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Mining wars: Corporate expansion and labor violence in the Western desert, 1876-1920

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MINING WARS: CORPORATE EXPANSION
AND LABOR VIOLENCE IN
THE WESTERN DESERT,
1876-1920

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation analyzes the class struggle in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Mexico and the western United States to illuminate the social transformation taking place in this trans-national region. The US and Mexico both underwent a significant metamorphosis in this era. The creation of a labor based working class and the displacement of occupational professionals from the upper class in many communities into an emerging middle class disrupted traditional social structures in both nations. This systematic social change, occurring nearly simultaneously in the US and Mexico, was complicated by the emerging system of monopoly capitalism, which led to a new form of trans-national ideological, political, and economic struggle between social classes.

While the emergence of monopoly capitalism brought social transformation, it also resulted in new political challenges as conservatives, moderates, and radicals in the middle- and upper-classes struggled for political and economic control in both nations. In the US, social struggles led to the Populist movement, Progressivism, and increased radicalization of labor unions such as the International Workers of the World and the Western Federation of Miners, while at the same time, labor unions, clerical groups, Indian farmers, moderate landowners, and anarchists, fought in Mexico against Porfirio Díaz and foreign corporations.

The transformation of Mexican capitalism began as early as 1857 with the creation of its Liberal Constitution. Under this constitution the Liberals in Mexico privatized communal and church lands, through laws such as the Ley Lerdo, strengthening their economic and political control across Mexico. The economic restructuring of Mexico during the Díaz administration, however, increased this redistribution of power, displacing the wealthy landowners and increasing the influence of foreign investors, primarily from the United States.

The end of the nineteenth century was a time of great change for the United States as well. Essentially independent of each other for most of the nineteenth century, the eastern and western United States began to merge politically, economically, and socially in the Progressive Era. Greatly fueled by investments from the eastern US, corporate mines, ranches, and farms spread through the West with growing railroad and telegraph companies connecting America's many island communities. Traditional community leaders were

displaced as the national economy grew more interconnected and industrial leaders grew more powerful both nationally and internationally.

To better understand the social changes in the US and Mexico as industry giants dominated these nations at the turn of the nineteenth century, this trans-national analysis of labor struggles from 1876-1920 will examine the social struggles within these industrializing nations. Though these regions are often treated separately by scholars, the similarities of the struggles that took place in both of them indicates a common and connected series of social transformations. This trans-national emphasis highlights the shortcomings of the traditional regional and national models that have marked scholarship on the American West and Mexico.

Several archives in the US and Mexico contain extensive collections pertinent to this study. The Congressional papers of Simon Guggenheim are housed in the Colorado Historical Society and the Simon Guggenheim Foundation in New York maintains the papers from his non-senatorial career; additional papers are also archived at the University of Colorado at Boulder and Temple University libraries. The Denver Public Library's extensive mining archive for the US West also contains information on the Guggenheim Mining companies, mining in northern Mexico, and Mexican mining labor in the US West. The Western Federation of Mining archives housed at the University of Colorado, Boulder, contains extensive documentation of labor struggles throughout the US West as well as materials on Mexican labor leaders and laborers. Numerous newspaper sources for Colorado and other mining communities in the US West are available at the Denver Public Library, and newspapers from Mexican mining

communities are held at the National Archive in Mexico City. The National Archive of Mexico also houses official government documents for Mexican mining operations. The Colorado State Archives maintains the papers of Davis H. Waite and John Shafroth, two progressive Governors of Colorado. The papers of the many Mexican reformers in the 1900-1910 period, including Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama, Ricardo Flores Magón, Francisco (Pancho) Villa, and Francisco Madero are housed in the Mexican National Archive and other state archives and libraries in Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, and Chihuahua.

As the first truly trans-national study of the labor wars that erupted in the US and Mexico from 1876-1920 this dissertation draws on a wide range of more readily available secondary literature on mining labor and labor violence in the US West and Mexico. This secondary literature, while voluminous, has, for the most part, occupied separate streams, primarily divided by the international border artificially drawn through the western desert. The aim of “Mining Wars” is to bring these stories together, to show how they illuminate one another and in doing so provide a larger narrative of the relationships between business and labor in a larger region of the American continent that cuts across the international borderline. The early twenty-first century, as US-Mexican border issues – including strict enforcement of the US law through increased border patrols and Congressional debates over the status of the up to twelve million Mexicans currently residing in the US without official papers (sans papiers)--is an opportune time to remind ourselves of the vital interconnectedness of the two nationally separate parts of this border region.

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CHAPTER 1

CONSTRUCTING A COMPARATIVE CONTEXT: HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

This dissertation compares the economic and social changes occurring simultaneously in the US West and Mexico in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, highlighting the trans-national impact on a region traditionally divided by most historians. Analysis of the Guggenheim mining operations sheds light on the transnational context of the many social and economic changes occurring in both the US and Mexico resulting from an increased reliance on large businesses and international markets. Large corporations, like the Guggenheims' American Smelting and Refining Company, brought capital and machinery, hoping to decrease production costs and increase production levels and profits in the US West and Mexico. By focusing on the Guggenheim mining operations, this study examines similarities within a broader Pan-American mining labor system in a period of industrialization and modernization spanning from 1876-1920.¹

¹ Key secondary sources that explore the Guggenheim operations are John H. Davis *The Guggenheims: An American Epic* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1978); Edwin P. Hoyt Jr., *The Guggenheims and the American Dream* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls 1967); Isaac F. Marcossou, *Metal Magic: The Story of the American Smelting and Refining Company* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1949); Jesús Gómez Serrano, *Aguascalientes: Imperio de los Guggenhiem*. (México: D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1982); Horace Marucci, "The American Smelting and Refining Company in Mexico, 1900-1925" Dissertation submitted to Rutgers University, May 1995, 402-3.

As the first truly trans-national study of the labor wars that erupted in the US and Mexico from 1876-1920 this dissertation draws on a wide range of more readily available secondary literature on mining labor and labor violence in the US West and Mexico. This secondary literature, while voluminous, has, for the most part, occupied separate streams, primarily divided by the international border artificially drawn through the western desert. The aim of “Mining Wars” is to bring these stories together, to show how they illuminate one another and in doing so provide a larger narrative of the relationships between business and labor in a larger region of the American continent that cuts across the international borderline.

The US and Mexico both underwent a significant transformation in this era. The creation of a labor based working class and the displacement of occupational professionals from the upper class to an emerging middle class disrupted traditional social structures in both nations. This social transformation, occurring nearly simultaneously in the US and Mexico, was complicated by the emerging system of monopoly capitalism, which led to a new form of trans-national ideological, political, and economic struggle between social classes.²

² The social organization of Mexico during the presidential terms of Juárez and Díaz is commonly simplified as 900 hacendados in control of approximately 9 million peons. While this structure is in a general sense true, the reality of politics, economics, and class are much more complicated. While it is true that most Mexican property was consolidated into the hands of a small elite group of approximately 900 hacendados, these men did not rule their lands single handed. The Hacendados had a great amount of political influence to appoint or nominate political and municipal officials throughout the territories surrounding their land holdings. Mayors, judges, police, and military leaders were commonly loyal to the local Hacendados.

With the rise of Díaz to power in 1876 and the increased rate of foreign investment throughout Mexico, many Hacendados initially took advantage of the large amounts of money available from the investors from the US, Great Britain, and other nations from around the world. Increasingly the US became the largest single investor in Mexico with large corporations increasingly completing for regional political power in their efforts to increase profits. US business leaders like the Guggenheims, Rockefellers, and Doheney won political favors and often had enough influence in a region to demand legal reforms and/or provide enough political and economic support to ensure loyal political candidates won elections to local and regional offices.

The social transformation in the US and Mexico occurred predominantly on two levels: 1) displacement of local elites into a national middle-class, and 2) the creation of a wage-labor working class. While the emerging middle-class merchants, professionals, and land owners fought against social and economic changes politically, less affluent wage workers in the US and Mexico often resorted to violent strikes because of their limited political voice. Each of these displaced groups generally struggled on their own, however, they did unite against monopoly capitalists for a short time, resulting in the Populist and Progressive movements in the US and the Revolution in Mexico.³

As the West developed and matured socially and economically, labor disputes in Mexico and the western US became virtually indistinguishable. The region as a whole struggled for worker rights and fair wages, with similar strategy shifts throughout the 1880s. In times of economic hardship workers fought on the defensive, reacting to employer initiated cuts, to maintain wages and benefits in depression and recession, whereas in prosperous periods workers often used strikes in an offensive strategy, calling for increased wages, more benefits, and improve standards of living.⁴ This cyclical shift is evident in the years from 1876-1920s; in the relatively prosperous years of 1886-1892 labor strikes for the eight-hour day and wage increases by labor organizations were fought from an offensive position. However, defensive strikes against the reduction of

The growth of large US corporations disrupted the traditional political structure, displacing many educated Mexicans who had traditionally held power in State and municipal governments, replacing these leaders with a new group of business minded professionals focused on supporting the large scale industrial operations developing across Mexico, for the benefit on US business, but more importantly for the future economic benefit of Mexico.

³ Freiderich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

⁴ Alvin H. Hansen, "Cycles of Strikes", *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 11, Issue 4 (December 1921): 618.

wages were nearly twice as great in the depression years of 1893-1897. The return to offensive strikes began again in 1896, increasing in 1897, with battles to regain wages and benefits lost during the depression as mine profits improved.

Mining strikes in the US and Mexico from 1876-1920 followed this model; however, acts of violence between employers and striking unions occurred during both offensive and defensive strikes. Overall, miners on both sides of the border remained careful to negotiate with employers to improve work conditions; however, in mining towns with minimal government oversight, or company towns where the corporation acted as the government, miners found that their only recourse was to react with violence. Miners often resorted to destructive acts and open warfare in those places where and at those times when they could not depend on a non-partisan government to mediate the dispute. In many company towns, mine owners controlled a feudal empire and the labor battles were fought to regain their social, political, and economic freedoms.

This project analyzes the effect of monopoly capitalism on the social transformation in Mexico and the US West. Chapter Two examines Porfirio Díaz's rise to power in 1876 and the subsequent transformation of Mexico's economy and the nation's reliance on foreign investors for development at the same time that the US government supported extensive capitalist expansion in the West. Chapter Three compares and evaluates the political and economic consequences of US corporate investment in the West leading to Populist and Progressive reaction, with the middle- and upper-class political movements opposing the Porfiriato in Mexico as a new wage-labor working class emerged. Chapter Four evaluates early labor struggles in the western US and Mexican mining regions illuminating the similarities in battles fought on both sides

of the international border against a common corporate enemy. Chapter Five explores the development of regional and national union in the US and Mexico in response to increased government support of big business interests. Chapter Six describes the rise of labor war generals on both sides of the border, to include moderates like Samuel Gompers and Francisco Madero, as well as radical leaders like William Haywood and Ricardo Flores Magón. Chapter Seven focuses on the period of the Mexican Revolution, differentiating between the general revolutionary movement and the labor war that continued to be fought on both sides of the international border. Chapter Eight concludes with the apparent middle-class victories over big-business before the Great War and the disappointing results for the working class in Mexico and the US West in the aftermath of the World War I.

The West was quickly conquered by many industrious US migrants dominating the mining, railroad, and ranching industries throughout the region. In most cases these industries took advantage of the local Mexican populations as well as the great influx of newly arrived immigrants from Mexico, Asia, and Eastern Europe as cheap labor. Interestingly, while US industrialists dominated the railroad and mining industries north of the US-Mexico border, many of these same businessmen invested heavily in the same industries south of the border, quickly dominating railroad and mining industries in Mexico. While Western historians have documented and analyzed the multicultural aspects of industrial development in the US West, there has been less discussion of simultaneous industrial development and economic domination in Mexico and nearly no studies analyzing these events in the trans-national context.

The US-Mexico War in 1848 was a key transitional moment for the US West, since prior to this time the bulk of the region did not belong to the US at all, but to Mexico. Richard White asks the question, “When did the West begin?” in his influential textbook *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own* (1991), and answers,

We could date the West's beginnings from the moment particular sections of it became part of the United States. For all its logical consistency, however, this definition ignores everybody who was living in the places that would become the West until the moment that the territory actually became American.⁵

White acknowledges the need to understand what happened in the US West prior to 1848, though his study accepts the line drawn in 1848 as a definitive event in the establishment of the US West. White carefully discusses the convergence of different people forced together on the northern side of the border as a result of the Mexican territorial cession. However, did the change in ownership after the US-Mexican War in fact create an immediate historical change or should Patricia Limerick's emphasis on historical continuity be applied to this transitional period as well? When looking at the core arid-West region of the US (Colorado, Nevada, California, Utah, Arizona, Idaho, West Texas, and New Mexico) in conjunction with the connecting territories of Mexico (Chihuahua, Sonora, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Durango, Zacatecas, Nueva Leon, and San Luis Potosí) we see many historical similarities prior to and after 1848.⁶

Why should the post-1848 border regions of Mexico be included when discussing the US West and how would they fit into the current historical paradigm? Patricia Limerick developed a list of characteristics to better define the concept of “westernness”

⁵ Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 4.

⁶ Patricia Limerick, *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 18-22.

as applied by scholars of the US West. However, these same characteristics, when applied to Mexico's northern frontier, result in remarkable conclusions, highlighting the integrated nature of the larger western mining region stretching from South Idaho to San Luis Potosí. Common characteristics include: 1) a region prone to aridity or semi-aridity; 2) a region historically inhabited by indigenous Indians who have vanished, often to reservations; 3) the border between the US and Mexico influences regional history; 4) the region was, and is, an entry point for Asian immigration; 5) The bulk of regional land remains under government control; 6) the region has been greatly influenced by US power and conquest; 7) The regional economy remained tied to extractive industries, resulting in greater risks associated with boom/bust economic cycles; and 8) The region has been mythologized as a place of escape for the working poor where they could find economic success.⁷

The political partition of the Mexican northern frontier in 1848 created what seems at first glance a historical reference point for Western historians to embark on the story of the West. However, upon closer examination this region remained connected for many years after 1848 despite the emergence of an international boundary, and remains connected to this day as illegal immigrants continue to flood across the US-Mexico border searching for opportunity and security in the US West, while American corporations grew to dominate industries in Mexico seeking abundant low cost labor and abundant natural resources.⁸ The larger trans-national region, composed of the core arid-

⁷ Ibid., 23-26. Adapted from Patricia Limerick's list of Western characteristics in *Something in the Soil*

⁸ There are several recent books that begin to bridge the gap in understanding the inter-connected relationship between the US West and Northern Mexico: Richard White's influential textbook *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*; William Robbins, *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1994); Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1880-1930* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Roberto Calderon, *Mexican Coal Mining Labor in Texas and Coahuila, 1880-*

West region of the US (Colorado, Nevada, California, Utah, Arizona, Idaho, West Texas, and New Mexico) and the desert mountain territories of Mexico (Chihuahua, Sonora, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Durango, Zacatecas, Nueva Leon, and San Luis Potosí) when combined represent a larger homogenous region of North America, referred to in this study as the Great Western Desert.

This transnational examination of the continuity of the region split by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 (and by the Gadsden Purchase of 1852) focuses on three changes occurring simultaneously in the US and Mexico: first, the economic and political challenges faced by the national and state governments and large industrial corporations in the US and Mexico; second,⁹ the middle-class/bourgeoisie challenges to the transitioning economic and political environment as large corporations replaced most independent businessmen in both nations; and third, the often violent struggles of the working class miners as they fought to regain control of the value of their labor on both sides of the US-Mexico border.⁹

From the earliest period of human habitation in the Great Western Desert of North America, the region has been defined by its environmental borders rather than its political borders. Framed by the Sierra Madre Mountains in the south, the Rocky Mountains in the east, the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the west, and the Cascade Mountain ranges in the north, the Great Western Desert has remained a region where people struggle for

1930 (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000). These books illustrate the impact that Mexican-American citizens and illegal Mexican immigrants have had in the US West, however Robbins only mentions the counter influences of American economic and cultural influences in Mexico, though the book does not provide much detail on that topic. While Calderon's study explores the permeability of the US-Mexican border in its descriptions of both US and Mexican companies operating mines in both Mexico and Texas, the majority of his book is focused on Texas mining. While all four of these works explore the relationship between the US and Mexico in the West, they each remain primarily one sided, focused largely on either the US or Mexico.

⁹ Robert Holden, *Mexico and the Survey of Public Lands* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994).

survival against nature, competing for access to water and herd animals with neighboring societies throughout this harsh desert region. Over the course of several thousand years a complex multi-cultural society developed, connecting agricultural communities, nomadic communities, and raiding tribes, together in an elaborate symbiotic network of survival.

By the 1500s, Spanish and Anglo immigrants challenged the environmental borders of the desert region and its multi-cultural web of interdependence in their attempt to conquer the region. These early invaders quickly found themselves restrained by the same harsh desert environment that limited earlier Indian tribes from conquering the entire region. In effect, the early Spanish, and later Anglo invaders, struggled for survival through a complex strategy of cooperation and conflict with existing Indian communities, weaving themselves into the intricate social balance of the western desert. The desert continued to define the region and its boundaries.

As the Spanish continued to press northward, they became increasingly entangled in the culturally interdependent space of the Great Western Desert. Apache Indians reacted violently, raiding Spanish settlements as they continued to grow in the north and spread into New Mexico in the 1590s. Colonial conflict between New Spain and Spain erupted in the early 1800, resulting in a full scale revolutionary war in 1820, with Mexico declaring its independence in 1821.¹⁰

During the Mexican War of Independence the government borrowed heavily from European nations to finance its armies through the war. At the end of the war the nation was left with very little savings and no internal credit. A majority of the silver mines throughout the nation had been flooded and the machinery destroyed or neglected,

¹⁰ Pekka Hämmäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

including the Valencia mine in Guanajuato, which had been the world's leading silver producer. In an effort to strengthen the Mexican economy and rebuild Mexico silver mines, the government of Agustin Iturbide initiated the 1823 Mexican Mining law which provided for direct ownership of mining property for Mexicans and encouraged foreign companies to lease these mining properties.¹¹

Mexico profited from increased foreign investment in mining in several ways: requiring annual lease payments (*alimentos*) to the property owner, labor expenses, mandatory smelting and minting fees, and export taxes, making mining an expensive business venture, yet profitable enough to entice investors. By 1823, alimento payments were made on 256 mines ranging from 3,000 pesos to 50,000 pesos paid by the Bolaños Company for use of the mine of the same name. Of these 256 properties only 64 were in operation in 1823 managed primarily by British investors.¹²

British companies invested nearly 10 million pesos in Mexican mining operations in the 1820s, with over 75% of all investments concentrated in Real del Monte, Bolaños, and Zacatecas, with Zacatecas receiving 2.4 million pesos, and Bolaños receiving nearly 5 million pesos.¹³ By the end of 1827 the Bolaños Company was nearing insolvency, producing nearly no gold or silver ore in its Mexican properties. In January 1828, with mining ceased at most of its mining sites, the operations at its Gallega mine struck a rich

¹¹ Charles Dashworth to George Canning, Jalapa 27 July 1827, British Foreign Office Reports, Section 50 Vol 39 file 33, Microfilm collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

¹² "Charles Dashworth to George Canning, Jalapa, 27 July 1827" Great Britain Public Records Office Consular Dispatches from Mexico Volume 39, file33 Microfilm collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

¹³ Calculated from: Bolaños Mining Company Reports II, 1826-1845. Typed transcription on microfilm in two volumes. Microfilm collection, Bancroft Library, University of California; Bolaños Mining Company Reports I, 1826-1845, p.76; Great Britain. Public Records Office. Consular Dispatches from Mexico. Volume 39, file33. "Charles Dashworth to George Canning, Jalapa, 27 July 1827"; and Great Britain. Public Records Office. Consular Dispatches from Mexico. Volume32, file 176. "Report on Mexican Mining by H.G. Ward, London, 30 December 1827".

vein of silver that turning the Bolaños Company into the most profitable silver company in Mexico. In the four quarters of 1828, the Gallega mine produced 194 tons, 593 tons, 3,114 tons, and 3,680 tons of silver ore.¹⁴

With the success of the Gallega Mine the Bolaños Company was able to expand operations at other mines that had proven less profitable, finding even greater deposits at Vetagrande and other mines. From 1829 until 1836 the Gallega mine produced over 2.2 million pesos and the Vetagrande mine produced 2.4 million pesos annually, accounting for nearly half of the national silver production.¹⁵ While the Bolaños Company was achieving high profits from its Mexican mines, it was the Mexican government that was making the majority of the money. In addition to the company's tax burden to the state the Bolaños Company was required to pay the 10,000 peso annual lease, the *alimento*, to the Fagoafa family in addition to a onetime payment of 170,000 pesos and 50% of all profits after taxes.¹⁶ With the success of British foreign investment during the 1820s the Mexican government also opened its frontier region to the settlers from the United States in an attempt to increase the populations of the northern Mexican state of Texas.

British mining ventures continued to increase throughout the 1820s, however, due to the tight profit margin and high start-up cost associated with conducting mining operations in Mexico, most British investors left Mexico by 1830. While the Bolaños Company continued to profit in the early 1830s, its profit margins continued to decline year after year until the company discontinued its dividend payments to investors in

¹⁴ Archivo del Gobierno del Estado de Zacatecas, Legajo 932 (1856), Ministerios de Relaciones, Decreto, Ignacio Comonfort, Mexico, 1 February 1856. Palacio del Gobierno, Zacatecas, Zacatecas MX.

¹⁵ Archivo del Gobierno del Estado de Zacatecas, Legajo suelto (1853), Ministerio de Formento, Ley para el arreglo de los negocios de minería, Mexico, 29 May 1854.

¹⁶ Bolaños Mining Company Reports II, 1826-1845. Microfilm collection, Bancroft Library, University of California; Bolaños Mining Company Reports I, 1826-1845.

1836. In 1829, the Bolaños Mine was the most profitable mine in the nation, employing 1,560 employees who received 573,733 pesos in direct salaries and wages with another 265,000 pesos spent on daily contract laborers.¹⁷ Additionally the mine spent another 420,000 pesos on local material, animals, and feed to run the mine. While these operating costs were high, the profits from the mining operations easily covered these expenses, however, after the alimentos and other payments were made to the Fagoafa family, total profits for the company averaged around 7% in 1829 and decreased to as low as 2% in 1835.¹⁸ The Bolaños mine was the most profitable mine in the nation, there is no doubt that most other mines made considerably less and often failed to produce a profit. In light of the decreasing interest in mining by the British, the Mexican governments also lost interest in mining as the easy money began to disappear.

The state government of Zacatecas, however, couldn't give up on mining since the Gallega mine was the primary employer for the state. Under the governorship of Francisco Garcia Salinas, the Zacatecan Congress passed the 1833 property law allowing foreigners to purchase, trade, acquire, and most importantly, claim property in the state.¹⁹ Garcia worked as an engineer in the Bolaños mine and was sent to represent the state of Zacatecas in the Constitutional convention in 1822-1823.²⁰

The trans-national mining desert underwent a remarkable transformation in the period from 1800-1872. The western desert witnessed a war between the US and Mexico for control of this territory from 1846-1848, the migration of thousands of US citizens

¹⁷ Archivo del Gobierno del Estado de Zacatecas, Legajo 200 (1829), Estadística, Censo general, Vetagrande, 31 December 1829, Palacio del Gobierno, Zacatecas, MX.

¹⁸ Bolaños Mining Company Reports I, (1826-1845), Microfilm collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, 165.

¹⁹ Archivo del Gobierno del Estado de Zacatecas, Legajo 932 (1856), Ministerios de Relaciones, Decreto, Ignacio Comonfort, Mexico, 1 February 1856. Palacio del Gobierno, Zacatecas, MX.

²⁰ Jaime E. Rodríguez, *The Divine Charter: Constitutionalism and Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Mexico* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 269.

into the gold rich mountain regions from 1849-1860, national struggle and civil war in both Mexico and the United States from 1860-1865, and a period of national reconstruction from 1865-1872 on both sides of the newly established international border. The Great Western Desert is a central theme in each of the dramas experienced by the US and Mexico from 1846-1872, resulting from national level arguments and decisions in Mexico City and Washington DC over the political control of the region.²¹

Mexico's northern territory remained relatively isolated from the chaos consuming Mexican politics during the early years of independence. This northern frontier remained a disputed territory between small Spanish mining settlements and Apache and Comanche Indian groups, complicated further by the arrival of settlers from the United States. By the late 1820s the Mexican government faced new threats to the north in Coahuila y Texas as Anglo immigration increased as the United States expanded westward.²²

Texas remained a distant province of Mexico, administered by Coahuila, though the population of Texas was overwhelmingly comprised of Anglo immigrants from the United States. Continually frustrated by high tariffs and unrealistic demands from Mexico City, including the emancipation decree and restrictive immigration laws, the Mexican elite in Texas formed an alliance with the Anglo populations and declared independence from Mexico in 1835.²³ Mexico suffered an embarrassing defeat in 1836, losing Texas.

²¹ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984); Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963).

²² Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*.

²³ Hubert Bancroft, *History of the North Mexican States and Texas* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1886).

As the Anglo population continued to increase in Texas, arguments increased between the residents and the distant government in Mexico City resulting in a call for Texas independence and the Texas Revolution in 1836.²⁴ Concerned over the expansionist desire of the United States, Mexico jealously clung on to its northern frontier and refused to officially recognize Texas independence. The United States, eager to obtain western territory continued to put pressure on the Mexican government to sell New Mexico and California from 1836-1845. In 1845 Texas agreed to annexation into the United States and the Mexican government was again forced to deal not only with the Texas issue, but the expansionist policies of the US.²⁵

The situation in Northern Mexico continued to deteriorate with antigovernment violence in New Mexico and Sonora erupting in 1837 as residents demanded a return to a federal system. Upper California, long autonomous of distant Mexico City, declared provisional independence in 1837, pending restoration of the Constitution of 1824. Increased immigration from the United States also complicated the situation in the north as settlers moved toward California in the early 1840s along the California Trail, through present-day Utah and Nevada. The US presidential election of 1844 also spelled disaster

²⁴ *The Mercury*, "From the *New Orleans Bee* Glorious News from Texas" 27 January 1836; *The Mercury*, "Further from Texas from the *New Orleans Bee* March 16th 31 March 1836; *The Floridian*, "Texas" 28 May 1836; For more information on Texas Independence: Bancroft, *History of the North Mexican States and Texas*; William Binkley, *The Expansionist Movement in Texas, 1836-1850* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1925); Donald Chipman, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992); Henry Foote, *Texas and Texans; or Advance of the Anglo-Americans to the South-West* (Philadelphia: Thomas Copperthwait, 1841); William Hogan, *The Texas Republic: a Social and Economic History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969); Mark Nackman, *A Nation within a Nation: the Rise of Texas Nationalism*, (Port Washington NY: Kennecott Press, 1975); Joseph Nance, *Attack and Counterattack: The Texas-Mexican Frontier, 1842*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964); David Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Annexation: Texas, Oregon, and the Mexican* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1973); Rupert Richardson, *Texas: The Lone Star State* 9th ed. (Upper Saddle River New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2005); Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the US-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the US-Mexico Borderlands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

²⁵ *The Boston Daily Atlas*, "State Legislature; State House; State Legislature" 1 January 1845.

for Mexico as the expansionist James K. Polk entered the White House. The annexation of Texas in 1845 was seen as the first step in acquiring all of Mexico's northern territories, described by Stephen Austin as a rich region squandered and neglected by the Mexican government. War between Mexico and the United States over control of the greater west seemed inevitable.

Since independence, Texas had claimed the Rio Grande as its southern border, however Mexico maintained that the Nueces River remained the border between Texas and Coahuila as it had been since 1824. The United States annexation accepted the larger Texas claim creating even greater strains on its relationship with Mexico. Mexico quickly broke diplomatic ties with the United States, recalling its ambassador, in reaction to the annexation of Mexican territory. Mexico moved military forces into Coahuila to protect its territory from the Rio Grande to the Nueces River, and President James K. Polk mobilized General Zachary Taylor's forces to defend Texas and its southern territory from Mexican aggression. War broke out officially when President Polk rallied Congress after receiving reports of American casualties in skirmishes along the Rio Grande.²⁶

President Polk, insistent upon negotiating a peace with Mexico that included the sale of the New Mexico and California territories, continued to pressure Mexico diplomatically and militarily. Mexico refused to negotiate with the US, enraging Polk who blockaded and occupied Mexican port towns and sent General Stephen Watts Kearney to occupy New Mexico and California.²⁷ As Zachary Taylor led the US military

²⁶ *Morning News*, New London Connecticut, "Quite an Army" 19 March 1845.

