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**The Mexican Army and the State:
Historical and Political Perspective**

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Panorama of the Theme

Studies about contemporary history of Mexico are dominated by analyses of the civil society's components: the government party in its long metamorphosis, non-government parties, worker and peasant trade unions, both official and of opposition, etc. Mexico's Army as a fundamental ingredient of the political society has been relegated to a secondary position as an object of study; in consequence, the dialectical unity of civil society-political society (which together make up the State) has received little attention, historically speaking as well as in recent times. This situation responds partially to the fact that in Mexico (in contrast to many latin american nations) ideological-political elements predominated over those of a coercive nature in controlling the non-ruling classes; even so, in addition to the Army's important functions in organizing the State's apparatus of consensus and administration, this institution's services of compulsion in the first half of this century were considerable (1).

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(1) A profound formulation concerning the peculiarities of Third World structures of mediation and production can be found in: Roger Bartra, *El Poder Despótico Burgués*, Ed. Península, Barcelona 1977. For the specifically political aspect, see: the chapter entitled «Campesinado y poder mediador»; for the economic: «Economía campesina moderna y articulación de los modos de producción».

However, there are a reduced number of studies about the Mexican armed institution which can be divided into two basic groups: one consists of the official and extra-official literature which present it as a « popular and revolutionary » organization (arising from the « sui generis » State of the Mexican Revolution) presently transformed into an « apolitical » unit because of its increasing professionalization, interpretation which has served as a point of agreement for both national and north american researchers, such as Lozoya and Lieuwen⁽²⁾. « Professionalization = Apolitization ». The Latin American armed forces most highly praised for their « professionalism and constitutional respect » were the Chilean; these now offer the most renowned, bloody example of exactly the opposite. Secondly, there are certain experts who recognize that the Army presently has an undeniable political role; most representative of this group are Rondfeldt and Margiotta⁽³⁾. Both of these authors represent a definite analytical improvement in comparison to Lieuwen, who tends to be descriptive and anecdotal; however, at the end of his article Rondfeldt finishes by introducing the famous « apoliticizing » military professionalization as part of his hypothesis. Margiotta also elaborates a model of « military non-intervention » based on several obvious suppositions: constant cooptation and distribution of high positions to a military elite, absence of guerrilla warfare on a large scale, adequate fringe benefits and salaries, etc. Unfortunately, it seems that models of a strong Weberian tint (ideal types) never go out of style. Even so, none of these models can explain the real profound reasons for an increase or decrease in the militia's presence within the State: not all military interventions have the same historical class sign nor are they per se negative.

(2) Jorge A. Lozoya, *El Ejército Mexicano: 1910-1965*. El Colegio de México, México, D.F. 1970. Edwin Lieuwen, *Mexican Militarism. 1910-1940: The Political Rise and Fall of the Revolutionary Army*. The University of New Mexico Press. Albuquerque, N.M. 1968. Frederick C. Turner, « México: las causas de la limitación militar » in *Aportes*. No. 6 October, 1968.

(3) David Rondfeldt, « The Mexican Army and Political Order since 1940 ». The Rand Corporation, 1973. Franklin D. Margiotta, « Civilian Control of the Military: Patterns in Mexico », Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Air Command Staff College, 1975.

Another scholar goes even farther than the two groups already mentioned and underlines the obvious class character of Mexico's military body⁽⁴⁾. Boils develops some interesting ideas both about the Army within the political system as well as about Imperialism's military assistance to it, but he insists on including his analysis within a general scheme of dependentism. Even though he tries to point out Mexico's specificity with respect to other Latin American countries, his scarce empirical data (a must for constructing scientific sociology) and his lack of definition or understanding of our nation's undeniable historically dependent character, make it possible for him to sustain: « Latin America's dependent capitalist development includes all aspects, even the military... the Mexican armed forces are submitted to the influences of the American imperialist interests. This influence is not conditioning or determinant... but we must emphasize its presence, which in other conditions could become fundamental »⁽⁵⁾. Obviously, his first enormous error is to confuse what is determinant with what is conditional, but the absurd thing is to affirm that Imperialism is neither one nor the other, an affirmation which would seem to indicate that it didn't exist, even though he declares that in a specific future moment, there could exist a possibility of the « external » becoming of fundamental importance. We consider that Imperialism's influence certainly conforms a conditioning factor in any dependent society, but its presence alone is not sufficient to explain or analyze transformations of socio-political roles played by the armed forces in « resolving » social conflicts; we shall show how these last are the motive for such transformations and not the military aid and dependency of imperialism⁽⁶⁾.

To summarize, all previously mentioned interpretations contain important restrictions for understanding both the armed institute's changing participation in national politics, as well as

(4) Guillermo Boils, *Los militares y la política en México: 1915-1974*, Ed. El Caballito, México D.F. 1975.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 167, italics added.

(6) The insufficiencies of dependentism in the analysis of both the historical and the specific in our continent is discussed at length in the special number of *Historia y Sociedad: revista latinoamericana de pensamiento marxista*, No. 5, Spring, 1975: « Modos de producción en América Latina ».

the real significance of the American Union's military aid with respect to this participation (7).

Marxist sociologists have underestimated the Army as an object of study, especially with respect to its not necessarily coercive function inside the civil society and to U.S. imperialism's influence on it. There is no doubt that an important key to understanding Mexico's prolonged political stability (highly praised by statesmen and intellectuals, both national and foreign) resides in the peculiar cristalization of the «modus vivendi» which exists between the civil and political society; a cristalization understood not only as material concessions of civilians to their military counterparts, but also as an interacting network of ideological, economic and cultural factors in a given historical perspective. Latin American militarism has a strict relation not only with our persistent productive crises but also with specific characteristics at the superstructural level. Mexico's long stability is explained not only by a continued economic growth but also by the manner in which the State «coagulated»; to mention the economic situation as the only explicative factor is not enough: it should be sufficient to remember that Mexico has one of the most unequal distributions of income of our continent.

(7) Several studies do not go beyond a subtly apologetic narrative description of the Latin American armies and Pentagon's interrelations although they attribute to the U.S. Defense Department the responsibility for militarism in the southern hemisphere, however, in conclusion they recommend continued american military aid to dictatorships confronted with a «communist» threat. Edwin Lieuwen, *Generales contra Presidentes en América Latina*, Ed. Siglo Veinte, Buenos Aires, 1965. *Ibid.*, «The Latin American Military», Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 1967. Robert C. Case, «El entrenamiento de militares latinoamericanos en los Estados Unidos: el papel social de las Fuerzas Armadas», in *Aportes*, No. 6. Other investigations based on the vulgar interpretative scheme of cause and effect try to explain military interventionism's origin and modalities by comparing the percent of the military budget in terms of the national budget or of the gross national product, or in terms of other indicators such as: per capita income, degree of literacy, etc. For a well founded rejection of such positions, as well as for a series of stimulating hypotheses, see: Manfred Kossok, «Potencialidades y Limitaciones en el cambio de la función político-social de las FF.AA. en los países en desarrollo: el caso de América Latina», in *Revista Latinoamericana de Sociología*, Vol. VII, No. 2-3, Jul.-Sep. 1971; the same article appears in: *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. XIV, No. 4, Nov. 1972.

It is therefore impossible to advance in the understanding of a complicated phenomenon such as militarism if it is considered to be a mechanical reflection of the material structure's problems and even less if it is thought of as a simple situation where the alternate or simultaneous presence of violence and consensus are evaluated as products of North America's plans and those of its unconditional latin american allies. However, there is no doubt that specific imperialistic strategies for each continent, country or even zones of one nation do exist. But these strategies and their corresponding tactics (economic, cultural, military, etc.) do not enter with ease in any underdeveloped socio-economic formation (or for that matter in any formation). There is always a certain degree of rejection which varies according to the specificity of each formation. This degree of rejection, or better yet, the «mode of reception» (8) of imperialism's presence, should be examined both historically speaking and with respect to specific situations. In other words, economic dependence is not an element which determines but rather conditions the class struggle and the correlation of forces within each class.

In synthesis, when faced with an acute socio-political context, it is absolutely necessary to consider, first of all, the equilibrium of internal forces (class front within unions, political parties, the Army, etc.) and secondly those international ones: the position of the USSR and other socialist camp governments (as being those ruling blocks most consequent in terms of proletarian internationalism) and that of North America (and of its working class, which is not necessarily condemned «ad perpetuum» to cooperating with the bourgeoisie); that of Europe, considered as a conglomerate of governments in which a strong «eurocommunist style» working class or even that of a social-

(8) For more detail about this notion see: René Zavaleta Mercado, «Movimiento obrero y ciencia social», in *Historia y Sociedad*, No. 3, Autumn 1974. A general outline can be found in Augustín Cueva, «Problemas y perspectivas de la teoría de la dependencia» and Fernando Arauco, «Observaciones en torno a la dialéctica de la dependencia», in *Ibid.* Zavaleta sustains «... most attention has been paid to the moment of arrival of the metropolis' different phases of capitalism to peripheral countries (when a world economy already exists) and not to the mode of reception of this phase which is, in our opinion the fundamental aspect of that complicated union (of modes of production), that which sets the tone of one type of underdevelopment or another», *op. cit.* «Movimiento...».

democratic nature makes its presence felt, and of course those revolutionary processes taking place in the misnomered « Third World » (9). To locate the real weight of each one of these elements is essential in order to elaborate scientific formulations and make objective political propositions.

At the beginning of this decade, Manfred Kossok called our attention to the lack of serious studies about latin american militarism (10). As far as we know, his observation is still valid, at least with respect to Mexico. An analysis of the organization, functioning, transformations, tendencies, potencialities, and socio-political limitations of the Army within the State and super-structural realm, as well as in the economic area, constitutes a task still to be accomplished for Mexico and seemingly for all Latin America. We hope that this article makes a contribution towards understanding the mexican military question both historically and at the present.

Our central objective consists first in making a panoramic presentation of the Army as a cardinal organization in the conformation of Mexico's modern State and as a backup institution of the official party, which in turn occupies a great portion of the civil society; we will effect secondly, a detailed projection of certain profound professional changes which have occurred

(9) An excellent study underlines North America's role and its restrictions in specific situations in Bolivia in 1952 and 1971, as well as the internal context of these same historical moments. Op. Cit. Zavaleta and *Ibid El Poder Dual en América Latina*, Ed. Siglo XXI, México, D.F. 1976. Another text which contains obvious contrasts with the above mentioned is: Guillermo Bedregal, *Los militares en Bolivia*, Ed. Extemporáneos, México, D.F. 1974.

