



Turmoil and Change in Mexico

MAIN IDEA

REVOLUTION Political, economic, and social inequalities in Mexico triggered a period of revolution and reform.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Mexico has moved toward political democracy and is a strong economic force in the Americas.

TERMS & NAMES

- Antonio López de Santa Anna
- Benito Juárez
- *La Reforma*
- Porfirio Díaz
- Francisco Madero
- “Pancho” Villa
- Emiliano Zapata

SETTING THE STAGE The legacy of Spanish colonialism and long-term political instability that plagued the newly emerging South American nations caused problems for Mexico as well. Mexico, however, had a further issue to contend with—a shared border with the United States. The “Colossus of the North,” as the United States was known in Latin America, wanted to extend its territory all the way west to the Pacific Ocean. But most of the lands in the American Southwest belonged to Mexico.

TAKING NOTES

Comparing Use a chart to compare the major accomplishments of the Mexican leaders discussed in this section.

| Leader | Major Accomplishment |
|--------|----------------------|
| | |

Santa Anna and the Mexican War

During the early 19th century, no one dominated Mexican political life more than **Antonio López de Santa Anna**. Santa Anna played a leading role in Mexico’s fight for independence from Spain in 1821. In 1829, he fought against Spain again as the European power tried to regain control of Mexico. Then, in 1833, Santa Anna became Mexico’s president.

One of Latin America’s most powerful caudillos, Santa Anna was a clever politician. He would support a measure one year and oppose it the next if he thought that would keep him in power. His policy seemed to work. Between 1833 and 1855, Santa Anna was Mexico’s president four times. He gave up the presidency twice, however, to serve Mexico in a more urgent cause—leading the Mexican army in an effort to retain the territory of Texas.

The Texas Revolt In the 1820s, Mexico encouraged American citizens to move to the Mexican territory of Texas to help populate the country. Thousands of English-speaking colonists, or Anglos, answered the call. In return for inexpensive land, they pledged to follow the laws of Mexico. As the Anglo population grew, though, tensions developed between the colonists and Mexico over several issues, including slavery and religion. As a result, many Texas colonists wanted greater self-government. But when Mexico refused to grant this, Stephen Austin, a leading Anglo, encouraged a revolt against Mexico in 1835.



▼ Mexican leader Santa Anna



◀ Santa Anna's army met with strong resistance from the defenders of the Alamo.

Santa Anna led Mexican forces north to try to hold on to the rebellious territory. He won a few early battles, including a bitter fight at the Alamo, a mission in San Antonio. However, his fortunes changed at the Battle of San Jacinto. His troops were defeated and he was captured. Texan leader Sam Houston released Santa Anna after he promised to respect the independence of Texas. When Santa Anna returned to Mexico in 1836, he was quickly ousted from power.

War and the Fall of Santa Anna Santa Anna regained power, though, and fought against the United States again. In 1845, the United States annexed Texas. Outraged Mexicans considered this an act of aggression. In a dispute over the border, the United States invaded Mexico. Santa Anna's army fought valiantly, but U.S. troops defeated them after two years of war. In 1848, the two nations signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The United States received the northern third of what was then Mexico, including California and the American Southwest. Santa Anna went into exile. He returned as dictator one final time, however, in 1853. After his final fall, in 1855, he remained in exile for almost 20 years. When he returned to Mexico in 1874, he was poor, blind, powerless, and essentially forgotten.

Juárez and *La Reforma*

During the mid-19th century, as Santa Anna's power rose and fell, a liberal reformer, **Benito Juárez** (HWAHR•ehz), strongly influenced the politics of Mexico. Juárez was Santa Anna's complete opposite in background as well as in goals. Santa Anna came from a well-off Creole family. Juárez was a poor Zapotec Indian who was orphaned at the age of three. While Santa Anna put his own personal power first, Juárez worked primarily to serve his country. **A**

Juárez Rises to Power Ancestry and racial background were important elements of political power and economic success in 19th-century Mexico. For that reason, the rise of Benito Juárez was clearly due to his personal leadership qualities. Juárez was raised on a small farm in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. When he was 12, he moved to the city of Oaxaca. He started going to school at age 15, and in 1829, he entered a newly opened state-run university. He received a law degree in 1831.