²⁷ William Hemsley Emory, *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance, From Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California, Including part of the Arkansas, Del Norte, and Gila Rivers. 1846-1847*

through El Paso to Chihuahua and Parras their superior artillery enabled the outnumbered US Army to claim victory in every battle. Mexico's continued diplomatic silence pushed Polk to send Major General Winfield Scott to lead the first major amphibious assault force down the gulf coast of Mexico to invade through Veracruz.

Facing Santa Anna's makeshift defense forces, Winfield Scott's 10,000-man army took Veracruz and marched toward Mexico City defeating Santa Anna at Cerro Gordo, Contreras, Churubusco, El Molina del Rey, and Chapultepec, Mexico City fell on September 14, 1847.²⁸ At the conclusion of the US-Mexican War of 1846-1848, Mexico found herself under military occupation by the victorious army of the United States. Mexico agreed to release its claims on the majority of its northern frontier territory in exchange for \$15 million and signed the peace treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in February 1848 to end the war. This treaty, in effect, reduced Mexico's territory by half and accomplished the primary goal of Manifest Destiny in the United States: controlling the territory stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific.²⁹

While the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo inalterably changed legal ownership of the territories stretching from Texas to California and Colorado to Arizona from Mexico to the United States, it did not end the interconnected nature of the former Mexican frontier. In many ways, the line of the treaty created an artificial barrier separating the

(Washington DC: Wendell and Van Benthuysen, Printers 1848) (US 30th Congress 1st session, H.R. Ex Doc no 41).

²⁸ *New-Hampshire Sentinel*, "Approach to the City of Mexico" 13 January 1847; *The Sun*, Baltimore, "Important from Mexico-Position and Strength of Santa Anna-Citizens of Vera Cruz Against the War" 20 January 1847.

²⁹ Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits, and Settlement Between the U.S. and the Mexican Republic, US Congress 30th Congress, 1st Session, 23 February 1848, LexisNexis Executive Documents and Reports, DOC-NO: Exec.Doc.7, 30-1, February 23, 1848; For more information on the US-Mexican War see DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*; Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes*; Paul Foos, *A Short offhand Killing Affair: Soldiers and Social Conflict during the Mexican-American War* (Chapel Hills: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); George Wilkins Kendall. *Dispatches from the Mexican War* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); J. Frost. *The Mexican War and its Warriors: Comprising a complete history of all the operations of the American Armies in Mexico* (Philadelphia: H. Mansfield, 1850).

mineral rich regions of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Monterrey, Durango, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado into two spheres, with political control split between the US and Mexico. While this artificial border divided the western frontier between the two nations, the line of demarcation was largely ignored by eager entrepreneurs and poor laborers in the US and Mexico, as they crossed the border both north and south in pursuit of the vast mineral wealth, with little regard for the new international borderline.



Territory Ceded by Mexico under the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and the 1853 Gadsden Purchase

Map from the Government Accountability Office website.

<http://www.gao.gov/guadalupe/bckgrd.htm>

Even before the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was ratified gold had been discovered in California. Newspaper reports as early as January 2, 1848 spread the news of the riches near the Pacific. Gold fever fueled the largest migration up to that point in American history, with 80,000 hopeful miners panning the streams of California in 1849, swelling to over 300,000 by 1854. The 14,000 Mexican residents of northern California quickly became the minority population as “foreigners” from around the world flooded the region. In 1850 US Anglos comprised about 68% of the population as miners from Australia, England, France, Russia, China, Japan, Hawaii, and other countries searched for gold. The US government opened the San Francisco Assay house and Mint in 1854 to reduce to threats of robberies as ore was shipped through the desert for refining and minting and ensure that the US government received its taxes on all claims, just as Mexico had done forty years earlier.³⁰

The rapid expansion of the Anglo population in the newly conquered western desert raised questions over the structure of new state governments and renewed contention over the issue of slavery in the new territories almost immediately. The movement toward preserving the West as free-states began immediately when California created its free-state government in 1849, without consulting Congress and New Mexico adopted its free-state constitution in 1850.³¹ The Mormons, who were driven out of Missouri in 1846, in part because of their objections to slavery, drafted their claim to

³⁰ U.S. Treasury website; <http://www.ustreas.gov/education/factsheet.shtml>

³¹ William McKendree Gwin, “Memorial of the Senators and Representatives elect from California, requesting, in the name of the people of that state, the admission of California into the Union; accompanied by a certified copy of the constitution adopted by the people of California, and the credentials of the Senators elect from that state” 31st Congress, 1st Session, LexisNexis, 563 S. misc doc. 68, 12 March 1850; Millard Fillmore, “Message from the President of the United States, transmitting a copy of the constitution adopted by the inhabitants of New Mexico, together with a digest of the votes for and against it; also, a letter to the late President of the United States” 31st Congress, 1st Session, LexisNexis, 562 S.exdoc.74, 9 September 1850.

western territory with the desire to form the state of Deseret, encompassing nearly all of the Mexican territory cession, including coastal territory from Los Angeles to San Diego. While President Zachary Taylor endorsed immediate statehood for California as a free-state, Congress disagreed.

The 1846-1848 war between the United States and Mexico resulted in military conquest of the desert regions of the West by the United States, though life for the majority of the desert inhabitants remained unchanged. While discoveries of gold and silver encouraged thousands of immigrants to try their luck in places like California, Colorado, and Nevada, internal struggles in Mexico, including a French invasion that placed a foreign monarch at the head of the state, and civil war the United States minimized the pace of change in the region until after the 1860s.³²

During this period western mining became increasingly important for both Mexico and the US. From 1823-1840 silver production in Mexico increased by 50%, and Mexico adjusted its mining laws to allow increased foreign investment in mining with the aim of increasing government profits on the newly discovered silver deposits in Mexico. Discoveries of rich gold and silver deposits across the newly conquered US West from 1849-1872 led to new government policies favoring railroad construction and continued expansion. Both Mexico and the US established multiple minting operations throughout the western desert to quickly incorporate the new wealth of the west with the rest of the nation.

³² The following works explore the period of Texas independence: Chipman, *Spanish Texas*; Hogan, *The Texas Republic*; Richardson, *Texas: The Lone Star State*; Foote, *Texas and Texans*; Joseph Allen Stout, *The Liberators: Filibustering Expeditions into Mexico 1845-1862 and the Last Thrust of Manifest Destiny* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1973); Dan L. Thrapp, *The Conquest of Apacheria* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967).

Culturally the region of the western desert remained relatively isolated from the national struggles in Mexico and the United States. Apache and Comanche Indians continued struggle for dominance in the region, sedentary Indian villages continued to trade and interact with Spanish and US migrants. Settlers from the United States provided troops for the new western territories in the US-Mexican War and the US Civil War, though many more continued their life in the West indifferent to the national struggles erupting in the East and the South. The Great Western Desert remained a land of competitive diversity where many different groups of people struggled over limited natural resources necessary for survival.

As the years of the Gold Rush produced lower profits for the steadily increasing pool of California immigrants, many fortune seekers moved their search for wealth toward the south, into Mexico. Many immigrants from the United States traveled to Sonora, Chihuahua, and Coahuila with the hopes of not only finding wealth, but also establishing new territorial claims for the United States. These filibuster expeditions into Mexico found opposition not only from the treacherous desert environment, but also from the Mexican population and US Congress. It was not uncommon for trespassers from the United States to be run out of Mexican towns and villages or killed, like the unfortunate Henry Crabb, former California State Senator who led an expedition to Mexico in 1857 only to end up with his head on display in a jar of mescal in the village of Caborca.³³ The United States government discouraged filibuster expeditions in congressional debate as well as through direct military action, with leaders such as Senator James Gadsden promising to capture filibustering groups heading to Mexico.

³³ Stout, *The Liberators*, 13.

Political divisions in both Mexico and the United States deepened in the period after the US-Mexico War in part because of the resultant exchange of territory. While the debate over the continuance and extension of slavery had been ongoing in the United States prior to the US-Mexico War, the compromise politics of 1850 and 1854 over the extension of slavery into these regions increased political tensions to the point of civil war in the United States in 1861. In Mexico, disappointment over the political failure of Santa Anna and the loss of Mexican territory in 1848 led to increased tensions between liberal and conservative factions resulting in civil war from 1858-1861. While the civil war in Mexico ended in 1861, the political struggles of the nation did not. President Benito Juárez understood that he needed to resolve the economic problems of Mexico, and even requested US support for this effort, though the US Civil War prevented any economic support to Mexico, resulting in the Juárez's decision to call for a two year debt moratorium on its Civil War debts from its' European lenders.³⁴ Mexico quickly found itself occupied by Spain, Great Britain, and France intent on collecting the debts.

³⁴ William Henry Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, was concerned over rumors that the southern Confederates were planning to annex Lower California and other northern Mexico states to guarantee access to the Pacific. In an effort to prevent Confederate Control as well as to prevent possible European intervention, Seward offered to pay 3% interest on the Mexican debt for five years requiring Mexico to use the northern territories of Lower California, Sonora, Chihuahua, and Sinaloa. Thomas Corwin, US Minister to Mexico, argued for acceptance of this treaty for several reasons, 1). It would supplicate the European powers preventing further action against Mexico; 2). If the Confederates did attempt to occupy any properties held as collateral for the loan by the United States, the United States would have the rights and obligation to send in the Union Army to repel confederate aggressors. The first several months of 1862, while the Senate was considering this bill, were the most critical months of the U.S. Civil War; the Senate refused to ratify the treaty due to money required for the war. Seward to Corwin, No 17, Sept 2, 1861, *House Ex Doc* No. 100 p.22. Seward, Frederick W. *William H. Seward; an Autobiography from 1801-1834. With memoir of his life, and selections from his letters* Vol 3 *Seward at Washington as Senator and Secretary of State 1861-1872* (New York: Derby and Miller, 1891); 1861 Treaty for US to pay Mexican debt (Van Duesen, *Biography of William Henry Seward*) Welles Diary 250-51, 257; WP Bigelow to Weed [February 1863]; SP J.B. Murray to Seward April 17, 1863, E.D. Morgan to Seward, April 3, 1863, Seward to "My Dear Sir" April 10, 1863; NA M77 R77, Seward to Adams, April 7, 10, 1863; F.O. 5, vol 881, Lyons to Russell, April 13, 1863; (Seward the Foundations of the American Empire) Matias Romero to Seward, April 1, 1861, NA M54 R5 (notes from delegation, Mexico), in which the Mexican Minister complains of "grave outrages" in Lower California; Thomas Sprague to Corwin, May 31, 1861, in Corwin to Seward May 29, 1861 NA M97 R29 (Dispatches Mexico). Sprague was the former Commercial

The Veracruz occupation agreement between Spain, Great Britain, and France remained centered on the recuperation of Mexico's international debt payments. When Spain and Great Britain realized that France was planning more than debt collection and had agreed to assist with the restoration of Conservative power in Mexico, they pulled out of Veracruz, leaving France to fight this battle alone. The first French offensive into Mexico City in 1862 was unsuccessful, however French forces returned the next year in greater force and captured Puebla and Mexico City, forcing Benito Juárez and his Liberal army into northern exile. With this victory Napoleon III appointed Archduke Maximilian of Austria to sit as the Monarch of Mexico.³⁵

As the US fought its own Civil War, the western desert remained a valuable resource watched by the leaders in the North as well as the South. While the majority of the US Civil War was fought in the eastern portions of the United States, the resources of the western desert were a key strategic concern for both the Union and Confederacy early in the war. The Confederate government declared all of New Mexico territory part of the Confederacy. In August 1861 Confederate troops moved into the region, reaching as far west as modern day Tucson by February 1862. The Union met this challenge by sending California Volunteers, led by Brigadier General James Carleton who defeated the Confederate troops at the battle of Picacho Pass in April, pushing this small band of Confederates out of Arizona and back to the Rio Grande River.³⁶

Agent at La Paz, Lower California, who claimed that he had learned of a Confederate plot to seize the region; June 3, 1861, NA M77, R113 (Instructions, Mexico); June 29, 1861, NA M97, R29; Sept 2, 1861, NA M77 R113; Seward to Corwin June 24, 1862, NA M77 R113.

³⁵ Enrique Krauze, *Mexico: Biography of Power A History of Modern Mexico, 1810-1996* (New York: Harpers Perennial, 1997), 174.

³⁶ Andrew E. Masich, *The Civil War in Arizona; the Story of the California Volunteers, 1861-65* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006).

As the Union continued to make advances against the Confederates, US Secretary of State William Seward continued to pressure France to remove its armies from Mexico. By the end the Civil War in the United States this continual diplomatic pressure led to the removal of French troops from Mexico and victory for Juárez's liberal army over Maximilian in Mexico. The Union defeat of the Confederacy in the US and Juárez's return to power in Mexico opened a new chapter of reconstruction in both nations and an opportunity for change to begin in the West.³⁷

With the US Civil War resolved in 1865 and the return of Republican rule in Mexico in 1867 reconstruction began in both nations with renewed emphasis on the economic development of the Great Western Desert. Railroad construction, spurred by expanding mining wealth in Colorado, Nevada, and the Idaho territory resulted in increased populations and vast amounts of investment capital throughout the northern region of the West. The completion of the first transcontinental railroad, (stalled by the Civil War), in 1869 through California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming, quickly connected the Comstock mines of Nevada to the line. In Colorado railroads raced to connect important mining regions with the transcontinental line as well as pushing south to connect with the El Paso, Texas and Mexican railroad. Additional transcontinental routes in the north and south would begin in earnest but they would not be completed until the 1880s.

Mining claims in northern Mexico increased after 1867 with numerous petitions to reassert mining claims from Mexican land owners and foreign miners alike as

³⁷ Wayne Reynolds Merrick "A Study of William Henry Seward, Reformer" (dissertation, Syracuse University, 1956); John M. Taylor, *William Seward: Lincoln's Right Hand Man* (Washington DC: Potomac Books Inc., 1996).

President Juárez continued to reform property laws in Mexico.³⁸ Juárez continued to fight with Conservatives, primarily church leaders, as he pushed forward with liberal economic reforms in Mexico. Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, the minister of foreign affairs, strongly supported private industry and increased railroad construction in Mexico and continued the Liberal government reforms in Mexico when he assumed the presidency after Juárez's death in 1872.

Railroads opened the desert terrain, connecting the gold and silver mines to banks in Mexico and the United States and providing the means to move commercial goods to the desert and enabling increased population growth. The 1880s witnessed the beginning of rapid transnational capitalist expansion across the North America. Large banks financed industrial development throughout the US and Mexico as corporations spread across the international border. Labor also moved across the border, at times illegally, taking advantage of increased job opportunities. Governments in both nations were forced to face many labor issues, though in most cases politicians sided with business leaders, supplying forced labor in Mexico and at times dispatching troops to put down strikes, sometimes across the international border. The relationships between finance, big business, labor and government were changing in this period of industrial expansion across North America.³⁹

New corporate giants like the Guggenheims were at the forefront of the economic transformation at the turn of the century. The Guggenheims invested in mining

³⁸ Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México, Sección 167 Minero y Petróleos. There are several boxes of government petitions to renew property claims in the post-Maximilian era as the Juárez government continues its reform efforts to protect property rights and collect taxes on the property.

³⁹ Ernest N. Paolino *The Foundations of the American Empire: William Henry Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973); Merrill Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun*; Joseph Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

properties in the US West and Mexico, changing the social and economic landscape of mining communities with increased reliance on wage labor, heavy industrial equipment, and railroads. The Guggenheims struggled with labor conflicts and depressed international market prices for silver, gold and copper on both sides of the border, while struggling to maintain profits in the international metals trade.

This trans-national comparative analysis of labor struggles in Mexico and the US West from 1876 to 1920 examines the social struggles within these two industrializing nations. Though these regions are often portrayed as effectively isolated from each other, the similarities of their struggles indicate a common and connected series of social transformations. This trans-national emphasis highlights the shortcomings of the traditional regional and national models that have marked scholarship on the US West and Mexico.

The focus of most scholarship on these issues has remained regional, devoted to one side of the border or the other. Many authors have analyzed social change in the US, in US regions, including the West and the South, and in states such as Kansas, Texas, and Georgia. Others have examined social changes occurring in Mexico, in the regions of northern and southern Mexico, and in individual states such as Chihuahua, Mexico, and Jalisco. While these studies explain the causes and effects of national, regional, and local social change, the broader story of a trans-national social transformation has not yet been told.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ There are two dissertation projects exploring the trans-national aspects of the US/Mexico desert region: Ana Elizabeth Rosas, "Flexible Families: Bracero Families' Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries, 1942-1964" (PhD Dissertation University of Southern California, 2006); and Samuel Jefferson Truett, "Neighbors By Nature: The Transformation of Land and Life in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands, 1854-1910" (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1997), published as a book in 2006, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the US-Mexico Borderlands*.

The story of the American West, as penned by US historian Frederick Jackson Turner in his 1893 thesis, describes the West as a catalyst shaping a politically and culturally distinct nation, as its many immigrants pressed forward into the challenging landscape of the frontier. This frontier heritage irreversibly changed the US as its frontier pioneers were “compelled to adapt themselves to changes...involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness.”⁴¹ Turner laid the initial foundations for explaining the history of the US West, though scholars have long since moved away from his nationalistic framework, they remain bound by a perspective defined by the national borders emphasized in his original thesis.

Following what appeared to be a political, economic, and cultural transformation expanding across the nation at the turn of the century, historians have analyzed the formation of the populist and progressive movements as well as the transformation of the Democratic and Republican parties as the US struggled with the problems of urbanization and industrialization during the Gilded Age. Early historians like Frank and Mary Beard argued that the increased social ills were associated with evils of capitalism and that reform parties rose in opposition to pro-business government at the local, state and

The secondary works remain focused within the US or Mexico, and often analyzing individual camps such as Harry E. Cross, “The Mining Economy of Zacatecas, Mexico in the Nineteenth Century” (PhD Dissertation University of California Berkeley, 1976); Katharine Dawson, “Coal, Community, and Collective Action in McKinley County, New Mexico 1900-1935” (PhD Dissertation, Binghamton University, State University of New York, 2004); Andrea Yvette Huginnie, “Strikitos: Race, Class, and Work in the Arizona Copper Industry, 1870-1920” (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1991); Carol Ayres *Dark Lincoln and Kansas: Partnership for Freedom* (Manhattan, Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 2001); William Beezley, *Insurgent Governor: Abraham Gonzalez and the Mexican Revolution in Chihuahua* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973); James W. Byrkit, *Forging the Copper Collar: Arizona’s Labor-Management War of 1901-1921*, (The University of Arizona Press, 1982); Calderon, *Mexican Coal Mining Labor*; William E. French, *A Peaceful & Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class in Northern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

⁴¹ Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1894), 199.

federal levels.⁴² Gabriel Kolko's book *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916* (1963), however, argued that the political reforms and federal regulatory agencies established in this period were advocated by the big business tycoons and the social and political elite of the nation, in an effort to destroy the quagmire of local and state trade regulations that had developed as the nation became evermore connected via rail and communication networks and establish formal and standard regulations on inter-state trade.⁴³

In his seminal work *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (1967) Robert Wiebe explained that the elite were not alone in their call for change. In the early 1890s many western and southern working-class voters abandoned the Democratic and Republican Parties, for the Populist Party in response to the breakdown of local community life. The Populist platform, which called for the nationalization of interstate railroad routes and for reforms of the national monetary system, and condemned monopolies, addressed issues threatening America's community-based agrarian society. While Populism was successful in a few western states, the party ultimately failed. Wiebe, however, notes that "Populism...acted as reform's precipitant" on the party's agenda for regulating railroads, monopoly, and finance.⁴⁴

While Wiebe focused on the integration of the US, as it transformed from "island communities" to a connected nation with a political and economic center in the east, it is important to relate this change in the US with similar changes occurring in Mexico during the same time. Benito Juárez initiated several programs between 1867-1872 designed to

⁴² Charles and Mary Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (New York: MacMillan, 1927).

⁴³ Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

⁴⁴ Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 89.

project Mexico City's central power outward, such as the creation of the rural police to protect intra-state commerce, Díaz's programs to improve national infrastructure in transportation and communication, land reform and privatization, and increased industrialization (often led by foreign corporations) to increase tax revenues for Mexico, ensured central control of the nation by Díaz's government in Mexico City.

James Cockcroft's book *Intellectual Precursors of the Mexican Revolution, 1900-1913* (1968), describes the development of the reformist Mexican Liberal Party (PLM), and the call for political, economic, and social reform. Cockcroft expertly details the extent to which capitalism flourished in Mexico by 1910, describing its reliance on international capital and trade, which was largely controlled by foreign investors, disproving any assumption that the Mexican economy remained feudalistic prior to the Revolution. Frustrated with the near authoritarian powers of foreign owned business spreading across the nation and the plummeting standards of living for Mexico's working class poor, the PLM devised a radical program of social and economic reforms similar to the political reforms enacted by progressive politicians in the US. While he explains that this popular movement did not result in real political change anywhere in Mexico, in contrast to the moderately successful Populists and Progressives movements in Kansas and Colorado, the utter failure of reform highlights the extent of corruption in the Mexican government.⁴⁵

John Mason Hart's *Revolutionary Mexico: the Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (1987), argues that the Revolution was an economic rebellion of displaced peasants and campesinos, and industrial and urban workers in response to the

⁴⁵ James D. Cockcroft, *Intellectual Precursors of the Mexican Revolution 1900-1913* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

economic policies of Porfirio Díaz. American capitalists like Rockefeller, Morgan, Harriman, and Guggenheim invested heavily in mines, railroads and commercial agriculture displacing not only the rural working class from the haciendas but Mexico's elite from regional power. In an effort to unite Mexico against Díaz and foreign investors the regional elites were able to co-opt the working class in order to regain political and economic power in Mexico, much like the Populists had tried to do in the US.⁴⁶

Mexican scholars writing in both English and Spanish have continued to debate the role of labor in this struggle. Manuel Ceballos Ramírez analyzes the social struggle within Mexico's dominant Catholic middle class in his book *El Catolicismo Social: Un Tercero en Discordia. Rerum Novarum, la "Cuestión Social" y la Movilización de los Católicos Mexicanos 1891-1911* (1991). Ceballos Ramírez describes the growing tensions between the displaced middle class and the ruling class of Mexico's elite because of Díaz's economic policies favoring foreign investors. Ceballos Ramírez looks at the class struggles to explain internal conflicts during the period leading to the Mexican Revolution that kept society disunited by discouraging unions, anarchism and religious organizations that helped to unify Mexican labor.⁴⁷

In *The Incorporation of America: Culture & Society in the Gilded Age* (1982), Alan Trachtenberg describes the political, economic, and cultural consolidation of the United States in the three decades following the Civil War. Trachtenberg argues that struggle between these different social groups resulted in compromises and the rise of corporate culture throughout the nation as farmers, wage workers, working professionals,

⁴⁶ John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

⁴⁷ Ceballos Ramírez, Manuel. *El Catolicismo Social: Un Tercero en Discordia 1891-1911* (México: El Colegio de México, 1991).

and the industrial elite conformed to the more tightly controlled social structures and hierarchies of control that emerged during the Gilded Age.⁴⁸

Michael McGerr's *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* argues that the years from 1890 to 1920, the American Progressive Era, stands out as a time when the US middle class was strong enough to conduct a political revolution that changed the course of US history.⁴⁹ Mexico underwent the same transformation during these years, though Díaz had effectively prevented the Mexican middle class from forcing a political transformation at the ballot box. Since a political revolution was impossible, Mexico's middle class elite, primarily led by men from the northern desert states, led a violent revolution to overthrow Díaz in order to force political change in Mexico.

While many of the scholars focused on political reform and opposition, other historians chose to focus on the impact of individual reform leaders. Early works analyzing the leaders of the Mexican Revolution tended to focus on the presidents, Díaz, Madero, Huerta, and Carranza, however by the 1970s, several scholars began to look more closely at the range of reform leaders and include state governors, opposition party leaders, and military leaders. In most cases Mexico's opposition leaders remained regional caciques, with little national reach or appeal, remaining isolated and relatively impotent against foreign business interests and the central government. *Mexican Rebel: Pascual Orozco and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1915* (1968) by Michael Meyer analyzes the life of Francisco Madero's key revolutionary challenger, Pascual Orozco. A

⁴⁸ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

⁴⁹ Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

committed conservative, Orozco challenged Madero at every step, in many ways weakening Madero's political support and enabling the coup that would eventually result in the murder of the revolutionary president. John Womack's seminal study *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (1972) tells the dramatic story of the villagers in the state of Morelos and Emiliano Zapata who led the revolutionary uprisings through much of southern Mexico.⁵⁰

William Beezley's *Insurgent Governor: Abraham Gonzalez and the Mexican Revolution in Chihuahua* (1973) details the administration of Chihuahua's reformist governor, Abraham Gonzalez, friend and ally to Francisco Madero. Like Madero, Gonzalez implemented a series of reforms to establish free elections, a free press, and the establishment of democratic institutions throughout his state. While he worked to implement his liberal agenda throughout his northern state, Gonzales was unable to reduce the power and influence of the Terrazas-Creel group of hacendados and foreign mining firms who dominated the economy of his state.⁵¹

Ward Albro's study *Always a Rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution* (1992) builds on of previous studies of the Magónista Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) to describe the revolutionary movement as well as the personal story of Ricardo Flores Magón. Albro provides close analysis of the cross-border activities of the opposition movement in Mexico detailing Flores Magón's connections with Eugene V. Debs, Mary Harris (Mother Jones), and US anarchist Emma Goldman. Unlike Francisco Madero who was able to continue his revolutionary planning from inside the United

⁵⁰ Michael Meyer, *Mexican Rebel: Pascual Orozco and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1915* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967); John Womack Jr., *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1968).

⁵¹ Beezley, *Insurgent Governor*.

States, Ricardo Flores Magón was jailed several times and died on November 22, 1922 in the Fort Leavenworth penitentiary where he was incarcerated after his conviction for seditious activity.⁵²

Similar studies of influential opposition leaders during the Progressive Era in the United States were undertaken concurrently by historians. Like Francisco Madero in Mexico, Eugene V. Debs is among the studied reform leaders in the Gilded Age. Harold Currie's *Eugene V. Debs* (1977), and Nick Salvatore's *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist* (1983), are among the key studies. There are two major works detailing the role of Mary Harris, also known as Mother Jones and the influence she held with striking miners across the US and parts of Mexico: Edward Steele's *The Correspondence of Mother Jones* (1986) and Elliot Gorn's book *Mother Jones: The Most Dangerous Woman in America* (2001). Other key leaders in the US include "Big Bill" Haywood to include Joseph Conlin's study *Big Bill Haywood and the Radical Union Movement* (1969) and Melvyn Dubofsky's biography *Big Bill Haywood* (1987).⁵³

Scholarship examining mining labor and mining unions throughout the US West and Mexico is also greatly divided by the geography, separating the history of mining in the US West and Mexico as artificially as the national border divides the western desert. Vernon Jensen's book *Heritage of Conflict: Labor Relations in the Nonferrous Metals Industry up to 1930* (1950) examines the growth of labor discontent in relationship to the

⁵² Ward S. Albro, *Always a Rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution*. (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992).

