

**THE HISTORICAL STRUCTURE AND PROCESSES OF THE  
STATE IN THE SOCIAL FORMATION IN MEXICO  
SINCE 1910**

**A dissertation  
submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Philosophy**

**by**

**ALOK CHATURVEDI**

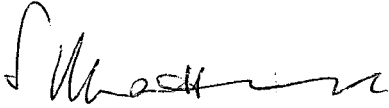
**CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES  
School of Social Sciences  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI - 67**


**1980**

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
NEW DELHI-110 067.

C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled  
"The Historical Structure and Processes of the  
State in the Social Formation in Mexico since 1910"  
submitted by Mr. Alok Chaturvedi, in fulfilment of  
the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy,  
is, to the best of our knowledge, his original work  
and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
(PROF. S. BHATTACHARYA)  
Chairman

  
(PROF. BIPAN CHANDRA)  
Supervisor



31. 'Pancho' Villa (born in 1877 in Durango, died in 1923 in Chihuahua).  
The brigand as revolutionary general, December 1913.

## PREFACE

This dissertation is essentially based upon secondary sources on Mexican reality available to us in English.

Our work primarily has been to construct a framework for the analysis of the State in Mexico - in which our conclusions could only be accepted as transitional pending further research.

But, we do hope that a picture would appear, the definitions of which will elucidate certain aspects of the Mexican reality, if not communicate a sense of 'total' empathy with those circumstances - the language of which is quite alien to us.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I take upon myself this opportunity to extend my emotions to all the kindered souls, whose spiritual messages have led to the fruition of this minor work.

My special gratitude goes to the gaiety of the 'third floor' commune which was not only a source of profound intellectual splits but was also the limpid pool of friendship, love, affection and a place away from....

I respectfully bear before me the countenances of my 'gurus' without whom the angles of intellectual perception would have become obtuse in emotional cul-de-sacs.

Lastly, but not the least, I appreciate the endeavours of my friend, the flight of whose fingers completed this impossible task especially when the time itself was running out.

To all my greatest gratitude and humble respect, finally I bow before Lord Shiva - the sacred communions with whom glowed with a deep warmth.

*Alok Chaturvedi*  
( ALOK CHATURVEDI )

C O N T E N T S

	Page
PREFACE	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
CONTENTS	iii
PROLOGUE	1 - 45
CHAPTER I - Grains of Sand	46 - 49
CHAPTER II - Myriad Meridians	50 - 59
CHAPTER III - The Equinox	60 - 80
CHAPTER IV - Strands and Knots	81 - 93
CHAPTER V - Whiskers Through the Topaz	94 - 101
CHAPTER VI - Potbellied Purse Stringers	102 - 125
CHAPTER VII - A Side	126 - 131
CHAPTER VIII - Eels on Slippery Sidelines	132 - 135
CHAPTER IX - Lines of the Palms	136 - 150
CHAPTER X - Furrows of the Face	151 - 178
CHAPTER XI - Shadows and Silhouettes	179 - 200
CHAPTER XII - Crisis Corridors	201 - 209
CHAPTER XIII - The Eyes of a Storm	210 - 216
CHAPTER XIV - The Spiral Staircase and the Silent Stands	217 - 230
CHAPTER XV - The Blues of a Barren Land	231 - 265
CHAPTER XVI - Big Fish eat smaller ones	266 - 275
CHAPTER XVII - Outlaws in	276 - 286
CHAPTER XVIII - The Unfinished Refrain	287 - 300
CHAPTER XIX - Is it a Boat going by	301 - 318
BIBLIOGRAPHY	319 - 325

PROLOGUEHeralds Without Horns

"Frente a los grandes hacendados, terratenientes, banqueros, capitalistas del exterior y burguesía reaccionaria servidora del imperialismo, se encontraba la gran masa campesina, el incipiente proletariado industrial, las clases medias rural y urbana y la pequeña burguesía progresista. Esta última, representante de las nascentes fuerzas del capitalismo mexicano, necesitaba destruir el régimen feudal que estorbaba su desarrollo, y encabezó la lucha contra el porfirismo, arrastrando tras de sí a las demás clases descontentas (Ernesto Lobato Lopez, "El crédito en México", México, pp. 244).

"In opposition to big farmers, landowners, bankers, foreign capitalists, and the reactionary bourgeoisie servitor of imperialism, one could meet large masses of peasants, the incipient industrial proletariat, the rural and urban middle classes and the progressive petit-bourgeoisie. The last one representative of the nascent powers of Mexican capitalism. This one was in need to destroy the feudal regime that was obstructing its development, and it directed the struggle against Porfirismo, dragging also the remaining discontented classes".

"In considering such transformations (social revolutions) a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of economic conditions and of production, which can be determined by precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophical - in short the ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out" (Marx, "Preface to a contribution to a critique of Political economy", pp. 3, Moscow 1970).

Before trying to analyse the political processes which the 1910 revolution expressed, and its social dynamics, it would be essential as well as necessary to locate the historical specificities of development of the socio-economic as well as politico-ideological contradictions, as also the historical basis of the colonial as well as post-colonial state in its formal, contentual and contextual aspects, to be able to appreciate historical determinants in novel conjunctures.<sup>1</sup>

We shall begin with the development of capitalism by inferences from compendiums which are even ignorant of the historical aspects of it. The development of the working class as well as the peasantry (at all levels) alongwith the petit-bourgeoisie and the creeds of

---

1. Bernstein, op. cit., p. 25, p. 37, p. 78, p. 113.



intellectuals will also be dealt with in summary, along with the nature and structure of the state in 19c. Mexico, to be able to appreciate the significance of the 1910 Revolution, and the specific form it took related to the nature and 'soecific' determinants of the social contradictions implicit in it - both at the social-economic level as well as at the politico-ideological levels - and its implications at the level of the formation of the state in the post-revolution period.

The historical gleanings of the colonial past of Mexico reveal particular specifics, which not only affected the development of the social contradictions but also provided them with a peculiar ideological colouration - in which 'ethnicity of social classes and groups',<sup>2</sup> provided points of convergence.

We shall very briefly sum up the basic points in the development of Mexico as a colony 'under the agocentrism of the Spanish crown, the benevolence of the Church and the predations of the army-bureaucracy'.<sup>3</sup>

The conquest of Mexico was accomplished primarily in the context of commercial goals. Essentially, it was accomplished by a series of joint (private and state)

---

2.

3. Ibid., p. 5.

mercantile<sup>4</sup> enterprises, which got royal charters of monopolies and privileges<sup>5</sup> in the various 'consulados', 'audiencias' and 'cabildos' councils of the primary ports - especially on the Atlantic side - where the axis of Mexico city, Puebla and Veracruz developed<sup>6</sup>, beginning a process of port-hinterland nexus for the movement of minerals, handicrafts, agricultural products<sup>7</sup>, as also implying a regional unevenness of development of areas under the royal monopoly.<sup>8</sup> In some regions veritable feudal areas were created by means of 'encomiendas' and 'mercedes' (respectively grants of Indian labour and land by which the Spanish crown rewarded the conquerors).<sup>9</sup> The conquered indigenous populations were subjected to the most brutal oppression and exploitation on part of the Spaniards<sup>10</sup> - in the same way that the slavery of African Negroes on the Caribbean sugar plantations satisfied the needs of a mercantilist economy, oriented

- 
4. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Seven Erroneous theses about Latin America, p. 105 in Irwing Louis Horowitz, Jose De Castro, John Gerassi, ed., Latin American Radicalism - A Documentary Report on Left and Nationalist Movement, Random House, London 1969.
  5. Bernstein, op. cit., p. 7.
  6. Ibid., p. 14.
  7. Ibid., p. 9
  8. Ibid., p. 15.
  9. Stavenhagen, op. cit., p. 105.
  10. Ibid., p. 105, Pablo Gonzales Casanova, Internal Colonialism and National Development, pp. 119-22 in Horowitz et al. (ed.), Latin American Radicalism, op. cit.

towards the consumer markets of Europe, which also partook on both agriculture and the mining - extractive products - primarily silver.

During the whole colonial epoch, the driving force - based on a 'one way flow out' from the colony to the metropolitan centre<sup>11</sup>, was the mercantilist-capitalist system, with the periferical areas providing raw material - agricultural and minerals (silver) - to the metropolitan centre.

The one constant factor of the colonial economy was the search for and control of cheap labor for the latifundias and mines. First the colonists (Spaniards and Creoles tried enslaving the indigenous populations; later they ensured themselves of servile Indian labour through a series of arrangements which varied from the 'encomienda' to the forced distribution of Indian workers.<sup>12</sup> The "feudal" living and working conditions of the peasant population reduced to a minimum the costs of production in mining and in colonial agriculture. Thus the 'feudalism' in labor relations provided the basis for the development of the colonial economy in its entirety which in them formed an integral interconnected part of the

---

11. Stavenhagen, op. cit., p. 106.

12. Ibid., p. 105.

world mercantilist system.<sup>13</sup>

With this framework of unequal exchange, internal disarticulation and external articulation of the economy<sup>14</sup> regional disfunctions took place in the process of uneven development, where underdeveloped regions of the colonial economy played the role of internal colonies in relation to the developing urban centres or the productive agricultural areas<sup>15</sup>, and integrally connected with it. In Mexico - the Mexico City-Veracruz axis dominating the Atlantic maritime operation was the dominant area, with the south-central and north being its hinterland.<sup>16</sup>

The colonial state - a complex extension of the Iberian empire as also susceptible to the local pressures was structured hierarchically from the centre in Mexico City down to the 'pueblos' connected with roads and dirt-trails. The military-bureaucratic structure with civil agencies in councils 'consulados' was reinforced

---

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

14. Samir Amin, tr. by Brian Pearce, *Unequal Development An essay on the social formation of Peripheral Capitalism*, Monthly Review Press, 1976, *passim*.

15. Casanova, *op. cit.*, p. 126. Stavenhagen, *op. cit.*, p. 106. Andre Gunder Frank, *On Capitalist Underdevelopment*, OUP, 1975, pp. 72-80.

16. Bernstein, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

by the taxation and customs on the commerce, the sale of land, offices and patronage.<sup>17</sup> It was precisely the colonial state which mediated between the objective interests of the commercial oligarchy and the land-owning class - linked in a symbiotic relationship<sup>18</sup> within the overall framework of the colonial social formation.

The Church - vested with considerable land wealth, power and prestige, formed the basis for the expansion of the Iberian precepts and the europeanisation of the Indians, the mestizos (mixed breed) in the inculcation of Christian values - of obedience, guilt, servitude and giving money for expiation.<sup>19</sup> The Church and state infact were intricately bound with the former being the ideologiser and the latter keeping the strong arm - as also the various monopolies of administration, and commercial functions of usury, commerce, trade, fiscal arrangements<sup>20</sup>, in which a strong sense of differential discrimination against the indigenous elements - the Creoles, Mestizos, Indians was a strong index<sup>21</sup> - which

---

17. Ibid., p. 19.

18. Borrowed from the ideas in the "Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism" debate, John Merrington, "Town and country in the transition to capitalism, pp. 8170-8195 in The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism, Verso 1978.

19. Inference from evidence in Bernstein, op. cit.

20. Theoretical expansion on the nature of the colonial state based also on inferential evidence from all over

21. Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 25-28.

were subsumed under a strong paternalism.

The national movement in the earlier part of the 19c. in Mexico, infact was inspired by the ideas of liberalism - anti-autocracy, anti-feudal, anti-monopolist, with a concept of equalisation of privilege and freedom of movement and enterprise to which the intellectuals of the universities, the petit-bourgeois elements, and the subservient mercantile community of the north and the pacific coast gave full support - against the colonial state.<sup>22</sup>

The formal independence gained on a nationalist ideology in which the Creole emerged - however crystalized in a structure of power - in which the relative positions of the ruling elites - the monopolist merchants and the large landowners were kept in the new political conjuncture - though the Liberal Constitution of 1857 ensured the expansion of privilege to upcoming investors, producers, eager to partake of the expanding trade. The dominant aspect however still remained the export-orientation<sup>23</sup>, within the framework of which a haphazard system connecting mines, towns, agricultural areas and ports had developed.

---

22. Ibid., indirect reference, pp. 25-56.

23. Ibid., passim.

Within the parameters of this one can understand the 'liberalisation' of Mexican polity and economy emerging from the framework of the restrictions imposed by the Colonial State, and the process of internal colonialism. When issues of regionalism, federalism acquired a significance, with the development of the north especially in mining and agriculture.<sup>24</sup> Besides, Spain was weakening in the world capitalist system, losing out primarily to the USA becoming dominant in the Latin American context.<sup>25</sup>

The regime of Porfirio Diaz was infact the 'last stand of Mexican conservatism' before the Revolution of 1910. The 'transition' in the Mexican context (unlike the European) is a problem whose empirical indexes are relatively unknown and provide an embarasment to research efforts - while the symbiosis of mercantile-landholding interests represented and mediated by the State during the 19c. - with ideologies of Positivistic Urbanism of progress were far from any 'revolutionari breaks' within the context of 'dependent economic development' - though the contradictions developed within it.

The political and economic dead end of the extensive landholding - monopolistic class were obvious by the end

24. Ibid, Branderburg, op. cit.

25. about which not much evidence is available. See George Lichtheim, "Imperialism".

of the 19c. - absetted by the 'Diaz - potism'<sup>26</sup> - the consequences of which were obvious by the first decade of the 20c. The 'Porfirista' alliance with foreign investors, acceptance of the gold standard (which benefited the merchants linked to the European and American market - operating on the gold standard), concentration on commercial export agriculture, to the detriment of feeding the Mexican 'masses', buttressing of 'peonage, seizure of lands, antagonism towards industrialisation policies and the closed-circuit of bureaucracy' stultified the paths of the 'nascent nationalist bourgeoisie'<sup>27</sup> - and alienating a large number of nationalistic intellectuals in the urban centres'.<sup>28</sup>

This 'progressive' group appreciated the necessity of stability in government and society, but they wished a stability based essentially on capitalism with large segments of the economy reserved for exploitation by the Mexicans. Acts such as government inspired propaganda

- 
26. concept coined in Bailey and Nasatir, op. cit. p. 361.
27. Albert L. Michaels, Marvin Bernstein, The Modernisation of the old Order : Organisation and Periodisation of 20c. Mexican History, p. 690 in James W. Wilkie, Michael C. Mayer, Edna Monzon de Wilkie (ed.), Contemporary Mexico - Papers of the IV International Congress of Mexican History 1976, California & El Colegio de Mexico.
28. Daniel Cosío Villegas, The Porfiriato : Legend and Reality, p. 295, Lewis Hanke (ed.), op. cit.



justifying the establishment of the Ferrocarriles Nacionales fed a formerly latent but now increasing anti-American sentiment.

A new class of merchants, manufacturers and small commercial farmers had developed in Mexico, with the development of the market (primarily home). This group delved into numerous new activities like textiles, smelting steel, vulcanising rubber, cigarettes, beer, wheat, cotton, rice and vegetables for the national market<sup>29</sup> - in which the service sector was rapidly expanding under the Diaz directive of progress - which also escalated the inflationary spiral.<sup>30</sup> Further more, the conversion to the gold standard and the international effects of the panic of 1907-8 raised the cost of imports upon which the merchant class depended. But the manufacturers depended upon imports no less to supply their needed capital goods. Besides the fixed gold standard for the peso deprived native manufacturers of the protection they derived from the old exchange market and did not stimulate export as the old bimetallic system had. The inflexible, monopolistic banking system only aggravated the crisis, for commercial banks began to make more and more invest-

---

29. Albert L. Michaels et al., op. cit., p. 691.

30. Ibid.

ments in long term loans that necessitated the issuance of paper money once their portfolios were frozen - worsening the inflation. Finally, there was the rigidity imposed upon the economy, by the land monopolists, who deliberately maintained brutally low wages in the countryside (process of formal subsumption?) effectively curtailing consumer demand in addition to impeding the mobility of labour.<sup>31</sup>

A further source of social discontent for the nascent manufacturing capitalist class was the position of the foreigner in Mexico. Whereas Diaz had ignored anti-foreign sentiment at first in securing enactment of laws favouring foreign participation in railroad and mining (extractive industries) to which the railroad pattern was linked and not to national development. Besides the Mining Law of 1909 and American domination of major import-export houses and the largest commercial establishments.<sup>32</sup> The rise of the manufacturing national bourgeoisie relying primarily on the home market - emerged as the protagonist of national development<sup>33</sup> - contrary to integration in the world market led by the traditional

---

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., Bernstein, op. cit., Brandenburg, op. cit.

33. Ibid.

mercantile and landowning classes and by the centralist state which had been created to serve those very classes and make Mexico prosperous only without considering the nature of property.<sup>34</sup> This contradiction however is not representative of the classic transition from feudalism to capitalism, but is one specific to the 'underdeveloped/dependent developmental context' of Mexico. Though this point is however a matter of controversy - on which we shall not be able to comment right now - though the relationship between the mercantile mining and manufacturing elements would be interesting to know.

#### Soft serenades

An analysis of the working class movement would be crucial, before we take up the question of the Revolution of 1910 and the subsequent state which emerged - to see its influences of the revolutionary/conservative (counter-revolutionary) aspect of the rising nationalist bourgeoisie. "Some persons believe that the daily wage in Mexico is so low that it cannot sustain the worker. Let us state, however, that it is an axiom of the science

---

34. Idea taken from Cardoso, *The Industrial Elite in Latin America*, pp. 195-204, in Henry Bernstein, ed., *Underdevelopment and Development: The Third World today*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, though there still remain a lot of ambiguities in the 'revolutionary transition' question.

economics that wages can never go below the level necessary to maintain the working class, because the latter would perish ... and since in Mexico workingmen subsist it can be inferred that they need no more for subsistence".<sup>35</sup>

In the land of commerce, mining, transportation and agriculture - labor of primary displaced Indian and mestizo origins proliferated in services of coolies, porters, weavers, artisans<sup>36</sup> - with the state and the Church - guiding the 'drunken lazy sorts'<sup>37</sup>, Indians worked in large labor gangs in public works, roadbuildings - away from the haciendas - in mines, ports, plantations or in 'obrajes' (factories) in the earlier part of the 19c. - for wages which were only formal and nominal - with the caciques dominating the enrollments.<sup>38</sup> Along with the expansion of the economy and the coming of the railways, by 1890, unions had already begun to develop first in railway brotherhoods - almost always moderate,

---

35. Idea of Pimentel, a reactionary intellectual under Diaz, loc. cit., Bernstein, op. cit., p. 94.

36. Robert J. Alexander, Labour Movement in Latin America, pp. 510-11 in Asher N. Christensen, ed., The Evolution of Latin American Government, A book of readings, New York, 1951.

37. Bernstein, op. cit.

38. Ibid.

if not conservative. Labor expressed itself in strikes at Cananea copper works in 1906 and at the Ozizaba textile strike in 1907.<sup>39</sup> The rise of working class consciousness is an unresolved question - and the expansion of trade unions and the number of their memberships in pre 1910 period is also an aspect of which adequate information is not available. But the general tendency of the decline in wages is a common feature noticed in the immiserisation process. We shall notice the various trends of the radical philosophies when we explore the question of the intellectuals separately, though demonstrating their effective linkages.

#### Whistling weeds

From the beginning of the Spanish rule in Mexico, the crown sought to curb the powers of the conquistadores, who were to be town dwellers, not directly related to the process of production<sup>40</sup> - and directly dependent upon the royal bureaucracy. The encomienda - though perpetuated brutal exploitation of Indians' labor - also assured a nominal autonomy to state supervised

---

39. Ibid., see E.J. Hobsbawm, Peasants and Rural Migrants in Politics, pp. 61-62 in Claudio Veliz, ed., The Politics of Conformity in Latin America, Oxford, 1967.

40. Eric R. Wolf, Aspects of Group relations in a complex society, Mexico, pp. 50-69 in Teodor Shanin, ed., Peasants and peasant societies, Penguin, 1971.

Indian communities<sup>41</sup> - though the Indians lost their best lands and water supply. Though the colonist actually became the master - removed from the royal command.<sup>42</sup> Power thus passed into the hands of the local rulers - exercising influence also over the loosely structured settlement of casual farmers and workers, middlemen and 'lumpen proletarians' who had no legal place in the colonial order - and who existed on the marginal fringes of haciendas, mines and mills.<sup>43</sup>

With independence from the Crown, the haciendas began to encroach more heavily on the Indian communities, while the Indian communities faced the twin threats of internal differentiation by the 'marginals' of colonial times.<sup>44</sup> The hacienda phenomenon, however, granted direct ownership of land to a manager-owner and permitted direct control of a resident labor force. From the beginning it served commercial ends whose principal function was to produce for the market<sup>45</sup> in which the labor force was tied down. The haciendas' hunger for land and labor has been noted, whose optimum was limited

---

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

within the very structure.<sup>46</sup> First, the hacienda always lacked capital, thus it tended to farm only the best lands and relied heavily on the traditional archaic technology of the labour force.<sup>47</sup> Hacienda owners also curtailed production in order to raise land rents and prices and to keep down wages.<sup>48</sup> Thus 'Mexico has been a land of large estates, but not a nation of large-scale agriculture', with the haciendas striving to monopolise land and labor.<sup>49</sup> On most haciendas, however, Indian communities existed on the fringes, with labor-farming a subsistence plot on the hacienda land lost by them.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, only in the arid and sparsely populated north did large haciendas predominate with areas going up to 16,500,000 acres under one family.<sup>51</sup> In the heavily populated central region, large and medium haciendas averaged about 3,000 hectares.<sup>52</sup> The hacienda system in fact structured the social relation-

---

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Stavenhagen, op. cit.

51. Charles H. Harris, "The 'Overmighty Family': the case of Sanchez Navarros, pp. 47-62, in Wilkie et al., ed., op. cit.

52. Wolf, op. cit.

ship of exploitation in the countryside, with the Indian communities' feeling its presence at all times;<sup>53</sup> with corporate peasant communities ultimately establishing relations of hostile symbiosis with the haciendas, expressed in peasant revolts and social banditry,<sup>54</sup> with their 'grito de dolores' cries of pain, anguish, resentment developing into legends, lores and songs expressing a 'culture' against repression.<sup>55</sup>

Alongwith, the hacienda system - land became a commodity, and a land market<sup>56</sup> developed throughout the 19c. with the colonial marginals' and tenants moving in as new landowners, - usurers, capitalists and confiscating new land from the Indians, as well as the Church lands.<sup>57</sup> Important also was the spread of plough culture which required some capital investment coupled with the development of wage labor on such holdings, and increasing

53. Hobsbawm, op. cit.

54. Wolf, op. cit., and on the two questions of the basis of banditry, E.J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, Pelican 1972, pp. 17-30.

55. Extrapolation from Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, op. cit. with inferences from various details on peasants and their consciousness. Infact it is a speculation.

56. Wolf, op. cit.

57. *Ibid.*



production for the market,<sup>58</sup> expanding with overseas trade and the home market in cash crops and raw materials with developing manufacturing industry marking a considerable amount of differentiation in the countryside<sup>59</sup> - though on the other hand with the 'formal subsumption of labor into capital',<sup>60</sup> a feature of 'backward capitalist development' - considerable immiseration of the peasantry took place without actual proletarianisation - though this point cannot be validated at this conjuncture of the analysis. This tendency of differentiation however developed in different regions of Mexico at a differential rate<sup>61</sup> - with features of debt-bondage, forced labor, captive communities with their caciques collaborating with haciendas, also there - before the Revolution of 1910. Besides the relationship of capitalism in the countryside and in the towns is also a problematic question to judge to see how far the countryside provided the impulse.

---

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid..

60. Idea of Marx expressed in Capital, vol. I, Penguin Harmondsworth, ed.

61. References from Bernstein, op. cit., regarding the nature of the movement pressing towards and demanding Federalist constitution for the States, instead of domination by the central Mexico City, Puebla, Veracruz axis. Also explained within the framework of "internal colonialism" - Casanova, op. cit.

Nerves of the temple

From "the deep obstinacy of a strong race", notions, the actual conditions of Indian peasantry in the countryside was not far from sordid strain. The 'progress' of the 19c. had not percolated down to them despite the Porfirian rhetorics<sup>62</sup>, a starting picture is afforded of the changelessness and chronic depression of the low wages of the Indians and the peon - with the high prices of animal and grains dictating a pattern of concentric poverty.<sup>63</sup> And in the plantations a system of veritable slave form of labor continued. The plight of the 'jornalarc' and peons who worked for others at a daily wage was far worse than the small farmer (mainly in the north) who at least held his land, even though he was unable to compete or market his goods<sup>64</sup> - in the face of large haciendas, and land companies and miners which had acquired title to millions of hectares of land by corruption, fraud and public grants by the State especially under Diaz, whose law of 1894 had revoked the previous legal limit on the size of a holding -

---

62. Bruening, op. cit., p. 64.

63. Bernstein, op. cit.

64. Francois Chevalier, The ejido and Political stability in Mexico, pp. 158-163, in Claudio Veliz, ed., op. cit.

Diss  
Y,774'N7<NI

MO

then at 2,500 hectares.<sup>65</sup> Land companies were no longer compelled to settle, occupy or cultivate the lands, which could hold for speculation or convert into cattle ranges (a kind of enclosure).

In this situation probably a connection between merchant money, landowners, foreign capitalists and the State could be established though not ascertained with capital being invested in land, mines, ranches, railways, public works etc. and policed by the State.

Lights in the alcoves

Alongwith the development of the nationalist bourgeoisie and the growth of urban centre - the vast mass of the petit-bourgeoisie also proliferated.<sup>66</sup> And within the crystallising environment of social antagonism - with the dictatorial Profiriato standing by its positivistic dictums and ideology of 'progress', 'iron law of wages', a strong sub-altern trend developed in the civil society by the intellectuals - who were considered renegades by the 'order'. Forceful attacks on the system were expressed - even when public opinion was repressed and

---

65. A.L. Michaels et al., op. cit.

66. In the service sector, as also the professionals, lawyers, doctors, teachers etc. and the 'active conceptive ideologists' in the civil society; see Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, tr. Quintin Hoare & Srd... pp. 3-14.

DISS  
972.082  
C3928 Hi



TH666



TH-666

circumscribed, on the issue of "suffrage and noreelec-  
tion" of the president by the 'spokesmen' of the rising  
class like Madero. Even more forceful were the attacks  
on the regime and Mexican capitalism launched by Ricardo  
and Enriques Flores Magon - two brothers who became  
leaders of the rising labor tide of anarcho-syndicalism.  
Therefore ideological attacks came on the 'ancien regime'  
from three quarters the syndicalist labor which held  
the Mexican State responsible for the social evils of  
capitalism (unlike the scientific socialists), (b) the  
liberal argument holding that Diaz had betrayed consti-  
tutionalism and representative government, (c) from the  
school of the revivalists of idealism which opposed  
the materialists 'cientificos' school of the Positivists  
- enshrining also ideas of Catholic social justice, with  
as small movement started by Ganaro Garcia in 1891 for  
the liberation of women.<sup>67</sup> During the early part of the  
Diaz era the revolutionary philosophies became known to  
some Mexican intellectuals. Aspects of Marxist and  
utopian Socialist (syndicalist etc.) ideas were expressed  
in 'La Revolution Social' of Alberto Santa Fe. Though  
Marx and Engels figured in 'El Socialista', in Mexico  
City, though the rise of socialist thought was relatively

---

67. Bernstein, op. cit.

connected to trade union or Indian restlessness - which threw up organic ideologies, in which outside intellectual intervention was marginal - though the ideas were known.<sup>68</sup> Though Marxist Socialism had few followers in Mexico, notwithstanding the extreme evils of agrarian and labor conditions - whose perception of social reality and social relations were strongly mediated by the ideological domination (if not egemony) of the Catholic church - and its charity for the poor - favoring the ideas of the paternalist dependence, the position with which the State was infused with, as also the specific traditions and the historical experiences - in their process of social existence. Though this point when elaborated can be a very expansive topic.

And while Marxist Socialism, strong in Germany, France and Spain, poured out its literature of protest. It had little impact on the Mexican intellectuals - and unionists.<sup>69</sup> But the contrary happened with anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism - which also provided the formative influence on the Mexican labour movement (why? is a problem to be explored within the specific context)

---

68. Ibid.

69. *ibid.* related to the nature of the development of the social contradictions as also the ideological aspects of them - and the question of the 'hegemony in which the Church was a crucial factor - indirectly mediating between the State and the masses.

whose famous protagonists were the Magon brothers, in Mexico - receptive to the ideas of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Sorel and Fourier - coming from Iberian Spain (the nexus which had not dried up after formal independence, as also related to the question of the nature of transmission of ideas?). Ricardo Flores Magon became involved in politics and economic reforms in the year 1892 by attacking Diaz, Wall Street and Capitalism and presenting an alternative to the 'cientificos' 'intellectual platform' exalting science and progress while negating the metaphysics of human and divine rights - which the Church upheld. The theory and programme of the Magon movement was expressed in a quasi-radical journal 'La Regeneracion' - the organ of the junta of the so-called Mexican Liberal Party - a combination of the members of the 'liberal clubs' which had proliferated in most of the urban centres.<sup>70</sup> Magon asserted principles of reduced political but extensive economic activity for the workers.<sup>71</sup> The use of strike, boycott together with the emphasis upon trade unions rather than political leadership - which on the one hand favoured the organisation of the working class - but kept it divided - a feature prominent in the development of the working

---

70. Bernstein, op. cit.

71. Ibid.

class movement in Mexico<sup>72</sup> - which was far from being an 'industrial proletariat with a revolutionary consciousness'.

To Magon and other Mexican radicals - individualism and equality advocated by the liberals was a farce, only economic equality was basic<sup>72a</sup> - and in this connection the programme of the junta in 1907 expressed - a revision of landownership for the benefit of the Indian and peon, and to better the working class by means of increased wages and reduced working days<sup>73</sup>, the primary national needs of the historic conditions.<sup>74</sup> It is however not clear as to how many 'working class unions and brotherhoods' endorsed or supported the Magon programme - which however, was radical but not revolutionary - and especially when Mexican labour was more 'primitive'<sup>76</sup> - artisans, weavers, spinners, coolies, porters, miners, shoemakers, tailors and in the railways' also caught

72. Ibid.

72a. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. In the sense of providing a revolutionary alternative, which could not be accommodated within the structure of the prevailing property relations, rather than expressing economic attitudes.

76. cfr. E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class.

between the town and the countryside<sup>77</sup> - which had effects upon the development of their consciousness, as also the basic feature of 'underdeveloped mercantilism/capitalism in Mexico'.

Initially Magon had an incipient influence on the 'railway brotherhoods and miners' gangs' - but soon won over support and in fact, they became the progenitors of the 'Radical labour organisations' in 20th century Mexico - a critique of anarchism<sup>78</sup> is not possible in the present context - though we can discern the making of the Mexican working class and its intellectual collaborators<sup>79</sup> in the pre-revolutionary era.

The heyday of the apologetic Positivism in Mexico was gone by 1906 - when a new generation of 'educators, teachers and even Catholic social philosophers were attacking the bareness of 'materialistic progress' and criticising 'technology for the humans'<sup>80</sup>, a neo-idealism and a revival of humanistic values captured

77. Cfr. E.J. Hobsbawm, Peasant and rural migrants, op. cit., and on their specific consciousness Raymond Williams, Culture and Society, London, 1958.

78. on which Lenin's critique of anarcho-syndicalism shows the limitations of the political possibilities of anarchism - a "deviationist strategy" inspired by the petit-bourgeois notions of radicalism.

79. The formation

80. Bernstein, op. cit.



the loyalties of the Mexican youth - with Justo Sierra - a great teacher, and Liberal sought to restore the Latin-Hispanic values of 'art, beauty and spiritual ideals to the wasteland of Mexican Positivism' - which was imposing values of Europeanism rather than Mexicanism.<sup>81</sup> With Alfonso Caso, and Jose Vasconcelos - a new intellectual force appeared - with ideals such as democracy, justice, harmony and humanity getting a new vogue and heralding a new perception<sup>82</sup> (which developed in response to many inter-related factors - structural professional, experimental - about which details are not available and for which a digression would be very complex and heavy) of cultural nationalism, based on the indigenous 'mestizo'<sup>83</sup> (a complex ethnic category) with mestizo national leaders like Hidalgo, Morelos, Juarez.<sup>84</sup> A strain of anti-foreignism<sup>85</sup>, and more so anti-Americanism refurbished the quest as well as the development of the rising Mexican identity, which was

---

81. César Gana, Cultural Nationalism - Dreams of the Spanish-American Intellectuals, p. 340. Waldo Frank, Hispano American's world, p. 327 in Lewis Hanke, ed., op. cit.

82. Bernstein, op. cit.

83. Ibid.

84. Barley & Nasatir, op. cit., p. 516 passim.

85. Frederick C. Turner, A Case Study ; Xenophobia in Mexico-Roots of nationalism, pp. 361-66, in Hanke, ed., op. cit.

far from being just an extension of xenophobic sentiments<sup>86</sup> but was the expression of the fructification common, cultural, ethnic voice, which the intellectuals were expressing primarily through the rising press and platform propaganda in the urban centres, in which the Indian side was also placed as the progenitor of a novel paradigm. Reaction came from Parra - a Positivist - who attributed all rights and liberties of individuals on the civic order and society in which they live and which are guaranteed by civil law and a paternalistic state<sup>87</sup> - to which the neo-idealists were posing an alternative.

We have noted rather inadequately, since material is not available, the various ideological strains which were developing in Mexico on the eve of the Revolution - in which the liberal ideas of 'effective suffrage and no reelection', democracy, representation, 'Mexico for the Mexicans' and several other aspects of economic and cultural nationalism, emphasising a cultural homogeneity of the mestizos were being emphasised - and the radical trends of anarcho-syndicalism were supplementing to without posing a threat to the 'ideologia nouveau' -

---

86. As expressed by Turner, op. cit.

87. Bernstein, op. cit.

against the absolutist, pro-imperialist state of Diaz - which was the political manifestation of the reactionary coalition - against which the up-coming nationalist bourgeoisie was pitted in the social formation and the process of transition in the dependent, unevenly developed objective-economic context. These ideological strains in fact generated the potentials of the social contradictions as well as placed perceptual limits on it - in which the ideology as well as the class of the bourgeoisie emerged as the dominant one - whose 'hegemonic' role and its development would become the aspect of a different paper - in which we shall discuss the nature of the state and its relations with society in the post revolutionary period.

#### Paeans and pain

The revolutionary process in Mexico was a complex process which combined the differentially developed social contradictions and regions of Mexico - against the conservative social forces - in which the new bourgeoisie dominated and emerged as the new ruling class, whose character was determined by the very nature of the social contradictions in the process of development within the Mexican social formation.

Our emphasis in this part of the paper would be not so much to notice the events during the revolutionary

period from 1910-1917, but to discern the basic trends and tendencies which the social contradictions expressed - and the predominant role of the bourgeoisie in it; in its 'transformist'<sup>88</sup> nature and ideology - and the final creation of the 'historical bloc'<sup>89</sup> which not only affected the strategy from war of manoeuvre to war of position of the subaltern classes but was itself a manifestation of their aspects of consciousness - specific to their development within the social formation.

"Grito de dolores"

"Oh! Oh! my beloved general,

He made a sharp advance against the peasant's land,

He became rich and famous after six months in command,

88. 'transformismo' - the integration of the figures of opposition into the 'moderate' political class, characterised by its aversion to any intervention of the popular masses in State life, to any organic reform, which would substitute a 'hegemony' for the crude dictatorial 'dominance'. See also Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, p. 58, 58f, 97, 109, 227.

89. 'Historical bloc' - the concept implies an identity of principles and expectations between the rulers and the ruled, whose 'moral economy' in fact is in the process of being hegemonised (Gramsci, *op. cit.* p. 137, 168, 360, 366, 377, 418, and which is also related to the 'conversion of the war of manoeuvre' movement, to a war of position, in the State complex - see the role of labor and peasantry and then form of their integration in the Mexican bourgeois State; cfr. Perry Anderson, *Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci* LNR-100, Nov. 1976-January 1977, pp. 9-26.

And owned more farms than ever planned".<sup>90</sup>

The Mexican Revolution was concentrated in the rural provinces, with Mexico city playing a relatively passive role, though important rural attitudes and beliefs were linked with ideas originating in the city directly or indirectly.<sup>91</sup> Our hypothesis is that the crucial figures in the countryside were the peons, the jornaleros, and the middle marginal peasant communities on the haciendas - who were facing a "sinking economic situation" and great resentment at their position - and whose movement, though it burst out, was ultimately guided to a moderate solution 'reforms' - by the linkage of the regional movement to the national process of bourgeoisie demands - which could 'accommodate' and 'contain' the contradictions, while actually decapitating it by the removal of its leadership - as in the case of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, of who Villa is considered as a 'bandit',<sup>92</sup> and Zapata as an agrarianist. About the 'form' of the revolution an incredible literature exists - with its heroes, tales, traditions, loves and legends. We, however, shall be more concerned with the nature of the 'agrarian unrest' in its specific context - and how it

---

91. Chevalier, op. cit.

90. Barley-Nasatir, op. cit., p. 485.

92. Hobsbawm, Bandits, pp. 108-09.

was 'contained' - in relation to the 'revolutionary potential of the peasantry'.<sup>93</sup>

The expropriation of the Indian communities and their incorporation into the hacienda economy especially in the central and southern regions gave them a new impetus for unity and a personality. This was marked in Morelos, close to Mexico city, where semi-independent groups of peasant Indians struck to small patches of land - "hollows in the mountains".<sup>94</sup> They worked also as artisans or hired labour on haciendas, the city, and the sugar mills. In the north, the peasant communities were lesser and looser.<sup>95</sup>

Related to the social specifics and to that of the formation of the contradictions as also the rural traditions lay the particular forms and strategies of struggle of Zapata in the south and Villa in the north, within the overall context of the regional/national movement - for which details are missing.

---

93. A good study of R.P. Millon, *Zapata-Ideology of a Peasant Revolution*, New York 1969 and John Womack Jr., *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*, London, 1969.

94. Chevalier, *op. cit.*

95. *Ibid.*

The oppression and rigidity of the hacienda strait-jacket provided the revolution its basis, while the active coercion of the Porfirian 'rurales'<sup>96</sup> or police force formed the conjunctural stimulation.

Zapata and his followers symbolise the essence of the 1910 land reform movement - expressed in his plan of Ayala 1911, which was a complex plan, not only for land reforms, but also for the national economic, political and social reforms - with a clearly defined ideological orientation.<sup>97</sup> Although he proposed to forbid the formation of monopolies, to protect and encourage small owners and to defend the rights of labour, he and his followers contemplated that capitalist property relations would continue to prevail in industry, finance and commerce - in which they demonstrated an 'agrarian petit-bourgeoisie romanticism'<sup>98</sup> and the division of the haciendas laid the foundations for the freedom of the peasant, and at the same time offered the city worker "a sure means to free himself from the capitalist exploitation --- in order to go there (to his land) and who the slavery of the workshop weighs down too much,

---

96. Hobsbawm, *Peasant & rural migrants*, op. cit.

97. Millon, op. cit., p. 99.

98. Millon, op. cit., p. 99, Womack, op. cit., p. 99, Womack, op. cit., p. (ix).

and there arises the desire to breathe freedom deeply - far from the unhealthy atmosphere of the city and under the protective dome of the heavens".<sup>99</sup>

Who was Zapata? seems a problematic question - which has to be answered at the subjective, objective and the contextual levels. According to one interpretation Zapata was a radical petit-bourgeoisie anarchist whose hostility towards the dictatorial State did not imply a desire for no State, and whose criticism of monopolies and the big landowners did not imply a desire for the destruction of capitalist property relations.<sup>100</sup> "It was the feudal(?) not bourgeois social relations which the man of the south sought to destroy".<sup>101</sup> The Zapatista proposals, which mentioned the interest of the working class looked to the improvement of the workers conditions, by insuring good wages, right to organise and strike, shorter hours, without actually posing a revolutionary alternative.<sup>102</sup>

Besides, the Zapatistas promoted the property of small holder in land and private property in industry,

99. Millon, op. cit.

100. Ibid. and Womack, op. cit., pp. 393-411.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid., Chevalier, op. cit.



finance and commerce. When the October 26th 1915 Convention left private property untouched both of the rural bourgeoisie and the sugar mills of Morelos. They, however, struggled for wide distribution of land (the "ejidos" with their limitations) throughout Mexico, realization of a democratic government, the guaranteeing of rights to labour and the restriction of imperialist penetration - which would create an independent, liberal bourgeois Mexico - in which the State will play an active role<sup>103</sup> - In contrast to 19c. liberalism far from idealising about the "patria chica" (local fatherland) concept, Zapata was involved with the broader national issues<sup>104</sup> unlike, the interpretation of some American scholars who see in him the personification of the Indianist, who wanted to exterminate all "Europeanised Mexicans" in the south and make the land "a milpa studded collection of ranchos in the Indian mode".<sup>105</sup>

In the north, the typical bandit based movement of Pancho Villa, and its military terms, which played a more important part on the national scene, did not change the shape of Mexico nor of the north<sup>106</sup> - except injecting

---

103. Millon, op. cit., and Womack, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

104. Millon, op. cit.

105. Like Howard F. Cline's book on Mexico.

106. Hobsbawm, Bandits, op. cit., pp. 108-09.

the elements of agrarian reform in the Revolution. The brigands produced a potential 'Caudillo' and a legend - not least - a legend of the only Mexican leader who tried to invade the land of the gringos.<sup>107</sup> In actual terms, except for large scale confiscations and expulsions of former owners of the agricultural estates by the Villista government, as well as some improvements in the terms granted to the small tenants and sharecroppers, there was no 'revolutionary' change in the countryside in the north. No massive occupation of hacienda lands or change in the living and working conditions within the haciendas<sup>108</sup>, though there is no explanation provided, pending research, as to why there was no strong pressure from the peons and the landless jornaleros, and the brasseros (landless migrant labor into the USA and back), towards that direction.

The "peasant movements" in the Mexican Revolution, therefore, were not objectively displaced on the revolutionary tide - but was such which could be 'contained' in a process when the bourgeoisie was emerging as the dominant class.

---

107. Ibid.

108. Frederick Katz, Agrarian Changes in North Mexico in the period of Villista rule 1913-1915, p. 268 in Wilkie et al. (ed.), op. cit.

