio del Estado. During this same period of educational service in behalf of the constitutional forces, he also organized the first pedagogical congress to be held in the Guanajuato area.<sup>8</sup> After the triumph of Carranza and his capture of the national capital, Sáenz returned to Mexico City, where he served for a time (1915-16) as a teacher in his old preparatory school, the Presbyterian High School in Coyoacán.<sup>9</sup>

During the year at Coyoacán Sáenz also devoted considerable time and effort to writing, especially materials designed to serve the cause of popular education. In collaboration with Americans resident in Mexico City he wrote text-

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high position as a lawyer, diplomat and businessman. After serving in many government positions both in a military and a civilian capacity, he retired to look after his private interests, which include the general directorship of the Sugar Trust, and interests in the Ferrocarriles Nacionales, Banco Azucarero, Asociación Nacional de Productores de Alcohol, Asociación Mexicana de Turismo, and the Compañía Hipotecaria Atlas. Ronald Hilton, ed., Who's Who in Latin America, Part I, Mexico (3d ed., Palo Alto, California, 1946), p. 109.

<sup>8</sup> Datos biográficos del Sr. Profesor y Doctor Moisés Sáenz, pamphlet published in Guanajuato, May 15, 1950.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



military service, devoted himself to the new educational programs of the Revolution. During the years 1914-15 he served as Director of Public Education in the State of Guanajuato, by appointment of the revolutionary government, Colonel Venustiano Carranza, and as a professor in the Escuela del Estado. During this same period of educational service in Guanajuato he organized the first constitutional congress, which was held in the Escuela del Estado. After the triumph of Carranza and the capture of the national capital, he returned to Mexico City, where he served for a time (1915-16) as a teacher in his old preparatory school, the Escuela Preparatoria. High School in Coahuila.

During the year at Coahuila he was elected constitutional member and elected to the office of President of the National Congress. He served the cause of popular education. In connection with American residents in Mexico City he wrote text-

high position as a lawyer, diplomat and businessman. After serving in many government positions both in a military and a civilian capacity, he retired to look after his private interests, which include the general citizenship of the State of Coahuila, interests in the Escuela del Estado, Escuela Preparatoria, Escuela Nacional de Profesores de Escuela, Escuela Nacional de Maestros, and the Escuela Nacional de Maestros de Escuela. He is also a member of the Escuela del Estado, Escuela Preparatoria, Escuela Nacional de Profesores de Escuela, Escuela Nacional de Maestros, and the Escuela Nacional de Maestros de Escuela. He is also a member of the Escuela del Estado, Escuela Preparatoria, Escuela Nacional de Profesores de Escuela, Escuela Nacional de Maestros, and the Escuela Nacional de Maestros de Escuela.

8 Escuela Preparatoria del Sr. Profesor y Doctor  
Escuela, preparatoria en Coahuila, 1915, 1916.



books for the teaching of English (Primero y Segundo Curso de Inglés) and a reader (Las Cinco Maravillas) for elementary schools, the content of which dealt with the "wonders" of nature. Sáenz' scientific interests also prompted him to write a series of essays of popular character entitled "Pláticas Científicas" and designed for adolescent readers. These were published in El Faro, a journal sponsored by the Presbyterian Church in Mexico and dedicated to the advancement of education.<sup>10</sup>

The author has been able to examine only one group of essays in the "Pláticas Científicas" series, a group of short papers entitled "Las Flores, Siete Pláticas de Primera."<sup>11</sup> These papers describe in graceful and sometimes beautiful language essential botanical facts relating to the growth and function of flowers and the role of color, perfume, nectar and anatomical structure and mechanism in promoting and facilitating the processes of cross-fertilization by pollen-bearing insects. References are made to blooms of diverse

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<sup>10</sup> Datos biográficos del Sr. Profesor y Doctor Moisés Sáenz. Also information supplied by Sra. Sáenz. During his residence in Guanajuato, Sáenz had written a semi-popular essay entitled "La Mano de la Raza y la Mano del Niño," in which he reviewed current theories on the evolution of the "hand" in the animal kingdom and stressed the complex anatomical structure and dexterity of the human hand, no longer an instrument of locomotion, as evidence of the superiority of the human species. A copy of this unpublished paper, which lacks the clarity and humanistic qualities of the "Pláticas Científicas," was made available by Sra. Sáenz.

<sup>11</sup> Typewritten copies made available by Sra. Sáenz.







structure ranging from the simple myrtle, "esa planta mexicana de flores menudetas, graciosas como una tapatía y alegres como una china poblana," to the complex and bizarre orchid. In these short disquisitions Sáenz calls upon his youthful readers to make their own observations of the structure of flowers and suggests simple experiments by which the purposes and functions of flower anatomy may be tested and demonstrated. Here we see the student of science serving in his chosen role of teacher, skilled in the presentation of technical data in simple language for young readers, and also the humanist, the philosopher, and the devout evangelical Christian calling attention to the deeper meaning and lessons of nature. "The history of flowers," he writes, "is a history of aspirations and struggles. In no other part of the vegetable world do we see more clearly the anxiety for life, for the most complete self-expression." In a similar manner he characterizes the adaptations of flowers, which science defines in terms of Darwin's principle of natural selection, as evidence of their intelligence. "Flowers know what they are doing." Sáenz concludes the last essay in these terms:

And behind all the movement of matter, things, and beings there is God, who, being the Creator of matter, has suggested to it the laws by which, throughout time, it has been transformed and will continue to be transformed in obedience to a kind of creative evolution.

In a satirical essay, dated 1917, Sáenz revealed his ability to relate the world of nature to contemporary events--







the world conflict then in progress and the dubious prospects for lasting peace. In this paper, entitled "El Congreso de las Insectos," he describes a meeting of delegates of different species of insects called by Madame Beetle to plan for cooperative action against the threats of man and birds to the insect world.<sup>12</sup>

When this congress met, the bees and the wasps were conspicuously absent. They had declined the invitation to send delegates because long experience had taught them "that armed peace is the only peace possible." For centuries they had been able to protect themselves against man and birds by "poisonous" weapons. "Therefore we affirm that the best policy is not the deception of diplomacy but that of armed preparation."

At the opening session of the congress Madame Beetle eloquently stated the urgent need of the insect world to make plans for mutual defense before man, now temporarily busy in "hatching new wars," again turned his fury against them. Her speech received warm support from the delegate of the butterflies, who called attention to the unbelligerent nature of his species. But the congress was thrown into an uproar when Dragonfly took the floor and arrogantly boasted of his powerful wings, his "pair of immense eyes that see in all direc-

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<sup>12</sup> Sáenz' copy of this paper was made available by Sra. Sáenz.



the world conflict than in progress and the future prospects for lasting peace. In this paper, entitled "El Congreso de las Insectas," he described a meeting of delegates of different species of insects called by Madame Beethle to plan for cooperative action against the threats of man and other to the insect world.<sup>12</sup>

When this congress met, the bees and the wasps were conspicuously absent. They had declined the invitation to send delegates because long experience had taught them "that eternal peace is the only peace desirable." For centuries they had been able to protect themselves against man and other by "poisonous" weapons. "Therefore we affirm that the best policy is not the reception of diplomacy but that of armed preparation."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Beethle, copy of this paper was made available by Mrs. Beethle.



tions," and his ability "to attack in full flight with precision and violence." "I believe," he said, "that there is no better policy than aggression." Regardless of the decisions of the congress, his species would continue to follow their present line of conduct.

This bold and bellicose speech caused consternation among the flies and the mosquitoes, who had so often been victims of dragonfly aggression. Therefore Madame Beetle was obliged to adjourn the session, but with a solemn warning to the delegates that they would well merit being devoured by a flock of thrushes.

It must be a matter of considerable regret that Sáenz did not have the leisure time for writing more of these delightful essays on the world of nature and its lessons for man. But his reputation as a teacher and an educator had marked him for a new position in government service. In 1916 he was named Director of the National Preparatory School, a post which he held until 1920.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately we have little information concerning his tenure of office as head of this institution, founded by Barrera in the Juárez period. But it is evident, on the basis of later developments, that during these few years he sensed the need for a radical change in the system of secondary education in Mexico.

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<sup>13</sup> Martin, op. cit., p. 364.



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of talent and violence." "I believe," he said, "that there is  
no better policy than to support the best of the best  
of the country, the people who are devoted to the  
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This bold and brilliant speech and his conduct  
among the first and the most important, and has no other  
victim of his own aggression. The American people have  
obliged to support the speaker, but with a solemn warning to  
the delegates that they would well have better be careful  
look of themselves.

It must be a matter of considerable regret that  
did not have the pleasure of the visiting days of the  
lightful essays on the world of culture and the human  
But his reputation as a teacher and an author had  
him for a new position in government service. In 1915 he  
was named Director of the National Observatory School, a  
which he held until 1920. In 1920, however, he was  
formation concerning the future of the school at that  
institution, founded by himself in the same year, and in  
is evident, on the basis of these developments, that during  
these few years he sensed the need for a radical change in  
the system of secondary education in America.

13 March, 1921, p. 254.



In 1920 he was granted a government fellowship for advanced study at Teachers College, Columbia University, and for the express purpose of gaining a first-hand acquaintance with American educational methods and procedures, especially in the field of secondary education. His studies at Columbia extended over a two-year period (1920-1922), during which he was enrolled in standard courses covering the subjects of educational psychology, school administration, high school methods, and curricula development. It is not without interest that he also used this opportunity for further study of chemistry and food analysis. His best grades were made in courses dealing with the organization of science teaching in high schools, modern language methods, the history of education, and in professional courses for high school principals, courses whose content probably was most relevant to the educational problems of Mexico. At the end of the first year he was awarded the M. A. degree, and it appears that he planned to work for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The outline of a proposed dissertation on the adaptation of American and French secondary methods to Mexican education was accepted in May, 1922.<sup>14</sup> He spent the following year at the

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<sup>14</sup> The account of Sáenz' year of study at Columbia is based upon a letter from Dr. Hollis L. Caswell, President of Teachers College, dated April 20, 1957. He also supplied a transcript of Sáenz' course of study. It is a matter of some interest, perhaps, that Sáenz did not enroll in any of John Dewey's courses during his years at Columbia; however, he did become acquainted with and was influenced by Dewey's writings.



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14 The account of Deane's year of study at Columbia is based upon a letter from Dr. Hollis L. Caswell, President of Teachers College, dated April 20, 1927. He also consulted a transcript of Deane's course of study. It is a matter of some interest, perhaps, that Deane did not enroll in any of Dewey's courses during his years at Columbia; however, he did become acquainted with and was influenced by Dewey's writings.



Sorbonne in Paris, presumably doing research for his dissertation. However, in 1923 he returned to Mexico and his plans for the doctorate were never completed, for he was again called into the educational service of his country.

For a few months following his return from Europe Sáenz served as a teacher in the Presbyterian school at Coyoacán and as acting editor of El Mundo Cristiano, a church magazine of general interest published quarterly by several Protestant denominations in Mexico. In 1924 he was chosen official mayor of the Secretariat of Public Education and assistant director of the summer session of the National University. The following year (1925) he was named Undersecretary of Public Education by President Calles, following the resignation of Dr. Manuel Gamio from this position.

Sáenz held this new post for five years (1925-30), and for a few months--August to November, 1928--he served as Acting Secretary.<sup>15</sup> During these years he was in a position to exert a potent influence on the development of Mexican education, especially on the primary and secondary levels, and to give expression, in terms of official policies and programs, to a philosophy of education and pedagogy formed on the basis of his earlier experience and training. Except for the brief period when he was Acting Secretary, he was

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<sup>15</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., p. 359.



personnel in Paris, presumably being reported for his services.  
However, in 1923 he returned to France and remained there  
for the duration of the war, but he was not  
called into the educational service at the Ministry.  
For a few months he worked as a teacher from 1919  
to 1920 as a teacher in the Protestant school at 1920-  
and as acting director of the Normal School, a church man-  
sion of general interest published quarterly by several Pro-  
testant denominations in 1921. In 1922 he was chosen official  
member of the Department of Public Education and Education  
director of the summer session of the National University.  
The following year (1923) he was named Under-Secretary of the  
the Education by President Miller, following the resignation  
of Dr. Manuel Gami. From this position,  
Blanca held this post for five years (1923-28),  
and for a few months--August to November, 1928--he served as  
Acting Secretary. During this time he was in a position  
to exert a potent influence on the development of French  
education, especially on the primary and secondary levels,  
and to give expression, in terms of official policies and pro-  
grams, to a philosophy of education and thought formed on  
the basis of his earlier experience and training. Except  
for the brief period when he was Acting Secretary, he was



subordinate to a series of political appointees who occupied the Secretaryship, but because of his superior professional training and his experience as a teacher and educational administrator, he played a major, and sometimes decisive, role in the formulation of policies and action programs.

In the execution of these plans and policies he occasionally encountered some opposition on the part of older and more conservative officials of the Secretariat, some of whom vented their resentment against the energetic Undersecretary by calling him a "gringo" because of his period of study in the United States and his sponsorship of educational reforms, especially in the field of secondary education, based, in part at least, upon American and European methods.<sup>16</sup> During the years Calles was President, from 1924 to 1928, he enjoyed strong executive support.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, his critics could not question the integrity and unselfish devotion of Sáenz to the cause of education in Mexico, for here was a man without political ambition and with a single purpose--to make education serve the social needs of his country. Toward the end of his tenure of office his courageous defense of the maestros rurales, trained in special schools established in rural areas,

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<sup>16</sup> Information supplied by Sra. Sáenz.

<sup>17</sup> Although Sáenz had no political aspirations and did not participate actively in politics, he had powerful connections in his brother Aarón who held important positions under Calles and the Callista presidents.



subordinate to a series of political agencies who controlled the Government, but because of the nature of the political system and the experience of a teacher and administrator, he played a major, and sometimes decisive, role in the formation of policies and action programs.

In the creation of these plans and policies he not only personally encountered some opposition in the early years, but more conservative officials of the Government, even of the United States and the Government of California, objected to their representative role in the energetic administration by calling him a "flying" because of the nature of the United States and the Government of California, especially in the field of secondary education, based, at least, upon American and European methods. During the years Calles was President, from 1924 to 1928, he enjoyed strong executive support. However, the Calles could not question the integrity and leadership of the United States in the cause of education in Mexico, for he was an ardent political abolition and with a single purpose--to serve the nation serve the social needs of the country. Toward the end of his tenure of office his conservative beliefs of the President, trained in special schools established in Mexico, were

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18 Information supplied by Mr. Calles.

19 Although Calles had no political activities and did not participate actively in politics, he was to some extent a figure in his brother's and his political activities with Calles and the United States.



finally caused a breach with his superiors and he was forced to resign.<sup>18</sup>

Chapters IV and V will deal with specific phases of Sáenz' activities as Undersecretary of Education, especially as related to secondary education, rural education, and the all-important problem of the Indian masses. The following will deal with general aspects of his educational philosophy, as background for these special issues and problems.

An unpublished essay entitled "El Concepto de la Cultura"<sup>19</sup> reveals certain fundamental characteristics of his thinking. In this essay he calls attention to the fact that in past times--the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and succeeding centuries--"culture" was restricted to small minority groups, the clergy, the humanists, or the wealthy classes who had the time and leisure "to devote themselves to culture and to the satisfaction of spiritual needs. Culture was the prerogative of leisure classes, of men who did not have to make their living by the sweat of their brow."

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<sup>18</sup> The circumstances leading to Sáenz' resignation as Undersecretary are not clear. Sra. Sáenz reports that the break was prompted by a series of articles signed "El Maestro Rural" but written by Sáenz, published in the Mexico City press. When Sáenz' authorship of the articles became known, he was accused of insubordination and of casting aspersions on the competence and motives of his colleagues. Unfortunately the author has not been able to consult these articles in the preparation of this thesis.

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In our day we have seen the development of "a distinction between professionalism and culture," between technical and utilitarian activity and culture, which is ornamental, disinterested, and non-professional. Moreover, as a result of science, "the modern magic," life has been exteriorized and much former activity, even educational methods, have been made dependent upon technology. "Every small activity has its tedious technic; specialization rules. There are no longer wise men, philosophers, doctors, nor engineers in the general sense of the word"--only specialists. Mere professionalism and competence is not culture but ignorance. Culture, on the other hand, "is general comprehension, the knowledge of the relationship of facts, appreciation for the work of those who labor in other fields. . . the factor which conserves the principle of the integrity of human effort; it is the unity of human life."

If professionalism makes us intelligent and skillful producers, culture--"which is appreciation"--makes un intelligent consumers. Let us prepare good architects, poets and musicians, but also let us prepare ourselves for culture to appreciate the works of these men. Modern industry and social justice have given to modern man increased leisure, with the result that he is in a position to enjoy the privileges of the leisured minority of earlier times. "Culture 'which is light and sweetness' (Mathew Arnold) today calls at homes



in our day we have seen the development of "a distinction between professionalism and culture," between technical and utilitarian activity and culture, which is often mental, disinterested, and non-professional. Moreover, as a result of science, "the modern world," life has been ex-terminated and much former activity, even educational methods, have been made dependent upon technology. "Every small activity has its technical technique; specialization exists. There are no longer wise men, philosophers, doctors, nor engineers in the general sense of the word"--only specialists. Here professionalism and competence is not culture but ignorance. Culture, on the other hand, "is general comprehension, the knowledge of the relationship of facts, appreciation for the work of those who labor in other fields. . . the factor which conserves the principle of the integrity of human effort; it is the unity of human life."

If professionalism makes us intelligent and skillful producers, culture--"which is appreciation"--makes us intelligent consumers. Let us preserve good architects, poets and musicians, but also let us preserve ourselves for culture to appreciate the work of these men. Modern industry and social justice have given to modern man increased leisure, with the result that he is in a position to enjoy the privileges of the favored minority of earlier times. "Culture" which is light and sweetness (Matthew Arnold) today calls at homes



of the rich and the poor. . . it has been humanized because it has become democratic." "Culture has become a necessity."

Consequently education must adjust itself to "this new social and human need," and pedagogy, which has devised methods for the teaching of writing and arithmetic, chemistry, and other formal subjects of instruction, must also find the means of teaching, at all levels, appreciation of cultural values. The elementary and the secondary schools have the obligation of bringing about cultural awareness, in which the student receives more than a "pedantic varnish of knowledge," but "essential understanding, fundamental points of view, historical perspectives, attitudes of appreciation for the contributions of the human spirit for social well-being." "Far from being hollow and superficial, the cultural end of education thus understood becomes one of the most precise objectives to which the teacher can dedicate his labor."<sup>20</sup>

These concepts reveal that Sáenz was more than the professional pedagogue trained in methodology, and when called upon to work with specific educational problems during his term of office as Undersecretary he could face them squarely and on the basis of practical needs as well as theory. But he never lost sight of or sacrificed his fundamental philosophy, which Larroyo has defined as "the vitalist and social

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<sup>20</sup> Quotations in this and preceding paragraphs are from Sáenz' essay "El Concepto de la Cultura."



of the rich and the poor. . . . It has been maintained that it has become democratic. "Education has become a necessity." Consequently education must exist in order to "fill new social and human need," and to do this, which has led to methods for the teaching of writing and arithmetic, book-keeping, and other formal subjects of instruction, must also find the means of teaching, at all levels, a realization of cultural values. The elementary and the secondary schools have the obligation of bringing about cultural awareness, in which the student receives more than a "technical training," but "essential understanding, fundamental points of view, historical perspectives, attitudes of respect for the contributions of the human spirit for social well-being." This from being hollow and superficial, the universal and of education thus understood becomes one of the most great activities to which the teacher can dedicate his labor. These concepts reveal a new ideal and more than the professional pedagogues trained in methodology, and who stand upon to work with specific educational objectives, and in terms of office as administrators, he could face them seriously and on the basis of practical needs as well as theory. But he never lost sight of or sacrificed the fundamental philosophy, which Larroze has defined as "the universal and social."

29 Quotations in this and preceding paragraphs are from Sclenz' essay "El Concepto de la Cultura."



doctrine of education." For Sáenz "education is intimately linked with human life. . . . To speak of educational values is to speak of human values; to speak of the ends of education is to speak of the ends of life itself." Consequently educational problems cannot be resolved once and for all, nor in an absolute manner, but must be subject to modification in terms of the changing conditions of the life of peoples and of individuals, in terms of social heritage and growth. In short, the aims of education must always have relevance to the current scene. Inasmuch as modern life has arrived at new concepts of citizenship and democratic organization, "based upon cooperation, solidarity, the delegation of functions, and the division of labor," education in turn must take account of these factors. It must therefore serve vocational as well as avocational needs. But the long-term objective of education should be the formation of ethical character and that spirit of comprehension he defined as the essence of culture.<sup>21</sup>

In a speech which Sáenz made in 1924 at the opening

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<sup>21</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 358-359, in which the author summarizes the educational philosophy of Sáenz, revealed in part in articles published in a pedagogical journal, Educación, founded in 1922 to serve as the organ of a group of young maestros with which Sáenz became affiliated after his return to Mexico in 1923 and in which he promptly won a position of leadership. This group sought to improve pedagogical methods in Mexico as well as to publicize their philosophy of education, which owed much to the writings of John Dewey and Paul Monroe. Ibid., pp. 359-360.