⁵³ Harold Currie, *Eugene V. Debs* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976); Nick Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982); Edward M. Steel, ed. *The Correspondence of Mother Jones* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1985); Elliot J. Gorn, *Mother Jones: The Most Dangerous Woman in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); Joseph Conlin, *Big Bill Haywood and the Radical Union Movement* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969); Melvyn Dubofsky, "Big Bill" Haywood (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

industrialization and mechanization in the mining industry and the corresponding rise of labor unions in the mining west. David Pletcher's book *Rails, Mines and Progress: Seven American Promoters in Mexico, 1867-1911* (1958) is a snapshot study of several individual US investors in Mexico, which led to Mark Wasserman's regional study *Capitalists, Caciques, and Revolution: The Native Elite and Foreign Enterprise in Chihuahua, Mexico, 1854-1911* (1984). Marvin Bernstein's seminal work *The Mexican Mining Industry, 1890-1950: A Study of the Interaction of Politics, Economics, and Technology* (1965) is a close depth analysis of US mining interests throughout Mexico, for many years cited as the most comprehensive analytical study of mining in Mexico available in the English language.⁵⁴

Richard Lingenfelter's *Hard Rock Miners: A History of the Mining Labor Movement in the American West* (1974), Rodney Anderson's book *Outcasts in Their Own Land: Mexican Industrial Workers, 1906-1911* (1976), and Mark Wyman's book *Hard Rock Epic: Western Miners and the Industrial Revolution, 1860-1910* (1979). In the Spanish language, notable studies of the emergence of labor unions in the mining industry include Javier Aguiar Garcia's *Los Sindicatos Nacionales: Minero-Metalurgicos* (1987), and *Comunidad, cultura y vida social: ensayos sobre la formación de la clase obrera: Seminario de movimiento obrero y Revolucion Mexicana* (1991) edited by S. Lief Adelson and Mario Camarena Ocampo.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Vernon H. Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict: Labor Relations in the Nonferrous Metals Industry up to 1930* (Cornell University Press, 1950); Pletcher, *Rails, Mines, and Progress*; Mark Wasserman, *Capitalists, Caciques, and Revolution: The Native Elite and Foreign Enterprise in Chihuahua, Mexico, 1854-1911* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Marvin D. Bernstein, *The Mexican Mining Industry 1890-1950: A Study of the Interaction of Politics, Economics, and Technology* (New York: State University of New York, 1964).

⁵⁵ Richard E. Lingenfelter, *The Hardrock Miners: A History of the Mining Labor Movement in the American West 1863-1893* (University of California Press, 1974); Rodney D. Anderson, *Outcasts in their Own Land: Mexican Industrial Workers, 1906-1911* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1976); Mark

Another focus of scholarship has been devoted smaller regions, to include states, companies, and mining camps. There are volumes of studies examining the mining industry in Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and Colorado in the US and El Oro, Coahuila, and Real Del Monte in Mexico, to name a few. Many of these books look at the social cultures developing in these urban communities such as James Byrkit's book *Forging the Copper Collar: Arizona's Labor-Management War of 1901-1921* (1981), Philip Mellinger's *Race and Labor in Western Copper: The Fight for Equality, 1896-1918* (1995), Cárdenas Garcia's *La quimera del Desarrollo. El impacto económico y social de la Minería en El Oro, Estado de México 1900-1930* (1996), William French's book *A Peaceful and Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class Formation in Northern Mexico* (1996), Elizabeth Jameson's *All that Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community in Cripple Creek* (1998), and Mary Murphy's *Mining Cultures: Men, Women, and Leisure in Butte, 1914-1941* (1998), David Stiller's *Wounding the West: Montana, Mining, and the Environment* (2000), Laurie Mercier's *Anaconda: Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's Smelter City* (2001), and Thomas Andrew's *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (2008). While each of these studies analyzes social transformation in a specific community, it is important to connect these experiences together to weave the narrative of transnational change occurring during this period.⁵⁶

Wyman, *Hard Rock Epic: Western Miners and the Industrial Revolution, 1860-1910* (University of California Press, 1979); Javier Aguiar Garcia's *Los Sindicatos Nacionales: Minero-Metalurgicos* (1987), and *Comunidad, cultura y vida social: ensayos sobre la formación de la clase obrera: Seminario de movimiento obrero y Revolucion Mexicana* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1987); S. Lief Adelson and Mario Camarena Ocampo, eds. *Comunidad, cultura y vida social: ensayos sobre la formación de la clase obrera: Seminario de movimiento obrero y Revolucion Mexicana* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1991).

⁵⁶ Byrkit, *Forging the Copper Collar*; Philip J. Mellinger, *Race and Labor in Western Copper: The Fight for Equality, 1896-1918* (The University of Arizona Press, 1995); Nicolás Cárdenas García, *La quimera del desarrollo. El impacto económico y Social de la Minería en El Oro, Estado de México, 1900-1930* (México: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1996); French, *A Peaceful*

In the last two decades a few historians have initiated cross-border studies examining aspects of mining, labor relations, and political reform stretching across the US-Mexico border. William Culver's and Thomas Greaves's book, *Miners and Mining in the Americas* (1985), is an edited compilation with a chapter devoted to Mexico which contends that while mining has always been a labor intensive occupation, as the mines became more dependent on technology and capital, miners were relegated to the trappings of wage labor, employed and managed by those who controlled the capital required to operate the mines.⁵⁷ Culver and Greaves agree with Trachtenberg's basic premise that mechanization further divided the managers and workers, bringing profits, progress, and efficiency to the capitalists. As mine operations grew in the US West and Mexico, many urban mining centers emerged, marked by great differences between workers and manager/owners.

William Robbins' book *Colony and Empire* (1994) promises to analyze the similarities of US migration in the west and Mexico as a form of imperial colonization, however the book contains next to no examination south of the national border. Robbins does, like Culver and Greaves, argue that the West must be viewed within a global economic model to understand the historic colonial relationship with its eastern landlords and explores the importance of transnational capitalism in the West describing southern border towns in Arizona, New Mexico, Sonora, and Chihuahua as integrated into the

& *Working People*; Elizabeth Jameson, *All that Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community in Cripple Creek* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Mary Murphy, *Mining Cultures: Men, Women, and Leisure in Butte, 1914-1941* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); David Stiller, *Wounding the West: Montana, Mining, and the Environment* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); Laurie Mercier, *Anaconda: Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's smelter city* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Thomas Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

⁵⁷ William Culver and Thomas Greaves, *Miners and mining on the Americas* (Glasgow: Manchester University Press, 1985), 3.

global capitalist structure and similarly wound into a world economy that dictated their relative prosperity.⁵⁸

A more detailed cross-border study is Roberto Calderon's book *Mexican Coal Mining Labor in Texas and Coahuila, 1880-1930* (2000), which examines the contiguous coalfields of Coahuila and West Texas as one region, for many years undisturbed by the international border running through the field. Another study, Gunther Peck's *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1880-1930* (2000) highlights how by the early 1900s and 1910s, most immigrant labor groups in the Americas had found some permanence in their new societies. Italian workers in Canada rebelled against padrones and created unions; Mexican workers entered unions in Arizona and New Mexico, as did the Greeks in Bingham, Utah. While Peck's book focuses primarily on trans-national labor issues in the US, its insight into conditions leading to labor migration from Mexico helps build the framework for comparing social transformation in Mexico and the US during the same period.⁵⁹

Essentially independent of each other for most of the nineteenth century, the eastern and western United States began to merge politically, economically, and socially during this post-Reconstruction period.⁶⁰ Corporate mines, ranches, and farms spread through the East and the West with railroad and telegraph companies connecting America politically, economically and socially as the national economy grew more interconnected and new industrial titans grew more powerful both nationally and internationally. Mexico, led by Díaz in the post-Reconstruction period, also initiated government policies

⁵⁸ Robbins, *Colony and Empire*, 38.

⁵⁹ Calderon, *Mexican Coal Mining Labor in Texas*; Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor*.

⁶⁰ Wiebe, *The Search for Order*.

to extend railroad construction and mining ventures throughout the northern desert region, uniting Mexico's desert with central Mexico economically and politically.⁶¹

While the emergence of monopoly capitalism brought social transformation, it also resulted in new political challenges as conservatives, moderates, and radicals in the middle- and upper-classes competed for political and economic control in both nations. In the US, social struggles led to the Populist movement, Progressivism, and increased radicalization of Labor Unions like the International Workers of the World and the Western Federation of Miners, while at the same time struggles developed in Mexican society as labor unions, clerical groups, Indian farmers, moderate landowners, and anarchists, fought against Porfirio Díaz and foreign corporations.

To better understand the social changes in the US and Mexico as industry giants dominated these nations at the turn of the nineteenth century, this trans-national comparison of labor struggles from 1876 to 1915 examines the social struggles within these industrializing nations. Though these regions are traditionally portrayed as effectively isolated from each other, the similarities of their struggles indicate a common and connected series of social transformations. Drawing on the work of historians such as Culver and Greaves and Gunther Peck, this dissertation compares the experiences of miners in both nations. This trans-national emphasis highlights the shortcomings of the traditional regional and national models that have marked scholarship on the American West and Mexico.

⁶¹ John H. Coatsworth, *Growth Against Development: The Economic Impact of Railroads in Porfirian Mexico*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1981).

CHAPTER 2

SETTING THE CORNERSTONES OF CAPITALISM

The end of the nineteenth century was a critical period of political and economic transformation in the US and Mexico. The distinction between economics and politics in both of these nations became increasingly blurred with the rise of corporatism and government support for business. There are two important outcomes during the post-1876 period that allowed for the unprecedented western growth. The first is the end of extreme political division in both the US and Mexico, which had plagued these nations since their respective civil wars. The end of Reconstruction in the US led to increased government support of large-scale business expansion into the US West, and President Porfirio Díaz's dictatorial rule strongly promoted industrial growth through increased foreign investment throughout Mexico, primarily from the US. The second is the transformational growth of a wage earning working class society in the US and Mexico, resulting in the birth of labor unions created to protect workers' rights through solidarity.

Prior to 1876 the expanding US Anglo and Mexican populations in the West disrupted the delicate social balance of Indian tribes that had inhabited the region for thousands of years. As the newly emerging wage based society emerged the growing labor classes struggled for survival on both sides of the international border in the. While the US and Mexico experienced tremendous struggles during the Civil

War/Reconstruction years from 1861-1876, the US political system returned to a relatively peaceful and orderly transfer of power through the democratic process, while Porfirio Díaz's leadership in Mexico resulted in a stable political atmosphere for thirty-five years where foreign corporations found many enticing opportunities.

Ending a period of political division in both nations after the civil wars in the US and Mexico, the political events of 1876 set the stage for what would become a period of executive power in the United States and Mexico maturing between 1890 and 1900. The Hayes victory in 1877 re-opened a national legislative dialog free from the spectre of Republican hegemony imposed by the northern states on the defeated South, and the restoration of national elections with a peaceful and orderly transfer of political power. After his assumption to power in Mexico, Díaz carefully selected the national legislature to ensure a political majority, thereby providing the façade of democracy while maintaining political control through corruption and strong-arm tactics expanding his dictatorship across the nation.

By 1877, when President Hayes withdrew Union troops from the Southern states, ending the Reconstruction era, the emergence of monopoly capitalism brought social transformation, as well as new economic challenges as conservatives, moderates and radicals in the middle- and upper-classes struggled for dominance in the new economic order developing in Mexico and the US. In the US, social conflicts led to the Populist movement, Progressivism, and increased radicalization of labor unions like the International Workers of the World, the United Mine Workers Association, and the Western Federation of Miners who fought against the increasingly powerful US

corporations as well as the growing flood of immigrant labor, arguing that these migrant workers forced wages below the subsistence level.

At the same time Mexican labor unions, clerical groups, Indian farmers, moderate landowners, and anarchists fought against Porfirio Díaz and many of same US corporations. While there were Mexican companies operating in the US, the amount of Mexican investment on the northern side of the international border was miniscule in comparison with the hundreds of millions of dollars invested by US companies in Mexico. The US was fast emerging as a great world power while Mexico continued to struggle with its colonial past.¹

The Guggenheim Mining and Smelting conglomerate was one of the leading mining corporations to emerge in this period, with mining and smelting operations throughout the US and Mexico. While the Guggenheims and others took advantage of the laissez faire economic policies in the US West in the 1880s, they did not enter Mexico until the 1890s, following the route of the railroads and taking advantage of the pro-foreign investment policies enacted by Porfirio Díaz. The resultant support of big business in Mexico and the United States after 1876, during the period known as the Gilded Age, encouraged and supported industrial expansion, primarily railroad construction and mining, throughout the Great Western Desert, on both sides of the international border.

In the Gilded Age, both Mexico and the United States experienced political, economic, and industrial centralization as Mexico City grew to control Mexican affairs and Washington DC, New York, and the industrial cities of Pennsylvania dominated in

¹ Roberto Calderon *Mexican Coal Mining Labor in Texas and Coahuila, 1880-1930* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000).

the US. Benito Juárez and Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada initiated a program of political centralization in Mexico, however, Porfirio Díaz accelerated this process after 1876. In the US, centralization began as a result of growing corporate demands on Congress to decrease economic restrictions imposed by individual states. While many corporations were initially successful in their dealings with Congress, growing discontent, resulting in the Farmers Alliance and Populist movement, spurred presidential action to curb the influence of big business on Congress, while continuing to promote government policies to ensure economic strength in the US. This process began with William McKinley's administration in 1896 and was expanded by Theodore Roosevelt in the early 1900s.

After the Civil War, US businesses quickly expanded with the goal of dominating, first US markets, and later global markets. Spurred by a nationwide labor shortage, US businesses and inventors developed new machinery, increasing efficiency and reducing labor demands across many industries. A population explosion from 1869-1899 -- in large part a consequence of increased immigration -- led to greater demand for industrial goods in the growing eastern cities, as well as the many newly formed communities in the West. Railroad construction across the US, connecting the growing markets to the industrial centers in the East, was one of the many new demands leading to increases in steel production and mining. As businesses continued to grow in size and wealth in the US, federal and state government leaders encouraged further growth by providing land grants and financial incentives for railroad construction and other infrastructure improvements and imposing high tariffs on foreign competitors to protect national manufacturing. Many US business and government leaders adhered to the Darwinist idea

of the survival of the fittest for business as they raced for efficiency and technological advancement.

The Great Western Desert quickly became a land of investment opportunity for land promoters, railroads, and by the 1880s, large scale mining. Many businessmen from the US and Europe earned steady profits from mining and railroad investments throughout the West in the early years after the US and Mexican Civil Wars. The economic and political stability after 1876 allowed for massive railroad and mining development throughout the West creating a new opportunity in the western hemisphere for the rise of multinational corporations, to include those owned by the Guggenheims, the Rockefellers, and Jay Gould. While the majority of these powerful industrialists began their careers in the eastern cities of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, the immense wealth of the Great Western Desert had a significant role in the creation of each of these industrial empires.²

In the US Western Desert a transformation was occurring from 1872-1890 as the dominant Anglo population displaced the traditional Indian and Mexican populations through the use of technology. Railroads connected the US West to the industrial, financial, and political centers of the nation and large scale business transformed the nation increasing the reliance of industry and workers on a wage labor system. As the US underwent this transformation, a similar phenomenon was occurring in Mexico as well. President Lerdo de Tejada supported railroad expansion throughout Mexico, though he was reluctant to embrace foreign investors. Díaz, however, would later welcome foreign investors from the US, Great Britain, and other industrial nations,

² Arthur T. Hadley, "Railroad Business under the Interstate Commerce Act" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (January 1889): 170.

supporting railroad growth throughout the northern frontier in an effort to connect this mineral rich region with the financial and political capital in Mexico City. The railroads would finally enable the central government of Mexico to subdue its frontier region and increase the Mexican population in the region traditionally controlled by hostile Indian groups.³

While the political compromise that followed the 1876 presidential election brought the end to Reconstruction in the US South and a return to congressional normalcy with nearly unrestricted representation for southern states, the inclusion of West Virginia, Nevada, Nebraska, and Colorado strengthened Republican power in congress. Eastern industrialists worked with congressional leaders to support their expansion into the new western territories and states expanding railways and exploiting the vast natural resources of the region. In Colorado, spurred to life in the 1850s by gold discoveries, silver production from Georgetown, Silver Plume, and Caribou surpassed gold revenues by 1874. New silver discoveries in Leadville in the late 1870s increased population growth in Colorado as it became the wealthiest mining state in the nation.⁴

As gold fever continued to draw thousands of people into the Great Western Desert, prospectors from the US began drifting into Chihuahua and Durango in Northern Mexico to search for silver and gold after 1847, with more than thirty American companies operating by 1867. The high grade ores discovered in Coahuila and Chihuahua allowed low technology pick and shovel miners to continue to operate at a

³ M. Romero "Railways in Mexico" *The* (November 1882): 477-506.

⁴ "The Approaching National Convention" *San Francisco Bulletin* 11 February 1876.

profit with over forty US companies with investments over \$40 million, operating in the region by 1880.⁵

The 1876 national elections in the US and Mexico were ended with disputes in both nations. While the US solved the crisis through the democratic institutions available to the government with no bloodshed, Mexico once again witnessed a violent struggle to take power in the capitol. Ignoring the popular call against presidential re-election, Lerdo de Tejada proceeded with his re-election campaign, taking advantage of the many governors he had helped place in office to ensure his re-election. Lerdo de Tejada's success sparked three separate rebellions across Mexico: the first, which began in the north eastern states, was led by Porfirio Díaz; the second in the central states was led by José María Inglesia, the president of the Supreme Court; and the third in Michoacan was led by Catholic reformers. In November 1876 Díaz led his forces in a definitive battle at Tecoac, defeating the federal forces and forcing Lerdo de Tejada from office. Díaz was formally elected in May 1877.⁶

By the early 1880's Porfirio Díaz promoted land privatization and redistribution throughout much of Mexico. The state began confiscating both Indian communal lands and Hacienda lands not routinely used as living space or in active production. The Hacienda lifestyle of the northern states was diminishing as wage labor became the dominant economic system. Haciendas transformed into corporate farms and cattle ranches paying for wage labor rather than supporting Indian peons on their large tracts of

⁵ Harry A. McGraw "Old Mining Camps in Pozos, Guanajuato, Mexico" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, (7 May 1910), 961-2; Robert E. Chism "Sierra Mojada, Mexico" *American Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum Engineers*, (1886-7), 542-588.

⁶ "Items" *Friends Intelligencer*, 20 January 1877.

property. Mexican Indians competed for wage jobs at the many new mines, owned by Mexicans and Anglos, to supplement their seasonal work on farms and ranches.

By the mid 1880s industrial mining quickly left the individual miner outmoded, with power shifting to well-financed corporations. Western corporate mining brought with it strong ties to eastern markets, demanding maximum profit through limited labor costs and production efficiency. The West was changing from an open frontier to a natural resource vault of US industrialism. Many of these same corporations moved to Mexico as well, taking advantage of the wealth of resources south of the international border. Many Mexican land owners leased their mining properties to foreigners for additional income. These foreign renters often brought new mining technologies allowing them to extract silver and lead from mines long thought depleted, producing revenue for the Mexican landlord, the Mexican government, through taxes and export duties, and the foreign renters.

From June 1881 to June 1883 the Aguascalientes Secretary of State received 141 mining claims, the major portion of which were for copper, with only 52 claims for other types of mines. The major mines that were heavily explored in this period were the Alta Palmira, Los Angeles, San Agustin, San Geronimo, San Pascual, and the San Magdalena. It was found that these mines had large copper deposits as well as abundant silver and lead ores. A local political leader, Francisco Parkman received the state concessions to operate these mines in conjunction with the Veta Madre Smelting Company, which would quickly be bought by the Guggenheim interests.⁷

⁷ Archivo General Estado Aguascalientes, Calientes, México. *Memoria administrativa presentada por el gobernador Rafael Arellano a la Legislatura del estado, junio de 1881 a octubre de 1883* (Aguascalientes, Mexico 1883), 30-31, document #21.

In Mexico, Díaz approved twenty-six highway projects across Mexico from December 1877 to December 1884. Rail production remained central to Díaz's plan for Mexican progress; rail construction increased from merely 475 miles of track in all of Mexico in 1876 to an increase that averaged 748.5 miles per year from 1877-1884, with future construction decreasing to an additional 398 miles per year until 1910. Federal telegraph lines grew at a rate of 410 miles per year from 1876-1884, 418 miles per year from 1881-1884 and by another 74 miles per year until 1910. By 1880 Mexican railway lines connected to US lines allowing for coal to be shipped from the US into Mexico to aid with smelting operations for Mexican silver and lead. Mexico subsidized northern rail connections to the US with forced labor, and payment of 8,000 pesos per one sixth mile of track on flat ground and 26,000 pesos on sloping ground. The Pearson Company, a British railway construction firm, received 15 million pesos for a line that cost 6 million pesos to build, with the rights to exploit the accompanying territory for fifty-one years. Rail construction remained a hotbed for economic piracy across the Great Western Desert into the late 1880s, with little regard of the international boundary.⁸

In conjunction with the expanded railway infrastructure that connected Mexican mines to the international markets, Díaz enacted several political incentives to lure foreign investment into Mexico, including federal tax exemptions, waiving of import taxes for industrial equipment, and extensive land grants. By 1885 Díaz suspended the 1873 Mining Codes, providing even greater freedoms for foreign investment companies.⁹

⁸ Pearson plc company website. http://www.pearson.com/about/history_pop/why.htm; Carleton Beals, *Porfirio Díaz: Dictator of Mexico*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1932), 343-4; Paul Garner, *Porfirio Díaz: Profiles in Power Series* (New York: Longman, 2001).

⁹ Archivo General Estado Aguascalientes, Calientes, Mexico-Ramo Poder Legislativo: 50-162-32, 188-611-56.

The expansion of silver production in California Gulch and Oro City mines in Colorado brought thousands of miners back to the state. Among those who established mines in the promising Leadville area was H.A.W. Tabor, who would serve as mayor, Lt Governor and US Senator for Colorado and would eventually lose all of the money he had made mining in Colorado. Another miner was A.Y. Corman, whose mines would eventually end up in the hands of Meyer Guggenheim. In 1869 A.Y. Corman joined four other prospectors staking their claim in California Gulch. After several months of discouraging production, looking for visible gold and finding very little, Corman's partners gave up leaving him to work his claim alone. When the mine flooded in 1881, Corman sold the property to Meyer Guggenheim.¹⁰

The wage earning laborers in the Leadville mines formed a union in 1879 as a protective measure; however, due to the scarcity of labor until 1880, labor conditions remained relatively beneficial for the miners. A proposed wage cut in 1880 forced the union to react, calling a general strike to begin on May 27. The miners formed militias to defend their union hall leading to a violent and bloody clash that paralyzed local law enforcement. H.A.W. Tabor, now Lieutenant Governor, supporting the mine owners, called on the state militia to protect the mining property, breaking the strike.¹¹

After the miners' strike in 1880, pumping at the A.Y. & Minnie mines proved very successful, improving mine production from two hundred tons a month in 1880 to fifty tons a day in 1881 from the A.Y. alone. Patiently watching the reports sent from the mine's Superintendent Sam Harsh, Meyer Guggenheim continued to invest more and

¹⁰ Edwin Lefevre "Captains of Industry" *The Cosmopolitan, a Monthly Illustrated Magazine*, Vol 35 No 4 (August 1903): 403.

¹¹ Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

more money in the mine throughout 1881 for watering and other repairs. In August, Meyer received another report from Harsh, assuming it to be yet another request for money, he was surprised to read that the mine had hit a bonanza, The mines began to earn as much as \$17,000 a month and by 1887 the mines, worked by 130 miners, were producing nine million ounces of silver and 86,000 tons of lead a year. By 1888 the A.Y. & Minnie were earning the Guggenheims \$750,000 a year.¹²

In 1895 another strike erupted in Aspen, with miners protesting a pay reduction from \$4.00 per day to \$3.00, with the addition of a boarding fee for \$1.00, effectively reducing their net pay to \$2.00 per day. Judge Porter met with miners and managers to resolve the dispute, offering to reduce the boarding costs for miners by 25 cents per day, if they reduced their demands for luxuries like canned fruit, increasing their pay to \$2.25 per day with the reduced boarding costs. The miners refused, demanding \$2.50 per day with the same meal options.¹³ While the miners began conversing with the Knights of Labor in an effort to gain support for their demands, mine managers successfully recruited replacement workers, essentially ending the strike.

In Mexico and the US, the Great Western Desert was transforming into a region dominated by businessmen, like the Guggenheims, who increasingly relied on daily wage workers. Businessmen and wage laborers alike paid little attention to the political border in their search for wealth in the 1880s. Wages were determined regionally based on the supply and demand for laborers, in relation to the profits of a given mine. Ore prices

¹² The story of the rise of the Guggenheims is told by several books, to include: Edwin Hoyt , *The Guggenheims and the American Dream* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1967); John Davis, *The Guggenheims: An American Epic* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1978); and Isaac Marcossou, *Metal Magic: The Story of the American Smelting and Refining Company* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Company, 1949).

¹³ *Rocky Mountain News* "San Juan Miners on Strike" 31 January 1885.

remained connected to the global market and profits tied to smelting and rail rates regardless of the mine's national location. State and local governments in the US and Mexico brokered deals to entice large mining businesses and railways to build within their jurisdictions. Miners unions formed to protect the interests of workers on both sides of the border as well, though membership in these organizations most often respected the political boundary between the US and Mexico, their ideologies did not.

While silver production increased in Mexico, Nevada and Colorado mines experienced a boom as well in 1876, increasing annual silver production in the US from a few thousand ounces to over four million ounces in 1890. The rising silver production increased the demand for lead ore used to smelt the silver. Unfortunately the silver mined in Colorado and Nevada had low lead content, described as dry ore, though the Mexican ores mined were self fluxing, containing much higher lead content, allowing for greater ease and less cost for the smelting process. The demand for the self fluxing ore from Mexican mines between 1876 and 1890 led miners in the US to demand trade restrictions against the cheaper import in reaction to the declining price of silver, which in turn was due to overproduction more than Mexican imports.¹⁴

Independent of each other, government fiscal and economic policies in the US and Mexico were adjusted during the same period to accommodate industrial expansion in the Great Western Desert and to combat a persistent economic depression resulting from the Panic of 1873, following the US decision to de-monetize silver. Mexico initiated legislation similar to the Bland-Allison Act, buying silver from miners at a fixed rate for unlimited coinage. The expanded use of silver coinage allowed mine owners to

¹⁴ "The Need for Foreign Lead" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, (26 April 1890): 467; US Consular Reports No 131, August 1891, Piedras Negras.

pay employees and buy supplies with cheap pesos, hiring Mexican laborers for a fraction of the cost paid in the mines of Nevada and Colorado. Additionally, Mexico's silver ore contained zinc, copper, lead, and gold allowing mine owners to sell the gold, lead, and zinc abroad at higher international rates paid in gold, which was then used to pay for any imported fuel, dynamite and machinery needed to operate the mines. Silver production in the US and Mexico rapidly expanded in the years after 1873. In the US, silver production rose from a few thousand ounces in 1860 to four million ounces annually by 1890. In Mexico, 40,255,278 kilograms of silver was produced between 1878 and 1908.¹⁵

In their effort to reduce imported Mexican silver, US miners pressed Congress to enforce the 1873 Tariff, assaying a duty of fifteen cents/lb on imported lead. In an effort to stop the declining silver prices, the Bland-Allison Act of 1878 restored the standard coinage of silver dollars, greatly reduced in 1873. The Act also required the Secretary of the Treasury to purchase between \$2 million and \$4 million of silver bullion each month to be minted into silver dollars. Between 1878 and 1893, when the Bland-Allison Act was replaced by the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, the US government purchased \$308,279,260.71 of silver, and minted 378,166,793 standard silver dollars.¹⁶ While this Act only had a minimal effect on the monetary problems facing the nation in the 1880s, it did encourage silver production throughout Colorado and the West.¹⁷ In light of the Bland-Allison Act, the Customs office in El Paso received guidance to classify the shipments of mixed ore as the metal containing the highest market value, allowing the

¹⁵ The Mineral Industry, Its statistics, *Technology, and Trade* (New York: The Scientific Publishing Co., 1893-), XLIII (1934), 189; *Bulletin of the Pan American Union*, XXVIII (February 1909): 345.

¹⁶ <http://www.usmint.gov>

¹⁷ "The Growth of the Mining Industry in the United States" *The Albion, Journal of News Politics and Literature* (28 October 1876): 10; John A. Greir, "The Restoration of Silver" *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, (November 1891): 622; "Industrial America" *Outlook*, (23 September 1893): 546; Henry W. Peabody, "Bimetallism" *The Watchman*, (28 March 1895): 6.