The politico-socio-economic conditions of exploitation and oppression during the Porfiriato especially perpetuated latent feelings of despair and resentment (mediated by the Church's piety towards the poor and its fatalist ideological disposition to acquiesce) expressed in folk songs, tales and all the local idioms of expressions - against the landowners who also monopolised the police, the bureaucracy and the judiciary.<sup>109</sup> The seemingly conservative, fatalist, passive and parochial mentality of 'peasant' (peons and the lower segments) engendered by the inability to perceive the possibility of change in their objective economic conditions and by the lack of an autonomous rise of expectations,<sup>110</sup> tended to inhibit their process of organisation, till the arousal of their subjective cognition of their objective social position<sup>111</sup> and the possibility of change from the exploitation of the landowning class, leaders emerged from within - with the intent of verbalising their demands and ameliorating their existential conditions. This leadership (a type of the rural "intellectual") with its contact with

---

109. Heather Fowler Salamini, Adalberto Tjeda and the Veracruz Peasant Movement, p. 277 in Wilkie et al. ed., *Contemporary Mexico*, op. cit.

110. *Ibid.*

111. J. Petras, *Politics and Social Structure in Latin America.*

outside leaders and ideologies like "Christian Socialism"<sup>112</sup> of Zapata, or in the form of Villa's banditry - with its moral codes of "honourable conduct" of robbing the rich and helping the poor<sup>113</sup> provides the effective organisation and mobilisation of the depressed man of the small peasants or peons of the "peasant-guilleros"<sup>114</sup> for a stand against oppression. But in its long term program its insufficiency became obvious - when the radical slogans of the Revolution of "land and Liberty" in fact became a part of the bourgeois rhetoric - and when the land and creation of ejidos or peasant Indian communities - became the "reserve" for holding the rural proletariat<sup>115</sup> an adjacent auxiliary to the capitalist system emerging as the dominant one in the social system.

#### Sighs and Screams

In the midst of battles over land and liberty, the Mexican labor movement also acquired an important

---

112. Salamini, op. cit.

113. Hobsbawm, Bandits, op. cit.

114. Ibid.

115. Chevalier, op. cit. Rodolfo Stavebhagen, Changing Functions of the Community in Underdeveloped countries, pp. 83-97 in Henry Bernstein ed., Underdevelopment and Development, op. cit.

position in the "liberal, nationalist agrarian programmes."<sup>116</sup> Labor unions could not avoid the consequences of the revolution; railway workers, although belonging to liberal brotherhoods, were instantly affected. They were arrested or impressed to work by rival fighting forces. The influence of Flores Magon and his Syndicalist movement (about which we have mentioned earlier) was everywhere apparent - both in general ideas advocating cooperatives and mutualism, as well as concrete participation in the Revolution as a fighting force. The noted "red battalions", which fight the battle in Mexico city in 1914 were not isolated, spontaneous groups seeking the barricades.<sup>117</sup> There was much syndicalist guidance and leadership, especially that which gathered in the Casa del Obrero Mundial, the centre of the workers of the world. From 1914 on, Mexican labor became increasingly conscious of its aims and gains, going through different fases with different leaders, but retaining an essentially national character which abstained from affiliations with the international labor movements.<sup>118</sup> Mexican labor, however, drew away from any independent

---

116. Bernstein, op. cit., "Its seat".

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid.

political action of its own, the more it became connected to the nationalist bourgeois forces.<sup>119</sup> By 1918 the ideas of Magon were being replaced by the ones of Luis Morones, organiser of the nation-wide trade union federation, the Confederation Regional Obrera Mexicana or CROM. And when Mexican labor entered the political arena, it was slowly subsumed and guided by the bourgeois national state - paternalistic with a generous Constitution - in which - labor did not feel the necessity of independence - and in sport of it labor leaders received promises of the repeal of the harsh, anti-labor laws of Diaz - affirmed in the new constitutional workingman's code expressed in article 123 of the Constitution of 1917 providing the guarantees for labor and social welfare.<sup>120</sup> With scarcely any Marxist influence, Mexican labor character supplied the guarantees of the Constitution behind labor's right to organise unions, to bargain collectively, and to strike. It was certainly the most relatively fundamental extension of human benefits that Mexican labor had been able to obtain. But the gains still came to it from the authority of law and not from the natural rights of man. It was national law and paternalistic authority and not the

---

119. Ibid.

120. Ibid.

concept of equality, which provided the source of the social welfare clauses.<sup>121</sup> The labor pressure was transformed therefore into a collaborative force, both by the petit-bourgeois intellectuals as well as the "transformismo"<sup>122</sup> of the bourgeoisie - which "could contain the contradiction" by the form of the "mansification of privilege".<sup>123</sup>

### The Janus face

"Effective suffrage and no re-election was the rallying call of the new bourgeoisie, against the Porfirian Diaz-potism, in which the "conscious element" of the urban petit-bourgeoisie, the professionals, journalists, lawyers, intellectuals, university professors, the press tabloids, and the democratic 'clubs' were echoing the demands at the political level - with the ideology of nationalism providing the homogenising buttress; and equality - freedom, the ideal which Madero expressed in his 'constitutional plan of San Luis Potosi'. The nationalist bourgeois disposition was however, clearly offset in the contest of the forms of

---

121. Ibid.

122. Gramsci, op. cit.

123. Andrew G. Frank, Mexico, the Janus face of the 20c. bourgeois Revolution, p. 74, in Whither Latin America Monthly Review Press, 1963.

agrarian and labor movements - with the Maderistas raising the slogans of "regional equality" with the centre (in which the rising northern industrial zone would be dominant), equality of representation and the political progress of 'all' Mexicans instead of a few - which in itself would be few - who will benefit from the extension of the political privilege expressed in the demand for suffrage in the liberal nationalist horizon, aiming at the capture of State power and annihilate the Porfirian military and bureaucracy by counter-offensive. Madero was elected in 1911 as the new President and Diaz resigned; and he (Madero) moved closer to his nationalist - Mexico for Mexicans - liberal ideals in social legislation, where the sanctity of private property was maintained.<sup>124</sup> Reaction moved in with the Caudillo militarism of Huerta who assumed presidency after the murder of Madero - with Carranza becoming the revolutionary head of the forces in the north - facing the reactionary dictatorship of Huerta.

In 1914 the race of Mexico city began leading to the Queretaro Convention of 1916 which provided the 1917 Constitution. Carranza provided hope for "order and

---

124. Michaels et al., op. cit.



stability" and displayed the defiance of the Yanquis; introduced anti-monopoly measures, and got Mexico's due in taxes from the foreign controlled oil and mining companies, who complained loudly, but operated their properties and paid their taxes.<sup>125</sup> And under him, the Constitution of 1917 was ratified, which provided the legal basis to the programmatic ideal of the rising new bourgeoisie - placed in the formation of social contradiction - of labor and agrarianists. The central aspect of the Constitution was its anti-foreign and anti-clerical attitude, and it sketched a picture for Mexico's national future, where property rights were duly protected and people were to live in freedom and dignity<sup>126</sup>, in which the Mexican 'State' emerged with an increasingly sovereignty over individuals and property<sup>127</sup>, as the grand 'protector' and harmonizer of different social interests - meaning whereby, the subsumption of contradictions to the process of capitalist development - enshrined in petit-bourgeois intellectual notions - which dominated the Convention.<sup>128</sup> The overwhelming impression that is dominated and gleaned from

---

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid., Andrew G. Frank, op. cit.

127. Ibid., Bernstein, op. cit.

128. op. cit.

a reading of the Constitution is that it established a capitalist State - within the context of the various contradictions - which gave it its specific character of being nationalist and "responsible towards other social classes". Profits are not only not prohibited but are to be shared with the workers<sup>129</sup>, with Article 123 enshrining the Labor code. Article 27, which proclaims the nations inalienable rights an ownership of the subsoil, and immediately speaks of granting concessions to private enterprises. In the matter of land, it confirms peasant proprietorship albiet under the peculiar Mexican institution of the ejido. Then too, the rancho, the foundation of the farming bourgeoisie, is recognised as socially desirable, while the multi-hectared hacienda is not forbidden but placed under regulations to be enforced by the option of the State - which will pay compensations in case of expropriations. One theme of strict contrast over foreigners wishing to hold real property in Mexico is however presented in Article 27 without exception. Article 28 prohibits monopolies, and its call for the establishment of a Banco Unico de Emision was designed to control monopolistic foreign dominated banks of Mexico city

---

129. Ibid.

with their power of issuing notes.<sup>130</sup>

The Constitution became the Magna Carta for the nationalist bourgeoisie and provided the legal framework for the capitalist relations of production and their predominance in the social formation - in which the State acquired 'relative autonomy' for both 'directing democracy' as well as for 'economic intervention' for the 'progress of the nation'. The form and functioning of which shall be the basis of our thesis.

So let us close the prologue with an old song of the Revolution -

"Pancho Villa has surrendered in the city of Torreon  
 We are tired of fighting  
 And now cotton will be grown  
 Now we are all one party  
 There is no one left to fight  
 The War is ended companeros".<sup>131</sup>

---

130. Ibid.

131. Anita Brenner, "The Wind that swept Mexico", New York, 1943, p. 57 loc. cit. Barley and Nasatir, op. cit.



## CHAPTER I

"It is the Revolution, the magical word, the word that is going to change everything, that is going to bring us immense delight and a quick death."  
(Octavio Paz-Labyrinth of Solitude).

Grains of Sand

In continuation, we would admit the complexity of this intellectual venture, the conclusion of which, we hope, will present, if not a 'totalised'<sup>1</sup> instance in the process of understanding, at least a schematic and tentative framework to comprehend the historical reality of the Mexican State which has repeatedly been dealt with in franchised portions, and dislocated analysis by many American scholars,<sup>2</sup> presenting elaborate constructs of

- 
1. "You know, I have connections - even in California"  
T.S. Eliot, *The Cocktail Party*, loc.cit.,  
E.P. Thompson.  
"The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays" Merlin -  
London 1978, p.1, and which combines the aspects of  
a material understanding in a dialectical conjunction  
rather than dialectical disjunction of historical  
situations 'made' to interact. But, is rather taking  
into cognisance the formal-contentual specificity and  
contextual generality into a totality. It is a  
philosophical quest for the placement of existential  
priorities within in ambit of reified experiences.
  2. (a) Frank Brandenburg - *The Making of Modern Mexico*,  
Prentice Hall 1964.  
(b) Merilee S. Grindle - *Bureaucrats, Politicians  
and Peasants in Mexico - A Case Study in Public  
Policy*, UCP 1977.  
(c) RR Fagen and WS Tuchy - *Politics and Privilege  
in a Mexican City*, Stanford 1972.  
(d) Ernest Gruening - *Mexico and its Heritage*,  
NY 1968.

"multivarious variables in their interpersonal relationships" representing the system of the Mexican State.

Faced with the limitations of the availability of primary evidence (factual as well as experiential) we have been constrained to operate with the assistance of secondary sources, most of which are lacking in any conception of a scientific theory, and which not only reproduce the bourgeois conceptions of the state and of political power, but also pre-empt and prevent a "going beyond" by the mystifications and empirical jungles which are resultantly created within the context of their specific as well as general problematic. To present any positive knowledge of the historical phenomenon and its processes of articulation (the state in Mexico), an immediate theoretico-examination of the "concrete" fact is imperative, which, however, is not available to us. The inferencial utilisation of secondary source evidence based upon the epistemological principles of the bourgeois ideologies of the state and political power, has in it, the implicit impulse, as well as obfuscations, which can tingle unconsciously, the conclusions of an analysis, undertaken within the parameters of a scientific theory -- the mastery of the propositional variables, categories, aspects and relationships of which, for us is yet a far

off horizon; and which itself has yet to be constituted in further refinements<sup>3</sup> beyond essentialism, structuralism, empiricist reductionism, economism etc. to a totalised instance of comprehensive rapport with what happened and its adequate and necessary understanding. We shall, however, indirectly though, try and displace the epistemological terrain of the bourgeois ideologies, by not just subjecting them to a marxist critique, or posting 'concrete facts to their concepts (in which we have already expressed our limitations), but rather by demonstrating their inadequacy by posting parallel concepts situated in a different, more scientific problematic for it is only by means of these new concepts that we shall be able to look beyond the form, at the actual 'concrete reality' to, so to say, lightly enhance the virtues of our transitional conclusion, and clarify the footpaths of further enquiry.

In the process of investigation of the historical development of the Mexican State structure and its specific form in its complex ramifications, we shall construct where possible a diachronic framework for the study of the societal processes and experiences which we

---

3. Especially when a Marxist theory 'on the state' is still finding its own bearings - see, John Holloway and Sol Picciotto (ed) State and Capital - A Marxist Debate - Edward Arnold 1978, pp.1-32.

are afraid shall not be complete, but will also have instances of theretico-logical developments related to the actual and concrete historical processes.<sup>4</sup>

Our main emphasis would be upon the "class theory" of the State, and to show its development and linkages with other social classes, and its role in the establishment of the hegemony<sup>5</sup> of the ruling class in the civil society, while maintaining their predominance in the economy by active intervention. We shall also touch upon the problem of relative autonomy<sup>6</sup> of the state in a social formation, with special reference to Mexico-taking care, not to fall in the susceptibilities of mechanistic or economic aspects<sup>7</sup> of a vulgar materialism<sup>8</sup> drawing upon reductionistic as well as overtly deterministic formulae<sup>9</sup> in studying the intrinsicity of extrinsic relationships of class and state and its configuration of diagrammatic articulation.

- 
4. See for instance, Maurice Godelier - Irrationality and Rationality in Economics Tr. by Brian Pearce - MRP, NY 1972, pp.vii-xvii on notions of theretico-logical guidance.
  5. We shall develop this concept later - established by Antonio Gramsci c.f. selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci ed. and Tr. by Quintin Hoare and G.N. Smith - International Publishers NY 1971, pp.206-75.
  6. f.f. Louis Althusser - Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays NLB 1971, Section on Ideology, pp.123-62.
  7. F.J. Hobsbawm - Karl Marx's Contribution to Historiography, pp.265-83, in Robin Blackburn (ed.) Ideology in Social Science - Fontana 1972.
  8. Ibid.
  9. Ibid.



## CHAPTER II

Myriad Meridians

Instead of attempting to show that different types of class relations and of class power generate referentially corresponding forms of state organisations, bourgeois methods and conceptions precisely mystify these issues at times in highly complicated "sets" of categories and digests of analysis. The state is conceptualised as a formal organisation,<sup>1</sup> neutral, and distinguished by its specific functions - defence, political governance, administrative management, judicial regulation etc. An abundant literature exists on organisations and organisational analysis,<sup>2</sup> most of which suffer from a necessary flaw; it does not consider organisations as part of the ongoing historical process of social reproduction and revolution. From Weber's conception of a "rational bureaucracy" to modern functionalism,<sup>3</sup> systems approaches, and notions of forms of compliance, the conceptualisation and analysis produced by organisational theory, have generally been located in a subjectivist problematic. They have focussed on organisation subject - its goals,<sup>4</sup> its decision making or "adaptive" behaviour,

---

1. In Goran Therborn - "What does the ruling class do when it rules?" NLB 1978, pp.36-41.

2. Ibid., pp.34-35, 243.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

its modes of legitimation and enforcement of compliance<sup>5</sup>, thereby making the paradigms of bourgeois ideology exemplar to them and judging 'state approximation to it, that is to say, on the creators or leaders of the organisation and on their problems.<sup>6</sup> Of course, this is not an unimportant area of investigation, however, a basic dichotomy between the organisation subject and its "setting" (objective location)<sup>7</sup> is maintained a dichotomy which hinders deeper consideration of the process of social reproduction and change. This, is a more fundamental weakness, than the customary lack of class analysis of organisation structures, because it is in and through these processes that classes and class struggle operates.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, in order to understand the class character of the state apparatus, we should not view it not just as a goal-oriented subject in an environment<sup>9</sup> but as a formally bounded system of structured processes within the global system of societal processes.<sup>10</sup>

---

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid also see Bo Anderson and James D. Cockcroft - Control and Cooptation in Mexican Politics, pp 366-89 in Horowitz, Castro and Gerassi (ed.) Latin American Radicalism - London 1969 and Frank Brandenburg op.cit. for the 'goal-oriented' approach to the study of the Mexican state.

10. Therborn, op.cit.

rather than exigent ruses to meet the partial pressures of temporal, contingent necessities of 'reasons of state'.

The systems approach to study organisations and politics usually operates as a variant of the subjectivist problematic utilising, highly abstract concepts, they typically analyse the organisation as a self maintaining system, with its own autonomy, logic and dynamic, which provide the inputs as well as the outputs in which, question of objective location are just peripheral.

Within these broad methods, as it is impossible in the context of this paper to account for the subtle variations of the themes of bourgeois ideological emanations and its analogues, these are some basic approaches to study political power, by far the most common of which centres on the question "who has power?" It asks - "who runs the country? Does anyone run this community etc." This is the subjectivist approach, in the sense that it tries to locate the "subject of power", and extends the question to "how many have power? few or many, unified groups of families or institutional elite or competing groups?"<sup>11</sup>

Within this shared problematic many different analyses and solutions have been proposed especially in the USA where a lively debate has emerged in relation to

---

11. Ibid.

both methods and conclusions of research. There is no end to polemics amongst theorists of pluralism, power elite and ruling class"<sup>12</sup> Remaining within the framework of a liberal political ideology (with some radical liberals like CW Mills) the conceptions of liberal democracy have become the starting norms and paradigms for judgement<sup>13</sup> of government forms and political regimes, especially the favouring or criticism of the state in Mexico-related to the liberal norms<sup>14</sup> of peace, stability pluralism, progress etc.

Unlike, the historical materialist approach which states not from the point of view of actors and their self conceptions,<sup>15</sup> but from that of the social process of reproduction and change, and which seeks to define the nature of state and the character of power, and not just its subject and quantity, by basing its focus on specific historical social relations of production connected in a determinate manner to the productive forces, the non-Marxist approaches have blatant ideological

---

12. Therborn, op. cit.

13. Ibid.

14. See Woodrow Borah - "Discontinuity and Continuity in Mexican History" pp. 23-25 in *The Pacific Historical Review*-Feb., 1979, Vol. XLVIII No. 1 - California University Press and Luis Villoro - *Mexican Idea of History*, pp. 484, f.f. in Xawis Hanke (ed.), *History of Latin American Civilisation - Sources and Interpretation*, Vol. II - The Modern Age.

15. and deceptions.

distortions. They usually do not deal adequately with questions of what do the power subject do with their power, what do the ruler do when they rule, or where do the leaders lead the led? The pluralist-elitist approach concludes - many have power - good! few have it - bad! undemocratic etc. Their typical answer to "Power to do what?" results in - power to realise one's own interests - or the interests of the effectiveness of the collective operation as a whole,<sup>16</sup> which in view of a variety of historical forms and systems of power (democracy, Fascism) can hardly be a satisfactory answer, therefore, only within given social form and time perspective does it seem possible to attach a precise empirical meaning to the 'utilitarian' notion of 'interest' which is a point of basic focus in the bourgeois analyses of vertically formed multi-class societies; but which falter as soon as more penetrative questions are posed- what is the interest of a fascist or a military dictator, or of a democratic Prime Minister? The answer usually is in the framework of a complexified teleological paradigm is, to stay in power.

Besides, the pluralist-elitist theories do not have any conception of historical dynamic change. For Mosca, Pareto and Michels<sup>17</sup> the organism has a cyclical/

---

16. Therborn, op. cit.

17. Ibid.

biological character, from rise to stability to degeneration, and within this, the psyche-will and interests (though not unimportant in relation to historico-conjunctural voluntarism)<sup>18</sup> of the subjects of power are taken as starting points. Marxism, however, goes beyond these analytical impasses by locating the matter in the social rhythms of production and reproduction of it, in which the state acquires a tangible posture, complexion and form.

Alongwith Weber's conception of class, status and powers, where class is defined in terms of position in the market, i.e., relationships of circulation, and classes are not agents of specific socio-economic mechanisms but market subjects whose bargaining opportunities are determined by their differential endowments with certain properties, while status groups are pre-capitalist; this dichotomy hinders an analysis of ideology in capitalist society, as also mystifies the social bearings of the subjects of power.<sup>19</sup> While the focus should be more not on elites and decision making per se, but on the effects of state policies in the production and reproduction of the social formation in the short and long term.

---

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

Based on a static structuralist or formal functionalist methods, the conclusions of the pluralist-elitist theories deny the very existence of a ruling class and "class" power; which precisely cannot be located outside any conception of the social formation. The state in this context acquires 'vicarious distortions' and is as best adjudged on the principles of its formal functioning, democracy, dictatorship etc. The social classes and state are therefore, not seen as objective structural processes of relationships whose "agents" are in the words of Marx not just passive, puppet like - 'bearers' of it.<sup>20</sup> Hence, all social classes and groups are in some way reducible to inter-personal relations, and the state is reducible to the interpersonal relations and the state is reducible to the interpersonal relations of the members of the diverse groups that constitute the state apparatus, and finally the relationships between social classes and the state is itself reducible to interpersonal relations of 'individuals' composing social groups and 'individuals' composing the state, expressed in the 'patron-client' linkages which, however, leaves much to be desired about the social specificities as well as the societal contexts of both the patrons as well as the clients.

---

20. Therborn, op.cit.

The same approach of the subjectivist problematic which sees 'men' not as active bearers of objective instances,<sup>21</sup> but as the genetic principles of the levels of the social whole (fetishised in the individual) and them as the origin of social action: Sociological Research thus leads finally, not to the study of the objective coordinates that determine (not inevitably) the distribution of agents into social classes and the contradictions between these social classes, but to the search for finalist explanations founded on the psychic, genetic motivations of conduct of the individual actors-leading to expositions of "good queen Bess" or "bad queen Bess".<sup>22</sup>

Rather than multiplying instances let us rather emphasise the 'mystifying' character of the epistemological problematic of bourgeois ideology and its methodological application to research. Notions of 'the decomposition of the capitalist class', with division between owner and executives (managers) of capital<sup>23</sup> (though important in the modality of functioning not in end) the idea of the 'neutrality'<sup>24</sup> of the state representing the general interest in relation to divergent interests of (civil) society, and

---

21. Therborn, op.cit.

22. Fact which even E.H. Carr in 'What is History?' Criticise though not with a acute finesse.

23. Therborn, op.cit.

24. Ibid.



that the capitalist class has never ruled, in the sense that they have rarely participated directly in the government, the emphasis is on their social origins and personal ties of influence, status and milieu of the bureaucrats, have overcast the horizons. And, precisely, these streams are well established on the various studies on Mexico in general and Mexican State in particular about which we shall take up the issue later.

Not just this, let us also mention the bourgeois - especially Amercianist influence and monopolies on the theories of under-development<sup>25</sup> - where, suffice it to say, notions as well as strong static conceptions of 'the innate dual economy'<sup>26</sup> of advanced and archaic sectors (reflected also in advanced and third world attitudes) have been supported with the 'diffusionist' solution of material and moral development on capitalist ethical principles, as well as scope for bourgeois - neo colonialist intervention in the developmental processes,<sup>27</sup> and developing those countries in their own image with

---

25. Elucidated by Rodolfo Stavenhagen in "Seven Erroneous Theses about Latin America", pp. 102-17 in Horowitz et.al. (ed.) Lat. Am. Rad. op.cit.

26. Ibid.

27. Hamza Alavi - state in Post Colonial Societies - Pakistan and Bangladesh, pp. 145-49 in Gough and Sharma (ed.) Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia MRP-1973.

the dominating dependency kept in tact.<sup>28</sup>

This aspect goes outside the scope of our paper, but it is well to mention it, as the general approach on the Mexican economic development both American as well as indigenous looks towards the diffusionist solution in which the role of the nation-state vis-a-vis trans-national corporate capital also becomes important.

---

28. See Andre' Gunder Frank - On capitalist underdevelopment, pp. 20-104. Ox U. Press 1975, also T. Dos Santos - The crisis of Development Theory and the Problem of Dependence in Latin America pp. 57-82 in Henry Bernstein (ed.) Underdevelopment and Development. The Third World Today - Penguin 1976.

## CHAPTER III

The Equinox:

The very negation by revealing the inadequacies of the bourgeois problematic in its analysis of state power and state structures and processes does not automatically provide an alternative methodology, though it does expose the various 'traps' into which an uncautious analysis might fall into, by unconsciously and uncritically adopting the conceptual categories of the bourgeois approach which are abundant, especially for our purpose in the historical surveys on Mexico, which unfortunately, are our only basis for empirical evidence. An alternative model, however should not start from the functionalist, instrumentalist, essentialist problematic of the role of the state in the reproduction of capital, but from the relations between the antagonistic classes, as determined by the forces and relations of production in a given social formation.<sup>1</sup> Poulantzas has already developed the idea that the state should be regarded neither as a specific institution nor as an instrument, but as a relation, a materialised concentration of the class relations of a given society<sup>2</sup> with state power.

---

1. Therborn, op.cit.

2. Nicos Poulantzas - The problem of the Capitalist State, pp. 239-53 in Robin Blackburn (ed.) op.cit. and also Poulantzas - Political Power and Social Classes - London 1972 loc.cit.

a relation between social class forces expressed in the context of state policies executed through the state apparatus or apparatuses, which in the historical course come to crystallise determinate social relations and thus assume material existence: which are to a certain extent independent of current state policies and class relations.<sup>3</sup> (relatively autonomous). It follows, that, although the variance between state power and state apparatus is limited by the fact that they express the class relations of the same social system (or formation - also at differential levels of dev. esp. in 3rd world contexts) at any given moments, significant disjunctures (non-correspondence) appear between the two, the possibility of variance is substantially increased by the coexistence within a particular state system of several apparatuses in which different sets of class relations may have crystalised. Therefore, any conceptualisation of the state should take into account the system of apparatuses also, with specific functions of coercive defence, political governance (by supreme law making), administrative management (by rule application) and judicial regulation of the social formation, not as specific, autonomous situations, but within the framework of the underlying unity of the historical process to which they are intrinsically affiliated.

---

3. Ibid.

Within the broader framework of the Marxist problematic, there is far from a concensus on a theory or typology of the capitalist state, the political modalities of class rule; formats of ruling class representation and the processes of mediation by the state in the mechanisms of reproduction of both the social formation as well as itself. Different theoretico-intellectual traditions and realities have produced divergent points of emphases in the understanding as well as theorisation of state (class) power, and its dominant and determinant linkages with the different state apparatuses and its relations with the other social classes, as also the question of ideological hegemony in civil society<sup>4</sup> and its relationship with the state. And, these complex issues related to the processes and the modalities of articulation of class rule have become a point of debate, within the context of the advanced capitalist nations and the conception of the revolutionary strategy<sup>5</sup> for the working class as well new managerial class.<sup>6</sup>

We should admit, that we do not propose to sum up the debate, but shall only be presenting certain critical referential points, which highlight the issues of the essential character and the historical forms of the state

---

4. Gramsci, op.cit.

5. Holloway and Piciotto (ed), op.cit.

6. See also - Pat Walker ed. - Between Labor and Capital - Harvester Press, 1979.

and its relationships with the (civil) society primarily in a social formation comprising the totality of the political, economic, ideological-cultural instances.

For Marx<sup>7</sup> and Lenin<sup>8</sup> the State is conceived as a repressive apparatus, which enables the ruling class or classes to ensure their domination over the subordinated and exploited; as also its intervention in the interests of the ruling classes in the class struggle, which revolves around the question of the seizure of state power. And, linked with the specific nature of the social contradictions, is the determinate form of the state in the historical process, though a subtle distinction is also indicated that the state apparatus may survive the political events which affect the possession of the state power<sup>9</sup> in a new conjunctural position.

The debate on the State revolves on its emphasis on the aspect of essentialist 'structural - super-determinism'<sup>10</sup> in which case, the state and its set of

---

7. f.f. Karl Marx (i) 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte - Moscow 1970 (ii) The Class Struggles in France 1848-1850 (iii) Manifesto of the Communist Party (iv) Preface to a contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.

8. Lenin - "State and Revolution".

9. Althusser, op.cit., pp. 134-36 ff.

10. The theoretical generality has been criticised by E.P. Thompson in Poverty of Theory, op.cit. passim.

apparatuses is conceptualised as an objective relation, in which the members of the state apparatus functions according to a specific internal unity. Their class origin, class situation recedes into the background in relation to that which unifies them, their class position, that is to say, the fact that they belong to the state apparatus and that they have as their objective function the actualisation of the role of the state. The totality of this role coincide with the interests of the ruling class.<sup>11</sup>

From the question of the "managers and the bureaucracy" this approach further links the state Repressive Apparatuses with the state Ideological Apparatuses - to provide a system of domination in the objective interests of the ruling class or classes.

Althusser has specially contributed to the concept of 'structural determinism', in which 'vital distinctions of relatively autonomous institutions of the civil society eg. church, schools etc. are fused and subsumed within the state complex and shown as necessary extensions of it, through which the ruling class exercises its ideological domination for the reproduction of the relations of production. This is related to his distinctions of the 'social levels and instances' with specific determination, with the infrastructure representing the

---

11. Ralph Miliband - Reply to Nicos Poulantzes, pp. 253-63 in Balckburn (ed), op.cit.

unity of productive forces and relations of production and the superstructure, with two levels of instances - the politico legal (law and the state) and ideological, with respective indices of effectivity in the last instance determinism<sup>12</sup> by the base, as also the internal logic of the reproduction of the structure within the system.<sup>13</sup>

He emphasises the role of physical and non-physical violence, repressive and ideological state apparatuses - army, police, courts, prisons, bureaucracy etc. as part of one repressive apparatus, and family, legal, political (parties) trade unions, communications - press, T.V., radio etc. as the ideological apparatus whose "linkages with the state are obfuscated and whose independence is fetished by the ideologisation process."<sup>14</sup> The Repressive state apparatus constitute an organised whole, whose different parts are centralised beneath the commanding unity of that of the politics of class struggle applied by the political representatives of the ruling class is possession of state power. The unity of the multiple 'relatively autonomous' Ideological state apparatuses is usually assured in contrary - contradictory forms, by the ruling ideology, and it is this intermediation of the ideology of the ruling class that harmonises the repressive

---

12. Althusser, op.cit.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid and Miliband, op.cit.



and the ideological state apparatuses and parts thereof - where the volition of valorisation of ideology is a representation of imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence through interpellations, with illusions being sponsored by the state<sup>15</sup> through schools, cultural institutions This propogandist approach however, neglects the historical experiential dimension of the subordinated, subalterm elements to see how the mythification and ideologisation processes are mediatively received by them and which either hegemonise or are discarded attackively by the development of the subalterm ideology and culture of the subelltern classes.<sup>16</sup>

Poulantzas develops the althusserian problematic further, by further suggesting the relative autonomy of the state - which is relatively antonomous from the "diverse fractions of the ruling classes precisely in order to be able to organise the hegemony of the whole of this class.<sup>17</sup> For him, the state apparatus forms an essentially objective system of special branches whose relations presents a specific internal unity, and obeys, to a large extent its own logic.<sup>18</sup> Each particular

---

15. Althusser, op.cit.

16. Gramsci, op.cit. and also E P Thompson - Whigs and Hunters - Penguin, 1975, pp. 219-70.

17. Poulantzas - Problem of Capitalist State. in Blackburn, op.cit.

18. Ibid.

form of relations among its branches (underdeveloped state form have a necessary control over the various st. apps. whose relative autonomy from the base and class manipulation is also relatively less related to the paradigms of adv. cap. societies) and by the predominance of one or of certain of its branches over the others - Liberal state, Bonapartism, military, dictatorship, Fascism. But each particular form of capitalist state must be referred back, in its unity, to, important modifications of the relation of production to important stages of class struggle. Only after having established the relation of a form of state as apparatus as a whole, with the 'exterior' can the respective role and the mutual internal relation of the 'branches' of the state apparatus be established:<sup>19</sup> a significant shift in the predominant branch in the state apparatus, or of the relations between these branches, cannot be directly established by the immediate exterior role of this branch, but is determined by the modification of the whole system of the state apparatus and of its form of international unity as such; a modification which is itself due to changes in the relations of production and to developments in the class struggle.<sup>20</sup>

---

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

Poulantzas also emphasises the role of ideology in the functioning of the state apparatus. The classic Marxist tradition of the theory of the state is principally concerned to show the repressive role of the state, in the strong sense of organised physical violence. But with the elaboration of Gramsci's problematic of hegemony, the role played by ideology in political domination has become crucial. He, Poulantzas, emphasises further that ideology not only exists in ideas, customs or morals, but is institutionalised and belongs to the system of the state, whilst depending principally on the ideological level.<sup>21</sup> The Althusserian ideological state apparatuses - like the church, schools, mass media etc. - with the state repressive apparatus exhibiting a more rigorous, singular unity between its different branches, than the ideological apparatuses which are vested with a greater independence vis-a-vis the state repressive apparatus, because of their 'specific function' of ideological transmission and inculcation.

In defense of his conceptualisation of the state ideological apparatuses Poulantzas mentions four instances: (a) if the state maintains the cohesion of a social formation which reproduces the conditions of production of a social system by maintaining the determinant class domination, it is obvious that the ideological apparatuses

---

21. Ibid.

fulfil the same function; (b) the condition of possibility of the existence and functioning of these institutions under a certain form is the state repressive apparatus which is always present behind them and which defends them; (c) although the ideological apparatuses maintain a notable autonomy among themselves as well as in relation to the state repressive apparatus (SRA) they belong to the same system, and every modification of the form of the state has repercussions not only on the mutual relations of the state repressive apparatus, but also on the mutual relations of the state ideological apparatuses and their relation with the state repressive apparatus: one does not need mention the extreme case of Fascism to prove the point, but just to mention the modifications of the role and relations of the church, the parties, the unions, schools, etc., media, family both among themselves and the state repressive apparatus in the diverse 'normal' forms through which the capitalist state has evolved (Mexico being our special case in point); (d) according to Marxist-Leninist-theory - a socialist revolution does not signify a shift in state power but it must break it - destroy the state repressive and ideological apparatuses differentially with the emphasis on the state repressive apparatus which in the last instance maintains the state form in a social system.<sup>22</sup>

---

22. Ibid.

Ralph Miliband expresses a different strain in the Marxist problematic of the analysis of state and he is criticised for using an empiricist instrumentalist approach in studying class power in state structure,<sup>23</sup> because he differentiates the "subjectivities of the elites which comprise the objective state form, and whose social relations in society are more complex and differentiated, than the structural super-determinists would have it,<sup>24</sup> though he is accused of falling within the problematic of the pluralist-elitist theories-using an empiricist methodology.

Miliband however, suggests a complex analysis- governments may be solely concerned with the better running of the economy - what is being improved is a capitalist economy: and this ensure that whoever may or may not gain, capitalist interests are least likely to lose.<sup>25</sup>

Contrary to the French tradition, Miliband, emphasises the subjective modalities of articulation of objective structures and relations - as between the "ruling class and the active functionaries of its interests" whose linkages are mediated in complex correspondent forms historically, but who are necessarily

---

23. Poulantzas critique of Miliband.

24. In Ralph Miliband - The State in Capitalist Society London, 1969.

25. Ibid passim.

irrespective of their social origin, class situation and ideological dispositions are subject to the structural constraints of the system.<sup>26</sup> Further, he also counters the arguments of Poulantzas when he stresses that what the state does is in every particular and at all times is wholly determined by these objective relations, in other words, that the structural constraints of the system are so absolutely compelling as to turn those who run the state into nearest functionaries-agents of policies imposed upon them by the logic of the system - which ultimately negates the concept of 'relative autonomy of the state' which is totally subordinated to the ruling class because of its objective relations. This being an economic concept in the last instance. Miliband on the other hand emphasises the dialectic between the 'state and the system, by suggesting that the state in these class societies is primarily the guardian of the economic interests which are dominant in them. Its real purpose is to ensure their continued predominance. And within this, the state elite is involved in a far more complex relationship with the system and with society as a whole, than Poulantzas would admit, by seeing it but a 'deviationist - face problem',<sup>27</sup> and within the parameters of which the relative autonomy of the state operates, with the case of Fascism being an extreme.

---

26. Ibid.

27. Miliband in Blackburn, op.cit.

On ideology Miliband suggests that 'political socialisation' takes place through institutions which are linked to the state system, but goes beyond to point out that it is important to show as to how they do perform their ideological functions outside it<sup>28</sup> and which never cease to insist on their unideological, unpolitical and neutral character.<sup>29</sup> He also elucidates, that these ideological institutions differ in their relationship to the state, and this is an important distinction to be made in bourgeois democracies and system of monopolistic state.<sup>30</sup>

In the same subject on the question of hegemony, in civil society - Perry Anderson<sup>31</sup> has reconstructed the shifting constellation of concepts used by Gramsci to theorise the differential nature of the state, civil society and class rule in east and west by suggesting that civil society is a complex structure, and one that is resistant to incursions of immediate economic elements (crises, depressions etc.)<sup>32</sup> The civil society is autonomous from state activity in which the hegemony of the ruling class is constructed, which Marx mentions with relation to the autonomous state under Bonaparte -

---

28. Ibid.

29. Miliband - State in Cap Soc., op.cit.

30. Ibid.

31. Perry Anderson - Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci - NLR 100, Nov. 1976, Jan. 1977, pp. 9-44.

32. Ibid.

"The state enmeshes, controls and regulates supervises and regiments civil society from most all embracing expression of its life, down to its most insignificant motions - from its general modes of existence down to the private life of individuals."<sup>33</sup>

Anderson further, elaborates the Gramscian notion of state political society and civil society - with hegemony armoured with coercion which is differentially displayed in structures of bourgeois power related to the levels of force and consent, domination and hegemony, violence and civilisation,<sup>34</sup> with the power always everking in the shadowes and becoming strongly coercive in times of crisis.<sup>35</sup>

After having briefly surveyed the basic conceptual tendencies within the marxist problematic, related to their points of emphases on the nature of class domination and its (often contrary not contradictory) relationship with state power and its relations with the ideological domination and hegemony in civil society - the ground becomes fairly clear for a scientific approach to the application of the evolution of the bourgeois state in Mexico, which we must confess, we would not be able to analyse at a very high level of complexity. We shall

---

33. Marx 18 Brumaire, and Survey from Exile - London, 1973, pp. 238.

34. Anderson, op.cit.

35. Ibid.



just indicate certain directions of approaches for further developments. Before passing on to the actual historical processes of the development of the state in Mexico, let us also consider a separate reality - that of the state in post-colonial societies. It, is crucial for our own study to mention these different aspects albeit at the theoretical level, to construct certain bearings for a grid-chart of analysis, where none exists before trying to cross the ocean of a miasmic empirical details.

The state in most (leaving aside exceptions) post-colonial society is not the instrument of a single class. It is relatively autonomous and it mediates the competing interests of three propertied classes - the metropolitan bourgeoisie, the indigenous bourgeoisie and the landed classes, while at the same time acting on behalf of all of them in order to preserve the social order in which their interests are embedded i.e., the institution of private property and the capitalist mode of production as the dominant mode of production in the social formation<sup>36</sup> (due to uneven capitalist development in the dependent context).<sup>37</sup> In this situation the military/bureaucratic obgarchies,<sup>38</sup> the apparatus of the

---

36. Hamza Alavi, op.cit.

37. See also C. Furtado - Elements of a Theory of Underdevelopment - the Underdeveloped Structures, pp. 33-43 in Henry Bernstein (ed), op.cit.

38. Alavi, op.cit. See also Ralph Miliband - The Coup in Chile, pp.410-36 in Robin Blackburn (ed) Revolution and Class Struggle - A reader in Marxist Politics - Fontana, 1977.

state also assume a new relatively autonomous economic role, which is not parallel in the classical bourgeois state, because, the state in the post colonial society directly appropriates a very large part of the economic surplus, and deploys it in bureaucratically directed economic activity in the name of promoting economic development.<sup>39</sup>

The strength of the bureaucracy rests in the extensive proliferation of administrative controls and in the direction of a vast array of public agencies, engaged in a variety of activities.<sup>40</sup> What remains problematic, however, is the social character, affiliations and commitments of the oligarchy, or those of the different sections of it vis-a-vis the various social classes - and the different regions (of the country), including the metropolitan bourgeoisie which have appeared in the plural.<sup>41</sup>

It is precisely in this context, that capitalist development takes place under the corrupt patronage and close control of the bureaucracy - which keeps the business opportunities restricted to few who keep the cash nexus wet<sup>42</sup> (Non organic-not emerged from competitive capitalism). Monopolists do not have any political

---

39. Alavi, op.cit.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

party which can be said to represent them as a class and the influence of the business community on the conduct of public affairs is primarily through direct contact with the bureaucrats.<sup>43</sup>

Within this circumstance, the relationship of metropolitan bourgeoisie and the indigenous one is also complex - where the indigenous elements are associated as "agents of modernity" in conformity to metropolitan interests, ideas and ideology of rationality and technology, vis-a-vis the demagogic parochialism and nationalist chauvinism of the politicians.<sup>44</sup> International agencies of aid give out planning programmes of development that suit them and corrupt the bureaucracy - which operate despite competing demands of different classes on the state, to maintain the system, and ensuring thereby the dependency of it in the international context.<sup>45</sup> Within the post colonial context, along with the structural overdevelopment of the state, the politicians and political parties stand at the centre of a complex set of relations. On the one hand, they are expected ideally to represent the demands of those from whom they seek support, they are supposed to attempt to realise those demands by their

---

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., see also Pablo Ganzalez Cassanova - Internal Colonialism and National Development, pp.118-39 in Horowitz et al., ed Latin America Rad.

45. Alavi, op.cit.

participation in the government, on the other hand, they play a key role in manipulating public relations on behalf of those who make public policy, to make it acceptable to the community at large. Towards, that end, they channel public grievances and seek to promote an "understanding of public issues and thereby diminish potential opposition. The party and bureaucracy are, therefore, two arms of the state - in competitive/complementary relationships,<sup>46</sup> (at times contrary but never contradictory - implying the imperative of dissolution).