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In a speech which Dewey made in 1934 at the opening

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<sup>21</sup> Lattin, op. cit., pp. 258-259, in which the author summarizes the educational philosophy of Dewey, revealed in part in articles published in a pedagogical journal, *Human Education*, founded in 1923 to serve as the organ of a group of young educators with which Dewey became affiliated after his return to Mexico in 1923 and in which he probably won a position of leadership. The group sought to improve pedagogical methods in Mexico as well as to introduce the psychology of education, which owed much to the writings of John Dewey and Paul Monroe. *Idem*, pp. 258-259.



of a new school, he called attention to the deplorable lack of educational facilities in Mexico for the total school population, and as Undersecretary he worked consistently toward remedying this situation. But he also recognized that the educational process is selective, that in the end "few are chosen." This selective process placed a definite obligation upon the chosen few, the social obligation "to serve and to direct" in the cause of a democratic society in process of formation.<sup>22</sup> This obligation, defined by Sáenz as official mayor of the Secretariat of Education in 1924, he readily assumed for himself during his years of service as Undersecretary.

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<sup>22</sup> "Las Obligaciones del Hombre Educado," unpublished manuscript made available by Sra. Sáenz.



of a new school, he called attention to the necessity of educational facilities in order for the rural school population, and an Undersecretary, he urged responsibility toward remedying this situation. But he also recognized that the educational process is selective, and in the end "few are chosen." This selective process placed a heavy obligation upon the chosen few, the social obligation to serve and to direct "in the name of the democratic society in process of formation."<sup>32</sup> This obligation, defined by him as official service of the Government of Education in 1933, he readily assumed for himself during the years of service as Undersecretary.

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<sup>32</sup> "Las Obligaciones del Hombre Excepcional," unpublished manuscript made available by the author.



### CHAPTER III

#### SAENZ AS UNDERSECRETARY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION (PART ONE)

##### Problems of Mexican Education, 1925-1930

During the period of Sáenz' service as Undersecretary of Public Education (1925-1930) the educational policies and programs initiated by Vasconcelos were carried forward and expanded subject to modifications and changes sponsored in many instances by the new Undersecretary. This same period also witnessed several new developments and experiments which may be attributed largely to Sáenz' special interests.<sup>1</sup>

Two interesting examples of these educational experiments were the Escuela Libre de Pintura y Escultura in Mexico City and the open-air schools for poor children. The former, which sought to encourage young artists to explore their talents and to develop art forms based on older Mexican and Indian patterns and subjects, reflected Sáenz' abiding interest in art, particularly the native arts and crafts.<sup>2</sup> The open-air schools, established in urban areas

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<sup>1</sup> These developments are described in Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 351-379 passim.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 85-86 infra, for a discussion of Sáenz' views on Indian arts and crafts.



CHAPTER III

AGENTS AS UNDERSTANDING OF THE LITERATURE  
(PART ONE)

Problems of Mexican Education, 1930-1940

During the period of 1930-1940, there was a development of Public Education (1930-1940) and the educational system was expanded subject to modifications and changes. This was partly witnessed by the new Undersecretary. This was partly also witnessed several new developments and experiments which may be attributed largely to the educational system.

Two interesting examples of such educational experiments were the Escuelas Libres de Maestros y Maestras in Mexico City and the open-air schools for poor children. The former, which sought to encourage young students to explore their talents and to develop art forms based on their own can and Indian patterns and customs, reflected the growing interest in art, particularly the native arts and crafts.<sup>2</sup> The open-air schools, established in rural areas

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<sup>1</sup> These developments are described in Lombrero, op. cit., pp. 381-393 passim.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 85-86 (Lombrero, op. cit.), for a discussion of the views on Indian arts and crafts.



and especially in Mexico City, were designed to meet, at minimum expense, the urgent need to provide school facilities for children in congested slum areas. In an address on Mexican education given in the summer of 1926 Sáenz described these schools as follows:

. . . we found ourselves at the beginning of this year with some six thousand children in Mexico City, for whom no accommodations could be found in a school. Very naturally too, these six thousand children were the poorest, the most destitute, and the most in need of the influence of the school. This was one side of our problem. The other difficulty was the shortness of time and the lack of money. There was still a third aspect to the problem. These six thousand children were creatures of the slums. They needed education but they also needed food, soap and water, play, and a place in which to stay as long as possible away from their miserable homes. You see our problem then: thousands of children right in the city of Mexico for whom we had to provide not a school but a whole education. . . .

This has been the answer to the situation: in four months we have built five open-air schools in which we are housing almost 2,500 children. . . . The structure is light but satisfactory, and the cost has been reduced to a minimum. Each school has a garden, shower baths, and playground. A light lunch is given to the children. The rooms have an uncovered front and wide porches. There is room for chickens and rabbits; one of the schools has a stable for two cows. . . . The children work and play--or perhaps it would be better to say that they play only, they are so happy in their work. In the center of the patio high above the children and the flowers a Mexican flag waves in the air--the green, the white, and the red--green for hope, white for purity, and red for race.

. . . They are five little schools, it is true, but they are fine schools with a tendency, and that tendency happens to be tremendously important for us. From the shower bath to the flag, everything is significant in these schools of the slums. Designed to meet an emergency, they are creating a type. The mere fact







of their being built at all shows an ethical attitude toward the poorest of the poor, and a sense of democratic practice. And then, there is more "new education" in these open-air schools of Mexico City than in many a fancy school of pedagogical theorists.<sup>3</sup>

This account of the open-air schools has been quoted at length because it reveals not only Sáenz' keen awareness of social needs but also his humanitarian ideals nurtured in the evangelical atmosphere of his early training and experience. It also reveals a talent, demonstrated on other occasions, to reach practical solutions for urgent problems and an educational philosophy that was more than mere pedagogy.

The open-air schools were eventually replaced, during Sáenz' term of service as Undersecretary and in later years, by permanent structures. These new buildings serving slum areas have been planned to provide adequate recreational facilities as well as formal class instruction. Sáenz also gave support and encouragement to the development of kindergartens in urban areas and to a reorientation of instruction in these pre-school agencies.<sup>4</sup> Another phase of the educational pro-

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<sup>3</sup> Moisés Sáenz and Herbert I. Priestly, Some Mexican Problems (Chicago, 1926), pp. 76-77.

<sup>4</sup> Prior to 1925 the kindergarten had been characterized by methods which failed to take account of individual differences in children or their social origins. Under the leadership of Lauro Aguirre, director of the Escuela Normal de Maestros and a close associate of Sáenz, kindergarten teachers received instruction in methods designed to encourage the full development of social habits and attitudes. These leaders "had no other mission than that of guiding the sponta-



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<sup>3</sup> Notes by Edward and Herbert I. Priestly, Long Ashton (Chicago, 1928), pp. 55-57.

<sup>4</sup> Prior to 1925 the kindergarten had been characterized by methods which failed to take account of individual differences in children or their social origins. Under the leadership of Laura Agazzi, Director of the London Kindergarten and a close associate of Edward, kindergarten teachers received instruction in methods designed to encourage the full development of social habits and attitudes. These lessons had no other function than that of guiding the children



gram to which Sáenz gave considerable attention was the teaching of personal hygiene and programs of physical education. In 1927 a training school for teachers of physical education, established during the ministry of Vasconcelos, was made an integral part of the National University.<sup>5</sup>

One of the most important features of the educational program developed during the early 1920's, when Vasconcelos was Secretary of Public Education, was the plan for the reform of the primary schools in accordance with "Principles of Action" adopted in 1923. These "Principles" stressed the social function of the primary school, to be achieved by combining instruction in traditional subjects with "action" experience to give the child an understanding of such fundamental matters as nutrition, "the means of defense" (housing, clothing, and technology), social groupings, and community life (interchange of ideas and services). Instruction should serve both utilitarian and cultural ends, and "the child should be treated as individually as possible."<sup>6</sup>

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neous experience of the child for the purpose of initiating and establishing good habits, physical, moral, intellectual and social." Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 354-355.

<sup>5</sup> The program of this new division of the National University was based upon that of the well-known college of physical education in Springfield, Mass. Ibid., p. 368. Graduates of the Springfield college have served as directors of physical education in many Y.M.C.A. units in the United States, and it is not without interest that Sáenz, during his tenure as Undersecretary, served for a time as president of the Y.M.C.A. in Mexico City.

<sup>6</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 348-349.



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9. ...



Success of this program, which represented a rather sharp reorientation of primary schools, depended in large measure upon the recruitment of adequately trained teachers. In the beginning it encountered considerable resistance from the maestros and school inspectors trained in older methods of pedagogy. To meet the need for a corps of teachers to serve the new program for primary schools, the Secretariat, early in 1925, established a new coeducational Escuela Nacional de Maestros. This new institution, located outside Mexico City, included a demonstration school and a kindergarten as well as the school for professional training in which day and evening courses were given in methods of teaching Spanish, arithmetic, history, geography and citizenship. It also offered courses in homemaking and in sewing for women of underprivileged classes.<sup>7</sup>

The leader of this new Escuela Nacional was Lauro Aguirre, a close associate of Sáenz in "a pleyade of maestros who, as a group, influenced teaching methods and practices" in the decade of the 1920's. After the sudden death of Aguirre in 1928, the school turned back to traditional methods of pedagogy.<sup>8</sup> Although we may assume that Sáenz, who consistently advocated the thesis that education should serve

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<sup>7</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 352-353.

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 ostensibly advocated the thesis that education should serve

<sup>7</sup> Petrov, op. cit., pp. 332-33.  
<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 332.



social needs, gave sympathetic support to Aguirre as director of the Escuela Nacional de Maestros, his writings and reports provide little specific evidence on this point. It should be noted, however, that during his tenure as Under-secretary the improvement of primary education was a major objective of the Ministry, and that in 1928 it introduced a program of objective and diagnostic examinations to test the progress of students in the elementary grades.<sup>9</sup>

During the years 1925-1930 Sáenz devoted his major efforts to the reorganization of secondary schools and to the important and basic problems of education for the Indian masses, the development of rural schools, and the training of teachers for those schools. His activities in these fields will receive special attention in the third section of this chapter and in Chapter IV. It will be useful, however, at this point to take note of another phase of his activities during these years which gave Sáenz the opportunity to express his views on the Revolutionary movement and its implications for Mexican education.

#### Sáenz as Spokesman for Revolutionary Mexico

Sáenz' leadership in Mexican pedagogical programs brought him valid recognition, especially in educational and

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<sup>9</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., p. 351.



social needs, gave sympathetic attention to the needs of the people, and for the people's education, and for the people's health. It should be noted, however, that during the period of the revolution the improvement of primary education was a major objective of the Ministry, and that in 1933 it introduced a program of objective and theoretical examinations for the progress of students in the elementary grades.

During the years 1933-1935, when Soviet aid was

efforts to the reorganization of secondary schools and to the important and basic problem of education for the Indian nation, the development of rural schools, and the training of teachers for these schools. His activities in these fields will be given special attention in the third section of this chapter and in Chapter IV. It will be noted, however, that the main aim of the new phase of the activities during these years which gave birth to the opportunity to express the view on the Revolutionary movement and the Revolution for Indian education.

Plans for Revolutionary Education

Plans for leadership in the Revolution, and the program brought him valid recognition, especially in connection with



scholarly circles in the United States with which he already had contacts as a result of his years of study at Washington and Jefferson and at Columbia. It was natural, therefore, that he should have been called upon to interpret the new Mexico in speeches before university groups, in interviews and articles for publication in leading North American magazines and journals, and by participation in the seminars of American students who visited Mexico during the 1920's and early 1930's. In these speeches and articles we find both general and specific comments on contemporary Mexican problems that are pertinent to our study of his career and his educational endeavors.

His views on the Revolution of 1910 and its significance for Mexico were expressed in succinct terms in an interview with a reporter for Outlook when he was returning from an educational congress held in Toronto in 1927. Sáenz stated:

. . . the present revolution is not a mere eddy or whirlpool on the surface of the water, but a deep on-going stream with nation-making as the object. The final outcome of the revolution does not depend on one group or regime now in power. Its success is dependent on the will of the people, and the people are determined to see that changes which have been undertaken are carried through.<sup>10</sup>

This view that "nation-making" was the objective of the Revolution was expressed in somewhat different terms in an article

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<sup>10</sup> As quoted by C. B. Lenz, "Mexico Turns the Corner," Outlook, CXLVII (September 21, 1927), p. 84.



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His views on the Revolution of 1910 and its significance for Mexico were expressed in a number of articles in the view with a reporter for Outlook when he was returning from an educational congress held in Toronto in 1932. He stated:

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10 As quoted by C. E. Taylor, "Mexico Under the Current Outlook," CXVII (September 21, 1932), p. 24.



which Sáenz wrote for Current History in the same year (1927). Here he summed up the problem of Mexican nationalism as follows:

The nationalistic attitude of Mexico has two sides: it is spiritual and it is practical. On its spiritual side it seeks to create in Mexico an Indo-Latin type of culture--a culture recasting Indian civilization in Hispanic molds. It seeks to derive from native sources an emotional pattern that may bind us into a nation. On the practical side we are endeavoring to construct a material fabric for our patriotism. Spiritual concepts, we suspect, will fare badly in this modern age of ours unless they are embodied in substantial terms.<sup>11</sup>

In a series of addresses given at the University of Chicago in 1926 under the auspices of the Harris Foundation, Sáenz had already presented a more lengthy and more specific defense of the Revolution.<sup>12</sup> In the first address, entitled "Foreign Investments and Mexican Nationalism," he reviewed the history of the economic exploitation of Mexico, which had made the masses "starved strangers in a land of plenty." This process, begun in colonial times, had been intensified during the regime of Díaz and "his experts in so-called scientific government." A prime objective of the Revolution was "to reconquer the land and to put national wealth under the control of the nation for the benefit of the many." Inasmuch as foreign investment had acquired extensive holdings

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<sup>11</sup> Moisés Sáenz, "Two Sides of Mexican Nationalism," Current History, XXVI (September, 1927), p. 908.

<sup>12</sup> Published in Sáenz and Priestly, op. cit., chapters 1-3.



which seems worse for Current History as the same year (1936).  
Here he summed up the problem of Mexican nationalism as  
follows:

The nationalist attitude of the new state is a  
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11. Current History, LXVI (September, 1937), p. 1906.  
12. Published in Current History, LXVI, p. 1906.  
1-3.



and concessions, this basic tenet of the revolutionary program had created serious international problems. But this was nothing new in the history of Mexico, or in the history of other backward areas, including other parts of Latin America and China, for example. The new Mexican nationalism merely represented "the tendency to regain or to retain our national inheritance." Unfortunately, "the modern Phoenicians, the warriors of the bank draft and the pipeline" failed to recognize the elementary fact that the revolutionary leaders, Carranza, Obregón and Calles, "have all had a common aspiration, the desire to save Mexico for the Mexicans and to save the Mexicans for Mexico, which is, in synthesis, the Mexican Revolution."<sup>13</sup>

Sáenz' second address in the Chicago series, entitled "Humanism and the Mexican Laborer,"<sup>14</sup> presented a spirited defense of the Mexican labor movement as a means of overcoming the "feudal" conditions that had for so long characterized the status of Mexican workers. The rapid growth of labor unions and effective use of strikes had brought increased wages, improved housing, and "a sense of security and of strength," and had given workmen the opportunity for "a more dignified participation in life than was the case in 1910." The address

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<sup>13</sup> Sáenz and Priestley, op. cit., pp. 6-25.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 33-53.







ended with these words:

We have been called Bolsheviks, Reds, socialists. It would be far nearer to the truth to be simply called humanists. Our problems are elementary. . . . Our aims are the satisfaction of the most elementary needs. Reds we have been called for giving the work-  
ingman a charter of rights which long ago had been given to laborers in this country and in all the European countries.<sup>15</sup>

These Chicago addresses were made at a time when relations between the United States and Mexico were troubled by the very issues which Sáenz boldly discussed--foreign investments and landholding and the related question of labor organizations. His defense of the Revolution received a sympathetic hearing in many cases, but it probably identified him in the eyes of conservative interests in both Mexico and the United States as a radical, despite his protestations to the contrary. Actually Sáenz was no radical, but rather a fervent advocate of a Mexican nationalism which could be achieved only by rather sweeping economic and social reforms. In the Chicago addresses he was merely presenting, on the basis of established facts and figures, conclusions which are now generally accepted. Although his speeches and writings of the late 1920's contain few references to the agrarian reforms then in progress, his sympathetic interest in the land problem was clearly indicated in his Outlook interview, in which

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Sáenz and Priestly, op. cit., pp. 51-52.







he called attention to the evils of latifundismo in Mexico and stated:

These facts, I would say, explain and even justify any movement for the better distribution of property. It would explain any method of procedure, even outright confiscation to serve the same purpose. . . . We may regret the inconvenience and the trouble, but there is no alternative. Four hundred years of waiting have made pariahs of us all. The people have waited too long.<sup>16</sup>

This statement may also have been regarded as smacking of radicalism, although its obvious purpose was to direct attention to another Mexican problem urgently calling for a solution. Moreover, in later years he expressed open criticism of certain aspects of the programs of land distribution adopted subsequent to 1927.<sup>17</sup>

It is not surprising that in his speeches and articles addressed to American audiences Sáenz avoided extensive comment on the Church-State issue that loomed so large at the time, especially in the eyes of Catholic groups in the United States. In the Outlook interview, however, he took occasion to deny that the anti-clerical measures of the Mexican government were inspired by an anti-religious bias but rather by the belief that "the economic, political and educational dominance of the Church in Mexican life was not consistent with nor

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<sup>16</sup> Lenz, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>17</sup> See p. 82-83, infra.



he called attention to the fact that...

and stated:

These facts, I would say, suggest one possibility  
any movement for the better situation of Indians.  
It would explain any action of the Government, even one  
right considered to be wrong. The Government, however,  
we may regret the Government's action, but the fact is  
there is no alternative. The Government is not of course  
have made certain at all. I am sure, however, that  
too long.

This statement may also have been made at a meeting of the  
Commission, although its obvious purpose was to attract attention  
to another Mexican problem regarding the situation.  
Moreover, in later years the expression of such criticism of certain  
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It is not surprising that in his speeches and articles  
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to deny that the anti-clerical measures of the Mexican govern-  
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the belief that "the economic, political and educational condi-  
tion of the Church in Mexico is not a pleasant sight."

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> See p. 82-83, ibid.



in the best interest of the national government's own plan." Sáenz also expressed the view that most of the government leaders and intellectuals in Mexico were men of spiritual conviction who believed in the teachings of Christ. (Certainly this was true of Sáenz himself.) As further indication of the fact that the official policy of the government was not anti-religious, Sáenz called attention to the publication by the Secretariat of Education of an address given at the National University by Julio Navarro Monzo, an outstanding Christian leader of Los Angeles, to the effect that the failure of democracy in the Latin countries of Europe and America was due to the absence of a real and vital Christianity.<sup>18</sup> In Sáenz' report of this incident we doubtless have evidence of his own evangelical training and education, and it is not likely that government publication of the address by Navarro served to assuage the feelings of the Catholic Church at this time.

The topic of Sáenz' third address at the University of Chicago in 1926 was "Integrating Mexico Through Education."<sup>19</sup> In this address and in others given before groups of Americans visiting Mexico,<sup>20</sup> Sáenz called attention to the geographic, ethnic and social diversity of Mexico, which contrasted sharply

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<sup>18</sup> Lenz, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>19</sup> Sáenz and Priestly, op. cit., chapter IV.

<sup>20</sup> Some of these addresses are incorporated in Sáenz' book, México Integro, published in Lima in 1939.



is the best interest of the people of the United States. The Government  
also expressed the view that the United States should not support  
leaders and intellectuals who are not of political conviction who believe in the overthrow of the Government. It is certainly  
this was true of the United States. The United States has not only  
fact that the official policy of the Government is not anti-  
religious, but also called attention to the fact that the United States  
Secretary of Education as an address given at the National  
University by Julio Alvarez, an outstanding Mexican  
leader of Los Angeles, on the subject of the future of Mexico  
crisis in the Latin American of Mexico and Mexico was one of  
the absence of a real and vital nationalism. It is clear  
report of this incident as Mexicans have evidence of the own  
evangelical training and education, and it is clear that they  
government publication of the United States by Mexico turned to  
assuage the feelings of the Catholic Church of this time.  
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18 *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.  
19 Somo and "The United States of Mexico", Chapter IV.  
20 Some of these addresses are incorporated in Somo's book,  
*Mexico Today*, published in 1933.



with the uniformity and standardization characteristic of North American culture. The creation of a general sense of national unity and national consciousness in Mexico could be achieved only through a continuing process of integration. Since 1910 Mexico has given due consideration to the problems of racial and social diversity, and any move toward integration of the various groups has been tempered by a desire to protect the essential integrity of each.<sup>21</sup> However, the essential aim of the Revolution is the formation of a unified national group, a society, the Mexican, a combination both racially and psychologically of Indian, Spanish, and other elements, ethnic and social. This truly Mexican society would be "no mere aggregation of elements, nor sum of independent particles, but a vital new creation capable of growing and of diffusing itself."<sup>22</sup>

As we might expect, Sáenz consistently expressed the firm conviction that education could, indeed must, play a major role in the creation of this "México integro." "Let us define Mexican education in its social aspects," he said, "as an effort to weave a civilization out of the varied strands that comprise our Mexico."<sup>23</sup> In his third Chicago address he pre-

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<sup>21</sup> Sáenz, México Integro, pp. 1-9.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Moisés Sáenz, "School and Culture," IX (February, 1932), p. 107.







sented an enthusiastic account of the progress already made toward this end by means of the open-air primary schools, the rural schools, and the cultural missions serving rural areas.<sup>24</sup> But it was the function of education at all levels to facilitate this process of integration and to serve the needs of all social groups, including the middle and upper classes as well as the urban proletariat and the Indians and peasants of the rural areas. Although the most pressing need of Mexico in the 1920's was for primary education, especially for the Indians, it was Sáenz' feeling that there was also urgent need for a reorientation of the program of secondary education. He exerted much effort during the first years of his tenure as Undersecretary in an attempt to at least partially solve this problem.