(10) « ... a certain contradiction has been made evident: on one hand, the number of publications referring to the latin american armed forces' social and political position has increased rapidly; on the other, however, there is an absence of global analyses which, beyond giving a detailed description, explain in a trustworthy manner this phenomenon of an increasing and cyclical « militarization » of political life, a specific characteristic of this geographic region. We must point out that research concerning this role of the Latin American Military is in a critical situation, and demands a reconsideration in light of new criteria. This necessity also represents a starting point for a greater compromise by marxist authors », Kossok, Op. Cit., p. 193. An interesting reflection about the Armed Forces in Latin America using certain elements from Gramsci and geared towards reducing this gap is presented by Luis Razeto in his contribution « *Classi sociali e Forze Armate in America Latina* » published in: F.P. Cerase, L. Razeto, F. Consoli, *Classi e istituzioni in America Latina*, Carucci ed., Roma 1977.

in the Army in answer to different forms of the class struggle and as a necessity of making it into a highly organized and cohesive organization of violence within the State. Simultaneously, we will reveal the importance which U.S. military assistance has played in these changes, as a source of organizational techniques as well as of training and technical-military equipment. We will underline a specific interaction among: class struggle-military professionalization-military aid of Imperialism.

In politics, there are only two decisive forces: the organized power of the State, that is the Army and its counterpart, the unorganized, elementary power of the popular masses.

F. ENGELS

I. - The Domestication of the Warrior.

A. - Perspective of the first lessons and consequent tests

After the long civil war (1910-1917) more commonly known as the Mexican Revolution, it became absolutely necessary for the new-born ruling class to complete the national unification both in the economic and in the political-ideological sense. Different measures were taken to achieve the consummation of this difficult task: the emission of a single currency, the ratification of a new constitution, the substitution of the popular armies by a permanent and national one, etc. A large degree of agitation and violence accompanied this process of national unification. The bloody events of the « Decena Tragica » (the Tragic Decade: 1910-20) reflected the contradictions of the different fractions of the recently formed ruling class on one hand, and on the other, the presence of the masses struggling for the realization of their rights expressed in the new constitution (obtained by means of constant pressure) as well as in answer to the semi-general repression of the Army, exercised mainly against the peasants, the grand mass of the population.

In such a way began an unequal battle between the peasants (who, to the cry of « land and liberty » demanded respect for their constitutional and individual rights) and the militia of the flowering bourgeois state. The first group asked for the fulfill-

ment of the promises for which it had given its massive participation in the past revolution; the militia (peasants in uniform) played the sad role of executioners of the members of their own class who were not content with the « revolutionary » order and peace. The peasants and workers who accepted this peace played the same tragic role of executioners (for example: the workers of the Red Battalions against the peasant troops of Villa, the CROM, the official federation of trade unions, against the independent unions, etc.) serving as a check and balance to the rebellious military units. The situation described above gradually turned into a complicated mechanism of checks and balances which in a general sense worked in this way: the National Revolutionary Party (PNR) understood as the organized worker and peasant movement, against the Army which was still a disunified body, likely to divide into rebellious fractions (representing the ambitions of generals and of national and sometimes international interests of the ruling classes, usually the most reactionary); the use of these checks and balances made possible the defeat of all main military uprisings (1924, 1929), the continuation of the project of professionalization of the Army and the « domestication » of the worker and peasant movement, by means of repression or ideological manipulation.

After the Decena Tragica, president Gen. Alvaro Obregón ordered measures to be taken to fortify the professional formation of the Army and especially to consolidate its permanent character. He worked both among the troops and in the top ranks, and was able to achieve: the massive retirement from active duty of many peasants and the physical elimination of « caudillos » and discontented generals or their cooptation into the growing bureaucratic bourgeoisie as well as their corruption by means of the famous « cannon balls » or pay-offs of 50,000 pesos. Others had already been incorporated into the agrarian bourgeoisie (11), or were in collusion with it, putting their troops at its service. Gen. Plutarco Elías Calles adopted decisive measures to professionalize the military corps. In the decade of

(11) Hans-Werner Tobler, « Las Paradojas del Ejército Revolucionario: su Papel Social en la Reforma Agraria Mexicana, 1920-1935 », in *Historia Mexicana*, Vol. XXI, Jul-Sep. 1971, No. 1.

Calles (1924-1934) the basic military educational infrastructure was established, culminating in the creation of the Escuela Superior de Guerra: Army General Staff College (12).

During the dictatorship of Calles, certain other innovations were achieved, including the formation of the ideological-political superstructure (foundation of the Partido Nacional Revolucionario: PNR) and others of an economic nature (creation of the Central Bank, establishment of international lines of credit, etc.); but the most important socio-economic reforms necessary for capitalist development would have to wait until the administration of Cárdenas (1935-40): for example, the Agrarian Reform (very essential) and large works of infrastructure: construction of highways and system of dams, etc. as well as further improvement of the ideological-political instrument inherited from Calles. In order to be able to achieve these goals, Cárdenas resorted to the masses of workers and peasants and to the Army. With the former, he established alliances, made concessions, recognized certain victories but finally was able to submit them to the officially controlled trade unions. Because he was held in great personal esteem, the president was able to use the latter as a dike to contain the national and international fractions of the bourgeoisie which demonstrated the most conservative attitudes towards the Agrarian Reform and the Expropriation of the Petroleum Industry, as well as towards the generally democratic climate present in the country. Contrary to the past, when the system of checks and balances worked to offset the untrustworthy military apparatus and the armed workers and peasants, that is, when the combined forces of the popular masses and the loyal Army units made it possible to defeat the reactionary classes grouped behind rebellious generals; now, Cárdenas appealed to both of these unified groups as reliable State institutions.

For the government, this change represented a show of confidence in the armed institution, for the bourgeoisie, its identification with the newborn state and therefore its acceptance of this same apparatus as an intermediary not only with respect to the dominated classes, but also in the event of future conflicts

(12) See: « El Ejército Mexicano » published by the Department of Defense (Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional) in the edition of *Excelsior*, 17/IV/75, and Op. Cit. Lózoya, p. 46.

within the ruling class itself. All of this was made possible thanks to the control and incorporation of the worker and peasant movement within the PNR and to the technical-organizational and ideological professionalization of the Army, generally understood as the consolidation of a national, unified corps, submitted to the discipline of the bureaucratic-administrative apparatus, an organization which would not disintegrate when faced with an acute moment of the class struggle. The national State clearly manifested the institutionalization (ideological-political and military) of the domination of the bourgeoisie obtained under Calles (13). The birth of the Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos (CTM) and of the Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC) made it easy for Cárdenas to perfect the mechanisms of mediation such as the bureaucratic-administrative apparatus (as well as to foment the capitalist economic development) and gave way to the phenomenon of despotic presidentialism and to an authoritarian regime of only one political party. With the strengthening of these mechanisms, the Army was able to be reduced to a secondary role in national politics, not because its increased professionalization had « depoliticized » it as some authors sustain (14); but because the civil branch of the political bureaucracy had acquired a clear predominance over its military counterpart in the direction of the State.

Cárdenas continued with the process of Military professionalization, as well as with a specific practice which had been quite effective in times of Calles: that of promoting young professional officials to positions of strategic command. Calles had used these to create a buffer zone between the troops and those generals of dubious loyalty to the government; Cárdenas did likewise but now the young officials were imbued with a profound nationalistic sentiment due to events such as the Expropriation of the Petroleum Industry and as a reaction to continuous pressures coming from the United States. In 1938 the PNR was substituted by the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM), made up of the following sectors: worker, peasant, popular and

(13) Roger Bartra, « La Revolución Domesticada: del Bonapartismo Pequeño-burgués a la Institucionalización de la Burguesía », in *Historia y Sociedad*, Second Epoch, No. 6, Verano 1975.

(14) Lieuwen, « Mexican Militarism », Rondfeldt and Lozoya, Op. Cit.

military. This change divided opinions in the military corp, but was obeyed by Gen. Avila Camacho, Secretary of Defense; Cárdenas's decision responded to his recognition of the direct political (though secondary) role still played by the Army (15). Later, as presidential candidate, Avila Camacho let it be known that he was in complete disagreement with the official military partisan activity (16). He was considered to be a mediating element in the turbulent electoral arena, as he recognized his devout catholicism, to be neither friend nor enemy of industrialists or workers, etc.; even inside the Army (in contrast to the opposition candidate Gen. Almazán) he was considered the only candidate of national unification, in spite of having « won his general's stars behind a desk and not on the battlefield », a common saying of the epoch. But this was precisely his special quality, he personified the military bureaucrat, conscious of the grave risks involved in any partisan participation of the men in uniform; it would be « to return to the past » as he bluntly expressed.

The State could permit divisions inside the official worker and peasant movement, the malleable and receptive part of its heart, but not within its iron core. In the first month of his administration, (1941-46) Avila Camacho ordered the soldiers' immediate withdrawal from the PRM. Once again as before, this president directed his messages to generals and high level military brass, in contrast to Cárdenas who had directed them to the middle level officials and the troops. All articles referring to the development of a socialist education « disappeared » etc. In this period a « rectification » was initiated both in the civil society and in the Army, the most representative sector of the political society; it had to be « depoliticized » by taking it out of direct electoral participation: « in order to avoid elections in the barracks, which could cause serious divisions » as Avila Camacho himself underlined.

During Alemán's administration (1947-52) no significant changes occurred within the Army, at the technical-organization-

(15) F.J. Aguilar Ocegüera, « El Papel de los Militares en la Etapa Cardenista », Tesis, Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales. UNAM 1973, p. 81.

(16) Lozoya, Op. Cit., p. 101.

al or logistic level. The scarce equipment acquired during the Second World War ⁽¹⁷⁾ (distributed only to elite units of the capital) provided the only news of any worth. A considerable group of young officials was sent to receive training in the United States. Upon their return, they were to occupy key positions in the Department of Defense: Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (SDN), replacing many officials appointed during the cardenist era because these last had reached the age of retirement or because of simple bureaucratic changes of duty. Alemán, first president with no military background, designated some of the new arrivals to high positions, such as Gen. Hermenegildo Cuenca Díaz as Under-Secretary of Defense ⁽¹⁸⁾. This renovation of command represented the most important change in the military structure after 1920 ⁽¹⁹⁾. Those professional soldiers educated during the past three decades of constant professionalization began to arrive to high and intermediate command positions. They were imbued with the nationalism of the democratic-bourgeois Mexican Revolution, but they had also received training from and maintained contact with north american imperialism.

In spite of the above mentioned rotation of duty, it is necessary to underline that the process of professionalization which had been pursued from 1920 to 1968 had been carried out principally at the bureaucratic-organizational and ideological level and only partially at the logistic level. As a result, a partial gap developed between the two levels with the first, (that is, the suppression of personal loyalties to caudillos and generals for others of an institutional character: loyalty to the president, the Constitution, etc.) receiving primary importance. Large acquisitions of modern armament and technical equipment did not correspond to modern methods of organization and discipline.