The indigenous bourgeoisie is unable to subordinate the relatively highly developed state apparatus, which mediates the interests of the different dominant classes while its policies are determined by one.<sup>47</sup>

In this historical situation a fundamental distinction can be seen from that situation - subsequent to the bourgeois revolution in Europe on which the classical marxist theory of state is based. The questions, however, will be raised primarily with reference to the classical marxist theories of the state what Miliband ~~succes~~ calls the primary marxist view of the state "finds its most explicit expression in the famous aphorism of the Communist Manifesto".<sup>48</sup> "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing

---

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Alavi, Loc. cit.

the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie and the political power is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another." Miliband adds - this is the classical marxist-view on the subject of the state and it is the only one which is to be found in Marxism-Leninism.<sup>49</sup>

With regard to Marx himself, however, it only constitutes a primary view of the state -- for there is to be found another view in his works. This secondary view, is that of the state as an independent (not neutral) form and superior to all social classes as being the dominant force in society, rather than the instrument of the ruling class.<sup>50</sup> This secondary view of the state in Marx arises from his analysis of Bonapartism, Miliband concludes - "For Marx, the Bonapartist State, however, independent it may have been politically from any given social class, remains and cannot but remain, (in a class society) the protection of an economically and socially dominant class."<sup>51</sup>

The problem of the relationship between the state and the underlying economic structure, is however, more complex than the historical conjunctural context in which it was posed even in the Bonapartist State, or in other

---

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Alavi, loc. cit.

examples that arose in the context of the development of societies in Europe. It is, structured by yet another historical experience and require a fresh theoretical insight.<sup>52</sup>

In Europe societies, we witness the creation of the nation state by the indigenous bourgeoisie in the wake of their ascendant power, to provide a framework of law and various institutions that are essential for the capitalist relations or production. And within Marxist theory, there are two senses in which the idea of "relative autonomy" of the elements of the superstructure (such as the state) in relation to the underlying structure, i.e., the economic foundation of society, the relations of production, has been discussed. This should be clarified at this point: one is a basic philosophical sense, i.e., that it does not mean that elements of the superstructure are determined mechanistically by the underlying structure, but that the formative influence of the latter are mediated in a complex correspondent way. This fundamental philosophical issue should be distinguished from another: the theoretical issue. The idea of relative autonomy of the superstructure is put forward in this second sense as a theory i.e., as an explanation of the relationship between the state and the underlying "structure" in certain

---

52. Ibid.

exceptional historical situations.<sup>53</sup> Marx's analyses of the Bonapartist State deals with the most extreme case of the relative autonomy of the state. However, in classical marxism, the idea of the relative autonomy of the superstructure (and the state) was conceived of explicitly within the framework of a society, subject to the domination (hegemony) of a single ruling class. The issue in relation to post-colonial society is different with the class issue summed up by Poulantzas "when Marx designated Bonapartism as the 'religion of the bourgeoisie' in other words - as characteristic of all forms of the capitalist state (and where Poulantzas is wrong), he showed that this state can only truly serve the ruling class insofar as it is relatively autonomous from the diverse fractions of this class, precisely in order to organise the hegemony of the whole of this class."<sup>54</sup>

Hence, within the social formation of the colonial context, the dynamic to the state is provided by the developmental logic of the class struggle and the various modes of production. The state feeds back into society a contribution to the regeneration of class relations which formed it but with the development of the modes of production in the social formation, the relations of size and strength among the different classes emerged change. Both the state apparatus as well as the class relations that formed it are reproduced and transformed by the active interventions of the state.<sup>55</sup>

---

53. Ibid.

54. Alavi, loc.cit.

55. Ibid.

## CHAPTER IV

Strands and Knots

"distances become shorter by ticking time  
off the table  
now the horizon is Scarlet with the sunset."

So much has been said at the level of theoretico-  
abstractions. More could be added to the voluminous  
folds of the debate on the "theory of state" -- suspended  
between the extremities of perception within the  
conceptual framework of one weltanschauung the historical  
materialist-one, moving towards an instance of transitional  
totality.

We shall take a turn here to go up a slight  
gradient in perception to reiterate, review and replenish  
the theoretical locality, before we finally "go down to  
the valley below of the actual historical specificities  
of the country - Mexico where we hope to come to a rest in  
time upon a plateau where theory and historicity could  
come together on the horizon of land and sky - which has  
been denied by the economistic, reductionistic, essentialist,  
immanentist, deterministic, positivistic, empiricist,  
theoreticist, instrumentalist and abstractionist,  
mechanistic variants of a vulgar, mund-one materialism,<sup>1</sup>  
on the one hand - and frightfully obscured by the abstract

---

1. See, Hobsbawm - Marx's contribution to historiography  
in Blackburn (ed), op.cit.



historical methodologies of bourgeois ideology about which we have mentioned earlier, when we gave a critique of the epistemological conditions and principles of the methods of cognition of that problematic which has the intellectual incapacity to go beyond the realm of surface reality. While we are trying to elaborate a 'sophisticated' design for the analysis of the relationships between the social structure, class struggles, their political and ideological forms for a more adequate understanding of the "state" in society; within the epistemological parametres of historical materialism, through a process of elaboration of concrete concepts,<sup>2</sup> which are the syntheses of many definitions and thereby represent a unity of diverse aspects and are, in fact, points of departure for the perception and imagination.<sup>3</sup>

There seems to be much obscurity in the materialist conception of the "mode of production" which has become the theoretical background of many parleys, paralyses and profound insights of the fundamentals of objective, historical processes, especially of our interest in dealing with the 'capitalist state' is the conception of "capitalism" which is seen at the abstract theoretical level as a system of commodity production characterised by the private ownership and control of the means of production

---

2. Maurice Godelier's Understanding, op.cit.

3. Ibid.

and by "formally" free labour power. The direct labourers neither own nor control the means of production and must, therefore, sell their labour power in order to live.<sup>4</sup>

Production is controlled by non-labourers (capitalists) who purchase and combine the factors of production (including labour power) and sell the material goods and services that result. Although surplus - value is created during the process of production it is realised only through the exchange of commodities on the market. The basic dynamic of the capitalist mode of production is the expanded reproduction of capitalists relations of production through the capitalisation of the surplus - value realised on the market. The process of capital accumulation involves class struggle between capital and wage labour to secure (or transform) the subordination and exploitation of the latter within definite limits of the relations of production.<sup>5</sup> For, without such exploitation and subordination, it would be impossible for capital to appropriate surplus value. A reference to be reiterated is that we have just given one structural dynamic aspect of the totality of the 'mode of production' leaving aside the very important concepts of 'ideology', consciousness, legitimacy and the mediating and variable roles of institutions and ideas which we shall be considering elsewhere.

---

4. Expressed in Bob Jessop - Capitalism and Democracy - The Best Possible Political Shell? pp.10-50 in (xerox) Little John, Smart, Wakeford, Davis (ed) Power and the State.

5. Ibid.

Now, although it is possible to conceptually define different modes of production at the abstract simple level of analysis, a caveat has to be followed which is overlooked by many,<sup>6</sup> that no such modes exist in a pure form in the real world. For, not only are there variant forms of each mode of production and different stages in their development, a given mode of production is also always inserted into a social formation in which its conditions of existence are more or less successfully realised, and in which it coexists with other modes of production and/or other forms of social and private labour.<sup>7</sup> This means that the analysis of a pure mode of production must be concretised and complexified if it is to prove adequate to the analysis of specific social formations - which is a crucial aspect - especially when we deal with the historical complexity of the character of the bourgeois state in the Mexican social formation - where the state cannot be just located per se as the 'principal institutional locus of power in a capitalist society and cannot be derived from an abstract consideration of the articulation of the pure capitalist mode of production',<sup>8</sup> but has to be located in the specificity of the dynamic social formation in which the capitalist mode of production is the dominant/determinant one.

---

6. Primarily by the capital-logic school c.f. Elmar Altvater - Some Problems of State Interventionism, pp.40-43, Joachim Hirsch - The State apparatus and social Reproduction - Elements of a Theory of the Bourgeois State, pp.57-107 in Holloway and Picciotto (ed) op.cit. which conceives of the 'State' as the 'ideal collective capitalist', see Critique in Jassop, op cit.

7. Jessop, op.cit.

8. Ibid.

It is important to recognise the nature of the state in this respect, where

- (i) the state is a structural ensemble rather than a subject;
- (ii) the state is a system of political, ideological domination rather than a neutral instrument;
- (iii) state power is a complex social relation that reflects the changing balance of social forces in a determinate conjuncture.<sup>9</sup>

To take these points for further elaboration - first the state is a set of institutions and apparatuses of political representation and intervention that cannot, qua set of structures exercise power. In this context, it is acceptable to define the institutional limits of the state in terms of the legal 'distinction' between 'public' and 'private' provided one rather sees it as an originating subject endowed with an essential unity nor neglects the role of 'private' institutions and bodies in securing political domination.<sup>10</sup> For, to treat the state as a real (as opposed to legal) subject is to exclude from consideration political struggles within and between state apparatuses as well as the effects of its institutional structure on political struggle in general. Likewise, to endow the state with an essential unity or inevitable character<sup>11</sup> is to engage in crude reductionism and to

---

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

suggest that the only valid form of political struggle is one concerned to smash the existing state apparatuses, which takes on an historical idealist view of the circumstantial dimensions of the social formation - and the differential levels of the political struggle.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, if one adopts such an essentialist position or simply argues that all institutions of class domination or social cohesion should be included in one's definition of the 'state', then it becomes impossible to differentiate between 'democratic' and 'non-democratic' forms of domination and to discuss the effects of changes in the institutional limits of the state.<sup>13</sup>

Secondly, even though the state has been defined in institutional terms rather than as a subject capable of exercising power, this should not be interpreted as an argument that the state is a 'neutral' instrument that can be used with equal facility and equal effectiveness by all classes regardless of their location in the social formation or their political goals.<sup>14</sup> For, the institutional structure of the state has unequal and asymmetrical effects on the ability of different social forces to realise their interests through the means of political struggle.<sup>15</sup> This argument against a vulgar instrumentalist view of the state is reinforced through consideration of the various ways in

---

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

which political forces themselves are constituted in part through the constraints associated with different forms of state. This means that classes, should not be seen as already constituted political forces which exist outside and independently of the state and which are capable of manipulating it as an instrument. For although classes are defined at the sub-objective<sup>16</sup> level of the complex relations of production (economic and ideological) their political weight depends on the forms of organisation and means of intervention through which (material) interests are expressed. These considerations also apply to other political forces besides wage labour and capital. Thus the state should be viewed as a system of political domination whose structure has a definite influence on class struggle through its impact on the balance of social forces and the forms of political practice.<sup>17</sup>

Thirdly, although the state is not a real subject that exercises power, state power certainly exists and indeed constitutes the principal focus of political class struggle, state power is a complex social relation that correspondentially reflects the changing balance of social forces in a determinate conjuncture, insofar as they are concerned to control, reorganise and restrict state apparatuses and state intervention. It is always contingent

---

16. The necessary dialectical conjunction.

17. Jessop, op.cit.

upon the circumstances in which the political struggle between such forces occurs, as well as the correlation of forces - circumstances, which are influenced in part by the institutional structure of the state itself. This view involves a firm rejection of any attempt to differentiate between 'state power' and class power' either as descriptive or analytical concepts. This distinction can be sustained only by treating the state itself as a subject,<sup>18</sup> and/or ignoring the continuing class struggle within the state as well as that outside it. One should treat state power as a complex social relation whose changing nature depends on various interrelated factors.<sup>19</sup>

We shall now introduce certain theoretical skeins to which we will refer to at a later stage and which we consider do reflect essentially upon the 'form' which the bourgeois state acquires within the parameters of the capitalist mode of production (the conceptual inadequacy of which we have suggested) in the advanced capitalist countries. Our derivations from these conceptual formats will be inferential as our analysis of the 'state' in a specific social formation at a differential level of development is definitely at a far remove from the historical reality in which these 'advanced' concepts have developed and which they try to analyse.<sup>20</sup>

---

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. C.f. Holloway and Picciotto (ed), op.cit.

The German debate of the 1960s and 1970s has been engaged in the questions of the crisis in the advanced capitalist state - "with its failure to manage the economy?" and its interventionist assistance to the process of the restructuring of capital in times of the accumulation crisis.<sup>21</sup> The attempt has been made to break out of the limits of orthodox Marxism - which understands the content of state activity as principally correspondent to the long term interests of the ruling class/es alone, but is inadequate insofar as questions of political development, limits of state action and differences in state forms (Bourgeois Fascism etc.) are concerned. And this, in fact, is due to inadequate theorisation of the nature of relations between the economic and political - seen as discrete forms of capitalist social relations of production charged with ideological obfuscations.<sup>22</sup> The critique of Miliband and Poulantzas debate broken into bi-polar points of "instrumentalist" vis "structuralist" respectively<sup>23</sup> is constructed on their formal points of emphases, where discord about the fundamentals of the capitalist system - though their approaches might vary in the suggestions to revolutionary praxis.

---

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.



What Poulantzas and Miliband have in common is at least as significant as that which separates them. They do not deny that political forms could be understood only when related to the "anatomy of civil society"<sup>24</sup> but fail to construct a systematic schema for state analyses on that basis. And, by suggesting the autonomy of the political level from the economic are unable to locate the nature of this fetishised disjunction in capitalist societies, whose ideology denies even a referential possibility of the two.

Miliband combats bourgeois theory to show that the facts are wrong, but, within a Marxist critique, it is necessary to show the relationship between state, society and ideology, but also to develop an analysis of the state, which would show the relation between its development and the developing contradictions (class) of capitalist production.<sup>25</sup> Poulantzas criticises Miliband precisely on his incapacity to explain the structural links between the bourgeoisie and the state - what makes up a state in capitalist society is not just the subjective class composition issue of state personnel (whose motivations can be reduced to individual psyches) but the objective position occupied by the state in the mode of production - the ideology of which is mediatively reflected at all social levels.<sup>26</sup>

---

24. C.f. Marx - German Ideology.

25. Holloway and Picciotto, op.cit.

26. Poulantzas vs Miliband in Blackburn, op.cit.

Poulantzas, however, in suggesting that capitalist society is characterised by the relative autonomy of the political and economic instances, neglects the question of the nature of separation of and the relations between these instances and the underlying unity, which sets limits to their specific rationality and historical existence.<sup>27</sup> But he relegates surface separation to the factor of coincidental helpless unity in the last instance.

The answer, however, is not in class reductionism, but in a schema of complex, multilinear referential aspects of compatibly and incompatibly correspondent phenomena and epiphenomena within the hierarchically structured social complex of determinant and dominant relationships in which changes in the formal and contentual aspects of social contradictions and changes in the state structure should be established as a dual interrelated dialectic. Behind all these controversies, one fundamental problem lies concealed - why does the dominance of class not continue to be that which it is, subordination in fact of one part of population to another? Why does it take the form of official state domination? Why is not the mechanism of state constraints created as private mechanism of dominant class(es)? Why is it dissociated from the dominant class - taking the form of an impersonal mechanism

---

27. Holloway et. al., op.cit.

or public authority isolated from society?<sup>28</sup> which seeks to portray itself as serving the nation as a whole, thereby obscuring the basic facts of class antagonisms. Thereby, the state representing a universality, but a false one, of an illusory community".<sup>29</sup>

These questions are themselves aspects of the broader problematic for defining the state in a bourgeois social formation, which requires not an economic but a materialist theory - which unifies the specificities of the economic base and politico-ideological superstructure into totality in which the economic and politico-ideological are specific forms of the social relations of production and exploitation in which the state provides -

- (1) the provision of general material conditions of production - infrastructure legal;
- (2) establishes and guarantees relations through which relationships of 'legal' subjects in capitalist society are performed;
- (3) regulates the conflict between the contradictory social classes (working class-capitalist) not only by legal means but by police and army;
- (4) safeguards existence and expansion of national capital on world capital market.

---

28. Ibid.

29. Herbert Marcuse - Negations and Other Essays.

as also providing the bulward for the building up of the 'hegemony' of the dominant class(es) in the civil society - the intra and inter relationships of which are very complex<sup>30</sup> and which we shall endeavour to denoue in our analysis of the social formation in Mexico - where it is not just the rulers' social illusions which are circulated and propagated, but the mediative acceptance of these at the "mass" level moral economy.<sup>31</sup> Why?, When?, How?, Whither? are the questions we will have to answer at this level.

---

30. Holloway et.al., op.cit.

31. EP Thompson - Whigs and Hunters, op.cit.

## CHAPTER V

Whiskers through the topaz

At an earlier stage<sup>1</sup> we have tried to analyse the historical origins and the social character of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 about which opinions range from glorious adulations<sup>2</sup> to vapid criticisms. Before we reiterate our conclusions of the nature of the movement and the historicity of the formation of the "modern state" in Mexico, we shall prefer to clarify certain 'knowledgeable notions' utilised in a type of Marxist analysis to characterise social movements and the establishment of 'effective' linkages of class interests and its political and ideological forms. The linkage format emanates from an essentialist character of traditional marxist conceptualisation of classes and class struggle in relation to the structure of the social formation<sup>3</sup> in which social phenomena are analysed not so much in terms of their specific conditions of existence and their consequences for other social relations and practices but rather as more or less adequate expression of an essence. Well known examples in Marxist thought are the works of

---

1. C.f. "Blood in the Labyrnith".

2. 'State' History.

3. C.f. Barry Hindess - Classes and Politics in Marxist Theory, pp.72-96 where this paper develops some arguments presented in Cutler, Hindess, Hirst and Hussain - Marx's Capital and Capitalism Today, vol.1.

Lukacs in which cultural phenomena are interpreted as the more or less adequate expressions of an imputed class consciousness,<sup>4</sup> and economism - in which political forces are effectively reduced to manifestations of class 'interests' determined elsewhere (basically in the economy) and consequently to a political strategy that fails to take adequate account of the specific political forces at work in the social formation in question.<sup>5</sup> In Marxist theory classes have been conceived both as categories of economic agents and as, or as represented by political institutions, forces and ideological and cultural forms<sup>6</sup> which tend towards generating an essentialist mode of analysis - which has to be transcended by conceiving of the political practice, institutions and ideologies not as "representing" the "interests" of class as economic agents, but rather as providing certain of the necessary conditions of existence of definite economic class relations<sup>7</sup> in which there is a historically referential, mediative correspondential dialectic involved.

The ambiguities of the essentialist problematic assume two basic forms, which we shall cursorily investigate for our present purposes - of the conceptualisation of classes and class relations in the

---

4. Georg Lukacs - History and Class Consciousness Passim.

5. Hindess, op.cit.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

social formation. In one form, classes are conceptualised in terms of a counterposition of subject and structure, subjective and objective conditions - (Lukacs, Poulantzas and the left-Weberian sociology).<sup>8</sup> The other form involves the conception of classes and class struggle as rigorous effects of the structure - Althusser,<sup>9</sup> and the very different tradition of Marxist orthodoxy represented in Stalin's 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism'. In the first case the counterposition of subjective and objective (or structural) determinations entails the existence of political and cultural forms that are not reducible to the effects of class determinations, but the theory provides no means to conceptualise the effectivity of these forms.

The second case involves a functional conception in which cultural, political and economic forms and forces are reduced to the effects of the structure itself - where political forces, merely perform the role assigned to them by the 'structural causality', the functional necessities of the structure itself.<sup>10</sup> These difficulties arise from the attempt to conceive of classes both as categories of economic agent and as political and cultural agencies in a social formation which has a definite unity of these structural levels characterised by the determination in the

---

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10 . Ibid.

last instance of the economy and the relative autonomy of the political and ideological levels.<sup>11</sup> Rather, the connections between relations of production and political, legal and ideological or cultural forms and relations must be conceptualised not in terms of determination in the last instance but rather in terms of conditions of existence and the forms in which those conditions may be satisfied.<sup>12</sup> This means, that while certain legal forms may be necessary as conditions of existence of capitalist relations of production, this existence is not secured by capitalist relations of production themselves.<sup>13</sup> Relations of production can be shown to have definite conditions of existence in other types of social relations, law, political, cultural etc. but they do not themselves secure those conditions and neither do they determine the forms in which they are expressed in the specific social formation - the conflict of social forces within which provides the conditions of existence of a definite set of class relations.<sup>14</sup> The Mexican Revolution of 1910, therefore, has to be located in a historical materialist problematic which fundamentally establishes the nature of the movement and attenuates the vicarious influences of the other

---

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.



theoretico-ideological problematics of either bourgeois subjectivism (state and string-pullers or pushers) or orthodox Marxist essentialism to analyse the developmental basis of the societal contradictions which laid the formats for the formal and contentual conditions of realisation and existence of certain (bourgeois) relations of production and exploitation which the state monopolises, safeguards, maintains and exacerbates in the interest of the dominant class(es) in the onward process of the development of the societal contradictions placed also in the global context of world capitalism. On the one hand, the content of the state policies has to be located, while on the other, the specificity of the state structure and its processes of articulation have to be related to the very nature of the social contradictions in which it evolved and upon which it interacts; and not understood as a deviation from the liberal democratic - bourgeois paradigm<sup>15</sup> which, in fact, conceals the actuality of the ideology of that class.

The Mexican revolution by challenging the landowning and big mercantilist oligarchy as well as the state form of Diazpotism, in fact, provided the political bases for the realisation of the slogan of Madero - "effective suffrage and no re-election", who wanted wider participation

---

15. Which, however, is a point of criticism by the 'liberal radical tradition'.

and more democratic processes in politics in an effort to end the continuism of Diaz regime.<sup>16</sup> This also explains the timidity of the agrarian measures contemplated in Article 3 of the Plan of San Luis Potosi, which nevertheless was enough to asymmetrically 'assimilate' Zapata and his followers. "He and his men soon threw themselves into the Revolution not because they were excited by 'effective suffrage and no re-election', but they believed in the agrarian measures promised in Article 3 of the plan of San Luis Potosi."<sup>17</sup> The complete ineffectiveness in this respect of the 13½ months of Madero's government provoked insurrection of the southern leader and his proclamation of the Plan of Ayala which gave contemporary expression to the syndicalist slogan of Flores Magon "Land and Liberty"<sup>18</sup> but which did not provide a 'revolutionary' threat to the emerging process, and which could be contained within the structure of social relations<sup>19</sup>

---

16. C.f. Harry Bernstein - Modern and Contemporary Latin America - NY 1952, pp.3-160. See also Jose' Nun - "The middle class military coup", pp.66-112 in Claudio Veliz (ed), The Politics of Conformity in Latin America - Oxford 1967.

17. Nun, op.cit.

18. Ibid., see also R.E. Ruiz - Madero's administration and Mexican Labour, pp.203ff in Wilkie, Meyer Wilkie ed., Contemporary Mexico - Papers of the IV International Congress of Mexico - El Colegio de Mexico 1976.

19. C.f. R.P. Millon - Zapata, Ideology of a Peasant Revolution International Publishers, NY 1969, pp.5-100.

albeit with a recourse to reformist and transformist tactics from above,<sup>20</sup> which could accommodate the 'radical' elements and 'effectively' neutralise the dangerous edge.

The story of the state in the social formation in Mexico has, therefore, to be started in the context of the peculiarities of the historical circumstances of the Revolution in which the effective nature of the expressed and activated social contradictions lent to the specificity of the form and content of the state - creating and mediating historical circumstances for the dominant bourgeois mode of production in the social formation - the ideological precursors of which were the petit-bourgeois ideologues pitted against the political, ideological and economic urges of the Profiriatto,<sup>21</sup> and whose radical challengers had no alternative to offer which could not be transformed into an accessory of the bourgeois state and disbursed into the colours of glorious reforms and paternalistic concessions while at the same time lynching the leaders

---

20. C.f. Gramsci, op.cit., pp.58,97,109,128,227 on the concept of 'transformismo'.

21. Bernstein, op.cit.

of the 'other' camp (if not the state -- you are the other) like Zapata - who was brutally murdered and whose corpse was hung in the public square of Cuautla in the state of Morelos,<sup>22</sup> but who to his ardent followers still appeared "mounted on his favourite white horse -- to see that his people are receiving just treatment",<sup>23</sup>

---

22. C.f. Eric R. Wolf - On Peasant Rebellions, pp.264-73 in Teodor Shanin (ed), Peasants and Peasant Societies - Penguin 1971.

23. Sutti Ortiz - Reflections on the Concept of "Peasant Culture" and Peasant "Cognitive Systems", pp.322-36 in Shanin (ed), op.cit.

## CHAPTER VI

Potbellied Purse Stringers

Although the revolution with which it associates itself began as a liberal - democratic effort of the petit-bourgeoisie to institute free elections (the political form) the movement eventually led to the introduction of an agrarian reform, unequivocally established capitalism as the dominant mode of production, made suffrage universal and created a mass base political party. And since the civil strife subsided, the economy has diversified and expanded - reflecting the responses to capitalist forces which had penetrated the society prior to 1910. The changes represent policies of a capitalist state operating in a semidependent capacity in the international capitalist system. The state despite its 'populist veneer' acts primarily in the interests of capital and not merely because it is preoccupied with capital accumulation,<sup>1</sup> although the state assumes a new relatively autonomous economic role, which is not parallel in the classical bourgeois state, because the state-directly appropriates a very large part of the economic surplus and deploys it in its own directed economic activity in the name of promoting economic development.<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. C.f. E.V.K. Fitzgerald - "The State and Capital Accumulation in Mexico" in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol.X, Part 2, Nov. 1978, C.U.P.
  2. Extension from Alavi, op.cit.

In relation to economic growth, most of the initial capitalist bases for modern agriculture and industry laid under the Porfiriato were dismantled (requiring a restructuring in the years of the revolutionary civil wars between 1910-1924<sup>3</sup>, and output in all branches fell. Much of the next decade was spent in reconstruction of the transport and financial systems. On the political plane, although reformism of Madero had been overtaken by the popular agricultural movement of Zapata and Villa, and the hegemony of the agricultural oligarchy destroyed,<sup>4</sup> these movements expressed their incapacity to form a government<sup>5</sup> before being suppressed by Obregon and Carranza. In this political vacuum, it took the bureaucratic military elite<sup>6</sup> a decade to build a nation state, but the resultant 'statist'<sup>7</sup> regime of Cardenas (1934-40) managed during the North American dependence to reduce substantially the degree of foreign ownership still remaining after the Revolution,<sup>8</sup> complement the land reform by massive irrigation works and complete a transport network - integrating the national market.<sup>9</sup>

---

3. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

4. Nun, op.cit.

5. Ibid., also Millon, op.cit.

6. Nun, op.cit.

7. Therborn, op.cit.

8. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

9. Ibid.

Thus by 1940 a strong national state had set the stage for a long period of sustained capitalist growth which was clearly oriented towards the fostering and realisation of objective capitalist development in the social formation<sup>10</sup> through the active state intervention in the process of capital accumulation during the period of dependent import substitution industrialisation by providing the infrastructural basis through the public sector.<sup>11</sup>

Mexico, in fact, is heralded as a model developing country. It enjoyed for a period of time (1940-66 the miracle)<sup>12</sup> the highest growth rates in the world with the GDP fluctuating around 6 per cent in which agriculture developed at 5 per cent a year and industry at 7 per cent a year<sup>13</sup> practically non-comparable by the 3rd world standards. The agricultural improvements have been sufficient to provide raw materials for industry and to earn foreign exchange for financing capital imports for industry for power production, irrigation, construction etc.<sup>14</sup> However, modern firms, which are assuming increasing importance in terms of value added and labour

---

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Brandenburg, op.cit.

13. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

14. Ibid.

employment make the most intensive use of capital per worker (higher ratio of organic composition of capital to labour) and have the highest labour productivity leading to a highly concentrated production,<sup>15</sup> in both agriculture and industry. According to studies in 1960s - 3 per cent of firms produced 55 per cent of all agricultural production and 0.82 per cent of all firms accounted for 64.3 per cent of industrial production.<sup>16</sup>

Along with a favourable tilt towards private capital the state has directly intervened to promote economic expansion in all sectors of economy with a high level of state investments among total fixed investments.<sup>17</sup> Cardenas' nationalisation of foreign oil companies in 1938 was a dramatic example related to the contradiction between national and foreign capital's domination of Mexican resources.<sup>18</sup> Since then the Mexican state has come largely to own the electric power industry, to participate in other productive industries and to provide infrastructure, credit, protection and guidance primarily to the large-scale private sector business concerns.<sup>19</sup>

---

15. C.f. Susan Eckstein - *The Poverty of Revolution* - Princeton 1977, pp.13-39.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

18. Bernstein, op.cit.

19. Eckstein, op.cit.



Although one agency - The Guarantee and Development Fund for small-scale and Medium-sized industry - since 1954 provides so-called small and medium sized enterprises with credit, however, it offers assistance to only 694 of the 55,068 businesses employing 1-15 workers and no support to the extensive number of artisan shops with less than 25,000 pesos active capital, even though the latter are ineligible for other sources of institutional credit and have limited resources of their own.<sup>20</sup> In this process both the state and big-business sector have been strengthened.<sup>21</sup> Mexico publicly assumes a nationalistic stance, partly because of the extreme predominance of foreigners in the Porfirian boom preceeding the revolution which made anti-foreignism the code of the Revolutionary heritage, and for the emerging local capitalists, ideological predilections were reinforced by the logic of self-interest. As a result fifty years after the revolution, the share of net external financing to total investment was only about 7 per cent, one of the lowest ratios in Latin America.<sup>22</sup> The Post-revolutionary governments have emphasised economic nationalism through legislation designed to discourage industrial imports. 'Legally' Mexican industrialists enjoy preferential fiscal treatment in

---

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

firms which replace imports and protection of their industries through import licenses, tariffs and export subsidies.<sup>23</sup> The "Mexicanisation" decree of 1944 gave the state the power to require, at its discretion majority Mexican ownership - while by 1971 and 1973 the concept of Mexicanisation was broadened to include control over conditions under which foreign technology and management could be imported and a tighter legal restriction on the foreign purchases of equity in Mexican firms.<sup>24</sup>

While domestic capitalism antedates the revolution, it has been expanded and strengthened since then because the state regulates foreign controlled ventures and because the government initiated policies are conducive to national capitalism at a time when international conditions were favourable to such development. "... every effort will be made to give guarantees to all businessmen (foreigners included) who come here with the object of making investments, and every facility will be granted to them for the development of the projects."<sup>25</sup> The country's productive capitalism was not an automatic by-product of the revolution which nevertheless laid the basis for its development and which the state interventions in the

---

23. Eckstein, op.cit.

24. Ibid.

25. President Obregon's statement in 1921 - (What's ahead for business in Mexico", loc.cit., Eckstein, op.cit.

economy facilitated when international capital was weak during the world depression<sup>26</sup> and during WW2 (World War II) when domestic manufacturing expanded significantly, to provide essentially for the expanding national market, when industrial goods were not available abroad.<sup>27</sup>

The experience of Mexico suggests that even when a dependent country adopts a strong nationalist position, it has difficulty maintaining an upper hand over foreign interests, if capitalism is instituted as the dominant mode of production,<sup>28</sup> in which case the concept of an absolute autarchic national development in the framework of the global capitalist system is just rhetorical or wishful thinking where the dynamics of the market are established beyond the territorial borders of the national state.<sup>29</sup> Although it was widely believed in the 1940s and 1950s that "import-substitution" would reduce the economy's vulnerability to and dependence on the external sector, dependence on imports (primarily capital goods) has grown and domestic industrialisation has worsened the balance of payments deficit which increasingly is financed by external sources on progressively less favourable terms.<sup>30</sup> The state, however, after half a

---

26. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

27. Ibid.

28. C.f. Goran Therborn - "Caudillos and Elections. The Travail of Latin American Democracy". NLR 113-14, 1979.

29. Ibid., c.f. also Hamza Alavi - Imperialism old and new - Socialist Register 1964 and Andre Gunder Frank, op.cit.

30. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

century after the revolution has been able to effect a linkage between the public and the private domestic sector through riskless contracts, subsidised loans, power, transport, protection against imports etc.<sup>31</sup> And about 1/3rd of GNP is given into public industrial and commercial investments, into electricity, irrigation, railways, steel, chemicals etc., and loans through the state financial agencies like the National Financiera and Banco de Mexico<sup>32</sup> which not only provide for foreign loans for private enterprise, but also subsidises risks of both lender and borrower by a system of government guarantees against investment loss.<sup>33</sup> The National Financiera also doctors sick industrial units and assists in the economic redistribution through various affiliated agencies - communicating also the ideological aspects of national prosperity to the 'generality'.<sup>34</sup>

During the 'miracle years', the real wage rate was held down in industry and agriculture, thus generating large profits for reinvestments, although the average real wage rate rose steadily as labour shifted from agriculture to industry<sup>35</sup> (the phenomena of internal migration). For the subsequent decade (1950s) the wage

---

31. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., c.f. Eckstein, op.cit.

35. Ibid.

bill was contained by progressive capital deepening, resulting from high investment programmes leading to a sustained high profit rates.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile, high balance of payments had remained fairly stable, with the imports declining steadily as proportion of domestic output, as the "import-substitution" programme proceeded. The modest deficit on current accounts was covered by inflows of foreign capital funds although these accounted for a fraction of total saving in the economy.<sup>37</sup> In short, Mexican economy appeared to have achieved a balanced long run growth the Rostowian takeoff.<sup>38</sup>

There was in 1960s considerable literature analysing the causes of this phenomenal success - primarily originating in the US - with its Mexican spillovers. The main thrust of the argument was that Mexican economic development had been an unqualified success, the main long run cause being the structural reforms before 1940, above all the agrarian reforms, the concentration of state investments on productive public works, e.g., irrigation, the provision of developmental finances so as to set up and sustain private enterprise in its 'infancy' and the 'enlightened' channeling of foreign investments into

---

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

selected branches requiring advanced technology.<sup>39</sup> In fact, concern was expressed for the fact that government intervention should be minimal, otherwise it would deprive private sector of resources, and 'freedom of action for the enterprise'. Indeed, this was seen as the 'dilemma of Mexican development'<sup>40</sup> and the suffocating burden of an unnecessarily large public sector upon the private sector (echoing empiricist images of state domination in the short run rather than state supplicating the long run development of capital). To some extent, this conclusion was the result of the 'official' under-estimation of private investment<sup>41</sup> but it also effected the belief, that in some sense, the historic role of the state intervention was over and that the 'individual' should be freed.<sup>42</sup>

However, technical economic analysis of the operations of Mexican economy, concentrated on financial and monetary aspects of state interventionist policies. Their version of events takes into account the structural

---

39. *Ibid.*, c.f. Brandenburg, *op.cit.* Also (i) Stanley R. Ross - Mexico - The Preferred Revolution, pp.140-49 in J. Maier and R.W. Weatherhead (ed) *Politics of Change in Latin America*, New York 1964; (ii) W. Raymond Duncan and J.N. Goodsell (ed), "Quest for Change in Latin America - Sources for a 20c analysis", Oxford 1970, pp.vii-112; (iii) Donald Marquand Dozer - *Latin America - an interpretive history*, London 1962, pp.338-518.

40. R. Vernon - *Dilemma of Mexican Development 1965*, *loc.cit.*, Fitzgerald, *op.cit.*

41. Fitzgerald, *op.cit.*

42. *Ibid.*

factors, but attributes much of short run stability and business confidence to state's monetary policies which was also the 'official version' of the Mexican government where government expenditure follows 6 year cycles of Presidential office, low at outset-higher later on,<sup>43</sup> but where overall stability in accumulation pattern was achieved by monetary adjustment. In the absence of major tax reforms and with steady output of growth and a low proportion of exports in total demand, consumption expenditure is a stable and exogenous factor, so that stabilization is achieved by adjusting private investment,<sup>44</sup> as they maintain a low rate of interest relative to high profit rates, state banks are always faced by excess demand for their funds, and by manipulating credit rationing rules and reserve requirements for private banks, the monetary authorities can absorb the proportion of private savings from the banking system required to finance the public sector's deficit, itself a result of high state investment.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, neither an inflationary nor a deflationary situation develops. In addition by limiting available funds of the Mexican capital market in times of external deficit, the monetary authorities oblige the private sector to borrow abroad,

---

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

thus avoiding public external debt from rising.<sup>46</sup>

Hence, this mechanism has allowed steady economic growth despite the deficit on both fiscal and trade accounts arising from that growth.<sup>47</sup>

The contemporary critique of this approach came not as a criticism of the internal logic of this model - although lack of attention to the predominant role of internal funds in company finance and to the pattern of demand was noticed, but rather in the form of pointing out structural aspects of asset (means of production) ownership and income distribution that formed no part of the mechanistic official version. The first line of attack to the form of analyses of ownership in major enterprises, which underlined the enormous extent of foreign ownership in Mexican corporate sector - pointed both the fact that although domination by foreign capital had been substantially reduced by Cardenas, considerable foreign ownership and control in industry remained and it had increased.<sup>48</sup> Data for recent years indicate that half of manufacturing assets were controlled by transnational corporations in 1972 and the share of sales controlled rose from 38 per cent in 1962 to 45 per cent in 1970.<sup>49</sup> Close collaboration between foreign enterprises

---

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.



and state enterprise on the one hand and dominance of foreign brokers primarily US in large areas of agricultural marketing, especially in the north-truck farming zone,<sup>50</sup> strengthen this dependency, in which foreign capital is concentrated in the least competitive, most productive and profitable sectors of the economy.<sup>51</sup> Apart from implications of national sovereignty, the critics also pointed out that the outflow of profits and royalties, the gearing of the output pattern to production of luxury consumer goods, and the lack of integration between the production branches, brought about by reliance on imported inputs on the one hand (and thus the differential development of the capital goods sector and the development of manufactured exports-typically by labour intensive border operation of transnational corporations) -- as inputs to the manufacturing processes 'abroad' on the other.<sup>52</sup> The evident worsening income distribution through the 1960-70 period provided the second line of attack. This was seen due to the growing imbalance of the economy as industry and urban services expanded more rapidly than agriculture (leading to massive internal migration of population from the countryside to starvation shanty towns of mammoth urban conglomerates) on the one hand,

---

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., c.f. Eckstein, op.cit.

52. Ibid.

and to the concentration of national income in profits on the other.<sup>53</sup> Where poorest 80 per cent of the population receive only 40 per cent of the national income and which the state exacerbates by regressive fiscal policies and protection of oligopolistic enterprises, together with the inflationary policies which contribute to income concentration in large industrial banking and commercial complexes.<sup>54</sup>

This approach, also saw the factor of state support to private sector though from a divergent criteria of development in which the interpretation of the dominant class forces, or dominant fraction of capital since 1940 became critical. One point of analysis argues that the new industrial capitalist class was the main beneficiary of state support and eventually achieved dominance within the power structure, while the industrialization process was assisted not only by the 'containment' of wage demands, tariff barriers and capital finance, but also by defence of domestic industry from foreign enterprise.<sup>55</sup> In complete contrast another point suggests that although some independent industrial capital did emerge (like the Monterrey group) the main beneficiaries of state support and the dominant fraction in business were the finance capitalist groups, which undertook industrialization in direct

---

53. C.f. Eckstein, op.cit., Therborn - Caudillos etc., op.cit., Fitzgerald, op.cit.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

collaboration with foreign capital.<sup>56</sup> Reality probably lies in between these two extremes of analysis of the nature of capitalist development in Mexico. Given the importance of foreign enterprise, it would seem reasonable to argue that as decades of growth progressed and the control of TNC (transnational corporations) over industry grew, the 'financieras' came to dominate domestic finance, and the balance of power in the domestic bourgeoisie and the state shifted from industry towards financiera, meanwhile the state maintained a relative autonomy of action within the framework of sustained capitalist growth.<sup>57</sup> Mexican economy 1967-76 the contradictions: No sooner had this debate taken place that the smooth growth path began to break up into contradictions. In contrast to their performance of the previous quarter century, the crucial indicators entered sustained adverse trends.<sup>58</sup> The rate of national income growth slowed down to about a half of its previous average oscillating around 3 per cent per annum - as manufacturing output decelerated to 2/3rd of its previous growth and agricultural production fell back to half of its sustained 5 per cent rate of expansion.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, in relation to industry, the pattern of output was clearly stagnating at

---

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

the consumers' goods and intermediate inputs stage, without progressing to the establishment of capital goods branches.<sup>60</sup> Even more seriously, the flagging agricultural growth rate brought output expansion and most important (food supply) below that of population.<sup>61</sup> Both these phenomenas contributed to a structural deterioration in the balance of trade, as industrial inputs and imported food forced up the ratio of imports to national income again. Massive foreign borrowing by the government to support the 'peso' could not prevent its eventual devaluation in 1976 for the first time in nearly quarter of a century.<sup>62</sup> The rate of domestic inflation rose alarmingly and there are reasons to believe that the distribution of personal income deteriorated even more rapidly than the long run trend among other things, deteriorating food supplies - a central element in the real wage, and the relative response to inflation of profits and wages - particularly in the non-unionised labour sector would point to this.<sup>63</sup>

With the slowing of the rate of total national income growth to little over the population growth, many mean that the 'average' real living standards for a large section of population may even have been falling.<sup>64</sup>

---

60. Ibid.

61. Brandenburg, op.cit.

62. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

63. Eckstein, op.cit.

64. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

Meanwhile, internal migration continued and labour unrest appeared to be breaking the bounds of the PRI organizations.<sup>65</sup> In addition, there was growing resentment of the increasing transnational control of Mexican industry.<sup>66</sup> What had gone wrong? First, to the extent that the agrarian reforms and more important investments in irrigation (and thus effective land creation) was responsible for the rapid growth in agricultural production. The relative neglect of which since mid 1950s made its effects clear.<sup>67</sup> In addition, the concentration of farmers in the northern areas (under the influence of US brokers) on fruit and vegetable exports (Mexican tomatoes!) further exacerbated urban food supply problems, which had become more urgent after the decades of internal migration.<sup>68</sup> Second, the end of the initial stage of import substitution - that of consumer goods - meant, a natural market was covered by domestic supply, an effect strengthened by the slowing down of 'factory' expansion based on the elimination of artisanal activities, as the Mexican economy was modernised.<sup>69</sup> Third, the dominance of the more dynamic branches of industry by foreign enterprise resulted in a continued reliance on imported technology and capital goods, preventing the establishment of capital goods branches.<sup>70</sup> Fourth, the running down of natural resource

---

65. Eckstein, op.cit.

66. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

67. Ibid.

68. Eckstein, op.cit., Brandenburg, op.cit.

69. Ibid.

70. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

base in petroleum (which has recently picked up in 1980) led to a weakening of the export structure and even oil imports. Fifth, the profitability of real estate development in tourism and the metropolis, relative to more productive investments caused the diversions of an increasing proportion of private capital.<sup>71</sup> Finally, the imbalance of the economy and the resulting internal migration led to serious strain on the urban infrastructure and services.<sup>72</sup> Interestingly enough, these symptoms had been felt elsewhere in Latin America earlier in the decade, after growth paths that had started later than in Mexico.