#### Sáenz and Secondary Education in Mexico

Prior to Justo Sierra's service as Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts, Mexican secondary education consisted of training provided by two types of institutions. These were the National Preparatory School established by Barreda during the Juárez administration and which soon developed its counterpart in most of the large urban centers throughout Mexico, and private institutions, particularly Church-sponsored schools,

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<sup>24</sup> Sáenz and Priestly, op. cit., pp. 61-84.



presented an enthusiastic response to the program already made toward this end by means of the various schools, rural schools, and the national schools serving rural areas. But it was the function of education at all levels to help take this process of integration and to serve the needs of all social groups, including the urban and rural classes as well as the urban proletariat and the Indians and peasants of the rural areas. Although the program was not intended to be in the 1930's was for primary education, especially for the Indians, it was Sábana's feeling that there was also urgent need for a reorientation of the program of secondary education. He exerted much effort during the first years of his tenure as Undersecretary in an attempt to reorient this problem.

### Plans and Secondary Education in Mexico

Prior to Sábana's tenure as Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts, Mexican secondary education consisted of training provided by two types of institutions. These were the National Preparatory School established by Sábana during the Mexican administration and which soon developed its counterpart in most of the large urban centers throughout Mexico, and private institutions, particularly church-sponsored schools.



which controlled most of the secondary education. Students who desired advanced training had no other alternative than to attend one of these institutions and take courses which would ready them for work on the university level. No vocational or technical schools such as are commonly found in the United States existed in Mexico. For many years this pattern of education had worried Mexican educators and they tried to work toward a solution of the problem of providing adequate secondary education for all students. As was discussed earlier, one of the commissions of the first national Congreso de Instrucción, which met in 1890, suggested that a program of advanced primary education be instituted, to fill at least partially the gap between elementary and preparatory schools. These recommendations were carried out some fifteen years later when Sierra authorized the opening of the escuelas primarias superiores. Yet even this plan, though an attempt at alleviating the situation, was not particularly effective, and in the 1920's, after some degree of order and stability was restored to Mexico, the newly created Secretariat of Public Education tried to find a new solution to the problem. Although Vasconcelos initiated some plans for change, it was Sáenz who did the greater part of the work in developing the plans and originating others to bring about improvements in secondary education.

Sáenz' own secondary training in Protestant schools,



which controlled most of the secondary education. Students who desired advanced training and other opportunities to attend one of these institutions and their courses which would ready them for work on the university level. The vocational or technical schools, such as the normally found in the United States existed in Mexico. However, this kind of education had worried the government and it set itself to work toward a solution of the problem of providing adequate secondary education for all students. As was discussed earlier, one of the commissions of the First National Congress in 1921-1922, which met in 1922, suggested that a system of advanced primary education be instituted, to fill at least partially the gap between elementary and preparatory schools. These recommendations were carried out and some fifteen years later when State authorities authorized the opening of the Escuelas Intermedias. Yet even today, there is an attempt to alleviate the situation, not yet particularly effective, and in the 1920's, after some degree of order and stability was restored to Mexico, the new, created a minister of Public Education tried to find a new solution to the problem. Although Vasconcelos initiated some plans for change, it was Obregón who did the greater part of the work in developing the plans and originating efforts to bring about improvements in secondary education.

Obregón's own secondary system in progressive schools,



which were patterned on North American high schools, as well as his experiences as Director of the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria (1916-1920) and his study of secondary education in the United States and in Europe, greatly influenced his philosophy of secondary education and provided him with a good background for its reinterpretation and reform. Sáenz believed that the preparatoria needed a more well-rounded program of studies and that vocational training courses should be introduced for those students who would terminate their formal education upon graduation from the preparatoria. These factors, along with the desire to make secondary schooling serve cultural ends, were the basis of Sáenz' proposals for revision.

In an address delivered before the Asamblea Nacional de Estudios de Problemas de Educación Secundaria y Preparatoria, Sáenz stated that the aims of secondary education in Mexico fell into three categories. The first of these concerned the "growth and development of the individual" in both his physical and mental aspects and the "exploration of his capacities and inclinations; the exercise of the same; use of free time; and an expression and appreciation of culture."<sup>25</sup> The second of these aims was the formation of good attitudes

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<sup>25</sup> Moisés Sáenz, "Finalidades de la Educación Secundaria en México" (speech given before the Asamblea Nacional de Estudios de Problemas de Educación Secundaria y Preparatoria meeting in Mexico City, November 15, 1928), p. 20.







of citizenship, including:

. . . knowledge, habits, and ideals relative to civic life; the fortifying of the feeling of nationality and of nationalism; the democratization of the school and the democratic organization of the same; . . . the factors relative to social integration, to the spiritual integration of the people, to mental integration, to the community of interest, to emotions and to ideas; and the qualification for domestic and family life.<sup>26</sup>

The final aim was vocational preparation, which Sáenz considered fundamental to secondary training, particularly for those students unable to continue their education. At the time this speech was made there was a controversy as to whether vocational education should be included on the program of secondary education. Sáenz, who favored vocational training, stated in an article in the Mexican magazine Educación that

its mere persistence [the controversy's] is an unmistakable sign that it represents an essential element in education. Placed in its most general terms, the principle of vocational education means that man should be an agent of production within the group in which he lives and that education should definitely enable him to fulfill this function.<sup>27</sup>

Other than actual vocational training, this phase of secondary education would include such programs as the acquisition of the fundamental processes, for example, Spanish and arithmetic, and specialized preparation for subsequent professional

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<sup>26</sup> Sáenz, "Finalidades de la Educación Secundaria en México," p. 20.

<sup>27</sup> As quoted by Larroyo, op. cit., p. 359.







courses.<sup>28</sup> Sáenz wanted vocational education that was sufficiently practical to arouse the particular interests of the students and also sufficiently complete in itself so that if the student could not go on to the university or an advanced technical school, "he would find himself with units of studies complete and valuable in themselves and feel the satisfaction of having victoriously terminated a cycle of scholastic life that brings him nearer the condition of an enlightened man."<sup>29</sup>

In this speech, in which he discussed the aims of secondary education, Dr. Sáenz also declared quite realistically that "in Mexico preparatory training has become in practice an agency for the formation of a clase directora."<sup>30</sup> Theoretically secondary education was not to be used as a mark of class distinction, as was often the case in Europe, but rather it was to be available to all of the Mexicans much the same as the high school in the United States was open to all. Yet due to economic handicaps, a shortage of schools, and a lack of properly trained teachers, Sáenz realized that those students who would have an opportunity to receive secondary edu-

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<sup>28</sup> Sáenz, "Finalidades. . ." p. 22.

<sup>29</sup> Moisés Sáenz, "La Universidad y las Escuelas Secundarias" (manuscript), Mexico City, June 27, 1929, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Sáenz, "Finalidades. . ." p. 7.







cation would be very few in number and would become the elite or the clase directora of Mexico. Since conditions could be improved only gradually, causing this situation to exist for a great length of time, Sáenz concentrated considerable attention on the preparation of this elite group. As a further complication Sáenz pointed out that

there never has been in Mexico, nevertheless, a true theory of selection, nor an aim regarding the clase directora which in fact is being formed. The political-liberal creed, it is true, served as a norm in the beginning because it served as a philosophy for the schools. Juárez and the reformers conceived of the preparatoria as a school to make socio-political leaders who would conform to the liberal theory, but apart from this plan, with respect to the formation of the clase directora we almost have not had another.<sup>31</sup>

Sáenz believed that this situation could at least be partially remedied by developing in the students a greater social consciousness and creating an elevated and generous nationalism able to carry out the precepts of the Revolution of 1910. Furthermore he thought that essential in this new secondary education was the formation of "la emoción mexicana" and an examination and recognition of the great social problems of Mexico by the students. By pursuing these goals Sáenz felt that the clase directora being formed would be indoctrinated with the ideals of social service necessary for the advancement of Mexico.<sup>32</sup> As he had pointed out, Juárez and Barrera wished to per-

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<sup>31</sup> Sáenz, "Finalidades. . ." p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 20.







petuate the traditions of the Reform by means of the preparatorias. However, by 1900 the majority of the graduates of these institutions had lost any social conscience which they might have had and favored and implemented exploitation of both natural resources and the masses, and encouraged foreign investment and domination. In order that the clase directora now being formed by secondary education should not turn out the same way, Sáenz favored an initial selection of students who were both intelligent and liberal. He suggested that scholarships and other financial aids be granted to poor students who filled these qualifications.<sup>33</sup>

The reform of secondary education actually began before Sáenz assumed the position of Undersecretary of Public Instruction; however, the changes were still mostly in the planning stages during the Vasconcelos ministry. Larroyo points out that due to large population increases and a desire to bring about new social improvements, it was decided to divide the course work of the preparatoria into two cycles--one of three years, to be called the secondary cycle (ciclo secundario), to be followed by one of two years, the ciclo preparatorio. In August and December of 1925 presidential decrees authorized the organization of a separate system of federal secondary schools which was to be based upon the ciclo secundario of

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<sup>33</sup> Sáenz, "Finalidades. . ." p. 18.



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In August and December of 1917, the National Council authorized  
the organization of a separate system of laborer secondary  
schools which was to be based upon the ciclo secundario of



the preparatoria. A branch of the Ministry of Public Instruction, the Dirección de Enseñanza Secundaria, was set up to take care of the secondary schools which were four in number and included, in addition to the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria and the Escuela Nacional de Maestros, two newly established schools.<sup>34</sup> Despite considerable opposition,<sup>35</sup> Sáenz continued to push forward the program of secondary education. With the effective use of statistics and arguments he convinced President Calles of the importance and need of further reform. Legislation of 1927 which provided for new changes in the program of secondary education was largely suggested by Sáenz. This legislation provided for the creation of a Bureau of Secondary Education which would not only control technical and administrative direction of federal secondary schools, but would also have the right of inspection and control of private secondary schools and secondary courses in all preparatorias. This Bureau also directed the night courses of the Escuela Nacional de Maestros and the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria Nocturna. In 1928 the administration of a newly

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<sup>34</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 355-356.

<sup>35</sup> According to Sra. Sáenz the principal sources of opposition to her husband's reforms of secondary education were earlier directors of the preparatoria who wanted to keep the old system, Catholic and conservative interests who wanted to retain control of secondary education, some personnel of the Secondary Division of the Ministry who were not prepared to accept any innovation, and also Vasconcelos and the Hispanistas.



the preparatoria. A list of the preparatoria of 1910 in-  
struction, the Preparatoria de Instruccion Primaria, was  
to take care of the needs of the preparatoria. The list  
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<sup>34</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 357-358.

<sup>35</sup> According to Seceta, when the principal sources of oppo-  
sition to her husband's reforms of secondary education were  
either directors of the preparatorias who wished to keep the  
old system Catholic and conservative in spirit, or persons who  
retain control of secondary education, some personnel of the  
Secondary Division of the Ministry who were not prepared to  
accept any innovation, and the Escuela Nacional de Instruccion



created girls' high school was also added to its functions.<sup>36</sup>

By 1928 six federal secondary schools were in operation, and in 1947 this number had grown to thirty. According to Larroyo the program of secondary education had the following general aims:

1. To increase and to elevate the general culture imparted by the primary schools.
2. To keep watch over the integral development of the student, attending simultaneously to its physical, intellectual, moral and aesthetic aspects.
3. To prepare him for the fulfillment of the civic and social obligations within the democratic government of our country.<sup>37</sup>

These aims, which imply the seven cardinal principles of education as followed in the United States,<sup>38</sup> adequately sum up Saénz' philosophy of secondary education.

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<sup>36</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., p. 356.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 357.

<sup>38</sup> The seven cardinal principles of education as set forth by a commission of the National Education Association are: health; command of the fundamental processes, notably the three R's; worthy home membership; vocation; civic functions; worthy use of leisure time; and ethical character. John Brubacher, Modern Philosophies of Education (New York, 1950), p. 110.



created girls' high schools in the Transcaucasus.  
By 1928 six federal schools were in operation, and in 1947 this number had grown to thirty. According to Latvian the program of economic development had the following general aims:

1. To increase the productivity of the national economy.
  2. To keep workers and the national development of the country, raising the standard of living in its physical, intellectual, moral and aesthetic aspects.
  3. To prepare the youth for the fulfillment of the civic and social obligations of the Latvian government of our country.
- These aims, which imply the seven cardinal principles of education as followed in the United States, are summarized as follows:

Latvian philosophy of secondary education.

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36 Latvian, op. cit., p. 37.  
37 Ibid., p. 37.  
38 The seven cardinal principles of education as set forth by a commission of the National Education Association, recently organized of the fundamental principles, namely the three R's; worthy home membership; vocational training; financial soundness; use of leisure time; and physical development. (John F. Johnson, Modern Philosophies of Education (New York, 1950), p. 110.)



## CHAPTER IV

### SAENZ AS UNDERSECRETARY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION (PART TWO)

#### Sáenz on the Indian Problem

Another phase of Mexican education to which Sáenz gave special attention during his years of service as Undersecretary was the dual problem of the Indian masses and the rural schools. His interest in the complex and difficult question of educating the Indian antedated his appointment as Undersecretary, and when called upon to give close and direct attention to the rural school program initiated during Vasconcelos' tenure as Secretary of Education he quickly responded to the challenge. Indeed, the Indian problem in Mexico and in other parts of Latin America eventually became a major interest to which he devoted much of his later career. It is important, therefore, to examine with some care several of his writings which reveal his thinking on basic issues relating to the Indians, their place in modern Mexico, and their future role in Mexican society.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this discussion the author has utilized various published and unpublished papers by Sáenz written prior to his death in 1941. His two monographs on the Indians of Ecuador and Peru and the volume entitled Carapan will be considered at some length in the next chapter.



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Notes on the Indian Problem

Another phase of the Indian problem is the Indian  
gave special attention to the Indian problem in the  
secretary was the final result of the Indian problem and the  
rural schools. His interest in the Indian and the Indian prob-  
lem of educating the Indian population and the improvement of their  
secretary, and when called upon to give advice and assist in the  
tion to the rural school program initiated during the 1930s.  
tensions as Secretary of Education in the Indian response to the  
challenge. Indeed, the Indian problem in Mexico was in other  
parts of Latin America even though a major interest to  
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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this study, the author has ex-  
lined various publications and writings published by the author  
prior to his death in 1961. The author's views on the Indian  
of Honduras and Peru and the Indian problem will be  
considered as some basis in the study.



In his approach to these problems Sáenz never expressed the views of certain proponents of indianismo, who, in his opinion, carried their enthusiasm for the Indians to extremes and tended to minimize the values of the European heritage in "Indian America." Sáenz had no interest in preserving the Indians as a kind of national curiosity or as a special group characterized by a distinct cultural heritage,<sup>2</sup> nor did he feel that any approach to the Indian problem should be motivated exclusively by feelings of guilt concerning past injustices. Instead he was interested in the Indians as individuals and groups worthy of the dignity and opportunities which should be accorded all members of society regardless of any particular background. Instead of wandering into the pitfalls of sentimentalized or exaggerated emotionalism, he sought to view the problem as objectively as possible and to

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<sup>2</sup> In a paper on "Indian Mexico" published in Hubert Herring and Herbert Weinstock, eds., Renascent Mexico (New York, 1935), Sáenz stated (pp. 173-174): "Here I must confess that the Indian as a subject for scientific investigation, as a candidate for a museum showcase, does not interest me very much . . . I have been studying Indians for years, but I have not yet visited the National Museum. I know that there are men there sitting at high desks dissecting the Indian. I leave them to carry on this work undisturbed. Naturally I recognize the importance of archaeology, anthropology, ethnology, and all the allied sciences; but insofar as Mexico is concerned I believe that we should not consider these studies as ends in themselves but as contributions to, as subsidiaries of, sociology. Therein is where we had failed in Mexico prior to the Revolution. While the National Museum of Ethnology and History was progressing, while costly monographs on the Indian were being published, millions of Indians in Mexico were being criminally neglected, or, what is perhaps worse, exploited unmercifully."







find a reasonable commonsense solution.

In the most general terms Sáenz saw the Indian question as part of a larger problem--the evolution of culture or civilization. This point of view he expressed in a statement recorded in Simpson's book, The Ejido:

Civilization means the elevation of the masses, the incorporation of the Indian; the organization of the country, the raising of the standard of living, the improvement of the economic situation of the worker and the peasant, the creation of institutions, the conversion of the Mexican ethnic, cultural and political conglomeration into a nation. Civilization. . . means generalization; it means the loss of some things that are ours or their limitation in order that we may adjust ourselves to universals.<sup>3</sup>

The formation of this national civilization and the incorporation of the Indian as an integral part of it, called for a concerted effort on the part of Sáenz and his generation to eradicate the weaknesses of national society and to raise the culture of the nation to levels necessary for progress and success in the modern world.

The Indian question, although only one phase of a larger national problem, presented in itself issues of considerable complexity. Sáenz believed, however, that the Indians possessed many qualities and traits of potential value which could be put to good use in the development of Mexican nationality. These he defined in remarks to an American seminar

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<sup>3</sup> Eyler N. Simpson, The Ejido (Chapel Hill, 1937), p. 557.







group in Mexico:

He, the Indian, has restraint and dignity; he has ethic standards; he has physical and moral vitality. Now that the world has seen the evils and dangers of a machine economy, the Indian's manual ability should be an asset. His love of the soil is another valuable trait. His artistic talent is a strain we would do well to preserve. Even certain aspects of his socio-political organization might well be incorporated into our statutes. His sense of community and his genius for communal cooperation are virtues greatly needed at the present time.<sup>4</sup>

This estimate of the positive values which the Indian could contribute to Mexican civilization expressed Sáenz' basic admiration for the Indian, revealed again and again in his writings. It also suggested that the formulation of a truly national Mexican unity would call for more than a change in Indian folkways. It would also require some adjustment of non-Indian culture traits to those of the Indians.

In an article published shortly before his death in 1941<sup>5</sup> Sáenz took note of two entirely different points of view regarding the Indian, both of which he characterized as false and absurd. The first is that held by sentimental defenders of the Indians, who constantly talk about the vindication of the native races and envision the restoration of the Inca and Aztec civilizations. These people blindly fail

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<sup>4</sup> Moisés Sáenz, "Indian Mexico," pp. 177-178.

<sup>5</sup> Moisés Sáenz, "Indians are Americans," Survey Graphic, XXX (1941), pp. 175-178. Although published toward the end of his life, this article states views which Sáenz had held for many years.







or refuse to take into consideration the social, economic and cultural changes in Indian life since conquest times, which make a return to the past not only impossible but also impracticable and even intolerable. The second point of view, equally absurd, is that of unconcern on the part of people "who blindly shut their eyes to the Indian question and smugly confine the Indians to the zone of extrasocial life to vegetate, forgotten, in the vast recesses of the land." The fallacy of this viewpoint lies in the fact that the world is constantly becoming smaller, thus limiting or even eliminating possible areas to which the unwanted problem can be relegated.<sup>6</sup>

There appeared to be two possible solutions of the Indian problem. The first involved the use of reservations, as in the United States, which some people believe to offer an opportunity for

. . . preservation of the Indian cell in such a form that it may grow and bring forth in the future, which they envisage but cannot predict in time, a flowering of the Indian race imbued with their peculiar culture moving in an efficient economic system and living, one would think, within their own judicial system.<sup>7</sup>

The second alternative, which Sáenz favored and which was actually the only possible alternative in Mexico, is that of integration, to produce both biologically and socially a nation of mestizos, a truly American or Mexican culture combining

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<sup>6</sup> Sáenz, "Indians are Americans," p. 175.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 176.



or refuse to take into consideration the social, economic and cultural changes in Indian life which make a return to the old life impossible and even undesirable. The second aim, which is equally absurd, is that of demanding that the Indian "who blindly shut their eyes to the Indian situation and who confine the Indian to the limits of environmental life to waste, forgotten, in the vastness of the Indian life" (the writer of this viewpoint) live as he has lived in the past, as a community becoming smaller, more isolated, even disappearing, because to which the situation must be changed.

There appears to be two possible solutions of the Indian problem. The first is to demand that the Indian, in the United States, should be allowed to follow his own path of opportunity for

... preservation of the Indian as an individual, that it may grow and develop in its own way, which they envisage but cannot carry out in their own hands. The Indian has been forced to live in a situation of moving in an artificial society of race and living, and would think, with his mind, that he is a free man.

The second alternative, which is the more realistic, is that of treating the only possible alternative in Indian life, integration, to produce a new, healthy and socially a nation of nations, a truly American of Indian origin and living.



white and Mexican values. "The mestizo is the Indian's way out."<sup>8</sup>

Integration of the Indian into this new Mexican society and culture cannot wait, however, upon the completion of the biological assimilation of the Indian masses into a predominantly mestizo population. They must be converted as rapidly as possible into cultural mestizos with the aid of government-sponsored programs having these major objectives: (1) the protection of Indian lands, including adequate credit facilities and distribution of lands to those who have none; (2) public health programs to improve living conditions; and (3) the use of education for the indoctrination of new cultural values.<sup>9</sup>

This statement of objectives reflects, of course, Sáenz' acceptance of the basic principles of the Mexican Revolution. It is interesting to note, however, that although he recognized the need for agrarian reform, he felt that greater emphasis should have been placed on the improvement of agricultural methods and techniques, and on the development of cooperative ejidos rather than on distribution of land in small

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<sup>8</sup> Sáenz, "Indians are Americans," p. 177.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



white and Mexican villages. It is situated in the Indian's way.

one."