Mexican ore to remain duty free due to its silver content. While the Bland-Allison Act initially increased the demand for silver from mines in the US and Mexico, it was too little and too late.

Following the global trend of moving away from monetized silver, in 1873 the United States shifted fiscal policy away from bi-metallism to a gold standard. Germany, Scandinavia, Australia, Canada, Egypt, and Brazil moved away from silver coins demanding gold for all trade, and were soon followed by France. Mexico's silver peso, once a standard currency in Asian trade in China, Japan, and the Philippines lost its foothold in the 1870s. Japan began minting a silver yen, the US minted a trade dollar used in China, the French minted silver coins for Indo-China and the Chinese imported machinery to begin minting silver coins at Canton to replace the peso.¹⁸

The increased silver production in the desert mining region resulted in a wave of immigrants flooding into the area, hoping to strike it rich on their own, though most eventually sought employment with the industrial mines. As the number of available wage laborers increased and the price of silver decreased mining companies routinely cut wages and/or benefits or increased working hours in order to sustain corporate profits. When miners protested the changes, most mine managers turned a deaf ear and replaced the striking miners with newly arrived immigrants willing to work at the new contract rates. Striking miners quickly realized their predicament and many turned to unions, leading membership drives to persuade miners throughout the region that it was always in the working-man's best interest to stand united against the profiteering mine owners.

¹⁸ David M. Pletcher, "The Fall of Silver in Mexico, 1870-1910, and its Effects in American Investments" *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol 18, No 1. (March 1958): 34-37.

The growing wealth of the mining industry in Mexico led to increased tensions between US employers and Mexican workers. Many mines became targets of opportunity for roving bandits determined to “reclaim” the Mexican silver being “stolen” by US companies. In April 1886, a band of thieves attacked the Dolores Mines in Nuevo Leon. The mine assault on the mine was undertaken by a small army of 200 men who had scaled the walls of the compound. Miners fought back, firing at the intruders, though they were overcome by the Mexican bandits. With three US citizens and 200 Mexican miners and only a handful of weapons, the camp was quickly overrun by the better armed bandits. Ranchers in the region heard the alarm at the mining camp and rallied a force to respond, with fifty armed men preventing the massacre of the camp by the invaders. The miners killed six of the attackers with nineteen more gravely wounded, though seven miners were killed and a score more were wounded.¹⁹

Railroad expansion and new technologies allowed for US industries to expand throughout the northern desert, taking advantage of untold mineral resources that was previously too expensive to exploit. The growing opportunities brought droves of people eager to make a profit in the expanding desert as merchants as well as wage laborers. These new immigrants filled make-shift cities that sprouted to support the booming mines. The developing urban culture brought its own set of problems with wage laborers growing increasingly discontented with the profit hungry industries.

Railroad and telegraph expansion connected the Great Western Desert with not only the production centers of the East, but also with the growing economic tensions associated with global market forces. The West quickly became a market driven society,

¹⁹ “A Desperate Battle” *The New York Times*, 23 April 1886; “Mines that Have Caused Much Trouble” *The New York Times*, 25 April 1886.

tioned not only to prices determined in New York or London for the metals which it sold, but also grain, lumber, livestock, and the other necessities of life which it needed to buy. As independent mining opportunities quickly eroded, the majority of miners adjusted to the rigors of a wage based society, forming unions and protective associations in reaction to the growing power of newly formed corporations in the West, just as workers were reacting to the same experiences in the East.²⁰

The growing influence of corporations across the US brought a concomitant increase in unions throughout the East and the West in the 1880s and 1890s. The Knights of Labor (KOL) grew in strength across the United States in the 1880s with nearly 1,000,000 members by 1886. The KOL practiced a strike strategy of inclusion, enlisting members throughout all sectors of an industry, hoping to create large-scale support for labor demands. Though its large-scale strikes were effective in shutting down mines and other industries, the KOL could not support the volume of striking workers from its meager assistance funds. In 1885, it had merely \$1,000 in reserve for strike purposes, not even one penny per member, and this meant that strikers endured incredible hardships.²¹

The goal of the KOL was to protect the working class from the oppressive forces of monopoly, political corruption and cutthroat competition. The Knights worked to protect both skilled and unskilled laborers, men and women, Irish, German, Italian, Negro, Mexican, and Anglo, the only group clearly rejected by the KOL were Asians, who faced a systematic and legalized discrimination across the West under the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The KOL had extended throughout the industrializing US,

²⁰ Romero, "Railways in Mexico" 477-506.

²¹ Gerald Friedman, "Strike Success and Union Ideology: The United States and France, 1880-1914", *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 48, Issue 1 (March 1988): 13.

publishing newspapers in larger cities, holding regular meetings, dances, and other community events to unite the producing classes.²²

Labor organizations in Mexico began as early as 1850 with the creation of the first mutual aid societies, serving as an organization to develop a group savings plan to provide medical care and life insurance to cover burial charges. By 1864 two mutual aid groups were organized, La Sociedad Particular de Socorros Mutuos, and La Sociedad Mutua del Ramo de Sastrería, for tailors. These new groups expanded their role, demanding wage increases and reductions of work hours for their members, calling themselves, resistance societies, and prepared to physically defend themselves against the injustices of the capitalist state.²³

Mutual Aid societies spread across Mexico during the late 1860s with organizations forming in every industry from textiles, to mining and railroads. By 1870 Santiago Villanueva tried to unite the many different aid societies into one labor organization called the Centro General de los Trabajadores Organizados, to better defend labor in Mexico. Meeting for the first time in September 1870, the group called itself the Gran Círculo de Obreros de Mexico (GCOM). After his election as president of the GCOM in 1871, Villanueva continued to recruit additional mutual aid societies into the organization.²⁴ By 1871 subsidiaries formed in Toluca and San Luis Potosí and by 1876 the labor movement surged in San Luis Potosí as railway men and miners began to organize strikes.²⁵

²² Terrence Powderly "The Organization of Labor" *The North American Review*, Vol 135, (August 1882).

²³ *La Internacional*, 21 July 1878.

²⁴ Letter Juan Cano to Benito Juárez, 23 May 1870 doc 1864, Archivo Juárez, Biblioteca Nacional de México.

²⁵ Ferrocarril Central, *Informe tecnico del inspector del gobierno sobre la linea San Luis Potosi a Tampico*, 31 July 1882, Archivo Histórico de la Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes, México, D.F. 10/3137-1.

The GCOM supported several strikes in the early 1870s, beginning with an 1871 strike at the La Fama Montanesa factory in Tlalpan, with government troops forcing workers to return to their jobs. Another strike erupted in July 1872 against the English-owned mine, Real del Monte, near Pachuca, Hidalgo.²⁶ The mine owner announced a wage reduction from two pesos per day to one peso due to depressed silver prices. The GCOM provided moral support to the miners, sending contributions to the general strike fund. The miners demanded their original salary and a reduction of hours, from eighteen to sixteen per day.²⁷ The national press called on President Lerdo de Tejada to react swiftly against the miners, to prevent future strikes. Lerdo de Tejada sent in federal troops and deported many of the strikers to Campeche and the Yucatan where they were sentenced to work in labor camps.²⁸ Factory workers in Mexico City continued to press for employment improvements in 1873, receiving wages equivalent to sixteen cents per day for twelve hours work in the winter and up to fifteen hours work during the summer months. Workers routinely were given only five minutes to eat during the work day, with company foreman enforcing the strict standards throughout the factories.²⁹

Labor organizations in Mexico continued to struggle for workers' rights after Porfirio Díaz assumed the mantle of president in 1876. In 1885 strikes broke out in textile plants in Evalor (Tlaxcala), Cerritos (Orizaba), La Magdalena (Contreras), and San Antonio de Abad (Mexico City) when factory managers cut wages. In 1888 workers at the La Victoria plant in Puebla went on strike for three weeks with workers calling for the

²⁶ For an in-depth study of the Real del Monte mines see Robert W. Randall, *Real del Monte: A British Mining Venture in Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972).

²⁷ The workers involved in this uprising were most likely Indians captured in the northern desert or unknowing peasants forced or tricked into signing labor contracts which resulted in indentured service. For more information on these types of contracts see John Kenneth Turner, *Barbarous Mexico*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969).

²⁸ *El Socialista*, 18 August 1872.

²⁹ *El Socialista*, 23 January 1873.

restoration of wages and a reduction of hours. In 1889 strikes closed the El Molina factory in Veracruz, the San Fernando plant in Tlalpan and Cerritos.³⁰

Elias Fortuna led a revolt in the towns of Ciudad del Maiz, Rio Verde, Tamasopo, Guadalcázar, Lagunillas, Ciudad Fernández, Alaquines, Cárdenas and Cerritos, located in the middle region of San Luis Potosí. This agrarian movement began under the leadership of Maurucio Zavala in 1882 in response to the disruption of traditional society as foreign investors entered the Mexican mining and railroad industries, and the concomitant transition to a wage based labor system with commercial exchange. In 1884 miners in Charcas and Matehuala initiated a strike protesting against the poor work conditions and the high prices the company charged for meals and other supplies in the company stores. In 1886 and again in 1891, miners in Catorce initiated another strike in response to similar complaints.³¹

In 1881 Mexico granted major rail concessions to two national railways from Mexico City, the first – the Mexican Central – to El Paso, and the second – the Mexican National – to Laredo. The Mexican Central was completed in 1884, with the initial train arriving from Mexico City to Chicago on March 28, carrying Mexican diplomats and businessmen.³² The Mexican National was completed in 1888, running through the mining region of San Luis Potosí. Mexican rail construction throughout the 1880s

³⁰ Moises Gonzalez Navarro, *Las Huelgas Textiles en el Porfiriato* (Puebla: Editorial Jose Cajica, 1971): 36-40; Moises Gonzalez Navarro “La Huelga del Rio Blanco” *Historia Mexicana* Vol 6, (April/June 1957): 510-533.

³¹ María Isabel Monroy Castillo, Tomás Calvillo Unna. *Breve Historia del Estado de San Luis Potosí*. Electronic book available from the *Centro de Investigación en Informatica* website. http://copernico.mty.itesm.mx/phronesis/archi_txt/san_luis.txt

³² “From the City of Mexico, The Arrival of the First Through Train at Chicago” *New York Times*, 29 March, 1884: p2.

connected important mining centers in San Luis Potosí, Coahuila, Chihuahua, and Nuevo Leon to the port city of Veracruz as well as to the border stations with the US.³³



Mexican Northern Rail Lines in Operation about 1895

David M. Pletcher, *Rails, Mines, and Progress: Seven American Promoters in Mexico, 1867-1911*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1958), 24.

Mexico experienced a silver boom in 1876 with production steadily increasing to averages of 1,000 tons of ore per week with 20 ounces of silver and 700 pounds of lead per ton by 1885. Encouraged by the growing profits in Mexican mining, the Kansas City Smelting and Refining Company sent Robert S. Towne to establish an ore buying agency and secure rights to mines in the Sierra Mojada fields. In 1887, Towne formed the

³³ Luis Salazar, “Mexican Railroads and the Mining Industry” *American Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and Petroleum Engineers*, vol 32, (1902): 313-14.

Mexican Ore Company in Chihuahua City, assigning purchasing agents in the Sierra Mojada and Santa Eulalia mines in Coahuila, providing ore for the Kansas City smelters in El Paso. With the construction of the Mexican Central Railroad line from Mexico City to the Ciudad Juárez border town, ore deliveries to El Paso remained inexpensive, increasing profits for the Kansas City Smelting and Refining Company.³⁴

The Kansas Smelting and Refining Company built the El Paso Smelting Works, a large silver-lead smelter between 1885 and 1887 in El Carmen, Texas. Towne formed the Mexican Ore Company next, which provided enough ore to operate the El Paso smelter as well as the Kansas smelter operation. Towne's success led to his promotion in 1887 when the Kansas City Smelting and Refining Company was reorganized as the Consolidated Kansas City Refining Company. Towne was provided a sizeable share of company stock and made a vice president of the corporation, which would be a key rival to the emerging Guggenheim empire that was about to enter the Mexican smelting market.³⁵

With the completion of the El Paso smelter in 1887, Robert Towne and the Kansas Consolidated Company began construction of a blacksmith shop, a sampling mill, in addition to homes for plant managers, and several single family homes. The smelter operated a company store that offered credit to employees to purchase necessities

³⁴ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Sección de Guardia y Custodia/Libros Corporativos o Carptas Verdes, Sierra Mojada Unit doc 11. Sale of Volcan Mine and Dolores Mine by A.V. Ferrarta and M.G. Cuerra to Kansas City Smelting and Refining Company for \$30,000, dated 21 January 1890; Contract to exploit various mines located in Santa Eulalia, Chihuahua from P.R. Preto and L. Seijas to Kansas City Smelting and Refining Company dated 10 November 1897.

³⁵ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico: Sección Guardia y Custodia; Libros Corporativos o Carptas Verdes. Department of Titles, document 17. Charter and By-Laws of the Consolidated Kansas City Smelting and Refining Company. Mexico D.F. May 15, 1887; Editorial *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 3 May 1890, 489.

between paychecks, however the prices were considered high by workers in the camp.³⁶ By 1890 the population had grown to over 11,000 people, who were divided into Anglo and Mexican districts by a large wooden fence.³⁷

Just as the Guggenheim family was making its initial mining fortunes with the A.Y & Minnie mine, new struggles emerged as labor unions formed across the US. While only a handful of workers belonged to formal labor organizations in 1876, by 1880 as many as eighteen national labor organizations had formed in the US, with a total membership of about 350,000.³⁸ Labor unrest in the West resulted in strikes protesting wage cuts against the Union Pacific Railroad in 1884 and the Southwestern Railroad in 1885. Buoyed by the success of their strikes these western railway workers joined the KOL. By 1886 the ranks of the KOL swelled to nearly 1,000,000 workers. With its growing numbers and corresponding strength, the KOL strongly supported the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor's call for a standard eight-hour day, to begin on May 1, 1886. Nearly 340,000 workers walked off the job demanding an eight-hour day and by the year's end there were nearly 1,500 strikes involving over 400,000 workers.³⁹

By 1881, competing rail construction and mining in the southwestern US forced many companies in Mexico to rely on lower paid unskilled Mexican labor rather than imported unskilled labor from the US. While many Mexicans worked for the foreign companies, the majority of the higher paid skilled positions remained in the hands of

³⁶ Pedro Saucedo, Interview by Bill V. Abilez (translated by Bill V. Abilez) 30 November 1976, tape and transcript #265, University of Texas, El Paso Archive, 1-2.

³⁷ Chadwyck-Healey, Inc. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*, El Paso, Texas, May 1898, Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, 1983, Microfilm # 535, University of Texas, El Paso.

³⁸ Craig Phelan, *Grand Master Workman: Terrence Powderly and the Knights of Labor* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000) 178-185; Leon Fink, *Workingman's Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983).

³⁹ Jerry Wayne Chandler, "The Knights of Labor and the Southwestern Strikes" M.A. Thesis, Florida State University, 1970).

foreigners. Wage scales differed greatly between foreigners and native Mexicans. Unskilled Mexican laborers in the mining and rail industries earned between \$.75 and \$2.00 per day with unskilled foreign laborers receiving between \$1.25 and \$2.50 per day.



Mining regions in Mexico

Mexican workers, however, were not the only group to form labor unions in the southern portion of the Great Western Desert. Many US workers moved to Mexico because they were unable to find employment in the US, or because they followed advertisements in the publications of the railroad brotherhoods. In many cases these Anglo-immigrants advanced quickly rising into the best paid positions much faster than they would have in the US. When these workers arrived in Mexico they generally settled into colonies along the main rail lines and segregated camps at the mines. As the number of US immigrants continued to grow in Mexico, the Anglo workers formed union locals.

In 1884 the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers founded its first chapter in Mexico, followed by the Order of Railway Conductors in 1885 and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen in 1886.⁴⁰

In 1885, the Ferrocarril Central announced a wage reduction for engineers on their line. The wage reduction caused 185 engineers from the United States to strike the line. When the railway hired engineers from other lines and promoted twenty Mexican firemen to replace the striking workers, the US immigrants retaliated by derailing several trains and beating the Mexican strikebreakers. President Díaz deployed federal and state troops to restore order and put an end to the strike, in one of the only incidents where force was used against foreign workers in Mexico. The company fired all of the strike leaders, but re-hired all of the remaining engineers and demoted the Mexican strikebreakers to their previous positions.⁴¹

The company's use of Mexican strike breakers caused union leaders to question further exclusion of Mexican workers from the union. In an effort to counteract this trend, the railroad industry the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers began recruiting Mexican workers in 1886, in an attempt to prevent their use as strike breakers by employers. The Knight of Labor also recruited railroad workers from Nuevo Laredo in 1887, in Monterrey and Puebla in 1889, and in Aguascalientes and Mexico City in 1900.⁴² When the union encouraged Mexican workers to join the local chapter, the Mexican government discouraged them from joining, threatening their jobs, and blacklisting them from other employment, and threatening probable prison terms.

⁴⁰ Ferrocarril Central, *Annual Report from the Board of Directors to the Stockholders* 1886 Archivo Histórico de la Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes, México, D.F. 10/3137-8.

⁴¹ Ferrocarril Central, *Annual Report* 1886, Archivo Histórico de la Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes, México, D.F. 10/3137-5.

⁴² Alfonso Lopex Aparicio, *El Movimiento Obrero en México* (Mexico City: Editorial Jus, 1958), 115.

Mexican union membership in US-based locals remained small and ineffective through the 1880s. However, by the 1890s, mine owners in Mexico formed Mine Owners' Associations (MOAs) in regions like Charcas, Catorce, and Matehuala, in the State of San Luis Potosí as a new tool to maintain the upper hand over labor.⁴³

While the Guggenheims were not immune to the labor troubles of the period, many other factors affected the profit margin of their mining investment, railway freight rates, smelting costs, and the unstable silver prices. By 1887 Meyer Guggenheim had grown frustrated with the expensive smelter processes taking a large portion of his mining profits. The Guggenheims sent their ores to several smelters to take advantage of lower costs when the opportunity presented itself. Before sending their ore to the smelter the mining company would sample the ore to determine its gold, silver, and lead content. When the ore was received by the smelter they would take their own sample often ending in a dispute over the composition of the actual ore quality that could lead to legal disputes between mine owners and smelter operators.⁴⁴ To avoid this problem with the smelters, Meyer decided that he should expand into mineral smelting as well as mining.

In 1887, Meyer Guggenheim met Edward Holden, part owner of the smelter in Globeville, Colorado, to discuss his plan to enter the smelter industry. Meyer bought \$80,000 worth of stock in Holden's smelter on the condition that his son Benjamin would be hired at the smelter to learn the business operations. In January 1888 Meyer had his partner Edward Holden announce the formation of the Denver Smelting and Refining Company and the plan to build the nation's most advanced smelter somewhere in

⁴³ Marcelo N. Rodea, *Historía del Movimiento Obrero ferrocarrillero en México, 1890-1943* (Mexico D.F: 1944), 82-83.

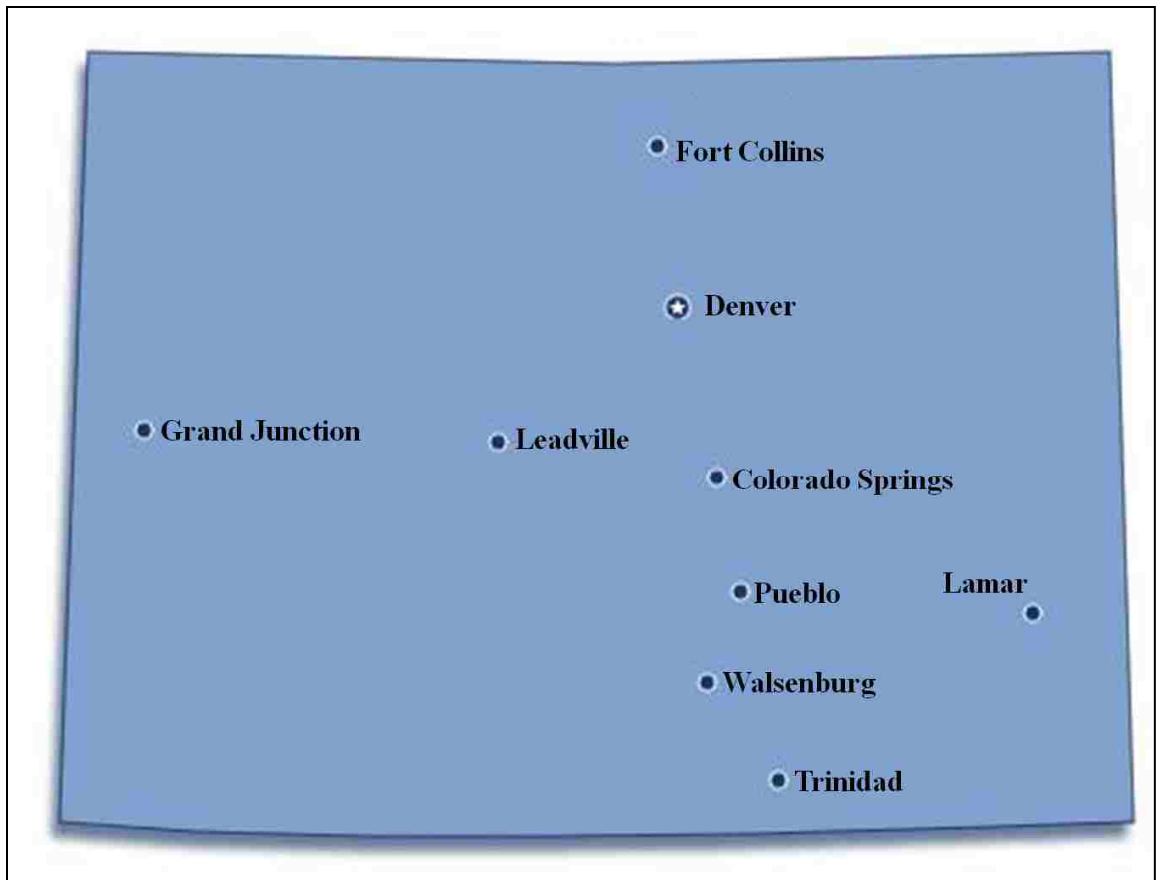
⁴⁴ Denver Public Library Western Archives, Guggenheim box, letters and ledger with smelter disputes.

Colorado. Meyer Guggenheim owned 51% of the company and Edward Holden owned the remainder. The next decision was where to build.⁴⁵

The three primary locations considered were Denver, because it was the transportation hub of Colorado; Leadville due to its centrality to the mines, and Pueblo near the Arkansas River. Pueblo rose to the top of the list due to its central location to the mining communities of Cripple Creek and Leadville, its proximity to coal, coke, and lime, located to the south in Walsenburg, needed for smelter processes, and its access to north-south and east-west rail lines, giving it easy connections with mining communities throughout the Southwest and Mexico; however, Pueblo had high railway freight rates and a small population resulting in higher labor costs. The Pueblo Board of Trade assured Holden and the Guggenheims that the construction costs in Pueblo would be much less than in Denver or Leadville and that they could keep the labor costs low. The Guggenheims proposed to build the smelter in Pueblo, if the land was provided free of cost and a \$25,000 bonus was paid by the city. Town leaders worked to raise the money to ensure the smelter's construction and the city council agreed to suspend all taxes on the smelter for ten years sealing the deal for the Guggenheim smelter in Pueblo, announced on April 10, 1888. With the new location of the smelter, the Guggenheims changed the name of the company from the Denver Smelting to the Philadelphia Smelting and Refining Company.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Hoyt, *The Guggenheims*, 59-73; Henry Dudley Teeter, "Smelting and Refining in Colorado" *Magazine of Western History*, (May1889): 64-69.

⁴⁶ Davis, *The Guggenheims*, 70-75.



Colorado Mining and Smelter Towns in the 1880s

As the smelter began operation the Guggenheims faced their first crisis, the price of silver fell from \$1.25 an ounce to less than a dollar and remained unstable through the early months of 1889. As the silver price stabilized the Philadelphia Smelter found itself caught in contracts negotiated several months earlier at a higher silver price. The smelter was also losing money on non-contract shipments when the silver price dropped between the time of agreement and the time of smelting.⁴⁷

The Guggenheim smelter faced a dilemma in the summer of 1889 when the workers demanded a reduction from twelve-hour days to eight-hours during the hot summer months; the Guggenheims agreed, with a concomitant wage cut. When the

⁴⁷ Denver Public Library Western Archives, Guggenheim box, letters and ledger with smelter disputes.

smelter men pushed for an extension of the eight-hour agreement for the rest of the year, the Guggenheims refused and the smelter workers went on strike, keeping the smelter closed for two months. Ores piled up in the yard and the price of metals continued to drop, leading to economic disaster for the Guggenheim smelting operations.⁴⁸

Defeating the strike the Guggenheims reopened the smelter requiring a twelve-hour day from its workers. Even with the men back to work the Philadelphia Smelting Company continued to lose money for several months due to low metal prices. By the end of 1889 the smelter had lost nearly \$500,000 dollars, threatening the fortune made earlier by the A.Y. & Minnie mines. Unable to sustain more losses, Holden offered to sell his 49% share, and Meyer Guggenheim quickly sold his stock in the Globe smelter and bought the remainder of the Philadelphia Smelting company. When the smelter resumed operations in the fall of 1889, the price of silver stabilized at about 93 cents per ounce, much lower than the high of \$1.25, but for smelter operations the key was price stability to set contracts and price agreements for the ore.⁴⁹

The McKinley Tariff Act of 1890 increased the protective tariff on many manufactured goods imported into the US, as well as some manufacturing materials such as lead. In 1889, the Guggenheim Exploration Company was operating profitable smelters in Colorado and sent Simon Guggenheim to Mexico to contract with independent mine owners for the Philadelphia Smelter to process their ores in Pueblo, Colorado. These Mexican ores were attractive to the smelter because they were cheap to purchase due to the heavy lead content. The new 1890 tariff on lead, 1.5 cents per pound, was so prohibitively expensive, silver mines in Mexico were unable to ship ores into the

⁴⁸ "Smelters Stop Work" *The Sunday Inter Ocean*, Chicago, 18 September 1889.

⁴⁹ "Telegraphic Tidings, Trust Against Trust" *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican*, 3 March 1890.

US for smelting and maintain a profit, resulting in the growth of the Mexican smelting industry in the 1890s. Smelter construction began in Monterrey, San Luis Potosí, Aguascalientes, Velardeña, Torreón, and Mapimi in 1890. To complicate matters, the Mexican government had also placed a tax on all metals shipped out of the country, resulting in a double tax on silver-lead ores headed to the US. Daniel Guggenheim was sent to Mexico in 1890 to investigate mining properties as well as to obtain a contract to build a series of smelters in Mexico.⁵⁰

In 1890, Daniel and Murray Guggenheim traveled with Edgar Newhouse, the former chemist and assayer for the Consolidated Kansas City Smelter, to Mexico to explore the possibility of building a smelter there. After visiting several mines across northern Mexico, the Guggenheims decided to build two smelters in Mexico, the first in Aguascalientes to support southern Mexico, and the other in Monterrey to process ore from the northern desert region. Newhouse had met President Porfirio Díaz previously and the Guggenheims envoy in Monterrey, Dave Kelly, was acquainted with General Bernardo Reyes, the governor of Nuevo Leon. These men were dispatched to obtain favorable concessions from the Mexican government to build the smelters.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico: Sección Guardia y Custodia; Libros Corporativos o Carptas Verdes. Planta de Monterrey doc 2. Aviso al Gobierno de Nuevo Leon de la adquisicion de terranos para la construccion de una hacienda de fundicion. Monterrey, 26 de Marzo de 1891; Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico: Sección Guardia y Custodia; Libros Corporativos o Carptas Verdes. Planta de Monterrey, document 1, sheet 3 and 4; Emerterio de la Garza, representing the Gran Fundicion Nacional Mexicano, advises the Secretary of Development of the State of Nuevo Leon that the smelter is ready to begin operations. Monterrey, Marzo 4 de 1893; Editorial. "The McKinley Tariff Bill" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, (4 Jan 1890): 9; "Driving Out the Smelters" *New York Times*, 18 May 1890; "The Silver-Lead Ore Job" *New York Times*, 3 February 1891.