The response of these problems took the form of renewed state intervention, starting under Diaz Ordaz 1964-70, but deepening to form an overall strategy under Echeverria 1970-76. This response, consisted of five elements, all of which contributed to the 'fiscal crisis of the state'.<sup>73</sup>

- (i) The imposition of much closer control over the activities of the TNC's. Foreign ownership of electricity utilities, communications and mineral rights were forbidden and only minority ownership in heavy industry, transport, forestry, gas and auto components was allowed under the "Ley Para

---

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

Promover la inversion Mexicana y Regular la inversion extranjera in 1973".<sup>74</sup> In addition technological contracts were to be directly supervised and foreign ownership of new ventures was permitted only in exceptional circumstances.<sup>75</sup>

- (ii) State moved into oil explorations, petrochemicals, fertilisers on a large scale in order to restore national resource base of the export structure and eliminate incipient oil imports at the higher world price.<sup>76</sup>
- (iii) Infrastructure in agriculture was extended and renewed, particularly in marketing and storage facilities, which in combination with small scale credit, fertilisers and new scale credit, fertilisers and new seeds, would, it was anticipated diffuse development and revive food supplies.<sup>77</sup>
- (iv) Through both state finance and parastatal ventures, a start was made on a capital goods branch, particularly railway stock, machine tools and electronic equipment.<sup>78</sup>
- (v) By food subsidies, and massive expansion of urban services as well as health and education of 'poorer' classes, it was hoped to ameliorate the deterioration of personal income distribution and so to some extent recapture the waning popular support for the PRI.<sup>79</sup>

---

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. Eckstein, op.cit.

Just what overall construction is to be put on this programme which is being continued, albeit with less rhetoric by the Lopez Portillo administration, in terms of its effects upon the underlying economic structure is still unclear. Although, the fiscal consequences of these reforms are more immediately manifest. Nonetheless, it can be argued with some confidence that this represents an attempt to "restructure capital" and thus recover to some extent the original conditions for sustained economic growth established in the World War II context of 1940.<sup>80</sup> However, though on the political plane, the Echeverria administration reflected an undoubted gain in the relative autonomy of the state itself, possibly the result of the weakening of domestic capital and the strengthening of both labour pressure and nationalist sentiment, all three greatly influenced by the inroads made by foreign capital in the preceding decade, this gain seems to have been insufficient for the economic task in hand.<sup>81</sup>

This rather cursory and impressionistic detailing of the nature of economic development of Mexico, has to be elaborated further in which the role of the state has to be integrated by relating it to the circumstantial as well as structural contradictions. But certain observations could be made on the basis of details of the sectoral shifts

---

80. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

81. Ibid.



in investments, where the public sector has invested in the rural and urban infrastructure, and private capital investments have shifted from rural to industrial to urban real estate.<sup>82</sup> State investment in the unprofitable "basicas de desarrollo" and in the 'beneficio' social outlays for urban workforce in medium and large enterprises (which are more unionised) has thus contributed to private profitability of capital<sup>83</sup> which has been left unhassled by low tax pressure as well.<sup>84</sup>

And though, capital-output ratio is stable, the capital-labour ratio in corporate sector i.e., the capitalist sector of medium and large corporations which accounts for the greater part of production' accumulation and profits in Mexico, as opposed to the 'traditional' (SIC!) (formally subsumed)<sup>85</sup> informal sector of peasant farmers, petty urban commerce (penny capitalists), shopkeepers, street vendor who withstand competition from organised capital by increasing self-exploitation, and which absorbs most of the underemployed labour force,<sup>86</sup> has risen rapidly and that explains why with such a huge rate of accumulation, Mexico still has not been able to employ even 40 per cent of its work force adequately

---

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid., c.f. Eckstein, op.cit., Brandenburg, op.cit.

85. C.f. Marx - Capital, Vol.I, Penguin (ed).

86. Eckstein, op.cit.

resulting primarily from the nature of investments of both indigenous and TNC in high technology low labour utilising industries,<sup>87</sup> shifting from wages to the consolidation of profits and its valorisation.<sup>88</sup>

The Nacional Financiera and Banco de Mexico increase savings of small businessmen and professionals that could be shifted into capital formation. But, there has, however, been no parallel development of the share market as corporate ownership is still restricted to a small group of banks, rich families and TWCs<sup>89</sup> and which manage to restrain "income taxation" by the state the structure of which has been fairly stable through 1960-76.<sup>90</sup>

"The programme and policies of the Mexican government since 1940 have been designed to stimulate private sector's efforts in the development process -- but -- the development in Mexico's monetary and fiscal policy represent a second best solution to the problems posed by the public sector's deficit financing of the infrastructural investments, leading to a "fiscal crisis of the state", where in 1976 due to international inflation, and internal credit growth and a weak capital market, the state had to borrow abroad on behalf of public enterprises with the total external debt

---

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

90. Ibid.

rising to 1/4th of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a debt service burden which was using up over 1/3rd of exiguous export incomes along with the bearing of the informal influences of foreign finance funds like the IMF etc.<sup>91</sup>

From this pattern certain tentative conclusions can be made, since 1940, the result of the state capital accumulation has been to support industrialisation carried on by the private sector and TNC. Initially the support involved "replenishment of capital" in the form of agricultural and transport investments, but during the 'miracle years' the state share of investment declined<sup>92</sup> and was mainly confined to industrial inputs such as energy, so that the state finance ran a deficit, which was however, covered up and absorbed by a capital market under strong state control.<sup>93</sup> Secondly, economic growth, began to lose both equilibrium and momentum as the underlying contradictions of capitalist industrialization worked through and for which renewed state intervention was felt necessary after 1967 leading to a doubling of public expenditure towards minerals, heavy industries agriculture and attempts to reduce foreign control over industries.<sup>94</sup>

---

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

This expansion of state investment was not however accompanied by fiscal reforms and a commensurate increase in public sector savings - resulting in borrowings which placed undue inflationary pressure on the indigenous capital market, sale of official bonds and a huge external debt - service burden.<sup>95</sup> The present economic crisis therefore is not because of state mismanagement but the outcome of the long-term structural contradictions of the Mexican growth model, where, in order to restructure the economy if industrialization is to continue beyond the primary stage of import substitution, the state requires more resources and a "transitional relative autonomy", which involve economic and political costs to the private capitalist sector in the short-term, in order to achieve benefits in the long-term.<sup>96</sup> One of the (contradictions not contraities) of the relationship between private capital and the state (which is highly complex and we shall to some extent investigate it) is that it is no longer prepared to concede this concession to the state (fleeing rather to Switzerland), despite the fact that this activity provided the original basis for the long run of capitalist growth since 1940. The resolution of this relational dilemma is the central problem of the Mexican political economy today.

---

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid.

## CHAPTER VII

A Side:

As a brief refrain, we would also like to show the material implications of the dynamic of "uneven, economic development" in Mexico - where advanced capitalist growth is not generalised but co-exists with lower forms of capital and even pre-capitalist relations in the social formation, which is nevertheless dominated by the capitalist mode of production.

It is fashionable for Marxists to call Latin America "dependent" in the world capitalist system, which often has misleading connotations, and as a concept of little analytical utility. Rather, in the framework of the international capitalist system, where all parts are inter-dependent (differentially) it is better to talk of 'dominated' capitalist development which refers to the relations of force, control and necessity, under which a given country enters and participates in the system;<sup>1</sup> In which, aspects and extent to which the international capitalist system, its relations of production and exchange penetrate and transform the local unit are perhaps, twin poles of the same aspect.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. c.f. Goran Therborn - Candillos etc., op.cit.

2. Ibid.

Vis a vis economic domination which infers external control of basic resources and means of production, with external transfer of profits, advancement of credits to the state with conditions involving infringement of the sovereignty of the dominated state in default, the presence of advisors and agents, and the ideological association of the local ruling classes with the exterior,<sup>3</sup> economic integration implies an all pervasive penetration where parts of the local system are all interconnected by means of capital and commodity relations which represent territorially bound segments of the world capitalist system.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from these, economic incorporation has the result of the local system being linked and dependent upon the international system, while not being pervaded by it.<sup>5</sup> There remains relative internal disarticulation due both to the absence of organic links between various capitalist sectors and the co-existence of these sectors with non-capitalist, non-commodity relations.<sup>6</sup> A crucial area polarised in the 'integration' 'incorporation' relation is agriculture especially.<sup>7</sup>

---

3. Ibid., also Alavi - Imperialism old and New, op.cit.  
Casanova - Internal Colonialism, op.cit.

4. Therborn, op.cit.

5. Ibid., Alavi., op.cit.

6. Ibid.

In Mexico, the 'Uneven' capitalist development has not generalised, leading to an erroneous picture of the 'dual economy',<sup>8</sup> with a 'dynamic modern sector' and an archaic primitive one,<sup>9</sup> but to serious 'differentially placed, disjunctions' in the economic development and the subsumption of 'peripheral' areas to the dominant 'metropolitan' capitalist sector through a process of 'internal colonialism' and ideological programme of national integration of marginal communities and classes,<sup>10</sup> and through the mechanisms of the national market. This feature shows marked regional variations in development, where sectors of economy are consciously maintained (ejidos about which we shall talk later) to provide a cheap labour force,<sup>11</sup> and where 'immiseration takes place without proletarianisation',<sup>12</sup> and the 'formal subsumption of labour into capital both in agriculture and lower forms of industry,<sup>13</sup> in the absence of a generalised

- 
8. Rodolfo Stavenhagen - Seven Erroneous Theses - op.cit.  
 9. Ibid., c.f. also Alistair Henessey - New Radicalism in Latin America - PPI-26 in Journal of Contemporary History - Vol. 7 No. 1, 1972, London.  
 10. Casnova, op.cit.  
 11. (i) Rodolfo Stavenhagen - Changing Functions of the Community in Underdeveloped Countries, pp. 83-96 in Henry Bernstein ed. Underdevelopment and Development, op.cit.  
 (ii) c.f. also Francois Chevalier - The ejido and political stability in Mexico, pp. 158-92 in Claudio Veliz (ed) Politics of Conformity, op.cit.  
 12. Therborn, op.cit.  
 13. Marx - Capital, Vol. I, op.cit.

development of a national labor market. Urban development takes place without urbanisation which marginally absorbs the 'internal migrants' from the rural areas<sup>14</sup> giving rise to the phenomena of lumpen proletarians.<sup>15</sup>

The monopoly of the organised capital in trade and commerce and credit also creates the intermediaries, merchants and money-lenders<sup>16</sup> whose exploitation further worsens the situation in the countryside and where the effectivity of 'state's benevolence' is also marginalised.

This uneven capitalist development within the framework of internal colonialism' is a matter of controversy and for which details are not available though it shows the differential placement and relationships of economic sectors in the social formation where the capital mode of production is the dominant one - which in turn is placed in an incorporated position in the international capitalist system. Our question therefore, is, what is the bearing of international capitalist system upon the formation of the bourgeois state. It affects the social geography of the dominated state territory tending to

---

14. Therborn, op.cit. c.f. E J Hobsbawm - Peasant and Rural Migrants in Politics, pp. 46-62 in Claudio Veliz (ed), op.cit.

15. Ibid.

16. c.f. Manning Nash - Market and Indian Peasant Communities, pp. 161-77 and Eric Wolf - Aspects of Group Relations in a complex society: Mexico, pp. 50-68 in Teodor Shanin (ed) Peasants - op.cit.



link growth spots with the exterior, enhancing regional discrepancies.<sup>17</sup> It tends to destabilise the local economy, by making it vulnerable to shock waves of the international conjunctural cycles, and tends to overload the polity with socio-political relations and contradictions through an interlocking of different historical temporalities.<sup>18</sup> All this also affects the formation of the working class consciousness also, where workers of the advanced sectors of the economy are better placed and which have to become the vanguard.<sup>19</sup> And, where traditional agriculture is rendered unviable there is no sufficient urban industry to absorb the population resulting in the development of urban conglomerations of unemployed or marginally employed labour force isolated from the industrial workers.<sup>20</sup>

Dominated incorporation also implies the non development of independent peasantry and petty bourgeoisie and encourages instead the emergency of 'precarious minfundists' and a vast wretched lumpen petty bourgeoisie eg. street vendors.<sup>21</sup> The result is the growth of subordinate classes what have great difficulties in getting together for sustained collective action but which present with their problems latent threats to the existing order and sporadic outbursts of violence. These sections are also most prone to populism.<sup>22</sup>

---

17. Therborn, op.cit. Casanova, op.cit.

18. Therborn, op.cit.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

We have just mentioned these theoretical issues of dominated incorporationist economic development in Latin America. In general where the penetration by external finances and TNC, after the failure of the import-substitution industrialisation in 1940's and 1950's, explains at one level the political instability and stability relative to the extent of domination.<sup>23</sup> Some of the fundamentals of the theoretical problematic are debatable, but for our present purposes, we have mentioned this form of analysis, to see any possible connections of it to the specificity of the Mexican reality, about which not only details are unavailable, but in which frustration mounts to the chimney tops when one has to grope along the obscurity of the melange of totally 'diffused' bourgeois analyses, trying to cull with caution a step in our direction.

---

23. Ibid.

Eels on slippery sidelines.

"After the jungles lay the marsh in the evening shadows".

The guise of formalities at times keeps the informalities at an 'untouchable' distance. Similarly, the subjective relationship of the bourgeoisie with the state in Mexico is an affair conducted in the corridors, private apartments of high rise buildings or in the open secrecy of public offices, where the cash nexus between capital of different sizes and bureaucrats of different weights is kept wet to a smooth constancy.<sup>1</sup>

A social historical account of this class is virtually impossible to give, for lack of effective details. But some aspects of its subjective 'formation' can nevertheless be rendered to clarify the motifs of our tapestry.

"The entrepreneur exhibits extraordinary, drive energy and determination in his desire to create a 'private empire' and once he is near or at the top of Mexican business, he exerts unusual efforts to build for the future of Mexico".<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Brandenburg, op.cit.

2. Ibid.

The majority of the truly big entrepreneurs date the beginnings of their fortunes to the 1920's and 1930's some to even earlier times and usually comprised the second and lower enclhelons of the Porfirian bourgeoisie<sup>3</sup> who emerged as the 'new group' in the post-revolution period.<sup>4</sup> Considerable interlocking of interests and concentration can be noticed under names like Raul Bailleres with finance, mining, CREMI, breweries, bottling and real estate, Carlos Troujet with finance, telephone, manganese, steel, cellulose, paper, banking, cement etc., the families of Garza Sada owning a large amount of the Monterrey complex of industries and commerce, Garcias in sugar, finance, chemicals etc.<sup>5</sup>

Private capital in Mexico has these familial linkages and kinships in which a vast amount of capital is concentrated in a few hands<sup>6</sup> whose decisions also carry weight in the various chambers of commerce and industry, which were restructured by President 'Lazaro' Cardenas.<sup>7</sup> In 1956 by state legislation, the antiquated law of chambers of commerce that dated back to the pre-revolutionary year of 1908 was rescinded by a new Law of the Chambers of commerce and Industry, under which the separate

---

3. Ibid.

4. Bernstein, op.cit.

5. Brandenburg, op.cit.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

National confederation of Chambers of Commerce (CONCANACO) and Confederation of Industrial Chambers of Mexico (CONCAMIN) were combined into one large semi-official association, which set the stage for the modern evolution of both the chambers.<sup>8</sup> In the case of CONCANACO, full-fledged membership became obligatory for all non-industrial businesses whose equity capital exceeded a set minimum of (400\$) and junior membership was obligatory for businesses whose capital was less than the minimum of 400\$. In essence, the law excluded the street vendors and the 'independent' artisans from institutionalisation.<sup>9</sup> The CONCANACO linked the local to the National Chamber of Commerce, consolidated the organised capital market, which maintained a close contact with the state and by 1964 grouped about 20,000 individuals and their concerns.<sup>10</sup>

Although, commerce and industry were combined in the (CONANACO) by 1941 - the industrialists asserted the autonomy of the CONCAMIN where membership was based on types of industrial activity, dominated by the largest National Chamber of Manufacturing Industries in the CONCAMIN.<sup>11</sup>

---

8. Ibid.

9. c.f., Eckstein, op.cit.

10. Brandenburg, op.cit.

11. Ibid.

Voting strength within a chamber is apportioned according to the amounts of dues paid calculated on the capitalisation of a member's firm. Therefore, some chambers have become stronger because of heavy capitalisation required in their industries like the National Chamber of Iron and Steel, Chemicals etc.<sup>12</sup> By 1964, the CONCAMIN incorporated 46 full-fledged national chambers of industry, plus five affiliated associations and has increased in proportional strength.<sup>13</sup> Our purpose of detailing this subject is to show the institutional organisation of capital in Mexico, its integration and proliferation, where on the one hand the state mediates its activities by legislation, while on the other provides effective basis for its national organisation in which the capitalist class gains a national solidarity of its long term interest, and its realisation through the institution of the state.

---

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

Lines of the Palms

"Another day opens with its dogged hurry".

To be able to undertake an analysis of the complexities of the relationship of labour with state in the social formation in Mexico, the attendance of details upon the economic development and the nature of the development of the working class both at the levels of the objective, economic aspect and the formation of its ideological tendencies have to be accounted for to comprehend the dialectical dynamics of its political articulation and its developmental patterns on certain tendencies. We, however, shall make broad markets in the arena, where details could be added by further research, and as far as our material permits, shall analyse the historical processes through which labour articulated itself and its relations with the state. Leftist politics, though connected with the social bearings of the proletariat shall be dealt with separately at a later stage, when we discuss the question of the intellectuals. We must make our apologies for having created these analytical divides in our perception of the historical dynamic, which we hope shall not remain disjuncted isolations but congruent adjacents in our analyses, which might "confuse the bowsprit with the rudder",<sup>1</sup> and thereby lose itself in its own folds.

---

1. Lewis Carol - "Hunting of the Snark".

In the midst of battles over the categories of the Mexican Revolution, the Mexican Labour Movement also acquired an important position in the liberal nationalist programmes, having developed in the Porfiriato's expansion of railways, mines, maritime services and some textile mills; in which, however, the Railway Syndicates of different gangs was best formed.<sup>2</sup> The various moderate brotherhoods and unions could not avoid the consequences of the revolution.<sup>3</sup> They were arrested or impressed into work by the rival fighting forces. The influence of Flores Magon and his syndicalist movement was everywhere apparent, both in general ideological terms advocating cooperatives and mutualism as well as in concrete participation in the revolution through a fighting labour force - the noted "red battalions" which fought in the battle of Mexico City in 1914 and which were not isolated, spontaneous groups seeking the barricades.<sup>4</sup> There was much syndicalist guidance and leadership especially in the 'Case del Obrero Mundial' the centre of the workers of the world. From 1914 onwards, Mexican labour became increasingly conscious of its aims and gains, going through different phases with different leaders, retained

---

2. Bernstein, op.cit., c.f. also Robert J. Alexander - Labor Movements in Latin America, pp.510-42 in Asher N. Christensen (ed), The Evolution of Latin American Governments - A book of readings, NY 1951.

3. Bernstein, op.cit.

4. Ibid.



an essential national character, which however, abstained from affiliations with the international labour movements.<sup>5</sup> It drew away from any independent political action of its own, and the more it came to receive government support, it gave in slowly at a later stage to be coopted by the state.<sup>6</sup> By 1918, the ideas of Flored Magon were being replaced by the views of Luis Morones, organiser of the nationwide trade union federation called the Confederation Regional Obrera Mexicana (CROM)<sup>7</sup> which completely dispossessed the Casa. When Mexican labor entered the area of government and politics instead of its 'political boycotting', the first chapter of Mexican radical labour history syndicalism closed. Its legacy of unionism based upon class struggle still remained, but it no longer felt the need to be independent of a 'paternalistic central government' and a generous constitution which 'collectivised the contradictions and made them appear as Fundamental contraities through its transformist stance,<sup>8</sup> thus creating the 'movement state' of the historical bloc<sup>9</sup> which established the incipient conditions for not only the domination of the bourgeoisie in the social formation but

---

5. Ibid., c.f., Brandenburg, op.cit.

6. Bo Anderson and James Cockcroft - "Cooptation in Mexican Politics", op.cit.

7. Brandenburg, op.cit.

8. Aspects of the bourgeois constitution of 1917.

9. c.f., Therborn - What does the ruling class do when it rules? op.cit.

laid the very basis for its material hegemony, its ideology which necessarily, though not sufficiently expressed the forms of the ideological conceptions, integrated in the consciousness (the moral economy) of the asymmetrically, differentially dominated classes,<sup>10</sup> ensuring thereby, the content of a dynamic confluence of oscillatory contradictions (moving between the forms of an identity and disjunctions of class interest in the consciousness vis-a-vis the state) of the dominated classes, in their historical process of being integrated and hegemonised which however, does not preclude the possibility of the historical development of subaltern classes both at the objective instance and the subjective in consciousness (differentially mediated) of that instance.<sup>11</sup> Bourgeois 'creole' (an ethnic category) nationalism absorbed labour and in exchange for its support of the nationalist revolution, labor leaders accepted the promises of the state to repeal the harsh anti-labor policies of Diaz.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, labor found other political leaders who offered protection from the "unrewarding" laissez-fair legalism of Madero and Carranza, both of

---

10. c.f., E P Thompson - Whigs etc., op.cit., and Nicos Mouzelis - Ideology and Class Politics - A critique of Laclau, pp. 45-62 in NLR 112, Nov-Dec. 1978, London.

11. c.f., Gramsci, op.cit.

12. Bernstein, op.cit.

whom had refused to recognise any special status or privileges for labor.<sup>13</sup> Whether the repressive discrimination of the Diaz period was worse than the legal neutrality of Madero and Carranza can be debated, but labor sought a new constitutional workingman's code with strong affirmative clauses which wrote the rights of labor in the constitution of 1917,<sup>14</sup> the legal charter of the bourgeoisie in which article 123 provided the basic guarantees for labor and social welfare; the rights of labor to organise unions, to bargain collectively and to strike<sup>15</sup> the rights which were handed over by the state, by the authority of law and not because of any natural rights of human beings.<sup>16</sup>

Obregon's recognition of labor unionism brought into prominence a new kind of administrative support, based largely upon the propaganda and pressure of union organisers and officials. Unionisation was probably the most striking advance made by the Mexican labor, (though within which the the relatively advanced industries and sectors of services dominated as they were better organised and also in terms of the economic position of the workers)<sup>17</sup> although, here also, legislation for the removal of labour restraints (for a better mobility) did not come quickly from the

---

13. c.f., R.E. Ruiz - Madero's Administration and Mexican labor, op.cit.

14. Bernstein, op.cit.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Brandenburg, op.cit.

congress.<sup>18</sup> It was the general state of labour sympathy which favoured organisation (possibly the differential formation of the class consciousness)<sup>19</sup> Union leaders acquired considerable political influence, but did little to provide or secure legislation for a system of unemployment insurance, old-age assistance and pensions. Throughout the regime of Obregon, Mexican labor or its spokesmen rather, concerned almost entirely with economic demands of winning the right to strike, trade-union recognition, collective bargaining, wage increases and political influences<sup>20</sup> which did not provide any structural threats to clauses of the relations of production and the ownership of the means of production both private and state, and could be accommodated within the parameters of the burgeoning economy of the miracle years - which in fact saw the holding down of the average real wage in both industry and agriculture, thus generating large scale profits for investments.<sup>21</sup> A few large unions, however, had their own large funds and their own systems of benefits. And, because of state patronage, labour union developed a new trade-union officialdom, with a power of their own - labor caudillos (or Sardars) who acquired great power over their organisations and consequently heavy influence in politics, government and corruption.<sup>22</sup>

---

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

22. Brandenburg, op.cit.

The CROM launched in 1918 with the favor of the government had become by 1928 the largest labor organisation. In Mexico its head Luis Morones, connected the future of labor movement with the Mexican government in order to strengthen labor with state patronage. The CROM grew very wealthy from dues, contributions and exactions and the members of its central governing committee the Groups Accion were Villified for graft and misappropriation of the funds for personal wealth as all labor leaders have been rightly or wrongly.<sup>23</sup> Morones and his aides attained the peak of their power in 1928 when Calles, needing Morones made him the Minister of Industry with power to enforce labour and industrial laws.<sup>24</sup> Both workers (except the old moderate railways union which never joined CROM)<sup>25</sup> and employers, as well as many public officials contributed to the permanent treasury and the political war chests which the CROM and the Groupo Accion saw fit to raise.<sup>26</sup> Union bosses used membership statistics in bargaining for personal political priveleges and the years 1918-28 formed at one level the years of predatory unionism, boss opportunism and extremely meager advances for the workers.<sup>27</sup> One of the dilemmas of labour was that it had organised before the industrialisation

---

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Bernstein, op.cit.

26. Brandenburg, op.cit.

27. Ibid.

and it was intrinsically shackled to the economic backwardness in which it was recompensed by overt political privileges by the 'transformist' state as short term compromises.<sup>28</sup>

Cardenas rejuvenated the hopes of older labor centrals and nascent unions that had begun activities in the early 1930s. Although his promises of future rewards in return for support against Calles failed to impress some unionists, others considered whether the long term interests of the labor movement would best be served by political activity or by remaining aloof from politics.<sup>29</sup> But young leaders in 1935, spurred on by the fiery oratory of the former CROM intellectual Vincente Lombardo Toledano stepped into the political frying pan on the concept of worker democracy.<sup>30</sup> The state under Cardenas backed labor in organising a giant national central. This labour confederation set up in 1936 with Stalinists and Trotskyites<sup>31</sup> on its first executive council along with non-Marxists took the name of Confederation de Trabajadores de Mexico (CTM) - the workers Confederation of Mexico. Lombardo became the

---

28. c.f., Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Bernstein, op.cit.

31. Brandenburg, op.cit.

Secretary-General (with the President's approval) and the virtual dictator of the new organisation.<sup>32</sup>

From the outset the CTM included peasants, civil servants, bank employees, teachers, miners and laborers in commerce and industry. But Lombardo's ambition (?) as well as the factional disputes between the Communist and non-Communist trade unionists gave the state a pretext for backing the autonomy of several occupational groupings, and in the process reducing the CTM membership base to laborers in industry and commerce.<sup>33</sup> Expropriation of the railroads and oil industry also reduced the CTM hold over these industries, for their workers now found that contesting management terms of work meant nothing less than criticising the state.<sup>34</sup> The Trotskyite led miners and metallurgical workers' union split from CTM and the Stalinist-oriented Toledano in 1938 set up his own Central.<sup>35</sup> Peasants, bank employees, civil servants and teachers like were split in 1938 from the CTM along with the miners of communistic persuasions. Despite these breaks, CTM continued to dominate the industrial and commercial trade unions.<sup>36</sup>

The case of the strike in 1938 among the refinery and well workers of the pre-nationalised oil industry suggests the mediative forms in a very particular instance,

---

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

of the state in the pre-public sector enterprise. Article 123 of the Constitution of 1917 had provided for collective bargaining and had also outlined a machinery for the settlement of labor-capital disputes - known as 'juntas de arbitraje y conciliacion'.<sup>37</sup> These local, regional and national boards had been established well back in the Obregon days, and intervened in strikes and other disputes. By 1936 these boards had attained a considerable reputation and prestige for impartiality within the law.<sup>38</sup> The constitution and implementing statute provided that labor-capital disputes might be appealed from the 'juntas' to the Mexican court system. In the oil controversy of 1938, the appropriate junta had decided in favor of the workers, appeals had been taken up to the highest 'junta' which upheld the lower commissions,<sup>39</sup> Further, appeals taken to the Mexican courts had the same result, and finally when the supreme court of Mexico upheld the unions and the companies refused to accept the discussions, the state accused them of violating Mexican laws and on March 18, 1938, the Mexican President Cardenas signed the order expropriating and nationalising the properties of the foreign oil corporations by article 27 of the constitution 1917, which granted the state powers over surface and subsoil wealth-thereby reducing private property in natural resources.<sup>40</sup>

---

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.



By 1946, labour influence as an independent political factor declined, tending to be more closely identified with static forces in law and state rather than with revolutionaries<sup>41</sup> in which there were great hindrances of both scientific theory and proper revolutionary organisation, which we shall discuss when we take up the question of the ideological formations at a later stage.

The specific character of unionism and its effective economism have to be understood in the particular historical context of the form of economic development in Mexico and the process of the 'formation' of the working class.

From the outset, we should understand that the organised labor movement in Mexico is neither free nor independent, that organised labour comprises a minority segment of the labour unions with exaggerated membership statistics and that the labor force as a whole receives miserably low wages, even though one segment of organised labor has managed to carve a convenient corner for itself.<sup>42</sup> Apart from this, very little is known about the unorganised day laborers, the unemployed, women and children labor and the internal migrants, though broad canvases of misery are pointed in dull shades about them.<sup>43</sup>

---

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., c.f., Eckstein, op.cit.

43. Eckstein, op.cit.

Besides labor has become the captive of the 'official Party' (which we will analyse later) and no national strike can succeed or demands granted without state approval.<sup>44</sup> However, nominal wage increases have appeared in the form of biennial restructuring of legal minimum wages on a regional basis. But except for priveleged unions (labor aristocracy?) periodically blessed with wage increased and in which the union boss in Mexico is more like a policemen than a responsive leader,<sup>45</sup> while most of the labor engaged in the commercial sectors remained unorganised.<sup>46</sup>

Unionism in Mexico follows the general pattern of syndical organisation, with the labor leaders placing great emphasis on grouping unions into territorial units corresponding to politico-electoral districts.<sup>47</sup> Local unions affiliate with national ones, which may or may not be adjoined to a national central. But local unions, largely for political ends also belong to local, district, regional and state federations, who also affiliate with confederations and controls. By 1964 only two centrals and two autonomous national unions could validly claim more than 60,000 membership vis CTM and the CROC central and the autonomous Railroad workers union and the Mining and Metal Workers Unions.<sup>48</sup>

---

44. Brandenburg, op.cit.

45. Ibid.

46. Eckstein, op.cit.

47. Brandenburg, op.cit.

48. Ibid.

The state itself, grants pay increases to the workers of electric power, petroleum, telephone, railways and a choice of a dozen other industries - amounting to less than 1/7 of the total non-agricultural force, while the hard core of labor still stands in the depths of misery.<sup>49</sup> The CNT-Central Nacional de Trabajadore, established in 1960 by independent leftists union has on occasion been rather outspoken in its disagreement with government policies. Formed by CROC, SME, STERM, CRT the new CNT represented 1,00,000 unionists with the relatively highest wage scales in organised labor and on whose leaders were bestowed deputy seats by the state and where the CNT has emerged as the political competitor for the leadership of the Labor Unity Bloc and not the Mexican state.<sup>50</sup>

To take an overview of the situation, since W.W.2, employment in the services, the least productive non-agricultural sector has been growing most rapidly related to the nature of the economic development in Mexico. While Mexican industrialisation had a positive effect on employment in manufacturing in the 1950's. Since then large modern firms utilising capital intensive techniques have been displacing older and smaller firms, to the extent that the overall rate of increase in industrial jobs

---

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

has declined.<sup>51</sup> Employing approximately 1/5 of the labor force, the increasingly productive industrial sector absorbs only about 5% more of the economically active population than it did on the eve of the revolution though the composition of the industrial sector has changed since the revolution where the proportion of artisan activities diminished from 70% to 32%, whereas industrial jobs increased from 30% to 68% between 1928 and 1970.<sup>52</sup> However, the 'general economic growth without development' and the bias for 'modern' technology both of the state and the individual capitalists has depressed the labor problem further to the shanty towns of large metropolises of Mexico City, Puebla, Monterrey, Veracruz axis where most of the industrial processes are localised.<sup>53</sup>

The economic organisation of the asymmetrical working class - trade unions, work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital, but do not provide revolutionary solutions and are emmeshed in reformist, economistic bartering with the state and the individual entrepreneurs and where, the development of a 'proletarian political class consciousness' has been low because of the vital insignificance of a 'theoretical comprehensive practice',<sup>54</sup> which is able to link up and

---

51. Eckstein, op.cit.

52. Ibid.

53. Bernstein, op.cit.

54. c.f., Ernest Mandel - The Leninist Theory of Organisation, pp. 78-135 in Blackburn (ed) Revolution and Class Struggle, op.cit.

unite the spontaneous development of the proletarian class struggle, which we shall discuss later when we take up the limitations of the communist movement in Mexico.

The formation of the working class as an objective category is itself a historical process, in which, at a given point in time its 'becoming' a class is reflected in the various degrees of consciousness within it,<sup>55</sup> The making of the working class in Mexico, and the realisation of its revolutionary political potentialities are however, historical developments in which its dialectical relationship with the bourgeois state is a crucial variable, where its (state's) mediations have effectively formulated its (working class's) modalities of articulation and set limits to the realisation of its revolutionary potentialities in the absence of any active coagulant of 'theoretical practice', and platform and by conveying it into state sponsored economic programmes. This dimension, however, require a further in-depth analysis the fundamental 'material' requirements of which we do not have.

---

55. c.f., E P Thompson - The Making of the English Working Class - Pelican, 1977 - Passin.

## CHAPTER X

Furrows of the Face:

"The naked eyes met the noon-day sun through a haze of tears. The blood was drying upon the parched earth."

There is much 'descriptive' literature on the subject of the 'peasantry' and its role in the revolution of 1910<sup>1</sup> and its consequent relationship with the state where indictments are made upon the latter, in a typically bourgeois format of 'affluence and poverty'<sup>2</sup> for not having executed its 'professed' goals of alleviating misery. This kind of approach not only confuses the question of ideology, but predicates upon the state its own illusions of a liberal neutrality which stands in contradiction to the actual historical reality.

Furthermore, the use of the descriptive blanket category 'peasants' confuses the various levels of social existence within it which any serious analysis should take into account and be able to relate it to the societal dynamics.

- 
1. (i) e.f., John Womack Jr. - Zapata and the Mexican Revolution London, 1969, pp. x-87.  
 (ii) Charles A Thompson - Land for the Peons - Agrarian Reform in Mexico, pp. 558-63 in Asher No. Christensen (ed) op. cit.  
 (iii) H.M. Bailey and A.P. Nasatir - Latin America - The Development of its Civilisation, London 1960, pp. 361-516.
  2. Infact most of the criticisms of the state in Mexico are precisely made on these issues.

We, however, must express our incapacities of going to the extents of our perception in face of evidential lacunae in relation to the nature of commercialisation in Mexico, its effects upon the rural social structure, the relationship with the state, the question of ideology etc. However, where possible we shall make tentative generalisation at the theoretical level hoping to construct from the rubble of details some structural columns and gardens of relationships with thorns. Our emphasis will, however, be upon the controversial issue of the 'ejidos' and its political, social and economic import and its position in the capitalist dominated social structure - while its ideological significance would be dealt with later. Marx, speaking in a relative historical sense upon the French peasantry in 1848 remarked that "the symbol that expressed their entry into the revolutionary movement, clumsily cunning, knavishly naive, doctishly sublime, a calculated superstition, a pathetic burlesque, a cleverly stupid anachronism, a world-historic piece of buffoonery and an indecipherable hieroglyphic for the understanding of the civilised, this symbol bore the unmistakable physiognomy of the 'class' that represents barbarism within civilisation."<sup>3</sup> He, infact, in talking in paradoxes defined the limits of his dialectical

---

3. Loc. cit., in Teodor Shanin - Peasantry as a Political Factor, pp. 238-63 in Shanin (ed), Peasants etc., op.cit.

imagination', and the ultra-complexity of the peasant's political action and consciousness, the comprehension of which remains problematical, and which is subsumed under a barrage of intellectual antirehtoric' in which the intellectuals have to confront their own non-sensical nuisance and banish it for redemption.<sup>4</sup> This 'maddening' peasant quality seems to be at the roots of the problems of research in this field.<sup>5</sup>

Our attempt, with a certain tentativeness in the character of generalisation, would be to deal with the 'peasantry' in its historical context, as a part of society, and the patterns of the political actions of this entity in which not only the recognition of the limitations of the translation of a complex reality into a verbal form of fewer dimensions, but also the limitations of research material provide an impediment in our study.

However, we shall make an attempt along a theoretical-objective perspective to locate the historical transformations contradictions and congruities existing in the Mexican countryside and their specific dialectical relationship with the 'peasantry'- (primarily the small-family agricultural producers)<sup>6</sup> at various scales of social 'placement' - (day laborer-jornalero, wage worker, tenants etc.)<sup>7</sup> resulting in a 'mediated' political action and

---

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Bernstein, op.cit.



the consequences of it, which would have a bearing upon its dynamic aspect as a potential 'class' and also its 'low level of classness'<sup>8</sup> in terms of its effective ideological displacements.

We, however, will not be go deep into the countryside to be able to take into account the historical 'experiential' dimension of the peasantry vis-a-vis its land, family, occupation, village structure, but shall make referential remarks to its broader forms of articulation at the local and national level vis-a-vis the state (and its realistic agents like the porfirian rurales, tax collectors etc.) the 'hacienda', in which the hegemony of the Catholic Church, and the tradition of blood, violence and death would be implicit, as the active concepts in the 'popular' consciousness, whose effectivity was limited by the overall framework of the social movement, of which, it was a catalytic part and in which it was slowly absorbed, politically, socially and ideologically - as the bourgeoisie hegemonised Mexican Society under its specific historical credos, culture, customs, commitments, contributions and concubinage condescendingly granted to the 'pressure' social class-through 'the paternalistic', national state-form.'

---

8. Shanin, op.cit.

Under Porfirio Diaz - there was a state sponsored large scale expansion of the 'Hacienda' economy in which large scale land grants were given to 'special' personages, nationals and foreigners for mercantilist colonisation for export commodities of coffee, sugar, cotton etc.<sup>9</sup> Incredible shares of land were parcelled out in Chihuahua, seven concessionaries received 35,000,000 acres, in Durango 9,000,000 acres were shared by two.<sup>10</sup> The alienation of peasant resources proceeded directly through outright seizure or through coercive purchase<sup>11</sup> in which the state military sided with the 'hacendados' and ruthlessly destroyed Indian villages, converting them into 'captive peons' - bonded labourers usually.<sup>12</sup> A concentrated opulent minority confronted a sea of melancholy; where in 1910, 1% of the Mexican population owned 70% of the arable surface,<sup>13</sup> like the Navarros, who also aided and abetted each other in both business and politics,<sup>14</sup> in 'money mindedness' and 'paternalistic' disposition towards the other social classes represented by the formal ancien symbiosis of the Porfirista state

---

9. Eric R. Wolf - 'Aspects of Group relations etc., op.cit.

10. Sanford A Mosk - The Pathology of Democracy in Latin America. An Economist point of view, pp. 167 in Christensen (ed) EV of Latin America Govt., op.cit.

11. Eric R. Wolf - Peasant Rebellions, op.cit.

12. Ibid.

13. Donald M. Dozer - Roots of Revolution in Latin America, pp. 293-94 in Christensen (ed), op.cit.

14. C H Harris - The "Overnight family" - The Case of Sanchez Navarros, pp. 47-48 in Wilkie et al. (ed) Contemporary Mexico, op.cit.

and the reconciling 'cientifico' ideology of peace, order and material progress.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike Chayanov's understanding of the subjectivity of the economic dynamic of the peasantry as a specific type of economy with its own rationality,<sup>16</sup> the objective process of commercialisation in agriculture in Mexico, the expansion of market, communications, transport especially during the Diaz regime (1876-1910) produced concomitant effects upon the system of land tenure, political-social relationships and to some extent its ideological forms of which the 'hacienda' type of organisation, of capitalist production was the predominant one,<sup>17</sup> utilising primitive 'forms' of labour exploitation (formal subsumption of labour into capital) leading to a process of 'pauperisation without proletarianisation' or flight to the upcoming industrial commercial settlements with the shanty-towns and slums harbouring such internal migrants<sup>18</sup> transiting between the town and countryside

---

15. Benstein, op.cit.

16. c.f., Basile Kerblay - Chayanov and the Theory of Peasantry as a specific type of Economy, pp. 150-60 in Shamin - Peasants etc., op.cit.

17. c.f., Wold - Aspects of Group relations etc., op.cit. and Manning Nash - Market and Indian Peasant Economics op.cit. and Ernest Feder - "Latifundia and Agricultural Labour in Latin America" in Shamin ed. op.cit.

18. Eckstein, op.cit.

in physical space and in transformist consciousness.<sup>19</sup> Increased instability in the rural area was thus accompanied by a still unstable commitment to urban work<sup>20</sup> expressed in their songs "to go to the land, when the slavery of the workshop weighs down too much, and there arises the desire to breathe freedom deeply, far from the city and under the protective dome of heavens".<sup>21</sup>

The hacienda phenomenon granted direct ownership of land to a manager-owner,<sup>22</sup> with a direct control over the resident labor force, which was integrated into the commercial production for the market on the hacienda<sup>23</sup> which, however, was organized on low technology and high labor inputs. Hacienda owners also curtailed production to raise rents and prices and keep down wages (in cash or kind)<sup>24</sup> On most haciendas, the Indian communities existed on the fringes, by farming a small subsistence plot of land lost to the hacienda and given in turn by it.<sup>25</sup> In the northern arid sparsely populated territories,

---

19. c.f. Raymond Williams - The country and the city - Paladin, 1975, pp. 324-43. also EJ Hobsbawm - "Peasants and rural Migrants in Politics", pp.46-62 in Veliz (ed) op.cit.