(17) In 1942 Mexico accepted a North American loan to be used in modernizing the Army. See: Ahuja Ruiz, E. Victor y Michel, Marco Antonio «Alianza de clases y dominación: México 1930-1946», in *Historia y Sociedad*, No. 9, 1976. A minute summary of the Mexican Armed Forces' capacities (men and armament, etc.) and deficiencies in 1940 come in: Prewett, Virginia, «The Mexican Army», in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, April 1941.

(18) José Luis Piñeyro, «La sucesión presidencial de 1952: el Henriquismo, el Ejército y los Campesinos», Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, UNAM, mimeograph. 1976, p. 40.

(19) Lozoya, *Op. Cit.*, p. 69.

...It is not true that the Army, according to the Constitutions, should have no political participation; on the contrary, the function of the Army is precisely to defend the Constitution, which is the legal form of the State, with all of its related institutions.

A. GRAMSCI

B. - The Last Test

The future characteristics of the soldiers' political participation (and of that of the Army as an institution) and of U.S. military aid were clearly defined during the presidential campaign to elect Alemán's successor. The main contenders were Ruiz Cortines, candidate of the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI, founded in 1952, in substitution of the PRM) and Gen. Henriquez Guzmán, whose candidacy was supported by the Federation of Parties of the Mexican People (FPPM). The latter was a very prestigious member of the national militia: he had been an intimate colaborator of Cárdenas (having been commissioned to put down the military rebellion of Cedillo in 1938 and the uprising of Almazán's followers in 1940) and by 1952 had also become a very wealthy businessman. Once again, just as had happened during the electoral contest between Almazán and Avila Camacho, the participation of distinguished generals produced partisan factions within the Armed Institute, some pro-Henriquez, others pro-Ruiz Cortines. But the Institute as an institution remained unified.

On repeated occasions the SDN manifested its supposed «apolitical» attitude with respect to the electoral debate as well as that of the Army as an organization. Alemán's government reiterated that it looked with favor on the free democratic contest. Gen. Sánchez Taboada, president of the PRI, was in complete agreement with the federal executive. Even though by 1952 the relative importance of the Army in comparison to that of the ideological-political apparatus had greatly diminished, certain key men in uniform played a decisive role in the election of Ruiz Cortines. All of them were adequately compensated ⁽²⁰⁾.

(20) The President of the PRI and leader of National Congress, Col. Carlos Serrano, the head of the PRI in the capital, Gen. Alfonso Corona del Rosal and of course Gen. Gilberto Limón, Secretary of Defense. Sánchez Taboada,

In spite of so many democratic promises, the Army had an indispensable part in the presidential succession, especially in the rural areas: patrolling, threatening, even physically repressing peasants at the least excuse. At the beginning, the PRI-Government tried to combat the followers of Henríquez (henriquistas) with pure violence. However, these violent methods only caused an increase in the unpopularity of Alemán's already discredited regime, which had been characterized by a brutal police-military treatment of the independent worker-peasant movements. The PRI was forced to enter the political battle on the ideological level, which is exactly where the henriquistas wanted it. Nevertheless, the PRI continued to administer considerable doses of provocation (which caused many bloody confrontations) combined with the creation of a spectacular propaganda apparatus (headed by Gen. Corona del Rosal) which had the job of glorifying the « revolutionary » virtues of Ruiz Cortines and of discrediting Gen. Henríquez Guzmán.

It is impossible to evaluate the real support which the FPPM enjoyed within the Army or the civil society. But there is no doubt that the PRI-Government was able to reduce the henriquistas' possibility of recurring to the living symbols of the Mexican Revolution. Alemán dusted off a presidential decree of 1949 and in 1951 ordered the creation of the Legión of Honor, open to all Revolutionary veterans, and the concession by the SDN of medals « for Revolutionary merit ». In a carnival-like, though depressing spectacle, this organization brought together conquerors and the conquered: followers of Madero, of Carranza, of Villa, of Zapata, and of Obregón, but « all united ». The popular masses (especially peasants) considered Gen. Henríquez to be the successor of Cárdenas because of his nationalist and agrarian sentiments. But what better proof could there be that the « true revolutionary » was Ruiz Cortines, than that all veterans of the Revolution and the great majority of the Constitutionalists gave him their unconditional support? Anyway, the PRI-Government closed ranks: it threatened bureaucrats and

President of the PRI under Alemán, became Secretary of the Navy under Ruiz Cortines; Corona del Rosal was made governor of Hidalgo and Gens. Jacinto Treviño and Rafael Melgar, leaders of pro-Ruiz Cortines organizations, were elected senators during his administration. Piñeyro, *Op. cit.*, p. 123.

teachers in order to « convince » them to register as voters in the coming election; the SDN conceded two free afternoons to its personnel so that everyone, from the lowest soldier to the most important general could comply with this « patriotic duty » as Gen. Cuenca Díaz, Under-Secretary of Defense, put it. There was an obvious effort at coordination between the PRI-Government and the SDN, which, with specific respect to the latter, is underlined in the following passage taken from an Editorial of the « Revista del Ejército »⁽²¹⁾ published a month prior to the election:

We have to remember that « strength comes from unity » and therefore we must be on the alert against any type of dissassociation which could place our national integrity in danger. We cannot permit any false hallucinations... The formula of our destiny is synthesized in these few words: Work and *Loyalty* to Mexico through her *institutions*.

The State's bureaucratic-administrative, ideological-political and repressive apparatuses acted as one against the largest participating opposition party.

On several occasions the SDN reiterated the Army's unity and « neutral » political character. Nevertheless, during the five months prior to the election this Ministry took numerous preventive⁽²²⁾ measures to discourage any action by those who might be « hallucinating »⁽²³⁾; the result was that on election day there did not exist any follower of Henríquez (general or official) with troops under his command. The SDN took different hostile measures against those men in uniform who decided to openly support the FPPM, for example, giving them an unlimited leave of absence to participate in politics instead of a limited one, which was the equivalent of a discharge from active service. On the other hand, the SDN conceded promotions and medals (some of which were conferred directly by

(21) *Revista del Ejército*, April-June, 1952, p. 4, Editorial: « La lealtad a nuestras instituciones », italics added.

(22) Demotion of high and intermediate commanders, concentration of troops in certain cities and in the capital, creation of the Tenth Military Region, etc. Piñeyro, *Op. Cit.*, p. 170.

(23) As some officers, followers of Almazán, who had tried to take the city of Monterrey in 1940, after the electoral defeat.

Alemán) to a reduced group of officers. In addition to the personal awards, there were others of a general nature: housing, salary increase, etc.

Henriquismo's importance as a mass movement can be appreciated in part by the number of votes *officially* recognized after the election: 579,743 ⁽²⁴⁾ (Ruiz Cortines: 2,713,419); which is a large quantity if we take into consideration that Gen. Almazán, in 1940, was only attributed a little more than 150,000 votes. However, many henriquistas considered this official total to be false; some estimated that the real number of votes was greatly superior; others even went so far as to affirm that they had won the election ⁽²⁵⁾. Henriquismo did not represent, as one researcher has stated ⁽²⁶⁾, the last organized dissidence in Mexico, but rather the last one to be permitted, actually semi-permitted. From this point on, the PRI-Government would not put up with any such disputes within the « Revolutionary Family » or bourgeoisie, of which Henríquez was an outstanding member ⁽²⁷⁾. Any illusion about this decision was eliminated by the slaughter of henriquistas who had assembled in the capital's Alameda (central park) to hold a victory celebration: no one would be permitted to question the « exact and impartial » elec-

(24) The largest quantity of votes attributed to an opposition party since 1924.

(25) Militants from very different political organizations agree that the real number of votes was much greater than that recognized by the government. Interview by José Luis Piñeyro to Lic. Salvador Mendoza, henriquista leader, 14-VIII-76, p. 13. Ibid. to Valentín Campa, leader of the Mexican Communist Party, 30-X-76, p. 16.

(26) Octavio Rodríguez Araujo, « El Henriquismo: última disidencia política organizada en México » en *Estudios Políticos*, Vol. I, Sep.-Dic. 1975, No. 34. Pellicer partially agrees with this author, but offers a more solid and critical analysis: Olga Pellicer de Brody, « El desmoronamiento de la oposición: el caso del Henriquismo », in *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana: período 1952-1960*, Vol. VIII, No. 23, El Colegio de México, Mexico, D.F. 1978.

(27) Henríquez Guzmán accepted the official verdict even though the masses rejected it, because the Treasury Department had placed a fiscal embargo on his businesses because of a real or supposed non-payment of 25 million pesos in taxes. For Henríquez, it was obviously more comfortable to forget the political adventure and conserve his businesses. The PRI opened its doors to admit or readmit all « disoriented » revolutionaries; those henriquistas who did not accept were ostracized or tragically eliminated. It was Ruiz Cortines' new policy, very different form that of his ferocious predecessor. Gen. García Barragán, prominent member of Henríquez's military supporters, later Secretary of Defense (1965-1970) was an excellent example of this policy.

toral results. The Political Institute represented by the PRI would allow no controversies external to itself, and even less within the Armed Institute and its prominent members. After this last test, the men in uniform had learned the lesson; from that time on, no group has ever sought to fulfill its political ambitions outside the PRI. With time a liason group or elite which serves as a substitute for the military sector eliminated from the PRM was created. Gen. Corona del Rosal ⁽²⁸⁾ together with other high level officers, would head this group within the PRI for a long time. This group has become the channel through which highranking military men can voice their personal or group demands, or those for the Army as an institution; or they satisfy them as representatives or senators by formally presenting their requests to the National Congress, but in reality these demands are satisfied by direct intervention of the President of the Republic, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. Members of the liason group commonly follow this trajectory: representative-senator-governor and sometimes Secretary of Defense ⁽²⁹⁾.

After 1952, this elite, formed by young officers and generals, not only reaffirmed its presence but remained permanently constituted as the only channel or communication between the Army and the bureaucratic-political apparatus, especially the PRI. This has given rise to a doubly antidemocratic situation: soldiers cannot personally participate in opposition political parties nor can they elect the liason group's members. The whole Mexican political system's antidemocracy had found eco within the national militia.

The other lesson learned from the experience of 1952 had to do with U.S. military assistance. In 1951 the U.S. Mutual

(28) Background: representative of the PRM's military sector, congressional representative (1940-43), senator (1946-52), governor of the state of Hidalgo (1953-59), President of the PRI (1958-64), Secretary of Natural Resources (Patrimonio Nacional) (1964-66) Mayor of the capital (1966-70), (mentioned as a possible presidential candidate in 1970) and in 1978 returned to the PRI's National Committee.