⁵¹ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico: Sección Guardia y Custodia; Libros Corporativos o Carptas Verdes. Monterrey Pland document 4. Concession del Gobierno del Estado de Nuevo Leon a Daniel Guggenheim. Referente a la exencion de contribuciones. Nuevo Leon, Monterrey, 5 Diciembre de 1890. Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico: Sección Guardia y Custodia; Libros Corporativos o Carptas Verdes Monterrey Plant document 4. *Periodoco Oficial*, Monterrey, tomo XXV num 57, Enero 20, de 1891; "Monterrey's Rapid Growth" *New York Times*, 31 July 1891.

The Guggenheims met with many government officials who agreed that the foreign investments made in Mexico would improve Mexico's economy and help industrialize and modernize the nation. The Guggenheims traveled to Monterrey to negotiate for exclusive rights for the Guggenheim smelter. Meeting with Bernardo Reyes, Daniel Guggenheim obtained an exemption of municipal and state taxes on the investment costs for the smelter construction. To receive this exemption, the smelter construction was required to cost at least 300,000 pesos and to be completed within eighteen months. To show good faith Daniel Guggenheim was required to pay a 4,000 peso deposit, General Reyes and Daniel Guggenheim signed the agreement on December 12, 1890. When Daniel Guggenheim met with President Díaz, the deal nearly made itself. Díaz wanted more smelters in Mexico in a move to become self reliant in ore processing, and the Guggenheims wanted to build the smelters. Díaz agreed to allow the free importation of all machinery and equipment for the construction of up to three smelters free from taxes and duties as well as exempting the smelters from taxes on all output from the smelters a concession to explore and exploit mines throughout the regions of the smelters.⁵²

While the Guggenheims received their concession to build the smelters, Mexico had given similar concessions to other companies as well. The Guggenheims faced competition from the Nuevo Leon Smelting, Refining, and Manufacturing Company, the concession held by a Spanish/Hungarian firm, the Compañía Minería, Fundidora y

⁵² Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico: Sección Guardia y Custodia; Libros Corporativos o Carptas Verdes *Planta de Monterrey document 1 and 7. Secretaria de Formentpo, Colonizacion, Industria y Comercio. Contract ratified between General Carlos Pacheco, Secretary of State and Department of Development, representing the Federal Executive, under the law of June 6, 1887 and Emilio Velasco, attorney representing Daniel Guggenheim, for the exploration and exploitation of all types of mines and the construction of three smelters, issued in Mexico City on October 11, 1890, Diario Oficial Octubre 15 de 1890 Numero 92, 1-5; Hayehudi, London, 3 November 1909, 19.*

Afinadora de Monterrey, a Mexican-held firm, and Robert Towne's Compañía Metallúrgica Mexicana.⁵³

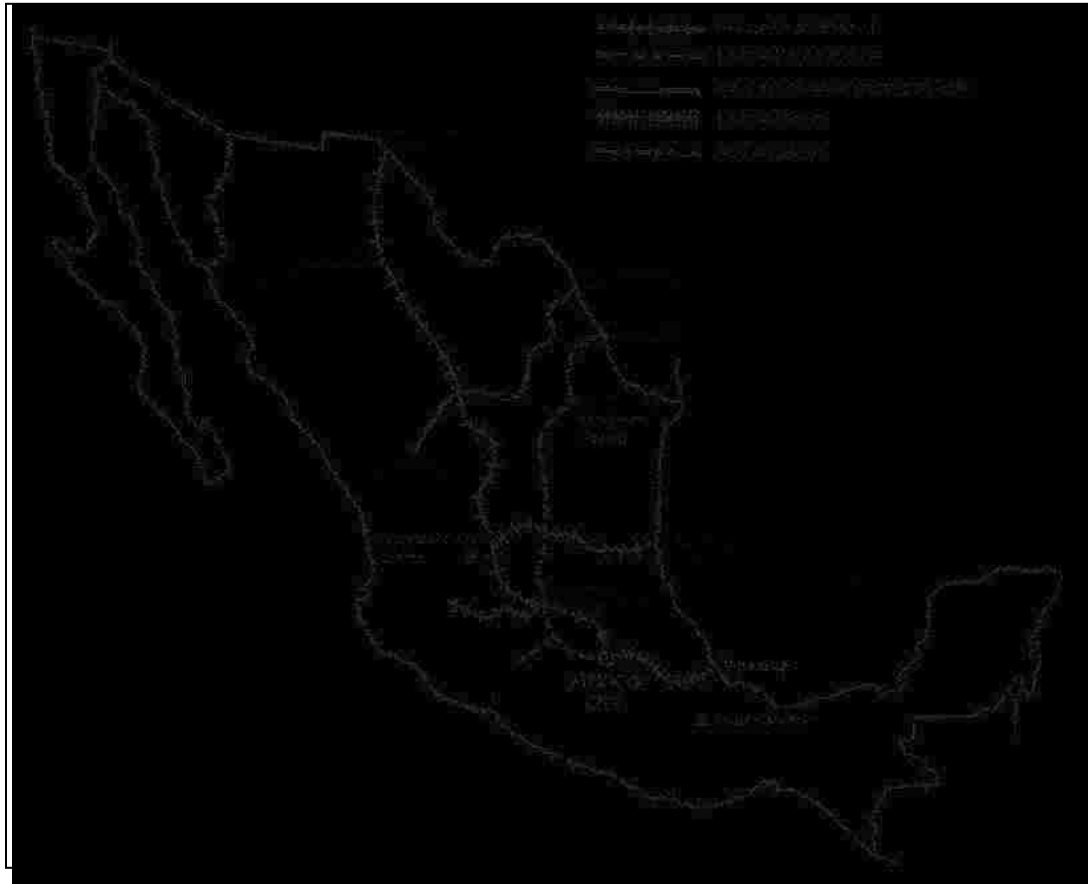
The first smelter, in Monterrey, was completed in 1892, after a few difficulties during the construction phase. When shipping the machinery for the smelter from Chicago, the border officials explained that the official concession allowing the tax free importation of the equipment had not arrived. The Guggenheims placed the machinery in storage for over two months while they awaited the concession paperwork. Once the concession was approved the machinery was shipped to Monterrey, however the spur line to the smelter had not been completed, causing another delay to the smelter's completion. Once completed the smelter earned a profit of \$60,000 in its first month of operation, and continued to earn a profit every month afterward. The success of the smelting business in Monterrey led the Guggenheims to purchase the Tepezala copper mine in Aguascalientes as well as property for another smelter. By 1895 the smelters in Pueblo, Monterrey, and Aguascalientes were earning a profit of over \$1 million a year for the Guggenheim family.⁵⁴

Railroad expansion throughout the Great Western Desert opened the territory to a seemingly endless number of immigrants moving throughout the desert region searching for economic opportunity on both sides the US-Mexico border in the 1880s. The growth

⁵³ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería México, México: Sección Guardia y Custodia; Libros Corporativos o Carptas Verdes Planta de Monterrey, document 22A. Testimonio de la protocolizacion de certificado de la constitucion legal de la Gran Compania Nacional Mexicana de Fundicion, Diciembre 17, de 1891; Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico: Sección Guardia y Custodia; Libros Corporativos o Carptas Verdes Planta de Monterrey, document 2. Aviso de quedisfrutaran de la franquicias concedes a la Zgran Fundicion Nacional Mexicana. Nuevo Lean, Monterrey, Enero 17 de 1891; Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico: Sección Guardia y Custodia; Libros Corporativos o Carptas Verdes Planta de Aguascalientes, document 14. Contrato de venta y tranferencia que Daniel Guggenheim hace en favor de The Great National Mexican Smelting Company. Nuevo Leon, Monterrey Enero 20, de 1891.

⁵⁴ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería México, México: Sección Guardia y Custodia; Libros Corporativos o Carptas Verdes, *Memorias de la Secretaria de hacienda, 1879-1897, Registro General de Minas abierto en virtud de lo dispuesto en la Ley de Propiedad Minero*, document 157, p 446-705.

of mining in the region resulted in a trans-national migration of workers moving freely across the permeable border that prior to 1890, had been classified as a frontier, a region sparsely populated and with little economic development.



Guggenheim smelters in Mexico 1895

Many towns emerged around important mining centers, in Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Montana, and Idaho. In some cases the mining towns grew to be permanent towns and cities, where the mining claims proved substantial. However, other mining camps were ephemeral, disappearing as quickly as they emerged, when the ore was exhausted. Similar mining centers emerged in the Mexican states of Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Sonora, Chihuahua, and San Luis Potosí.

From 1876 to 1890, the Great Western Desert transformed from a region where men and women struggled against nature for survival into a territory increasingly connected by a sprawling rail network where men and women increasingly fought for survival against employers, trying to secure adequate wages in the expanding mining and rail industries of the Pan-American West. As the mining companies transformed into international corporations, mining towns emerged in the US and Mexico with the larger populations of wage workers to support the mines. In these mining towns the concentrated population of workers often united into labor unions in an effort to protect wages and safe work conditions, leading to strikes and occasional violence. The transnational growth of labor organizations in the US and Mexico caused many industrial leaders to seek government support when confronting labor disputes. State and federal government leaders often assisted businesses resulting in broad discontent not only with industry, but also with the pro-business government policies in the US and Mexico after 1890.

CHAPTER 3

DRAWING BATTLE LINES IN THE SAND: LABOR UNIONS

IN THE GREATER WEST

The economic strength of corporations grew exponentially from the late 1880s through the first decade of the 1900s. Labor unions also grew in this period as a cooperative front against profit driven employers. In their efforts to maintain control over labor and the means of production business leaders gained state and federal support in the escalating battle against labor unions. Forming large corporate alliances to reduce economic competition and maintain their advantage over workers many corporations merged, forming cooperative trusts in smelting, mining, rail, and other large industries as they tried to eliminate unified labor organizations including the Knights of Labor (KOL), American Federation of Labor (AFL), and Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). As labor unions grew increasingly militant, corporations hired private armies of Pinkerton guards and routinely convinced government leaders to deploy military forces to protect mining properties. While early scholarship has analyzed labor struggles in the eastern and western US, little comparison has been made concerning the similar challenges of industrialization, urbanization, and capitalism faced in Mexico, as the Great Western Desert region as a whole underwent a labor transformation at the turn of the nineteenth

century. The escalation of the labor war continued unabated across the Great Western Desert with little or no regard for the international border separating the US and Mexico.

The growth of mining corporations required a large labor supply to operate the machinery to mine the massive amounts of ore required for profitable production quotas. After the large initial investments of machinery, labor wages were the most expensive recurring cost of mine operations. Mine owners continually looked for ways to cut costs and increase profits and wages were routinely adjusted based on the shifting financial goals of the corporations. Miners, fighting for their pay, realized that their bargaining strength increased against employers when they united. Small mining unions formed throughout the region with limited success. Miners found that they could gain ground against their employers as local unions worked together and formed larger regional and national organizations to demand industry wide change.

As western mining became increasingly industrialized and politicized in the late 1890s, workers suffered the greatest hardships during the struggle for global dominance between industry giants such as Guggenex and ASARCO.¹ To remain competitive in the challenging metals market, mining corporations had to increase efficiency and decrease production costs; labor remained one of the easiest targets for cost reductions. As the labor market grew more congested in this period, workers who in the past could simply leave to find a better job nearby, found that the monopoly control of the mining trusts

¹ ASARCO managed eleven major smelting companies, consisting of eighteen smelters and refineries in US and one major smelter in Mexico representing 60% of all smelting operations in the US and 20% of the Mexican smelting market. While Guggenex controlled only four smelting properties in the US, its control of 70% of the smelters in Mexico and extensive mining properties allowed the Guggenex unprecedented control over ore availability for competing smelters in the US and Mexico. Editorial, "The Lead Smelters Corporation" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXII, (18 May 1898) 376; Editorial, "The New York Stock Market in 1899" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXIX (6 January 1900) 30; "More Big Corporations: American Smelting and Refining Company Capital \$65,000,000" *The Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, 7 April 1899; Editorial, *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXVII (10 June 1899), 673; Editorial, "Colorado Arbitration Board Decision" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXVIII (2 September 1899), 286.

meant that nearly all mining jobs were subject to the same low wages. Workers continued to join the unions in increasing numbers to fight the battles against the corporate mines to maintain a fair wages.

Labor organizations grew in size and disagreements between international mining corporations became fiercer. By 1900, the struggle between workers and owners evolved into full scale war. Battle lines were drawn, violence between workers and employers escalated, and negotiation between the feuding parties became more difficult. On both sides of the international border corporate giants formed alliances with local and federal government leaders, and union leaders became determined to change the face of government in an effort to even the battlefield. Union leaders in the US had gained limited political support with the election of pro-labor candidates such as Davis H. Waite and John Shafroth to the Colorado Governor's office, Senator Robert LaFollette in Wisconsin and Senator William Jennings Bryan in Nebraska. In Mexico several opposition leaders stood against the pro-business policies of Porfirio Díaz, including Francisco Madero, Ricardo Flores Magón, Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama, and Camilo Arriaga, challenging local leaders in Coahuila, San Luis Potosí, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Nuevo Leon, in addition to protesting federal policies which supported the foreign corporations operating in Mexico.

The battle lines between labor and the mining corporations stretched across the US-Mexico border. Workers routinely fought for higher wages and safer work conditions across the Great Western Desert fighting a series of connected battles in the Western Mining War. The evolution of overall strategy and tactics on both sides of the war are evident in this trans-national struggle for dominance. The growth of unions in

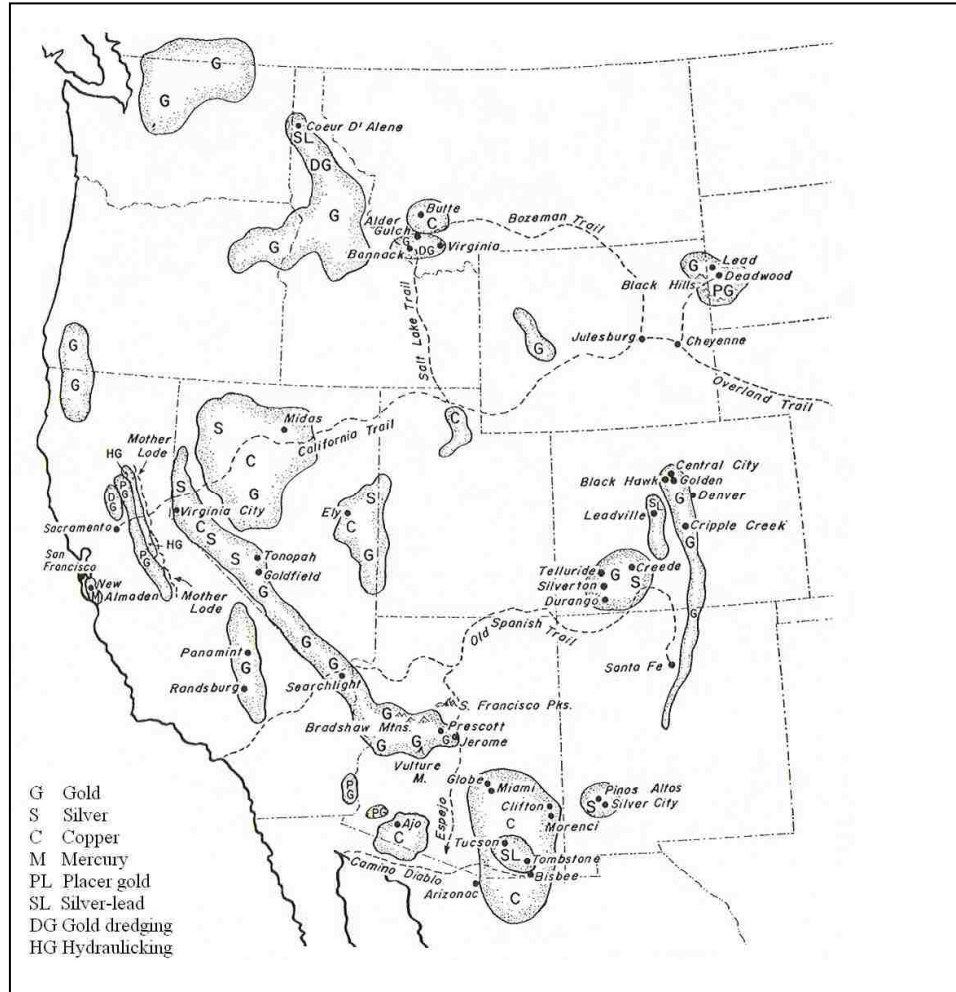
the US and Mexico, the expansion of violence by both workers and owners on both sides of the border, the alliance between mine owners and government leaders, and the eventual trans-national drive for political change by labor leaders, constitute the main elements of the war that was waged throughout the Great Western Desert.

Trans-national corporations with operations across the western mining region faced intense political challenges in addition to their struggle with labor. US government policies like the Sherman Silver Purchase Act (1890), McKinley Tariff (1890), and the economic depression of 1893-1897 had far reaching effects on corporations and labor throughout the Western Hemisphere, impacting mining profits and metals prices, resulting in protective tariffs in both the US and Mexico. Economic recession in the US routinely spilled over into Mexico as reduced global metals prices forced mines on both sides of the border to cut costs. During the boom years when profits were high, mine owners in the US and Mexico were more willing to pay higher wages for skilled laborers from the US and Great Britain reaping the benefits of higher productivity brought by their years of experience underground. However, during times of economic recession or depression, many high paid workers were replaced by lower paid foreign workers, often as scabs replacing striking union miners.²

Working people across the Western Hemisphere initiated a series of violent battles between 1880 and 1910, commencing what would become full scale war against their economic and political oppressors. The Knights of Labor, one of the earliest unions in western mining, reacted with deliberate violence when political negotiations failed to achieve their goals of an egalitarian society and fair wages. As miners in both Mexico

² Richard Loosbrock, "The Changing Faces of a Mining Town: the Dual Labor System in Elizabethtown, New Mexico" *New Mexico Historical Review* 74 (November 1999): 353-73.

and the US West stood in firm protest against the excessive wealth flaunted by mine owners, the industrial capitalists remained steadfast as they protected their wealth and power, and also engaged readily in the sponsorship of violent action.



Mining regions in the US West

Otis E. Young, *Western Mining: An informal account of Precious-Metals Prospecting, Placering, Lode Mining, and Milling on the American Frontier from Spanish times to 1893* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1970) 53.

As the West developed and matured socially and economically labor disputes in Mexico and the western US were virtually indistinguishable. Each region struggled for worker rights and fair wages, with similar strategy shifts throughout the 1880s. Labor

unions fought on the defensive, reacting to employer initiated cuts, to maintain wages and benefits in depression and recession periods, whereas in prosperous times unions maintained an offensive posture, with worker initiated strikes demanding increased wages, benefits, and improve standards of living.³ This cyclical shift is evident during the decade of the 1890s. In the relatively prosperous years of 1886-1892 labor strikes for the eight-hour day and wage increases by labor organizations were fought from an offensive position. However, defensive strikes against the reduction of wages were nearly twice as great in the depression years of 1893-1897. The return to offensive strikes began again in 1896, increasing in 1897, with battles to regain wages and benefits lost during the depression.⁴

The Knights of Labor were at the forefront of the battle in the 1880s. Originally a small secretive organization of craftsmen, the KOL expanded its membership to include skilled and unskilled workers alike in their battle against the corporate trusts. In western mining the Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World took the charge drawing battle lines to protect the rights of workers against profit-focused employers and corporate owners. US labor organizations participated in recruitment in Mexico as well, assisting with the organization of railway workers in Nuevo Laredo in 1887, Monterrey and Puebla in 1898, and Mexico City in 1900.⁵

Devastated by a disastrous strike in 1886, KOL membership dropped to only 100,000 members in 1890 and further declined to 14,635 members three years later. In Colorado, KOL membership declined to thirty-seven Labor Assemblies with only 2,736

³ Alvin H. Hansen, "Cycles of Strikes", *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 11, Issue 4 (December 1921): 618.

⁴ John M. Hart, *Anarchism & The Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 83.

⁵ Alfonso Lopez Aparicio, *El Movimiento Obrero en Mexico* (Mexico City; Editorial Jus, 1958), 115.

members in 1891.⁶ The KOL however, did have an impact on the labor movement across the nation. In 1890, the Knights of Labor spawned what would become two of the largest and most successful unions in the US. In January 1890, KOL Local 135 formed the United Mine Workers of America with the largest portion of the KOL forming the American Federation of Labor in the same year. The creation of these new organizations brought changes in strike strategy for labor, limiting union membership to skilled laborers and targeting key trades for strike actions. This strategy reduced the ability of owners and managers to bring in strikebreakers, which was much easier to do when unskilled laborers went on strike. These new unions also understood the importance of maintaining strike funds sufficient to support striking workers.⁷

In the 1880s, corporations often contracted foreign workers through labor agents. These agreements provided stable labor pools, with contractual requirements tied to transportation costs and wage advances made upon the laborers signing a contract, often to work in slave-like conditions. The contract labor system and the evils associated with padrones were challenged and deemed illegal. In 1885 the KOL called for legislation to end contract labor and in response the US Congress passed the Foran Act, prohibiting the immigration or importation of foreigners under contract or agreements to perform labor in the US. Labor contractors continued to operate secretly throughout the US West, with corporations eager to accept the cheap labor.⁸ While there are no documents indicating that the Guggenheim smelters or mines hired immigrant laborers from contracting agencies, it can be assumed that they did based on the size of their operations throughout

⁶ Colorado Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Third Biennial Report, 1891-1892* (Colorado Springs: The Gazette Printing Co., 1892) 47.

⁷ Harold Underwood Faulkner, *Politics, Reform and Expansion 1890-1900* (Harper & Row, 1959), 87.

⁸ US Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 164 (February 26, 1885).

Mexico and the US West in conjunction with the numbers of contract laborers employed during the period.

In the context of the US progressive era, the contract labor system was definitely repressive, though no more so than the standard labor practices of many corporations. There were positive advances for labor too, with the acceptance of immigrant groups into unions and the assimilation of immigrants into US and Mexican society. Although many immigrants may not have been welcomed into western communities, they faced many of the same struggles as the white working class.

While the contract labor system in the US was rendered illegal by the Foran Act, the labor system in Mexico received harsh criticism from progressive writers like John Kenneth Turner who characterized the *enganche* system in Mexico as slave labor. Based upon these descriptions the labor conditions in Mexico seem much harsher than those of the United States, though upon closer examination, many similarities are seen throughout North America during the latter years of the nineteenth century. While much of the US West relied on the contract labor system, Mexico relied on what appeared to be an illegal slave labor system, dependent on the capture of Indians and trapping of lower class workers into contracts of debt peonage.⁹

Having formally abolished slavery through constitutional measures Mexico continued to practice de facto slavery through the guise of forced penal labor for captured rebel Indians, and compelled contract labor, known as *enganche*, of poor peasants. With its large Indian and peasant population, Mexico did not need to contract for immigrant laborers like the US in the 1890s, or 1900s, though the *enganche* system does, in some ways, resemble the contract labor systems of the United States.

⁹ Kenneth Turner, *Barbarous Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969).

Under the *enganche* system, labor contractors, often state sponsored, would manipulate and coerce peasants to sign contracts leading them to dangerous plantation and mine work. Illiterate peasant and Indian workers often received false promises from labor recruiters who intentionally misled them into signing the work contracts. Other potential slave laborers were drugged or abducted after a long night of drinking, waking to find themselves imprisoned in the labor camps. While this system was clearly cruel and inhumane, many of the same tactics were used by agents for contracted labor in the US. Workers throughout the Great Western Desert and beyond were contracted by labor agents who literally lied, cheated, and kidnapped to meet the contractual requirements of the large industrial corporations.

The rapid rate of Chinese immigration to the US caused great concern among much of the white population of the West. After the Gold Rush of 1849, Chinese immigrants rushed to the US West coast chasing the promise of fast riches. Much of the first transcontinental railroad was constructed by Chinese laborers working on the Central Pacific line from 1864 to 1869. By 1880, nearly 75,000 Chinese immigrants were in California, with thousands more in Washington, Utah, and Colorado. Growing unemployment throughout the region was conveniently blamed on the Chinese immigrants resulting in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, signed by President Chester Arthur, shutting the door for Chinese immigrants for ten years, and renewed in 1892.¹⁰

Life in the mining camps of the Great Western Desert remained relatively consistent from camp to camp. Many miners would move from mine to mine throughout the West in search for higher wages, or when unemployed, to find any work at all. Mines

¹⁰ George Seward, *Chinese Immigration, in its Social and Economic Aspects* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), <http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/immigration/outsidelink.html/http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:896990>.

throughout the desert region relied on immigrants for labor, however in the US the immigrants were the poor working class, and in Mexico most of the immigrants were the engineers, managers and owners of the mines who enjoyed a relative life of luxury compared to the native workers. Mexican miners moved freely across the US-Mexico border in search of work while other immigrant groups routinely remained within the confines of the US when looking for work.

As industrialization continued to spread through the US West, the re-election of President Porfirio Díaz in 1884 marked a new era for Mexican development. Díaz was determined to bring progress to Mexico and strengthen Mexican industry and manufacturing to ensure Mexico's place among the world's advanced nations. Díaz was determined to bring foreign investors to Mexico along with the advanced manufacturing and industrial skills from Europe and the United States to achieve his goals.

The Porfirian government remained dedicated to the larger vision of industrial growth, promised that the pain workers experienced as Mexico industrialized would be temporary, and should be endured for the good of the nation. Investors insisted on cheap labor, with US government publications emphasizing the importance of a manageable labor force. The 1885 US Consular Report reported that "one of the most important factors in favor of United States' investors is labor, docile and easily managed."¹¹ The Díaz administration assured cheap labor for investors, guaranteeing labor compliance with military force if necessary.

With the growing number of industrial laborers and the growing discontent with Mexico's labor policies, labor organizations began to spread in the large industrial centers of Mexico. Beginning as an anarchist organization in 1870, the Gran Círculo de

¹¹ Foreign Commerce Bureau. *Consular Report XVII* (Washington: December 1885): 253-58.

Obreros de México (GCOM) grew more involved in labor organization in the 1880s and 1890s. The GCOM became directly involved with the strike against the Real del Monte mine in 1872, providing monetary and moral support for workers demanding reinstatement of former wage levels and a reduction in work hours from sixteen to twelve per day. While the strikers were unsuccessful and many of them were deported to Campeche and the Yucatan as forced laborers, Mexico City Newspaper coverage of the strike led labor leaders in the US to notice Mexico.¹²

While strikes were not prohibited by the 1857 Mexican Constitution, there were no clear protections for workers either. Most states enacted laws protecting industry, patterned after the 1871 Federal District's Penal Code, imposing fines and imprisonment for anyone attempting to "impede the free exercise of industry and labor."¹³ Mexico experienced labor violence in the 1880s as Mexican industry struggled with low silver prices and a requirement for mine owners to improve industrial processes and cut costs, increasing workers hours and decreasing wages. Managers at the Piños Altos mine in Chihuahua paid 50% of all wages in company scrip, good only at the company store, despite prolonged protests by the miners. In January 1883 a riot broke out when workers complained about the company scrip and demanded silver pesos. Trying to quell the violence the mine manager was injured and later died. Federal troops were deployed to the mine and arrested five "conspirators," Blas Venegas, Cruz Baca, Ramon Mena, Juan Valenzuela, and Francisco Campos. These men were subjected to a military court martial and summarily executed for the rest of the miners to witness.¹⁴ By subjecting these men

¹² El Socialista, August 18, 1872. Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

¹³ Moises Gonzalez Navarro, *El Porfiriato: La Vida Social Vol 4 of Historia Moderna de Mexico*, edited by Daniel Cosío Villegas, (México : Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1956), 298, 303.

¹⁴ Gaston Garcia Cantu, *Socialismo en Mexico: Siglo XIX* (México: Ediciones Era, 1969), 110-11.

to military justice, the Mexican government demonstrated that it viewed the eruption of labor violence as a military matter.