Integration of the Indian and Mexican cultures is --

ty and culture cannot be, however, and the question is

the biological adaptation of the Indian to the new and a pre-

dominantly native population. This must be considered as

rapidly as possible into the Indian community with the aid of

Government-sponsored projects having a great effect upon

(1) the protection of the Indian, including adequate civil

facilities and distribution of land to those who have none;

(2) public health projects to improve living conditions; and

(3) the use of education for the development of new cul-

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cooperative ajidos rather than on the introduction of land in the

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8. Adams, "Indians and Americans," p. 127.

9. Ibid.



parcels to individual Indians.<sup>10</sup> Sáenz also offered criticism of the political methods and objectives of the Revolution on the ground that there had been a failure to take into consideration the Indians' sense of socio-political organization, based upon the community or village, with the result that the Indian often regarded political leaders and organizers from the outside as invaders of the worst sort, acting without check or restraint. Moreover, many of the Revolutionary leaders had approached the Indian problems--social, economic and political--with a feeling of superiority, reflecting superficial appreciation of Indian values and lack of respect for the personality of the Indian.<sup>11</sup>

Sáenz realized that cultural integration of the Indian, in which as an educator he had great interest, presented difficult problems. It called for sympathetic study and understanding of the Mexican scene and recognition of the concept that the Indian in Mexico is not only a biological fact but also a social condition. In contrast with the United States, which Sáenz regarded as the epitome of standardization, and in which the reservation method of dealing with the Indians

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<sup>10</sup> Sáenz, "Indian Mexico," p. 176. These views, expressed prior to 1935, have considerable interest in relation to the agrarian policies of Cárdenas, 1934-1940. Successors of President Cárdenas have placed greater emphasis on the development of improved agricultural methods.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 177.







resulted in their isolation from the spiritual community of the nation,<sup>12</sup> Mexico is characterized by great diversity and the Indians present ethnic, linguistic and social problems of great complexity. This diversity and complexity is not only characteristic of the country as a whole but also of small geographical areas, in which one may find sharp contrasts, climatic, topographical, ethnic and social. Each indigenous group has its own socio-political organization, which has often functioned independently of that of the country as a whole. Sáenz noted, however, that this factor, as well as the distribution of the autonomous population groups, the physical isolation of many communities, lower economic standards, and the lack of rural schools, have produced a certain similarity which, to some extent, simplified the Indian problem. On the other hand, the existence in Mexico of some eighty Indian groups, with more or less distinct languages, cultures and folklore, who have only a vague understanding of Mexico as a national entity, served to illustrate the immensity of the problem facing the leaders of the new Mexico.<sup>13</sup>

It was a fundamental tenet of Sáenz' thinking that any program of education designed to promote the integration of

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<sup>12</sup> Sáenz, México Integro, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Moisés Sáenz, "El País de los Mexicanos," undated manuscript supplied by Sra. Sáenz. This paper may have been published in El Nacional, a Mexico City newspaper.



resulted in their last session, the educational community of the nation, the nation is now beginning to grow. Diversity and the Indians present ethnic, linguistic and social problems of great complexity. This diversity and complexity is not only characteristic of the country as a whole but also of small geographical areas, in which the local ethnic complexity, ethnic, topographical, ethnic and social. Each indigenous group has its own socio-political organization, which has often functioned independently of the state, even as a whole. It is noted, however, that this diversity, as well as the fragmentation of the autonomous population group, the physical isolation of many communities, lower economic development, and the lack of rural schools, have produced a social situation which, to some extent, simplified the Indian problem. In the other hand, the existence in Mexico of an Indian population, with more or less distinct languages, customs and folklore, who have only a vague understanding of the state as a national entity, served to illustrate the complexity of the problem facing the leaders of the new Mexico.

It was a fundamental concept of Indian thinking that any program of education should be based on the recognition of

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12. El Estado, México, 1950, p. 10.

13. Moisés Sáenz, "El Estado y la Educación," published in El Nacional, a Mexican newspaper, 1950.



the Indian into a mestizo or Mexican society, with a sense of social consciousness based upon the needs of the nation as a whole, must take into account these elements of diversity. At the same time, while promoting a greater national consciousness, it should also seek to preserve the essential integrity of Indian personality and socio-political traditions, and to encourage the further development of the special capacities of the Indian to make a contribution to the total culture of the nation. In short, progress for the development of an improved economic and spiritual life for the Indian should not, --need not--seek to achieve uniformity at the expense of essential Indian values.

This point of view is set forth in cogent form and language in another unpublished paper by Sáenz entitled "A Guide to the Popular Arts of Mexico."<sup>14</sup> In this paper he recognized that the popular arts, especially the Indian crafts, do not represent a potent force or factor in the total economy of Mexico. The handicrafts do represent, however, social and aesthetic values which should not be lost. Sáenz experienced concern lest economic forces might eventually smother the very sources of culture, "a condition which would undoubtedly throw us into a state of civilized barbarism. And the question, Will it sell? applied to art and artwork is a sure indication

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<sup>14</sup> Manuscript supplied by Sra. Sáenz.



the Indian into a member of the nation itself, with a sense  
of social consciousness, and with a feeling of the value of  
a whole, must take into account the development of character.  
At the same time, while progress is being made, the  
nation, it should also seek to preserve the existing  
of Indian personality and self-respect and individuality, and to  
encourage the further development of the social qualities  
of the Indian to make a contribution to the total culture of  
the nation. In short, progress for the development of an  
improved economic and spiritual life for the Indian should not  
--need not--seek to destroy individuality or the expression of indi-  
vidual Indian values.

This point of view is not entirely correct, for the  
language in another hypothetical case of a people is  
Guide to the popular arts of Mexico. In this case the  
cognized that the popular arts, especially the Indian arts,  
do not represent a potent force in the total economy  
of Mexico. The handicrafts of the Indian, however, social and  
aesthetic values which should not be lost. These handicrafts  
concern least economic forces which are essential to the very  
sources of culture, a contribution to the total personality and  
as into a state of civilized development. This is the question  
Will it really applied to the Indian and to the nation?



that we are putting a price on personality, that we are making the spiritual a subject of the material."

The native handicrafts, he held, were being threatened not only by such economic factors as mechanization and the increased emphasis on money economy, but also by the tourist, the promoter, and even by the teacher, who were exerting pressure on the Indian, in his attitude toward art, to conform to the dead forms of the past or to make his art merely applied art. Sáenz had little sympathy for either of these trends, which sought to make the Indian conform to definite standards and art patterns, and which would only result in destroying the fundamental value of handicrafts as an expression of individual personality. In short, the popular arts, as an expression of Indian civilization, can co-exist in a more advanced culture if properly sustained and encouraged. Conformity and more modern modes of living do not call for either the elimination or the standardization of the expression of native personality.

Application of the ideas discussed in the preceding paragraphs to programs of education for the Indians would be no easy task, as Sáenz learned through actual experience. But from first to last he held fast to what he believed to be the essential objective--the integration of the Indian into a mestizo, or Mexican, national society without impressing upon him a uniform or standardized pattern of culture at the sacrifice







of worthwhile Indian tradition and values.

### Sáenz and Rural Education

The Secretariat of Public Education under the leadership of Vasconcelos (1920-1928) had vastly expanded the number of rural schools in a major effort to raise the educational level of Indian peasants in the more accessible areas and also of the primitive Indian groups located in isolated regions. One of the principal objectives of the Vasconcelos program was combating illiteracy, but his new rural schools were also envisioned as social and cultural agencies, in which instruction in most traditional subjects was regarded as of secondary importance. It was the function of the rural teacher to instruct both children and adults in the elements of personal hygiene and health, to encourage interest in better agricultural methods and in handicrafts, to develop a stronger sense of community living, and to inculcate the ideal of national citizenship. In short, the rural school was to be a "socialized school" serving civic and social ends.<sup>15</sup> These larger objectives obviously called for teachers of more than usual competence and experience. Actually few of the rural teachers then in service in rural schools were qualified to direct a "school of action." Most of them had deficient training, and

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<sup>15</sup> Sáenz and Priestly, op. cit., pp. 67-75; Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 374-375.



of worthwhile Indian projects and plans.

## Indian and Rural Education

The Government of India has been the pioneer

ship of Vasconcelos (1900-1901) and the Government of

the rural schools in a major effort to raise the educational

level of Indian people. The Government of India has also

of the primitive Indian people. The Government of India has

One of the principal objectives of the Government of India is

combating illiteracy, but this is a long and arduous task

viewed as social and cultural education. The Government of India

tion in most traditional and social education. The Government of India

importance. It was the Government of India that first

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hygiene and health, to encourage the use of native

rural methods and in education, to develop a national

of community living, and to improve the level of national

citizenship. In short, the Government of India has been

school" serving civic and social ends. The Government of India

festives obviously called for the development of more than

competence and experience. The Government of India has

then in service in rural education. The Government of India

"school of action." The Government of India has been



to meet this emergency the Secretariat of Public Education organized "cultural missions"--sometimes described as flying squadrons--to give short in-service courses to rural teachers. These missions, which were usually composed of an expert on rural education, a social worker (often a nurse), experts in agriculture and house industries, and a teacher of physical education, held institutes in strategically located centers for the rural teachers of the surrounding areas.<sup>16</sup>

This rural school program, which was carried forward and expanded during the later 1920's when Puig Cassaranc and Sáenz headed the Secretariat of Public Education, aroused considerable interest in the United States and in other Latin-American countries. In his third address before the Harris Foundation at the University of Chicago in 1926, Sáenz gave a very enthusiastic report on the entire program and the role of the rural schools as an integrating force in Mexico. The following excerpts from this address illustrate the views of the new Undersecretary.

The importance of it all is that through our little rural school we are trying to integrate Mexico and to create in our peasant classes a rural spirit. To integrate Mexico, to bring into the fold of the Mexican family the two million Indians; to make them think and feel in Spanish. To incorporate them into that type of civilization which constitutes the Mexican nationality. To bring them into that community of ideas and emotions which is Mexico. To integrate

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<sup>16</sup> Sáenz and Priestly, op. cit., pp. 80-82; Sanchez, op. cit., pp. 65-87.



to meet this emergency, the Government of Mexico has organized "cultural missions" -- educational expeditions to rural schools. These missions, which have already resulted in an aspect of rural education, a social work, a study of agriculture and home industries, and a number of other education, held last year in the newly founded centers for the rural teachers of the corresponding states. This rural school program, which was started toward and expanded during the last year, was very successful. Adams headed the expedition of this mission, and he has considerable interest in the United States and in other American countries. In his third volume before the foundation at the University of Chicago in 1930, he gave a very enthusiastic report of his program and the role of the rural schools as an important factor in Mexico. The following excerpts from his volume illustrate the state of the new Undersecretary.

The importance of the rural schools in Mexico is little rural schools are being organized in the country and to create in our schools a new type of rural school. To integrate Mexico, to bring into the fold of the Mexican family the two million Indians, to make them think and feel like Mexicans, to make them into that type of civilization which constitutes a real one nationality. To bring them into the fold of the of these and emotions which is Mexico. The importance



the Indians without sacrifice. Our Indian has many faults, but he has likewise many virtues--a wonderful patience and quietness; miraculous endurance, both physical and mental; artistic temperament, a soul artistic in its very essence. . .

To integrate Mexico through the rural school--that is to teach the people of the mountains and of the faraway valleys, the millions of people that are Mexicans but are not yet Mexican, to teach them the love of Mexico and the meaning of Mexico. . . Our little rural school stands for Mexico and represents in those far-off corners--so many of them yet that belong to Mexico but are not yet Mexican.<sup>17</sup>

It would be difficult to find in Sáenz' writings another passage which expresses so well his ideal of "México integro" and his faith in education as an effective force for the realization of that ideal stated in the almost lyrical sentences quoted above.

Sáenz' enthusiasm was prompted in considerable measure by the fact that the new rural school program represented a sharp break with traditional methods which in the light of past experience had done little to raise the cultural level of the Indians or to give them a sense of belonging to a larger Mexican society.<sup>18</sup> Sáenz saw in the new rural schools, which were in effect community centers and the teachers real

<sup>17</sup> Sáenz and Priestly, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

<sup>18</sup> Experience had found that the Indians had derived little benefit from instruction in Spanish, reading, writing, and other purely scholastic subjects because thereafter they had made little, if any, use of these skills once learned. Moisés Sáenz, Escuelas Federales en la Sierra de Puebla (México, 1927), p. 87.



the Indians without...  
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17 Science and Technology, pp. 111-112.

18 Experience...  
benefit from...  
other...  
made little...  
Science, Technology...  
p. 97.



social workers, a practical expression of his social philosophy of education. Again direct quotation from his Chicago address presents his point of view better than any paraphrase:

We are not interested in school routine, especially; traditional questions of method and of technique are of secondary importance, but we are tremendously interested in having a vital school and in having a school that will contribute toward social organization and national unity. It is a far cry from the old three-R school to this rural school of the mountains of Mexico. A far cry indeed from the narrow, restricted life of the traditional school to this natural, real community of children and teacher, where to raise a chicken is as important an enterprise as to learn a poem. . .

. . . I have heard wise university professors expound the technique of socialization. Let me assure you that nowhere have I seen better examples of a socialized school than in some of these rural schools of Mexico--in these schools where conditions are natural, the work personally interesting, the activities real, and where there is a spirit of give-and-take, of sharing, and a community of interest.<sup>19</sup>

During his tenure as Undersecretary Sáenz made frequent trips into the rural areas of Mexico, including visits to isolated mountain districts in the states of Puebla, Oaxaca and Michoacán, and to the primitive Mayan settlements of Quintana Roo.<sup>20</sup> His first-hand observations of the Mexican scene

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<sup>19</sup> Sáenz and Priestly, op. cit., pp. 69-72.

<sup>20</sup> Sáenz recorded observations and impressions based upon these journeys to outlying areas in several of his publications. The most important are semi-official reports entitled La Educación Rural en México (México, 1928); Escuelas Federales en la Sierra de Puebla; and Escuelas Federales en San Luis Potosí (México, 1927), which contain important statistical data on the expansion of the rural school program as well as descriptive material relating to conditions in various areas. The volume entitled México Integro, to which reference has







during these travels served to strengthen his appreciation of and admiration for the values of Indian culture. At the same time he had ample opportunity to evaluate the methods and achievements of the rural schools as an integrating force in Mexican life. Although his on-the-spot experiences taught him that rural education presented special problems which he may not have realized, or may have only partially recognized, at the beginning of his service as Undersecretary, he never wavered in his faith in the "socialized" rural school as a means of giving the Indians a sense of being Mexicans and of creating among them a stronger national consciousness.

He reaffirmed this faith and conviction in a report on rural education published in 1928, in which he defined the objectives of the "socialized" school in more explicit terms than in his Chicago address. He began by asking a question: "What kind of school is this to which come both the children and the adults. . . in which one hears much talk about chickens and rabbits, about cooperatives and small industries, about recreation and free-time activities, about vaccination and haircuts, and so little about learning to read, write and count?"<sup>21</sup> He answered this question by stating first of all

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already been made, contains interesting accounts of native life and customs in Quintana Roo (pp. 55-112) and at Janitzio in Michoacán (pp. 173-182).

<sup>31</sup> Sáenz, La Educación Rural en México, p. 74.



during these years he was in the school and continued  
of and education for the purpose of a better  
name time he had made a reputation for himself  
and achievements of the school in the last  
in Mexican life. Although he was not a student  
him that rural education was a great thing  
may not have realized, but he was a student  
at the beginning of the school and continued  
wavered in his faith in the school and  
means of giving the children a chance of being  
thing among them a stronger feeling of  
He realized the fact that education is a  
on rural education published in 1933, in which he  
objective of the "rural education" is to give  
than in his Chicago address. He was a student  
"What kind of school is it to which you refer the children  
and the adults. . . in which one learns to read, write  
and habits, about geography, history, civics, and  
vegetation and free time activities, about sanitation and  
health, and so little about the things that are  
count?" He answered this question by stating that at the

already been made, comparing the school to a  
life and custom in Mexico (pp. 173-174).

31 years, in 1933, in Mexico, p. 174.



that it was a school which, because it functioned in a backward society, must assume many responsibilities discharged by other agencies in a more advanced society. If the home lacked the degree of culture to take care of the hygiene of the children, the school must do so. It must also encourage and, if necessary, supervise such elementary habits and activities as regular bathing, the making of clothing, and proper utilization of local food products.<sup>22</sup>

The school, he continued, reflects the unity of life, its activities are not to be departmentalized. The school program is linked to three or four fundamental bases of civilization: ". . . knowledge and control of the factors which conserve life and promote good health; knowledge and mastery of the physico-agricultural medium; practical knowledge of all that which elevates and dignifies domestic life; knowledge and exercise of whatever promotes material and spiritual recreation."<sup>23</sup> Reading and writing will, to be sure, figure in such a program, but always subordinated to the other objectives, since the ideal is not to teach reading, writing and arithmetic, but to teach people how to live.<sup>24</sup>

Defined in more concrete terms, the new school is "a rural school for rural people and a rural mode of living." It

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<sup>22</sup> Sáenz, La Educación Rural en México, p. 74.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



that it was a school, in which the children in a work-  
ward society, must have been brought up. It was  
by other agencies in a high technical school. It was  
lacked the degree of culture and refinement of the school of  
the children, the school of the children, the school of the children,  
and, if necessary, a high school, a high school, a high school,  
vital as regular school, the school of the children, the school of the children,  
realization of local school progress.  
The school, the school, the school, the school, the school, the school,  
its activities are not to be neglected. The school, the school,  
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tion: " . . . knowledge and culture of the school, the school,  
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Reading and writing, the school, the school, the school, the school,  
but always subordinate to the school, the school, the school,  
ideal is not to teach, the school, the school, the school, the school,  
teach people how to live.  
Defined in more concrete terms, the school, the school, the school,  
rural school for rural people, the school, the school, the school, the school.



will encourage love of the land and service as the center of a small community. "It will organize the people and teach them methods of collaboration and participation." And finally, it will open up doors to the exterior world" and convert itself into an antenna always sensible to outside influences--of the exterior world that is Mexico." In this way the rural school fulfills the best pedagogical doctrine and at the same time serves as a social agency. In Mexico, however, where the nation is in the process of formation, the school must transcend the norm of any doctrine and become an instrument of integration, "which begins by giving a Castillian voice to four millions of mute Indians and by presenting to all of our widely dispersed people the ideal of a united Mexico."<sup>25</sup>

Sáenz realized, however, that many obstacles had to be overcome before the program of rural education could function most effectively and achieve its greatest usefulness. In his third Chicago address, in which he described the rural schools with such warmth of feeling, he mentioned several factors, such as racial diversity, the spiritual and geographical isolation of many groups, and the tendency of all Latins to individualism, which hindered the process of national integration. At the same time he took note of other factors, viz., Spanish as a common language, a strong sense of national pride, folklore

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<sup>25</sup> Sáenz, La Educación Rural en México, p. 25.



will encourage love of the land, and the center of a  
small community. "The only way to get the people to  
methods of collaboration and cooperation," said Lincoln,  
will open up doors to the entire world and convert it into  
into an antenna which will be able to feel the pulse of the  
entire world that is passing. But in the first place  
within the heart of the people, and of the same time  
behave as a social agency. In fact, however, when the nation  
is in the process of formation, the nation must transcend the  
norm of any doctrine and become an instrument of liberation,  
"which begins by giving a definite voice to the millions of  
wise Indians and by presenting a new ideal of life."  
people the ideal of a united nation.  
Satan realized, however, that any such ideal was  
overcome before the people of the world could be united.  
most effectively and achieve the necessary condition. In the  
third Chicago address, Lincoln said that the world is  
with such wealth of feeling, the people must be united, and  
as social diversity, the nation must be a social institution  
of many groups, and the condition of all nations to maintain  
ism, which hindered the process of social integration. At  
the same time he took issue of the world, and the  
a common language, a common sense of national pride, and a



traditions, and "a considerable sense of artistic talent, refined and modernized by Spanish crossing," which in his opinion could prove to be unifying forces.<sup>26</sup> His first-hand observation of conditions in rural and isolated areas during the years 1927-1930 served, however, to enlarge and deepen his awareness of the ethnic, social and economic diversity of rural Mexico, and taught him that these elements of diversity constituted counter-balancing forces of greater complexity and difficulty than he had heretofore realized.

His travel through the country taught him, for example, the need for various approaches to the program of rural education in terms of varying conditions in different parts of the country. In some areas the school had to serve as an agency for bringing primitive Indians into the fold of civilization; in other areas, where the Indians could be classified as peasants, the principal function of the school was the dissemination of culture, i.e., "the popularization of information, concepts, habits and customs" as the means of promoting a greater sense of national unity.<sup>27</sup> But even in the case of these more advanced, or peasant, groups, ethnic diversity offered serious obstacles to the achievement of educational objectives and the realization of common denominators of culture.

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<sup>26</sup> Sáenz and Priestly, op. cit., pp. 57-60.