20. Williams, op.cit.

21. Millon-Zapata, op.cit.

22. Wolf-Aspects etc., op.cit.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

haciendas covered enormous areas upto 16,500,000 acres,<sup>26</sup> while in the densely populated south and central regions large and medium haciendas averaged 3000 hectares.<sup>27</sup>

The system, infact, structured the social relationship of exploitation and forms of labour use in the countryside, with the Indian communities feeling its presence at all times,<sup>28</sup> and with corporate 'peasant' communities ultimately establishing relations of hostile symbiosis with the haciendas, expressed in peasant revolts and social banditry,<sup>29</sup> with their 'grito de dolores' cries of pain, anguish, resentment developing into legends, lores and songs expressing a culture against repression.<sup>30</sup>

Apart from the haciendas, with the commercialisation of agriculture and the formation of a land market, during the 19c, the colonial marginals (residents of the fringes of haciendas, mines, plantations) and tenants moved in as new landowners, usurers and capitalist farmers confiscating new land from the Indians as well as the church.<sup>31</sup>

---

26. C H Harris, op.cit.

27. Francois Chevalier - Ejido etc., op.cit.

28. Ibid.

29. Wolf-Aspects, op.cit. Wolf - Peasant rebellions etc., op.cit., c.f. Hobsbawn - Bandits - Pelican 1972, pp. 17-30.

30. c.f. Heather Fowler Salamini - Adalberto Tejeda and the Veracruz Peasant Movement, pp. 275-82 in Wilkie et. al. led contemporary Mexico, op.cit.

31. Wolf - Aspects etc., op.cit.

Important also was the spread of plough culture, which required some capital investments coupled with wage labor on such holdings, increasingly producing for the market.<sup>32</sup> However, further substance on this relation of production cannot be detailed upon, except in terms of the substance of the political activity of these new rich farmers to which we will come to.

Besides, the countryside was dotted with a land-owning 'middle-peasantry with a relatively secure access to land of its own and using family labor<sup>33</sup> and below which was the small peasantry located in a peripheral area outside the domains of the landlords control<sup>34</sup> and where, subsistence from insufficient holdings for the support of the household was carried on by subsidiary activities of casual labor, live-stock raising, smuggling etc.<sup>35</sup> which the margins of commercial, subordinated integration provided and which also felt the predations of grain price fluctuations and the control of itinerant or adjacent richer usurers.<sup>36</sup>

---

32. Ibid.

33. Wolf - Peasant rebellions, op.cit.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Manning Nash, op.cit.

To sum up, the hacienda dominated the agrarian commercial economy and set the long term trends<sup>37</sup> using its peons and tenants as labor, under which came the pyramid of the rich, middle and small peasantry and the landless feeling the burdens differentially of debt-bondage and usurious transactions, feeling their "frustration of freedom".

The 'peasant' movement under Zapata has been misunderstood by many who fail to see the differential aspects of the 'peasantry' and thereby create a vicarious analysis with a teleological import.<sup>38</sup> The support for a movement is not just predicated upon 'misery, poverty and hunger' which might create requisite existential environments for political mobilisation whose effectivity will be related to the 'tactical mobility' of the different segments of the peasantry,<sup>39</sup> whereby the poor peasant or the landless laborer who depends on a landlord for the largest part of his livelihood has no tactical power, he is completely within the power domain of his employer, without sufficient resources of his own to serve him in his struggle.<sup>40</sup> But such a segment lends its support

---

37. c.f., Wold - Aspects etc., op.cit.

38. c.f. Womack - op.cit.

Ernest Gruening, op.cit.

Branderburg, op.cit.

Bernstein, op.cit.

Eckstein, op.cit. and many more.

39. Wolf - Peasant etc., op.cit.

40. Ibid.

when it can rely upon some external power to challenge the power which constrains them. Such external power is represented in the Mexican case by the constitutionalist army in Yucatan which liberated peons from debt-bondage "from above".<sup>41</sup> The rich peasant, as employer of the labor of others, as money-lender, coopted by the state machine exercises local power (under the shadows of the hacienda as in Mexico).<sup>42</sup> Only when an external force, proves capable of challenging these 'superior domains' will the rich peasant give support to an uprising.<sup>43</sup>

The "middle" and the "small" peasantry, however, have a sufficient leverage to enter into a sustained movement and the possession of even minimal resources provide them with a tactical freedom<sup>44</sup> and an ideological underpinning such as Zapata's - "Land and Liberty" which, of course, was asymmetrically perceived at different levels and in different complexes of consciousness. Such tactically mobile peasantry, in fact, became the basis of the agrarista movement in the villages of Morelos in Mexico<sup>45</sup> where the "middle" peasant was the most vulnerable

---

41. Ibid., also c.f. Salamini, op.cit.

42. C.f. Brandenburg, op.cit., and Andrew Gunder Frank - The Janus faces of 20c Bourgeois Revolution, pp.72-85 in Whiter Latin America, MRP 1963.

43. Wolf Peasants, op.cit.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.



to the economic changes wrought by commercialism, while his social relations remained encased within the traditional design,<sup>46</sup> and it is precisely his condition, which is the most precarious, in times of encroachments of rival landlords, loss of rights of grazing and water, unfavourable conditions of the market, interest and tax payments and foreclosures and this is also the strata which depends most on traditional social relations of kin and mutual aid.<sup>47</sup>

Besides, the "middle" and "small" peasants are also the most exposed to developing urban influences.<sup>48</sup> The poor peasant or landless laborer, in going to the city also usually cuts his ties with the land. The middle peasant, however, has a part of his family which stays on land while another part goes to the cities.<sup>49</sup> This makes the middle peasant a transmitter also of urban unrest and political ideas - maintaining the precarious equilibrium of its "moral economy".<sup>50</sup>

---

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., also c.f. Hobsbawn "Rural Migrants", op.cit.

49. Wolf - Peasants, op.cit.

50. Ibid., "Moral Economy" concept of EP Thompson which is an active constituent of the mediating consciousness which effectively tells people how much they can take? from whom? to what end? etc. essentially an experiential dimension.

Along with this economic and ideological tactical mobility the factor of its peripheral geographical location with regard to the centre of state control is also crucial. In fact, frontier areas quite often show a tendency to rebel against the central authority, as the Mexican north was a zone of dissidence from the centre in Mexico City; the economy of which was based on mining and cattle raising rather than maize agriculture.<sup>51</sup> Similar was the case with Morelos where there was also an ethnic solidarity of the Nahuatl speaking peasant groups.<sup>52</sup>

It was, however, these middle and small peasant groups which formed the backbone of the agrarian movement of Zapata, which was not only concerned with the 'patria chica' but had a national perspective<sup>53</sup> and who introduced the peasantry as the political factor in the revolution with the economic ideological commitments of the post-revolutionary bourgeois state adapting them towards particular forms of land reforms - which do not contradict the rule of bourgeois property relations but actively supplement the economy with vast reserves of the precariously "under-employed" population integrated and being hegemonised through state policies and agencies.<sup>54</sup>

---

51. Wolf, op.cit., c.f. Brandenburg, op.cit.

52. Ibid.

53. Millon, op.cit.

54. C.f. Stavenhagen - Changing functions of the community etc., op.cit. and Manning Nash - Market etc., op.cit. Also Casanova - Internal Colonialism, op.cit.

Zapata and his followers symbolised the essence of the revolution of 1910, while Pancho Villa became its 'bandit' legend.<sup>55</sup> Zapata expressed in his 'plan of Ayala' of 1911 a complex pattern for not only land reforms but also broader social and economic reforms,<sup>56</sup> with a clearly defined petty-bourgeois romantic ideological orientation<sup>57</sup> in which the dissolution of the 'hacienda' structure and relation became the crucial demand.<sup>58</sup> Zapata's ideology objectively promoted the private property of rich, middle and small holders in land expressed in the October Convention of 1915, and left untouched both the rural bourgeoisie and the sugar mills of Morelos.<sup>59</sup> They, however, struggled for wide distribution of land the 'ejidos' throughout Mexico, which the state under popular pressure took up as its key to 'partial' and reforms under a petty-bourgeois socialist rhetoric, especially under Cardenas.<sup>60</sup> While Villa expressed the bandit variant, with his group of marauding 'peasant guilleros' with 'honourable conduct' in the North-taking from the rich to give to the poor.<sup>61</sup>

---

55. Hobsbawm - Bandits, op.cit.

56. Millon, op.cit.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Chevalier, op.cit.

60. Ibid.

61. Hobsbawm - Bandits, op.cit.

In objective terms, both the 'peasant' leaders failed to participate in the state<sup>62</sup> and after their murder the 'folk migration' in the North Subsided, and the land reforms from the bourgeois state appeased the 'limited radicalism' in the South. The state slowly 'statified' the contradictions transforming them as a crucial factor in its ideological relations with which it hegemonised the subordinated, and except for large-scale confiscations of haciendas and improved tenurial rights to 'small' peasants, tenants and share-croppers there was no 'revolutionary' transformation in the countryside. Along with the market mechanisms, the economics of old landlords were dispossessed, partially by the new labor bosses, merchants, industrial entrepreneurs and a provincial elite, often utilising the old ideological forms to establish themselves physically and in the consciousness of the 'peasantry', and integrating them further in a national ideological complex dominated by the towns (in the social formation) to which these provided a vital axis.<sup>63</sup> The transition, of course, is a slow process and vestiges of the past integrated in new historical contexts still linger in the memory of traditions and generations. Villa and Zapata are still the 'Champion heroes of the revolution' idealised even by the revolutionaries who killed them.<sup>64</sup>

---

62. Nun, op.cit.

63. Chevalier, op.cit.

64. Wolf - Aspects etc., op.cit.

The typical element of land reform in the post-revolutionary period is the 'ejido' which has acquired an important social if not economic position by virtue of the great number of people (crucial in the system of electoral politics) who live, depend or are connected with such units<sup>65</sup> of land, held communally but distributed into individual family plots. Thus the beneficiaries have only the usufruct of their plots which are run by an 'elected' ejidal committee of three members.<sup>66</sup> By 1960, 3.2 per cent of the total land was held in communal 'ejidos'.<sup>67</sup>

There is no reliable data, on the historical evolution of the 'ejido', but distinctions in the structure of village communities both in the south-central and Northern regions of Mexico are noticed<sup>68</sup> which were colonised by the haciendas under Iberian influence and which converted the Indian into peons or marginalised peasants.<sup>69</sup> The north had a much looser structure of independent village communities relative to the south-where, especially in the region of Morelos, semi-independent groups of peasants stuck to small

---

65. In state's historical interpretation. C.f. "Historia de la Revolution" El Colegio de Mexico editions.

66. Chevalier, op.cit.

67. Brendenburg, op.cit.

68. Chevalier, op.cit. Also c.f. Andrew G. Frank, op.cit.

69. Chavalier, op.cit.

patches of land or tlacololas - 'holes in the mountains'<sup>70</sup> though they worked also as artisans or as hired labour on haciendas or in the cities<sup>71</sup> or the sugar mills. These villages communities of peasants imposed reforms for the recovery of cultivable land, peace and freedom in the areas of Morelos, Puebla and Guerrero provinces in 1915 and 1916 and to prevent the expansion of haciendas at their expense by a system of the allocation of inalienable patches to individual families.<sup>72</sup> To supplement, a rural loan bank was started in 1915-16 to provide friendly credit as against the usurers.<sup>73</sup> And by 1917 the organisation of the 'ejido' peasant settlements was perfected along old communal "indigenous calpulli" (clan) lines but in a new social context<sup>74</sup> borrowing from the Christian Socialistic ideas of Soto y Gama.<sup>75</sup> The legislation of the Zapatistas, however, had no legal sanction from the state, which came in 1920 by the act of Obregon-Ley de Ejidos, which formalised the form of the village communities in which semi-collective agricultural system did not substitute the large estates.<sup>76</sup>

---

70. Wolf-Aspects etc., op.cit.

71. Chevalier, op.cit.

72. Wolf, op.cit.

73. Chevalier, op.cit.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Bernstein, op.cit.

The economic and ideological notions of discipline and authority on which the haciendas were organised were not taken over in the context of ejidos by the bureaucrat officials of the central government, except in sectors of state planning or private planning which benefited from investment of capital.<sup>77</sup> By 1934, the 'peonesacasillados' (living on haciendas) were granted 'ejido' autonomy for 'comunidad' (collective) or 'pueblo' (village) organisation; while the hacienda was not abolished and continued as a part of the rural landscape.<sup>78</sup>

Before Cardenas, from Carransa to Calles the aim of the agrarian reforms was to establish individual holds of small or 'average' size of inalienable family property, expressed in article 27 VII of the liberal constitution of 1917 which saw in the state sponsored small peasant property the seeds of economic progress as against the communal ejidos. Thus by 1923 the tendential ratio of distribution was 4 hectares to the ejidatarios as against 25 to the small holders in which the former was provided means for subsistence while the latter was given encouragement for commercial agriculture.<sup>79</sup> Cardenas between 1934-40 made the agrarian measures of reform

---

77. Chevalier, op.cit.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

irreversible; along with land distribution he created the Banco Nacional to drive out usury, expanded the limits of ejido property the figures of which are misleading and rhetorical as they also included many unconfirmed allocations for occupation of land<sup>80</sup> but which did have some regularisation and confirmation of ownership.<sup>81</sup> By 1936, some rich hacienda lands were converted into "collective ejidos", which were different from the Pueblo ejidos. And at the end of Cardenas' regime, the ejidos owned formally more than 1/2 of the high yield state irrigated lands.<sup>82</sup>

Unlike Obregon and Calles before him who preferred small private farms, Cardenas favoured the semi-collective ejido as a means also of rejuvenating the Indian cultural patterns lying at the interestices of the state's populist ideology of 'Indianists' socialist reform,<sup>83</sup> encouraging Portes Gil in 1935 to organise peasant leagues and bring them into the official PNR (Party of National Revolution). Cardenas simultaneously permitted trade unions to enlist ejidatarios and small farmers in their ranks, whose number exceeded the entire industrial labour force<sup>84</sup> and demanded an autonomous confederation. Based on

---

80. Ibid., c.f. Brandenburg, op.cit.

81. Bernstein, op.cit.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid., Chevalier, op.cit.

84. Ibid.



state agrarian leagues that had become a pillar of the redesigned official party, in 1938, the confederation Nacional Campesina (CNC) Confederation of National Campesina was formed and integrated into the PRI.<sup>85</sup> Membership in the CNC became obligatory for every ejidatario, where the three-man local ejidal commissariats, state agrarian leagues and the CNC national executive committee were expected to aggregate and regulate the interests of the peasantry for 'meaningful gross-roots democracy' to guide the secretary-general of the CNC.<sup>86</sup> In fact, this measure has generally been considered as further means made available to the Party and the President to control vast masses of peasant electors, who do influence the internal politics,<sup>87</sup> but by what methods? How? and to what extent? remains an open question. The CNC, in fact, became an ultimate organ of the state party, with its officials abusing membership trust by conniving with government banks to obtain financial credit and gratifications for CNC officialdom in the name of ejidos.<sup>88</sup> The state by "introducing" the ejidos also made the members of the majority class (1960-peasants - 57.8 per cent of population)<sup>89</sup>

---

85. Brandenburg, op.cit.

86. Ibid. Chevalier, op.cit.

87. Ibid., Chevalier, op.cit.

88. C.f. Eckstein, op.cit., ibid.

89. Brandenburg, op.cit., ibid.

aware that their interest lay in preserving those interests and the results already achieved by them through the beneficence of the state<sup>90</sup> (in the face of a reactionary opposition and a negligible left alternative to which we will come to later). However, even after the 1934-40 efforts, there were still concentrated latifundias, which in 1960 amounted to 3½ million hectares of cultivable land being divided in 708 agricultural estates<sup>91</sup> out of which some controlled rich irrigated soils, while others occupied poor regions for ranches.<sup>92</sup>

As far as rich lands were concerned, the state was discreet. For increasing production for both the internal and export markets large scale irrigation works were undertaken by the ministry of hydraulic resources which also raised the prices of land.<sup>93</sup> Along with the attraction of foreign capital, large scale private latifundias were favoured for coffee, cacao, fruits, grapes and cane-sugar by Aleman in 1946-54.<sup>94</sup>

On the north-west capitalist agriculture providing for markets in the US thrive, with large scale, more mechanised latifundias utilising wage labour. These,

---

90. Andrew G. Frank, op.cit., *ibid.*

91. Brandenburg, op.cit., *ibid.*

92. Chevalier, op.cit.

93. *Ibid.*

94. *Ibid.*

however, are controlled by influential persons and powerful interests which prefer to remain in the background and do not figure significantly in the populist official statistics.<sup>95</sup>

Besides, smaller capitalist farms were carved out of the old haciendas with the farmers combining in the Confederation of Small Agricultural property, made part of the 'popular' sector of the PRI and receiving state patronage and assistance especially after 1946, and by 1964. This group claimed a membership of 750,000 farmers including big estate owners.<sup>96</sup> In fact, the profit has been high for the capitalist units, in which, because of inflation, the real wages have lagged behind, which showed a fall of 46 per cent between 1940-50, and considered as proportion of the GNP, the share of wages has reduced from 30.5 per cent in 1939 to 23 per cent in 1950, while profits rose from 26.1 per cent to 42 per cent.<sup>97</sup> And, this decline in real wages has also contributed to the 'bracero' problem of 'migrant wet-back labour' into the U.S. who flees from its own desperations.<sup>98</sup>

Highly capitalised agriculture also spread to the irrigated lands of the ejidos especially in the Yaqui Valley in the north-western province of Sonora.<sup>99</sup> Some of

---

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid.

97. Brandenburg, op.cit.

98. Chevalier, op.cit.

99. C.f. RB Craig - The Bracero Programme - Austin, 1971.

the ejidatarios invest credit obtained from the Ejidal Bank in part of the land and lease out upto 40 per cent of land which others rent to add more to the profitability mainly private capitalist farms as in Sonora where foreign capital also trickles in to boost commercial crops, like the Anderson and Clayton brokers for cotton for the US markets.<sup>100</sup> Besides, the discriminatory Ejidal Bank (circulating national capital under state directive) reserves credit for prosperous regions and viable enterprises of ejidos, a fraction of which has prospered amounting to 2.3 per cent of the total 16,670 ejidatarios of this sectors leaving out of others.<sup>101</sup> These also carry weight in the CNC for the same economic reasons as the rich owners or farmers of the irrigated estates contributing to the projected brilliance of export dollar income and the economic development of the nation.<sup>102</sup> Besides, these are new lands with no labour problem which is contained in the ejidos of the densely populated areas.<sup>103</sup>

The bourgeois state in the social formation has thus succeeded in maintaining "order" "equality and liberty" based on the compromise between the requirements

---

100. Chevalier, op.cit.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.

of agricultural development based on capitalist rich peasant rancho units and the tendency under social pressures to "contain" and maintain the agrarian reforms on the "revolutionary lines".<sup>104</sup>

Besides, Indians who had a right to petition to the state to receive land, but who in practice were discouraged by intimidation of landowners and "red tape" of the bureaucracy;<sup>105</sup> the ejido saw within it a differential pattern of development. In northern Mexico, there were few Indian communities to lay claim to the great cattle and agricultural estates, the state programme commissioned and extended just as much assistance and distribution on behalf of the small non-Indian agrarians who were included into the ejidos' cooperatives like the one at Laguna<sup>106</sup> which became after 1936 a state sponsored cotton, wheat and maize plantation ejido, with a population of 150,000 cultivating almost 300,000 acres occupying only 1/10th of the irrigable land in the district.<sup>107</sup>

Otherwise, the ejidos 'comunidad' and 'pueblo' combine peasant small holdings of non-irrigated subsistence plots where the ejidal holders are prohibited from selling, mortgaging or renting their lands to 'outsiders', but where this formal legal law is circumvented

---

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid.

106. Eckstein, op.cit.

107. Bernstein, op.cit.

without being punished.<sup>108</sup> The 'poor' ejidos on original village sites granted by the state 'restitucion' did not experience a revolution in their existential circumstances though a sense of victory prevails along with a security of landownership.<sup>109</sup> These, in fact, provide the basis for seasonal labourers, small craftsmen and labour and where the moneylender still is the basic creditor for maize, cattle, marriages or funerals<sup>110</sup> and where the "collective servitude" converts many into share-croppers 'medieros' for some outside factor-driving out the weakest (an illegal conversion within the legal constraint) who formally subsumes them into capital though circulating in money form.<sup>111</sup> Besides, the ejidos confront their 'extractive' new bosses the caciques, ejidal commissioners, the compadrazgos, political 'brokers', moneylenders who mediate between the state, market and the ejido, which also lacks adequate resources in land, water, technology, credit and contacts with the market,<sup>112</sup> and which has this dependence upon the state institutions.<sup>113</sup>

---

108. Ibid.

109. Eckstein, op.cit.

110. Bernstein, op.cit.

111. Chevalier, op.cit.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid., c.f. also Manning Nash, op.cit.

The ejidos play another role in politics through the CNC and in the PRI. Every 3 years, executive committees are elected in ejidos which delegate two members to select over 500 local committees throughout the country which in turn appoints 32 provincial committees. Finally, the latter select 14 members of the national executive of the CNC which represents the ejidos in the official party, and asserts, the statistical tables of trade union strength associated with the PRI the CNC and associated unions have 2,650,000 members, 2,500,000 of whom are ejidatorios out of a general union membership of 6,621,000.<sup>114</sup> The state also intervenes in the choice of members of the CNC at least at the higher levels, parcelling out positions to the dominant local level private interests<sup>115</sup> and thus maintaining a grip over its 'directed democracy' scheme in which the ejidos figure as the symbol of the revolution and the 'reserves' of the rural population contributing integratively to the bourgeois economy, social peace and political stability and where the minimal experience transformed in the moral economy supplements the factor of the populist ideological hegemony of the state as the "national benefactor".<sup>116</sup>

---

114. Manning Nash, op.cit.

115. Chevalier, op.cit.

116. Ibid.

To sum up, the revolution, did not prove to be a 'total' revolution as some conceive it, and in fact, it had laid down the material preconditions for the development of the bourgeoisie in the social formation assisted by a state with a 'populist complexion'. The non-ejidal capitalist agriculturists, many of which are the families of the old hacendados<sup>117</sup> have more access to capital, fertile land and productive public assistance including infrastructure, irrigation and marketing assistance and who are favoured by the state and who dominate the agricultural economy<sup>118</sup> in the dynamics of which are subordinated the 'poor' ejidos, integrated through the mechanisms of the regional markets,<sup>119</sup> the moneylenders, state officials, political-brokers and their own priveleged,<sup>120</sup> and which in the context of the overall social formation relates its own historical reality as a satellite to the necessities of bourgeois economy, where it forms the backwaters of pauperised, underemployed people<sup>121</sup> the 'potential proletariat' which because of the

---

117. Extrapolation from Thompson - Whigs etc., op.cit.

118. Eckstein, op.cit.

119. C.f. Brandenburg, op.cit. Also Wolf - Aspects etc., op.cit.

120. Manning Nash, op.cit.

121. Wolf - Aspects etc., op.cit.



very nature of industrialization with heavy capitalization and concentration cannot be employed in that sector<sup>122</sup> and has to be "kept out of mischief" while the state doctors it with, its ideological illusions and 'massification of privilege',<sup>123</sup> and their minimal historical experiences, legends, lores, and longings, contribute in the process of hegemonising and being hegemonised.<sup>124</sup>

---

122. Stavenhagen - Changing Functions etc., op.cit.

123. Fitzgerald, op.cit.

124. C.f. Carmelo Mesa Lago - Social Security, Stratification and Inequality in Mexico, pp.228-29 in Wilkie et.al (ed), op.cit.

## CHAPTER XI

Shadows and Silhouettes

"They stand with their legs apart, shifting to carry on, when the day beckons on the morrow and the night seduces them".

The petty-bourgeoisie has never been able to create a sovereign state of its own, it has often constituted an important social force, and has, at times, even succeeded in making a definite imprint upon the state apparatuses and ideology-the "populist" aspects.<sup>1</sup>

The petit bourgeois social relations are essentially ones of exchange and competition among self-employed, independent and equal individuals or nuclear families linked only by spatial cohabitation of varying density<sup>2</sup> which in, themselves, overtly express the ideological aspects of this class, the basis of which lies upon the mediated dimensions of the historical experience.<sup>3</sup> However, historically, the weight of the petit bourgeoisie has been used to limit the separateness of the state apparatuses,<sup>4</sup> and they have served to soften the distinctions between the state and the society, between the private and the

---

1. Goran Therborn - Ruling Class etc., op.cit.

2. Ibid.

3. C.f. Nun - Middle Class Coup etc., op.cit.

4. Therborn, op.cit.

public, and have set limits to the growing autonomy of specialised legislative, administrative, judicial and repressive apparatuses of the state.<sup>5</sup> Another aspect of these restraints is the investment of the state with the moral and ideological concerns, typical to this class with its new cults of state populism like the protector, the heroes, defender, etc. which are a generalised phenomenon in most of the populist presidential systems in Latin America<sup>6</sup> where depending upon the strength of the working class and its consciousness in the civil society, such notions have been utilised against the palaeo-capitalist oligarchies (like the revolution of 1910 in Mexico) or against the menace of the working class.<sup>7</sup> But within the parameters of the populist state contraities between its radicalism and the public servicing of capital accumulation accrue,<sup>8</sup> which however, do not lead to any crisis, but tax the state for the 'minimal programmes and concessions", to the social contradictions within the social formation to maintain its legitimacy in the process of hegemonising in which the petit-bourgeoisie (both rural and urban) acquires a crucial dimension.<sup>9</sup>

---

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Nun, op.cit.

As against this approaching vast tracts of literature exists in the bourgeois problematic which conceptualises the development of a country (especially in the third world context particularly in Latin America) as the work and creation of a progressive, nationalist, enterprising and dynamic middle class, with the social and economic policy objectives of the government should be to stimulate "social mobility" and the development of that class.<sup>10</sup> There is probably no other thesis about Latin America more wide spread than this supported by researchers, journalists and politicians. It is the theme of seminars and conferences and one of the implicit assumptions of the 'diffusionist model of development.'<sup>11</sup>

As it is, the concept "middle class" itself contains many ambiguities, comprising of the statistical aggregates of middle-income groups situated between the (often assumed) extremes of a given economic scale, in which the 'middle class' is not even a social class.<sup>12</sup> But, generally, this concept refers to people who have a certain type of occupation, particularly in the tertiary sector of the economy, in commerce or services and mostly in the urban areas, the white-collar workers, bureaucracy, businessmen and certain professionals, lawyers, doctors, journalists,<sup>13</sup>

---

10. Stavenhagen - Seven Theses etc., op.cit.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

etc., and, at times, this concept also refers to certain social groups which have no place in the social structural model of Latin America in which, there supposedly exist only landed aristocrats and peons without land;<sup>14</sup> all other groups from the middle and small peasants to the urban population as a whole are then lumped under the catchall term "middle class" which not only blurs social differentiation, but makes it practically impossible to penetrate to the social specificities and relationships in the social formation of the various classes which it subsumes<sup>15</sup> and dresses up in vague virtues and potentialities predicated to their behavioural aspects, by those who state them.<sup>16</sup>

Very often, the 'middle class' becomes a euphemism for the ruling class whose relationship of domination vis-a-vis other social classes is negated and denied where, very often it suggests the idea of a potentially "majoritarian mass of the population primarily recruited from the lower strata of society and which will sooner or later occupy the social universe<sup>17</sup> and this, in fact, is an extension of the bourgeois myth of 'responsible', free individuals in a democracy into the context of the third world.

---

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

But, nothing could be more misleading than the notion that the growth of middle social sectors guarantee the disappearance of discriminate social and economic differences by the "massification of privilege",<sup>18</sup> and through the agency of a 'middle class state' whose dynamics are precisely determined by the contradictories of the social formation and which 'maintains' actively the disjunction between the rulers and the ruled. The constituents of the 'middle class' employees, professionals, artisans, shopkeepers, small and medium peasants usually do not have bourgeois progressive characteristics attributed to them, and are in fact, tied to the conservatism of the ruling class, are defenders of the objective basis of continuismo (status quo) searching for individual privileges<sup>19</sup> aspiring for imported consumption goods and the identity from that consumption which comes along with the imported consumerist ideology of the advanced capitalist sectors.<sup>20</sup>

This class,<sup>21</sup> in fact, is the most important supporter of military dictatorships.<sup>22</sup> In Latin America, while its linkages with the ruling class mediates the

---

18. Ibid.

19. Richard N. Adams - Political Power and Social Structure, pp.15-42 in Veliz (ed), op.cit.

20. Casanova, op.cit.

21. C.f. Nun, op.cit. Also Relph Miliband - Coup in Chile in Blackburn(ed) Revolution etc., op.cit.

22. Nun, op.cit.

effects of class struggle; and it has become instrumental in the "institutionalization" of the revolution, as in Mexico<sup>23</sup> and, where, the lack of an internal dynamic within this social class (the petit bourgeoisie) prevents it from becoming promoters of a viable transformation of the stabilised order.<sup>24</sup>

One can clearly notice the analytical differences of the two concepts located in antagonistic problematics—the petit-bourgeoisie, and the descriptive middle class, where we have to construct a scientific understanding of the social relationships of this class and its role not as a simple massifier, but as an attendant phenomenon in the overall historical context of the material social formation of structured social and ideological relationships in Mexico.

The characteristics associated with the process of colonisation was that it was in large part an urban venture carried out by 'urban minded people' and the city represented both the point of departure and residence of owners of land.<sup>25</sup> The urban centres became the instruments of colonial rule in which more typical than the struggle between the burgher and feudal groups was the conflict between local rural-urban oligarchies and the agents of the

---

24. Casanova, op.cit.

25. Nun, op.cit.

royal bureaucracy.<sup>26</sup> In this milieu, developed the petit-bourgeoisie especially during the 19c in the service sector, the small merchants, shopkeepers, professionals and civil servants all integrated into the hegemonic system of the ruling oligarchy<sup>27</sup> - extending its values of prestige, morality and 'machismo' (men especially are supposed to be men)<sup>28</sup> and 'macho dignidad' an affront to which always reveals itself as a capacity for wounding, humiliating, annihilating,<sup>29</sup> at a differential scale of psychological association with the rulers. In this framework the state providing the framework for the oligarchy and by maintaining a rigid control over the conventional bases of economic power became the distributor of privileges and the bureaucracy became a coveted job.<sup>30</sup> The political institutions which consolidated the economic system (especially after 1910) and its application, constituted a deliberate measure consciously designed to achieve specific ends of fusing the state with society into a solid 'historical bloc'<sup>31</sup> via the petit-bourgeoisie who became the ideologists, the functionaries and the mediators of bureaucratic and judicial procedures in the civil society.<sup>32</sup> The systems

---

26. Ibid.

27. Merle King - Violence and Politics in Latin America, pp.191-206 in Horowitz et.al., (ed), op.cit.

28. Octavio Paz - Labyrinth of Solitude, NY 1961, p.82.

29. Nun, op.cit.

30. C.f. Gramsci, op.cit.

31. Nun, op.cit.

32. Ibid.



'beneficiaries' direct and indirect, in fact, established the systematic justifications by means of a normative structure which defend the general rights in terms and forms of communications (deference, defiance, disgust) which applied to the existing internal relationships (and the historical experience of those) among the social groups. The bonanza accruing from the export economy differentially divided amongst the petit-bourgeoisie made them optimistic enough to conceive of the future as an extension of the present,<sup>33</sup> based on liberal neo-centifico traditions in Mexico in the late 19c.<sup>34</sup> The 'middle class' with its further aspirations and limited desires to participate in political affairs for the revindication of its moral status, however, did not question basic principles of the system, nor was it able to comprehend the economic crises of inflation (result of the shifting from the silver to the gold balance under Diaz), limited production etc. which affected them most, and which were seen as resultants of mismanagement, and corruption of the system which in its uncorruptable state would be unsurpassable.<sup>35</sup>

Thus the 'middle class' found itself in the peculiar dualistic position of wishing to break the domination of the landed oligarchy under Diaz, wishing to

---

33. Bernstein, op.cit.

34. Nun, op.cit.

35. Ibid.

control the state without altering the existing system of structured social relations but being compelled to make alliances because of the consideration of the Realpolitik, the forms of which took an open demand for political universal suffrage in the front and paternalistic ballot rigging at the back.<sup>36</sup>

The political form of the revolution at the level of the petit-bourgeoisie was summed up in the well known Maderista slogan "Effective suffrage and no-reelection", which, in fact, was meant to introduce wider democratic processes in politics in an effort to end the 'continuismo' of the centralised Porfirian oligarchy.<sup>37</sup> This also explain the timidity of the agrarian measures contemplated in Article 3 of the Plan of San Luis Potosi which nevertheless were enough to mobilise Zapata and his followers,<sup>38</sup> whose programme and ideological dispositions did not stand in objective contradictions with the objective nature of the development and establishment of the capitalist mode of production as the dominant mode in the social formation.

---

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. C.f. Karl Marx - The Class Struggles in France 1848-1850 *passim*.

The petit-bourgeoisie emerged in the revolution as the 'ideological representatives of the bourgeoisie'<sup>39</sup> who by awakening the dead served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, of magnifying the given task in imagination<sup>40</sup> within the political forms of which, the 'transitional crises and incongruities' were worked into an objectively transformist solution of laying the 'unintentional' historical conditions for the development of the bourgeoisie and integrating and subordinating the 'tactically mobile' classes into not a transitional compromise but a 'historical bloc' (whereby the dynamics of the dominated classes were not politically effective to continue or break the compromise, but were subsumed into the state, which, in fact, 'institutionalised' the 'revolution' effecting even the forms and limits of class struggle). The subjective, ideological-formal aspects of which were expressed in fever pitched sloganeering, programmes, cliches, heroes, symbols, laws and rhetorics exposing the duplicity, of this class and placing it in its peculiar dualistic position between the state and civil society: in the historical process of stabilisation of the structure and the development of the bourgeois hegemony-fused with the socio-cultural indices of this class 'the possible consciousness' of which was constrained

---

39. Marx - 18 Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, *passim*.

40. Nun, op.cit.

by the limited framework of the circumstantial surroundings of its historical formation<sup>41</sup> and in which 'residual' strains of values, morality ethics<sup>42</sup> were expressed and a integrated into a new conjuncture.

The political, social liberality of the formal Constitution of 1917 securing freedom, rights and the intricate nexus of the basis for legality and illusions of equality, enshrined in the charter of universal suffrage, along with the recognition of the 'rights' of labour and the peasantry, in fact, consolidated the 'populist' ideological value of the state, mobilised and integrated the potential social contradictions into the Party which became the vested courier of the revolution institutionalised.<sup>43</sup> The actual reality and the experiential dimension in which the structures of feelings<sup>44</sup> the moral economy<sup>45</sup> of which, rest came to be heavily mediated by state ideological propagandas and minimal reforms to provide a minimal congruence between the said and the done-the effectivity of which within the parameters of the historical evolution and dynamics of the social formation we have seen earlier,<sup>46</sup> and which

---

41. Raymond Williams - Marxism and Literature OUP 1977, pp.115-36.

42. Brandenburg, op.cit.

43. C.f. Williams - Marxism etc., op.cit.

44. EP Thompson - Making etc., op.cit.

45. C.f. Chevalier, "ejidos", op.cit.

46. Gramsci, op.cit.

have effected the political forms of class struggle in Mexico. The petit bourgeoisie when (at the times of extended economic corporative solidarity) the question of state arises 'pressed' in the sphere of obtaining equality with the dominant groups, claims the right to participate in legislation and administration, and even to modify it or reform it but to do all this within the basic structure;<sup>47</sup> and not in any revolutionary sense where 'power' might slip away. An indication of this 'contentual' conservatism is the continuism of the forms of the state apparatuses which have been integrated into a new (in Mexico post 1910) conjunctural position<sup>48</sup> and the social constituents, of the new petit-bourgeois political elite, who largely but slowly replaced the military-agrarian bureaucrats of the Porfirista<sup>49</sup> changing the colour, complexion face and fashion of the state; from tough mustachioed 'generals' to 'white-collars, dark glasses and slick hairstyles'<sup>50</sup> from gunpoints, to party electioneers, with megaphones, poll-booths, state sponsored lotteries and circuses; propaganda pamphlets, ration shops etc. In the economic context to after the 1928 depression, when exports ceased to constitute the axis of the economy

---

47. C.f. Lenin - State and Revolution, op.cit.  
Also Althusser - Essays etc., op.cit.

48. Nun, op.cit.

49. C.f. Lewis Hanke ed. Hist of Latin America, op.cit.

50. Gramsci, op.cit.

and internal investments replaced the external sector as the differential growth factor and the protected national market provided the basis for 'import-substituting' industrialisation supported by the state, the petit-bourgeoisie gave in to the 'popular' ideology and programmes based fundamentally on quantitative goals, mobilising them to seek satisfaction within the framework of 'national', development which became an 'ideal of achievement' 'diffused' for all classes, which could ameliorate their conditions by 'producing more for prosperity'. During the 'miracle years' especially, related to the specific forms of class struggle, the civil society became an extremely complex structure capable of resisting the catastrophic incursions of immediate economic factors (crises, depressions etc.) The 'trenches' developed, and we notice, that in the periods of slackened growth and labour unrest, the petit-bourgeoisie, frightened by the prospect of the possibility of the country taking a radical turn, took refuge in those very same trenches<sup>51</sup> where the last dream of free elections became a nightmare, where the solution of which was the 'people' instead of electing should have, instead, the right of consenting in political decisions through an explicit plebiscitary form.<sup>52</sup>

---

51. Nun, op.cit.

52. Nun, op.cit. C.f also Brandenburg, op.cit.

In Mexico a formal 'democracy' was established by 'universal' suffrage, where the petit-bourgeoisie in 'articulating' popular consensus - utilised the deferential attitudes and ceaselessly diffused values associated with its formally liberal, ethical system and encouraged complex institutions for 'self-improvements' (like the state patronage to the institutional formation of the trade unions and the 'peasant' union), and advanced the 'paternalistic-saviour of the poor' ideological image of the state,<sup>53</sup> legitimising the 'political contract of all the classes in national development' in effect, the objective domination of capital which, "without protection by the same non-bourgeois group is politically helpless and unable not only to lead its nation but even to take care of its particular class interests".<sup>54</sup> 'Apart from the peasant groups of Zapata which remained politically marginal, the Mexican revolution from the outset had middle class (political) learnings,<sup>55</sup> and what made it exceptional in Latin America was the elimination of the land-owning oligarchy under popular pressure.<sup>56</sup> It thus opened the way to the formation of not classical liberal but a bourgeois interventionist state with an original ideological-normative structure, capable of mobilizing the politically active

---

53. Nun, *ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*, c.f. Stavenhagen - Theses etc., op.cit.

56. Casanova, op.cit.

parts of the population, one which organised the hegemony of the bourgeoisie, to which the atmosphere of the revolutions lent 'a universality'. And, where 'the bourgeoisie has realised its potential, has become strong and becomes stronger day-by-day that passes'<sup>57</sup> with the state playing the crucial role of not only restructuring capital, but also mediating the objective interests of the bourgeoisie against those of the rest of the nation and where further stability depends upon the ability of the bourgeoisie to incorporate the internal colonies into the life of the nation in the onward process of dynamic development of the social formation in the context of international capitalism.

The petit-bourgeoisie, by the 'massification of politics' (there are in fact no masses, there are only ways of seeing people as masses)<sup>58</sup> and by inventing the category of 'mass-democracy' (which is not a good thing at all) straddled the social contradictions in the forms of a populist politics which on an electoral basis became the instrument for political bargaining and 'cooperation of dissident groups'<sup>59</sup> and the organising principle of 'popular consensus' for the elected.

---

57. C.f. Raymond Williams - Culture and Society, London 1958, p.300.

58. Bo Anderson and James Cockcroft, op.cit.

59. Therborn - Caudillos etc., op.cit.



Within the economic context of 'dependent integrated' development,<sup>60</sup> the principle of profit created an imbalance with an 'over-equipment' of the modern sector of capitalist industry and with a low labour absorptive capacity.<sup>61</sup> This made it necessary, once the 'import-substitution phase lost its dynamic', to give overt protection to small craft industry at a low level of production and competition (in which production for the 'dominated' market in which this is integrated, also meant a further self-exploitation by the penny capitalists),<sup>62</sup> but at a high employment level, otherwise threatened by technological unemployment, this gave rise to the twin phenomenon, (which has confused many who notice the existence of a dual economy of a modern and archaic sectors) of "penny capitalists" of self-employed small scale producers, carpenters, tailors, barbers, rope-makers etc. with no machines, no factories and little credit facilities,<sup>63</sup> and the "lumpen-proletariat" of internal-agricultural migrants-inhabiting the slums of the cities<sup>64</sup> largely absorbed in the tertiary sector as unskilled labour, street-vendors, street-professionals, apprentices

---

60. Ibid.

61. Eckstein, op.cit.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid., c.f. also Therborn - Caudillos etc., op.cit.

64. Ibid.

in barber-shops, cobblers etc., who face the experiences of the city with the 'residual-formative consciousness' of their specific traditions, coloring the transformations in the perception of external reality and suggesting what it should be? and how much one can take? and from whom?, when?, where?, where?, how?, why?, wherefore?. These groups, have a great difficulty in getting together for sustained collective action of their own,<sup>65</sup> and are most prone to the ideological notions of a 'paternalistic' state trying to better their lot by providing them with clean lavatories, more urinals, better drainage, houses and cheaper food from the ration shops, along with some protections in prices and costs, which nevertheless do not contradict the objective dynamic of the paramonopolistic market structure-where profit margins for the capitalists are high enough to compensate for the idleness of a portion of the installed facilities when the state moves in to classify commodities as reserves of the small-scale sectors.<sup>66</sup>

The populist petit-bourgeois ideological forms and reforms integrate and hegemonise these social segments which, however, form the bulk of the electorate in the absence of a high level of working class consciousness and

---

65. Brandenburg, op.cit.

66. Ibid.

movement; which in fact has not only to build up a party antagonistic to the state providing a platform for revolutionary dissent but has to hegemonise the masses to the extent of transforming their very 'structures of feelings' and their 'moral economy' which are essential dialectical parts mediating their perceptions, receptions, and consciousness of external reality and what it should be. This, in fact, is a major problem in the development and movement of the left tradition, the party, the leadership and the led not only in Mexico but throughout the world where the bourgeois hegemony is being consolidated in the civil society even in the context of economic catastrophe which require an internal restructuration as well as a plea in a human form sometimes to the 'masses' - "We have it now you have it" and "please don't hassle a hassled man! would you kindly? or we get the guns." or "Walk into my parlour" said the spider to the fly.