As the miners' strike was ending a group of sixty students in Mexico City were arrested for protesting Díaz's re-election bid. The protestors argued for peasant land rights and an end to the growth of foreign investors flooding into Mexico and draining the wealth of the nation. While the protestors did manage to garner support in the local area, with nearly 2,000 members, they were not successful in preventing the re-election of Porfirio Díaz in 1884. Anti-Díaz movements continued throughout Mexico during the 1880s as Indian groups, peasants, and middle-class professionals continued to call for an end to the flood of foreign investors draining the natural resources of Mexico. The Antireelectionista movement was suppressed by the end of 1893 and the organization leaders were jailed.¹⁵

Additional strikes erupted at the Charcas mine and Matehuala mine in 1884, the Catorce mine in 1886 and again in 1891. Railway and textile workers also fought for higher wages and reduced hours striking over 250 times from 1880-1900. The KOL assisted striking railway workers in Monterrey and Puebla, providing encouragement and limited amounts of food and money in 1898. The labor war that erupted in the 1890s was inevitable as both sides continued to increase the stakes with each dispute.¹⁶

In addition to industrial strikes, Mexico also faced peasant revolts throughout the 1880s and 1890s in response to Porfirian land reform laws and property laws. Peasants revolted in San Luis Potosí in 1879 and 1882. Three thousand Huesteca Indian peasants

¹⁵ Ethel Duffy Turner, *Ricardo Flores Magón y El Partido Liberal Mexicano* (Morelia, Michoacan; Editorial "Erandi"), 18; Florencio Barrera Fuentes, *Historía de la Revolución Mexicana: la etapa precursora* (Mexico, 1956), 27-8.

¹⁶ Kim Voss, *The Making of American Exceptionalism: The Knights of Labor and Class Formation in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994).

fought against land owners and government officials in San Luis Potosí, with “Land to the tiller!” as their battle cry, attacking the large Barragan estate as well as Governor Pedro Diez Gutierrez’ La Penci Hacienda. The governor called on federal troops, led by General Bernardo Reyes, to crush the revolt, and hundreds of peasants were killed.¹⁷

Many of Mexico’s cities rapidly industrialized as government taxes increased through the rapid extraction of the nation’s natural resources. Rich mineral deposits fed the smelters and blast furnaces of the iron and steel complexes in Monterrey; rich coal and silver deposits in Zacatecas and San Luis Potosí kept the multitude of Guggenheim mines and smelters in operation. While rural workers sought out jobs in large cities like Monterrey and Mexico City, labor recruitment for the many mines spread across the desert away from urban centers remained difficult at best.¹⁸

Industrial growth came rapidly in the early 1890s, with light industrial shops spreading throughout Mexico’s largest cities. In Monterrey, a large steel plant began production in the 1890s along with the Guggenheim Smelter in Monterrey. Mexico’s industrialization had a huge impact on the economy with the annual value of manufacturing production jumping from \$75 million in 1877 to \$205 million in 1910. As Mexico underwent its industrial transformation, the indigenous Indian communities were disrupted as agricultural prices drastically declined, forcing much of the population to work as wage labor to survive.¹⁹ While many Mexican peasants went looking for jobs in the cities, labor shortages led to drastic labor recruiting techniques across Mexico. In

¹⁷ *El Estandarte*, November 1910 – May 1911. Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México. While the original revolt was not covered by the Mexican press, memories of these revolts and the abuses of the Governor and other land owners were discussed as the early battles of the Revolution erupted in these same locations in 1910-1911.

¹⁸ David Walker, “The Mexican Industrial Revolution and its Problems: Porfirian Labor Policy and Economic Development, 1876-1910” (M.A. Thesis, University of Houston, 1976), 25-6.

¹⁹ Foreign Commerce Bureau, *Commercial Relation* (Washington, 1911), 1.

many instances judges would sentence peasants to forced labor in lieu of prison sentences, other peasants and Indians were captured in raids and forced into labor camps.²⁰

Within a year of the McKinley Tariff's implementation Daniel Guggenheim began investigating opportunities to build a smelter in Mexico. The Guggenheims planned to build two smelters in Mexico, the first in Monterrey to serve the Northern and Western portions of the country, and the second in Aguascalientes for the southern and central regions. Daniel Guggenheim met with General Bernardo Reyes, Secretary of War and Governor of the state of Nuevo Leon to discuss his plans to invest in his state capital, Monterrey. Excited by this prospect, General Reyes acted as an intermediary, introducing Daniel Guggenheim to President Porfirio Díaz to discuss his investment plans. Díaz quickly agreed to the proposal and granted a concession in October 1890 for the Guggenheims to explore for new mines and construct the smelters for Northern Mexico.²¹

In Nuevo Leon, General Bernardo Reyes instituted a state industrialization program in line with the national policy. From 1885 to 1890 many foreign companies invested in Mexican silver mines taking advantage of import tariff exemptions for industrial equipment and lucrative tax exemptions. As mine output increased in the late 1880s, the two primary smelters in operation were the Guggenheim plant in Pueblo, Colorado and Kansas City Smelting and Refining Company owned by August Meyer.

²⁰ Turner, *Barbarous Mexico*, 150-180.

²¹ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico, Libros Corprotivos, Planta de Monterrey, documents 1, 7. Secretaria de Formento, Colonizacion, Industria y Comercio. Contract ratified between General Carlos Pacheco, Secretary of State and Department of Development, representing the Federal Executive, under the law of 6 June 1887, and Emilio Velasco, attorney representing Daniel Guggenheim, for the exploration and exploitation of all types of mines and the construction of three smelters, issued in Mexico City on October 11, 1890, Diario Oficial, October 15, 1890, Number 92, 1-5.

While tax exemptions lured many US companies into Mexico, demand for Mexican ore kept them there. Silver-lead exports from Northern Mexico expanded from 1,000 tons in 1884 to over 41,000 tons in 1887.²² By 1887 the US consul to Matamoros estimated that US companies had invested over \$20 million in silver mines across Northern Mexico.²³

The rise in silver prices in the US, due to the 1890 Sherman Act and the McKinley Tariff, prompted silver miners throughout Colorado to petition for increased wages. Miners in Aspen complained of wage disparities compared to Leadville and Comstock, though mine owners explained that the increase in silver prices was allowing the companies to recover losses from the previous years. The Aspen silver miners accepted the disparity, fully expecting to see wage increases in the near future as mine profits repaid the investments of owners. The quick slump in silver, however, left the miners with low wages and increased frustration with mine companies. The 1890 strike against the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad by Denver switchmen brought Aspen mining to a halt. With the railroad not moving, cars loaded with ore filled the side rails causing several of Aspen's largest mines to close down until the strike was resolved. This impacted merchants in the mining areas as well since unemployed miners could not purchase goods for their families.²⁴

While unions continued to gather members, industrial leaders continued to test new strategies to fight organized labor. By 1890, companies battling against unions and labor strikes discovered a new weapon—the injunction—an improvement to the

²² Ferrocarril Central, Annual Reports of the Board of Directors and Informes anuales de los representanted del gobierno, 1884-1887, Archivo Histórico of the Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes, Mexico City.

²³ US Consular Reports, #148, January 1893, Archivo Histórico of the Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes, Mexico City.

²⁴ Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *Aspen: The History of a Silver-Mining Town, 1879-1893*, (Oxford University Press, 1986), 210.

“Conspiracy Law” used to arrest striking laborers and labor leaders. Injunctions, freely issued by the courts, served as a tool to capture and hold labor leaders as prisoners of war, further evidence that managers and owners were viewing the labor violence within a military frame of reference. Violence associated with strikes and lockouts increased with each injunction, while the disillusionment of laborers toward the American justice system grew. Additionally, industry leaders formed owners’ organizations, hired private guards, and requested government troops to help put down strikes. Labor disputes continued to escalate, when the owners dispatched armed guards, the unions formed armed squads; when owners issued injunctions and captured union men, strikers captured “enemy combatants” as well.

Beginning its mining operations in Colorado in 1872, the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company opened dozens of coal mines across Colorado and in the neighboring states of New Mexico, Wyoming, and Utah, trying to cut the cost of transportation of expensive fuel and steel from the coal fields and mills in the East. These mines supported the newly expanded iron works in Pueblo and provided coal fuel throughout the Colorado mining towns of Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Denver, and Leadville.²⁵

The Rockefeller controlled Colorado Fuel and Iron (CF&I) company was the largest private employer and the largest private landowner in Colorado. As the only fully-integrated steel works west of the Mississippi River, CF&I manufactured the rails, nails, and wire that literally built the entire western region of the United States. New workers travelled by train from New York and other large cities in the eastern US, with promises of high wages and long term employment. When the laborers arrived at the

²⁵ The Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Company Annual Report 1896, Americas Corporate Foundation 1896, ProQuest Historical Annual Reports, 13.

CF&I properties in Primero, Ludlow, El Moro, Walsenburg, and Florence they found themselves housed in temporary shacks and then forced to work almost immediately upon arrival. CF&I employed large groups of immigrant labor in the coal mines and the iron works in Pueblo.²⁶

As in many communities with large immigrant populations, many workers maintained friendships and alliances based on nationality and language. Joseph Velikonja, an immigrant miner in Walsenburg during the late 1890s, explained that once the miners reached the camps, foremen organized work gangs based on nationality and language. While different groups often clashed outside of the mines, everyone worked together underground watching for unusual events that might result in a cave-in or explosion that would kill miners regardless of their race or language. It was important to trust the people around you in the mines, a process that was strengthened outside the mines in the bars and clubs and churches. In the camps of Colorado employing predominantly foreign miners, brotherhood developed by necessity. Having an adopted extended family created a modicum of normalcy for many immigrant miners.²⁷

The multi-ethnic population of mining towns in Arizona resembled hundreds of other mine communities in the desert region. Originally settled by nomadic Apache Indians, new immigrants from the eastern US, Mexico, China, England and Ireland quickly moved into the southwestern desert following the construction of the railroads. While most settlers moved to Arizona in the 1860s and 1870s to mine for silver and gold, by 1890 most of the easily mined ore had been recovered. Gold and silver mines had become copper mines by the end of the nineteenth century.

²⁶ Joseph Velikonja, Huerfano County Oral Interview Project. Immigrant laborer in Walsenburg, Colorado. Interviewed in 1979. <http://www.kmitch.com/Huerfano/oral162.html>

²⁷ Ibid.

Phelps Dodge purchased the Morenci Mine, outside Phoenix, Arizona, in 1881 from the Detroit Copper Mining Company. Phelps Dodge continued to expand its operations in Arizona, acquiring the Copper Queen in Bisbee, and the Old Dominion Mine in Dominion in the late 1890s as well as extending into New Mexico and Mexico. Phelps Dodge employed a myriad of employees throughout its mines, including Italians, Greeks, Slavs, Mexicans, and US citizens, categorizing many Europeans as “white” and Japanese and Mexicans as foreigners. They built segregated camp towns to house their employees; building the required infrastructure of roads, waterworks, electricity networks, as well as homes, hospitals, stores and schools. The copper giant also constructed a network of railroads throughout the West, connecting its mines to smelters and major rail hubs reducing the delivery time for their copper to be shipped to market.²⁸

The Guggenheims completed construction of the Monterrey Smelter, the Gran Fundición Nacional, in 1892. Determined to surpass their local competitors Nuevo Leon Smelting, Refining and Manufacturing Company and the Compañía Minería, Fundidora y Afinadora de Monterrey, the Guggenheims signed contracts with a majority of Mexican mine owners for exclusive smelting rights.²⁹ In its first month of operation, the Gran Fundición Nacional earned \$60,000 in profits and recovered the total construction expenditures in its first year of operation. By 1893 the Monterrey smelter increased its smelting capabilities, employing 1,600 workers and refining 3,600 tons of ore each day, equal to the operations in the Pueblo smelter. However, profits at the Monterrey smelter

²⁸ Phelps Dodge website. <http://www.phelpsdodge.com/AboutUs/HistoryandMore/OurHistory.htm>

²⁹ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico, Libros Corprotivos, Planta de Monterrey, Monterrey Plant, Document 4. Concession del Gobierno del Estado de Nuevo Leon a Daniel Guggenheim. Referente a la excension de contribuciones. Nuevo Leon, Monterrey, a 5 de diciembre de 1890; Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico, Libros Corprotivos, Planta de Monterrey Monterrey Plant, Periodico Oficial, Monterrey, tomo XXV, Numero 57, 20 de Enero de 1891.

were greater than in Pueblo due to the lower labor costs paid in Mexico. The Guggenheims paid smelter workers in Pueblo \$2.00 a day in gold, while employees at the Monterrey smelter only received \$1.00 a day in silver, or \$.40 a day in gold. In an average week the Guggenheims paid \$19,200 a week for labor in Pueblo and only \$3,840 a week for labor in Monterrey for the same work.³⁰

In the mines of Zacatecas, the majority of laborers, pickmen, muckers, and trammers, were Mexican, though a few Japanese and Chinese were also employed. The miners were typically paid according to the work accomplished in a week, measured by the distance pickmen dug and the tons of rock muckers and trammers delivered. Contract laborers were also managed by a team captain who would provide an evaluation of the team's work during the week, which also affected the wages of miners. Weekly pay for pickmen, muckers, and trammers varied drastically from week to week with miners earning 200 pesos for a good week, and sometimes as little as thirty pesos the next week.³¹

Overall, workers in Mexico were relatively free to work in the mines and depart at will after their short contract periods were met. Though wages declined over time, the lowest paid miners continued to earn more than their rural counterparts. Labor disputes were rare prior to the 1870s; however, small disputes did occur as US foreigners settled permanently in the region, challenging local customs and taking the highest paid jobs. There were minor strikes and riots against demands for contract labor and the hiring of women to work in the mines; nonetheless, as the US managers learned the customs mining continued with little disruption into the 1900s.

³⁰ Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Guggenheims and the American Dream* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1967) 91.

³¹ Archivo de la Compañía Fresnillo. Fresnillo, Zacatecas. Memoria general, 1860-1880.

The Guggenheims continued to expand their operation in Mexico during the 1890s. The Guggenheims leased the Cedral mine for iron, the Reforma mine for lead, and the Encantada and Parena mines for silver. The company contracted with local mine owners throughout the region to secure exclusive contracts for the new smelters. Additionally the Guggenheims opened their purchasing office in Mexico City and sent agents to Zacatecas, Catorce, Matehuala, Guanajuato, Las Charcas, and Pachuca to broker for continuous ore supplies for the smelter. In 1893, Solomon Guggenheim also bought the Tepezala copper mine, and planned to process copper in the new Aguascalientes Smelter.³²

The next noteworthy dispute between the workers' and owners' organizations came when the miners' union in the Coeur d'Alene district of Idaho demanded that all underground workers in the mines be paid a uniform wage of \$3.50 per day. Historically, miners had received higher wages than muckers and trammers, who received on average \$3.00 a day in 1891. Traditionally, the miners operated the equipment to crush the rock to be processed for ore, muckers shoveled the mined rock into the tram cars and trammers pushed the tram carts preparing the ore to be shipped for processing. Due to technological advancements of air powered drills and other new equipment, many miners were demoted to muckers and trammers, thus lowering their wages. Again, many mine operators quickly agreed to the requested wage increase, though several, including

³² Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico, Libros Corprotivos, Planta de Monterrey, Tepezala Unit, document 42. Report from O.H. Harker, General Superintendent of Mines, on Tepezala district to M. Guggenheim's Sons, dated Monterrey, 4 November 1893; Jesús Gómez Serrano, *Aguascalientes: Imperio de los Guggenhiem* (México D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982).

Bunker Hill & Sullivan, balked and only conceded to the demands after a few days of a strike.³³

In January 1892, the Mine Owners Association announced a complete closure of the Coeur d'Alene mines in response to a regional railroad rate hike. The ulterior motive of the MOA was to create a hardship for the miners during the winter, breaking their spirit so they would return needing a job, even at lower wage rates. Successful in lowering the freight rates, the mine owners prepared to reopen the mines, posting announcements for workers, though at reduced wage rates, re-implementing the underground trammers and muckers at lower rates. The miners' union refused to accept the reduced wage rate and remained out of the mines. With the slumping silver and lead prices, the mine owners left the mines idle, through the winter.³⁴

In May, the mine owners appealed to Idaho Governor Willey to send in the militia, citing violence by the strikers. The Governor visited the area and met with the miners and the mine owners praising each side for the refined manner in which they had been handling the dispute. Deciding that the claims of the owners had been exaggerated, Governor Willey did not dispatch the militia. However, after the Governor's visit the mine owners began hiring strikebreakers increasing the tension with the union miners.³⁵

The plans of the MOA to use immigrant miners as strikebreakers were frustrated due to the Chinese exclusion laws, and the general support of unions by European-immigrant laborers. Mine owners were successful in finding non-union Anglo labor in the upper peninsula of Michigan and the Joplin district of Missouri, where wage levels

³³ "Legislative Acts and Legal Proceedings" *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 11 May 1892.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ "The Idaho Militia in Bed Shape for a Battle with the Striking Miners" *The New Haven Evening Register*, 23 May 1892.

were lower. The Coeur d'Alene mine owners offered transportation and higher wages, though still lower than those that the union members demanded. While mine owners placed newspaper ads for workers, union officials ran opposing ads to warn men that they would be heading into a strike in specific locations. One ad read as follows:

Notice To Workmen

Laboring men of union bodies and all other fair minded men are requested to keep away from Idaho and not to be misled by any employment agencies, by order, Trades Union Assembly.³⁶

When workers responded to the ads ran by the mine owners, union members remained at the mines to persuade the newly arriving miners to join the strike. Many left or joined the strikers, though others worked. Union members stopped a train with strikebreakers en-route to the mills by placing a flatcar on the tracks. At this point, the mine owners obtained an injunction against union leaders, members, and nearly anyone interfering with mining operations. By June 4, Governor Willey issued a proclamation calling for the striking miners to disperse and cease their interference of the mines.³⁷

Violence broke out on July 10, as guards fired upon a miner walking past the Frisco Mill. A group of union men hearing the gunfire raced to capture the mill, scattering out of range of the guards' rifle fire. The next confrontation between the miners and the guards at the Gem Mine, however, left one man killed. The miners continued to the Bunker Hill & Sullivan Mine demanding that all non-union men be discharged or the mill would be blown up.³⁸ In light of the violence, the Governor declared martial law and dispatched the militia to control the situation. The troops were held back for a few days due to continued threats from the union men that they would

³⁶ "Advertisement" *Duluth Daily News*, 26 May 1892.

³⁷ "Coeur D'Alene Trouble" *New haven Evening Register*, 13 July 1892.

³⁸ "Miners are Winning: The Scabs are Walking Out" *Tacoma Daily News*, 12 July 1892.

blow up the mill if the militia arrived before the non-union workers were discharged. By the time the militia arrived on July 14, the violence had ended in an apparent union victory. But once the militia assumed control of the area, the Sheriff and Marshall, both union men, were removed from office and the temporary Sheriff arrested the union men. Martial law continued for four months as military troops protected the mines and non-union labor. The strike was defeated, though the tattered union survived with workers returning to the mines at the reduced wage rate in November.³⁹

The Guggenheims and other foreign mine owners faced strikes on a regular basis at their Mexican properties; however, they routinely evicted squatting strikers, employed strike breakers and forced the miners back to work through military strength or through starvation tactics. When necessary the Guggenheims would call on Pinkerton guards and Mexican Federal troops to assist, whatever was necessary to win the dispute. From a mine manager's point of view:

Strikes... can never take place under the present system of government in Mexico. There is no objection to a man or any number of men striking, but the moment these begin to interfere with other men taking their places, or the moment they begin to destroy property, the Federal Government takes a hand, and the leaders will, in all probability, be shot without trial... The Mexican laborer appreciates the methods of the Federal Government, and is a great respecter of property, and of the individual as well as public rights.⁴⁰

When the Mexican government acted, it always in supported mine owners.

³⁹ "War at Wardner" *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 12 July 1892; "Under Martial Law" *The Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, Georgia, 14 July 1892; Additional discussions of the Homestead Strike are found in contemporary periodicals to include: "Labor Troubles of July" *The Youth's Companion*, 18 August 1892, 412; "Lessons of the Strikes" *The Baptist Quarterly Review*, October 1892, 497.

⁴⁰ E. A. H. Tays, "Present Labor Conditions in Mexico." *Engineering and Mining Journal* 84:14 (October 5, 1907), 624.

Taking advantage of the victories at Coeur d'Alene, many mine owners throughout the West took action in the winter of 1892-1893 to advance in the war against labor. In Jerome, Arizona, a predominantly Anglo mining community, mine managers replaced striking smelter men with Mexican laborers. During earlier years, Mexicans were given less skilled jobs that presented no threat to the Anglos. However, ethnic replacement became a concern since Mexicans made up the low wage work force readily available as strikebreakers. The Anglo workers returned at the reduced wage.⁴¹ On New Year's Day 1893, owners of the Utah mine discharged all of their workers, nearly 1,000 men, announcing a pay cut from \$3.00 to \$2.50 for all returning miners. This trend spread through Utah with Eureka and Mammoth miners being thrown out into the snow to implement wage cuts. Western mines in Aspen, Castle, Granite, Neihart, Red Mountain, Rico, Summitville, and Telluride all closed down and the owners demanded wage cuts to \$3.00 a day for laborers.⁴² With the failure of the strike at Coeur d'Alene, western unions were not ready to fight the multilateral attack on labor by regional mine owners.

Employers were successful in flooding the market with laborers, limiting the effectiveness of small regional labor unions. Miners had three options: outwait the owners, compromise, or give in. None of the unions were ready to conduct a long strike and mine owners won the battle of wages, though their goal of destroying western unions failed. Aspen miners reached a compromise to stay at the old rate, though increasing the hours worked in a day and the Rico miners conceded defeat in February. In response to

⁴¹ Philip J. Mellinger, *Race and Labor in Western Copper: The Fight for Equality, 1896-1918*, (The University of Arizona Press, 1995), 20-21.

⁴² Richard Lingenfelter, *The Hardrock Miners: A History of the Mining Labor Movement in the American West, 1863-1893* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 216-217.

the multilateral efforts of the mine owners through the West, union representatives from South Dakota, Colorado, Utah, Montana, and Idaho met in Butte, Montana uniting in March 1893 as the Western Federation of Miners.

The outcome of the Coeur d'Alene strike changed the nature of labor strikes across western desert mining region. Complex strike strategies were developing, between owners and labor unions in an all out industrial war. As labor unions grew in strength, company owners such as the Guggenheims and Rockefeller changed their objectives from simply keeping plants in production, to eliminating organized labor from the workforce. Managers and owners instituted plans to reduce the union labor force by hiring new non-union laborers and protecting corporate property with armed private guards. While mine owners brought thousands of non-union workers into the US West, the numbers were not sufficient to break the hold of unionism in the mines. Union miners increased strikes, which grew increasingly violent as skirmishes increased between union miners and the private militias. While the unions prepared to meet the escalated challenges of industry owners by forming the UMWA and WFM, an even greater challenge hit them unexpectedly, the 1893 depression.

The confrontation between labor and the capitalists erupted at the turn of the century as violence escalated with armies on both sides battling for victory. In the US, the miners' strike at Coeur D'Alene, Idaho resulted in a monumental battle, leaving scores killed and wounded. In Mexico, violence erupted at the Piños Altos mine in Chihuahua in 1883 and the Cananea mine and Rio Blanco textile factories in 1906, leaving dozens more killed and wounded in brutal battles.

CHAPTER 4

CONFLICT IN THE DESERT MINES: THE STRUGGLE TO CONTROL MINERAL WEALTH

As the labor unions fought to improve working conditions and maintain fair wages, corporate executives struggled with strategies to preserve or hopefully increase profits in the face of sharp competition in an industry with increasingly narrow profit margins. In the US, a political reform movement had begun with pro-labor public officials and politicians adding to the challenges faced by large US businesses. Higher tariffs, court decisions in favor of striking unions, and a persistent drop in the value of silver drove many small mines into bankruptcy, while the larger corporations frequently found themselves in the court rooms and Congressional Committees pleading their case. From 1892-1900, western mining companies seemed to be surrounded by enemies, the unions, the courts, Congress, and other aggressive companies fighting to control the market.

Struggling with economic recession, demonetization of silver, and skyrocketing unemployment, the western desert was in the throes of an economic and cultural transformation at the end of the nineteenth century. Industrialization and urbanization were quickly becoming the unmistakable reality of the mining West. The mining region of the Great Western Desert grew increasingly integrated into the larger global metals

market, connecting the economy to distant markets through the growing transportation networks expanding across the globe. The seeds for the economic depression in 1893 began far across the Atlantic Ocean with the near collapse of the English Baring Brothers Bank in 1890. The Baring's Bank was widely known for its investments and loans throughout the Americas, investing over \$500,000,000 between 1860 and 1890. By 1890 the Baring's Bank had over-invested in many Latin American companies, including underwriting a £2 million share issue for the Buenos Aires Water and Drainage Company, which proved nearly impossible to sell. Stuck with the worthless Buenos Aires stock and millions of pounds paid for other Latin American stocks, many investors began to question the confidence of the bank's planners, and demanded payment on their deposits.¹

With increasing debts and higher interest rates in London, the bank was on the brink of collapsing when William Lidderdale, governor of the Bank of England, formed a consortium to save the Baring's Bank from failure. Lidderdale drew money from other national banks, the government of England and from the Rothschild's banking empire to pay the outstanding debts of over £17 million. To raise the needed funds, the consortium began selling many of their American securities, which were payable in gold, causing much of the gold reserve in the US to move across the Atlantic. By 1893, gold reserves had become so low that US bankers were concerned that the US Treasury would only be able to pay its obligations in silver, rather than gold.²

¹ Jan Kornert, "The Barings Crisis of 1890 and 1995: Causes, Courses, Consequences and the danger of domino effects" *Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions, and Money* Vol 13, Issue 3, (July 2003): 187-209; "The Financial Crisis" *The Times*, London, 18 November 1890, 5; "The Money Market" *The Times*, 5 December, 1890, 10.

² Stephen Fay, *The Collapse of Barings* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004) New York Times Books online; <http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/f/fay-collapse.html>

One of the consequences of the decreased availability of loans from London was the bankruptcy of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad in 1893. The failure of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad led to a panic on Wall Street and sudden drop in stock values across the US. The New York Stock Exchange collapsed on May 5, 1893, “Industrial Black Friday,” complicating labor troubles in the 1890s. Depression gripped the country, causing a panic from the East Coast to the West Coast. Over 600 banks closed and 16,000 businesses failed during the depression years, with nearly 25% of all unskilled workers across the nation unemployed.³ By 1894 nearly 750,000 workers were on strike protesting wage cuts, and millions of others were simply unemployed. The depression crippled many railroads that had invested large amounts of money laying track across the nation; first the Philadelphia and Reading in February, followed by the Erie in July, the Northern Pacific in August, the Union Pacific in October, and the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe in December. Bank loans were called in and credit dried up throughout the US.⁴

In the throes of economic depression, the US Senate repealed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890, in a move to reduce the inflationary pressure of unlimited silver coinage on the US gold-dollar. During the period of the Sherman Act the price of silver had risen as high as \$1.25 per ounce, however by 1893, silver prices had dropped to \$.47 an ounce. The repeal of the Sherman Act ended the period of free coinage of silver, greatly reducing the demand for silver in the US and Mexico. Internationally, Great Britain closed the mints of India, ending its economic policy of free coinage of silver;

³ Albert C. Stevens, “Analysis of the Phenomena of the Panic in the United States in 1893” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (January 1894): 117, 133; Alexander D. Noyes, “The Banks and the Panic of 1893” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol 9 No 1 (March 1894): 5.

⁴ “The Philadelphia and Reading Railroad” *The Times*, 21 February 1893, p 5; “The United States” *The Times*, 5 May 1893, p 5.