<sup>27</sup> Moisés Sáenz, "School and Culture," Progressive Education, IX (1932), p. 107.







In the state of Oaxaca, for example, there are fourteen distinct Indian groups, who speak different languages which themselves are varied and modified from pueblo to pueblo. Moreover, each group has its own dress, manners, rites, taboos and fiestas.<sup>28</sup> Diversity of the Indian languages alone created a major problem, especially with reference to the teaching of Spanish, which constituted one of the common denominators in the process of integration.

In addition to these features of ethnic and racial diversity, Sáenz noted that apathy and passive resistance on the part of the Indians were often obstacles to the success of the socialized school. Resistance was most frequently encountered among the adults, who were likely to look upon the school as a method of forcing acceptance of a way of life which seemed to be impractical and in conflict with their traditions. This attitude often reflected a lack of trust toward non-Indians because of exploitation suffered in the past and resentments built up by years of hardship. The school was regarded therefore as merely another means of binding the Indian to unwelcome modes of life.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, although the children usually showed curiosity and a desire to learn, the period of instruc-

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<sup>28</sup> Sáenz, La Educación Rural en México, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> Sáenz, Escuelas Federales en la Sierra de Puebla, pp. 87-95, passim; also "México Integro," unpublished manuscript made available by Sra. Sáenz.



In the state of Georgia, the Cherokee, Creek and Seminole  
distinct Indian groups, the great diversity of languages which  
themselves are varied and each has its own people to speak.  
Moreover, each group has its own art, manner, dress, customs  
and history. 28 Diversity of the Indian languages alone  
created a major problem, especially with reference to the  
teaching of Spanish, which necessitated one of the teachers  
nominate in the matter of instruction.  
In addition to these factors, the Spanish and English  
variety, Bernal noted that the Spanish language was on the  
part of the Indians was a factor which led to the knowledge of the  
so-called school. The school was not only a place of instruction  
among the adults, who were taught to read and write, but also  
a method of forcing acceptance of the ways of life which seemed  
to be impractical and in violation of their traditions. Their  
attitude often reflected a lack of interest in the new  
because of exploitation and the loss of their land and resources  
built up by years of labor. The school was regarded there-  
fore as merely another means of taking the Indians to the  
modes of life. 29 Moreover, although the children were  
showed curiosity and a desire to learn, the school at first

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28 Bernal, *La Educacion Indica en Mexico*, p. 3.  
29 Bernal, *Historia de la Educacion en Mexico*,  
pp. 67-68, Bernal; also "El Indio 'Educado'," unpublished manu-  
script made available by Dr. Bernal.



tion in existing rural schools, usually only two or three years, was too short in many cases to bring about a permanent and lasting reorientation of their life habits. After this brief school experience they were again "submerged" in their family surroundings and were absorbed once more and definitively by the traditional norms of living. "Life congeals in the old molds. The weak influence of the school is lost in the subconscious."<sup>30</sup>

In other words, the program of rural education often created a conflict between school and culture which could be overcome by bringing the adults as well as the children within the scope of the socialized school, by appropriate measures to protect the existing values of native life, and by enlisting the field resources of the national government. As early as 1927 Sáenz proposed that the Secretariat of Education should work in conjunction with the Ministries of Communications, Agriculture, Health, Industry and Commerce to resolve the Indian problem.<sup>31</sup> Later he placed even greater emphasis on the joint cooperation of all divisions of the national government because of his realization, after long experience, that the problems of rural education and of integrating the Indian were too great to be resolved by a single approach.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Sáenz, "México Integro" (manuscript).

<sup>31</sup> Sáenz, Escuelas Federales en la Sierra de Puebla, p. 89.

<sup>32</sup> See the discussion of his book Carapán in the next chapter.



tion in existing rural schools, usually only two or three years, was too short to permit the building of a permanent and lasting institution. The rural school, after this brief school existence, was usually "closed" for the family surroundings and the rural life. The school was usually by the traditional manner of living. The school in the old mode. The school was a school in the old mode in the educational.

In other words, the school of rural education often created a conflict between school and village which could be overcome by bringing the school as near as the village to the scope of the school. By bringing the school as near as the village to protect the existing village of rural life, and by utilizing the field resources of the rural community, the school in 1927 began proposed that the school of rural education work in conjunction with the Ministry of Communications, Agriculture, Health, Industry and Commerce to resolve the rural problem. The school was also to be a center for the joint cooperation of all interested in the rural community because of his realization of the rural problem, that the problems of rural education and of the rural life were too great to be resolved by a single agency.

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30 Sene, "Mexico Interpro" (Manuscript).  
31 Sene, La Escuela Rural en el Estado de Mexico, p. 14.  
32 See the discussion of the rural school in the next chapter.



In his report on rural education published in 1928 Sáenz called attention to another obstacle to the full realization of the ideals of the socialized schools, viz., the rapid growth of the very system which sought to realize it, the danger that like so many other great spiritual movements, it would become "a mere bureaucratic skeleton." Consequently the preservation of the spirit of the program, its philosophy, and its human basis, constituted one of the most delicate tasks of whoever should have the responsibility for directing it.<sup>33</sup>

Expansion of the program was to be in two directions: horizontally, to cover the entire nation and to provide educational opportunities for every child; and vertically, in strategically located places to enrich the program to the end that the best students "may take other steps on the educational ladder that will satisfy their capacities and satiate their longings." Vertical expansion of the program of rural education would involve programs of specialization in centrally located agricultural schools, these to be "crowned" as need required, by others of still greater specialization, until the completed system realized "the two greatest ends" of a good school system: "the development and perfecting of the human personality, and the development and perfecting of those tech-

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<sup>33</sup> Sáenz, La Educación Rural en México, p. 26.







niques which give pleasure and dignity to the life of men."<sup>34</sup>

But the most urgent need in the 1920's was the training and recruitment of competent teachers for the elementary rural schools, the socialized schools of the village communities. The rapid expansion of the rural schools, at the rate of a thousand a year, had resulted in a shortage of adequately trained maestros. "Moreover the kind of teachers that this new school demands had not been trained by the normal schools. Consequently we did what we could, and extended our hand to any person of good will; we demanded of them a certain spirit of service, enthusiasm and energy." In the beginning the majority of the teachers in service had not even completed a course of primary instruction. However, by 1928 the average length of their schooling was six years, and a considerable number had greater scholastic attainments. In his writings Sáenz paid tribute to the devoted and intelligent services of some of these rural maestros, who carried on their work under difficult conditions and with the most meager facilities.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately others lacked understanding of the objectives of the new rural schools. "As the schools increase in number, we must also write off a certain number of maestros who, although they are called apostles, are not

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<sup>34</sup> Sáenz, La Educación Rural en México, p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-21; and México Integro, pp. 150-152.



figures which give perspective to the data. But the most striking feature of the 1930's was the rising and recruitment of movement for the elementary rural schools, the movement which at the village level. This rapid expansion of the rural schools, at the rate of a thousand a year, had resulted in a number of completely trained teachers. However, the main problem was that this new school system had to be financed by the national schools. Consequently, the national schools, and not the local hands to any person or group, were the source of funds. A certain spirit of service, however, was evident in the beginning the majority of the teachers in service had not even completed a course of study in education. However, by 1933 the average length of study, including post-graduate, and a considerable number had completed their studies. In his writings Scharf has written of the devoted and intelligent services of some of these rural teachers, who carried on their work under difficult conditions and with the most meager facilities.<sup>35</sup> Under such conditions, the schools of the objectives of the national schools. As the schools increase in number, we are sure to find a certain number of teachers who, although they are not well paid, are not

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<sup>34</sup> Scharf, *La Escuela Rural en México*, p. 237.  
<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24; and *México Interior*, pp. 152-153.



worthy."<sup>36</sup>

Sáenz gave generous recognition to the work of the cultural missions, which conducted teacher training institutes, usually of three weeks duration, in rural centers throughout the country.<sup>37</sup> There was obvious need, however, for special training schools to supplement the work of the cultural missions and to provide more extensive instruction in the methodology of the socialized rural schools. Moreover, it was also evident that some of the "experts" who comprised the personnel of the cultural missions lacked the experience and sympathetic understanding that were required for a successful approach to the ethnic and social problems of rural areas.

In an effort to meet the pressing need for adequately prepared teachers for the socialized schools, Sáenz lent support to the creation of special schools in Mexico City and other urban centers to which rural maestros were brought for intensive training for a period of several weeks to a year. But this experience failed to achieve its major objective, largely because most of the student maestros, having experienced the amenities of city life, were reluctant or unwilling to return to the rural areas from which they had come. Sáenz resorted therefore to another experiment, the establishment of

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<sup>36</sup> Sáenz, La Educación Rural en México, p. 26.

<sup>37</sup> Sáenz and Priestly, op. cit., pp. 80-82; Sáenz, La Educación Rural en México, pp. 20-21.



Blanc gave concrete recognition to the fact that cultural missions, which constituted a major part of the work of these people, in fact, were a part of the country. 37 There was a change made, however, in the training schools to supplement the work of the cultural mission and to provide more extensive instruction in the history of the socialized rural schools. However, it was also pointed out that some of the "experts" who organized the personnel of the cultural mission lacked the experience and qualifications understanding that were so vital for a successful approach to the ethnic and social problems of rural areas.

In an effort to meet the growing need for adequately prepared teachers for the socialized schools, Blanc sent reports to the creation of special schools in various cities and other urban centers to which rural teachers were brought for intensive training for a period of several weeks to a year. But this experience failed to achieve its major objective, largely because most of the student teachers, having experienced the amenities of city life, were reluctant in returning to turn to the rural areas from which they had come. Blanc resorted therefore to another experiment, the establishment of

36 Blanc, *La Educacion Rural en Mexico*, p. 10.

37 Blanc and Pineda, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.



training schools in selected rural centers, in which a successful socialized school was already functioning under skillful leadership and to which promising young rural maestros were brought for on-the-spot training and indoctrination. These new experimental schools, of which one of the most successful was at Actopan, north of Mexico City, had two obvious advantages: (1) they provided a better opportunity for teacher training in a rural atmosphere and under conditions representative of those in which the student maestros would be called upon to function; (2) the apprentice teachers were not subjected to the temptation to abandon service in rural areas. Sáenz gave close personal attention and enthusiastic support to the work of these training schools and personally supervised the selection of members of the instructing staff, some of whom he had taught in earlier years at the Presbyterian school in Coyoacán.<sup>38</sup>

It appears that these plans for the training of rural maestros and other phases of the expanding rural school program to which Sáenz devoted much of his effort during the later 1920's did not receive the whole-hearted support of his associates in the Secretariat of Public Education. In 1928 Sáenz, as we have seen, had openly stated that bureaucratic

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<sup>38</sup> Sanchez, op. cit., pp. 152-155; Larroyo, op. cit., p. 374. Also some of the information used in this discussion was obtained from Bra. Sáenz.



training schools in selected rural centers, in which a number of the existing schools were already functioning under skillful leadership and to which promising young rural educators were brought for on-the-spot training and indoctrination. These new experimental schools, of which one of the most successful was at Acapulco, north of Mexico City, had two obvious advantages: (1) they provided a better opportunity for teacher training in a rural environment and under conditions representative of those in which the student teachers would be called upon to function; (2) the experience teachers were not subjected to the temptation to abandon service in rural areas. Adams gave close personal attention and enthusiastic support to the work of these training schools and personally supervised the selection of members of the instructing staff, some of whom he had taught in earlier years at the Presbyterian school in Coyocacán.<sup>38</sup>

It appears that these plans for the training of rural educators and other phases of the expanding rural school program to which Adams devoted much of his effort during the later 1880's did not receive the whole-hearted support of his associates in the Department of Public Education. In 1888 Adams, as we have seen, had openly stated that his associates

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<sup>38</sup> Sanchez, op. cit., pp. 152-153; Murray, op. cit., p. 374. Also some of the information used in this discussion was obtained from Mrs. Adams.



tendencies and attitudes might endanger the new system of socialized schools and apparently he now experienced the meaning of his own warning. Unfortunately we do not have sufficient information at this time concerning what seems to have been a rather sharp conflict of official and professional opinion within the Secretariat, nor do we know the exact sources of opposition to Sáenz' program.<sup>39</sup> But in any event there is clear indication that Sáenz felt compelled to defend his program, especially as it related to the recruitment and training of the rural school teachers, by the publication in the Mexico City press of a series of articles that were signed "El Maestro Rural." When his authorship of these articles became known, his superior and associates in the Secretariat apparently charged him with insubordination and with having brought discredit upon the Secretariat. As the result of this incident he resigned as Undersecretary early in 1930.<sup>40</sup>

Two years later (1932) Sáenz published a lengthy article

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<sup>39</sup> In obtaining a better understanding of this conflict it may be of some significance to note that during the later part of Calles' term as President and during the tenure of the "puppet" Callista Presidents who succeeded him after 1928, government policies reflected less zeal for the Revolutionary principles than had characterized the earlier 1920's. There was a definite slowdown in the program of land distribution and the growth of a somewhat more conservative point of view in government circles. Perhaps this transition to a more conservative outlook was reflected in the official policies and attitudes in the Secretariat of Public Education which were in opposition to Undersecretary Sáenz' views.

<sup>40</sup> See p. 50, note 18, supra.



...and attended night classes at the new ...  
 ...and especially in the ...  
 ...of his own ...  
 ...information ...  
 ...have been a rather sharp ...  
 ...opinion within the ...  
 ...of opposition to ...  
 ...there is clear ...  
 ...his program, especially ...  
 ...of the ...  
 ...the Mexico City ...  
 ..."El ...  
 ...became known, his ...  
 ...apparently charged ...  
 ...brought discredit upon the ...  
 ...incident he resigned as ...  
 ...two years later (1933) ...

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 ...was a definite ...  
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 ...government circles. ...  
 ...native outlook was reflected in the official policies and ...  
 ...these in the ...  
 ...position to University ...

40 See p. 50, note 18, ...



in Progressive Education summarizing his views on rural education in Mexico. In this article, which may be regarded as a kind of defense of his policies concerning the rural education of the Indian masses as Undersecretary of Public Education during the years 1925-1930, he again emphasized the fact that the rural school should be a civilizing or "socializing" agency.<sup>41</sup> "Let us define Mexican education in its social aspect as an effort to weave a civilization out of the varied cultural strands that comprise our Mexico."<sup>42</sup>

In order to achieve this goal Sáenz listed a series of activities which he believed would provide the desired pattern of integral education. First of all he felt that the school should teach Spanish as a means of helping both the Indian and the mestizo peasant develop a consciousness of the state. Related to this activity was that of bringing about a material and spiritual communication between villages and the nation as a whole by the use of technological advances. Another important activity to be carried on by the rural school was the socialization of the adult, by which Sáenz meant teach-

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<sup>41</sup> An interesting series of statistics on the advances made by the "socialized" school is provided by Sáenz in an article entitled "Rural Education in Mexico" published in the Institute of International Education News Bulletin, VI (1931), pp. 4-5. Statistics include figures for activities ranging from vaccination campaigns and installing radios to open-air theaters, vegetable gardens, and agricultural cooperatives, thus giving some indication of the scope of these schools.

<sup>42</sup> Sáenz, "School and Culture," p. 99.



in progressive education... in Mexico... a kind of defense of the... tion of the Indian... tion during the years 1900-1910... that the rural school... agency. "Let us define Mexican education in its social aspect as an effort to weave a civilization out of the varied elements that comprise our Mexico."

In order to achieve this goal... of activities which he believed would provide the desired pattern of integral education... school should teach Spanish as a means of helping both the Indian and the mestizo peasant develop... the state. Related to this activity was that of bringing about a material and spiritual co-ordination between villages and the nation as a whole by the use of technological resources. Another important activity to be carried on by the rural school was the socialization of the child, by which means would teach

41 An interesting review of statistics on the development made by the "socialized" school is provided by... article entitled "Rural Education in Mexico," published in the Institute of International Education News Bulletin, VI (1931), pp. 4-5. Statistics include figures for activities ranging from vaccination campaigns and training courses to book-keeping, vegetable gardens, and agricultural cooperatives. Thus giving some indication of the scope of these schools.



ing "men to work with others sharing functions and obligations." The school must also encourage the talent and creative traditions of the rural Indians and mestizos, as well as "effect the transition from a folk, oral, and traditional culture to an intellectual culture." Finally, and perhaps most important of all, the rural school must firmly ground in the minds of the masses the overall objectives of the Revolution, as well as the idealism which is associated with it. Sáenz also felt that the school from the political point of view would have to accomplish "what the Revolution has not achieved because the latter, in spite of its eagerness to innovate, has not known how to change the patterns according to which the political life of the nation must be fashioned."<sup>43</sup>

Sáenz firmly believed that if a strong national state was to be welded out of the conglomeration of diverse peoples and cultural patterns which existed in Mexico, the "socialized" school would have to discover and establish a common denominator, so to speak, for a relationship in which all Mexicans could share and feel a part of. He quite adequately summed up this ideal, which was the basis for his program of rural education, with the following statement:

Our task is to civilize--nothing short of this--to raise the level of the masses, to make the Indian one of us; to organize the country, to raise the standard of living; to improve the economic status of worker

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<sup>43</sup> Sáenz, "School and Culture," pp. 108-110.



ing men to work with others sharing functions and responsibilities.  
The school must also encourage the culture and creative imaginations of the rural Indians and peasants, as well as "direct the transition from a folk, oral, and traditional culture to an intellectual culture." Finally, and perhaps most important of all, the rural school must firmly ground in the minds of the masses the overall objectives of the revolution, as well as the idealism which is associated with it. It was also felt that the school from the political point of view would have to accomplish "what the Revolution has not achieved because the latter, in spite of the eagerness to know, has not known how to change the patterns according to which the political life of the nation must be fashioned."<sup>43</sup>

Salas firmly believed that it is a strong national state was to be welded out of the coagulation of diverse peoples and cultural patterns which existed in Mexico, the "national school would have to discover and establish a common denominator, so to speak, for a relationship in which all Mexicans could share and feel a part of. He also emphatically stated, this ideal, which was the basis for the program of rural education, with the following statement:

Our task is to organize--not in the short of time--to raise the level of the masses, to make the Indian one of us; to organize the country, to raise the standard of living; to improve the economic status of every

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<sup>43</sup> Salas, "School and Culture," pp. 100-110.



and peasant; to create institutions; and to convert the ethnic, social and political elements into a nation. To civilize, we stated at the beginning, and we must repeat it at this point, is to lose something of what is our own and limit it in order to adjust it to what is universal.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, Sáenz believed that if it could forge a unified civilization out of diverse cultures without compromising or sacrificing individuality or developing a stereotyped society, rural education would have succeeded.

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<sup>44</sup> Sáenz, "School and Culture," p. 110.







## CHAPTER V

### THE LATER CAREER AND WRITINGS OF SÁENZ

#### Major activities, 1930-1941

Although forced to resign from his position as Under-secretary of Public Education, Sáenz still enjoyed too much prestige and influence to be dropped from official government activity. Nor would Sáenz, because of his vital interest in education and social welfare, divorce himself completely from public service.

In 1930 he was appointed Director of the Beneficencia Pública, an agency of the federal government in charge of social welfare services and institutions of special education for the handicapped, the mentally deficient, and the orphans. During his term as director of this agency (1930-1931) the services and institutions under the Beneficencia Pública realized a considerable improvement and expansion, particularly in regard to education. The introduction of contemporary pedagogical doctrines and methods into the training offered at such institutions as the Casa del Niño and the Escuela Industrial de Huérfanos are excellent examples of the changes which took place under Sáenz' leadership.<sup>1</sup> Another indication of Sáenz' activity

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<sup>1</sup> Larroyo, op. cit., pp. 364-365.



THE LATE CARL AND EVELYN W. BARK

Major activities, 1930-1934

Although forced to resign from his position as Under-Secretary of Public Education, Carl still enjoyed the prestige and influence he possessed from official government activity. Nor would he, because of his vital interest in education and social welfare, have himself completely from public service.

In 1930 he was appointed Director of the Department of Publicity, an agency of the Federal Government in charge of social welfare services and institutions of social education for the handicapped, the mentally deficient, and the orphans. During his term as Director of this agency (1930-1934) the department and institutions under the Department of Publicity realized a considerable improvement and expansion, particularly in regard to education. The introduction of compulsory education, 5-14, 6-12, 7-12, and methods into the training of the blind, deaf, and dumb as the case of the blind and the hearing impaired in education are excellent examples of the changes which took place under Bark's leadership. Another extension of social activity

J. L. Bark, op. cit., pp. 304-305.



along these lines was his interest in the developments taking place in the field of "psycho-pedagogy," the study of the psychological aspects of the education of delinquents and abnormal children.

However, Sáenz' abiding interest during the period subsequent to 1930 was the Indian and the Indian problem. In 1931 he was appointed chairman of the Committee on Indian Investigations of the Secretariat of Public Education. His membership on this committee enabled him to carry on research on Indian communities in Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia as well as in his own country. As a result of his work in this field Sáenz wrote several books on Indian problems in other Latin-American countries.<sup>2</sup> Following this research Sáenz was selected to establish and operate an experimental school in rural Mexico in order to discover better methods and techniques of Indian education. This experiment at Carapán, a village in the state of Michoacán, will be discussed at some length later in this chapter. Also indicative of Sáenz' interest in the Indian is the shop, Artes de Mexico S.A., which he and his wife operated in Mexico City in 1933.<sup>3</sup> This establishment promoted authentic Indian art by displaying and selling extremely handsome examples of Indian arts and crafts.