The eliminating of the Porfirian bureaucracy did not eliminate the spoils of the system. Successive administrations paid off personal and political debts by pushing out previous appointees or by creating offices to make room for the new "civil servants" for longevity, job security and set pay scales. The state under Cardenas encouraged the civil servants to unionise first in CTM ranks, and then by a decree of law "the juridical statute of civil servants"<sup>67</sup> in 1938 gave them an autonomous

---

67. Ibid.

central the Federation de Sindicatos of Trabajadores en el Servicio del Estado (the FSTSE) which excluded the upper 10 per cent of the bureaucracy but encompassed all other civil servants.<sup>68</sup> This institutionisation also cleared the haze of identity for the petit-bourgeois bureaucrat not to be confused!

By its very nature, the FSTSE was solidly committed to membership in the official party.<sup>69</sup> It became and remains the pillar of the party's "popular sector" and selects bureaucrats to be congressmen<sup>70</sup> who, in fact, fuse the legislative and the executive arms of the state into a clap. The greatest strength of the FSTSE lay in its role as a vested-interest group negotiating directly with the President and Cabinet Ministers for obtaining higher wages, job-security, seniority, fringe benefits, vacation hotels, large clinics and discount houses.<sup>71</sup> By 1964, the FSTSE grew into a tightly knit organisation of 310,000 members-forming itself as it formed the state.<sup>72</sup>

An unusual feature of the FSTSE in its inclusion of public-school teachers paid by the 'national' government in the envelope of the "Ministry of Public Education",<sup>73</sup> in which, public nationalistic schooling was

---

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

dear to Cardenas who sought to release the people from superstition, fanaticism and fear by making a 'socialistic' education compulsory. The state wanted also controls over the high privately owned educational institutions where inspectors of schools were sent to ensure that constitutional mandates were fulfilled<sup>74</sup> (in what form? was not specified). The vast state sponsored public schooling programme required many more teachers, thus necessitating the construction and expansion of new schools to do away with the illiterate majority (who could not in the pre-radio forms of state propaganda 'read or write' - but understood). Cardenas would not risk public education to the CTM affiliated communist teachers,<sup>75</sup> nor did he feel that teachers who tended to confuse 'socialistic' with 'communistic' should possess an independent union.<sup>76</sup> The solution was to unite the educators with the bureaucrats in the FSTSE of which 100,000 were teachers in 1964,<sup>77</sup> though in 1946 a separate teachers syndicate appeared over the issues of the differences separating primary and secondary school teachers.<sup>78</sup>

---

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

Apprehensive of communist inroad into financial institutions, Cardenas removed bank employees from the CTM and 'granted' to them an autonomous union with clear stipulations of job-security, maximum hours and minimum wages.<sup>79</sup> Along with the National Confederation of Small Agricultural Property the nature of which we have discussed earlier, was formed. The National Cooperativist Confederation was also organised under a state law for cooperative societies of state-participating, consumer and producer nature which the ministry of national economy controlled by its right of giving permits.<sup>80</sup> And since 1930, this organisation has grown to encompass fisheries, bus lines, mining, trucking, forestry products, banana, coffee, cacao and sugar industries.<sup>81</sup>

All these form the Confederation Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (CNOP) the middle-class sector of the PRI along with the CTM and the CNC, and which (CNOP) is supposed to represent the 'national interest' (more than the other two specialised sectors) identified with the state ideology of which the petit bourgeoisie is the courier and mediator through the institutionalised revolutionary party (PRI)<sup>82</sup> the complex organisation and processes of we shall discuss separately.

---

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. Brandenburg, op.cit.

82. Ibid.

We have, in fact, tried to define the historical characteristics of the petit-bourgeoisie in Mexico in terms of not only its objective social location in the social formation, but more in terms of its ideological dispositions which have to be placed in proper correspondence to that specific class, but cannot be mechanistically reduced to its objective being. These, to get a scientific understanding of them have also to be placed in the historical context of their 'objective contribution' to the processes of development of the social formation in which they are located. Working under severe limitations, we acknowledge our incapacities of having delineated the intricate complexities of the historical 'existence' of a class, its 'structures of feelings' 'its moral economy' related to the experiential dimensions of that class, where its structure and ideology is 'formed', 'processed' and articulated in day-to-day conversations, jokes, small-talks, fights, freak-outs, drunken brawls, screwing in bedrooms, bars, law courts, government offices and market place, where the effective articulations of its historical sense, sensibilities and sensitivities have to be integrated in a 'totalised' human pattern of understanding guided by a scientific theory, the parameters of which could only be seen as distant horizons in the historical imagination.

## CHAPTER XII

Crisis Corridors:

"Upon the landscape of parched plains and poor dwellings, stood the 'grand' edifice of the commissioner's office - awe inspiring, impregnable, there and distant", in the minds of the poor peasants.

It is very difficult for us to detail out the specific instances of the state apparatuses and the historicity of their inter-relationships, which might give information regarding their specific functioning in historical conjunctures, but, which, placed in the overall context of the establishment of the 'centralised condensation of the state order'<sup>1</sup> within a spatially defined territory; assume a unified hierarchy both in the 'actual' and the ideological existence of the state. This 'monopolisation' of the means of repression of the subordinate classes, also presupposes a system of communication for the movement of orders, officials, troops, goods, demands, and assistance from the centre to its peripheries, which might have an overt liberal constitutional form of federal districts, exercising partial autonomy, but which necessarily conform to the integrity of the state order and class power, and give

---

1. c.f., Therborn - Caudillos etc., op.cit.



only a vicarious indication to 'formal democratic procedures and processes in the social formation.'<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the condensation of the state power and its materialisation in the forms of the distinct state apparatuses of administration (rule application), political governance (rule making) coercive defence and judicial regulation of the social formation should not just be seen as "functionally defined harmonious organs, with specific goal orientations and elite,"<sup>3</sup> but should be located as the complex organisation integrated into the structure and processes of the simultaneous class domination and contradiction at the actual, contentual level and at the 'formal ideological level' where the face of the state in fact is seen through these institutions and their specific functioning.

The army in Mexico under the authoritarian 'Diaz-potism' was an important political force in the 'politics of swords'<sup>4</sup> comprising of primarily the 'hacendado connections'<sup>5</sup> at the leadership, and the urban petit bourgeois and mainly the middle 'peasants in uniforms'<sup>6</sup>

---

2. Ibid., e.f. Branderburg, op.cit.

3. Like most bourgeois social theorists do - e.f. Bo Anderson and James Cockcroft, op.cit. Brandenburg, op.cit. Eckstein, op.cit.

4. Nun, op.cit.

5. Ibid.

6. Wolf - Peasant rebellions, op.cit.

at the level of rank and file. Infact, the Porfirian state was a complex of the military-bureaucrats, based on direct physical coercion<sup>7</sup> dedicated to 'progress'<sup>8</sup> where the pretenses (if, any) of legality were hard hitting, summary, and brutal of firing squads, gallows and state prisons.

Infact, cliquism in the stiff-necked army, led Diaz to forcibly retire, 25 dissident generals and 400 officers<sup>9</sup> which considerably weakened not only the force, but the principles of allegiance to high command directives, by making the position in the lines very precarious. Besides, professionalisation in the army was slower and the technology and equipment was backward. The revolution of 1910 exposed its inadequacies and was joined by the deserters of the Porfirian force.<sup>10</sup>

The dissolution of the oligarchy and the crisis of the priveleged position of the army as a source of power, was submerged in the 'liberal constitutional issues and legality of processes'. Generals were eliminated, who opposed the government, and officers were routinely rotated without their troops to keep them, like regional politicos, from building local bases. The strength of

---

7. Nun, op.cit.

8. Bernstein, op.cit.

9. Nun, op.cit.

10. Ibid.

the armed forces was especially cutback by the curtailment of both the posts allotted to military men and in financial support, and the proportion of the national budget distributed to the military dropped from 53 per cent in 1921 to 1.5 per cent in early 1970.<sup>11</sup> The 'Divisionarios' were also eliminated by Cardenas and by 1940 the military became a petit-bourgeois institution, with the young officers coming from the state military academy.<sup>12</sup> The structure of the revolutionary party (PRM) established by Cardenas incorporated the military under civil hegemony which by 1940 saw the disbandment of the military sector and the absorption of the officers holding elective posts into the 'popular sector of the PRI.'<sup>13</sup>

This did not negate the army as a political factor but reduced it to a 'residual role'<sup>14</sup> into a permanent reserve of order: the force which acts in a 'public way' when the legality of the system is threatened.<sup>15</sup> In fact, one of the three main divisions of the military,

---

11. Eckstein, op.cit.

12. Nun., op.cit. c.f. Edwin Lieuwen - Mexican Militayon - Political rise and fall of the revolutionary Army - 1910-1940.

13. Brandenburg, op.cit. New Mex Press, 1968, p. xi.

14. D.F. Ronfeldt - The Mexican Army and Political Order since 1940. p.336 in Wilkie et. al. ed., op.cit. c.f., Lieuwen, op.cit.

15. Nun, op.cit.

(comprising almost exclusively of campesinos) the division of rural defence is utilised to help maintain 'rural social peace' towards which it provides information about subversive activities, while the regular army crushes the insurrections.<sup>16</sup>

Despite such changes, the military remains a privileged group with political, economic and social prerogatives and preferences. It has with status, discount shops, insurance, housing, credit facilities etc., it has however, lately assumed important internal 'political functions', when in 1968 it was utilised to crush the students anti-state movement. They are also used to track down rural guerrilla groups, fight urban terrorism - Clamp down on campesino land seizures, officiate elections, dislodge labor protestors etc. for which they are rewarded with lucrative custom posts on the US border, better paycales, cheap booze etc.<sup>17</sup>

The dissolution of 'force' and physical violence as the 'norm of governance' was replaced by the formalities of a 'liberal', democratic constitution with a framework of universalistic legality and illegality in which the 'positive' state, however, acquired 'facultades extraordinarias'<sup>18</sup> of intervention, mediation, substitution

---

16. Eckstein, op.cit.

17. Ibid.

18. c.f. J. Lloyd Meacham - Mexican Federalism - Factor Fiction, pp. 373-82. c.f., William Ebstein - Public Administration in Mexico, p. 483 in Christensen ed., op.cit.

and conciliation. Individual liberties though guaranteed, were subordinated to the primacy of the state and society which by article 3, 27, 123 and 130 acquired direct dominion over subsoil rights, over agrarian reforms, over labour and direction of national education<sup>19</sup> for 'social justice' and 'universal national progress and for the 'fulfillment of democratic aspirations and expectations'.<sup>20</sup>

The 'culture of constitutionalism' which flowered however, should not be seen mechanistically which relegates the 'law' and legality perhaps more clearly than any other cultural or institutional artifact by definition, as part of the 'superstructure' adapting itself to the necessities of an infrastructure of productive forces and relations.<sup>21</sup> As such, it is clearly an instrument of the defacto ruling class, defined and defended by the state's claims over resources and labour - power - mediating class relations with an appropriate set of rules and sanctions, which ultimately (in the last analysis?) confirm and consolidate existing class power.

---

19. c.f. Bernstein, op.cit. also Stanley Ross, op.cit., pp. 140-44.

20. Brandenburg, op.cit. Bo Anderson et al., op.cit.

21. E P Thompson - Wings etc., op.cit.

But beyond this, preliminary reductionist position of the 'legality' confirming and the mystifying class content, or standing as particular rules and sanctions in (institutional forms) in the active relationship (often a field of conflict) to social norms, it should be seen to be a ideo-legitimising factor of class power,<sup>22</sup> with the existent class relations being mediated through the 'processes and forms of law' with its own definite standards of universality and equity but with variable interpretations (at the mass level, perception) the 'criteria of social justice' therefore, is an important precondition for the effectiveness of law in its function as ideology displaying an independence from gross manipulation. Without which, it shall appear as partial and unjust and then it would legitimise nothing and contribute nothing to the class's hegemony.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the legality legitimises the power of the rulers (state), and moralises their functions, to make them 'feel useful and just,<sup>24</sup> (particularly the petit bourgeois). In Mexico, the police and the military, in fact, stands behind this framework of 'legality' in the civil society as the obscured heavy hand-while the state's reiterating rhetoric, propaganda and 'limited minimum

---

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

welfarism' establishes and consolidates its interpretation of 'socialism, equality liberty and legality' in the process of hegemonising the social formation.

Adjacent to this, but operating at an informal level is the insitution of corruption, which ranges from the highest to the pettiest offices of the state. With the centralisation of power, and by the means of general regulative legislation and intervention in business cycles, promotion of growth etc., the state's top administration, disposes of a large amount of 'public funds in accordance with their economic strategies and where the state's economic policies are not restricted to the application of legal rules. Above all, direct state funds are advanced to favoured recipients, individuals and corporate interests after bargaining through selective budgeting and administrative decrees. Legal graft in this process is a well accounted phenomenon where "You pay the assessed lawful tax and you are out of business, pay the tax collector the mordida he has been ordered to collect, divided among the 'politicos' and you're still in business".<sup>25</sup>

---

25. c.f. IPP - Flaum - Arena of Decision-Latin America in Crisis - Prentice Hall 1964, pp. 123-34.

Besides, the 'circulation of offices' to his clique where with the change of the presidency every six years - there is a turn-over of approximately 18,000 elective offices and more than 25,000 appointive posts,<sup>26</sup> adds an incentive to "make more while the sun shines", to the extent which Sanchez mentions-reflecting a very particular attitude of the slum, dweller from the vecinidad-

"If we ever got a really tough government here, and it called up everyone who had been a president and said you go to Zocalo (central plaza of cuided del Mexico) and pile up all the millions you've robbed from the people, Why! ther'd be enough to build another capital".<sup>27</sup> Besides, the average minister and director of top administrative posts which include major state industries, government agencies, commissions and banks, finishes his term with two or three houses, cars, a ranch and \$100,000 in cash.<sup>28</sup>

- 
26. Brandenburg, op.cit. c.f. P.H. Smith - Continuity and Turnover Within Mexican Political Elite 1900-1971, pp. 168-81 in Wilkie et al. ed., op.cit.
27. Oscar Lewis - Children of Sanchez, pp. 487-8 loc.cit. in Hubert Herring History of Latin America from the beginning to the Present. 3rd ed. London 1968, pp. 381-87.
28. Brandenburg, op.cit. c.f. Daniel Cosío Villegas - The Mexican Left, pp. 126-39 in J. Maier and Weatherhead (ed) Politics of Change in Latin America - NY 1964.



## CHAPTER XIII

The eyes of a storm:

"When the day comes, the presidential succession is really no problem; all our politicians are revolutionaries, patriots, men of honour, and devotees of social justice".<sup>1</sup>

Related to the dual dialectic of the objective structure and the formal processes of the state located in the specificities of the historical contradictions in the social formation in Mexico placed in the framework of international capitalism, the President, the constitutional head of state, acquires a conjunctural overdeterministic' posture in the objective parameters of the state processes defined in their particular context.

The revolution broke the form and content of the oligarchic 'iron-rule' and political-military authoritarianism of the Porfiriato<sup>2</sup> and the 'radical' slogan of 'effective suffrage and no re-election (of the President)' laid down the formal constitutional basis for the development of the 'character' of the 'Revolutionary President' elected by the statistical majority of popular

---

1. Fagen and Tucky - Politics and Privelege in a Mexican City - Stanford 1972, p. 114.

2. c.f. Ernest Gruenning - Mexico and its heritage NY 1968, pp. x-637. also Mosie - Pathology of democracy etc., op.cit. c.f. R A Humphreys - Democracy and Dictatorship- pp.332-33. c.f. Frank Tannenbaum - Personal government in Mexico, pp.417-24 in Christensen ed., op.cit.

consensus<sup>3</sup> alongwith the 'institutional format for leadership selection'<sup>4</sup> in which the candidate with a strong non-ruling class, popular area, and representing the 'revolutionary' social tradition' of the incumbent administration always wins.<sup>5</sup>

The revolutionary constitution of 1917 established the principle of no-reaelection of the presidential candidate, but did not ensure a smooth system of succession, which became apparent in the pre-election succession crisis in 1923.<sup>6</sup> Due to the lack of any constitutional regularity in Mexican politics, the government changed hands through revolt. The 1923 uprising was staged on behalf of the presidential candidacy of Huerta, where the revolt was joined by 'legions of urban and rural lower classes' who believed that they had nothing to fear and everything to gain from a change in the government.<sup>7</sup> Although the greater part of the army sided with the counter-revolutionary force of Huerta, the 'revolutionary state's' force was

---

3. Nun, op.cit.

4. Therborn - Ruling Class etc., op.cit.

5. Ibid. c.f. Therborn - Caudillos etc., op.cit.

6. Martin c. Needler (ed) Political systems of Latin America - Nostrand - 1964, pp. 1-13.

7. Ibid.

bolstered by the labor battalions of Mexico City and irregular peasant corps who had an objective stake in the state which promised labor and land reforms headed by the 'revolutionary' Obregon.<sup>8</sup>

Revolts died down, with the agglutination of the revolutionary forces in a political party (National Revolutionary Party) initiated by Calles, which would assure stable succession and carry on the banner of the revolution<sup>9</sup> extending also the term of presidency from 4 years to 6 years.<sup>10</sup> With this institutionalisation of the revolution, the President from being an army general' could now be a civilian politico or bureaucrat,<sup>11</sup> where the army was being integrated under effective civil control, professionalised and reduced to internal policing.<sup>12</sup>

The President therefore, became interlocked with the Party in a symbiotic relationship dominating and being dominated by the party which places effective limits on the Chief Executive Office, within the framework of the state policies, programmes and ideology-and which controls

---

8. Ibid. c.f. also Needler - Problems in the evaluation of Mexican Political system, pp. 339-46 in Wilkie et al. (ed), op.cit.

9. Ibid. c.f. Christensen - General Nature of Political Parties in Latin America, pp. 501-507 in Christensen (ed), op.cit.

10. Needler - Pol. Sys etc., op.cit.

11. Eckstein, op.cit.

12. Ronfeldt, op.cit. Nun, op.cit.

the elections, rigs the ballots in favour of the victory of its Presidential candidate.<sup>13</sup> The selection is arrived at by a process locally known as 'tapadismo' a highly secretive and mysterious way which also ensures his electoral victory given the party machines actual popular control through propaganda, campaigns and speeches, strengthening the conviction that a 'right' candidate is chosen - "who shall win despite (a makebelieve) opposition-you shall see".<sup>14</sup>

However, open campaigning within the party is normatively forbidden, and the candidate seems, in fact, to be picked by his predecessors, perhaps after consultation with personal friends.<sup>15</sup> The President after election, then, becomes a constitutional and defacto semi-dictator, for 6 years,<sup>16</sup> alongwith his 'revolutionary' cronies freaking out in huge state limousines and building palatial country homes.<sup>17</sup>

---

13. Needler - op.cit. Ross, op.cit. also c.f. W. Raymond Duncan and J.N. Goodsell - Quest for Change in Latin America - Sources for a 20c Analysis Oxford 1970, pp. vii-112.

14. Therborn - Caudillos, op.cit.

15. Needler, op.cit.

16. c.f. Therborn, op.cit. also Needler - Political Development of Mexico, pp. 308-11 in American Political Science Review June 1961 and also Austin F. Macdonald - Latin American Politics and Government (2nd ed) NY 1954, pp. 204-80.

17. Brandenburg, op.cit.

Herring, op.cit.

BG Burnett and Kenneth F. Johnson - Political Forces in Latin America - Dimension of the Quest for Stability (2nd ed), Calif 1970, pp.21-52.

'Permanent revolution' in Mexico thus depends on a political system where the doctrine of 'no-reelection' merely serves to disguise political monopoly of the Party's inner circle and 'universal suffrage' is the effective monopoly of caciques, bosses, and nepotistic hench-men, contributing their shares to the processes of the 'dominated, directed, democracy',<sup>18</sup> in which civil liberties are chastised if they acquire an 'illegal' form, and the 'freedom of press' is restrained from making any explicit criticism of the President or the Party.<sup>19</sup>

In general form, the Mexican constitution is characterised by a federal, bi-cameral legislative system, but the President (who may never be re-elected by article 83A of the Constitutional amendment) has 'facultades extraordinarias',<sup>20</sup> where he is vested with power to present the budget, initiate and veto legislation, make appointments of high 'public' officials and negotiate

---

18. Needler, op.cit. Also Humphreys - Democracy and dictatorship, op.cit. CH Haring - Federalism in Latin America, p.377 in Christensen (ed), op.cit. W.S. Stokes - Parliamentary Government in Latin America, p.454 - 'Democratic Caesarism' in Christensen (ed), op.cit. H.M. Bailey - AP Nasatir - Latin America etc., op.cit., Dozer, op.cit.

C.f. also - William S. Tuohy and Barry Ames - Mexican University Students in Politics - Rebels without Allies - Denver Monograph No.3, 1969-70, pp.30-34. C.f. also concept of 'progressive and regressive caesarism' in Gramsci, op.cit. and Lucio Magri and Andre Gorz - Nasserism and Ataturks - Revolutionary Reformism.

19. Therborn - Caudillos etc., op.cit.

20. Needler, op.cit.

diplomatic negotiations<sup>21</sup> and command the armed forces. He can delay promulgation of a law passed by the Congress and may implement legislation by decrees, having the force of law.<sup>22</sup>

The President, also by virtue of being the head of the Party, has an array of informal, extra-constitutional control over the members of the legislature (most probably men of the party also), and because of the lack of any merit system in the civil services, also has tremendous powers of patronage.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly all the important politicians, belonging to different sectors of the party, labor-agrarian or popular, are found in the President's Cabinet or occasionally in the executive mansions of the states, but only accidentally in the legislative assemblies, which only ratify executive decisions.<sup>24</sup> And, from these, also are chosen the heirs apparent to the "revolutionary Presidency".<sup>25</sup>

Within the framework of the development of the 'democratic institutions' in Mexico and the strong tradition of caudillos and personalismo<sup>26</sup> which finds an identity in the consciousness of the lowest level masses integrated in the hierarchy, the process and

---

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Brandenburg, op.cit.

26. C.f. Humphreys, op.cit.; Haring, op.cit.; Tannenbaum, op.cit.

'continuismo' of the revolution-invested in the President with a revolutionary halo, emerges as a champion of all groups, friend of all, impartial, just, autonomous; (and which has crystallised this position at the ideological level also,)<sup>27</sup> but who intervenes in the political conjunctures on the objective behalf of the ruling class but upon subjective socialistic slogans to maintain the 'power bloc'. State (or the President) 'Paternalism' and patronage have further strengthened the revolutionary myth which the party circulates and the 'petit-bourgeoisified' sections of labour, 'agrarians' and popular sectors identify with honour.

---

27. Brandenburg, op.cit.

The Spiral Staircase and the Silent Stands

"Here the PRI runs everything, so if there is another candidate they stick a gun in his face - so who won? Well - the PRI man...."

Well, may be, its better that we have one gang running the country here, because its got a pistol in each hand. Den't you know this story about two fellows who were playing cards and one had two aces and the other fellow asks him...

'What do you have?'

'Two aces, and you?'

'Two pistols!'

So he says -

O.K. you win! and that is the way the PRI is here, its got the pistols and anybody who objects, well gets run over by a car, accidentally.<sup>1</sup>

The National Revolutionary Party (now Partido Revolucionario Institucional - PRI) was founded by Calles as a union of 'Revolutionary forces' - army, organised labor and the peasantry,<sup>2</sup> in the political conjuncture of unstable presidential succession to the state;<sup>3</sup> and especially when a 'threat from the right was

---

1. Oscar Lewis - Children of Sanchez, NY 1961, pp.497-98, loc.cit.; Herring, op.cit.

2. Brandenburg, op.cit.

3. Needler, op.cit.



very strong'. This official Party underwent a further elaboration of interlocking the different social classes to the state, under Cardenas, the depoliticised military was integrated into the "popular" sector<sup>4</sup> which initially intended to comprise supporters of the Revolution - the 'petit-bourgeois' state of professionals, civil servants, small-businessmen, skilled self-employed artisans and the rich peasantry.<sup>5</sup> This sector now has the feature in which employers of labor on any except the smallest scale<sup>6</sup> are excluded from membership, to suggest that since the bourgeoisie is not 'represented', the state is not favourably inclined towards it. An obvious myth. The 'popular' sector has, in fact, become the petit-bourgeois sector with all kinds, down to the petty operators of government lottery tickets<sup>7</sup> and, in fact, it is a federation of organisations based on vertical profession, job, business etc. affiliations.<sup>8</sup>

The 'labor sector' is also a league of organisations of labour federations and independent unions, but it is dominated by the largest national federation - the CTM,

---

4. Lieuwen, op.cit.

5. Brandenburg, op.cit.

6. Eckstein, op.cit.

7. Ibid.

8. Brandenburg, op.cit.

with its core of the 'privileged proletariat', whose leadership is also decided by the state - as the deposition of Toledano, and replacement by Velasquez suggests.<sup>9</sup>

The 'agrarian sector' of the Party consists almost of the CNC, which is composed of the peasants who have received land under the state's land reform programmes. The recipients, however, we have noticed have been subject to differential fortunes in which the majority of the 'poorest ejidatarios' also have the weakest organisation and representation in the CNC which in fact is dominated by the richer, more 'bourgeoisified' sections of the peasantry.<sup>10</sup>

The structure of the Party is, therefore, divided into 3 sectors, and at the national level the 'constitutional statutes' provide the National Assembly as the supreme legislative body of the Party<sup>11</sup> - which is supposed to meet every three years. The number of

---

9. *Ibid.*, c.f. Needler, *op.cit.* Also JPH Purcell and S.K. Purcell - Machine Politics and Socio-economic change in Mexico, pp.348-64 in Wilkie *et.al.* (ed), *op.cit.*

For general c.f. Ross, *op.cit.* Also Raymond Duncan and JN Goodsell - Quest for Change in Latin America - Sources for a 20c analysis, Oxford 1970, pp.vii-112; Herring, *op.cit.*; A.G. Frank, *op.cit.*

10. Brandenburg, *op.cit.*

11. Needler, *op.cit.*

delegates in the National assembly vary but are constant at about 1000, in which, numerically, the three sectors are evenly represented.<sup>12</sup> A permanent commission - the 'Gran Commission' acts on behalf of the assembly when the latter is not in session, and comprises of 30 members - ten from each of the three sectors. The Gran Commission also exercises continuing control over the real directive organ of the Party - the Central executive Committee (CEC) which consists of the Party's President, Secretary-General, one representative of each of the 3 sectors and one representative of the Party's members in each of the houses of the national legislature chosen by the Party's caucus.<sup>13</sup>

The Regional executive Committees (REC), with a similar constitutional structure exist in the 32 federal entities of the Republic, the 29 states and 2 territories and in the Federal District.<sup>14</sup> They are supposed to concern themselves exclusively with regional matters in relation with the central state. The composition of the REC mirrors the CEC - with their Presidents and Secretary Generals elected at regional party conventions - as the President and the Secretary-General of the National Party is elected by the National assembly. Needless to say,

---

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

most of these elections are just formal ratifications of appointments;<sup>15</sup> At a local level, 'municipal committees' of 5 members exist for each county in Mexico and for each electoral district in the federal capital. And, although parity for the three sectors of the Party is not stipulated for the municipal committees who are appointed by the CEC, are supposed to be the 'honourable' representatives of the socio-economic group dominant in the county or they are the caciques or local bosses.<sup>16</sup>

The election system in Mexico is based on "one man-one vote district" principle rather than on proportional representation,<sup>17</sup> in which a party getting 40 per cent of the popular vote might not receive even one seat, in which the 51 per cent mark is the majority mark, and the PRI usually makes it by rigging most of the elections.<sup>18</sup> Besides, most of the "federal states" autonomy is restricted by the article 76, where the President may appoint a Governor to hold office absolutely till the next elections - in place of the local constitutional authorities.<sup>19</sup>

---

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Brandenburg, op.cit.

18. Philip Taylor Jr. - Mexican Elections of 1958 - Affirmation of Authority. Western Political Quarterly Sept. 1960, p. 729. c.f. L. Vincent Padgett - Mexico's One-Party System - A Re-evaluation- American Political Science Review. Dec. 1967, p. 1008.

19. Needler, op.cit.

The fact, of the political domination of the PRI is in fact, the theme of study of many American scholars, who see it as a 'democracy' as it should not be,<sup>20</sup> but to analyse the multivarious aspects of this phenomenon of the 'populist party', requires an understanding of its historical specificity in the contradiction of the social formation in Mexico where the bourgeois mode of production is the dominant and determinant mode, and the state actively intervenes in the historical process of the development of the hegemony of the ruling class in specific ideological forms: and in times of conjunctural crises of this process, uses the 'informal' tough hand of the state repressive apparatus, of getting opposition leaders assassinated, journalists beaten up by lumpens etc. and by favouring the perpetual petty - tyrannies of the local caciques in the ejidos, municipios and at the state level.<sup>21</sup> In, Mexico, therefore, there is a peculiar mixture of legality and force, which present themselves simultaneously, at both the actual and ideological level, and this also gives a peculiarity to the political forms.

---

20. c.f. W.P. Glade and Anderson - Political Economy of Mexico. Madison, 1963.

c.f. Needler, op.cit.

c.f. Purcell and Purcell, op.cit.

c.f. Duncan and Goodsell, op.cit. etc.

21. Therborn - Caudillos etc. op.cit.

In this, the political 'state party' and its .  
politicos stand at the centre of a complex set of  
relations. On the one hand, they are expected (ideally)  
to represent the demands of those from whom they seek  
support; and they are supposed to attempt to realise  
those demands by their participation in the workings of  
the state. On the other hand, also, they play a key  
role in manipulating public relations on behalf of  
those who do make public policy, to make it acceptable  
to the 'national community' at large (legitimise).  
Towards, that end, they channel public grievances and  
seek to promote an "understanding of public issues",  
thereby diminishing potential opposition. In this, the  
Party and the bureaucracy appear as the two arms of the  
state in a complementary relationship.<sup>22</sup>

Liberal commentators on the 'political stability',  
in Mexico argue that the regime's stability derived from  
"a political culture emphasizing acquiescence, effective  
socialisation, balanced group interests, cohesion among  
elites and a sufficiently expansive economy to satisfy  
the mobility aspirations of mestizos as also the  
government's effectivity in controlling the demands of  
particularly the popular groups."<sup>23</sup>

---

22. Alavi - State in post-col sec., op.cit.

23. Brandenburg, op.cit.

This approach, however, reduces the historical dynamic to an essentially subjectivist, Voluntaristic aspect, primarily focusing on the state, while attempts to analyse the effectivity and nature of the social contradictions in the social formation within the context of which the state is situated, does not even exist in their conceptual problematic. The process of hegemony and class domination are reduced to 'presidential predilections', 'temporal heritages' 'coming to terms with reality keeping in view the absolute goal orientations of the state', (which are not seen as ideological aspects but as realistic, empirical givens) 'proliferation of political cultures and sub-cultures', diffusion and socialisation of politics etc.'

These aspects although are important and give crucial clues to the formal processes, however, beg the fundamental question of the objective nature of the state, the Party, the bureaucracy, the economic tendency - which cannot just be regarded as "oscillating between policies and programmes", where the very character of the crises is crucial for the analysis of the historical contradictions of the social formation - in which the responses of popular and political cultures", 'are relevant forms of the development of the 'hegemony of the ruling class'.

The PRI does not only harness the forces of 'nationalism and Socialism' into the service of a totalitarian state' nor does it adhere per se to the 'philosophy of the positive state, with socialism'<sup>24</sup> as the eventual goal of national policy in which submissiveness and a bending of the head by the masses unconsciously forces upon the president the exercise of arbitrary power',<sup>25</sup> but is the active, dominant mediator between the state and the civil society where it has become the 'largest institutionalised instrument' for the development of the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in the social formation - and where the economic institutions which integrate the market of commodity consumption, of 'welfare shops of the CONASUPO',<sup>26</sup> the monetary grants to encourage and stimulate men of ambition<sup>27</sup> also serve an ideological function of extending the 'populist' image of the 'state as father of the masses'.<sup>28</sup>

- 
24. Ibid. c.f. Stephen Clissold - Latin America New World - Third World PMP London 1972, pp. 77-95.  
c.f. also - Germain Arciniegas - The state of Latin America. tr. by Harriet de Onis.  
London MCMLIII, p. 341.  
Bailey and Nasatir, op.cit.
25. Tannenbaum, op.cit.
26. Eckstein, op.cit.
27. Branderburg, op.cit.
28. Nun, op.cit.



The state, through the civil agency of the PRI has considerably 'massified priveleges' and has integrated them into a hierarchical system of relationships where formal lines of control 'seem' to run from the bottom to the top,<sup>29</sup> The PRI is engaged in the process of 'weakening the formation of horizontal class alliances by dispensing services to vertical groups and individuals in exchange for votes - and by creating in urban centres beauty salons, (for the troublesome wives) clinics, child care centres, low cost foods, houses etc. in return for the recepients to participate in parades, fiestas and support PRI candidates in elections'.<sup>30</sup> It also acts as a 'friend in the villages' and distributes patronage to labour, peasants and the lower petit-bourgeoisie in accordance to relative strength in particular electoral areas by grants, fraud, corruption and bribery'.<sup>31</sup>

There is, infact, no national opposition to the PRI,<sup>32</sup> which, with its 'recruited incumbents and 'power fractionalisation' has built up to an extent where it can

---

29. Burnett and Johnson, op.cit.

30. Eckstein, op.cit.

31. Brandenburg, op.cit.

32. c.f. David T. Garza - Factionalism in Mexican Left - The Frustration of MLN - Western Political Quarterly Sept. 1964, p. 45.

Daniel Cosío Villegas - The Mexican Left, p. 126-39, in Maier and Weatherhead (ed), op.cit.

c.f. also K.F. Johnson - Ideological Correlates of Right Wing Political Science Review, Sept. 1965.

intervene 'to vulgarise social contradictions, by weaning away through favours and patronage on a vertical basis: where a proletarian class consciousness is purely economistic',<sup>33</sup> and where elections are a device to permit people to participate in patriotic manifestations to declare loyalty to the Revolution, Mexico, and express pride in being Mexican,<sup>34</sup> and its continuismo.

The 'flexibility' of the Party and its control of the state ideological apparatuses through subsidies to the press, radio, T.V. Cinema, cajoled by circuses, parades and orations of the glories of the Revolution,<sup>36</sup> has sought to bind the 'disparate elements into a nation' with the 'basic goals of a better life and social justice for the Mexicans in Mexico' - from the state, emphasising "Class collaboration and social harmony" which it has come to 'symbolise as the Party of the institutionalised Revolution,<sup>37</sup> primarily in the opportunistic petit bourgeois consciousness.

---

33. Villegas, op.cit. Brandenburg, op.cit.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. c.f. Burnett and Johnson, op.cit.

c.f. Victor Alba - The Latin Americans NY 1969, pp. 45-170.

The Party's management of the society with 'plural differences' and a 'multiplicity of overlapping group membership' (strains of the imported American ideological notions)<sup>38</sup> has led to its coming to symbolise the nation ideologically,<sup>39</sup> "where the people have been deceived into believing that the state is theirs and it really seeks to improve their way of life (but with sometimes-what-to-do-times, are-bad scenes) and has sought to extend their feeling of belonging to the nation"<sup>40</sup> once the process of commodity production and 'equal' exchange on the market has displaced people beyond the parameters of their local sources of identity."

The 'natural governing Party', upon the 'formalities of freedom and equality', underpins the petit-bourgeois 'populist' notion of the 'neutral state', which is able to reconcile class conflict<sup>41</sup> by modifying the balance of power in a way which does not threaten the stability of

---

38. c.f. W. Benton - Voice of Latin America NY 1961 - "How can the US best help Latin America to help itself?"

39. Burnett et al., op.cit.

40. Roger D. Hansen - PRI Politics in 1970 - Cases or Continuity, pp. 390-99 in Wilkie et al. ed., op.cit.  
c.f. Purcell and Purcell, op.cit. also Cesar Grana - Cultural Nationalism, pp. 304-26.

Waldo Frank - Hispano American's World, p. 327 in Lewis Hanke (ed), op.cit.

41. Jessop. op.cit.

the state and the objective long term interests of the ruling class - whose interests are never openly articulated by the state which, in fact, operates upon the clauses of the 'popular' 'aggregated' interests of the dominated classes. The, Party, is instrumental in projecting programmes that are 'realistic' (and realised) and are popular with the electorate, and so contributes to both the legitimacy and effectivity of the capitalist state-within definite limits, which does not contradict the essential process of capitalist accumulation, but at times leads to a fiscal crisis of the state.

The PRI with all its sectors of 'representative popular groups' - labour, campesinos and the petit-bourgeoisie, also provides a constant format for the subordinate classes to 'suggest' if not 'struggle' on behalf of their specific interests in a way that favours the continued domination of capital and by the image of the formal separation (though interlocked) of the 'representative' and the administration institutions - which highlight the features and complexions of the neutrality of the state - in contrast to the partisanship of the representatives, elected on the basis of different groups.<sup>42</sup>

---

42. See Eckstein, op.cit.

Furthermore, the proliferation of the bureaucracy and the Party units and affiliates has fused in the ideology the indispensibility of the Party as the mediator between the masses and the state bureaucracy - where 'specific', 'individual' groups of clients could press for demands through the 'legal, official format' - "We are here to help you!"

The Party, certain aspects about which we shall deal later on, has therefore, come to dominate the civil society with its 'populistic-reformist' ideology, which not only assures the continued domination of the dominated, but has also affected the political forms of class struggle in the social formation - where the state is seen as a 'popular revolutionary instrument, committed to the cause of the welfare of the masses."<sup>43</sup>

---

43. See Nun, op.cit.

## CHAPTER XV

The blues of a barren land:

"The death motif is accorded frequent and visible recognition in toys and pastries made on the Day of the Dead enthusiastically celebrated"<sup>1</sup>

"To die and to kill are ideas that rarely leave us. We are seduced by death".<sup>2</sup>

The problem of ideology and its linkages to the 'existential dimension' is a very complex scene, in which the aspects of the mediated forms of the 'materiality' of ideas have to be constructed in such a way, where the essential referencial correspondence, between the ideas and reality, spans not only the temporality of existence, physical and psychological (imagination, presentation, reflections, speculations, memories) with its own structures of feelings,<sup>3</sup> but is able to go beyond, in discerning the highly complex dialectic of the historical 'process' - and the historical experience which emerge as the dominant structures of ideology, but whose mediated determination lies infact, within the historical experiential dimension.

---

1. Merle King - Violence etc., op.cit.

2. Octavio Paz - Labyrinth, op.cit.

3. Raymond Williams - Marxism etc., op.cit.

Hence, while dealing with the objective structures of ideology during the context of the Mexican Revolution, we would be simultaneously dealing with the historical processes and the experiential forms which the ideology acquired in asymmetrical features. In fact - "Who was attacked? - For What?

From whom? - Why? - Whither? and if not? - Why not? are important questions related to the ideological movement, its political forms and in its 'integration and mobilisation of mass support - where the 'reality of realisation is realistic' at one level, and the actuality of it, in differential experience is another, but which are nevertheless dialectically linked in the formation of the objective hegemony of the dominant class, whose forms, idioms, images, emotionalities and language are different - and which integrates or breaks historical instances of continuities in the specificities of the concerns of novel conjunctures.

This, theme, we must emphasise, does not reduce the ideological bearings of a class to an essentialist, phenomenological proposition, but infact enriches the theory of class ideology with analytical instances to locate also the differential 'cultural' dynamics within the specificity of the objectively situated class category and its particular historico-political and experiential context - which, nevertheless has a strong overdeterministic

quality in it. Infact, the bourgeois formats to understand the 'sociological imagination',<sup>4</sup> provide crucial information to the different experiential cultures - culture of repression, angst, solitude, submissiveness etc. in a specific class category.

Our, emphasis, would be upon the class basis (not in a reductionist sense, but in a sense of its objective tendencies and a conceptual establishment of an 'ideal' social order of production and relations) of the ideological elements in the context of the development and transformation of the Mexican revolution and the crystallisation of the specific state form. However, it would be not possible for us to establish the details by which the dominant ideology was able to articulate the ideological discourse of a variety of contradictions - (within structural limits to their historical aspirations as units of social classes, which were subsumed into the processes of the dominant ideology), It is, by looking at the overall structure of ideology, i.e., the way it combines its constituent elements (congruities and incongruities), that its class connotations can be established also,<sup>5</sup> where in the ideological

---

4. C. Wright Mills - "Sociological Imagination" Penguin, 1966.

5. refer to Nicos Mouzelis, op.cit.



material background, the 'relatively' antagonistic classes tried to appropriate popular belief and used them for the promotion of their own interests<sup>6</sup> (expressed in the class strategies also), and where, the dominant class by articulating popular interpellations in a class ideology is able to neutralise class antagonisms to mere differences. In the process of hegemony, where ideology does not imply the uniform imposition of the weltanschauung of the ruling class on the rest (though to some degree) but the presentation of different views of the world in such a way that antagonistic contradictions are hidden, which can only be disarticulated by the 'subaltern ideology'.<sup>7</sup>

In Mexico, a process of 'intellectual overdevelopment' had taken place within the confines of the colonial society, which also provided a nexus for two distinct historical temporalities, where 'ideas' were imported to a context where the fundamental social basis for their effective realisation was not only restricted to the disposition of an urban minority but where the large mass of population was the victim of slavish overwork in the mines; factories upon the plantations, haciendas, on the sleazy streets of dockyard towns..<sup>8</sup> sometimes 'provided for providentially'

---

6. Ibid. c.f. "transformismo Gramsci, op.cit. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Bernstein, op.cit.

by the church<sup>9</sup> which in effect, was the hegemonising institution of the colonial state - standing by absolute divine right, suffrance, obedience and partial mitigation of sorrows.