China reduced its silver coinage, producing a huge surplus of silver on the global market, and global depression of silver.⁵

In Mexico, bi-metalism was adopted in 1867, with 16.5 ounces of silver equal to one ounce of gold. Silver demands increased for several years; however mining advances leading to increased production and new silver discoveries produced a surplus of silver on the world market, creating a severe price decrease for silver from 1892 to 1895. By 1905, one ounce of gold was equal to 39 ounces of silver, depreciating the silver based peso and creating an economic crisis for Mexico's workers, struggling to pay higher prices while wages remained static.⁶

Across the US, miners of low-grade silver ore were forced to stop mining due to depressed silver prices. With less silver ore to process, smelters throughout the region were also forced to reduce operations or close down completely. By August 1893, every smelter in Pueblo, except the Guggenheims' Philadelphia Smelter, was forced to shut down many of its furnaces. The Guggenheim smelter continued to operate at full capacity because the Guggenheims had expanded the smelter operation to include copper, gold, and other metals, rather than depending solely on silver like many other smelters in the West.⁷

The key smelters in the US processing Mexican ores were the Kansas City Refining and Smelting Company plant in El Paso, Texas and the Guggenheims' Philadelphia Smelter in Pueblo, Colorado. Both cities were connected to Mexico's

⁵ J.H. Brigham, "Hard Times and the Currency" *Ohio Farmer*, 25 Oct 1894; "India and Silver" *The Independent*, 6 July 1893; "Financial and Commercial" *The Independent*, 6 July 1893.

⁶ Jesús Silva Herzog, *El Agrarismo Mexicano y la Reforma Agraria* (Instituto Mexicano de Investigaciones Economicas, 1960), 129-30: Vol 3 of *Coleccion de Folletos para la Historia de la Revolucion Mexicana : la Cuestion de la Tierra*. 4 Vols.

⁷ "Colorado's Bright Outlook" *The North American Review* (February 1894); "Colorado Smelters Caught, Decline in Silver Disastrous" *The Daily Inter-Ocean*, Chicago, 28 June 1893.

northern mining region by direct rail links, the El Paso smelter by way of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe to the Mexican Central Railroad and the Guggenheims' smelter via the Denver and Rio Grande to the Mexican National Railroad. By 1890 the Kansas City Smelting and Refining Company had invested heavily in northern Mexico lead-silver mines near Coahuila and the Sierra Mojada region close to the Mexican Central line to supply its El Paso smelter with Mexican ore and reducing transportation costs.⁸

The Guggenheims' Gran Fundición Nacional Mexicana smelting plant in Monterrey began smelting operations in February 1892. At the same time that the Guggenheims were moving into Mexico, the Kansas City Smelting and Refining Company quickly requested concessions and tax exemptions to build a smelter in San Luis Potosí. With their concession in hand the Kansas City Company chartered the Compañía Metallúrgica Mexicana and began construction of the new smelter in November 1890 under the direction of Robert Towne, who employed a crew of 54 Americans and 800 Mexican workers.⁹

By the end of 1891 five blast furnaces, with modern machinery imported from the US to smelt both copper and lead ores, were in place.¹⁰ And by 1892 the smelter employed over 300 workers and processed 500 tons of copper and lead ores daily.¹¹ The new US-owned smelters faced limited competition in northern Mexico from two independent smelters owned by Mexican land-owners. The Compañía Moinera, Fundidora y Afinadora in Monterrey, founded in 1890, the Compañía Metallúrgica de

⁸ *The Mexican Yearbook: A Statistical, Financial, and Economic Annual, Compiled from Official and other Returns*, (London, 1909-1910), 493-504.

⁹ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico Cia Minería ASARCO, S.A. document 3 sheet 2, Testimonio de la Escritura de aumento de capital de la Compañía ASARCO, S.A. Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, 3 September 1923.

¹⁰ Special Correspondence, "Foreign Mining News, Mexico-San Luis Potosi" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, vol LII (November 21, 1891), 600.

¹¹ "Foreign Mining News, Mexico-SLP" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, (May 21, 1892), 555.

Torreón established in 1901 by the prominent Madero family of Coahuila, who also controlled large mines in Coahuila, San Luis Potosí, and Chihuahua.¹² Throughout the 1890s these three smelters dominated the Mexican industry, increasing production levels to the point that Mexico became the world's leading silver producer by 1897.¹³

The low labor costs in Mexico allowed the Guggenheims to continue to smelt and refine silver at a profit with global silver prices as low as fifty cents an ounce. The Guggenheims renegotiated their contracts with Mexican mine owners, allowing the smelter to pay current market prices for silver ore, rather than fixed rates determined in advance. Additionally, the Guggenheims met with the Mexican Minister of Finance, Don José Yves Limantour in 1893, and convinced him to increase the coinage of Mexican silver, arguing that the new policy would provide higher revenue for the Mexican Federal Government through a growth in the minting tax and expanded employment opportunities in the mines and smelters.¹⁴

In his 1893 presidential address to the American Federation of Labor (AFL), Samuel Gompers estimated that three million Americans were unemployed and that many more were underemployed throughout the nation. New York cited 67,280 unemployed and an additional 20,000 homeless in the city, and in Chicago unemployment approached 100,000 at the time of the World's Fair. Virtually all silver mining was stopped in Colorado leaving an estimated 200,000 unemployed workers

¹² *The Mexican Yearbook: A Statistical, Financial, and Economic Annual, Compiled from Official and other Returns*, (London, 1909-1910), 171.

¹³ Archivo General del Estado Aguascalientes, box 9, document 43, Letter from Simon Guggenheim to Governor Alejandro Vazquez del Mercado, las comunicaciones entre este y el Congreso del estado y el contrato finalmente firmado, 1894; United States Consular Reports, Number 153, May 1893, Nuevo Laredo, Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

¹⁴ "Will Bull Silver" *The Duluth News Tribune*, 17 November 1894; "Big Silver Combine" *Aberdeen Weekly News*, 22 November 1894.

throughout the state.¹⁵ Bankruptcy of the Union Pacific, which owned 63% of the coal mines in Wyoming, left nearly 20,000 in Wyoming without work.

As the crisis moved west, newspapers across the US heralded the news with alarming headlines:

“ALL COLORADO MINES TO CLOSE”

Smelting and mining men of the state...unanimously decided to completely close down all smelters, mills, and silver mines in Colorado...until such time as silver is appreciated at its proper worth. This action will throw many thousand people out of employment.¹⁶

Since the national extent of the trouble in 1893 was a crisis for all, many miners and laborers did not call for strikes immediately, however, as business improved even a little, laborers demanded an end to depression level wage reductions. Though silver mining was decimated by the depression, copper was not as hard hit. Improvements in production technologies and increasing demands for electrical copper wire, mercantile shipbuilding, new German and American navies, wars and increased armaments kept copper in demand through the depression and beyond. While copper remained relatively stable during the depression, with few strikes erupting, labor strikes by miners in coal, gold, and other hard rock mines increased. No longer were miners demanding increased wages and improved working conditions, the emphasis shifted to fighting against wage cuts and increased hours as employers continually tried to cut production costs in response to depressed market prices.

Coal miners in Kansas went on strike in June 1893 in response to wage cuts by the D.B. Brown management company, the largest operator in the Southwest and

¹⁵ “To Aid the Unemployed” *The New York Times*, 21 August 1893; “Gompers Wins Again” *Chicago Tribune*, 12 December 1893; Historical Statistics of the United States website <http://hsus.cambridge.org>.

¹⁶ “All Colorado Mines to Close” *Idaho Statesman*, 30 June 1893.

representative of the Atchison, Topeka, Santa Fe Railroad company, who owned mines in the region. With dropping coal prices and unemployed workers flooding the West, D.B. Brown knew a strike would prove nearly impossible for the union. By August over 30,000 miners were on strike in parts of Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Colorado, and the Indian Territory of Oklahoma, though finding strikebreakers was a simple feat. By early August the mine managers had brought in non-union Negro miners from Alabama. With the mines continuing production during the strike the union called off the strike on August 31, realizing that it had no leverage to press for its demands. Union men went back to work at the reduced wage.¹⁷

Though there was no violence or government involvement in the strike, the position of government proved to be a decisive matter. On August 31, 1893, *The New York Times* reported that the true effect of the strike in Kansas was more political than economic. The 4,000 Negro miners brought with them Republican influence, which altered the voting majority away from the Populist faction which had been in office in the region, ensuring the defeat of Governor Lewelling, a populist who supported the miners in their strike, in his re-election bid. The black miners replaced Italian and French miners, many of whom were reported to not speak English, and barred from voting.¹⁸ The pro-labor Populist state government of Kansas was effectively manipulated by industry leaders, which would happen again in Colorado and Illinois.

Jobless miners displaced by closed silver and coalmines across Colorado, Wyoming, and other western states made their way to more profitable gold and copper mines. Many of these miners were returning to jobs that they had left when silver

¹⁷ *The New York Times*. June 6, 1893.

¹⁸ *The New York Times*, August 31, 1893.

boomed with the Sherman Silver Purchase Act in 1890. When these skilled miners left, the gold and copper mines took advantage of the large population of unskilled immigrant labor to fill many of the vacant positions at lower wages. However, when the silver market busted many of the skilled miners were willing to return to gold and copper camps to reclaim the jobs at lower wages than the silver mines had paid, displacing many of the unskilled foreign workers in the mines. In other instances, returning miners found that there were no jobs available, and continued to search for work.¹⁹

The struggles of the 1893 depression left many people in the US concerned over the future of silver and its role in US currency. The success of the Guggenheim mining and smelting companies forced competitors to rethink mining operations leading to the establishment of mining and smelting trusts in the late 1890s. The end of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act and the resultant constriction of US currency caused many people to question US fiscal policies, demanding a return to silver, led by politicians such as William Jennings Bryan. The labor struggles that had developed in the US and Mexico in the early 1890s increased in intensity and frequency after 1893, resulting in greater violence on both sides of the war between owners and workers.

The initial shock of the depression in 1893 subsided as tensions grew with wage cuts and demands for increased work hours by employers. Over 30 strikes were in progress in April 1894, including the Cripple Creek gold miners' strike in Colorado, coal miners and coke worker strikes in Pennsylvania, and railway worker strikes throughout the West. Employers continued to use every weapon in their arsenal, requesting

¹⁹ Richard D. Loosbrock, "The Changing Faces of a Mining Town: The Dual labor System in Elizabethtown, New Mexico" *New Mexico Historical Review* 74 (November 1999): 353-73; Many skilled miners returned to the Eastern US to find employment as described in the *Friend's Intelligencer* Magazine "Current Events" 5 August 1893.

injunctions against unions and others involved in the strikes, which federal courts freely issued. The war grew through 1894 with approximately 750,000 people involved in strikes, primarily against wage cuts.²⁰

Unrest continued to grow in the West as displaced silver miners moved to other mines in the wake of increased unemployment. Hundreds of unemployed silver miners made their way to gold mines in Cripple Creek; while some found work, many others remained unemployed. With an increased labor supply and drops in market prices for gold and lead, mine operators in the Cripple Creek area demanded wage cuts and increased hours from the miners. On August 17, 1893 the first attempt to lengthen the workday was made when the Isabella Mine managers posted a notice announcing an increase from an eight-hour day to nine-hours. The workers refused to work under these conditions, and the operators of the Isabella Mine quickly rescinded the policy.²¹

In light of the Isabella struggle, the Western Federation of Miners held a conference and agreed that all men at all Cripple Creek mines would be called out if any attempt was made to lengthen the current work day. Most mines in the area worked an eight-hour day, though a few still worked nine or ten-hour days. On January 8, 1894, the WFM increased the stakes demanding that all miners be given a uniform eight-hour work day by February 7, 1894. The Mine Operators Association, led by J.J. Hagerman and David Moffat, would not agree to this demand and took steps to increase the stakes before the union's February 7, deadline. On January 17, the Pharmacist Mine announced a ten-hour day, including a one-hour lunch or wage reductions from \$3.00 to \$2.50 for an

²⁰ Samuel Rezneck, "Unemployment, Unrest, and Relief in the United States during the Depression of 1893-1897" *The Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 61, Issue 4 (Aug 1953), 334-335.

²¹ Vernon H. Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict: Labor Relations in the Nonferrous Metals Industry up to 1930*, (Cornell University Press, 1950), 41.

eight-hour day to start on February 1. Similar notices were posted at the largest mines including Isabella, Victor, and Anaconda, affecting nearly a third of the work force in the area. On February 1, the shifts changed and the miners at those mines went on strike. By February 7, all miners working more than eight-hour shifts walked off the job unless compromised wage scales were used, which was the case at the Independence and Portland mines where miners were paid \$3.25 for working a nine-hour day.²²

While Colorado was traditionally a Republican state, the 1892 election gave the Governor's office to the Populist candidate Davis H. Waite. Davis began his political career after rising through the ranks of the Knights of Labor, becoming the local secretary in 1891. Determined to return Colorado and the nation to a land where yeoman farmers and small business men could thrive, Waite took a stand against corporatism and government collusion with big business, supporting an honest wage for an honest day's work for laborers in Colorado. Waite ran on the free silver platform, describing the evils of the gold standard for the average citizen in his Populist Newspaper, *The Aspen Union Era*. Winning the governor's seat in 1892, Waite faced a split state senate with 15 Republicans, 12 Populists, and 8 Democrats in the upper house and 33 Republicans, 27 Populists, and 5 Democrats in the lower house.²³

In addition to having Governor Waite on the side of the Union in the Cripple Creek Strike, many of the civil authorities in Cripple Creek were either sympathetic to the union or they were union men, including Deputy Marshall Doley. The Operators

²² The Independence and Portland Mines owned by W.S. Stratton remained open working 9-hour days, with a previously established wage scale of \$3.25. Jensen. p.42. Several mines including the Kimset and Santa Rita agreed to 8-hour shifts and the Stratton and Burns made concessions with strikers agreeing to 3.25 for a 9-hour day. Elizabeth Jameson, *All that Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community in Cripple Creek*, (University of Illinois Press, 1998), 55; "The Week" *Outlook*, 2 June 1894, 952.

²³ John R. Morris, "Davis Hanson Waite: The Ideology of a Western Populist" (PhD Dissertation, University of Colorado, 1965).

Association hired armed guards and with the support of Sheriff Bowers requested additional deputy support from neighboring counties to protect company properties and aid in law enforcement, which they felt would not be handled locally. The operators requested an injunction against the unionists on March 14, which was quickly issued by Judge Becker of the district court.²⁴ Unions in Colorado received greater government support while Davis Waite was the governor than in earlier strikes, however local government leaders like Sheriff Bowers and Judge Becker continued to work with the mine owners.

When the injunction was issued, six deputies from Cripple Creek were sent to the Victor mine on March 14, at the request of Sheriff Bowers and the mine operators to protect the mine as it re-opened. A short-lived gun battle ensued, injuring one of the deputies as the strikers captured them. At this point, Sheriff Bowers requested troops from Governor Davis Waite, who dispatched three companies under the command of General E. J. Brooks. Upon arrival, General Brooks reported relative peace in the area and quickly withdrew his troops from the region.²⁵

On April 1, the mine operators presented a compromise of \$2.75 for an eight-hour day, which was rejected by the union. The mine owners brought in non-union men, under the protection of armed Pinkerton guards. By May 25, Sheriff Bowers had built an army of 1,200 men encamped near the Victor Mine to ward off union agitators. The miners attacked and captured the Strong Mine without bloodshed, taking the deputies prisoner and confiscating their arms and ammunition. Some extremists within the union

²⁴ "Cripple Creek Mines to Resume" *The Idaho Statesman*, 15 March 1894; "Cripple Creek Mines" *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican*, 15 March 1894; "Crisis at Cripple Creek" *The Evening News*, San Jose, California, 15 March 1894.

²⁵ "The Sheriff will be there" *Grand Forks Daily Herald*, 16 March 1894; "Troops Called for Serious Dispute in the Cripple Creek Mining District" *The Duluth News Tribune*, 17 March 1894.

destroyed the shaft house and machinery at the mine, though the majority refrained from senseless destruction of property.²⁶

The Governor returned to the region as the representative of the miners in negotiations with the owners to resolve the strike and end the violence. The following agreement was reached on June 4,

1. That eight hours actual work shall constitute “a day”, divided as follows: Four hours of continuous work, then 20 minutes for lunch, then four hours of continuous work; for which said eight hours of labor there shall be paid three dollars (\$3.00).
2. In the employment of men there shall be no discrimination against union men or against non-union men.
3. The undersigned, J.J. Hagerman and D.H. Moffatt, earnestly urge upon other mine owners and employees of signing labor, in said Cripple Creek District, to accede to and act upon the foregoing agreement.

Signed,
Davis H. Waite,
J.J. Hagerman,
David H. Moffat.²⁷

To ensure the agreement’s success, the Governor again dispatched the militia to Cripple Creek the next day. Tensions remained between the union men and the Sheriff’s deputies and the militia was essential in disarming and removing union men from the properties of the mines, and ensuring the deputies did not attack the union men.

The WFM was prepared to fight the mine owners at Cripple Creek; however, the support from Governor Waite was the key to union victory. The Governor’s use of the militia to protect the property interests of the mines, while also protecting the union members’ rights was the key difference between this and other strikes in this era.

Government support in strike situations continued to be a critical element in ending the

²⁶ *The New York Times* May 26, 1894.

²⁷ Jameson, *All that Glitters*, 49.

dispute. With the rise of Populism in western states industry leaders looked for alternatives to keep pro-labor politicians out of the strike process.

While the political reforms in the US continued to complicate business for large mine owners, the Guggenheim family continued to expand its operations across Mexico. With copper production increasing the Guggenheims extend their smelting operations to include copper as well as silver. The Aguascalientes rail network connected the Tepezala and Asientos copper mines to San Luis Potosí as well as Tampico. The Tampico connection allowed the Guggenheims to transport their ore to the seaport to be shipped to the US. The Guggenheims built their refinery at Perth Amboy, New Jersey in 1894, gaining a greater advantage in the competitive global metals market, mining, smelting, and refining copper and silver.²⁸ The Tepezala copper mine's potentially large deposits of and the vast quantities of self-fluxing lead-silver ores from Durango and Zacatecas drove the Guggenheims' desire to build a smelter in Aguascalientes.²⁹

In a confidential letter to Governor Alejandro Vazquez del Mercado, Solomon Guggenheim explained that a feasibility study completed by his company indicated the ideal location to build a new smelting plant was in Aguascalientes. When applying for the federal concession Solomon stressed that the project greatly depended on the concessions granted by the state, specifically asking for a twenty year exemption on all capital investments. On March 26, 1894, two days after receiving the letter, Governor del Mercado received legislative approval to grant the concessions and exemptions for the construction of a smelting complex similar to the one operating in Monterrey. Governor

²⁸ "Foreign Mining News-Mexico, Aguascalientes" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LVII (10 May 1893), 471.

²⁹ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico Tepezala Unit, document 42. Report from O.H. Harker, General Superintendent of Mines, on Tepezala District to M. Guggenheim's Sons; dated Monterrey, November 4, 1893.

del Mercado granted the contract on April 4, and the new business was registered by the Guggenheims three weeks later.³⁰

Once the Guggenheims received the concession for the Aguascalientes smelter they also requested a concession to build a branch line from the Central Railroad's trunk line connecting the smelter to their mines in the region.³¹ The federal government agreed to the concession in 1894; however the ruling determined that the branch line was for private use, rather than for public use as requested, restricting the company from the right of eminent domain.³² The Guggenheims appealed to the Governor of Aguascalientes who decided that the branch line should be considered a public utility because the smelters would benefit the general population of the state, granting the privilege of eminent domain. The property owners who were faced with losing their land quickly filed law suits arguing that the line would only transport materials for the smelter, and its employees.³³

With construction halted while the court cases were pending, the Central Railroad made an appeal to President Díaz asking him to declare the Guggenheim branch line a public project because the railroad company planned to use the line to move cargo for the state as well. The Central Railroad described their plan to establish offices and shops near the Guggenheim plant where they would manufacture and repair machinery and

³⁰ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico, Aguascalientes Plant document I-3. El Republicano; Periodico Oficial del Gobierno del Estado. Año XXVI, tomo 25, Numero 884. Aguascalientes 8 April 1894; also Año XXVI tomo 25, numero 886 22 April 1894.

³¹ Ferrocarril Central, Annual Report, 1894, Condumex, Misc. Ffcc #2, Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

³² Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Obras Publicas to Pablo Martinez del Rio, representante de la Cia Ferrocarril Central, 25 August 1894 Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico Tepezala 10/3092-1; Memorias de la Secretaris de Hacienda 1899-1900, Modificaciones al "Registro General de Minas abierto en virtud de lo dispuesto en la Ley de Propriudad Minería" document numero 137 (Mexico D.F) 392-477.

³³ Jesus Díaz Infante to Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Obras Publicas, 5 August 1895, Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico Tepezala 10/3092-1.

equipment. Díaz agreed with the railroad's request and declared the line to be a public utility, giving the Guggenheims the right to eminent domain.³⁴

The Guggenheim smelter in Aguascalientes was completed in 1893, smelting both silver and copper ores. Later that year the Guggenheims purchased the Tepezala copper mine also in Aguascalientes, increasing production at the Aguascalientes smelter. With two operational smelters in Mexico, one solely focused silver treatment and the other with the capabilities to treat both silver and copper, the Guggenheims quickly dominated the metals industry in Mexico with control of 18 mining properties in Aguascalientes alone.³⁵

As the western desert region of the southwest US and northern Mexico became increasingly integrated into the larger global metals market, economic fluctuations and labor disputes in distant markets were increasingly felt in the desert regions as well. At the same time as the Cripple Creek Strike, a devastating strike in eastern coalfields was being fought by the UMWA. The UMWA lost hundreds of members with the market collapse in 1893, weakening finances and their strength against mine owners. In light of the growing labor troubles in the Anthracite regions throughout the US, UMWA leaders moved through the region during late 1893 and 1894 establishing forty-four local unions by October 1894.³⁶

Signaling the start of an industry-wide problem, coke workers began a short-lived strike on April 1, 1894, demanding a uniform wage scale at coke plants in the

³⁴ Pablo Martinez del Rio to Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Obras Publicas, August 1895, Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico Tepezala, 10/3092-1; SCOP, Inner-office communication, Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico Tepezala, 10/3092-1.

³⁵ *Memorias de la Secretaria de Hacienda*, años fiscales 1898-1899 a 1910-1911, Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

³⁶ Perry K. Blatz, *Democratic Miners: Work and Labor Relations in the Anthracite Coal Industry, 1875-1925*, (State University of New York Press, 1994), 46.

Connellsville region of Pennsylvania. The majority of the strikers were foreign immigrants, determined to unite the Anglo English speaking miners with their cause. Operators in the region prepared for the difficulties by deploying armed guards throughout mine properties. On April 4, in Uniontown, Pennsylvania a mob of 1,500 non-union Hungarian strikers killed the chief engineer of the H.C. Frick Company, Joseph H. Paddock, and company guards killed 10 Hungarians strikers in the battle.³⁷ On April 10, 1894, in reaction to wage cuts forecasted by coalmines across the nation, the UMWA announced plans for an industry wide strike to start on April 21, to increase wages, hoping that if a strike was necessary, they would be successful in creating a coal famine to drive up the coal prices so the companies would pay the increased wage scale from between 40 to 50 cents per ton back to pre-depression rates of 70 cents per ton. Mine operators would not agree to the union demands and the strike began in April 21, with 160,000 men striking by the end of April.³⁸

As the General Coal Strike ended, labor trouble in Chicago, Illinois erupted. The Pullman Company made train sleeping cars and contracted many of them out charging rent for use by the railways. The Pullman Company, citing decreased business volume in train car orders during the depression, cut the wages of its employees five times between May 1893 and May 1894, totaling a 30-40% wage decrease in addition to cutting the workforce by 30%. In response to the wage cuts, many of the workers joined with the American Railway Union (ARU), formed by Eugene Debs a year earlier in July 1893.

³⁷ *The New York Times*, April 5, 1894; "Loss of Life at Connellsville" *Aberdeen Daily News*, South Dakota, 5 April, 1894; "Twelve Dead: Another Fatal Encounter with Hungarian Strikers" *The Evening News*, San Jose California, 5 April 1894.

³⁸ *The New York Times*, April 13, 1894; "A Dangerous Movement" *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican*, 31 March 1894.

Pullman, vehemently against unionization, fired the workers, initiating a strike by the Pullman employees on May 11, 1894.³⁹

On July 3, the day after the striking workers were served an injunction, violent outbreaks began in Chicago as strikers destroyed train cars and other property. The violence in Chicago increased as railroad owners, determined to run their trains, clashed with strikers. Striking workers destroyed engines, overturned railcars on the tracks, and dragged tower-men who continued to work during the strike from switch towers. Over 2,000 train cars were destroyed and twenty people killed in the mob riots in Chicago.⁴⁰ Circumventing the Illinois Governor, the General Managers Association requested federal troops to end the violence in Chicago. President Grover Cleveland approved the mobilization of federal troops into Chicago the same day with over 10,000 men arriving on July 4. Disorder continued in Chicago for a few days, with property damage estimated between \$50 and \$100 million.⁴¹

While the Pullman Railroad Strike disrupted rail operations in the United States, Mexican Mechanics in the Union de Mecánicos Mexicana, supported their Union brothers in the North by striking the Mexican Central in May 1894. Unionization began in Mexico in 1884 when the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers established a local for American Engineers working in Mexico. The Order of Railway Conductors established chapters in 1885, followed by firemen in 1886, and Carmen in 1891. Each of these

³⁹ “The Colossal Boycott” *Zion’s Herald*, 4 July 1894; “The Pullman Strike” *Ohio Farmer*, 12 July 1894.

⁴⁰ “Affairs Are Ominous! The Strike is Increasing and the Situation is Becoming More Dangerous” *The Knoxville Journal*, 3 July 1894.

⁴¹ “Growing Worse, United States Troops Now Ordered out: The Strike Spreading in All Directions” *Tacoma Daily News*, 3 July 1894.

unions maintained exclusive membership for US citizens, initially refusing to admit Mexican laborers.⁴²

Struggling against wage imbalances with the US laborers, Mexican workers began La Sociedad de Ferrocarril Mexicano in 1887, forming the first chapter in Nuevo Laredo. In 1890 the Orden Suprema de Empleados de Ferrocarriles en la Republica was formed in San Luis Potosí, operating as a mutual aid society and labor union for its members. These Mexican unions were craft unions, protecting skilled laborers in Mexico, fighting for fair pay and fair working conditions on the Railways.

Founded in 1890 by Teodoro Larrey in Puebla, the Union de Mecánicos Mexicana saw the Pullman Strike of 1894 as an opportunity to achieve important concessions from the National Railway of Mexico. Union leaders called for equal pay for Mexican and American employees and equal hours, reducing the hours worked by Mexican laborers from twelve hours to fourteen hours a day to ten at a wage of \$2.50 per day. Just as in the Pullman Strike in the United States, the National Railway owners requested support from the Díaz government which dispatched troops to Chihuahua, removing striking employees and allowing replacement employees access to the railway.⁴³

Labor challenges continued to plague miners in 1896 as the depression continued to disrupt business. Operations at two gold mines in Hinsdale, Colorado were disrupted when workers, primarily Italian immigrants, declared a strike when the managers fell two months behind in paying wages. Another strike, in Salmon City, Idaho erupted when the

⁴² Richard U. Miller, "American Railroad Unions and the National Railways of Mexico: An Exercise in Nineteenth Century Proletarian Manifest Destiny" *Labor History* (Spring 1974): 243-49.

⁴³ Marcelo N. Rodea, *Historía del movimiento obrero ferrocarrilero en Mexico (1890-1943)* (Mexico: no publisher, 1944) 79-85.

mine managers retracted an agreement for nine-hour days, instead requiring ten-hour days from the miners.⁴⁴ Employers continued to cut wages or demand increased hours from their employees in an effort to maintain their profit levels.

The initial strains of the depression caused concern for Arizona copper miners in 1893, though most mines remained open, mine managers adjusted wage scales and work schedules to keep the mines open. In 1895 the Baltimore owners of the Old Dominion copper mine in Globe, Arizona sold it to the Lewisohn Brothers, who owned several mining properties throughout the West. The new ownership also brought new management policies that pushed the miners to strike. S.A. Parnall, the new superintendent at the Old Dominion mine cut the wages of many of the workers from \$3.00 a day to \$2.50 in September 1895, with further cuts in May 1896 to \$2.25. The mine also began importing Mexican workers to work at lower wages, laying the groundwork for the miners' strike.⁴⁵ Though Mexican workers did work in many Arizona mines, they traditionally performed low paying unskilled labor. When the Old Dominion managers attempted to hire imported Mexican labor into skilled mining positions, the miners were enraged.