MAIN IDEA

Contrasting

A In what ways did Benito Juárez differ from Santa Anna?

> Analyzing Art

Juárez: Symbol of Mexican Independence

In 1948, more than 75 years after Benito Juárez's death, Mexican mural painter José Clemente Orozco celebrated him in the fresco *Juárez, the Church and the Imperialists*. A portrait of Juárez, which accentuates his Indian features, dominates the work. The supporters of Emperor Maximilian, carrying his body, are shown below Juárez. To either side of Juárez, the soldiers of Mexican independence prepare to attack these representatives of imperialism. By constructing the fresco in this way, Orozco seemed to suggest that Juárez was both a symbol of hope and a rallying cry for Mexican independence.

SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Visual Sources

- 1. Contrasting** How is Orozco's portrayal of the imperialists different from his portrayal of the forces of independence?
- 2. Drawing Conclusions** Based on this fresco, how do you think Orozco felt about Benito Juárez?



He then returned to the city of Oaxaca, where he opened a law office. Most of his clients were poor people who could not otherwise have afforded legal assistance. Juárez gained a reputation for honesty, integrity, hard work, and good judgment. He was elected to the city legislature and then rose steadily in power. Beginning in 1847, he served as governor of the state of Oaxaca.

Juárez Works for Reform Throughout the late 1840s and early 1850s, Juárez worked to start a liberal reform movement. He called this movement *La Reforma*. Its major goals were redistribution of land, separation of church and state, and increased educational opportunities for the poor. In 1853, however, Santa Anna sent Juárez and other leaders of *La Reforma* into exile.

Just two years later, a rebellion against Santa Anna brought down his government. Juárez and other exiled liberal leaders returned to Mexico to deal with their country's tremendous problems. As in other Latin American nations, rich landowners kept most other Mexicans in a cycle of debt and poverty. Liberal leader Ponciano Arriaga described how these circumstances led to great problems for both poor farmers and the government:

PRIMARY SOURCE **B**

There are Mexican landowners who occupy . . . an extent of land greater than the areas of some of our sovereign states, greater even than that of one of several European states. In this vast area, much of which lies idle, deserted, abandoned . . . live four or five million Mexicans who know no other industry than agriculture, yet are without land or the means to work it, and who cannot emigrate in the hope of bettering their fortunes. . . . How can a hungry, naked, miserable people practice popular government? How can we proclaim the equal rights of men and leave the majority of the nation in [this condition]?

PONCIANO ARRIAGA, speech to the Constitutional Convention, 1856–1857

Not surprisingly, Arriaga's ideas and those of the other liberals in government threatened most conservative upper-class Mexicans. Many conservatives responded

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Primary Sources

B What does Ponciano Arriaga think is Mexico's greatest problem?

by launching a rebellion against the liberal government in 1858. They enjoyed some early successes in battle and seized control of Mexico City. The liberals kept up the fight from their headquarters in the city of Veracruz. Eventually the liberals gained the upper hand and, after three years of bitter civil war, they defeated the rebels. Juárez became president of the reunited country after his election in 1861.

The French Invade Mexico The end of the civil war did not bring an end to Mexico's troubles, though. Exiled conservatives plotted with some Europeans to reconquer Mexico. In 1862, French ruler Napoleon III responded by sending a large army to Mexico. Within 18 months, France had taken over the country. Napoleon appointed Austrian Archduke Maximilian to rule Mexico as emperor. Juárez and other Mexicans fought against French rule. After five years under siege, the French decided that the struggle was too costly. In 1867, Napoleon ordered the army to withdraw from Mexico. Maximilian was captured and executed.

Juárez was reelected president of Mexico in 1867. He returned to the reforms he had proposed more than ten years earlier. He began rebuilding the country, which had been shattered during years of war. He promoted trade with foreign countries, the opening of new roads, the building of railroads, and the establishment of a telegraph service. He set up a national education system separate from that run by the Catholic Church. In 1872, Juárez died of a heart attack. But after half a century of civil strife and chaos, he left his country a legacy of relative peace, progress, and reform.