However, the Creole, intellectuals gave the philosophical basis for the dissolution of the colonial state - and became the 'conceptive ideologues' for socio-political reforms, which in their very nature were extremely limited and in which the potentialities for the vulgarisation of 'ideals' was an effective possibility-given the 'underlying vast sea of melancholy', of the masses, and where the reformers were also 'inspired' to do social good for justice and liberalising the social order in which the creoles themselves were marginals in the colonial hierarchy.<sup>10</sup>

Enlightenment ideas from Germany, Spain and the USA were fused into typical concepts of liberalism, democracy, freedom, equality etc., but their import was specific to a particular culture within the creole intelligentsia where the ideas of legal change, appeals to reason, philosophy and doctrine had a limited circulation in close circuited 'top heavy' intellectuals who also became the forebearers of the indepenence movement, in which ideals such as nationalism (i.e. formal indepenence from Spain) or a written constitution meant little to the

---

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

unwritten customs of the Indians, but generated the urban petit-bourgeois creoles, and became an ideological basis for a transitional, change.<sup>11</sup> It would be hard however to demonstrate the dynamic articulate effects of ideas on the 1810 movement in which Mexico's 'intellectuals' were different from both the Creole landed and business classes above and the inert masses below.<sup>12</sup>

The movement, however, rallied around the call of 'death to the gachupines' and Padre Hidalgo was able to mobilise the Indian guerillas with his 'grito de dolores' and became the generalissimo of the insurrection<sup>13</sup> against the colonial monopolies, consulados, supported by the new Mexican creole mercantile landed classes<sup>14</sup> who were interested in liberation but not revolution and in which the voluntary liberalism of the intellectuals was subsumed into the involuntary change of partial reforms- with the declaration of independence of Mexico, supremacy of the independent Roman Catholic Church and the principle of monarchy, with a dynasty separate from Spain.<sup>15</sup>

---

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

The Mexican 'dualistic' liberalism of the 19c looked upon the Indian as a cultural symbol of stoic-heroism, but essentially as a relic of the past,<sup>16</sup> who was a stumbling block in the path of progress. The Creoles' conception derived from Europe rather than America, fructified in the reforms for suffrage, constitutions, rule-of-law, economic and political freedom, individual enterprise, in which - advantages touched the top fringes of the petit-bourgeoisie in which some mestizos were also included.<sup>17</sup>

At, this point, we must put a caveat, that when we talk in terms of the ethnic categories of creoles, mestizos and Indians, we take in account these not as blanket categories but as class specific categories where differentiation existed and exists but where the hierarchy was patterned on social relations in which ethnicity acquired an important, articulate, mediative social form about which we will talk later.

The 'liberal' constitutional charter of independent Mexico emerged primarily as a restricted political-legal document concerned with rights, duties, laws, division

---

16. Cesar Grana, op.cit.

Villegas - The Profirriato Legend and Reality, p.295 in Hanke ed., op.cit.

also Frederick C. Turner - A case study: Xenophobia in Mexico - Roots of Nationalism, pp.361-66 in Hanke ed., op.cit.

17. Bernstein, op.cit.

c.f. Casanova, op.cit.

of power and state sovereignty, but which was hardly concerned with any social problems<sup>18</sup> - especially of the Indian masses. Republican liberalism therefore, provided the ideological basis for the formal dissolution of the colonial state structure, but only partially affected the dynamics of the social relations and attitudes where only the nature of the ruling class expanded to incorporate the colonial marginals upon the basis of an objective ideology which combined the referential aspects of the limited material interests<sup>19</sup> of a new landed-mercantile class breaking out of the welter of colonial fueros, privileges, restrictions, reservations and monopolies in trade, land, and socio-cultural relations and where demands came for free-trade, open market and freedom of enterprise,<sup>20</sup> At the intellectual level, debates of 1824 brought out the arguments over church-state relationship, modernisation of education, freedom of speech and opinion, in which Refael Davila alongside Fernandez de Lizardi ranged his attacks in books, editorials, leaflets which echoed and fiered the 'epochal sensibility' for democratic liberalism, hammered out actually upon questions of tariff, navigation and issues of material economic policies<sup>21</sup> in their limited

---

18. Bernstein, op.cit.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

sense, related to the nature of the social class background - as also the conjunctural situation of a strong conservative bloc and the possibilities of Indian incendiaryism in the memories of 1810.<sup>22</sup>

The weakness of the social roots of the tradition of popular democracy and the restrictions upon the limited, enfranchised electorate reduced its political weight, in which state power was assured not upon the basis of constitutional legality, but upon the shoulders of the repressive armed forces.<sup>23</sup> In politics, Liberalism, in fact, advanced at the ideo-conceptive level, while the politics of power of caudillismo maintained the contradictory (or contrary?) activity of conservatism in which questions of reforms were obvious but the privileges of the landed mercantile interests and the concomitant facts of the army maintained their rhythms<sup>24</sup> under the surface of veritable political confusion.

The liberal generation of Benito Juarez 1853 to 1872, though resting upon the forces of order and law, offered a relatively progressive procedure, which also tried to maintain the civil constitution, with the

---

22. Ibid.

23. Villegas - Porfiriato etc., op.cit.  
Nun, op.cit.

24. Bernstein, op.cit.

concepts of rights of individuals (in which not so much the 'natural rights' of European liberalism was the focus, but the Hispano-Roman concept of the superior state and law as the source of individual rights and duties was dominantly prevalent<sup>25</sup> assuring also right to parcel the benefits to private enterprise, and economic concessions for 'internal improvement'.

In Mexico, by and 19c a curious blend of liberalism emerged in the ideas of the petit-bourgeois intellectuals, the efficacy, of which was translated and coloured in the political domain of the 'power bloc' of the landed and mercantile interests which emerged as the dominant class out of the dissolution of the colonial structure, but which did not herald a revolution in the social relations of production, which were contained also within the parameters of an essentially conservative ideological transition; and where the economy was primarily geared to the export market of raw materials;<sup>26</sup> and where, economic liberalism did not imply free trade.<sup>27</sup> Within this context, the liberal ideals were practised by dictatorial means and Juarez

---

25. Ibid.

26. Wolf - Aspects, op.cit.

27. Bernstein, op.cit.

(a lawyer) inherited this tradition - refurbishing it with an alacrity of demonstrations, denunciations of the conservatives, (which could not emerge as a civilian party).<sup>28</sup>

The Juarez law through the state in 1833 made an effort to make persons and institutions equal under the law, by abolishing all unequal privileges and special immunities of the church, army and the haciendas, while the state acquired the power to regulate the property of religious and civil corporations,<sup>29</sup> where church lands were sold on the market, and its influence in education also was considerably curtailed. The Reforma of Juarez though it meant a 'war with the conservatives', nevertheless combined the strains of a liberal republicanism and nationalism which lost to the interim 'new empire' of a monarchy in 1864 during which the liberal republicans waged a constant struggle and in which Porfirio Diaz came to the fore as a leading guerrilla. The monarchy collapsed and Mexican Republicanism and nationalism, revived with the assistance of foreign capital investments under the repeated Presidency of Juarez who also took important steps for a cultural and educational regeneration against the obscurantism and conservatism of ecclesiastical beliefs

---

28. Brandenburg, op.cit.

29. Bernstein, op.cit.



in which Gabino Barreda imbued by the positivistic influences of Auguste Comte sought to overthrow theology and metaphysics for a more scientific approach in education through a secular curriculum.<sup>30</sup> Positivistic 'cientifico' tradition became a very powerful philosophico-intellectual tradition against the ranges of conservatism and heralded the concept of individual rights, progress through technology and evolution through stability.

The Diazpotism in 1876, in fact, developed in the semi-cooked welter of the Juarez reforma, working on the 'ideas of national progress at all costs'<sup>31</sup> in which issues of democratic republicanism were subordinated to a strong dictatorial state which for material progress and stability did away with the formalities of the ideal civil liberties of representation and public opinion. The strong 'state' derived from Hispanic theory, became the crucial instrument for development in which the paper facade of the liberal constitution of 1857 was maintained for lip service and neither the public, press, congress or supreme court could soften the 'legal' dictatorship established on limited suffrage and controlled elections.<sup>32</sup>

---

30. Ibid.

31. Villegas, op.cit. C.f. RA Humphreys - The Great Landed Estates remained, pp.44-134 in Hanke (ed), op.cit.

32. Duncan and Goodsell, op.cit.

Positivistic scientificity and its interpretation became the state ideology, which was directed towards a Europeanisation rather than Mexicanisation of the existing lower classes,<sup>33</sup> and which sharply modified economic liberalism associated with the 'business boom' aided by the state, whose object was to make Mexico prosperous under the rule of order. Property rights were 'confirmed' by the civil law of the state in which the objective interests of both the hacendados and the big mining-merchants were favoured by state patronage.<sup>34</sup>

Jose Yves Limantours 'sensitive circulation of credit', and the expansion of the railways, integration of the domestic market and construction of the basic infrastructure by the state saw the emergence of a new manufacturing class in steel, textiles, paper, beer etc. depending upon the internal market.<sup>35</sup> And it was the social contradiction against conservative business and trade circles associated with foreign investments and overseas trade, which became the objective 'bearers' and 'beneficiaries' of the 1910 revolution, which attacked the very basis and nature of the social existence of the conservative, 'compradorish' mining, merchant and landed

---

33. Ibid.

34. Wolf - Aspects etc.

35. Bernstein, op.cit.

interests in collusion with foreign finance, and whose objective interests were safeguarded by a state whose political form despite a sham of liberalism, was coercively dictatorial.

So far we have very sketchily traced the emergence of the different bourgeois liberal intellectual traditions in Mexico which provided an ideological basis to different state forms linked to the specificity of the objective social contradictions in transition. Liberalism as a political dogma matured in a context where a social basis for its realisation was practically non-existent in the face of mass illiteracy and restricted franchise to an urban petit-bourgeoisie, which was both in opportunistic connivance and in contradiction with the forces of conservatism-whose organicity as a class was weak and which utilised the strength of the armed forces for coercive control. Intellectuals became members of the state which affected reforms of the constitution and legal practices from above, in which the archaism of the political forms and the the economic actuality of uneven development provided for a negligible social contact with the mass of the peasantry and labour whose (mass) ideological complexions did not even perceive of liberalist solution and which remained politically marginalised in their effectivity for the securing of democratic processes; which became

the ideological cover for undisputed dictatorial rule and various 'on paper' reforms of rights and duties from above, in which state legislation, however, could only provide a basis for their realisation by not a social enforcement and practicality of its ideological precepts and principles. Besides, the Hispanice theory of the state, property, civil liberties placed the state at an ideological distance of superiority, where its mediations were legitimised in philosophy and the actuality of partial developments.

The intellectual formation of the revolution of 1910 saw a fusion of different ideological currents which presented an alternative to the 'assumed abstractions of absolute rights and absolute state'.<sup>36</sup> Positivist doctrine was sharply criticised and the Diazpotism was denounced for having betrayed constitutionalism and a representative government which could only be assured by the liberal Maderista slogan of "effective suffrage and no-reelection" of the President, along with anarcho-syndicalism of Magon and utopian socialism of Alberto Santa Fe, who became the critics of the "blessings of internal peace, prosperity and progress, which emanated from the top". A social acid was eating away at the masses of Mexicans at

---

36. Ibid.

the bottom, in which the evil of 'peonage' of 'the plight of Indians' became concerns in humanitarian treaties such as 'Tomochic' of Heriberto Farias.<sup>37</sup> Social conditions of the peons on the haciendas, labour in the mines and sweat shops had an impact on social concern of the intellectuals in terms of issues rather than conditions in which labour and peasantry were developing, as strong social factors which liberalism had to accost. The hey day of positivism in Mexico was coming to an end, and a new generation of intellectuals, even catholic social philosophers attacked the barrenness of the 'scientific progress' and provided an alternative current of neo-idealism and a revival of humanistic values by people like Justo Sierra, Alfonso Caso and Jose Vasconcelos who provided for democracy, justice, harmony and humanity<sup>38</sup> within the framework of nationalism and anti-foreignism<sup>39</sup> for a united nation of Mexico for Mexicans.

The Revolutionary liberal ideals, in fact, crystallised around the issues of anti-clericalism, anti-despotism, anti-hacendados, anti-military and

---

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., c.f. also KH Silvert - The Conflict Society - Reaction and Revolution in Latin America, New Orleans 1961, pp.12-199.

39. Turner, op.cit. Waldo Frank, op.cit.

anti-foreignism,<sup>40</sup> with the petit-bourgeois radicalism of Zapata forcing a different choice (not contradictory) in it. The ideological currents of the revolution blended into nationalism, liberalism, agrarian reforms and labour welfare, combining both the economic and cultural dimensions in a bourgeois ideology which not only integrated the elements of peasant and labour thought echoed by sensitive petit-bourgeois ideologues but also constructed the platform for the development of the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in the social formation.

The bourgeois liberal Constitution of 1917 was in effect the objectification of the economic and ideological aspects of the rising "transformist" bourgeoisie and around which the specifics of the particular state form were delineated which introduced pioneer, social, economic and humanitarian principles of law and whereby also the sovereignty of the state over the individuals, and property was established in its processes of 'nationalisation and socialisation';<sup>41</sup> the unmediated historical actualities of which we have noticed earlier.

The ideological transitions within the dominant ideology are crucial indicators to both the congruities and incongruities which inhere in the potentialities of social contradictions and class rule. The contradictions

---

40. Bernstein, op.cit.

41. Ibid.

of the social formation in Mexico within the political ambit of 'universal effective suffrage' crystallised in a 'historical bloc' - The state form of which through the liberal democratic processes could establish and maintain the hegemony of the bourgeoisie from a precarious to a sounder base.

Infact, the 'revolutionary creed' emerged in the process of the development of the bourgeois state-interacting mediatively, and relatively autonomously within the confines of the social context in which organic intellectual of the bourgeoisie helped in the ideological integration of the objective national market and igniting the efforts for a continuing struggle to transform the society into the translated image of its ideological ideals which have become ideologically 'fundamental objectives guiding Mexico under Revolutionary leadership' - a dressed up face of which one sees in the volumes of 'the history of the Mexican Revolution', published under state directives from El Colegio de Mexico. The 'objectives' infact, can be given legal justification under the broad provisions of the constitution of 1917, and additionally be interpreted differently by the state.

An overall synthesis of the 'revolutionary ideology' would reveal its insistence that reason governs tradition, secular authority supersedes divine right, nationalism transcends particularism, and that the state performs welfare functions that were historically dependent upon the

church charity. The basic objectives further hold that state intervention is indispensable to economic growth social, political and economic, integration on a national scale is intrinsically good and that international stature is gained by adherence to recognised principles of diplomatic conduct.<sup>42</sup>

The first 'objective' of the revolutionary creed therefore, is national Mexicanism which involves emotions of patriotic belonging and pride in being Mexican joined in the building of the country 'by them and for them'. The average Mexican is encouraged to believe that he is just as important as a foreigner, priest, or big landowner (memories of the era of Diaspotism?). The foreigner and his ideas and things are however, not to be excluded, by which they could be accepted only if they prove themselves pragmatically and on this basis foreign ownership, foreign employees, foreign textbooks, educational philosophy, and professionals have all been able to abide by the rules and have become intertwined with part of the concept of Mexicanism - extending thus the ideological premises of neo-colonialism within a national state.<sup>43</sup>

---

42. Brandenburg, op.cit.

43. Casanova, op.cit.



Patriotism is glorified through a set of emblematic symbols (with the facts colonised or concocted sometimes) from Mexican history. The Mexican is urged to find a personal counterpart in one of the nation's past glorious heroes. These object lessons (in school textbooks)<sup>44</sup> are frequently selected to justify and glorify the revolution and are carefully injected with a revolutionary interpretation. The strong Indian character with its anti-imperialism and refusal to be compromised are symbolised in the heroic last-ditch defense of the Aztec civilisation by the youthful chieftain Cuauhtemoc against the Spanish. Magnanimity, is inspired by the advanceable examples of Bartolome' de las cases, Vasco de Quiroja and Sahagun, all Spaniards who undertook the task of protecting, educating the downtrodden Indian,<sup>45</sup> these models inspiring young Mexican school teachers and doctors to leave the city for the needy rural areas 'glorified schemes of the petit bourgeoisie', Patriotism draws much fuel from the self-sacrifices of Hidalgo and Morelos-excommunicated priests who initiated the independence movement in Mexico and the bravery of young military martyrs against the

---

44. c.f. Raymond and Goodsell, op.cit.

also Dozer, op.cit.

c.f. George I Sanchez - Education, pp. 629-630 in Christensen (ed), op.cit.

45. Bernstein, op.cit.

American General Winfield Scott is decorated in a monument at the entrance of Chapultepec Park, where it is used to give school children inspiration lessons<sup>46</sup> and make their associative affinities with the 'canned national culture' and providing them with 'educated manners' in which, the nationalist ideology mediates their memories, fantasies and emotions and sensitivities in a new context of social relationships and their experiential forms. Ideology, infact, speaks in a voice and appears as a vision playing upon the extendable faculties of communication in which glorious pantheons, buildings, circuses, lottery, rationshops, legalised prostitutes, machismo, sex, family, violence, the state are phased out at variagated intervals of massages which try to harmonise and dominate existing cultural patterns of social relations as also provide institutional means and their ideological images for consolidations of class rule like the PRI, CTM, CNC, CONASUPO etc.

The 'revolutionary creed' in its process of hegemonising infact, has appropriated most of the diverse cultural traditions under aspects of a national unity, self-sacrificing attributes of historical personages have been highlighted and extended, Juarez the 'benemerito' 'Worthy one' of Mexican liberals, Madero assassinated by

---

46. Brandenburg, op.cit.

a 'usurper' Huerta, Zapata, sincere, single minded champion of agrarian reform murdered in 1919 by a 'treasonous turncoat', Villa-generous, idealistic, colourful, cruel, cynical and sadistic, who 'outwitted the foreigner armies' but who met a violent death, Cardenas the poor boy who rose to be the 'President', lover of Mexican peasantry, who gave millions of acres of land to the rural masses, the true nationalist who nationalised oil railroad, and telegraph, Cardenas, infact, animated the 'drive for social justice' and national development<sup>47</sup> and became a human symbol of the revolution who lived, laughed, smoked, cried, froliced etc. The enshrining of these principles, personalities, emotions and situations as 'emblematic continuums has become an exclusive part of the populist ideology in which Mexicanism is infact a question of identify: of the Mexicans being taken to the shrines of national heroes and national culture.

Within the complex context of ideology, constitutionalism stands with precepts of legality. Every revolutionary leader bestows an aura of sanctity to the constitution of 1917 which is often sloganised as "the revolutionary banner is our Constitution", "the programme of the revolution

---

47. Ibid.

is that outlined in the Magna Carta", "solutions to our common problems will be found in the constitution",<sup>48</sup> which can give, constitutional justification to practically anything that the state may desire within the instances of politico-social conjunctures. Besides, legality of processes is assured by the formalities and sloganising of the 'Constitutions' fundamental principles of reference to a republican form of government, free-universal secular education, freedom of religion as modified by prohibitions on clericalism and property ownership by religious institutions, exclusive national ownership of subsoil rights, restriction of title of agricultural lands to small private farms, cooperatives and communal farms, state responsibility for the defense of labor rights, judicial and penal systems to control civil and criminal acts against the law, establishment of Mexican birth as a requisite for eligibility for high political office, "an open-door" policy for political refugees seeking asylum, and finally all kinds of ownership and initiative-private, public, cooperative, communal necessary for national economic development.<sup>49</sup>

These 'constitutional provisions' which emerged in the historical process of the revolution and their further expansion, amendments, enlargements, interpretations with

---

48. Ibid.

49. c.f. Ibid.

the establishment of a bourgeois state serve a multiple purpose of regulating and assisting the essential process of capitalist development and its contradictions as also providing an ideological basis for the complex hegemony of that class - where the state has acquired a 'revolutionary tradition' of a populist nature which effectively, mediates the contradictions of social reality within its specific limits - whereby in the instances of different political conjunctures - the constitutional basis of legality of the state, rights of 'equal citizens' and their duties etc. have provided the 'national' government for "capitalising over crises".

Everywhere in Mexico in national state and local governmental organs, in official political party literature, in schools and universities, in newspapers and periodicals, on radio, television and the motion picture screen - one observes the national obsession with 'justice social' and progress - translated into simple experientio-associative terms-that today and tomorrow are worth living for their promise of a better life than yesterday.<sup>50</sup> Implementations of this proposition show the state establishing and extending social security, building public clinics, schools, libraries, housing complexes, redistributing agricultural lands, making available basic foodstuffs at 'controlled rates', low cost transportation, labor rights, markets etc.<sup>51</sup>

---

50. c.f. Ibid.

51. Eckstein, op.cit.

Alongwith, political liberalism, ensuring broad democratic rights lies on the surface of the 'revolutionary ideology', often obscuring the controls and state regulations of freedom of speech, thought, press, and assembly-effective suffrage, independent judiciary and legislature which need to be checked for political stability and economic development for the social welfare, and the face of which has been associated with 'tolerant rule' guided by the general wisdom of the revolutionary creed. Elections with nominal opposition (about the nature of which we shall come to later) are in fact controlled by the Party, in the context of which 'liberalism' in principle and practice is able to maintain its elastic duality by re-emphasizing chaos if, 'this order dissolves' and 'who likes chaos, murder, pillage, ruin of wealth and family?'

An important factor which exists in the ideological complex is the notion of intellectual freedom, 'enshrined in the revolutionary attitudes' which trace their ancestry to the tradition which first laid a foundation for a Mexican nationality based on racial equality, economic progress and the enhancement of civil liberties<sup>52</sup> - against the Spanish Crown. Contributions to the 'liberal' tradition

---

52. Brandenburg, op.cit.

from the teachings of Rousseau, Jefferson, Bergson, Mill Adam Smith, Malthus, Ricardo, Marshall, Keynes, etc. have fructified in 'Mexicanised' image in which Juarez, Madero, Obregon, Cardenas, stand out as Statesmen, and Andres Mohina Enriquez, Luis Cabrera, Jose Vasconcelos, Manuel Gamio, Alfonso and Antonio Caso, Samuel Ramos, Alfonso Reyes and Jesus Silva Herzog are the 'leading intellectuals'.<sup>53</sup>

'Intellectual freedom' is accompanied by the revolutionary emphasis on free, secular public education, which infact has become a vital basis in the process of ideologisation by emphasising the 'pan-class nationalism', in popular literature for kids, in the Biografias Selectas, Leyendas de Pancho Villa, Ninos (Children) Heroes, handbooks etc.<sup>54</sup> which bring out the highlighted partialities of 'revolutionary interpretation of Mexican nationalism and culture'. The idealisation of the state and leadership paternalism, combines with outright concealment of facts and figures by state agencies where important details and connections are maintained in informal records and personal diaries. The textbooks also induce a new perspective towards work and achievement,<sup>55</sup> class harmony and domestic unity

---

53. Ibid.

54. c.f. Turner, op.cit.

55. Brandenburg, op.cit.

based on peaceful cooperation and focus upon 'well dressed boys and girls', the emergents of 'economic development, benefiting Indians, mestizos and whites alike, who are formally recognised as 'equals before law'.<sup>57</sup>

The underpinnings of the hegemony of the ruling class, in fact circulate in attitudes, visions, formalities of social relations, in which the state necessarily injects a complex complexion of its own neutrality and its 'guardianship' of the 'social order' which would otherwise collapse into chaos.

The objectives of balanced economic growth, constant agrarian reforms, labour rights flash across tabaloids, radio, T.V., Party electoral pamphlets, billboards etc. and the 'national quest' for bourgeois economic integration and inter-dependence of the regions and sectors of economy are camouflaged by the slogans of 'Mexico for Mexicans', where the 'industrious northerner, indolent southerner, carefree Veracruzano and 'isolated Yacateco' alongwith people from the mountains, plateau, jungles, plains, coasts, towns, cities should come into contact by 'exchange of commodities and services,<sup>58</sup> facilitated by means of communications and transport. Concomitantly, the state programmes for

---

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.



industriat-integrative decentralisation for provision of jobs, services etc. have become not only core economic but simultaneously ideological aspects for establishing the bourgeois hegemony in the social formation and idealising it as 'the only alternative'.

A not-so peculiar, peculiarity in the state ideological complex is the integrative adoption of the history of labour 'radicalism'. The syndicalist trade-union movements of Rio Blanco (Veracruz) and Cananea strike (Sonora)<sup>59</sup> against the brutality of private ownership are, infact, utilised as additional forces consolidating the objectivity of the state ownership of the means of production and state-welfare for organised workers and the defense of their rights for minimum wage, job-security and minimal collective-bargaining.<sup>60</sup>

The ideological factors not only emphasise a 'restructured' concept of social reality but in themselves are parts of the on going process of class struggle in which the state is squarely located; feeding back and circulating populist, liberal notions which have become notations for a 'statist refrain' of the bourgeois hegemony which goes hand in hand with public welfare and 'inviolable nature of property', cultivated by nationalism,

---

59. Ibid.

60. Casanova, op.cit.

which also asserts the 'independence of the nation' within the context of the world capitalist system.

A specificity which we would like to emphasise in the social formation in Mexico is the factor of racio-ethnic forms of social relations, which inspite of the formalities of equality and heterogenous racial tolerance at the level of state legislation and ideology, nevertheless subsist at the level of social existence and experience; in which heterogeneity-technical, institutional and cultural-coincides with a structure in which relations of domination and exploitation are also relations between heterogeneous and culturally different groups which have important psychological and political implications within the context of the life in the 'internal colonies',<sup>61</sup> (which in themselves are facets of uneven capitalist development). Racism, infact, seen as a continuum of colonial ideology is impregnated in a complicated welter of attitudes ascribing the treatment of individuals and social groups according to the place they occupy in the social scale. It has an elaborate social etiquette related to "the degree of courtesy and rudeness acceptable, "the types of 'humiliations that are natural" which are ritualised into a conduct of gestures, learned reflexes and even the most banal words.

---

61. Ibid.

The further dehumanisation of the colonised "what serious sense of duty is felt when facing an animal or a thing?" constitute a crucial cog in the ideological disposition of the rulers which gives place to processes of manipulation, sadism and aggression, where the machine-gunning of colonised 'baboons' may bring an indifferent shrug.<sup>62</sup>

It is difficult to establish the historicity of this ideological continuum in a new social situation where it lends a typical form to the social relations of domination and exploitation among culturally heterogeneous, distinct groups, the aspects of which emerge primarily in cultural differences which exist between rural and urban populations and between social classes - colouring the forms of exploitation and providing bases for discriminations.

The practical and political value of internal colonialism and its ideology throughout the different stages of social development and social mobilisation is clearly perceived when this phenomenon's characteristics are placed within a concrete setting. In Mexico, with the triumph of the great liberal and progressive movements - from independence to the revolution of 1910, the 'official'

---

62. Ibid.

and national symbols of this 'mestizo' country are the Indians - with Cuahtemoc who fought against the Spanish and Juarez who was a full-blooded Indian. In schools and in secular society generally Indians are objects of veneration. The cementing, symbolic value they have corresponds to a mestizo society, without racial prejudices in the national orbit or in the national ideology. The Indian problem, is infact, seen in governmental and intellectual circles as a cultural rather than a racial problem. It is linked to the ideology of the revolution. Politicians attribute to the Indian innumerable positive values - the pride of a progressive nativist policy.<sup>63</sup>

However, the 'Indian problem' subsists at a generalised social level - despite the revolution, the agrarian reform, sustained development, civil pride or even the cultivation of folk ideology-marking a serious disjunction. The exploitation of the Indian by the Ladinos (Whites) accrues within the social formation in linguistic discrimination ' I was a worm until I learned Spanish', differential wages for equal work, through forced menial work, and where discrimination extends into the juridical, political and trade union spheres and coincides with the colonial attitudes of local and federal functionaries and of Ladino political leaders.<sup>64</sup> This

---

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

situation corresponds to differences of culture and life style which can be registered according to the type of population: Indian or Ladino, where the Indians are generally considered as 'lazy-good-for-nothings' 'primitives', and in which the violation of the rules of courtesy, language, dress, tone of voice on the part of the Indians often provokes violent verbal and physical abuse from the Ladinos.<sup>65</sup>

Even the state agrarian reforms have much less importance in the Indian regions, where the fiscal charge is proportionally higher (out of which caciques, local politicians, collective voters are fed) while credits and investments are proportionally lower.<sup>66</sup>

The processes of capitalistic development and national integration although have a referencial correspondence to the national ideology-concretised by the state, have acquired serious disjunctions in development, which for the liberal radicals appears as a betrayal by the state of democratic development, the difference between the 'said' and 'done'; but which precisely are contradictions of the particular nature of capitalist development, where 'a subjectivist state does not try and approximate to its liberal democratic ideals' but, which are precisely maintained as ideological focii.

---

65. Ibid.

66. c.f. Stavenhagen - Changing role etc., op.cit.

In Mexico, the racial factor corresponds also to class situation within the overall context of bourgeois development, where objectively, reservoirs of 'communal' proletariat are effectively maintained by the state reforms e.g. the communal ejidos. This duality of social existence of class and community may very well be a strong factor in the obstruction of the sub-objective development of class consciousness, and especially where racial colonial attitudes based on cultural differences are not restricted to a particular class but articulate differentially at different levels related to their proximity in actuality or aspiration to the dominant ideological dispositions.

This factor we thought important to mention because it lends a very peculiar kind of twist to the class relations in Mexico and their political articulation, which nevertheless are located within the overall context of the state intrusions in the social dynamic of bourgeois development; the populist ideological interpellations of which establish the basics of nationality and 'natural democracy', and converge in the revolutionary' political and ideological relations of domination - where the 'abstract neutrality and glorious paternalism' of the state is simultaneously established. In fact, the historical process for the establishment of bourgeois hegemony

in the social formation in Mexico accrues through the mediations of the state (class) ideology which appropriates popular beliefs, legends, heroes, etc. and uses them for the objective promotion of the interests of the ruling class by presenting and imposing different views of the world in such a way that the structural contradictions are hidden and neutralised: the disarticulation of which can occur only through the development of the subaltern ideology which some day might or might not present a serious challenge to the ideological discourse and hegemonic position of the ruling class. Populist discourses are utilised by the state for the mobilisation and containment of the 'masses', and effectively mediate the processes of class struggle, where the working class, divided into an opportunist wing with a trade union reformist orientation drives a wedge in the crystallisation of a revolutionary movement which we shall take up later when we discuss the problems of the weak communist movements and ideology in Mexico.

The 'official' Party integrates the 'masses' into 'political blocs' in which a paternalistic-pseudo-democratic leadership with an intricate system of patronage and a multi-level administrative structure not only broadens the political and social basis of the state, but also provides material references to its ideological projections which

seek a congruency with the 'revolutionary tradition' and a tacit implicitness with the long term objective interests of the bourgeoisie, in spite of 'instances of radical (non-revolutionary) rhetorics in political conjunctures like the elections and related to the overall social context. The state through its different ideological apparatuses constantly tells individuals what exists, who they are, how the world is and how they are related to it. The visibility of the mode of life, actual relations of experience, extent and character of exploitation and 'power' are thereby definitely structured in a class-specific mode of ideological formation and its articulation, which in fact, is more complex than 'simple legitimacy'.



## CHAPTER XVI

Big fish eat smaller ones

The strategy for political containment and hegemony of class rule in the ongoing processes of social reproduction and transformation, is governed by the inherent dynamics of the social formation in which the state, and its effectivity in mediation is placed; within the overall structural limitations in which it is located. The state apparatuses effect a centralisation of the resources of the ruling class, as also enforce a submission to the established social order and contribute to its functioning; based on a totalisation of the social relations.<sup>1</sup> Through it are effected intermediary interventions between different classes and between individual members of different classes. The processes of mediation like representation are traversed by class struggle, and how they function in practice is itself predicated by a constellation of forces arising out of class struggle, in which the state actively participates in the exercise of ruling class power.<sup>2</sup> The relationship involves not only the historical dialectic of the demands and protests of the ruled where submission is

---

1. Therborn - 'Ruling Class', op. cit.

2. Ibid.

ensured either by the means of centralisation or totalisation of social relations; but also the processes of 'pre-emptive canalisation' which itself is located in the framework of the social relations.

Related to the historical nature of bourgeois class power is the processes of mediation by the state, which either effects a centralisation through repression and displacement of the contradictions - extracting submission; or effects a totalisation through cooptation in which support is derived in the notions of legality.<sup>3</sup> And, it is precisely in these processes that the nature of civil hegemony of the ruling class and the particularities of the state form is established, where the state either contrasts with civil society in manners of its repressive-coercive apparatuses, or encompasses it in an enigmatic mosaic, whereas, Centralisation effects a distance between the state and civil society, totalisation implies domination over the ruled and inclusion of the latter in its own execution through the process of cooptation of contradictions, carried out through state and civil-state apparatuses.<sup>4</sup> The forms which this process takes infact, reiterate the 'father image'

---

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., c.f. Nun, op. cit. and Chevalier, op. cit.

in the state ideology which acquires a 'familial legitimacy' based on universalistic notions of legality, equality of opportunity and universal suffrage, manifested in a national community and patriotism - expressed through the various ideological institutions. Cooptation by 'realistic' promises of economic growth, rallies all classes behind policies of quantitative economic growth integrated in the ideology of developmentalism and articulated politically by broad formal democratisation where social sanction and 'consent' is ensured to the state by the dominated.<sup>5</sup> Welfare institutions form the facade and actualities of subordination, while the repressive apparatuses are maintained in the shadows and utilised whenever the 'legality of the system is threatened'.<sup>6</sup>

In keeping, therefore, with the social character of the relations and forces of production, the scale and interdependence of the historical productive process, the state also acquires the finances for the rule of the ruled, through taxation and is able to perform the important task of public underwriting of private capital accumulation, carried on the ideological national legiti-

---

5. Nun, op. cit.

6. Ibid.

mations of 'legality', 'justment' and 'fair wages'.<sup>7</sup>

In the social formation in Mexico, the contemporary pattern of political and ideological cooptation have a striking correspondence to what we have just mentioned, though it is also inter-related with other complex forms of political domination which have evolved within the historical specificity of the establishment of bourgeois domination and hegemony within the social formation and its correspondent state form and ideology, emphasising political stability, economic growth, public welfare and Mexicanism-alongwith 'popular' democracy, equality, legality etc., the civil-state: bearer of which is the 'revolutionary Party' - PRI effects an 'organic solidarity' of the Mexicans in establishing a 'glorious Mexico' and maintains a defacto power monopoly. The Party helps channel and limit popular demands, distributes patronage and welfare benefits which increase popular loyalty to the administration and mobilises public support for the state. Through the PRI, popular groups (CNC, CTM, CNOP) automatically are publicly associated with the state in a way which causes them to share responsibility for state policies that they themselves do not make including policies that discriminate against them, in which their

---

7. Brandenburg, op. cit.

support is largely based on passive acceptance and tacit support to the national revolutionary state.<sup>8</sup> The Party serves as a useful mechanism of political control, not interest 'articulation' and 'aggregation',<sup>9</sup> in which the objective interests of the bourgeoisie have not been undermined despite their exclusion from the Party and which operate at an informal level or state deliberations and have established channels of communication with policy making officials.<sup>10</sup>

The socio-political forces which the Revolution released - were in fact, included in the crystallised structure of the populist Party, which has become an effective institutionalised ideological bearer of bourgeois hegemony and ensures the submission of contradictory social classes, in a national unity for the 'stability and development' of Mexico - through constitutional and legal processes.

Intra-Party relations are structured in a way that the 'popular' forces associated with it are unable to use their formal power to generate and exercise 'effective' power. As a result, even though organised campesinos

---

8. Ibid.

9. Eckstein, op. cit.

10. Ibid.

(CNC) constitute one of the main divisions of the Party, their voice has no power<sup>11</sup> and limited political influence through the PRI, because, many leaders of the CNC appointed by the national executive committee of the Party have been non-peasants and many of the campesinos appointed to top political positions have been coopted and absorbed into the official administrative political groups, to the extent, that they advance their personal interests more than whom they represent (Sic !).<sup>12</sup> Besides, the rural bourgeoisie who receive more income generating benefits from the state than the 'campesionesos' - (peasants) are incorporated into the politically more important "middle-class" dominated popular sector of the Party.<sup>13</sup> The Party therefore, utilises social differentiation in parcelling out priveleges, as also its functionaries have prevented peasant-working class alliances, regulated 'peasant' access to agricultural resources, harassed peasants through agrarian bureaucracies and repressed peasant movements they could not otherwise control.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, organised labor used under state patronage has also been effectively neutralised through

---

11. Brandenburg, op. cit.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Eckstein, op. cit.

cooptation of dissent and imposition of leadership, violent repression and periodic concessions to workers of privileged sectors of control. The extension of social security benefits, wage increases and profit sharing to the more advanced and better organised sectors of labour, has divided the labour movement in which the opportunist-reformist unions predominate: by affecting actual concessions and realistic realisable demands, while the leftists have been marginalised.<sup>15</sup> Further more, the constitution ties labour to industry by legal provisions - where strikes are regarded as legal only when they are peaceful and in harmony with the rights of capital, arbitration boards are to be comprised of representatives of labor, industry and the state; workers are to share in company's profits, and, management is to provide workers with housing and other social services and community facilities in firms employing more than one or two hundred workers.<sup>16</sup> The processes of the state also divide the workers socially and economically as a class, (where the possibility of class-consciousness making them aware of their historical identity within the overall dynamic of social relations

---

15. Brandenburg, op. cit. c.f. Villegas - Mex Left, op. cit.

16. Eckstein, op. cit.

and production is negligible and the CP medium is frustrated) and restricts the rights of labour, by merging them with the rights of the management and the state, embodied in the 'Labor Code', and which are enforced primarily in large industries, where the workers have the greatest vested interest in the status quo, in the least competitive sector of the economy.<sup>17</sup>

The state also regulates or attempts to regulate - the affairs of the bourgeoisie mainly through negotiations and not through cooptation. All but the smallest capitalists are required to affiliate with divisions of formally autonomous chambers that deal individually with the state - which, however, decides which chambers are to be set up; state priorities to them etc; and because votes to the national assemblies of the chambers are proportional to the amount of dues paid by the affiliates, the richer and larger units predominate in the executive positions and largely orient the chamber's policies in their favor.<sup>18</sup>

Besides, the 'Popular' sector of the PRI which contains the bulk of the 'elite' petit-bourgeoisie -

---

17. Ibid.

18. Brandenburg, op. cit.



bureaucrats, teachers, lawyers, doctors, journalists, state lottery 'vendors' etc., infact, provides the social basis and ideological pinnings to the state, whose very fact of integration into the system, and specific social nature, makes them the active mediators between the state and civil society through institutional and ideological processes.<sup>19</sup>

The ideology of the 'revolutionary tradition', also allows for a symbolic integration of the populace into the body politic in harmony with the state's recent dictum of the 'apertura democratica' (democratic opening) which has allowed the creation of the new recent parties - The Mexican Workers' Party and the Socialist Workers' Party<sup>20</sup> (can't beat 'em-join 'em-scenes).

This phenomenon of 'totalisation' of all classes in the state in Mexico also lays an effective basis for intermediary mediation and intervention between different classes by the bourgeois populist state - Party, in which, the demands and protests of the ruled are eased out within the confines of the system. How long can this last? and what is the nature of the effective

---

19. Nun, op. cit.

20. Eckstein, op. cit.

contradictions? in the social relations and forces of production to the 'joined' world context and how far can the flexibility of the state be maintained? are questions we shall take up in our concluding chapter.