(29) Octavio Rodríguez Araujo, « Catálogo de Senadores y Diputados: 1940-72 » en Op. Cit. *Estudios Políticos*. It is necessary to clarify that in this Catalogue, some military men do not appear as such, for example: Gen. José Ortiz Avila, ex-governor of the state of Campeche.

Security Act stated that any country which wanted to receive military donations had to sign a bilateral treaty compromising itself to participate in missions to « defend the western hemisphere », that is, it was obliged to send troops to a foreign country in case of military conflict in any part of the « free western world ». The talks between the north american and mexican commissions concerning this agreement lasted two weeks in complete secrecy. During this time, the FPPM and leftist parties (Communist Party, Popular Party and Worker-Peasant Party) put on an important campaign of agitation against any military agreement with the American Union. Finally, Alemán made public the decision to reject any conditioned assistance, that is, not to accept war equipment and technical material in donation in the proposed terms, terms which were accepted by many latin american nations. In this way the limits of any future military aid were established: acquisitions would consist of purchases paid for in cash or by means of Pentagon loans solicited by the Mexican State; the same thing would hold true for training⁽³⁰⁾.

The donation was only one aspect of the postwar imperialistic military strategy. This point of difference did not signify a fundamental contradiction with imperialism; it was better

(30) The tacit agreement was very elastic: North American military provisions would always be available, when the most bitter moments of the class struggle would require the Army's modernization, that is, its professionalization. This had been previously proven by the crises provoked by military rebellions in 1924 and 1929. During the first, after the Mexican government had accepted the shameful and antinational Bucarelli Treaties, the North American government facilitated a credit purchase of 17 airplanes (piloted by americans), 15,000 rifles and 5 million cartridges, and north american petroleum companies granted a 10 million dollar interest-free loan. This aid came in very handy in putting down the Delahuerta uprising. A new supply of assistance helped defeat Escobar's coup (1929): 10,000 rifles, 10 million cartridges and some airplanes piloted by americans. See: Jean Meyer, *La Revolución Mexicana: 1910-1940*, Ed. Dopesa, Barcelona, 1973, p. 117 y 125. From 1929 to 1959 the greater part of the Army was equipped with old mausers (and even until 1968, see pp. 129-135 of this article) manufactured by the Military Industry Department which also produced the « Vargas » submachine-gun, the « Mendoza » rifle machine-gun, and the « Obregon » pistol for the elite corps, that were also furnished with modern armament imported from North America. See: *Revista del Ejército*, Oct.-Dic. 1952, p. 141 and *El Legionario: órgano de la Legión de Honor Mexicana*, Nov. 1952, p. 59-62.

to let the « eternal » Mexican Revolution follow its course. On the other hand, by that time the United States had already established official contact with our Armed Forces by means of the mexican delegation in the Interamerican Defense Council and the Mexican-United States Mutal Defense Commission⁽³¹⁾.

C. - *The Denationalized Warrior?*

Nevertheless, to consider the military dependence on imperialism as the primary element in accounting for changes which have occurred within the Mexican Army is not very useful, nor, as one student of the matter sustains⁽³²⁾, does it help in understanding a greater political participation by our men in uniform or an eventual coup d'état. However, there are other more questionable versions produced by certain dependentists who go to the extreme of speaking of the « denationalization of the

(31) Neither did we sign treaties which would have permitted the installation of military, naval or air bases within the country, in contrast to the rest of our sister nations, but objectively speaking, we are virtually surrounded by north american military establishments: all along our northern border, in the Caribbean, and in the south by the Panamá Canal. The Mexican State did not accept agreements which would have countenanced the establishment of US military or police missions, but the FBI and the CIA have acted openly. Recently the democratic and revolutionary press has denounced the actuation of these spy agencies. See: *Excelsior*: 6-XII-77, and *Uno más Uno*: 1-3/XI/78 and *Oposición*: # 203, 222 and 259 of 24-IX-77, 18-II-78 and 15-XI-78. For information about past CIA activities, See: Phillip Agee, *CIA Diary: inside the Company*, Penguin Books, Great Britain, 1975. Background data on the present CIA comes in: Larry Hill, *Emissaries to a Revolution: Woodrow Wilson's executive agents in Mexico*, Louisiana State University Press, 1973. We mention the above information with the intention of punctualizing that, if it is true that Mexico is formally a « unique case » in Latin America with respect to imperialism's global military strategy, in reality partial or total substitutes do exist to cover the absence of bases, missions, etc. All of which must be considered in order to evaluate the real weight of US military presence now or in a future emergency situation.

(32) Boils, *Op. Cit.*, p. 167. By paraphrasing Bartra when he speaks of economic dependence (*Op. Cit.*, *Historia y Sociedad* No. 5) we can say that military dependence essentially explains the following: characteristics of the accumulation of high technology military equipment; general and specialized training in antisubversive activities; a gap which may occur between the growth and organization of the Armed Forces provoked by modern organization methods and the specific terms of an « unequal exchange » between national militias. What we have just stated is intended only as a descriptive notion (and not as a category) which specifies the form (in this case, military dependence) leaving implicit the content: its national and world capitalist character.

Armed Forces» (33). Changes in military professionalization (new armament, tactics, organization, etc.) have always been a direct or indirect result of the class struggle and not of the ideological-logistical dependence on North America.

The SDN did not receive any US donations worth mentioning during the administration of Ruiz Cortines (1953-58) but it did vaunt a new generation of officials and generals. During the military parades which were a traditional part of certain national holidays, it was very common to see soldiers marching in perfect formation, wearing faded uniforms and carrying guns of World War One vintage. This scene repeated itself in the capital, with the exception of the elite corps, well armed and well paid. The following description is perfect (34):

A general idea of the epoch was based on an image of the Army as a small and rather laughable organization of dusty and ignorant generals, who returned home every afternoon on a public bus after having nursed their hemorrhoids while sitting behind grey desks in the Department of Defense, and of illiterate soldiers, badly paid and only armed with old carbines and 7mm. rifles. Even though this was a caricature, it did partially resemble the truth.

Although it may seem contradictory, by this time the Army fulfilled almost all the basic requirements of modern professionalization (35):

- a) members of the military corp are fulltime employees
- b) a certain degree of bureaucratization
- c) an autonomous set of norms which rule the organization
- d) permanent provisions in the national budget
- e) *esprit de corps*
- f) technical specialization
- g) corporativeness
- h) professional responsibility.

(33) Several of the papers read at the Congress «L'America Latina sotto l'egemonia militare» held in Bologna, Italy, April 1-3, 1977 can be included in this group. For example: Alain Joxe «Los militares latinoamericanos y la desnacionalización del Estado». The above mentioned papers have been published in: *Chile-América: revista del Centro de Estudios y Documentación Chile-América*, No. 33-34, July-August 1977, and by Fondazione Internazionale Lelio Basso, *Repressione e Militarismo nell'America Latina*, Newton Compton Editori, Roma 1978.

(34) *Oposición*: weekly publication of the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist Party, 7-11-76, p. 6.

(35) Virgilio Beltrán, *El Papel Político de las Fuerzas Armadas en América Latina*, Monte Avila, Caracas, 1970, pp. 35-37, quoted by Boils, Op. Cit., p. 100.

The only characteristic which our militia did not satisfy was that of having a distinctive social status. This apparent paradox was due to a lack of correspondence between the bureaucratic-organizational and ideological level of professionalization and the logistical one, which in turn is explained by the fact that most of the difficult moments of the class struggle had been dominated by the effectiveness of the State's ideological-political apparatuses. Since the continuous presence of the Army had not been necessary, acquisitions of modern US armament and technical equipment had been almost nil (36). In other words, without trying to evaluate it in an automatic manner: greater purchases of military equipment (with all that this implies: new installations, exercises, etc.) signifies a greater political presence of the Army (as an institution and as a pressure group made up of the military élite) (37); leads to the possibility of obtaining greater fringe benefits, that in turn give the Army a superior status which differentiates it from the population, that is, from the average living conditions of urban working classes, and puts it much above those of the rural proletariat and of the poor peasant.

II. - The Return to Arms.

A. - The call to the Warrior

During Ruiz Cortines' administration, the Army hardly ever left its barracks; this tranquil situation was interrupted in the first years of Lopez Mateos' administration (1959-64). Almost immediately he was faced with a step-up in the class struggle in which all the State's mechanisms of mediation failed and only repression remained. Between 1958 and the end of 1961,

(36) This scarce quantity of modern equipment was distributed among the élite units of the capital; these units would go to any region where the police or regular military troops could not contain the popular demonstrations.

(37) The «secret» of this scarce quantity of military acquisitions can be attributed, to the characteristics of the class struggle: the form of confrontation (whether it can be mediated or not) its nature (armed or not) and its level: economic, ideological or political. If the ideological-logistical dependence on Imperialism were the «key» to the understanding of Latin American militarism, it would be sufficient just to know its particularities and objectives.

the militia played a primary role in suffocating the wide-spread strikes of railway workers (1958-59), of those of the employees of the Mexican Aviation Company, of telegraph, telephone and postal workers (1960); in 1961 it dissolved the student movement in Mexico City; in rural zones of Guerrero and San Luis Potosí, in Puebla and Veracruz where it put down an uprising headed by Gen. Celestino Gasca, etc. The military reports were alarming (38). Given the above described situation, it is not surprising to know that between 1960 and 1962 the Defense Department bought 14,120 rifles and machine guns in the US (enough to rearm 50% of the Infantry) and 3200 troop transport vehicles (39). These arms were distributed in the accustomed manner: to the elite units in whom the political bureaucracy had more confidence (40).

When this phase of active and decisive participation in the « resolution » of multiple political conflicts was over, the men in uniform had acquired a certain relative autonomy with respect to the civil branch of the State, in the sense of being able to pressure to obtain greater concessions. During Lopez Mateos' administration, there was an enormous increase in fringe benefits (retirement funds and family housing) (41) especially after 1961, when the Social Security Law of the Armed Forces was promulgated.

(38) México, Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, *Memoria*, Dic. 1960-Nov. 1961. México, D.F. Taller Autográfico del Ejército, p. 30.

(39) José Luis Piñeyro, « El Profesional Ejército Mexicano y la Asistencia Militar de Estados Unidos: 1965-1975 », Thesis, El Colegio de México, México, D.F. 1976, pp. 73-79.