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<sup>2</sup> "Moisés Sáenz--Obituary," Bulletin of the Pan American Union, MXXVI (1942), p. 240.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



along these lines was his interest in the development taking place in the field of "psycho-physiology," the study of the psychological aspects of the education of delinquents and the normal children.

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2 "Indians as Mankind," *Publication of the Pan American Union*, XXXVI (1942), p. 240.



Following the Carapán experiment Sáenz was called to a series of positions in the Mexican diplomatic service, which enabled him to continue his studies of Indian life. In 1934 he was appointed Minister to Ecuador and in 1935 he was chosen to represent Mexico in Denmark in this same capacity. In 1936 Sáenz was sent to Peru, again as Minister, and was promoted to the rank of Ambassador to Peru in 1937.<sup>4</sup> While serving in these posts in Latin America and particularly in Peru, Sáenz, besides studying actual conditions and problems, made a fine collection of Indian artifacts.<sup>5</sup>

Although he was quite friendly with Cárdenas,<sup>6</sup> Sáenz took little active part in the Cárdenas programs. He was in sympathy with the plan of land distribution but had already expressed his criticism of "individual" allotments. Regarding the program of socialistic education carried on by Narciso Bassols, the Secretary of Public Education during the earlier part of the Cárdenas administration, we have no evidence of any expression by Sáenz of his views on the subject. However, one

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<sup>4</sup> Martin, op. cit., p. 462.

<sup>5</sup> Shortly after his death, his widow, Sr. Herlinda Treviño de Sáenz, published the book Peru, Joyas, Telas, Cerámica (México, 1946), which contains beautifully reproduced pictures of many of the articles collected by Sáenz in Peru.

<sup>6</sup> As an example of the high regard and respect in which Cárdenas held Sáenz, following the oil expropriation of 1937 Sáenz was chosen to go to the United States with nineteen other prominent Mexicans to plead Mexico's case in this country. William Cameron Townsend, Lazaro Cárdenas, Mexican Democrat (Ann Arbor, 1952), p. 291.



Following the 1936 election, Sæns was called to a series of positions in the Canadian diplomatic service, which enabled him to continue his studies of Indian life. In 1937 he was appointed Minister to Bogotá and in 1938 he was seen to represent Mexico in Geneva in this same capacity. In 1936 Sæns was sent to Peru, again as Minister, and was promoted to the rank of Ambassador in Peru in 1937. While serving in these posts in Latin America and particularly in Peru, Sæns, besides studying actual conditions and problems, made a fine collection of Indian artifacts.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin, op. cit., p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> Shortly after his death, his widow, Dr. Carlotta Trevino de Sæns, published the book Peru, Sæns, Carlotta Trevino (Mexico, 1946), which contains beautifully reproduced pictures of many of the articles collected by Sæns in Peru.

<sup>3</sup> As an example of the high regard and respect with which Sæns was held, following the old expedition of 1937 Sæns was chosen to go to the United States with nineteen other prominent Mexicans to plead Mexico's case in this country. William Cameron Townsend, League of Nations, Mexico, 1937 (Ann Arbor, 1932), p. 291.



should keep in mind that the "socialistic education" of this time was not the same as Sáenz' "socialized school." The fact that Sáenz was content to remain in the diplomatic service where he had the opportunity to continue his investigations of Indian problems may offer an explanation of why he did not enter into any of the controversies of the Cárdenas administration.

The last important positions held by Sáenz before his sudden and unfortunate death in Lima in 1941 were the Secretary-Generalship of the First Inter-American Congress on Indian Life which met in Patzcuaro, Mexico, in April of 1940, and the Directorship of the Inter-American Indian Institute created by that congress.<sup>7</sup> However, the writing that Sáenz did during the later period (1930-1941) was much more important than any of these positions which he held. His most important work was done on studies of Ecuadorian and Peruvian Indians, a relation and account of the experiment at Carapan, and in the editing and publishing of a collection of his speeches in a book entitled México Integro, to which reference has already been made. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to an examination of his books on the Peruvian and Ecuadorian Indians and on Carapan, since these works express Sáenz' ideas on what appears

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<sup>7</sup> Following World War II this Institute of Patzcuaro was placed under the direction and guidance of UNESCO, which at the present time is still operating it.



should keep in mind that the "statistical education" of this time was not the same as today's. The fact that Sáenz was content to remain in the diplomatic service where he had the opportunity to continue his investigations of Indian problems, an offer an explanation of why he did not enter into any of the administrative or political administration.

The last important position held by Sáenz before his sudden and untimely death in 1911 was the Secretary-Generalship of the First Inter-American Congress on Indian Affairs which met in Patzún, Mexico, in April of 1910, and the Directorship of the Inter-American Indian Institute created by that Congress. However, the writing that Sáenz did during the latter period (1930-1941) was much more important than any of these positions which he held. His most important work was done on studies of K'iche' and Yucatec Indians, a relation and account of the experiment at Cárdenas, and in the editing and publishing of a collection of his speeches in a book entitled México Interio, to which reference has already been made. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to an examination of his books on the Yucatec and K'iche' Indians and on Cárdenas, since these works express Sáenz' ideas on what appears

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to have been the major concern of this last period of his life.

### The Indians of Ecuador and Peru

Near the end of 1931 Sáenz made a six months' trip to Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia as a member of a commission sponsored by the Secretariat of Public Education for the purpose of making observations on the conditions of the Indian masses in these countries. This commission was to take under consideration the reactions of the Indian to the national state, the attitudes of non-Indians and the government regarding them, and, most important of all, the actions taken by the national governments in the attempt to integrate and incorporate semi-autonomous groups of a country.<sup>8</sup> As a result of this rather extensive trip, which enabled Dr. Sáenz carefully to observe the Indians of these areas as well as their problems, two rather detailed studies of the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Indians were published by Sáenz in 1933. These studies apparently were intended to be part of a series which would also include expositions on the Bolivian and Guatemalan Indians. Unfortunately, however, these latter works were never completed. Some of Sáenz' notes regarding the Bolivian Indian exist but they are rather inconclusive and relate entirely to a description of the

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<sup>8</sup> Moisés Sáenz, Sobre el Indio Peruano y su Incorporación al Medio Nacional (México, 1933), p. xiii.



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<sup>8</sup> Nils Sæns, Some of the Indians of Ecuador and Peru, Al Medio Nacional (Mexico, 1933), p. xiii.



way of life of these people.

The two works to be discussed in this section are those concerning the Indians of Ecuador and Peru. The larger part of both these books is taken up with the presentation of a rather comprehensive picture of Indian culture and life as it was to be found in these areas in 1931 and 1932. Sáenz gave a detailed description of all the aspects of the Indian environment, from food and clothing to religion and the use of drugs. Although this material involved a considerable amount of time in preparation, it is not pertinent to the present discussion. Therefore this brief study will be confined to those discussions which present Sáenz' views on the more basic aspects of the question of the Indian masses.

In Ecuador Sáenz felt that the three major problems of the Indians were land, education and religion.<sup>9</sup> Regarding the land question, Sáenz pointed out that the wide use of the hacienda had produced latifundismo, peonage, absentee land-owners, and an inefficient use of resources, all of which tended to form a type of feudal social structure in the rural areas. In opposition to this development existed the traditional love of the Indian for the land which to him was a symbol of his right to life--a kind of intertwining of material life and spi-

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<sup>9</sup> These aspects of the Indian problem also apply in greater or lesser degree to other Latin-American countries. Although Sáenz here is discussing only Ecuador, it seems that his discussion could be easily widened to include other areas.



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The two works to be discussed in this section are those concerning the Indians of Ecuador and Peru. The latter part of both these books is devoted to the presentation of a rather comprehensive picture of Indian culture and life as it was to be found in these areas in 1931 and 1932. Shenn gave a detailed description of all the aspects of the Indian environment, from food and clothing to religion and the use of drugs. Although this material involved a considerable amount of time in preparation, it is not pertinent to the present discussion. Therefore only brief notes will be confined to those discussions which present Shenn's views on the more basic aspects of the question of the Indian masses.

In Ecuador Shenn felt that the three major problems of the Indians were land, education and religion. Regarding the land question, Shenn pointed out that the use of the hacienda had produced latifundismo, procurado, excessive land-owners, and an inefficient use of resources, all of which tended to form a type of feudal social structure in the rural areas. In opposition to this development existed the traditional love of the Indian for the land which to him was a symbol of his right to life--a kind of material life and spiritual.

These aspects of the Indian problem also apply in greater or lesser degree to other Latin-American countries. Although Shenn here is discussing only Ecuador, it seems that the discussion could be easily widened to include other areas.



ritual or divine existence. Thus there existed in Ecuador a tendency which was pulling in two different directions--the desire of the hacendado to remain in power and the wish of the Indian to acquire land. Sáenz felt that the Indians should be granted more of the land and believed that an application of the Mexican solution to this problem would be beneficial, particularly the partition and distribution of large land holdings among the Indians.<sup>10</sup>

In the field of education Sáenz discussed the newly created system of comprehensive rural education. This new system, which was being established at the time of Sáenz' visit to Ecuador, had as its objective the elevation of the social and economic level of the Indian by encouraging him to make full use of his resources and by creating in him improved habits of work, health, morality and civic pride.<sup>11</sup> But Sáenz criticized this educational reform because it was formulated by cabinet officials more concerned with following the correct educational procedures than with the idea of the establishment of schools as complete "socializing" institutions. He felt that the authors of this plan had forgotten to take into consideration the factor of the teacher, who was even more important in rural

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<sup>10</sup> Moisés Sáenz, Sobre el Indio Ecuatoriano y su Incorporación al Medio Nacional (México, 1933), pp. 113-128.

<sup>11</sup> For a complete discussion of the objectives of the new system, see Ibid., p. 152.



ritual or divine existence. While to be exact in 1900 for a tendency which was really a new different direction--the desire of the peasants to remain in power and the wish of the Indian to acquire land. Stress was laid on the Indian to be granted more of the land and to be allowed to be an owner of the Mexican nation as this proprietorship by landowners particularly the peasants and landowners of large land-holdings among the Indians.<sup>10</sup>

In the field of education Stress was laid on the new created system of compulsory rural education. This new system, which was being established at the time of Stress, was to Ecuador, had as its object the elevation of the social and economic level of the Indian by encouraging him to work and use of his resources and by creating for him improved habits of work, health, morality and civic sense.<sup>11</sup> The system criticized this educational reform because it was formulated by peasants officials more concerned with following the peasant educational procedures than with the idea of the establishment of schools as complete "socializing" institutions. It felt that the authors of this plan had forgotten to take into consideration the factor of the teacher, who was even more important in rural

10 Moisés Sáenz, Indian Education in Ecuador, p. 113-114.

11 For a complete discussion of the objectives of the new system, see Ibid., p. 112.



schools than in those in urban centers. Sáenz feared that when they began to prepare the teaching staffs for these schools, instruction would be given only in formal educational principles. This would then be a fatal weakness, since formal instruction and the "socializing" education necessary for the rural masses could never be compatible.<sup>12</sup>

Religion, the third facet of the Indian problem, was bound up with the religious fanaticism of the Ecuadorian Indian, which was so extreme that it enabled the priest to maintain a direct and personal interference in his life. Sáenz felt that the connivance and agreement of the priest and the hacendado, the tacit concord between the clergy and the political officials to exploit and dominate the Indian, the lack of social conscience of the priesthood as a class, and the complacency of the clergy in the face of the evils to which the Indians were exposed all but negated any beneficial results which might have been derived from this religious zeal. The priest, the hacendado, and the politician, according to Sáenz, formed in Ecuador, as in other Indian-American countries, a well-known trilogy which was dedicated to the exploitation and oppression of the Indian.<sup>13</sup> However, he added that the first Congreso Catequístico, which met at Quito in 1916, began consideration

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<sup>12</sup> Sáenz, Sobre el Indio Ecuatoriano y su Incorporación al Medio Nacional, p. 153.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 154.



schools than in those in which the Indians learned that when they began to receive the teaching of the schools, instruction would be given only in formal educational principles. This would then be a fatal weakness, since formal instruction and the "socializing" education necessary for the rural masses could never be comparable.<sup>12</sup>

Religion, the third base of the Indian problem, was bound up with the religious fanaticism of the Indian, which was an extreme that it enabled the priest to maintain a direct and personal influence in his life. He felt that the conscience and agreement of the priest and the hacendado, the tacit concert between the clergy and the political officials to exploit and dominate the Indian, the lack of social conscience of the priesthood as a class, and the conscience of the clergy in the face of the evils to which the Indians were exposed all but negated any beneficial results which might have been derived from this religious zeal. The priest, the hacendado, and the politician, according to Adams, formed a triad, as in other Indian-American countries, a well-known trilogy which was devoted to the exploitation and oppression of the Indian.<sup>13</sup> However, he added that the first marriage

Catagolico, which was at Oaxaca in 1930. See also Adams.

<sup>12</sup> Adams, Some of the Indian Problem in Mexico, p. 113.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 114.



of how to improve the Indian's condition, and that in this respect the clergy of Ecuador had at least made a step in the right direction, placing themselves far ahead of the clergy of other Latin-American countries.<sup>14</sup>

In these two studies Sáenz also discussed the process of mestizaje<sup>15</sup> which has made more progress in Peru than in Ecuador and which he felt was very necessary to the success of the integration of the Indian. As in his discussion of the Indian in Mexico, Sáenz again stated that there are really two classes of mestizos, one that is biological, having developed through intermarriage, and the other psychological, resulting from a way of life of an individual. This psychological mestizaje is a result of one's economic, geographic and social contacts and influences.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, he stated that bio-

<sup>14</sup> Sáenz, Sobre el Indio Ecuatoriano. . . p. 162.

<sup>15</sup> Mestizaje is the process of becoming a mestizo involving a biological cross between an Indian and a Caucasian.

<sup>16</sup> These social contacts and influences must overcome such factors as:

- (1) the tie of the land;
- (2) the traditional bonds of blood, lineage and religion;
- (3) Some norms of Indian government respected by political regimes in colonial times and allowed to continue to the present because of indifference;
- (4) Native dress, which is a clear indication of class;
- (5) Ecclesiastical influences and the intermingling or reinterpretation of the old pagan beliefs within the Christian doctrine;
- (6) Language, such as Quechua in Peru, which is a narrow expression closely related with the culture that



of how to improve the Indian's condition, and that in this respect the clergy of the order had at least made a step in the right direction, placing themselves far ahead of the clergy of other Latin-American countries.

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<sup>14</sup> Adams, Sobre el Indio Mesoamericano, p. 102.

<sup>15</sup> Mestizaje is the process of becoming a mestizo involving a biological cross between an Indian and a Spaniard.

<sup>16</sup> These social contacts and influences must overcome such factors as:

- (1) the tie of the land;
- (2) the traditional bond of blood, lineage and religion;
- (3) some forms of Indian government recognized by political regimes in colonial times and allowed to continue to the present because of indifference;
- (4) native dress, which is a clear indication of class;
- (5) local racial differences and the intermingling or reinforcement of the old racial beliefs within the Christian doctrine;
- (6) language, which becomes a barrier, which is a narrow expression closely related with the culture that



logical mestizaje usually provokes, favors and accelerates the psychological development but that occasionally there are such conditions of social climate existing that the mixture of blood is not sufficient to take the individual from his Indian medium and then mestizos and "men of white skin and of blue eyes" continue being Indians in a cultural and psychological sense.<sup>17</sup>

The attempted solutions of the Indian problem in Ecuador have fallen into four categories which are typical of the attempts in most Latin-American countries. These categories are legislative, educational, ecclesiastical and economic. Sáenz made the following major points in his critique of these four attempted solutions.

1. Crítica de la solución legalista. A lack of a national conscience sensitive to the Indian problem and a lack of public opinion that asserts itself is the major fault of this approach. There is no demand for compliance with the laws passed or for the creation of instruments of execution without which any legislation is only a series of words and for all practical purposes dead. The problem is the failure of con-

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is a way of life for only certain groups of people;

(7) All of the reactions and defense mechanisms of the Indian before a hostile social climate dominated by whites.

--Sáenz, Sobre el Indio Peruano. . . pp. 266-267.

<sup>17</sup> Sáenz, Sobre el Indio Ecuatoriano. . . p. 171.



logical feelings, usually provoked, favors and accentuates the psychological development, but does occasionally there are such conditions of social climate existing that the Indian of blood is not sufficient to take the individual from his Indian medium and then reaches the sea of white skin and of blue eyes" continue being Indians in a cultural and psychological sense. IV

The attempted solution of the Indian problem in Peru has have fallen into four categories which are typical of the attempts in most Latin-American countries. These categories are legislative, educational, socialistic and economic. Sáenz made the following major points in his critique of these four attempted solutions.

I. Critique de la solución legislativa. A lack of a national conscience sensitive to the Indian problem and a lack of public opinion that asserts itself as the major factor in this approach. There is no demand for compliance with the laws passed or for the creation of instruments of execution without which any legislation is only a series of words and for all practical purposes dead. The problem is the failure of con-

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is a way of life for only certain groups of people; (V) All of the resources and talents of the Indian before a hostile social climate dominated by whites.

--Sáenz, Boque al Indio Peruviano. . . pp. 263-267.

IV Sáenz, Boque al Indio Peruviano. . . p. 171.



scientious citizens to practice the laws adopted and to translate into social action the will of the legislator and the desire of the people.<sup>18</sup>

2. Crítica de la solución pedagógica. The educational solution along with the legislative one has been offered as a panacea for the problems of American democracies. In order for the educational approach to be at least partially successful, the school requires not only a change in its methods and programs but also a change in its concept of function and basic purpose. The areas in which the school will have to work must be those of local rehabilitation, preparation, and national integration that will reconstruct the lives of communities and villages by being loyal to native traditions but also to the tradition of obedience and subordination to the national laws.<sup>19</sup>

3. Crítica de la solución eclesiástica. The solution of the Indian problem requires a social vision and a natural emotion which the clergy subject to Rome cannot have. The Church, whose aim it is to make citizens for Heaven, is not the most adequate institution to prepare citizens of Ecuador nor of any other country.<sup>20</sup>

4. Crítica de la solución económica. Regarding an eco-

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<sup>18</sup> Sáenz, Sobre el Indio Ecuatoriano. . . p. 182.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 183-184.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 184-185.



scientific citizens to practice the laws adopted and to translate into social action the will of the legislator and the desire of the people.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. Criticism of the educational system. The educational

solution along with the legislative one has been offered as a panacea for the problem of American democracy. In order for the educational system to be at least partially successful, the school requires not only a change in its methods and programs but also a change in its concept of function and basic purpose. The stress in which the school will have to work must be those of local rehabilitation, preparation, and national integration that will reconstruct the lives of communities and villages by being loyal to native traditions but also to the tradition of obedience and subordination to the national laws.<sup>19</sup>

## 3. Criticism of the political system. The solution

of the Indian problem requires a social vision and a natural emotion which the clergy subject to Rome cannot have. The Church, whose aim it is to make citizens for heaven, is not the most adequate institution to prepare citizens of this world nor of any other country.<sup>20</sup>

## 4. Criticism of the economic system. Regarding an eco-

18 Idem, Some of the Indian Movement, . . . p. 182.

19 Idem, pp. 183-184.

20 Idem, pp. 184-185.



conomic solution, everyone at present has been preoccupied solely with the question of land, believing that the land problem will have to be resolved before any adequate solution of the Indian problem can be reached. However, the economic solution is not only a settlement of the land issue, even though it is a fundamental step and will have to come first in most cases. Other economic aspects must also be taken into consideration. For example, without more efficient means of agricultural production and instruction in such practices as forming cooperatives and marketing associations, the small peasant farmer will be faced with economic collapse and destruction as a class.<sup>21</sup>

In his examination of the Peruvian Indians Sáenz expressed some thoughts which would carry this critique to its logical solution. There Sáenz stated that without the school to teach the farmer new techniques, there could be little economic improvement, nor could the land problem be solved without the aid of courts or the help of legislation. In his view the desired social action, be it benevolent or paternalistic, would not succeed if those working toward the goal of integration allowed themselves to believe that their answer was the only one worthy of merit. For Sáenz no one solution to this problem was enough. The legalistic and economic approaches, as well as the educational, had a significant and characteristic role, but none

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<sup>21</sup> Sáenz, Sobre el Indio Ecuatoriano. . . p. 185.



economic solution, however, it must be recognized that the land problem will have to be resolved before any economic solution of the Indian problem can be reached. However, the economic solution is not only a settlement of the land issue, even though it is a fundamental step and will have to come first in most cases. Other economic aspects must also be taken into consideration. For example, without more efficient means of agricultural production and instruction in such practices as forming cooperatives and marketing associations, the small peasant farmer will be faced with economic collapse and destruction as a class.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Sáenz, Sobre el Indio Peruano, p. 157.



was indispensable for an integral solution.<sup>22</sup>

Along with this declaration for a united movement to help with the integration of the Indian, Sáenz also made the following statement concerning the general tendency to consider the Indian as a member of an extra-social class which must be abolished if the work of incorporation was to succeed.