Porfirio Díaz and "Order and Progress"

Juárez's era of reform did not last long, however. In the mid-1870s, a new caudillo, **Porfirio Díaz**, came to power. Like Juárez, Díaz was an Indian from Oaxaca. He rose through the army and became a noted general in the civil war and the fight against the French. Díaz expected to be rewarded with a government position for the part he played in the French defeat. Juárez refused his request, however. After this, Díaz opposed Juárez. In 1876, Díaz took control of Mexico by ousting the president. He had the support of the military, whose power had been reduced during and after the Juárez years. Indians and small landholders also supported him, because they thought he would work for more radical land reform.

During the Díaz years, elections became meaningless. Díaz offered land, power, or political favors to anyone who supported him. He terrorized many who refused to support him, ordering them to be beaten or put in jail. Using such strong-arm methods, Díaz managed to remain in power until 1911. Over the years, Díaz used a political slogan adapted from a rallying cry of the Juárez era. Juárez had called for "Liberty, Order, and Progress." Díaz, however, wanted merely "Order and Progress."

Díaz's use of dictatorial powers ensured that there was order in Mexico. But the country saw progress under Díaz too. Railroads expanded, banks were built, the currency stabilized, and foreign investment grew. Mexico seemed to be a stable, prospering country. Appearances were deceiving,

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Porfirio Díaz
1830–1915

To control all the various groups in Mexican society, Porfirio Díaz adopted an approach called *pan o palo*—"bread or the club." The "bread" he provided took many forms. To potential political opponents, he offered positions in his government. To business leaders, he gave huge subsidies or the chance to operate as monopolies in Mexico. And he won the support of the Church and wealthy landowners simply by promising not to meddle in their affairs. Those who turned down the offer of bread and continued to oppose Díaz soon felt the blow of the club. Thousands were killed, beaten, or thrown into jail.

His use of the club, Díaz admitted, was harsh and cruel—but also necessary if Mexico was to have peace. That peace, Díaz argued, enabled the country to progress economically. "If there was cruelty," he said, "results have justified it."

Recognizing Effects

C What effects did Díaz's rule have on Mexico?

however. The wealthy acquired more and more land, which they did not put to good use. As a result, food costs rose steadily. Most Mexicans remained poor farmers and workers, and they continued to grow poorer. **C**

Revolution and Civil War

In the early 1900s, Mexicans from many walks of life began to protest Díaz's harsh rule. Idealistic liberals hungered for liberty. Farm laborers hungered for land. Workers hungered for fairer wages and better working conditions. Even some of Díaz's handpicked political allies spoke out for reform. A variety of political parties opposed to Díaz began to form. Among the most powerful was a party led by Francisco Madero.

Madero Begins the Revolution Born into one of Mexico's ten richest families, **Francisco Madero** was educated in the United States and France. He believed in democracy and wanted to strengthen its hold in Mexico. Madero announced his candidacy for president of Mexico early in 1910. Soon afterward, Díaz had him arrested. From exile in the United States, Madero called for an armed revolution against Díaz.

The Mexican Revolution began slowly. Leaders arose in different parts of Mexico and gathered their own armies. In the north, Francisco **"Pancho" Villa** became immensely popular. He had a bold Robin Hood policy of taking money from the rich and giving it to the poor. South of Mexico City, another strong, popular leader, **Emiliano Zapata**, raised a powerful revolutionary army. Like Villa, Zapata came from a poor family. He was determined to see that land was returned to peasants and small farmers. He wanted the laws reformed to protect their rights. *"Tierra y Libertad"* ("Land and Liberty") was his battle cry. Villa, Zapata, and other armed revolutionaries won important victories against Díaz's army. By the spring of 1911, Díaz agreed to step down. He called for new elections.

Mexican Leaders Struggle for Power Madero was elected president in November 1911. However, his policies were seen as too liberal by some and not revolutionary enough by others. Some of those who had supported Madero, including Villa and Zapata, took up arms against him. In 1913, realizing that he could not hold on to power, Madero resigned. The military leader General Victoriano Huerta then took over the presidency. Shortly after, Madero was assassinated, probably on Huerta's orders.

Huerta was unpopular with many people, including Villa and Zapata. These revolutionary leaders allied themselves with Venustiano Carranza, another politician who wanted to overthrow Huerta. Their three armies advanced, seizing the Mexican countryside from Huerta's forces and approaching the capital, Mexico City. They overthrew Huerta only 15 months after he took power.