(40) This permitted the creation of a system of checks and balances even inside the Army, between well-armed and remunerated troops and regular troops. However this system had partially disappeared by the middle 1960's when it was necessary to rearm a greater number of troops with modern armament due to the outbreaks of rural guerrilla and to the onslaught of worker and peasant trade union insurgency. In 1961 there was an exchange of diplomatic notes between Mexico and the US whereby the US would supply Mexico with police equipment and there would be a mutual exchange of confidential information. In the same year half a million dollars were granted to enable Mexico to purchase this equipment. *Treaties and Other International Agreements*, United States Department of State, Washington, D.C. United States Government Printing Office, 1961-62, January 1, 1974, p. 172 and Piñeyro, Op. Cit., « El Profesional... », Table VIII.

(41) Lozoya, Op. Cit., pp. 124-25.

B. - The professionalism of the Warrior increases

The years 1965 and 1966 are of primary importance in understanding the quantitative and qualitative modifications which have taken place within the national militia (42). In the first year, the Army-Navy Joint Manoeuvres were initiated, while in the second, we have the beginning of the Army's Regional Exercises (RE). Both practices were impressive because of the mobilization of thousands of soldiers who engaged in practicing anti-guerrilla and antisubversive tactics. The problems confronted during the RE varied according to the « social climate » and the terrain of each zone. Among the problems which had to be « solved » were: 1) civil disturbances and/or subversion. 2) armed uprising by small groups 3) worker and/or trade union conflicts 4) problems of an agrarian nature, etc. The official RE report of 1966 underlined three aspects which required immediate attention: a) reorganization and preparation of the Rural Defense Corps (RDC) for antiguerrilla warfare b) a need for new armament, owing to « the absolute disadvantage of the federal troops which are mainly armed with old rifles in comparison with the automatic arms used by subversive elements and common criminals » (43). c) a total renovation of the transmissions system, essential for contact between headquarters and field troops.

The RDC's reorganization transformed them into an important auxiliary body for the Army in the countryside, where they serve as « spies, guides, messengers and in the capture of criminals and drug traffickers ». They now form units (which are well prepared) to combat rural guerrillas and subversives and constitute a potential reserve army, when we consider that, even after their reorganization, in 1970 the RDC's had 38,000 members. Three other aspects were included in the 1966 reorganization: the rotation of commands, in order to give all the personnel an opportunity to exercise command and to renovate all levels of the chain of command, the massive elaboration of

(42) In 1965 the US sent another \$ 245,000 dollars in Police Assistance which has constituted the second and last official grant of this type of aid. Piñeyro, Op. Cit., « El Profesional... », Table VIII.

(43) *Revista del Ejército*, Dec. 1966, Op. Cit., p. 13.

manuals about « Irregular Warfare »; and last, but perhaps most transcendental in this process of restructuration: the fact that 89 officers went to be trained in the United States. The following year two new schools were founded to prepare officers as specialists in anti-guerrilla warfare: The School of Applied Tactics in Infantry, Artillery and Intendency and that of Applied Cavalry Tactics. In North America the students learned the latest techniques of Irregular Warfare and antisubversive tactics. The importance of US training does not require additional comments: from 1950 to 1963, there were a total of 240 officers who received training; from 1964 to 1968 the total was 306 (44).

Without going into detail about the multiple technical-organizational advances which had occurred, there is no doubt that by 1968 the Mexican Army was much better prepared to « maintain » internal security. On the tragic 2 of October, faced with a massive demonstration by students and popular masses, the militia « had the opportunity to put into practice what it had learned about controlling "Civil Disturbances and Riots" » (45), and, we might add, the elite corps had the chance to use their recently acquired modern equipment. In spite of this laconic military language, the internal repercussions after the massacre came to the surface: 97 high and medium level commands were substituted, in comparison with the annual average of 10 to 15 such changes; five Infantry Batallions had to undergo official inspections because of problems presented by the troops against their commanders (46). On Oct. 2, the Army carried out its orders, but it also revealed some weak points. All Regional Tactical Exercises were suspended; the units were ordered to dedicate their energy to a « revision of all training, especially that in which they had recently proven to be deficient » (47). The police also revealed certain deficiencies, which were partially overcome with special U.S. training (48). Police

(44) Piñeyro, Op. Cit., « El Profesional... », pp. 88-93 and Tables XIV, XX.

(45) Memoria, Sept. 1968-August 1969, Op. Cit., p. 45.

(46) Some commands which were substituted were: the first and second in command of the Army General Staff, the Secretary of Defense's private secretary, seven Military Zone Commanders, etc. Ibid. 1968, p. 100.

(47) Ibid., p. 38.

(48) Between 1969 and 1972, 65 police officers received training in the U.S. and two more attended the « Bomb School » for police terrorism, located in

forces operate in urban zones, while the Army patrols rural areas, but the latter also helps the former when the disturbances are beyond its capacities. There is a definite but elastic division of labor with respect to vigilance and coercion.

The last two years of Diaz Ordaz' administration were of cardinal importance in the logistics aspect. The Army continued to buy automatic rifles and machine-guns, principally from Belgium, but also from the U.S. and Israel; in addition Mexico obtained the patent to manufacture those arms coming from Belgium. The repartition of this modern armament corresponded to that used on other occasions: it went to the elite corps (Presidential Guard) and to those which were specialized in antisubversive tactics such as the « jungle units ». By 1970, the 25,900 new arms were sufficient to equip 50% of the Army. During this same year, the Air Force acquired 20 new U.S. planes for training and 17 more for transport (49). As we can see, the great bulk of this new equipment was acquired after the extensive student-popular movement of 1968.

III - The Professionalized Gorilla or the New Military Man?

A. - The Warrior in a dynamic social environment

The popular struggles which began with the railroad workers' movement in 1958-59 and culminated with the student-popular movement of 1968 showed their profoundness and maturity in the revindications they proclaimed and in their impact on the Armed Institute. « The level, content and procedure of the class struggle advanced more and more rapidly throughout

Los Fresnos, Texas. Piñeyro, Op. Cit., « El Profesional... » Tables V, VI and VII. This constitutes a very important piece of information, since it happens after the student-popular movement of 1968, this is the first time that there is an official recognition of police attendance at the courses offered by the Public Security Office of the AID.

(49) From 1962 to 1970, the base of the land transport network was established with the purchase of more than 2,500 motor vehicles, the majority north american, as well as with that of 750 portable radio units and material for the Cartography Department. Piñeyro, Op. Cit., pp. 70-117.

the decade of the 1960's »⁽⁵⁰⁾. The certainty of this observation with respect to López Mateos' and Díaz Ordaz' administrations is beyond question. The urban masses' demands advanced from those of a merely economic type to those of a more ample political nature. Inhuman living conditions and the repressive treatment which any rural protest demonstration received caused a definite change in the class struggle, turning into armed movements in some of these areas. Geographically speaking, these were well defined: they covered part of the state of Guerrero and this state's common border with Morelos, Oaxaca and Puebla, as well as some isolated outbreaks in Chihuahua. The Mexican State always tried to underestimate the popular support given to these guerrillas. However, the fact that it took the Army six years (from 1968 when Vásquez Rojas escaped from prison to 1974 when Cabañas was killed) to suppress the guerrillas and that there were 15,000 soldiers in Guerrero « combating against drug traffic » should give an idea of the real support on which the rebellious peasants could count. The urban political struggle manifested itself in different ways; here also appeared an urban guerrilla, which based its action on certain amorphous socialist ideas but which never obtained important mass backing.

The ruling class's political representatives were very worried by this new dimension in the class struggle (both at its armed and unarmed level); this signified an open rejection of the traditional instruments of domination; however, it was clear that this first aspect, which the « democratic » treatment announced by Echeverría's government (1971-76) could not allow, was that which required an immediate « remedy ». Because of this situation, the military bureaucracy participated in the rural areas, not only in a strictly military sense, but also with its Civic Action (CA) or Social Labor (SL) activities trying to fill the void left by the civil structures of mediation. In order to

(50) Sergio de la Peña, « Un sexenio de lucha de clases en México: 1970-1976 », in *Historia y Sociedad*, Second Epoch, No. 10, 1976, p. 41. Rural areas are patrolled exclusively by The Army. The deepening erosion of rural structures of mediation provoke its more frequent and violent intervention. For an excellent detailed study see: Jorge Gutiérrez, « El sistema político y la burguesía rural en México: el caso del Mezquital », in *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, Vol. XXIX, No. 3, 1977.

have a better appreciation of the role assigned to the Army, CA and military professionalization must be considered as phenomena intimately related between themselves and at the same time with US military assistance.

B. - *The gorilla as a Social Worker*

CA began in a modern, that is, an antisubversive, sense in 1971. Its apparent objective was that of helping the civilian population by means of free services: medical and dental visits, veterinarian services, etc. The true goal was that of « pacification »: by contributing simultaneously in general to capitalist economic development (political stability) and in particular, to preventing armed or unarmed subversion. Its objective was to eliminate or at least to diminish the possibility of the armed subversive movements' obtaining more recruits. At the same time it was able to collect information that was used to elaborate more detailed socio-economic studies, which in turn facilitated the localization of possible outbreaks of opposition and the taking of preventive measures. Mexico's leaders could not risk that the armed opposition, which was still geographically well located, might spread to other states. This situation called for another ingredient which would make repression more efficient, CA constituted a perfect element⁽⁵¹⁾. Now, only Guerrero has the « privilege » of receiving such aid. This is due to the fact that CA was more able to cover its objectives in areas where the guerrilla still had not taken root.

In Guerrero where SL was confronted with an armed movement that already enjoyed a relative degree of popular support, there are indications⁽⁵²⁾ which make us think that as a form of mediation it failed completely.

(51) CA was not programmed only for Guerrero, but took place also in Oaxaca, Tlaxcala, Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Campeche and Morelos; however, in these states it was never practiced with the same degree of intensity as in Guerrero.

(52) For example, the 15,000 soldiers which even in 1977 occupied the state, as well as the 35 million dollars provided by the US (in airplanes, helicopters, individual armament, photographic equipment, etc.) from 1973 to 1977 for combating against drug traffic. This traffic does exist in several states, principally in Guerrero; nevertheless, there is no contradiction between activities undertaken to combat real and « social » traffic, quite the contrary: they complement each other. These provisions were not received by the Army but

Independently of the correctness of this general evaluation concerning CA, there is no doubt that this activity did permit « on the job » training. The CA brigades were made up of students from different professional educational centers (doctors, nurses, etc.), technicians (veterinarians, instructors in antisubversive activities, etc.) professors, instructors and regular troops. The magnitude of the SL activities accomplished in four years (1971-74: especially in '73) was impressive: more than 300,000 vaccinations, almost 2 million medical visits, etc. See Table I. The knowledge obtained through the military educational system, both for future professionals and technicians as well as for specialists in antisubversive activities, had found an excellent laboratory for practical application. CA and professionalization are double-edged instruments: one, puts the soldiers in contact with the terrible rural misery, the second offers them superior elements for understanding Mexico's social reality, in spite of the ideological content of non-military courses (history, law, etc.). The feeling of repulsion that can come as a result of carrying out repressive actions is another means of increasing political sensitivity. During the past administration (1971-76) CA-repression-professionalization were a common trio.