. . . Jurists consider laws that present the Indian, if not as a wretched person, then at least as one mentally incapable and socially inferior; educators want to create a special system of Indian schools as if the rural schools simply were no good for them; even the economists speak of cooperativism among the Indians a little like they had different ways of thinking in essence from those of other people. I am the first in recognizing the need of objectifying the Indian with the aim of attending to his problems with the best efficiency possible; we will gain nothing with the foggy republicanism which declares that there is no Indian, that we are all nationals. However, it is necessary that once and for all we eradicate the colonial belief in the superiority of the white man, a myth of the encomendero of yesterday, even encouraged by Western science for the profit of slavery. Now it is necessary to place our Indianist thinking on a higher plane, constantly remembering that every step which is taken to solve the Indian problem should be a step that leads us to the equal world of an integrated nationality.<sup>23</sup>

In this brief discussion and examination of Sáenz' studies regarding the Peruvian and Ecuadorian Indians, we have reached the basis for Sáenz' solution to the question of integrating the Indian masses. He believes that integration will

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<sup>22</sup> Sáenz, Sobre el Indio Peruano. . . p. 297.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 298-299.



was indispensable for the rural solution.  
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... To make matters worse, the present day  
Indian, it is not a Westernized person, but a person who  
one mentally incapable and socially inferior: educa-  
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<sup>22</sup> Idem, Notes on Indian Problems, p. 227.

<sup>23</sup> Idem, pp. 228-229.



succeed only if all the forces concerned work cooperatively. In the next section of this chapter, which deals with the experimental school established at Carapan, we shall see him try to put his solution into practice and discuss the conclusions he reaches as a result of this experience.

### Carapan

One of the most informative and delightful of the writings of Sáenz is a work which was the result of his experiences as a leader of an experimental center in Indian education established in 1932 in a rural area of Mexico. Besides providing an account of experimental work done in Indian education, this book, Carapan, also provides a rather good summary of Sáenz' Indianist philosophy.

Early in 1932, due in part to his insistence, the Secretariat of Public Education established a center for observation, experimentation and action in rural education for Indian masses. This center was to have the following objectives: (1) a series of anthropological and sociological studies which were to provide a better understanding of the true character of Indian culture and of the process of assimilating the native population; (2) a discovery and an understanding of the best procedures to be followed in bringing about a rapid incorporation of these groups into the national state; and (3) an evaluation and criticism of the methods and procedures used by the national government in its agencies that operated in Indian communities



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similar to Carapan.<sup>24</sup>

In order to carry out this plan successfully, Sáenz "wanted a community of marked Indian character that had victoriously resisted in the struggle with the Mexican medium and had known how to conserve its Indian idiosyncrasies before the mestizo invasion." However, he also wanted the location for the experiment "to be sufficiently permeable so that outside influences had made the community fertile for the development of a new and different culture." In other words, Sáenz was looking for a community that would be ready to make the transition from Indian to Mexican culture.<sup>25</sup> After much searching among the more remote areas of Mexico, a site was decided upon in the state of Michoacán, in the section known as la Cañada de las Once Pueblos. A base of operations for the experiment was set up in the village of Carapan, which out of the eleven villages of that area best met the desired requirement. Although still rather remote, Carapan was not too far from the railroad and the Guadalajara-Mexico City highway. The climate, water supply and land were good, producing a typically indigenous economy. Regarding land ownership, the idea of common holdings existed in theory, but most of the land was held on an individual basis. Several small native industries, mainly

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<sup>24</sup> Moisés Sáenz, Carapan (Lima, 1936), pp. 37-38.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-2.



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In order to carry out this plan successfully, Garza wanted a community of native Indian character that had voluntarily resisted in the struggle with the Mexican nation and had known how to conserve its Indian characteristics before the mestizo invasion.<sup>24</sup> However, he also wanted the location for the experiment "to be sufficiently permeable to such outside influences had made the community fertile for the development of a new and different culture." In other words, Garza was looking for a community that would be ready to make the transition from Indian to Mexican culture.<sup>25</sup> After much searching among the more remote areas of Mexico, a site was decided upon in the state of Michoacán, in the section known as la Ciénega de las Once Pueblitas. A base of operations for the experiment was set up in the village of Garza, which out of the eleven villages of that area best met the desired requirements. Although still rather remote, Garza was not too far from the railroad and the Guadalajara-México City highway. The climate, water supply and land were good, producing a typically Indian economy. Regarding land ownership, the idea of common holdings existed in theory, but most of the land was held on an individual basis. Several small native industries, mainly

<sup>24</sup> Moisés Sáenz, Garza (Lima, 1932), pp. 37-38.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-2.



handcrafts, were also located in the area, thus affording the experimentors the double advantage of providing an opportunity to study the two fundamental aspects of most native economies--those of agriculture and small industry.<sup>26</sup> Following location of the station at Carapan a certain amount of resistance, mainly fostered by religious fanatics, developed in opposition to the program. Fortunately this resistance never grew beyond a passive stage, and as soon as the station had organized a full-scale program of activities, it was effectively eliminated.

One of the basic problems of this center was stimulating the interest of the adults in the work of the new school.<sup>27</sup> Sáenz felt that the solution to this problem lay in finding attractive forms for the education of the adult population. Any such program of education, however, had to be planned from three different points of view, namely, those of enjoyment or pleasure for the student, value as satisfying the necessities and obligations of socialization, and satisfying the movement for national integration.

In a discussion of this problem Sáenz pointed out that

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<sup>26</sup> Sáenz, Carapan, pp. 25-26.

<sup>27</sup> This book contains many highly stimulating examples of the actual work done by this experimental center in a great many fields of endeavor. However, it is impossible to discuss them all, so the activities of adult education and the development of basic skills among the Indians must suffice in serving as an indication of the program being carried out at Carapan.



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in smaller communities of more or less primitive culture, the interests of the adult population do not go far beyond the area of apparent need. Such groups of people are slaves of the past and of tradition. Since they must always contend with the problem of providing for their daily life, there remains no room for speculation with regard to the future. Their lives are only of two dimensions--yesterday and today. Perspective is lacking, and the educational process of the child, which is tuned in general terms to the future, interests them little. Furthermore Sáenz points out that in this type of indigenous adult community the law of the ancients is the only law. What now is considered the rights of youth is only a manifestation of modern civilization. Thus the teacher in the rural community is faced with the problem of the reaction of the adult population who constantly tear down what the school has accomplished by de-emphasizing the future in favor of the present and even more of the past.<sup>28</sup>

For a government, therefore, to be successful in the education of the young, it is necessary to transform the adult community as well. Sáenz felt that education of the adult did not mean to teach them to read and write, as had unfortunately been the case of many night schools. Neither should there be in these adult education programs lectures or simply an assign-

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<sup>28</sup> Sáenz, Carapan, p. 129.



in smaller communities of more or less primitive culture, the interests of the adult population do not go far beyond the area of apparent need. When groups of people are slaves of the past and of tradition, all of their interests centered with the problem of providing for their daily life. There remains no room for speculation with regard to the future. Their lives are only of the dimension yesterday and today. Perspective is lacking, and the educational process of the child, which is turned in general terms to the future, interests them little. Furthermore, some points are that in this type of communities adult community the law of the market is the only law. What now is considered the rights of youth is only a manifestation of modern civilization. Thus the teacher in the rural community is faced with the problem of the reaction of the adult population who constantly tear down what the school has accomplished by de-emphasizing the future in favor of the present and even more of the past. 28

For a government, therefore, to be successful in the education of the young, it is necessary to transform the adult community as well. Some feel that education of the adult did not mean to teach them to read and write, as it unfortunately has been the case of many night schools. Rather should there be in these adult education programs a focus on daily experience.



ment of material from manuals. The men and women of a native community are mature individuals whose concepts have crystallized and whose interests are channeled in directions which are difficult to change. Sáenz believed that whoever teaches adults has to encourage mental activity, oblige people to reflect on their problems and to modify their ideas, and make them forget the routine and look beyond it to more important things. In effect, the teacher must help them to recreate their personalities, to learn to live a better life, and to perfect their tools and technology.<sup>29</sup>

This understanding of the weaknesses inherent in such courses of adult education enabled Sáenz to experiment with a new program of "socializing" education for an adult rural indigenous community. He found that a considerable part of this program could be carried out at the town's newly established Social Center. These activities in the field of adult education soon became, perhaps, the most popular part of the many projects initiated by Sáenz and his committee. The Social Center became an integral and basic part of Sáenz's plan of adult education, with some type of activity, including concerts, parties, informal talks, picnics and films, planned for every evening.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Sáenz, Carapan, p. 131.

<sup>30</sup> For an example of a typical evening's program at the Social Center, see Ibid., pp. 164-166.







The techniques used in the adult education activities at the Social Center in Carapan differed considerably from those employed in a more standard program. This experiment as set up by Sáenz and his associates placed stress not upon scholastic attainments but rather on those activities which would broaden the outlook of the adult Indian population and make them more susceptible to a program of integration and incorporation. Also by allowing the participants in this program a certain amount of choice in activities, Sáenz encouraged them to feel that they had a hand in the planning of the schedule, thus further increasing their interest. These activities were varied enough to hold the attention of all those present and, if followed through, would develop a background of information which would serve as a sound foundation for a more advanced and stimulating program of activities.<sup>31</sup>

Another basic and related problem to be faced in Carapan was that of developing the skills of the Indians. This technological problem had two aspects: (1) the necessity to teach the people rudimentary skills to enrich their domestic lives; and (2) the importance of teaching them to produce certain goods that could be marketed, thus assisting the local economy.<sup>32</sup> Regarding the first aspect, it was necessary to

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<sup>31</sup> Sáenz, Carapan, pp. 164-166.

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The techniques used in the adult education activities at the Social Center in Gary were considered considerably more those employed in a more standard program. This experiment was set up by Adams and his associates placed stress not upon attaining fastie attainments but rather on those activities which would broaden the outlook of the adult Indian population and make them more susceptible to a program of integration and incorporation. Also by allowing the participants in this program a certain amount of choice in activities, Adams encouraged them to feel that they had a hand in the planning of the schedule, thus further increasing their interest. These activities were varied enough to hold the attention of all those present and, it followed through, would develop a background of information which would serve as a sound foundation for a more advanced and stimulating program of activities.<sup>31</sup>

Another basic and related problem to be faced in Gary was that of developing the skills of the Indians. This technological problem had two aspects: (1) the necessity to teach the people rudimentary skills to enable them to produce their own goods that could be marketed, thus assisting the local economy.<sup>32</sup> Regarding the first aspect, it was necessary to

<sup>31</sup> Adams, *Garage*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.



teach the concepts of gardening on individual house lots, as well as give instruction in the construction of simple and common furniture such as beds, tables and chairs and also window and door frames for the houses. In helping the Indians to supplement the economy of the village, Sáenz and his fellow workers discovered that the natural climate and topographical conditions of the land surrounding Carapan were conducive to increased horticulture. Too, a large market for agricultural products could be developed in the nearby towns, so it was important to convince the people of the necessity of increasing their diet to include more vegetables, for reasons of both health and economic prosperity.<sup>33</sup> After the station had been established for a time a competent mason, a harness-maker and a furniture maker were developed among some of the more skillful of the villagers. Chairs, tables, beds and chests were also being made for the Indian homes, which were now being constructed with an adequate number of windows. The station had furnished encouragement, materials and training, and when the Indians had reached the point of attempting these basic skills on their own initiative and accomplished them with a degree of competence, the experimentors had completed this phase of their work.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Sáenz, Carapan, p. 241.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 258.



teach the concepts of hard work or individual effort, as well as give instruction in the construction of simple and common furniture such as beds, tables and chairs and also window and door frames for the houses. In making the tables to supplement the economy of the village, chairs and bed frames workers discovered that the material of the forest was not in conditions of the land furnished. Men were constructive to increased horticulture. For a large capital for horticulture products could be developed in the nearby towns, so it was important to convince the people of the necessity of increasing their diet to include more vegetables, for reasons of both health and economic prosperity. After the station had been established for a time a constant reason, a business-maker and a furniture maker were developed among some of the more skillful of the villagers. Chairs, tables, beds and chests were also being made for the Indian women, which were now being constructed with an adequate number of windows. The station had furnished encouragement, materials and training, and when the Indians had reached the point of attempting these basic skills on their own initiative and accomplished them with a degree of competence, the experimenters had completed this phase of their work.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Idem, Op. cit., p. 241.  
<sup>34</sup> Idem, Op. cit., p. 258.



These two projects--adult education and the instruction of basic skills--are excellent examples of the activities carried on by the experimental school at Carapan. The author feels justified in spending considerable time in the discussion of these activities since they provide tangible and concrete examples of the action of the "socialized" school.

The experiment at Carapan was begun in July of 1932 and continued until December of 1933. However, Sáenz left the station in January after its inception, as a result of a disagreement between himself and the Secretariat of Public Education.<sup>35</sup> The way the Carapan experiment ended Sáenz felt was typical of a basic fault of the Mexican, who enters into a project full of enthusiasm and energy, without sparing any effort or expense to make it a success, and then somewhere in the middle the experiment is discarded and energy is turned to some new plan. For Sáenz this lack of perseverance was a bad characteristic which must be corrected before Mexico could make any real progress toward a solution of its many problems. As an example of this weakness Sáenz pointed out in Carapan, which was published some three years after the experiment, that the Indians of the area had again reverted in great part to

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<sup>35</sup> His withdrawal from this project, Sáenz reports on pages 295 and 296 of Carapan, was due to a difference of opinion between himself and Bassols, the Secretary of Public Education, and to outright conflict with Rafael Ramírez, a Bassols assistant who, Sáenz said, spent most of his time warding off "'Saencismo' that existed nowhere but in his mediocre and methodological imagination."



These two projects--basic education and the instruction of basic skills--are essential elements of the activities carried on by the experimental school at Garza. The school itself is justified in regarding considerable time in the discussion of these activities as time that provides concrete examples of the kind of the "school-like" school. The experimental school at Garza was begun in July of 1933 and continued until December of 1934. However, since the station in January after the completion, as a result of a disagreement between himself and the director of Public Education. The way this Garza experiment ended seems to be typical of a basic fault of the Mexican, who enters into a project full of enthusiasm and energy, without sparing any effort or expense to make it a success, and then somewhere in the middle the experiment is discarded and energy is turned to some new plan. For seeing this lack of perseverance was a bad characteristic which must be corrected before Mexico could make any real progress toward a solution of its many problems. As an example of this weakness seems pointed out in Garza, which was published some three years after the experiment, that the Indians of the area had again reverted to great part to

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35 His withdrawal from this project, seems to be an error of 1935 and 1936 of Garza, was due to a difference of opinion between himself and Basols, the secretary of Public Education, and to outright conflict with Rafael Ramirez, a Basols assistant who, Basols said, spent most of his time "sitting off" Garza. That existed nowhere but in his medicine and psychological imagination."



their old ways. The failure to carry through the experiment to its full conclusion left the peasants of la Cañada without a firm basis for their future development. Without further encouragement and guidance the many projects begun soon collapsed. Sáenz felt that Carapan was an excellent example of the history of many of the projected reforms in Mexico, and he marveled that after so many such experiences the Mexicans had the energy or the desire to begin again on a new project.<sup>36</sup>

To Sáenz Carapan also served as a good example of the Indian problem and of its corollary, that of the Mexicanization of the Indian. However, in dealing with the question of Mexicanization, Sáenz reiterated that it should be treated neither from the standpoint of a total conquest physically as well as spiritually of the Indian, nor from the vagaries of exaggerated patriotism. Rather this problem should be attacked from the side of human groups who are remote, isolated and forgotten.<sup>37</sup> After the Carapan experiment Sáenz had decided that there were really three Mexicos. The first is urban, the second is made up of rural peasants, and the third is composed of Indians. No member of any one of these groups can actually appreciate or

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<sup>36</sup> Sáenz, Carapan, p. 303. In the opinion of the author this statement reflects the bitterness of Sáenz at the failure of the project, rather than a general indictment against Mexico. Nowhere else in his writings has any similar comment been observed.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 305.



their old ways. The failure to carry through the experiment to its full conclusion left the peasants of the United States a firm basis for their future development. Without further encouragement and guidance the many projects began soon collapsed. Sáenz left this country with an excellent grasp of the history of many of the neglected regions in Mexico, and he returned there after an even more extensive trip. He soon had the energy or the desire to begin again on a new project.

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To Sáenz Garza also served as a good example of the Indian problem and of its solution. Part of the organization of the Indian. However, in dealing with the question of land, Sáenz reiterated that it should be treated neither from the standpoint of a social concept physically as well as spiritually of the Indian, nor from the viewpoint of exaggerated patriotism. Rather this problem should be approached from the side of human groups who are remote, isolated and forgotten. After the Garza experiment Sáenz had decided that there were really three Mexicos. The first is urban, the second is made up of rural peasants, and the third is composed of Indians. No member of any one of these groups can actually appreciate or

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Id., p. 302.



understand any other group. For example, those in the urban category speak their own language and have their own culture and ideas, which those from the country cannot know, understand or appreciate.<sup>38</sup> This only makes the problem of assimilation that much more difficult.

The venture at Carapan seemed to confirm a great many of Sáenz' previously expressed opinions concerning the Indian problem. It also developed within him a kind of double thesis regarding this problem, which he stated as follows:

The problem of the Indian is primarily a human problem regarding national integration in Mexico. The process of socialization alone is enough for its solution provided that we understand that to socialize means to communicate, which in turn implies the mutual participation of benefits and responsibilities. To socialize the Indian does not mean to attack his property nor to regiment him, nor to exterminate him; it means to make him a part of ourselves. To socialize the Indian we will have necessarily to socialize ourselves, and this means that to be good Mexicans, we must also learn to be better Indians.<sup>39</sup>

In Carapan Sáenz again criticized the various solutions to the problem of integration in a manner similar to that discussed in the preceding section. He felt that religious, economic and legalistic answers could not independently offer an adequate solution to this problem. Nor had he felt that the educational answer had been adequate when confined to pedagogical tenets, for education in its strictest sense of reading, writing

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<sup>38</sup> Sáenz, Carapan, p. 308.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 308-309.



understand any other group. For example, there is the Indian category which speak their own language and have their own culture and ideas, which these from the country cannot know, understand or appreciate. This only makes the problem of education that much more difficult.

The venture at Cuzco seemed to contain a great many of these, previously expressed opinions concerning the Indian problem. It also developed within it a kind of simple formula regarding this problem, which is stated as follows:

The problem of the Indian is primarily a human problem regarding national integration in Mexico. The process of socialization which is essential for the solution provided that we understand that to socialize means to communicate, which in turn implies the mutual participation of benefits and responsibilities. To socialize the Indian does not mean to attack and destroy him; it means to bring him, not to exterminate him; it means to make him a part of ourselves. To socialize the Indians will have necessarily to socialize ourselves, and this means that to be good Mexicans, we must also learn to be better Indians.

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and arithmetic had produced nothing of merit in the Indian communities.<sup>40</sup> However, Sáenz held the following view regarding the "socialized" school as an aid in his fight for the assimilation of the Indian:

The rural school only helps in the solution of the problem of integration when it does away with objectives which are exclusively concerned with pedagogy and academic endeavors, and becomes a broad social organism--an instrument of civilization, not merely of instruction--of economic betterment, of work, of socialization. When it is thus conceived, the school will attack the rural problem not only following the pedagogical solution but also on many other fronts such as economics and health as well.<sup>41</sup>

Following an analysis of the various answers to the question of integration and finding not one of them complete, even the socialized school,<sup>42</sup> Sáenz decided that the situation of the Indian masses required the application of new measures. He felt that the Mexican social process had reached a point where to achieve total integration of Mexico entailed a specific plan of action that would raise the Indian masses to the same economic, cultural and social level as that which the rest of the Mexican citizens had achieved.<sup>43</sup> Sáenz felt that since

<sup>40</sup> Sáenz, Carapan, p. 324.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 325.

<sup>42</sup> The failure of the experimental station at Carapan, which was the "socialized" school at its best, clearly proved to Sáenz the need for establishing a special branch of the Mexican federal government whose efforts would be entirely directed to solving the problem of the integration of the Indian.

<sup>43</sup> Sáenz, Carapan, p. 314.



and arithmetic had received nothing of merit in the Indian communities.<sup>40</sup> However, when asked the following question regarding the "socialized" school as set out in his report on the assimilation of the Indians:

The rural school only fails in the solution of the problem of integration when it does away with the activities which are organically connected with the body and academic activities, and becomes a mere social organization--an instrument of civilization, not merely of instruction--of economic betterment, of work, or socialization. When it is thus conceived, the school will attack the rural problem not only following the pedagogical solution, but also on many other fronts such as economic and health as well.

Following an analysis of the various answers to the question of integration and finding not one of them complete, even the socialized school,<sup>41</sup> Sison decided that the situation of the Indian masses required the application of new measures. He felt that the Mexican social process had reached a point where to achieve total integration of Mexico entailed a special plan of action that would raise the Indian masses to the same economic, cultural and social level as that which the rest of the Mexican citizens had achieved.<sup>42</sup> Sison felt that since

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<sup>43</sup> Sison, Catapan, p. 324.



cooperative efforts had failed in the past, the only logical solution left was the creation of a National Department of Indian Affairs, where a single office would be solely concerned with this problem. Sáenz believed that if such a department were established it should not have the stigma of placing the Indian in a special category, since the object of the entire program was to make the Indian a Mexican. Placing him in either a theoretical or a real reservation would only defeat the purpose.<sup>44</sup>

The objective of Sáenz' proposed Indian Bureau would be to initiate and direct all official actions designed to protect the Indian and his interests; to preserve his values; to elevate and improve his standard of living; and finally, to harmoniously assimilate and incorporate him into the Mexican state on the basis of improved economic life and a reinterpretation of his nature and culture.<sup>45</sup> This department was to be completely autonomous within the federal government, dependent only upon the President for aid, advice and supervision. Those activities which the department could not manage alone would become coordinated efforts between itself and any other agency which it would call upon for assistance. For example, since the Indian Bureau could not solve all land problems alone, it

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<sup>44</sup> Sáenz, Carapan, p. 317.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 331.



cooperative efforts had failed in the past, the only logical solution left was the creation of a National Department of Indian Affairs, where a single official would be solely concerned with this problem. It seems, however, that it is not a department were established it would not have the same effect as placing the Indian in a special category, since the object of the entire program was to make the Indian a citizen. Placing him in a special category or a special reservation would only defeat the purpose.