## CHAPTER XVII

Outlaws in

The Revolutionary outcome undermined the social influence of the old ruling classes and its aide institutions - the army and the church,<sup>1</sup> whose formal powers were restricted by the constitution. The Church may not own property or comment on political issues; and which is subordinated to civil law which it cannot criticise from a religious platform. Further, the church may not sponsor elementary and secondary schools, and no new churches may be constructed without federal government authorisation.<sup>2</sup>

Although the church initially refused to accept the restrictions imposed on it, and although it aligned with counter-revolutionary forces in 1920's, since the Cardenas era, overt Church-State conflict has subsided. Ostensibly, the two at that time reached a modus vivendi: each granted the other autonomy within its owns institutional sphere.<sup>3</sup>

As a result, once again the church and catholic culture enjoy national pre-eminence, where its prior

- 
1. c.f. Nun, op. cit.
  2. Eckstein, op. cit.
  3. Brandenburg, op. cit.

function of granting religious sanctions to civil edicts have been reduced considerably, though the catholic-ethos pervades through charitable hospitals, institutions and church-affiliated schools.<sup>4</sup> Politically, the church hierarchy partakes in national, moral and civic activities, where, under Cardenas nationalisation of oil was exalted by the Archbishop of Mexico, who exhorted the people to support the government. Besides, the church takes active part in 'national moralising campaigns' and important public works are at times inaugurated by the clergy as well as high bureaucrats.<sup>5</sup> The national church, (independent of the international catholic church) supplements state public education system even though church sponsored schools are illegal, and although it once owned large landed estates impeding the free mobility of land as a factor of production, it no longer represents a force antithetical to capitalist expansion, which it stimulates ideologically with its ethics, morality, notions of justice, piety, charity etc.<sup>6</sup> and by emphasising the congruities with the publicly expressed national concerns of the state for development and order and goes even to the extent of

---

4. Eckstein, op. cit.

5. Brandenburg, op. cit.

6. Eckstein, op. cit.

endorsing the new 'anti-papal' state birth control programme.<sup>7</sup>

It is difficult to delimit the asymmetrical social influence of the church, but one general tendency which emerges is its intricate induction within the parameters of the national state and ideology, where despite stringent social, economic, religious and political restrictions on the church, local priests and leaders and politicians have established ties with the organs of the state and the Party which also regulates their influence.<sup>8</sup>

Accordingly, the church indirectly strengthens conservative capitalist interests, and supplements the ideological discourse of the state by effecting an institutional linkage of obvious electrical-dialectical continuity between novel content and old forms of morality and ethics integrated into the aspects of bourgeois ideology mediating different social perspectives. Eg. Metallurgist - "one learns religion from the time one is a child, but work is different. When I go to Mass, I ask redemption for my sins. I don't go to ask for work". Shoe artisan: "If God would hear us we would

---

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

not be as we are. Our situation primarily depends on our personal force. The religious fiestas, the pilgrimages and other religious activities are primarily a pretext to rest and go drink (parranda). People's faith is only momentary, nothing more. All is a question of luck and commitment. Religion helps one feel better when faced with problems, but it does not help one resolve them. The ministers of church do not help us resolve our economic problems.<sup>9</sup>

In Mexico, alongwith the fact of the political domination of the PRI, exists the Partido de Accion Nacional (PAN) which is regarded as a 'legitimate opposition party which fulfills an important role in Mexican politics (the revolution was among other things made in the name of democracy!), but which is not expected to seriously challenge the role of the PRI.<sup>10</sup> The PAN voters come from different stratas of big businessmen, members of the 'small-town-clerically oriented middle classes and also the religious peasants in some parts of the country. The party also attracts workers and peasants who are discontented with the ruling PRI which is often seen as corrupt and inefficient; indulging in

---

9. Ibid.

10. Needler, op. cit.

electoral frauds and betraying its promises.<sup>11</sup> Recently, PAN has accepted the legitimacy of the basic gains of the revolution and a Christian Democratic factor of the party is making itself noticeable. However, it does not form any alternative to the 'entrenched situation of the PRI<sup>12</sup>, and infact refurbishes the 'open-murder-mindedness of the state' in allowing for an opposition to exist.<sup>13</sup>

It is difficult to suggest the refracted social medium upon which the PAN is based and the limits on its effectivity within the context of national politics. The processes of the Mexican revolution on the one hand sharpened the social contradictions, as also laid down the possibilities for their resolution in which the hegemony of the bourgeoisie would be established-based on the 'revolutionary credo' which became the basis for distinguishing the conservatives - old (hacendados and clergy) and new.<sup>14</sup> Infact the depression years of 1929 brought into existence the 'Gold Shirt movement' bordering on Fascism - with a strong nationalistic ideology and distrustful of anything short of naked

---

11. Bradenburg, op. cit.

12. Ibid.

13. Eckstein, op. cit.

14. Bradenburg, op. cit.

strength and force.<sup>15</sup> Alongwith this, the 'Sinarquista' - 'partisans' of the 'falangista' (Franco in Spain) in Mexico expressed vehement hostility in their anti-democratic ideas and attacked the 'atheisim' of national education especially under Cardenas (1934).<sup>16</sup> They carried on the catholic tradition of the Cristeros (a religious crusade against the heretics which never really died although suppressed by the state)<sup>17</sup> together with a vehemence against Marxism, materialism and against the 'lack of spirituality' in modern programmes of the state. In practice, the Gold Shirts and sinarquistas moved towards an objectively common political authoritarian objective, in which, however, the Goldshirts expressed their strong nationalism and anti-clericalism - making a distinction with the sinarquistas.<sup>18</sup> The rise of inarquismo in Mexico was one of those phenomena associated with the peerseverence of conservatism, the durability of the hacienda, and the weakness of political democracy and public opinion, expressed in the 'overdeveloped' slogans of the revolution and their partial application. The sinarquistas, sympathetic to Fascist

15. Ibid.

16. Bernstein, op. cit.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.



countries, were legally permitted to circulate literature to propogate their ideas by the state.<sup>19</sup> The concepts of Fascism, whether native in the 'caudillo' tradition or imported from Europe expressed their extrinsic desires for a 'strong state' and the values of 'hierarchy' and 'order'.<sup>20</sup> These movements, made huge well-financed efforts to break the influence, even relatively of socialising standards in welfare and education by the state.<sup>21</sup> The attack on materialism was in admiration of the goal of spiritualisation heavily admixed with religious concepts of divinity, hierarchy, superiority etc.<sup>22</sup>, instead of the liberal concepts in the state ideology. Conscription during the second world-war (unusual for Mexico), secular education and the discontent brought on by low wages and poor conditions became the immediate issues which unleashed the sinarquista propoganda against the state under Cardenas<sup>23</sup>, who was also attacked as converting Mexico into a Protestant bailwick (of the Protestant USA).<sup>24</sup> Sinarquisimo,

---

19. Brandenburg, op. cit., c.f. Needler, op. cit.

20. Bernstein, op. cit.

21. Ibid.

22. Brandenburg, op. cit.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

however, never drew more than a few intellectuals and never enlisted the official support of the Catholic hierarchy.<sup>25</sup> Hence, it cannot be seen as the projection of the Catholic Church into Mexican political life - although it utilises catholic ideology and youth groups. These sinarquista-'reactionary' conservatives derive their support from heads of old-landowning families, a small minority of the catholic clergy, few intellectuals and professionals and their mass basis lies in the intensely catholic peasantry (pauperised small holders) in regions of Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoa'can, Quere'taro, Puebla and San Luis Potosi.<sup>26</sup> Since 1949, when the State withdrew the legal status of the sinarquistas as a political party (which was named Fuerza Popular), the sinarquistas have no viable organization of their own, and frequently lend electoral support to PAN.<sup>27</sup>

The PAN social support derives from among large landowners, wealthy bankers and industrialists, upper hierarchy of the catholic clergy and some intellectuals who advocate an concoction of colonial value intermixed with corporate state designs in an ideology which attacks

---

25. Ibid., c.f. also Eckstein, op. cit.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

the 'socialistic mandates' imposed by the constitution and their proliferation through 'atheistic education'.<sup>28</sup> In terms of objective coincidence with the predominance of the economic aspects in their ideology and the state's, there is mutual preference for private capital and for crude forced savings over wage increase.<sup>29</sup>

Besides, the emphasis on 'Catholicism as the sole religion' and the liquidation of the rights and autonomy of the church in matters of state, education, political, participation, ownership of property-by the revolutionary state is a point of reiteration even in ordinary conversation - where 'Christian principles must replace atheistic socialism'.<sup>30</sup>

The agrarian reforms provisions of the constitution (the cardinals of the 'revolutionary' ideology) are the contraries of the perspective of the conservatives, who want a serious qualification of 'communal property ownership' and a return of the countryside under the tutelage of the rural barons 'using efficient techniques, to overcome the food shortage' which cannot be cured by small inefficient, communal ejido.<sup>31</sup>

---

28. Eckstein, op. cit. and Brandenburg, op. cit.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

The desire for the dissolution of the public sector and integration of it into private ownership with free trade, competition etc. - Integrated in the establishment of corporate monopolies, is an important economic aspect of the 'conservatives' ideology! Disbandment of trade unions and liquidation of all socialists, communists, trotskyites, anarchists etc. is seen, to subordinate labor completely.<sup>32</sup>

This conservatism mixed with colonial values however, has developed into the PAN ideology; whose leaders and financiers belong to old and new families of wealth - now into 'capital' and whose active bases are in Mexico city, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Baja California, Chihuahua and Sonora.<sup>34</sup> For more than two decades, their 'conceptive ideologue' has been Manuel Gomez Morin one time an ardent Marxist professor; who turned financier in 1930.<sup>36</sup> PAN, now, scared of being branded as reactionary, tries moderate Christian democratic stunts closely analogous to the state sponsored

32. *Ibid.*

33. Bo Anderson et al., op. cit.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

36. Brandenburg, op. cit.

programmes. Its effectivity as a viable political alternative is a question of doubt, though it has had frequent electoral successes, vis-a-vis the PRI. In essence, PAN at an ideological level expositis a definite reactionary alternative which the 'revolutionary' state contradicts at crucial conjunctures, and reduces the effectivity of its political functioning.

## CHAPTER XVIII

The unfinished refrain

"He sat down, tired looking outwards  
inwardly - at the clouds - with a dim  
sight ... may be hope might yet beckon".

In the deluge of state power, run alternative currents, surfacing and submerging in their transition - in their opposition - to what is: deriving their resources from characters, situations, perspectives, emotions, feelings contradicting the 'harmony and welfare' of the social system. Not all Mexicans accept their present lot or agree on the shape their society should assume in the future, and attack the intellectual-ideological credos of the 'revolutionary state; trying to extricate social consciousness from its shadows.

It is very difficult for us to give a historical survey of the 'left' in Mexico - its specific ideological constituents and its praxis in the social formation, due to lack of any sound, integrated material. What we can possibly try is to delineate certain tendencies, whose socio-political and ideological effectivity is a unfinished, transitional question.

Within the broad 'left' are factions of the anarchists, communists and trotskyites, each deriving

from a different theoretico-strategical praxis within Mexican society and vis-a-vis the state.<sup>1</sup>

The 'anarchist' tradition dates back to the turn of the century, led by the Magon brothers and crystallising in the labor central of Casa del Obrero Mundial - whose peculiar strategy of direct confrontation with the bourgeois state, was slowly neutralised by the state legislation of labour unions and induction of the advanced organised labour sectors of railways, telegraphs, transport into a state supervised union.<sup>2</sup> The Casa itself became lost somewhere along the wayside. The factious squabbles at the level of the leadership led to the successive founding of the Confederation General de Trabajadores CGT in 1921 which dictated preference for aloofness from politics.<sup>3</sup> The decade 1918-28 which saw the tying of the organised labor movement inextricably with the state, was followed by seven years of relatively huge popularity for syndico-anarchism, within an environment of labor repression. From 1939, when CGT formally joined the government till today, the CGT has preached a qualified sort of anarchism, while retaining membership in the official party and making

---

1. Brandenburg, op. cit.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

pleas for an independent labor movement free from state domination.<sup>4</sup>

The communists are the only militant, disciplined and financially strong faction in the broad 'left' demanding a liquidation of the very basis of bourgeois property.

From the outset of the Comintern agitation in Mexico (1919) the CP underwent considerable tactical shifts as hopes for a social revolution gave way in mid 1920's - and the CP gave way to the 'war of position' through infiltration and cautious agitation-going on to a popular front until the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939, then allying with pro-fascist forces and condemning the bourgeois democracies until Germany's attack on Russia in 1941, then suspending anti-capitalist attack and supporting Pro-Allied forces until 1946 and then renewed attacks on capitalism and support of the USSR in the Cold War.<sup>5</sup>

The Communist appeals since the advent of the cold war have centred on themes of the defense of national economy before imperialism. Finding themselves outside

---

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.



the mainstream of the labor movement which since 1939 has advocated business unionism, the communists have attacked low wages, labor leadership sell out to the bourgeoisie and state vacillation on land reform.<sup>6</sup> In this, the communists were able to mobilise the under-privileged urban proletariat and portions of peasants still without land.<sup>7</sup> For decades, the communist strategy in Mexico has centred on the peasantry and agrarian reform issue - which has meant, confiscation rather than expropriation and repartition of private farms in order to extend the pattern of the collective type ejidal farms. The communists attack the state for "its surrender to private capital" in permitting private farms to exist and its "betrayal of the needs of rural Mexico".<sup>8</sup> Infact, communist strength in the rural areas is centred in the collective farms of the Laguna region which is the home of Dionisio Encinas - CP leader since 1940, and in small ejidos located elsewhere.<sup>9</sup>

The urban centres are also prone to communist influences, headed by the trade union elements of 'the

---

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Bo Anderson et al., op. cit.

General Union of Mexican Workers and Peasants - UGOCM and the CTAL (pro-communist labor central for Latin America). From time to time significant 'extremism' erupts in sections and locals of the railroad and petroleum workers' unions, actors and motion pictures workers unions, telephone and electrical workers' unions.<sup>10</sup> These, unions have 'responsive counterparts' in certain student federations in the National University and the National Polytechnical Institute, and in several sections of the teachers' federation, 'intellectuals' artists and professionals (petit-bourgeois elements).<sup>11</sup>

The Communist Strategy is supported by Sections of under-developed proletariat when it sees no other political grouping as boldly and openly demanding higher wages and better conditions; and communist popularity with both the rural and urban masses is directly proportionate to the degree to which the 'revolutionary' state fails in its promises.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike the pro-Moscow Communists, the Trotskyites in Mexico advocate the overthrow of capitalism and the

---

10. Brandenburg, op. cit.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

establishment of a working class socialism, with 'real leaders linked to the rank and file of trade unions' to take over society.<sup>13</sup>

The Communist-Trotskyite split came after the death of Lenin, when Leon Trotsky (Leo Davidovich Boronstein) persecuted by Stalin came to Mexico as a political exile and injected a new dynamism in the political pronouncement in the news papers from 1938 to mid 1940 when he was assassinated by Jacques Mornard also known as Jose' Mercador, Frank Jackson, Ramon Mercader 'del Rio Hernandez'.<sup>14</sup>

The Trotskyite movement (Fourth international) finds its strongest Mexican cadres in the Miners and Metal Workers Union which has maintained a relatively independent status in the labour movement since its break-off from the CTM and the state patronised largest trade union federation of Mexico in 1938. The major significance of the Trotskyites is seen in their crusading vigilance against communist activities and in their agitation for a return of the Revolutionary left to power.<sup>15</sup>

---

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

The Independent Left, specifically, maintain that since ownership of property is the only true cause of class stratification, private property and economic liberty must give way to economic equality and worker ownership of the means of production. The exploited class of today, the wage-workers must be converted into a class-conscious proletariat in order to fulfil, its historic mission. Labor leaderships must constantly fight capital and even state-owned industries for higher wages, profit-sharing and better conditions. The right to strike is an indispensable weapon, all private capital opposes to true interest of labor and, therefore, should be abolished. Domestic capital is bad but foreign capital is worse - repugnant to the national pride and to 'labour's sense of national destiny'.<sup>16</sup>

The independents are conspicuously absent from official party ranks, and they propose general strike and secondary boycott as the best means of struggle, for expropriation of the means of production and replacement of private ownership with state socialism. In them, the Fabians consider slower, evolutionary, non-violent tactics as the proper approach to nationalisation or to worker's socialism. However, what appears to be the

---

£

16. Ibid.

greatest theoretical inconsistency in the independent strategy is, that contrary to their view, Mexican society has not been polarised into two contradictory classes with a class-conscious proletariat.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, some independents maintain that any theoretical inconsistencies are counteracted by the 'respect' from union rank and file, that has accrued to the independent trade union leaders because of their persistent demands on management and the government. The record wage increases won by individual trade unions during 1950-60, shows clearly that the unions that received more were under independent leadership.<sup>18</sup>

Many of the elements of the independents, composing of intellectuals, journalists, professionals, and artists who 'fancy' themselves as part of the group, are virtually unorganised and informal get-together of intimate friends are the only media through which they express their independent theories, although such support is given to the Popular Socialist Party, which since 1949, has been the sole permanent political outlet of the independent left.<sup>19</sup> The militant-independent trade

---

17. Villegas - Mexican Left etc., op. cit.

18. Brandenburg, op. cit.

19. Bo Anderson et al., op. cit.

unions of the telephone and electricity workers (SME) have been absorbed into the state union after it took over the private interests of the Electric Bond and Share and the Sofina consortium in 1960<sup>20</sup> and a new set of rules were dictated to regulate trade union activity.

Independent left has provided concrete material advances for the rank and file unions linked with it but has not made any effort to increase the organisational dimension of the Mexican trade union movement, the majority of which is in the state directed and patronised CTM.<sup>21</sup>

Limited as our knowledge is of the historical facts of the 'making' of the Mexican working class and the development of its historical consciousness-mediated by variegated ideologies, customs, culture etc.<sup>22</sup> This then has to be placed within the context of the revolution in the social formation, and the processes of mediation by the bourgeois state which not only came to centralise but to totalise the social relations in it. The effect of populist ideology and the basis for the

---

20. Brandenburg, op. cit.

21. Eckstein, op. cit.

22. c.f. E.P. Thompson - Making etc., op. cit.

development of the bourgeois hegemony, have to be related to the very nature of the political articulation of the organised working class segregated into economic, opportunistic trade unions with its own 'aristocracy', patronised by the state and lending active support to it for its own domination - the awareness of which could only come about through a scientific understanding of the social contradictions, which, however, do not appear to be grossly polarised in the Mexican context. If only the dominated classes manage to disarticulate the 'revolutionary' populist elements (people vs. class) from the ideological discourse of the ruling class and succeed in articulating them antagonistically into their discourses, can they develop a 'subaltern ideology' which can challenge the hegemony of the ruling class at the ideo-political level of the socio-economic reality.

Until recently the state resolved conflicts by allocating resources to coopt, repress or distribute benefits to dissident sectors. Yet, recent urban and rural guerrilla activities, peasant land invasions, labor strikes, and student-led protests - especially those of 1968 and 1971 suggest the development of 'some' opposition to the state, which has responded to the present crises of inflation and declining economy by

revitalising its ties with the 'popular sectors' and by expanding formal democracy in conjunction with its proclaimed goal of 'operatura democratica' - which is aimed at containing opposition if not contradiction within the confines of the system. The left movement in Mexico has to precisely mobilise and bring out the 'consciousness of the systemic contradiction' in the proletariat;<sup>23</sup> which is a long term task in which the 'crusader himself gets corrupted'<sup>24</sup> and the leadership, intellectuals land up as being 'marxist multi-millionaires'<sup>25</sup> or frustrated wrecks.

The unorganised, unemployed 'workingman', rural migrants and lumpen-proletariat - form a vast 'sea of melancholy', and the nature of economic development and state ideology has placed limits on an effective communist movement from developing and extricating the objective 'proletariat' from its feelings of pessimism, fatality and superstitious indisposition.<sup>26</sup> Relatedly - at the level of 'high' intellectualism, disillusionment in literature expresses the transformation of reality

- 
23. c.f. Ernest Mandel - The Leninist Theory of Organization in Blackburn ed., Marxism etc. , op. cit. also c.f. comparatively - Tom Narin - Anatomy and Labor Party, pp. 314-373 in Blackburn, op. cit.
24. Villegas - Mex. Left, op. cit.,
25. Ibid.
26. Bckstein, op. cit.



in repeated reiterations emphasising the objective background and its artistic transformation through succors of fantasy and imagination 'al filo del agua' of Austin Yanez in 1947 has been considered a major breakthrough in the thematic genre of the novel in Mexico.<sup>27</sup> 'Al filo del agua' is about a town on the brink of the Revolution, 'El luto humano' of Jose' Revueltas represents the frustrations of the working class and, 'pedro paramo' of Juan Rulfo is a novel on the phenomenon of Caciquismo.<sup>28</sup> All these, reduce their themes to a naive simplicity easily comprehensible and 'redundantly' communicating not so much the 'artistry of prose' but the hardness of the reality outside - nevertheless - utilising brilliant imagination using the narrational style to maintain, create, and live the actuality of sequential time-broken and woven in different rythms of different persons.<sup>29</sup>

In 1949, Octavio Paz published his 'Liberated bajo palabra' in which he experiences the intensity of the struggle for expression - and goes on in his 'Labyrinth of solitude' to give an exposition of the Mexican

---

27. c.f. J.S. Brushwood - Literary period in 20c Mexico - Transformation of Reality, pp. 671-683, in Wilkie et al., ed., op. cit.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

Character and What it means to be a Mexican.<sup>30</sup>

However, (as a qualified statement of generalities) most literature in the latter 20c is characterized by an 'awareness of the process' typical to the intellectuals physical distance from it - and the efforts of to cojoin the 'alienated selves' through the 'invention of invention'. It talks about change and how rapidly change occurs, speculating upon change it may stimulate and, assuming an obligation to create change - a change which emanates not from the processes of living but the processes of 'thought about life' - which can 'create' a stimulation, an invention to cope with the belief, instead of the 'experience' of reality; it is removed in order for the emotional experience of the process of creation to predominate leading at times to possibilities of self-deception and narcissistic busy-ness.<sup>31</sup>

This in no way should be considered as a sweeping generalisation, but as a suggestive signal to discern the possibility of these processes existing in the realm of the intellectual, vision, angst, pessimism, optimism, helplessness, creatitivity, communicability, furore,

---

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

aggression, frustrations, suicide - emanating from an inorganicity with the experiential dimension, from a 'divided self' and even alienation from it.

It gives ideas and emotions, pictures and platitudes but what else? When life is the flow of a river merging into the sea of a dispassionate death? To be or not to be? Is the everlasting question of existence to what end??? ..... passing away may be.

## CHAPTER XIX

Is it a boat going by

"at last ... a resting ground by the river of infinitesimal quest".

The future developments in the capitalist state in Mexico is a problem which we can decipher by elucidating in our conclusion the broad inherent tendencies and the dynamics of their specific historical logic. And, to construct, a typology for the state form (and not just see its evolutionary origins)<sup>1</sup> is a further complex issue, the historical constituents of which, we feel, we have touched upon during the mid-land course of our paper, although we have not been very faithful to the idea of sequential time and have derived 'implications' from various cross-roads and un-walked miles to bring some bearings to the location of the structure and processes of the bourgeois state in the social formation in Mexico, resting on a 'ritualised form of populist-democratic ideology and processes, and within the parameters of which the hegemony of the ruling class develops.

---

1. c.f. Maurice Godelier - Rationality etc,  
op. cit.

Throughout our paper, we have tried to demarcate the historical basis as well as the political conjunctures with their ideological ethos in which the objective parameters of class struggle developed in the social formation in Mexico, and to the particularity of which, a specific form of state corresponds in the overall context of the global capitalist system.

The development of the bourgeois mode of production with its commodity production characterized by, the separation of a formally 'free labour power alienated from the means of production (owned simultaneously by private and 'public' agencies), and in which surplus value is created during the process of production and realised through the 'dispassionate' mechanism of exchange of commodities on the market<sup>2</sup>, was inserted in a social formation in Mexico. The differential social nature and forms of social and private labour, nevertheless provided for its (Cap. mode of prodn.) conditions of existence and their realisation within definite relations of production incipiently dominated by the expanded reproduction of capitalist relations and accumulation, for the subordination and exploitation

---

2. Jessop, op. cit.

of wage labour. Infact, the entire process of the development and functioning of the state and its particular form has to be located within the dynamic of the social contradictions which were unleashed by the revolution, and the emergence of the bourgeois mode of production as the dominant mode in the social formation. Although, earlier as a theoretical issue we observed the divergent views on the 'capitalist state' and its complex articulations, the fundamental specificity of the bourgeois state in Mexico can only be understood

- (a) not as a direct correlate to the development of pure capitalism in which the state is the ideal collective capitalist.<sup>3</sup>
- (b) not as a state form governed by a 'revolutionary, philanthropic ideology'.
- (c) but as a state form relevant and correspondentially related to the inherent contradictions of the social formation.

which gave a particularity to the 'democratic' impulse in the determination of the state and state power.

Within this, we have tried to assess the nature of the state

---

3. c.f. Altvater in Holloway and Aciotto, op. cit.

- (a) as a structural ensemble rather than a subject.
- (b) as a system of domination rather than a neutral instrument.
- (c) and state power as a complex social relation that reflects the changing balance of social forces in determinate conjunctures.<sup>4</sup>

We have tried to construct the state as a set of institutions and apparatuses of political representation and intervention as also the effects of its institutional structure on the form and content of political struggles in general where the very institutional structure of the state provides the background of unequal and asymmetrical effects on the ability of different social forces to realise their interests through political struggle in the differential social formation. This necessary expansion of the perspective to transcend a crude instrumentalist approach which sees the state as a neutral instrument that can be used with equal facility and equal effectiveness by all classes regardless of their location in the social formation or their political goals<sup>5</sup>, and to analyse the classes not as already constituted

---

4. c.f. Therborn - Ruling Class, etc., op. cit.

5. Jessop, op. cit.

political forces which exist outside and independently of the state and are capable of manipulating it as an instrument. Instead, although classes are defined at the crucial level of the relations of production, their political weight depends on the forms of organisation and means of intervention through which economic interests are articulated, and in which, the state as a system of political domination has a definite influence on the processes of class struggle through its impact on the balance of social forces and forms of political practice.<sup>6</sup> Further, 'state power' and 'class power' are cojoined as an analytical concept to analyse state power as a totalised/transitional complex social relation that mediatively reflects the changing balance of social forces in determinate conjunctures.

It is within this context that the relationship between the development of capitalism and democratic processes have been located in the determination of the state and state power - in which liberal democracy can be treated as an aspect of the institutional structure of representation and intervention where 'people' are 'formally' able to exercise a choice between alternatives but 'actually' are dominated in the absence of their

---

6. Ibid.



effectivity from below.<sup>7</sup>

The extensions of the liberal constitution of 1917 in Mexico in fact provided for the legal basis of 'citizen' participation in national politics in the capacity of legal subjects endowed with 'qualified' political rights as well as obligations, and, the inclusive extension of the legal status to all adult members of society without reference to their class position.<sup>8</sup> Besides, the formalities of democracy had other legal preconditions related to the institutionalization of certain political freedoms eg. freedom of speech, association, free elections etc. and of 'supposed' parliamentary control over the executive. And, precisely because of this, the route of popular democratic struggle in Mexico and capitalist societies in general can take the form of struggles to extend the 'real' scope of peoples' rights of participation to institute the legal conditions appropriate for 'actual' democracy and the establishment and maintenance of the social conditions in which such control can be realised.<sup>9</sup> To the extent that the struggle is successful, state

---

7. Ibid., c.f. also Nun, op. cit.

8. Ibid.

9. On revolutionary strategy - Gramsci, op. cit.  
also Jessop, op. cit.

power itself becomes more democratic.

The state in Mexico by combining differentially the separate institutions of political and economic power (by a huge public sector) not only reinforces and 'publicly' underwrites economic exploitation but also in turn manages to mask the objective political domination of the bourgeoisie behind the appearance of political liberty and equality, whose effect is to secure the conditions of social exploitation expressed in the exchange of commodity on an extended coordinated market, where 'free' juridical subjects come into frontal relations. And, where, formally democratic institutions encourage the incorporation of the 'people' into the bourgeois society through the ideological illusion of formal equality of 'national' citizens.

Infact, the peculiarity of democracy, in the Mexican social formation has to be looked upon precisely, not as a simple correlate to the stages of the capitalist development with their requirements of a liberal and interventionist state, but has to be seen as a specific form of capitalist development inserted within the context of the world market and imperialist chain, and a corresponding state form.

The situation of the state on the terrain of the social formation rather than a pure bourgeois mode of

production makes the analysis of the social forces pertinent in their influences upon the articulation of the dominant capitalist mode of production and its political implications upon the state - in Mexico - trying to 'totalise' the social relations through its mediative policies of cooptation, conciliation and repression of labour and peasantry - favourable to the political domination of the bourgeoisie. And it is precisely in this context that the specific form of the "populist pseudo-democratic" state has to be located to see its adequacies and inadequacies, contradictions, and constraints<sup>10</sup> and congruities in securing the economic, political and ideological conditions necessary to the expanded reproduction of capital.

If one accepts the view, that the state is neither an originating subject nor a neutral instrument<sup>11</sup> but a system of apparatuses and institutions that have determine effects on the social relations and their political articulation, it is important to consider the effects of democratic representation on the classes in struggle. Through representation, the correspondence of the relation-

---

10. Concept of Lucio Colletti, also extensions in Mao - non antagonistic contradictions, c.f. Mao Collected Works Peking (ed.).

11. Beyond subjectivist instrumentalism.

ship between the representer and represented does not guarantee the accurate representation of the views or interests of the represented. The means of representation have their own effects on the process of representation in exactly the same way that the means of scientific enquiry affect the representation of the real world in the production of scientific knowledge. Besides, the means are themselves part of the conjuncture that determines class interests.<sup>12</sup> Infact, it is this problem that it is at the heart of a long standing debate in the socialist movement concerning the correct strategies and tactics of revolutionary struggle in bourgeois democratic republics.<sup>13</sup>

Despite, its 'directed-democratic centralism' the general form of the 'representative state' in Mexico (and in other capitalist countries) provides the ideological lynch-pin of capitalism in which - 'labour', peasantry and the petit-bourgeoisie are combined through state-sponsored representative institutions like the CTM, CNC and CNOP' while the PRI represents the revolution. The juridical concepts of law as also the pan class notions of nationalism provide the ideological basis for 'equality

---

12. Jessop, op. cit.

13. Ibid.

and Mexico for Mexicans', under the authority of a 'paternalistic, impartial and independent' state. This mirage obscures the fact of bourgeois domination which at the sensors level operate through unknown channels' of commodity production and exchange, and where the state emerges as the regulator of 'general, national interest'. Infact, we are now beginning to understand, an ideological effect (i.e. an effect of allusion-illusion, of recognition-mis-recognition objectively produced through and in social practice) can only be explained through a positive cause, through the existence and functioning of genuine ideological relations (juridical, moral, religious, cultural, political) that are constituted historically in the process of class struggle".<sup>14</sup>

The replacement of religious ideology and its integration into the bourgeois one which emerges as the dominant one leads to a transformation in the ideological social relations and ideological class struggle, through religion maintains itself at the more organic, informal level of social existence, especially in Mexico. The rise of trade unions and

---

14. E. Balibar - 'Sur la Dialectique Historique' La Pansee 1973, p. 31 loc. cit. Jessop, op. cit.

pressure groups operate within the context of the political and economic instances of the social formation, in which the economic class struggle is limited to concerns of wages and work conditions, while the political struggles to promote social reforms are themselves intrinsically connected to the statist executions and 'revolutionary ideology'. Within this, the constitutionalising of the labor movement and the demands of the 'peasantry' enhance the prospects of the economic and political domination of capital effected through the state which actively maintains the juridical and monetary framework and assists capital accumulation by public production, as also maintains a political environment, of 'electoral support to state power' through the Party (PRI) institution. The implications of universal franchise in conjunction with uneven development of political consciousness and the existence of non-proletarian classes in the democratic framework of electoral politics, work to reinforce the political domination of capital, where revolutionary socialist movements are either non-existent, contained in a weak minority, or illegitimised in terms of democratic politics.<sup>15</sup>

---

15. c.f. Villegas - Mex Left, op. cit. Brandenburg, op. cit.

The state therefore, on the one hand organises the hegemony of the bourgeoisie (and fractions of capital therein) and effects the disorganisation of the dominated classes - by intervening in the processes of class struggle at the economic and politico-ideological instances and by its 'populist' interpellations and historical actualisations, in which the dominated classes are reintegrated into the mechanisms of their own domination. Crucial in the context of Mexico is the role of the PRI which is able to project realistic programmes on behalf of capital, and popular with the electorate and so contributes to the legitimacy and effectiveness of the state which also offers political concessions such as welfare benefits within structurally defined limits, without threatening the continued accumulation of capital, which appropriates surplus labor on the market rather than through extra-economic compulsions.

The social cohesion is maintained through the 'flexibility' of the democratic processes, where state sponsorship to working-class and peasant organisation is not granted for the purposes of real democratic 'grass-root' participation, but for the agglutination of the articulate elements and the structural containment through dominated organisations; while ideologically it becomes a manifestation of the development of the

popular-democratic movement which colours and neutralises class differentiations, in creating a consolidation of their material interests with that of the ruling class, expressed in state sponsored programmes and 'nationalistic popular' interpellations. The labour, and peasant sectors of the PRI in fact are expressions of this phenomenon where the working class struggle itself is a economistic mechanism of capital accumulation, insofar as it forces capital to secure the reproduction of wage-labor as well as other conditions necessary to the self expansion of value.<sup>16</sup> Thus by the means of institutionalisation of the working class and peasant movements (underdeveloped?) through the recognition and regulation of trade unions and peasant leagues the potentially dangerous channels (with their own historical limitations) are blocked and canalised through legal forms where the comfort of bourgeois reproduction is not tickled. The state articulation of reformist and economistic programmes with the interests of the ruling class, furthers the continual adjustment of social interests and allows the subordinated classes to struggle on behalf of their own interests in a way that favours the continued domination of capital but may at times

---

16. Jessop, op. cit.



result in the 'fiscal crisis of the state', when it has to make 'popular' investments.<sup>17</sup>

The centralisation of the bureaucracy with its systematised corruption further limits the extents of popular control over the 'plebiscitary-democratic' state (SIC!). The proliferation of administrative apparatuses fragments the targets of political struggle and transforms the people into a series of clientele groups in competition with each other.

However, within the democratic gamble, contradictions exist where and which need a perceptive fostering by leftist forces. The democratic republic does not become an automatic guarantor of consent and stability - and this should be apparent from the flexible formal character of democratic institutions, which do not exist in a political vacuum but receive substance from the conjuncture of which they form part. And, this implies that the adequacy of the bourgeois democracy is contingent on the overall political, economic and ideological situation. The flexibility of the "elective dictatorship" and the dominant strength of the bourgeoisie in the attachment of the working-class and other subordinate

---

17. Fitzgerald, op. cit.

classes to 'forms' of representation and the articulation of working class and 'popular-democratic' demands into political programmes and ideologies conducive to the ideological domination of the bourgeoisie, maintains the system which may otherwise develop tendencies of a 'representational crisis' and therefore a 'crisis of hegemony'.<sup>18</sup>

A 'representational crisis' accrues primarily at the level of organised political articulation, characterised by splits in the political organisations and the development of extra-parliamentary forms of political action which result in the proliferation of 'corporate-economic' organisations that directly confront the executive, and paramilitary organisations which engage in open violence and political intimidation. Their content is typically a crisis of hegemony<sup>19</sup>, and this is reflected in the questioning of the dominant ideology and the detachment of 'popular democratic' movements from subordination to the dominant forms of ideological discourse and practice, and where the fundamental condition of ideological hegemony - its ability to integrate popular - democratic values and demands into an ideology that

---

18. c.f. Gramsci, op. cit.

19. Jessop, op. cit.

secures the representation of bourgeois interests is not fulfilled.<sup>20</sup>

However, this situation develops primarily where the bourgeoisie is not politically dominant in political struggle (i.e. at the level of political forces rather than political institutions) and ideologically dominant in ideological struggle (i.e. in terms of the articulation of ideologies rather than the system of ideological apparatuses), the democratic republic poses threats to the rule of capital in relation to the appropriation and exercise of state power, whether or not capital can consolidate its rule through the utilisation of exceptional forms of state (repressions) or the working class can institute a radical alternative is contingent on the nature and the balance of forces in the particular conjuncture then obtaining.<sup>21</sup>

The establishment of the 'revolutionary form of rule' in Mexico which also combines the social interests through 'corporate' organisations which conditionally participate within the legitimate system has led to a general programme of state intervention on behalf of capital accumulation which it assists through its mone-

---

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

tary, fiscal policies, market regulations and the very restructuring of capital. The utilisation of 'corporate' institutions restricts the 'alternative' struggles in favour of 'representative bargaining' in which the bureaucracy emerges as a permanent basis for coordination and cohesion of policies. In this the policy of 'apertura democratica' and the cooptation and integration of new corporate organisations also creates the conditions for the permanent rule by, the 'revolutionary centre' with its concerns for 'social democracy' expressed by the ruling party PRI - which fuses several important political roles into one organisation. It has close links with the labor movement (CTM), peasantry (CNC), petty-bourgeoisie (CNOP) and small and medium capital, and has a relatively strong electoral base in the working class and the lumpen-petit-bourgeoisie. It also manages to integrate popular-democratic demands into a programme that does not contradict the rule of capital and its presence and utilisation of forms of representation allow it to adopt, within limits, to changing conditions, at the same time, it also weakens the independent forms of working class and peasant movements which might unify economic and political struggles against the capitalist state. This, however, is not to argue that such struggles are impossible only

that they are extremely difficult to organise and make effective.

However, the future of the political development in Mexico is a complex historical speculation. We have tried to base our study upon the development of certain social, economic, ideological and political tendencies which inhere in the social formation, their contradictions, congruities and transformations, which however, could only be placed in the perspective of a transitional conclusion - pending further research.

"The day comes to an end  
On the horizon upon the sea;  
deep, mysterious, beautiful  
threatening at times".

Al Fin.

General

1. E.P. Thompson - The Poverty of Theory and other Essays, Merlin - London 1978.
2. Maurice Godelier - Irrationality and Rationality in Economics. Tr. Brian Pearce, M.R.P., NY 1972.
3. John Holloway and Sol Picciotto (ed) - State and Capital - A Marxist Debate; Edward Arnold, 1978.
4. Antonio Gramsci - Prison Notebooks ed. Quintin Hoare and G.N. Smith, International Publishers, NY 1971.
5. Louis Althusser - Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays, NLB 1971.
6. Goran Therborn - "What does the Ruling Class do when it rules?" NLB 1978.
7. Robin Blackburn (ed) - Ideology in Social Science. Fontana 1972.
8. Nicos Poulantzas - Political Power and Social Classes, London 1972.
9. Pat Walker (ed) - Between Labor and Capital, Harvester Press 1979.
10. Ralph Miliband - The State in Capitalist Society. London 1969.
11. E.P. Thompson - Whigs and Hunters, Penguin 1975.
12. Lenin - State and Revolution, Moscow 1970.

13. Karl Marx = (i) 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon.  
 (ii) German Ideology.  
 (iii) The Class Struggles in France 1848-1850.  
 (iv) Manifesto of the Communist Party.  
 (v) Preface to a Contribution to the critique of Political Economy, Moscow Publications.
14. Samir Amin - Unequal Development - An Essay on the Social Formation of Peripheral Capitalism, MRP 1976.
15. John Merrington - "Town and Country in the Transition of Capitalism." in the Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism, Verso 1978.
16. George Lichtheim - Imperialism
17. Geoffrey Barraclough - Introduction to Contemporary History. Pelican.
18. Karl Marx - (i) Survey from Exile, London 1973.  
 (ii) Capital Vol. I, Penguin ed.
19. Herbert Marcuse - (i) Negations and Other Essays.  
 (ii) Eros and Civilization.
20. Georg Lukacs - History and Class Consciousness.
21. Lewis Carol - "Hunting of the Snark."
22. E.P. Thompson - The Making of the English Working Class, Pelican 1977,

23. Raymond Williams - The Country and the City. Paladin 1975.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ - Marxism and Literature, OUP 1977.
25. E.J. Hobsbawm - Bandits, Pelican 1972.
26. C. Wright Mills - Sociological Imagination, Penguin 1966.
27. E.H. Carr - What is History.
28. Henry Bernstein (ed) - Underdevelopment and Development - The Third World Today, Penguin 1976.
29. Andre Gunder Frank - On Capitalist Underdevelopment, OUP 1975.
30. Robin Blackburn (ed) - Revolution and Class Struggle - A Reader in Marxist Politics, Fontana 1977.
31. Teodor Shamin (ed) - Peasants and Peasant Societies, Penguin 1971.
32. J.R.R. Tolkien - Lord of the Rings, Uneven 1979.
33. Raymond Williams - Culture and Society, London 1958.
34. Mao - Collected Works, Peking editions.
35. Lucio Colletti - From Rousseau to Lenin.
- SPECIFIC
36. Octavio Paz - Labyrinth of Solitude.
37. Oscar Lewis - Children of Sanchez, NY 1961.
38. Frank Brandenburg - The Making of Modern Mexico, Prentice Hall 1964.



39. Merilee S. Grindle - Bureaucrats, Politicians and Peasants in Mexico, UCP 1977.
40. R.R. Fagen & W.S. Tuohy - Politics and Privilege in a Mexican City, Stanford 1972.
41. Ernest Gruening - Mexico and its Heritage, NY 1968.
42. Hrowitz, Castro & Gerassi (ed) - Latin American Radicalism, London 1969.
43. Lewis Hanke (ed) - History of Latin American Civilization - Sources and Interpretations, Vol.II.
44. Harry Bernstein - Modern and Contemporary Latin America, NY 1952.
45. Claudio Veliz (ed) - Politics of Conformity in Latin America, Oxford 1967.
46. Wilkie et.al (ed) - Contemporary Mexico - El Colegio de Mexico, 1976.
47. R.P. Millon - Zapata - Ideology of a Peasant Revolution, International Publishers, NY 1969.
48. Susan Eckstein - The Poverty of Revolution, Princeton 1977.
49. Stanley R. Ross - Mexico - The Preferred Revolution.
50. J. Maier & R.W. Weatherhead (ed) - Politics of Change in Latin America, NY 1964.
51. Duncan & Goodsell (ed) - Quest for Change in Latin America, Oxford 1970.
52. Donald Marquand Dozer - Latin America, London 1962.

53. R. Vernon - Dilemma of Mexican Development 1965.
54. Asher N. Christensen - Evolution of Latin American  
(ed) Governments, NY 1951.
55. John Womack Jr. - Zapata and the Mexican Revolution, London 1969.
56. Bailey & Nasatia - Latin America - Development of its Civilization, London 1960.
57. I.P.P. Flaum - Arena of Decision - Latin America in Crisis - Prentice Hall 1964.
58. Hubert Herring - History of Latin America, London 1968.
59. Martin C. Needler - Political Systems of Latin  
(ed) America, Nostrand 1964.
60. Burnett & Johnson - Political Forces in Latin America, Calif. 1970.
61. Stephen Clissold - Latin America - New World Third World, PMP, London 1972.
62. Germain Arciniegas - The State of Latin America, tr. Harriet de Onis, London MCMXLIII.
63. Victor Alba - Latin Americans, NY 1969.
64. W. Benton - Voice of Latin America, NY 1961.
65. K.H. Silvert - Reaction and Revolution in Latin America, New Orleans 1961.
66. Historia de la Revolution - El Colegio de Mexico Series.

67. Andrew Gunder Frank - The Janus faces of 20c Bourgeois Revolution in Whither Latin America, MRP 963.
68. Austin F. Macdonald - Latin American Politics and Government, NY 1954.
69. Gough & Sharma (ed) - Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia, MRP 1973.

## RANDOM ARTICLES

1. Woodrow Borah - Discontinuity and Continuity in Mexican History; in The Pacific Historical Review, Feb. 1979, Vol. XLVIII, No. 1, Calif. Univ. Press.
2. Perry Anderson - Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci: NLR 100, Nov 1976, Jan. 1977.
3. Bob Jessop - Capitalism and Democracy - The Best Possible Political Shell? (Xerox) from Little John, Smart et.al (ed) Power and the State.
4. Barry Hindess - Classes and Politics in Marxist Theory in Outler, Hindess, Herst and Hussain (ed) - Marx's Capital and Capitalism Today, Vol. I.
5. E. V. K. Fitzgerald - The State and Capital Accumulation in Mexico. Journal of Latin American Studies, Vol. X, Part 2, Nov 1978 - CUP.
6. Goran Therborn - Caudillos and Elections. The Travail of Latin American Democracy, NLR 113-114, 1979.
7. Hamza Alavi - Imperialism Old & New. Socialist Register 1964.

8. Alistair Hennessey - New Radicalism in Latin America. Journal of Contemporary History, Vol.7, No.1, 1972. London.
9. Nicos Mouzelis - Ideology and Class Politics - A Critique of Laclau. NLR 112 - Nov-Dec 1978, London.
10. Martin C Needler - Political Development in Mexico. American Political Science Review. June 1961.
11. William S. Tuohy & Barry Ames - Mexican University Students in Politics - Rebels Without Allies. Denver Monograph, No.3 - 1969-70.
12. Philip Taylor Jr. - Mexican Elections of 1958 - Affirmation of Authority; Western Political Quarterly, Sept. 1960.
13. L. Vincent Padgett - Mexico's One-Party System - A Re-evaluation. American Political Science Review, Dec. 1967.
14. David T. Garza - Factionalism in Mexican Left. Western Political Quarterly, Sept. 1964.
15. K. F. Johnson - Ideological Correlates of Right Wing. Political Science Review, Sept. 1965.
16. E. Balibar - 'Sur la Dialectique Historique'. La Panses 1975.