C. - The Gorilla as a high level professional

Professionalization is composed of the following elements: education, modernization of technical military equipment and of transportation and improvement of physical installations. Throughout Echeverría's administration, education received an attention *without precedence* in all Mexico's military history. In 1973, for the first time in the General Staff College's (Escuela

rather by the Federal Attorney General's Office; however both organizations work together against the drug traffic. Such provisions correspond to the Assistance Program of the FBI's « Drug Enforcement Administration », United States, House of Representatives, « Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies, Appropriations for 1977 », Hearing before a subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, Part I, pp. 685-689. Another source sustains that during this same period the Attorney General's Office received more than 47 million; that for 1978 it received more than 10 million and for 1979 13.5 million are projected. See: « U.S.-Mexico: Military Buildup » in *NACLA'S Latin American & Empire Report*: publication of North American Congress on Latin America, Vol. XII, no. 2, March-April 1978.

TABLE I

CIVIC ACTION OF THE MEXICAN ARMY AND AIR FORCE: 1970-1974

| | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1973 2nd sem. | 1974 1st sem. | 1971-1974 (*) Total |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Thousands (Ths) of trees planted | 15 | 1,000 | 2,000 | 3,200 | 1,750 | 1,980 | 9,930 |
| Ths of medical examinations | 31 | 123 | 510 | 573 | 362 | 375 | 1,943 |
| Ths of vaccinations given | 23 | 45 | 67 | 138 | 42 | 42 | 334 |
| Ths of veterinary examinations | 8 | 25 | 31 | 45 | 29 | 18 | 140 |
| Schools restored | 56 | 272 | 395 | 450 | 302 | 380 | 1,799 |
| Ths of hundred-liter tanks of water distributed (dist.) | — | 3,000 | 7,300 | 7,500 | 3,900 | 4,930 | 26,630 |
| Ths of persons taught to read | 17 | 12 | 13 | 20 | 11 | 11 | 67 |
| Ths of manual flour mills dist. | — | 110 | 108 | 373 | 21 | 4 | 616 |
| Ths of flight hours used in Civic Action | 8 | 16 | 25 | 20 | 12 | 11 | 84 |
| Ths of food packages dist. | 31 | 47 | 66 | 60 | 28 | 33 | 234 |
| Ths of pieces of clothing and other articles dist. | 16 | 18 | 20 | 27 | 14 | 16 | 95 |
| Ths of sheets of reinforced cardboard dist. | 11 | 18 | 20 | 25 | 18 | 21 | 102 |

Source: México, Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, Informe de Labores, Sep. 1973-Ago. 1974, Taller Autográfico de la Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, Apéndice Estadístico, p. 75.

(*) Our totals.

Superior de Guerra) curriculum a course in Military and Humanities Juridical Investigation was given (by means of a series of lectures) in order to further the knowledge of high level commanders in the understanding of « National Doctrines » (53). A very distinguished group of lectures participated: Public Works and Interior Secretaries, outstanding representatives of the world of Industry, Commerce, and Finance, and university professors. In 1974 a Computer Seminar was held to prepare highly qualified personnel to manage the ultra-modern computer system. The Military Educational Reform Plan, begun in 1971, had as its objective the elevation of the Army's professional level, with emphasis on low and middle level commands. New schools (Education, Intendency and Administration, etc.) and Courses (Dactiloscoper, Air Photogrametry etc.) were established to help reach this objective. Studies offered in the Officers' School (Nursing, War Materials, etc.) were raised to the level of high school. The Military School of Classes (for first and second sargents) held a series of lectures about commanding small units, as well as an Intensive Transmissions Course. First Sargents participated in an Intensive Course for the Formation of Second Lieutenants, held in the Military College (Mexico's West Point). This whole process culminated in 1976 with the Military University's foundation (54).

US training played a cardinal role in this process of professionalization. Between 1967-72, 195 men in uniform received training in american schools or in the Panama Canal Zone; from 1973-77, another 193 soldiers went to study (55). See Table II. Upon their return to Mexico, those who have received special training work not only in their respective fields, but — what is even more important — as teachers in different military schools. This high degree of professionalization does not remain

(53) Theme of some lectures were: « Structure of Mexico's State » « National Planning » « Administrative Reform » « Government's Program » etc., *Revista del Ejército*, Op. Cit., October 1974, p. 79.

(54) For schools created in 1976, see: *Excelsior*, 9/III/76, 19-A and 30/VI/76, 14-A. For those existing until 1975, see: Piñeyro, Op. Cit., « El Profesional... », p. 171.

(55) Ibid. Table XVI, and U.S. House of Representatives, « Foreign... », Op. Cit., p. 1300. Mexico's military package for 1978 included the training of 59 military and policemen. See: « U.S.-Mexico Military... », Op. Cit.

TABLE II
MILITARY PERSONNEL TRAINED UNDER U.S. PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION
(Fiscal Years)

| COUNTRY | 1975 | | 1976 | | 1977 | |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | in USA | Abroad | in USA | Abroad | in USA | Abroad |
| Argentina | 8 | 11 | 129 | 63 | 118 | 125 |
| Bolivia | 8 | 326 | 67 | 116 | 20 | 198 |
| Brasil | 282 | 301 | 422 | 18 | 455 | 34 |
| Chile | 32 | 536 | — | — | — | — |
| Colombia | 46 | 277 | 128 | 302 | 74 | 217 |
| Ecuador | 40 | 116 | 39 | 118 | 121 | 44 |
| El Salvador | 17 | 141 | 158 | 148 | 24 | 185 |
| Guatemala | 21 | 118 | 40 | 101 | 61 | 104 |
| Haiti | 5 | — | 39 | — | 55 | — |
| Honduras | 60 | 196 | 47 | 176 | 49 | 127 |
| MEXICO* | 31 | 28 | 18 | 14 | 80 | 2 |
| Nicaragua | 46 | 207 | 58 | 153 | 102 | 245 |
| Panamá | 4 | 352 | 5 | 195 | 9 | 193 |
| Paraguay | 50 | 51 | 51 | 61 | 59 | 104 |
| Peru | 123 | 121 | 99 | 202 | 176 | 94 |
| República Dominicana | 43 | 162 | 50 | 145 | 83 | 164 |
| Uruguay | 25 | 112 | 31 | 144 | 40 | 189 |
| Venezuela | 57 | 87 | 92 | 48 | 82 | 163 |
| Total Regional | 899 | 2,861 | 1,352 | 2,004 | 1,608 | 1,188 |
| | | 3,760 | | 3,356 | | 3,796 |

Source: United States, House of Representatives, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, 94th Congress, 2nd Session: « Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies, Appropriations for 1977 », p. 739.
The total number of Mexican trainees between 1969-1977 divided into periods is: 1969-1970: 49
1971-1974: 84
1975-1977: 173.

Source: United States, « Military Assistance and Foreign Military Sales Facts 1970-1975 ».

only at a theoretical level, as, since 1971, each military zone has held special semester exercises in order to put into practice these new teachings.

Considerable steps were also taken in the logistical aspect: from 1971 to 1974, 7150 belgian rifles and machine-guns were bought, in addition to millions of cartridges and spare parts. Other minor importations of individual armament arrived from North America. During Gen. Cuenca Díaz's administration at the SDN, purchases of equipment for the Air Force reached an all-time high ⁽⁵⁶⁾. The Air Force itself has synthesized the magnitude of these provisions ⁽⁵⁷⁾:

The number of airplanes acquired is greater than that of the last 30 years combined... In addition to these acquisitions, we must mention that existing material has been undergoing repair, which has enabled us to put into operating conditions more airplanes than any other period.

From 1975 to 1977, the American government proportioned five million dollars annually in credit for purchases; these 15 million dollars is a quantity *without precedence* in the history of US military aid to Mexico ⁽⁵⁸⁾. This constitutes a qualitative as well as quantitative increase. By taking into consideration the changes which have occurred within the Army and its recent purchasing pattern, we can suppose that these loans have been used to obtain technologically advanced equipment (computer

(56) 100 airplanes, 34 helicopters for different uses, especially those dedicated to counterinsurgency and troop transport; these came from Israel, France, England and principally from the US; we must also mention 30 airplanes which had been repaired and equipped with new motors, to be used in counterinsurgency activities. Piñeyro, pp. 178-179, Op. Cit. « El Profesional... » and International Institute for Strategic Studies. « Military Balance 1977-1978 » London: Adland & Son, Ltd., p. 71. From 1977 to 1978, 18 airplanes were bought for transport, 15 for counterinsurgency, as well as 2 helicopters, also 12 P-C7's for training are on order. See: *Ibid.* « Military Balance 1978-1979 », p. 75. Another source reveals the existence of a secret agreement with North America to obtain 26 super modern F-5 combat jets at a cost of 150 million dollars. See: « U.S.-Mexico Military... » Op. Cit., p. 40.

(57) *Revista del Ejército y la Fuerza Aérea*, Sept. 1974, Op. Cit., p. 88.

(58) For loans of 1950-1974 see: Piñeyro, « El Profesional... », Op. Cit., Table XXVII. For those of 1975-1977, see: « U.S. House of Representatives... » Op. Cit., p. 697.

systems) and heavy equipment (airplanes, helicopters) not produced in Mexico.

From 1950 to 1977, almost 900 mexican soldiers and policemen were trained by North America; military and police assistance for the same period was 70 million dollars ⁽⁵⁹⁾. It is necessary to point out that more than 50% (that is, 477 officers) of the above mentioned personnel corresponded to the decade between 1966 and 1977; official police training began in 1968 and until 1972, 67 men had been trained. Of the total quantity of military assistance provided, more than 60% was received during this same period.

The Secretary of Defense resumes in this manner those benefits given to the Armed Institute in Echeverría's administration: 1) salary increase 2) fringe benefits: housing, chain of stores SeDeNa, better medical attention and an increase in pensions 3) improvement in education and in sports facilities 4) military legislation has been brought up to date 5) rotation of commands, promotions, decorations 6) « a higher degree of social integration for military men and their families » (that is, an increasing political assimilation and a potential social absorption) 7) renovation of transportation and installations 8) creation of new units 9) and « especially, the brilliant opportunity which the Armed Forces have had to directly serve the people to which it belongs » ⁽⁶⁰⁾. The SDN leader's final touch is stupendous: professionalization and « popular » SL. In less euphemistic terms, this implied the initiation of CA-counter-guerrilla activities, localization and control of the regime's opposition, mediatization, etc. and a practical test for the constantly increasing professional knowledge.