The objective of Adams' proposed Indian Bureau would be to initiate and direct all official actions designed to protect the Indian and his interests; to preserve his values; to elevate and improve his standard of living; and finally, to harmoniously assimilate and incorporate him into the American state on the basis of improved economic life and a reorganization of his nature and culture. This department was to be completely autonomous within the federal government, dependent only upon the President for aid, advice and supervision. Those activities which the department could not manage alone would become coordinated efforts between itself and any other agency which it would call upon for assistance. For example, since the Indian Bureau could not solve all land problems alone, it

#4 Adams, Adams, p. 117.

#5 Id., p. 131.



would call upon other agencies such as the Justice Department to help it successfully carry out this activity. Sáenz also set up the following suggested four lines of attack for the Department to follow in its attempts at solving the Indian problem:

- 1) increased health and sanitation projects;
- 2) problems of land, labor and manual activities;
- 3) the matter of education and the reorganization of culture;
- 4) Factors of inner life and the development of personality.<sup>46</sup>

These four lines of attack sum up very well Sáenz' viewpoint regarding the basic aspects of the problem of achieving a successful integration of the Indian.

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<sup>46</sup> Sáenz, Carapan, pp. 320-321.



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These four lines of attack seem to very well define the viewpoint  
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successful integration of the Indian.



## SUMMARY AND ESTIMATE

At the time of his untimely death in 1941 Sáenz had perhaps made his most important contributions to the Mexican Revolution in the fields of education and Indianist philosophy. In his reform of secondary education Sáenz had attempted to provide an institution which would prepare both technically and psychologically trained high school graduates to carry out the aims and ideals of the Revolution of 1910. Sáenz believed that this reform was necessary for the further progress and expansion of secondary education as well as for the development of a class of citizens who were dedicated to the principles of liberalism and democratic action and who would become Mexico's new leaders. His program of rural education centering about the "socialized school" was even more important than the change in secondary education. In 1929, upon his return from a visit to Mexico, John Dewey commented that "there is no educational movement in the world which exhibits more of the spirit of intimate union of school activities with those of the community than is found in this Mexican development."<sup>1</sup> This statement is a good testimonial to the success of the

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<sup>1</sup> John Dewey, Impressions of Soviet Russia and the Revolutionary World--Mexico, Turkey, China (New York, 1929), p. 158.



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

At the time of his untimely death in 1941, Gomez had perhaps made his most important contributions to the Mexican Revolution in the fields of education and industrial organization. In his reform of secondary education, Gomez had attempted to provide an institution which would prepare both technically and psychologically trained high school graduates to carry out the aims and ideals of the Revolution of 1910. Gomez believed that this reform was necessary for the future progress and expansion of secondary education as well as for the development of a class of citizens who were dedicated to the principles of liberalism and democratic action and who would become Mexico's new leaders. His program of rural education centering about the "socialized school" was even more important than the change in secondary education. In 1939, upon his return from a visit to Mexico, John Dewey commented that "there is no educational movement in the world which exhibits more of the spirit of intimate union of school activities with those of the community than is found in this Mexican development." This statement is a good testimonial to the success of the

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1 John Dewey, Impressions of Soviet Russia and the Revolutionary World--Mexico, Turkey, China (New York, 1929), p. 153.



program of rural education which was designed to prepare as many rural citizens as possible for a new and integral role in Mexican culture and society. Sáenz' Indianist philosophy was discussed in the last two chapters and he concluded that the only logical way to solve the Indian problem was to bring about the psychological mestizaje of the Indian. This action he felt could best be accomplished with the establishment of a Bureau of Indian Affairs, a broad and powerful governmental organization. Although his own plans for such a proposed agency were never accepted, it would be interesting to trace briefly the recent developments in this field.

The first governmental agency solely dedicated to the Indian question was set up by President Cárdenas in 1936 under the name of the Departamento Autónomo de Asuntos Indígenas. In an address made to the Mexican Congress regarding this development Cárdenas declared that this agency would have as its function "the direct study of the conditions of economic and social life of the Indians,"<sup>2</sup> as well as the implementation of the best possible solutions to the problem of aiding the Indian and improving his condition.<sup>3</sup> At the first Congreso Indigenista held in Pátzcuaro in 1940, and of which Sáenz was

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<sup>2</sup> Juan Comos, "Algunos Datos para la Historia del Indigenismo en México," América Indígena, VIII (1948), p. 213.

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program of rural education which was designed to prepare as many rural citizens as possible for a new and integral role in Mexican culture and society. Sáenz' Indianist philosophy was discussed in the last two chapters and he concluded that the only logical way to solve the Indian problem was to bring about the psychological rehabilitation of the Indian. This action he felt could best be accomplished with the establishment of

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an organizer and a leader, it was recommended that all the Latin-American countries organize national institutes to work with the Indian. Mexico then did not organize any such agency because she already had one in operation. However, by 1948 the Departamento Autónomo de Asuntos Indígenas had become so ineffective that the Instituto Nacional Indigenista was established by President Alemán at the instigation of Dr. Alfonso Caso.<sup>4</sup>

This institute, with Caso at its head, is a decentralized agency of the federal government with its own legal authority. It can call upon any other office of the government for assistance in handling the Indian problem. Dr. Caso and his assistants work mainly in the three fields of economics, education, and health and sanitation to bring about the integration of the Indian. Some of the activities carried out to achieve this end include a loan of 290,000 pesos for the assistance of the Ejido of Cusárare in the Tarahumara Indian region, the purification of drinking water in twenty-four rural communities, and the founding or improvement of a number of rural schools.<sup>5</sup>

However, despite these actions, which are representative

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<sup>4</sup> An excellent discussion of the objectives and the activities of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista may be found in an interview with Dr. Caso entitled "Indigenismo--como resolver el problema?" published in Hispano-Americano, XXIX (1956), pp.6-13.

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of a great many activities of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, Dr. Caso pointed out in an interview in Hispano-Americano that in 1956 Mexico had some three million inhabitants, or ten per cent of the total population, who speak only indigenous languages.<sup>6</sup> Then in the following statement he summed up the problem which was facing the Institute in its plan to integrate the Indian.

The Indian does not feel like a Mexican. He knows that there is a kind of national force called the government, whose commands ought to be respected, that the said entity appears at times in the form of alcohol inspectors that sack his lowly hut in search of clandestine stills, or on occasion demand that he comply with fixed requirements that result in fines and taxes. There, fatally, his concept of fatherland stops. Lacking is the sentiment for the whole of Mexico, much vaster than his small community, but he is not unreasonable in failing to have this sentiment. Outside of his community everything is foreign for him; only within it does he find sympathy, warmth and understanding. Mexico for him in the final instance is nothing more than a word.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, fifteen years after Sáenz' death, the problem of integrating the Indian was still far from solved. Yet from the first feeble attempts at incorporation begun in the 1920's, the effort has grown into an extensive and well-organized program which was authorized by the national government. It was only through the dedicated work of such Indianists as Sáenz that such a vital and developing program of Mexicanization could be made

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<sup>6</sup> "Indigenismo--como resolver el problema?" p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.



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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.



possible in the forty years that followed the Revolution of 1910.

Moisés Sáenz is an example of the dedication and sacrifice which many of his generation relentlessly contributed to the Mexican Revolution and which in great measure made the Revolution of 1910 a successful one. Although he was deeply interested in reforming and improving secondary and rural education, as well as achieving the integration of the Indian, Sáenz never developed the attitude of a fanatic toward these problems. Rather he seemed to view the problems objectively and work to the best possible solution regarding them. Over the period of years in which he worked with the Indian, Sáenz developed a greater realization of the situation which confronted Mexico and attempted to solve the problem with a wider approach. In an article published in the Revista Mexicana de Sociología, Beltrán, a member of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, makes the following statement which sums up quite well Sáenz' development in this respect:

The Indianist philosophy had reached the point of maturity in that the primitive emphasis on education had been substituted and exceeded by emphasis on integral action; therefore the creation of an organization that had as its function the development of this action was indispensable.<sup>8</sup>

Today Moisés Sáenz is still revered in Mexico as one of

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<sup>8</sup> Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, "Teoría y Práctica de la Educación Indígena," Revista Mexicana de Sociología, XVI (1954), p. 234.



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<sup>8</sup> Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, "Moisés Sáenz y la educación de la población indígena," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, XVI (1954), p. 234.



the leading and most effective educators of this century. His broad humanistic outlook and his sense of duty, along with very significant contributions to the development of a new pattern of education and a sound Indianist philosophy, have endeared his memory to his contemporaries. An excellent example of this esteem and respect in which he is held is evidenced by the following excerpt from a eulogy published in a Mexico City newspaper ten years after his death:

. . . By his faith in the destiny of his people. . . the life of Moisés Sáenz is one of the Mexican lives of the twentieth century that should most profoundly and truly be written on the register of the founders of the conscience of the fatherland.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Mauricio Magdaleno, "Evocación de Moisés Sáenz," published in El Universal on October 24, 1951.



the leading and most effective educators of this country. His broad humanistic outlook and his sense of duty, along with very significant contributions to the development of a new pattern of education and a sound Indian philosophy, have endeared his memory to his contemporaries. An excellent example of this esteem and respect in which he is held is evidenced by the following excerpt from a eulogy published in a Mexico City newspaper ten years after his death:

... By his faith in the destiny of his people, the life of Meléndez is one of the Mexican lives of the twentieth century that should most profoundly and truly be written on the register of the founders of the conscience of the nation.



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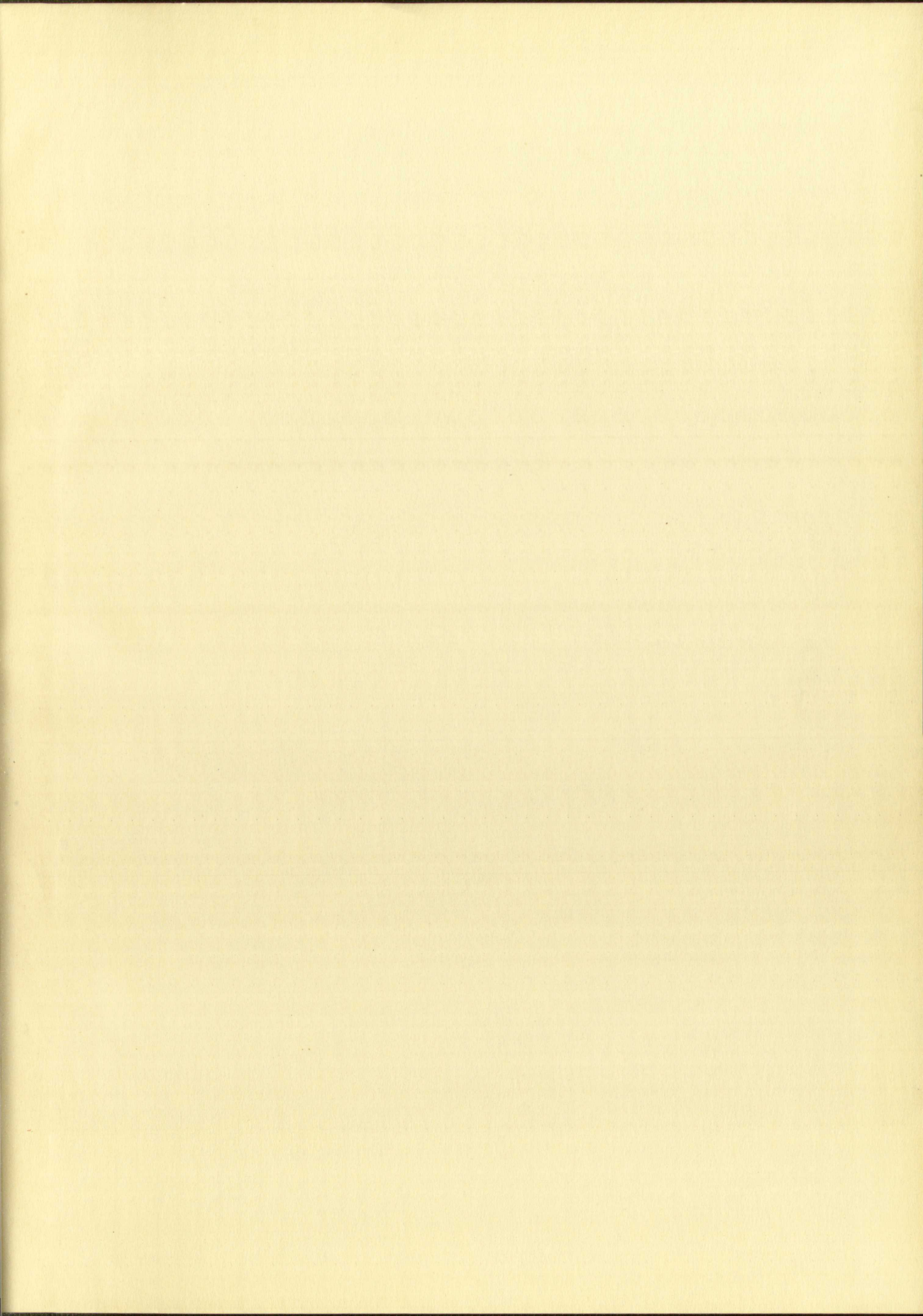


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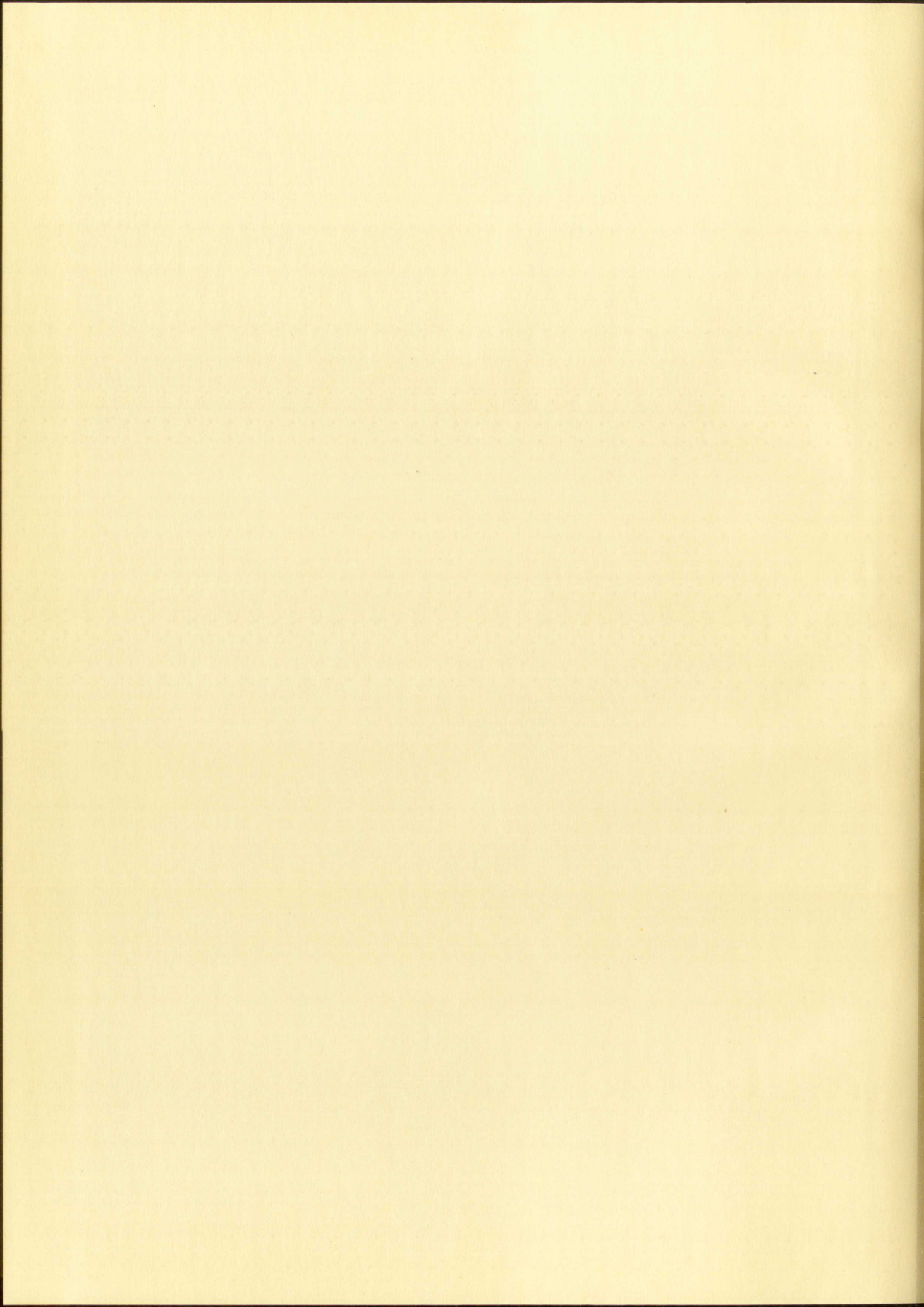


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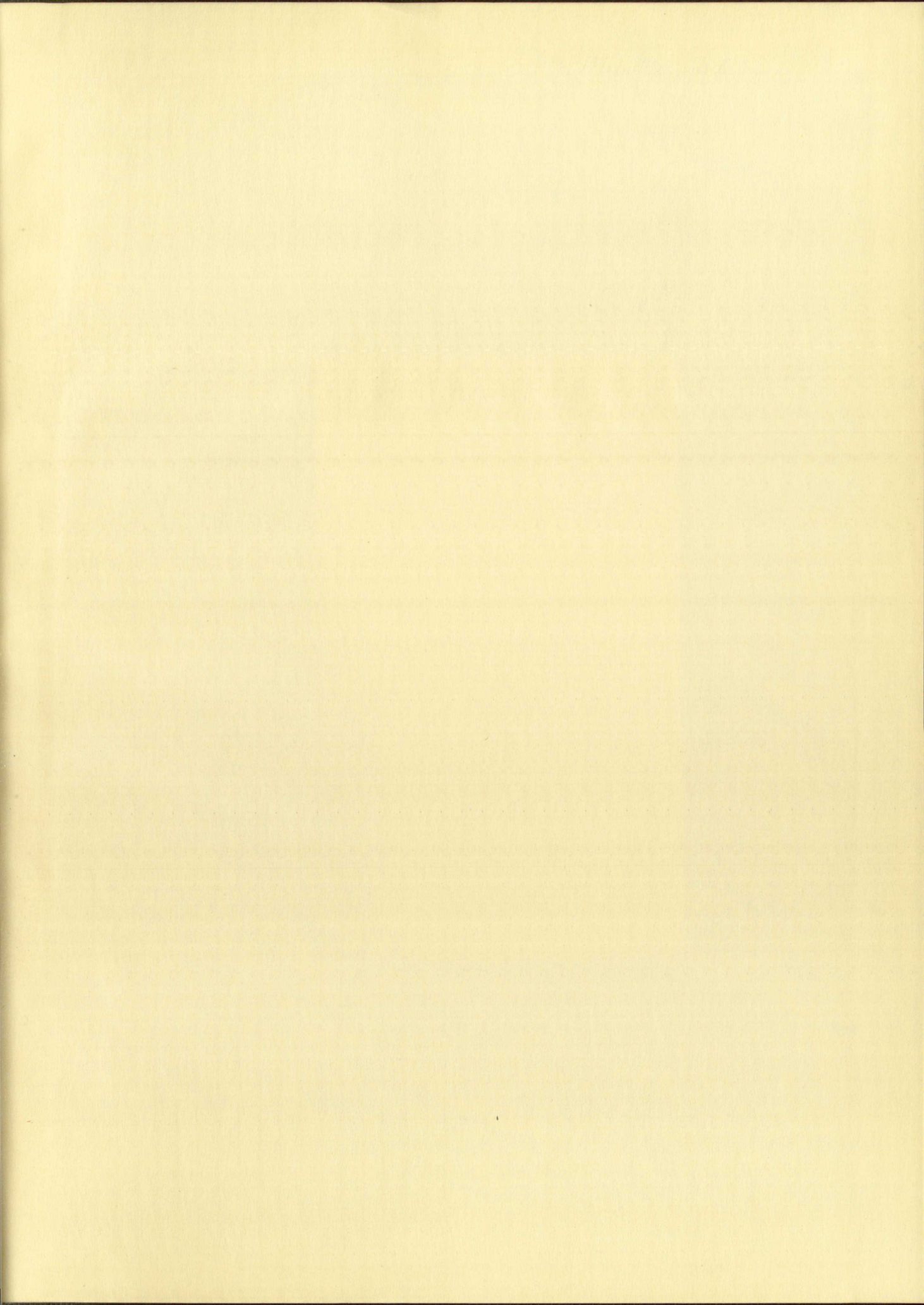














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