Carranza took control of the government and then turned his army on his former revolutionary allies. Both Villa and Zapata continued to fight. In 1919, however, Carranza lured

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Emiliano Zapata 1879–1919

Shortly after Francisco Madero took office, he met with Emiliano Zapata, one of his leading supporters. Madero's reluctance to quickly enact real land reform angered Zapata. He left the meeting convinced that Madero was not the man to carry through the Mexican Revolution.

A few days later, Zapata issued the Plan of Ayala. This called for the removal of Madero and the appointment of a new president. The plan also demanded that the large landowners give up a third of their land for redistribution to the peasants. Zapata's rallying cry, "Land and Liberty," grew out of the Plan of Ayala.

When Venustiano Carranza ordered Zapata's assassination, he expected Zapata's revolutionary ideas on land reform to die with him. However, they lived on and were enacted by Alvaro Obregón, a follower of Zapata, who seized power from Carranza in 1920.

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

INTERNET ACTIVITY Create a short biographical dictionary of leaders of the Mexican Revolution. Go to classzone.com for your research.

| Reforms of Mexican Constitution of 1917 | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| Land | Religion | Labor | Social Issues |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakup of large estates • Restrictions on foreign ownership of land • Government control of resources (oil) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State takeover of land owned by the Church | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum wage for workers • Right to strike • Institution of labor unions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal pay for equal work • Limited legal rights for women (spending money and bringing lawsuits) |
| <p>SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts</p> <p>1. Making Inferences Which reforms do you think landowners resented?</p> <p>2. Recognizing Effects Which reforms benefited workers?</p> | | | |

Zapata into a trap and murdered him. With Zapata's death, the civil war also came to an end. More than a million Mexicans had lost their lives.

The New Mexican Constitution Carranza began a revision of Mexico's constitution. It was adopted in 1917. A revolutionary document, that constitution is still in effect today. As shown in the chart above, it promoted education, land reforms, and workers' rights. Carranza did not support the final version of the constitution, however, and in 1920, he was overthrown by one of his generals, Alvaro Obregón.

Although Obregón seized power violently, he did not remain a dictator. Instead, he supported the reforms the constitution called for, particularly land reform. He also promoted public education. Mexican public schools taught a common language—Spanish—and stressed nationalism. In this way, his policies helped unite the various regions and peoples of the country. Nevertheless, Obregón was assassinated in 1928. **D**

The next year, a new political party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), arose. Although the PRI did not tolerate opposition, it initiated an ongoing period of peace and political stability in Mexico. While Mexico was struggling toward peace, however, the rest of the world was on the brink of war.

MAIN IDEA

Summarizing

D What were Obregón's accomplishments?

SECTION

4

ASSESSMENT

TERMS & NAMES 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Antonio López de Santa Anna
- Benito Juárez
- *La Reforma*
- Porfirio Díaz
- Francisco Madero
- "Pancho" Villa
- Emiliano Zapata

USING YOUR NOTES

2. Which leader do you think benefited Mexico most? Why?

| Leader | Major Accomplishment |
|--------|----------------------|
| | |

MAIN IDEAS

3. In what ways was Santa Anna a typical caudillo?
4. How did Porfirio Díaz change the direction of government in Mexico?
5. How were "Pancho" Villa and Emiliano Zapata different from other Mexican revolutionary leaders?

CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **MAKING INFERENCES** Why might Benito Juárez's rise to power be considered surprising?
7. **ANALYZING CAUSES** Why did Villa and Zapata turn against Madero?
8. **SUPPORTING OPINIONS** The revision of Mexico's constitution is considered revolutionary. Do you agree with this characterization? Why or why not?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **REVOLUTION** Juárez's motto was "Liberty, Order, and Progress." Díaz's slogan was "Order and Progress." Write an **expository essay** explaining what this difference in goals meant for the people of Mexico.

CONNECT TO TODAY **DESIGNING A CAMPAIGN POSTER**

Conduct research on the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) today, particularly its political platform. Use your findings to design a **campaign poster** for the PRI in an upcoming election.