In order to resume the militia's improvements in the past administration, it is necessary to return to Gen. García Barragán's (SDN Secretary in 1970) farewell speech. First., he indicated the lack of a War Doctrine, which he defined as « the creation, preparation and leadership of the Armed Forces »; and then he mentioned some essential points in developing such a Doctrine ⁽⁶¹⁾:

(59) « U.S.-Mexico Military... », Op. Cit., pp. 40-43.

(60) *Revista del Ejército y de la Fuerza Aérea*, Sept. 1973, pp. 43-44.

(61) *Revista del Ejército*, June 1970, italics added.

1) Organize brigades and divisions 2) increase the troops' combative capacity 3) instruct them in every possible way for large scale actions, with special emphasis on a new type, *irregular War*, indispensable aspect of every modern army 4) creation of its own network of services to assure its subsistence 5) organize the commands of large units (Brigades and Divisions) which, if there is a real intention of using them, should be formed as soon as possible, but underlining that the simple fact of organizing them was not enough, as it was first necessary to *prepare them*, since it is more economical to *prepare commands and troops* in time of peace than to improvise them in time of war.

García Barragán considered that during his administration the first four points had been developed, but that the fifth point, a very essential one, still needed to be enacted. This evaluation gives us a synthesis of the professional advances made under Pres. Díaz Ordaz (1964-70) and the key to analyzing Echeverría's administration: theoretical and practical preparation of commands, by means of the growing educational system and CA exercises, as well as with normal and emergency services. During Echeverría's administration, the Army was not only able to construct a highly prepared command network, but also able to perfect the first four points mentioned by García Barragán.

At this moment, I would like to make public an evolution in my thinking.. Socialism is a general and respectable movement in all the world which cannot be defeated. The progress of the world is in the hands of the socialists.

Words of Gen. Felipe Angeles, ex-officer in the army of Porfirio Díaz, a few moments before being executed as second in command of Francisco Villa, after being tried and convicted by the Military Tribunal of the government of President Carranza.

D. - The military professionalization: its political potentialities

Political repercussions of the Army's new professions and technical specialties, should be divided into two types: those services which it can offer to the society and to the State, and those for the militia as an institution. In Mexico's contempo-

rary history, there already exist precedents of these first (62); the most recent happened in 1976 when electrical workers of the Democratic Tendency threatened to call a national strike. The Army announced that it was willing and able to partially substitute these workers in strategic electrical centers in order to maintain the electrical system in working order. Men in uniform cannot substitute all those workers or professionals on strike, but they can exercise basic political functions in the telegraph and telephone companies, etc. or in other service areas such as those proportioned by graduates in medicine, dentistry and other new specialties of the Military University. Given a *coup d'état* of short or long duration, certain officers could carry out a series of functions in managing public or semi-public enterprises (63) or as chancellors of universities or directors of different academic departments as now happens in some latin american countries.

Considering the diversity of specialties and professions, we suppose that at present the Army does not need to recur to civilian technicians, and less and less to professionals. There even exists a plan for self-sufficiency in agricultural products by means of an expanding system of farms, installed on military lands, whose excess products will be used to help poor peasants (64). The political potentiality of these innovations should be considered on two levels: in critical moments which would not necessarily conclude in a *coup d'état*, or when the militia assumes direct political participation in the State's direction. A decade ago, this multitude of services now offered by the Armed Institute would have been inconceivable, as well as its growing autonomy with respect to civilian technicians and professionals and in general with respect to other kinds of provisioning from the civil society.

(62) For example, in 1952, military technicians substituted striking employees of Teléfonos de México; in 1958 they did the same, this time maintaining the telegraph service in operation.

(63) *Memoria*, Sept. 1973-August 1974, Op. Cit., p. 45. Interesting speech in which high level commanders recognize the wide range of services not related to strictly military questions.

(64) This began in July, 1975. Cuenca Díaz ordered the installation of a farm on each military base and beginning in February 1976, he announced plans to invest a total of 34 million pesos in this project. *Excelsior*, 29/II/76, p. 16.

To detect the Armed Forces' political participation in Latin America, foreign and national researchers have traditionally used three indicators. First of all, the Armed Forces' budget in relation to the national one, the proportion of the former expressed in terms of the gross national product, etc. This constitutes a partial criterion for Mexico, as many small and medium funds are not included in the official budget (65). Another criterion is that which refers to an increase or decrease in the Armed Forces' members, which should not be interpreted in a mechanical manner, but rather as a general indicator of an increment in: potentiality, direct participation or in the military's political presence, three distinct though interdependent levels; even so, it is necessary to point out that in the last four years, there has been a considerable numerical growth in the SDN's dependents (66). The third indicator has to do with the number of presidents or state governors of military origin. However, their presence in itself is not a trustworthy guideline, and even less so in Mexico's case.

In addition to these common indicators, we propose some extra, more specific ones. The first, related to the Army's political presence, has to do with those recent fringe benefits and salary increases enjoyed by the SDN; even though this indicator causes difficulties because of the lack of knowledge about the Armed Forces' total budget, a detailed study could throw some light on this subject. For now, its political presence is easier to localize if we take into consideration one fundamental event: the construction of the monumental Military University whose cost remains top secret, but which must have surpassed hund-

(65) Covered for example by the Treasury Department, as is the case with military pensions; this Department provides part of the funds for the recently established Armed Forces' Social Security Institute. *Excelsior*, 26/V/76, 1-A or by other small revolving funds which are used to finance internal programs. Since 1971, the SDN has received a total of almost 30 million pesos and another unspecified quantity in order to construct a rest home for elderly soldiers. «The above mentioned quantities and others which are not mentioned here... are not included in the budget of this Ministry», Cuenca Díaz concluded. *El Día*, 29/II/76, p. 17, italics added.

(66) The SDN increased its dependents from 60,000 in 1973 to 78,000 in 1977. The Navy from 8,500 in 1966 to 19,000 in 1976: «Military Balance 1977-1978» Op. Cit. This of course caused a qualitative increase in its bellicose capacity. See: *Excelsior* 2/VI/76 and 1/VIII/76. From 1966 to 1978 the Armed Forces increased from 68,000 to 97,000 members.

reds of millions of pesos: it cost more than 80 million pesos just to build the Military Medical School's new installations, situated outside of the University (67). The Military University's erection shows the growing political presence of the men in uniform; this institution is a visible result of their pressures to obtain a better social standing, greater prestige and importance within the State and the Society. It does not signify a direct political participation, but an undeniable presence, retribution for different services rendered during the last decade.

Other more specific, that is personal retributions can be considered as an indication of direct political participation. Cuenca Díaz's self-nomination as gubernatorial candidate in Baja California cannot be judged just as a daring move on the part of an old politician and member in good standing of the bureaucracy's military branch, but rather as a sign of his personal security of counting on definite support within the PRI. There are three other governors of military origin with lengthy political histories: Gen. Fernando Pámenes, governor of Zacatecas, (ex-congressman and alternate senator); Col Rogelio Flores Curiel of Nayarit (ex-senator and ex-Federal District Police Chief in 1971, fired after the June 10 student massacre) and Gen. Eliseo Jiménez Ruiz, of Oaxaca (ex-congressman, who became governor by presidential designation, due to civil disturbances which occurred in this state in 1977) who had already successfully liquidated the guerrilla in Guerrero. Another indicator which can be used to detect a direct political participation is that of the group of representatives and senators (varying in number but always present) in the National Congress and in other positions commonly held by men in uniform (68). These, together with those assigned to different jobs within the PRI, make up the liaison

(67) *Excelsior*, 3/IX/76, 9-A.

(68) Chiefs of police and prison directors; another way of approximating political participation would be to know how many men in uniform hold positions within the PRI or in the bureaucratic-administrative apparatus. In 1970, 10 military officers occupied intermediate positions: Chief of Police of the capital; General Highway Director; General Sports Director in the D.F.; Federal Security Director of the Interior Ministry; Ambassador in Ecuador, etc., Margiotta, Op. Cit., pp. 25-26.

group between the State's armed and political institutes. We suppose that similar roles are played by the high commands of the Presidential Guards' General Staff.

Conclusions.

In the consolidation and evolution of the modern Mexican State, its military branch played a basic role not only in accomplishing normal coercive functions, subjugating the social classes and/or sectors of classes which were contrary to the newborn central power, but also as a political-ideological institution which contributed greatly to the construction and support of the official one-party system. At the same time, it carried out a more ample ideological function, presenting itself to the people as a Revolutionary Army, heir to the best traditions of the Mexican Revolution.

Different fractions of the developing ruling class appealed to the Army on repeated occasions in their numerous internal controversies; however, the existence of a mechanism of checks and balances permitted both the defeat of the civil and military fractions which had preferred to solve their contradictions by violent means, and simultaneously the consolidation of the ideological-political tools of control over the working class and specially, the continuation of military professionalization, principally in its bureaucratic-organizational and ideological aspect. At the same time it made possible an increase in the State's military capacity to repress workers and peasants who fought against the official mechanisms of control.

At the same time that the superstructural institutions were being consolidated, the military branch came to occupy a secondary position in the State's direction. The bureaucracy's civil branch filled this void, without ever « forgetting to take good care » of those commanders (high salaries, other fringe benefits, etc.) who could guarantee a disciplined behavior by the Army and a constant process of professionalization. In this way a certain « status quo » was established between the State's military and political institutes. Any class or sector thereof or

political personality that threatened this new situation received in answer, depending on the specific situation, its incorporation into the system, its neutralization or a proportional dose of repression.

Gen. Henriquez Guzmán was the last prominent man in uniform to threaten the above mentioned « status quo ». The official party (PRI)-Government, the Department of Defense and all the State apparatus could not stand this challenge; these organizations let loose all the weight of their combined power against Henríquez's popular masses. After the election campaign of 1952, not only the generals but also the PRI-Government reflected on this recently « resolved » political threat. A mutually satisfactory solution was found in the consolidation of a liaison group between the State's military and political institutes by means of which the military men could channel their requests and personal political ambitions.

Also, in 1952, the form of military assistance of the United States to the Mexican Army became more clearly defined; this meant the rejection of any military aid (such as donations or loans of technical-military equipment) which was conditioned by the acceptance of bilateral treaties that could compromise the country in actions of war against other nations. However, the north american military aid (such as training and sales or credits for the purchase of equipment) has always been accepted in accordance with the necessities of the Army's professionalization.

We have shown the close relationship between growing military professionalism and the class struggle in its different manifestations, as well as this professionalism's partial dependence on U.S. military assistance, both in training and in equipment. Such training has confirmed that there exists a direct link between certain selected courses of study (as well as armament and technical equipment purchased) and the necessities which in each particular moment the popular struggles have made evident. Examples of this relationship were examined with respect to the critical periods of 1958-59, 1967-69 and 1971-75.

Presently, the logistic dependence on the United States no longer exists with respect to small arms which are now nation-

ally produced, under a Belgian patent that was bought in order to manufacture automatic rifles and machine-guns. Small war boats are also produced in Veracruz's port under another patent; there are plans under way to produce spare parts for different aircrafts purchased from foreign countries and in so doing diminish this dependence, not only on North America but also on other suppliers ⁽⁶⁹⁾.

The second level of dependence, that is the ideological-political one, is very difficult to evaluate. We cannot accept that all military personnel with U.S. training return to Mexico as unconditional agents of Imperialism. If such were the case, our Army would have begun to be denationalized as early as 1948, when President Alemán removed the soldiers of the old guard from positions of command and substituted them with those who had been educated in Mexico and had later specialized in the United States. To speak of ideological dependence only permits us to know some characteristics of Imperialism's antisubversive techniques and therefore the political objectives which some not exclusively antisubversive courses pursue. Beyond that, everything is speculation, especially with respect to the Mexican Army, where the localization of internal political tendencies is at best very difficult.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that the majority of the military zone commanders and other command personnel have received training or have made official trips to the American Union; in 1976, those promoted to other high commands, such as the Under-Secretary of the SDN, had similar backgrounds. From 1971 to 1976, hundreds of generals, intermediate and low ranking officers were discharged from the Army, to make way for more professionalized elements ⁽⁷⁰⁾. We must take into consideration that ⁽⁷¹⁾:

(69) For details about small arms production, see: *Excelsior*, 7/V/76, 30-A. For information about arms production in underdeveloped countries from 1965 to 1975: «Military Balance 1976-77», Op. Cit., p. 22. This same source has details about small war boats' production. For the planned project of producing aircraft spare parts, see: *Excelsior*, 28/VII/76, 3-A.

(70) *El Día* 29/II/76, p. 17.

(71) Kossok, Op. Cit., p. 196.

As always happens with any social scientific predication, in case of an initial differentiation within the Armed Forces, the greatest difficulty resides in making a clear distinction between those tendencies which have only a temporal, limited influence, and those which can lead to a real change based on long range, objective conditions.

In recent decades, there has appeared some evidence of nationalistic attitudes, but not of defined tendencies ⁽⁷²⁾. The Secretary of Defense (1965-70), insisted on the exclusive participation of mexican military personnel in the formation of a War Doctrine, even though he recognized that teachings received in foreign countries could help accomplish this goal. However, this same leader was a fervent anticommunist ⁽⁷³⁾, a die-hard defender of the «Mexican Revolution». This kind of bourgeois nationalism is very limited in scope and indeed, proimperialist ⁽⁷⁴⁾, because it tacitly accepts Mexico's military and economic dependence.

(72) For example: Mexico's refusal to accept a conditioned north american military grant in 1952 and the formation of and her participation in the OAS's Interamerican Peace Force in 1965. In 1972, after returning from a study trip through Baja California, students of the General Staff College reported growing foreign penetration in exploiting natural and tourist resources, which were in danger of being taken over exclusively by private citizens and U.S. enterprises. *Revista del Ejército*, January 1973, Op. Cit., p. 8. Even though this constitutes the only such instance of denunciation published in any military press (1971-76), it could be explained by Echeverría's «Third World» style or by a nationalist tendency which may be developing among the General Staff College's young officers and generals. In 1975, Mexico's Army did not accept an invitation to participate in the XI Conference of American Armies, held in Montevideo; conferences promoted and controlled by the Pentagon.

(73) The Secretary of Defense expressed that a series of lectures about the Mexican Revolution's Philosophic Doctrine, held in the General Staff College, could help its participants to realize that:

Our revolution has given us the opportunity to live in this present condition of increasing progress... and to counterrest any offensive undertaken against her by marxism-leninism and by conservative ideas...

Revista del Ejército, October 1970, p. 6.

(74) García Barragán implicitly accepted Mexico's dependent military character in a speech given before the Interamerican Defense Council, Boils, Op. Cit., p. 163. However, neither military nor public press registered any similar pronouncements during Cuenca Díaz's period.

At any rate, there exists the possibility that when high and intermediate level commanders execute tasks of coercion and those prescribed by CA programs, they can become conscious of existing social problems and of the situation of dependency which alienates natural resources and a whole series of basic industries and services. This can result in an increased social sensitivity which goes beyond the limits of bourgeois-dependent nationalism and in the adoption of patriotic-independent attitudes with respect to Imperialism and democratic ones in the internal political context.

Of course, this kind of mental transformation in many military men will not come about exclusively because of their natural repulsion towards executing repressive actions or because of a superior educational and professional level; rather, such a transformation will depend on the capacity of attraction of progressive and revolutionary forces, both in the high and intermediate hierarchies, as well as among the enlisted men. If such a « return to the barracks » could be obtained, it would constitute a significant step forward towards normalizing national civic life; the Constitution clearly establishes the Army's use only in extraordinary cases of the disappearance of legal powers in any state or if Mexico should be threatened by an armed conflict with a foreign nation.

Right now, there is taking place in Mexico an accelerated process of state monopoly capitalism⁽⁷⁵⁾, with all of its normal manifestations: increase in unemployment, concentration of wealth, etc. and in consequence a pronounced proletarianization of the peasants⁽⁷⁶⁾, a fundamental pillar of Mexico's political system. In addition, there is an expansive and combative independent trade union movement, which serves as a focal point in the constitution and strengthening of the political parties of opposition. Intimately related to all this, it is necessary to mention the constant problems within the official worker and peasant movement. In synthesis, little by little the pace is being

(75) Enrique Semo, « Capitalismo Monopolista de Estado y Coyuntura Política », in *Oposición*, No. 184 and 186.

(76) Roger Bartra, « Y si los Campesinos se extinguen... », in *Historia y Sociedad*, Second Epoch., No. 8, 1976. The same article appears also in: *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, Apr.-Jun. 1976.

stepped up in the process of dissolution of the State's mechanisms of mediation. The complement of this critical economic and political situation is a great absence of democracy.

Because of this critical political situation, there have been rumors about the possibility of a *coup d'état*. We coincide with those who affirm that, at least in the near future⁽⁷⁷⁾, this would be the last recourse of the bourgeoisie and of its State. In the long run, the only alternatives appear to be: an internal democratization or a *coup d'état*. With respect to the first possibility, because this lack of democracy has reached even the national militia, the Communist Party, in order to help foment a more democratic environment, (in addition to other necessary measures: legalization of all political parties, general political amnesty, etc.) has asked the Federal Electoral Commission for the restoration of political rights to the men in uniform, who were deprived of these rights in 1952.

The second alternative, the *coup d'état*, would have an enormous political cost, « the myth of the State of the Mexican revolution would be ruined forever », as a well-know mexican sociologist has observed; however, in the long run, this same scholar points out an intermediate solution:

The most probable alternative is that the mexican government will stubbornly insist in living on lost or every day more illusory mechanisms of mediation, on an institutional power which looks for a solution in everyone, but which gives the real exercise of political power to very few. This will also be a way to its ruin, slower and less painful than a *coup d'état*, less costly for some sectors of the bourgeoisie than a democratic solution, but at the same time it could be more dramatic, in the sense that it could take the society to those dangerous conditions of frustration which provide a good environment for the cultivation of fascism⁽⁷⁸⁾.

Certain symptoms of a possible process of democratization were present throughout 1978 (electoral registration of some opposition parties, a relative degree of respect for these political organizations' activities and a law granting partial amnesty).

(77) De la Peña, Op. Cit., p. 56.

(78) Bartra, Op. Cit., « Y si los Campesinos... », p. 83

Unfortunately, a complete normalization of public life is very long and arduous and not irreversible: this process has been offset by a selective repression of independent student, worker and peasant movements in different regions as well as by an impressive mass-media campaign financed by national and international conservative forces. The absence of democracy for more than half a century cannot be overcome with restricted changes; it is a job of a much more ample dimension.

Even so, in moments of crisis, when general social conflicts can cause destructive convulsions within the Army, it is necessary to remember the factors that can neutralize these convulsions:

The level of institutionalization and of professionalism and even more specifically the « *esprit de corps* », the cast sentiment, the political assimilation and the potential social absorption (which, by means of an *educational policy* can reach even the basically peasant elements of the Army) on one hand, and the intensity with which the more general socio-political relations become polarized, on the other, have shown to be the most decisive corrective factors ⁽⁷⁹⁾.

The Mexican Army does not have a cast sentiment as a generic characteristic, even if a cast or élite does exist. Such a sentiment will grow if there is a greater differentiation between the Army and the population in general, stimulated by means of greater fringe benefits (which lead to more political assimilation and to a potential social absorption which in Pres. Echeverría's government (1971-76) increased notably, as well as the educational process' intensification). All of this will signify a greater direct or indirect political participation in public matters, reflected in the acquisition of more prestige among petty bourgeoisie and bourgeois families, as now happens in other nations in Latin America.

From another point of view, we cannot forget that, in contrast with the majority of Latin America's armies, the Mexican is the product of a revolution; many of its commanders, even in the highest ranks, are of urban or rural proletarian origin,

(79) Kossok, Op. Cit., p. 201.

a special characteristic which must be taken into consideration and is certainly worthy of future study. It should be enough to think in the differences in social composition in the military « *intelligentsia* » in Perú and México, for example.

Even though we cannot presently ascertain the real weight of this characteristic within the militia, an undeniable reality lies in the fact that President López Portillo (1977-84) has under his command an Army with a well formulated War Doctrine, highly professionalized for its principal mission of coercion and internal vigilance; but at the same time, with a superior political potenciality and social sensitivity, with a horizon different from that of the traditional « *gorilla* ». Now we have the « *professionalized gorilla* », or why not? the new military man, conscious that repression will not solve the working class's political and economic problems, nor will a complacent attitude with respect to Imperialism and its servile allies help fortify our national independence.

In the corridors of the military schools we may be able to encounter some nationalists, along the lines of a « *Velasco Alvarado* » or some men in uniform even more atune to the times, the « *Felipe Angeles* ».

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SUMMARY

The article's central objective consists, first, in making a panoramic presentation of the Army as a cardinal organization in the conformation of Mexico's modern State and as a backup institution of the official party, which in turn occupies a great portion of the civil society; secondly, a detailed projection of certain profound professional changes which have occurred in the Army in answer to different forms of the class struggle and as a necessity of making it into a highly organized and cohesive organization of violence within the State is discussed. Simultaneously this paper reveals the importance which U.S. military assistance has played in these changes, as a source of organizational techniques as well as of training and technical-military equipment. It underlines a specific interaction among: class struggle-military professionalization-military aid of Imperialism.