The miners marched to the superintendent's home and demanded their wages restored and the dismissal of Mexican workers from the mines. Parnall agreed, fearing for his life in the face of the mob, only to retract the agreement later. Due to the refusal of the mine management to meet their demands, the workers went on strike, and Old Dominion ceased operations, locking out the remaining workers in response. Parnall

⁴⁴ *Mining and Scientific Press*, May 23, 1896, 423.

⁴⁵ Philip J. Mellinger, *Race and Labor in Western Copper: The Fight for Equality, 1896-1918*, (Phoenix: The University of Arizona Press, 1995), 20-22.

requested government assistance to protect the mine, hoping for troops and martial law in the city.

The miners organized a union in reaction to the strike, though Old Dominion managers refused to recognize the organization until July 3, when an agreement was made to end the strike with a partial restoration of the 1895 pay scale and hiring a primarily Anglo workforce. Since troops and martial law did not come to Globe, Arizona, the union and mine managers worked through the strike. Had the miners resorted to threats of or actual violence at Globe, the chances of military support to the owners would have ensured the failure of the strike. After the strike, the union men requested membership in the Western Federation of Miners and in October 1896 during a visit by Ed Boyce, President of the WFM, the Globe WFM Local 60 created.⁴⁶

Not able to improve profits through wage cuts or increased production schedules like the mines in Globe, Arizona, the Leadville mines were among those that closed throughout Colorado in the panic of 1893. By 1895, the Leadville mines had re-opened, with a banner year, and the miners approached the owners on May 25, 1896 requesting restoration of the wage scale to levels before the 1893 closures, restoring many miners' wages to the \$3.00 scale, from \$2.50 offered when the mines re-opened in 1895. The owners refused this and a subsequent June 19, request from the miners.⁴⁷

With nearly 90% of the Leadville miners listed as member of the WFM, the union met and voted unanimously to strike for the wage increase and on June 20, 1896 miners

⁴⁶ "Arizona Mine Closed: Two Hundred and Fifty Men Thrown out of Employment by Shutting down of Old Dominion Mine" *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican*, 12 June 1896; "Mining Intelligence: some Interesting Doings in the Various. Districts Surrounding This City" *Arizona Weekly Journal – Miner*, 17 June 1896.

⁴⁷ William Philpott, *The Lessons of Leadville: Or Why the Western Federation of Miners Turned Left*, Monograph 10, (Colorado Historical Society, 1995), 2; Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

walked out on strike. The owners retaliated by locking out the remaining miners, shutting down the Leadville mines for the second time in four years. The first compromise from the owners' organization offered a \$3.00 wage rate dependent on a 75 cent per ounce silver market price, though no minimum wage level was set. The miners refused this proposal, enraging the mine owners who promptly rescinded the offer and threatened to bring in strikebreakers if the miners did not return to work at the original wage level prior to the strike.⁴⁸

Despite attempts by the union miners to prevent strikebreakers from coming to the mines, several of the mines did re-open with non-union labor at the \$2.50 wage. Many of the strikebreakers came from the Joplin district of Missouri, a stronghold of non-union laborers, anxious to improve their wages in the West. Of the mines that did not re-open, several flooded their tunnels as a sign that they would not resume operations for some time. There was some minor trouble between the strikers and the imported non-union labor leading the mine owners to make repeated calls for the Governor to dispatch the militia.⁴⁹ Colorado Governor Albert W. McIntire steadfastly refused until September 21, when violence erupted in the early morning hours. The first attack was at the Coronado mine, which had re-opened with non-union labor. The strikers assaulted the mine with dynamite bombs and rifle fire for nearly an hour, with the company killing three union men in its defense. When the oil tank at the mine was destroyed and burst into flame, the miners drove away the fire department, wounding Jerry O'Keef a Leadville fireman while attempting to extinguish the blaze. The mob continued to the Robert Emmett

⁴⁸ "The Leadville Strike" *Albuquerque Morning Democrat*, 21 June 1896; "Leadville Strike" *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 21 June 1896.

⁴⁹ "Jobs for Scab Miners: Leadville Mines Will Start up Protected by State Militia" *The Butte Weekly Miner*, 1 Oct 1896.

Mine, which had been fortified against the probable attack. The mob continued their attack with dynamite bombs and rifle fire, though they were eventually driven back and another union man lost his life. The attacks left five men killed, many injured, over \$50,000 in property damage, and irreparable damage to the union.⁵⁰

The owners, taking advantage of the militia protection, continued to bring in strikebreakers. With the militia preserving the peace, the strikers were greatly restricted from persuading the incoming scabs from working. The mines were in full operation though the strikers continued their protests. By January 1897, Ed Boyce and Eugene Debs called on the WFM local at Leadville to end the strike honorably. The miners accepted arbitration on March 5, though with the mines in full operation and the strike fund exhausted, the union had no leverage in the negotiations. The strike was ended on March 9, and many of the workers returned to work in the mines at the old wage scale of \$2.50. Many union men left Leadville during the strike, and nearly 400 strikebreakers from Missouri remained at the mines after the strike.⁵¹

In Mexico, the Guggenheim Aguascalientes smelter steadily increased the capacity of its furnaces during its early years of operation reaching its full capacity during 1897, producing 6,500 tons of copper bullion containing 3.2 million ounces of silver, 9,500 ounces of gold, and 2,000 tons of copper. Continuing to increase in size by 1900 the smelter was operating four lead furnaces with a 125 ton daily capacity, four copper furnaces with 170 ton capacity, and three copper converters, enabling the smelter to treat

⁵⁰ “Leadville in Wild Terror” *The New York Times*, 24 September 1896.

⁵¹ “Adams' Fruitless Labors Unable to Settle the Difficulty at Leadville” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 19 January 1897; “Leadville Strike Off” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 10 March 1897; “Leadville Strike Ended” *The Kansas City Star*, 10 March 1897; “The Leadville Strike is Off” *Morning World-Herald*, Omaha, 10 March 1897.

190,000 tons of ore, producing 140,000 tons of lead bullion containing 7.4 million ounces of silver, 42,000 ounces of gold, and 11,000 tons of copper.⁵²

The Guggenheims kept its smelter furnaces full through a series of monopolistic contracts with mines in the region. While the Guggenheims controlled 55 of the major mines in the region, their output only accounted for 55% of the ore. The Aguascalientes smelter contracted with the remaining 300 mines in the regions leveraging reduced transportation costs on their branch lines and guaranteed purchase prices on ores received.⁵³ In the years between 1896 and 1910 the Aguascalientes smelter processed 98% of ore mined in the region.

Political and economic discontent in Mexico continued to increase as the 1890s come to an end. By 1896, the Governor of San Luis Potosí, Carlos Diez Gutierrez, had driven the government into ruin, amassing a 2 million peso debt. Carlos Diez Gutierrez and his brother Pedro had ruled San Luis Potosí for twenty years as the appointed governor. In the throes of economic collapse after the 1892-1895 economic recession in Mexico, San Luis Potosí's influential businessmen, led by Pedro Barrenechea went to Mexico City to request the replace Governor Carlos Diez Gutierrez with Blas Escontria a well respected businessman in San Luis Potosí. While President Díaz did not remove

⁵² Jesús Gómez Serrano, *Aguascalientes en la Historia, 1786-1920* (México, D.F.: Gobierno del Estado de Aguascalientes, 1988) 170-171.

⁵³ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico, Tepezala Unit, document 43. Contrato de venta de una hacienda de beneficio y catorce fundos mineros ubicas en Tepezala, pertenecientes a la Negociacion Minería La Cobriza y Anexas, Sociedad Anonima, otorgada por el Sr. Juan A. Petit, como Presidente de Consejo de Administracion de dicha Sociedad y apoderado de todos los accionistas de esta en favor del Sr. Jorge D. Barron oderado del Sr. Solomon Guggenheim favor de The Guggenheim Smelting Company. Aguascalientes 27 May 1897.

Diez Gutierrez at the meeting in 1896, Blas Escontria was appointed governor of San Luis Potosí in 1898.⁵⁴

Blas Escontria followed the same fiscal policy as the federal Government to resolve the economic crisis inherited from Diez Gutierrez. Escontria increased incentives for foreign corporations to invest in San Luis Potosí, enticing the Guggenheims to increase its mining operations in San Luis Potosí. While many of the businessmen of San Luis Potosí welcomed the much needed investment from by the Guggenheims from 1895-1900, several families, to include the Arriagas and the Barrenecheas, who historically controlled the region's mines protested the invasion as the Guggenheims attempted to buy them out.⁵⁵

While the Guggenheims bought properties in San Luis Potosí they also increased their holdings in Aguascalientes in the late 1890s. In 1895 the Secretary of Haciendas in Aguascalientes issued fourteen titles for mines, nine in Tepezala and five in Asientos to the Guggenheims. By 1896 the Guggenheims' Gran Fundición de Aguascalientes owned 31 mining properties in Aguascalientes, with 21 in Tepezala and 10 in Asientos, and adding another 21 Aguascalientes properties in 1897. The Guggenheims investments in Mexico began to pay very well in the late 1890s, creating contention between the displaced Mexican elite, many of whom had sold their properties during the years of recession from 1892-1895, and the Guggenheims and other foreign interests in Mexico. Profits from copper mining increased from 4 million pesos in 1891 to over 45 million

⁵⁴ *Compañía Anonima Restauradora del Minero de Ramos. Estatutos de la Compañía Anonima Restauradora del Mineral de Ramos de San Luis Potosi, aprobados en junta celebrada el 7 diciembre de 1887* (pamphlet). Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

⁵⁵ Manuel Jose Othon, *Apuntes que, para alegar de buena prueba ante el Senor Juez 3 de Letras del partido de Mapimi, produce Don Jesus Revilla, Patrocinado por el Lic. Manuel J. Othon, y representante juridico de la Compañía Minería Siderita y Anexas, S.A. des S. Luis Potosi el el interdicto de despojo promovido contra la Compañía Minería y Fundidora Descubridora*. (pamphlet) Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

pesos in 1900, with a similar increase in lead profits from 2 million pesos to over 18 million pesos. Gold and silver profits increased as well with silver increasing from 46 million pesos in 1891 to 70 million pesos in 1900 and gold profits increasing from 3 million to 18 million pesos.⁵⁶

Discouraged by his loss of fortune, Camilo Arriaga blamed both the foreign corporations in Mexico and the Porfirian government which invited them in for the declining economic influence among Mexico's traditional elite. Having served in the National Congress from 1888, Arriaga was expelled from Congress in 1898 when he protested the systematic continuation of clerical privilege by state governors as they allowed the Catholic Church and Catholic clergy special tax privileges that had been outlawed by the 1857 Reform Laws. After leaving Mexico City, Arriaga returned to San Luis Potosí where he was befriended by Juan Sarabia, Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama, Benjamin Millian, Humberto Macias Valades and others who protested the Díaz regime and foreign control of Mexican industry. Together this group would lead the call for Liberal reform from San Luis Potosí, beginning the Liberal newspaper *El Democrática* in 1899, and leading student protests against the policies of Porfirio Díaz in San Luis Potosí the same year.⁵⁷

In an effort to increase profits in the struggling mining industry, Henry Rogers, the organizer of the monopolistic Standard Oil and Amalgamated Copper Company coordinated the organization of a non-ferrous metals trust in 1897. Rogers was joined by Leonard Lewisohn, J. Moore, and D. Schley, who organized the United Selling

⁵⁶ *Memorias de la Secretaria de Hacienda*, años fiscales 1897-1898 a 1910-1911, Registro General de Minas abierto en virtud de lo dispuesto en la Ley de Propriedad Minería. Document #157 446-705. Mexico City, Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

⁵⁷ "Don Camilo Arriaga, ilustre precursor de la Revolucion" *El Popular*, June 27, 1945.

Company, the company that would grow to be the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO). This initial venture controlled 55% of all lead, silver, copper, and gold produced in the US. Rogers' goal was to form a lead-silver trust that could control the prices for lead and silver to prevent turbulent price fluctuations seen in the open market.

Lead and silver prices continued to drop into 1898, caused by increasing Mexican ore shipment, an excessive smelting capacity in the US and Mexico, and mounting labor demands, forcing smelters to reduce costs or be forced to close. Rogers continued to invite investors into his lead-silver trust, most joining hoping to find relief from the slumping prices. Two companies, however, did not join the trust; the larger Guggenheim & Sons with smelters in Pueblo, Colorado and Monterrey and Aguascalientes, Mexico, and the electrolytic refinery in Perth Amboy, New Jersey; and the Balbach Smelting and Refining Company of Newark, New Jersey. Both the Guggenheims and Balbachs refused to sign, insisting that they were family run companies and only participated in family run enterprises.⁵⁸

ASARCO united the largest smelter operations across the US to include: the Omaha and Grant Smelters owned by E.W. Nash; two smelters in Leadville, Colorado; two smelters in Pueblo, Colorado; the Globe Smelter in Arizona; the Durango Smelter in Colorado; the Argentine Smelter in Kansas City; the El Paso Smelter; smaller smelters in Philadelphia, Helena, Salt Lake City, and Great Falls, Idaho; and refineries in Omaha and Chicago. Without the inclusion of the prestigious Guggenheim smelters, ASARCO was

⁵⁸ Editorial, "Lead in 1889" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, XLIX, (4 January, 1899) 4.

formally organized on March 23, 1898, managing eleven major smelting companies, consisting of eighteen smelters and refineries in the US.⁵⁹

The ASARCO promoters spent nearly \$19 million to buy out many smaller smelters and eliminate competitors. ASARCO was formally incorporated on April 4, 1899, declaring a value of \$65 million and issuing 325,000 shares of preferred stock and 325,000 shares of common stock at \$100 a share. Within a month, shares of ASARCO were selling for \$115. ASARCO moved to restrict the supply of ores available to the Guggenheims' Pueblo smelter by stockpiling ores from Utah and Coeur d'Alene mine in Idaho, and purchasing ores at inflated prices from independent Colorado and Missouri mines. In reaction to ASARCO's tactics, Daniel Guggenheim formed a subsidiary ore-supplying company that leased mines in Utah and Idaho, guaranteeing ores deliveries to the Pueblo smelter. The Guggenheims next formed the Guggenheim Exploration Company (Guggenex), a public corporation used to raise large sums of money from investors willing to take high risks for high returns. ASARCO tried to reduce the rising costs associated with their hostile business tactics by reducing wages and requiring longer hours for its smelter operators.⁶⁰

Guggenex continued to expand its mining and smelting operations in Mexico, through its subsidiary Mexican Exploration Company, buying the Tecolotes lead-silver mine in Santa Barbara, Chihuahua, the La Luz silver mines in Cordero, Chihuahua, and the Dolores copper mines in Matehuala, San Luis Potosí, increasing profits at its Monterrey and Aguascalientes smelters. ASARCO gained Robert Towne's mines and

⁵⁹ Editorial, "The Lead Smelters Corporation" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXII, (18 May 1898) 376; Editorial, "The New York Stock Market in 1899" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXIX (6 January 1900) 30.

⁶⁰ "More Big Corporations: American Smelting and Refining Company Capital \$65,000,000" *The Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, 7 April 1899.

smelters in Mexico by way of the Kansas City Smelting and Refining Company, operating the Velardeña Mining and Smelting Company, the Mexican ore company with mines in Catorce, Matehuala, Charcas, and San Luis Potosí, as well as its smelter in El Paso Texas and the El Carmine refinery in Texas. Towne's remaining holdings were organized under the Compañía Metallúrgica Mexicana, which included the smelter in San Luis Potosí and its branch rail lines to the Veta Rica mine in Sierra Mojada, the Mina Vieja and Mina Rica in Santa Eulalia, the Sombrerete and Azules y Anexis mines in Zacatecas along with his original smelter concessions and exemptions from 1890.⁶¹

ASARCO faced its first challenge at its Durango, Colorado smelter. The Colorado General Assembly passed an eight-hour labor law in the spring of 1899, prohibiting employers from working men for more than eight-hours a day, without paying overtime. On June 15, the day the law became effective, smelter manager at the Durango smelter posted a new wage scale, structured at an hourly rate that required men to work a full twelve-hour day to receive the same wages received before the new law, though compelling no one to work overtime. Fed up with the reduced wages, the WFM struck in June 1899. While smelter managers refused to arbitrate with the union leaders, the Colorado eight-hour law was declared unconstitutional by the Colorado Supreme Court in July, with the arbitration board ending the strike in August, deciding for a ten-hour day and 20% wage increase in favor of the unions.⁶²

In the aftermath of the strike ASARCO smelting operations were disrupted for several months into 1900 with strikes in Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Arizona, Iowa, Idaho, and California, providing the Guggenheims the opportunity to contract with mines

⁶¹ Editorial, *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXVII (10 June 1899), 673.

⁶² Editorial, "Colorado Arbitration Board Decision" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXVIII (2 September 1899), 286.

throughout the US for silver and lead to be smelted at the Pueblo and Aguascalientes smelters. By the end of 1900, ASARCO profits were \$3.5 million and Guggenheim profits were \$3.6 million, even though the Guggenheims operated only one quarter as many smelters.⁶³

The Guggenheims stepped up the competition by flooding the world market with silver and lead refined in Mexico, reducing the market prices and forcing ASARCO to drop its prices and further reduce profits. ASARCO stocks dropped drastically to \$60 a share by December and the trustees accepted that they needed to work more closely with the Guggenheims to succeed. When ASARCO returned to negotiate with the Guggenheims in December 1900, the tables had turned, and the Guggenheims had the advantage in the proceedings. The Guggenheims agreed to participate with ASARCO and were provided 425,000 shares of ASARCO stock in exchange for \$15 million, the Aguascalientes, Monterrey, and Pueblo smelters, the Perth Amboy refinery, and the various ore contracts held by the Guggenheims, valued at roughly \$3 million.⁶⁴

For \$18 million, the Guggenheims gained control of nearly \$36 million in stocks, they kept control of their mines in Colorado, Mexico and Missouri, continued to run the steamship operations transporting ore to the Perth Amboy refinery, and maintained full control of the Guggenheim Exploration Company. While the ASARCO board members were not unanimous in the agreement with the Guggenheims, ASARCO needed the cash

⁶³ Editorial, "The Colorado Smelter Situation" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXXVII (17 June 1899) 704; *The Weekly Gazette*, Colorado Springs, March 1, 1899; *The Arizona Republican*, May 28, 1899; June 23, 1899; July 6, 1899; August 23, 1899; *Daily Iowa State Press*, June 16, 1899; *The North Adams Transcript*, North Dakota, June 17, 1899; *The Idaho Daily Statesman*, June 26, 1899; *Oakland Tribune*, July 31, 1899.

⁶⁴ "The Smelting Combination" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXXI (9 February 1901), 175; "Increase of Capital Required" *The Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, 20 Dec 1900; "Gold and Silver Mines" *Wilkes-Barre Weekly Times*, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, 29 December 1900; "Merged at Last: American Smelting and Refining Company Takes in Guggenheim Properties" *Morning World-Herald*, Omaha, 9 April 1901.

provided in the deal and agreed to the merger against the objections of Henry Rogers, the man who had originally developed the plan for the ASARCO trust. Struggling for control of ASARCO, Rogers and the Guggenheims found themselves in court throughout 1900 and early 1901. The Guggenheims gained a 51% majority share of the ASARCO stocks in 1901, formally taking control of the corporation on April 8, 1901 placing the five Guggenheim brothers, Isaac, Daniel, Murray, Solomon, and Simon, on the ASARCO board of directors, with Daniel acting as the Chairman of the board and Simon as treasurer. On April 27, Daniel was elected chairman of the executive committee with his brothers simultaneously elected to sit on the fifteen member committee, placing the Guggenheim brothers in key ASARCO leadership positions.⁶⁵

With ASARCO's acquisition of the Compañía Metallúrgica Mexicana smelter in San Luis Potosí and the Velardeña Mining Company smelter in Durango the Guggenheims held a virtual monopoly over Mexican smelting operations. Their only competitors, for the most part, still used mules to crush ores and could not compete with the ASARCO's large-scale, modernized mining and smelting operations. By 1900 the Guggenheims' Monterrey and Aguascalientes smelters processed 40% of all lead produced in Mexico and 20% of all silver.⁶⁶

Mining struggles in the greater West were fought on many levels. While labor fought for wages, reduced hours, and increased safety in the mines, the battle for control between two great mining empires played out as well. Hard battles were fought in the

⁶⁵ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico, Tepezala Unit., Southern Department, document 1. Revisada el 5 Enero de 1911, la copia fue certificado per el señor S. Dickenson, Secretaria de Estado de Nueva Jersey, quien hizar constar la validez del documents. Testimonio de las diligencias de la protocolizacion del acta la sociedad donominada The American Smelting and Refining Company, Mexico, Junio 29, 1901. Copia Certificado Incorporacion de dicha compania otorgada el mismo dia de su constitucion; Guggenheims step in" *Morning World-Herald*, Omaha, 23 April 1901.

⁶⁶ United States Consular Report, February 1900, number 233 Matamoros, Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

US and Mexico against mine owners and operators, sometimes with bloody consequences. The tactics of the UMWA, WFM, and emerging Mexican labor unions were similar; building strike funds and limiting union membership to the most effective and specialized workers in the industry. Unions won and lost hard battles on both sides of the border due to government involvement with police, state and federal military troops, Pinkerton guards, and court injunctions, while struggling for adequate wages, safe work conditions, and fair work hours.

Mine owners were able to manipulate the reactions of labor in order to achieve their desired results. In most instances the sure way to break a strike was to bring in new laborers to continue to run the company at a profit. The goal of the strikers was to prevent this from happening, which was effective until the owners united and found government support with injunctions and military troops under the perception of impending civil breakdown. In some cases, the eventual violence of striking mobs was exactly what the owners needed to secure the troops to protect the new laborers who would break the strike. Strikebreakers were not necessarily of any particular race--Slavs in the East, Anglos from Missouri and Mexicans in the West, and even these generalizations are too broad. Race had less to do with the outbreak of violence than did the fact that strangers, regardless of race, were taking the jobs of striking men in a given region.

Just as race had little to do with the outbreak of violence in mining strikes, the distinction between resident or absentee owners did not determine the labor policies of a mining company. Though western companies, such as Old Dominion in Globe Arizona, owned by eastern capitalists, and Kansas Mines held by the Atchison, Topeka, Santa Fe

Railroad Company had absentee owners, and eastern companies like Carnegie Steel and Calumet & Hecla had absentee owners, labor troubles occurred where resident owners made policy as well, as was the case in the Pullman strike in Illinois, and the western mining strikes in Cripple Creek and Leadville, Colorado.⁶⁷

The struggle between the ASARCO and Guggenex mining corporations was also won due to the inter-related nature of mining stretching across Mexico and the US through the Great Western Desert. The Guggenheim mining and smelting operations in Mexico clearly provided the resource required to defeat and finally gain control over ASARCO. The Guggenheims took advantage of cheap labor in Mexico while ASARCO struggled against labor costs in Colorado and labor unions immediately after Colorado passed an eight-hour labor law in 1899. By controlling the ores in the US and Mexico, the Guggenheim smelters in Colorado, Monterrey, and Aguascalientes used the same processing techniques providing flexibility for the Guggenheims ore processing. The Guggenheims understood the connected nature of mining in the western desert, to include the ore quality, transportation costs, labor costs and availability, and the importance of acquiring government support.

Labor on both sides of the border, union and non-union, fought for the same goals, had similar struggles with owners and managers, and US and Mexican workers were equally affected by economic boom-bust cycles. Labor struggles did not end or ease after the depression in 1897, and workers across the western region continued to fight the same war. Leaders such as William Bryan Jennings, Eugene Debs, Bill Haywood, and Davis Waite in the US and Camilo Arriaga, Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama in

⁶⁷ Richard Peterson, *The Bonanza Kings: Social Origins and Business Behavior of Western Mining Entrepreneurs, 1870-1900*, (University of Nebraska, 1977).

Mexico, led the battles on their respective side of the borders while Mother Jones and Ricardo Flores Magón challenged corporate power and pro-business government on both sides of the international border calling for fair wages, safe work conditions, and other general protections for laborers in the Great Western Desert.

CHAPTER 5

TENSIONS RISING: POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO PRO-BUSINESS GOVERNMENT

The surge of strikes during the 1890s indicates a collective discontent among workers on both sides of the border. Union and non-union laborers fought for the same goals against owners, managers, and government policies, as they struggled during back-to-back economic recessions in 1893, 1897, and 1907. The frequency of labor battles escalated after the depressions of 1893 and 1897 as workers in the US and Mexico escalated the war against the mercenary armies of US corporate giants composed of Pinkerton detectives, augmented by state police and military troops that were routinely deployed against the unions.

In the earliest stage of the labor battles, political discontent emerged in the middle- and upper-classes in cities throughout the US and Mexico. Corporate giants became more influential throughout many urban and industrial centers across the US and Mexico, displacing the regional elite from positions of power and influence. Many reform minded leaders such as William Bryan Jennings, Eugene Debs, and Davis Waite in the US and Ricardo Flores Magón, Camilo Arriaga, and Francisco Madero in Mexico, led the charge to reduce the power and influence of corporate giants by fighting for fair

wages, safe work conditions, and other general protections for laborers in the Great Western Desert.

A social and economic transformation occurring in the desert mining region was not simply guided by business or politics alone. By the 1890s and early 1900s the traditionally rural and expanding West had become increasingly urban as manufacturing industries developed, sweeping westerners into a new economic age. Depressed crop prices, growing debt, and exorbitant freight rates consumed the finances of independent farmers and businessmen who struggled to make it on their own. As these economic ills spread throughout the US West, discontent expanded and workers doubled their efforts in the battle against corporate power, this time targeting government policies in addition to the industrial corporations.

Initial challenges by farmers began in 1890 as they took a stand against corporate power. Frustrated by the persistent economic challenges of the era, many farmers united into an Alliance to fight against the burgeoning corporate industries, collusive railroad operators, and a government that seemed dedicated to protecting the interests of big business. United against the evils of capitalism, Alliance farmers coordinated purchases of equipment to save money, and held crops as a block, leveraging sales to increase profits and reduce freight rates by forming larger shipments. Initially profits increased by 5% for participating farmers.

In 1890, farmers in the Plains States fought to reduce rail rates and improve credit terms by running for public office. The Alliance quickly realized that government support for their cause was crucial to the success of their campaign against the industrial giants. By 1892 the Alliance had spread across the US, spawning the Populist Party,

uniting the farmers of the Midwest with the working-class mining interests in the desert West and adopting a platform of economic and social change for the nation. The Populists demanded free coinage of silver, a graduated income tax, government ownership of railroads and telegraph lines, and reforms to the US Treasury system to assist farmers and other independent small businessmen across the nation. In 1892, the Populist Party received over one million votes, winning the election for the Governor's seat in Kansas and Colorado.¹

In the northern desert region of Mexico, the completion of the Mexican Central Railroad, which connected Mexico City and El Paso, brought rapid development in mining, ranching, and corporate cotton production. Large tracts of land were “re-distributed” under the rule of Porfirio Díaz, with property seizures of communal Indian lands as well as unproductive estates owned by Mexican settlers in the northern desert. These properties were made available to large mining companies and corporate cotton producers in an effort to industrialize and modernize Mexico. The Porfirian development policies created great resentment among regional elites who were displaced by foreign businessmen, sowing the seeds of insurrection and revolt.

¹ Key works on the Progressive Era in the US include: Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Re-Interpretation of American History 1900-1916* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963); Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); John Whiteclay Chambers II, *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920* 4th ed (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Steven Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1998); Melvyn Dubofsky, *The State and Labor in Modern America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Alan Dawley, *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994); Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressivism in War and Revolution* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2003); and Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963).

While the railways allowed greater mobility for workers to move into the desert mining region, the railways were critical for profitable mine production as well. The Guggenheim mining interests took advantage of the newly completed Mexican Central Railroad in 1890, exporting copper and silver ore from its extensive Mexican mining operations to its newly constructed refinery at Perth Amboy, New Jersey. In 1893, the Guggenheims completed construction of their copper smelter in Aguascalientes along the Porfirian sponsored railway connecting to San Luis Potosí.²

The Guggenheims were among many US foreign investors who benefited from Porfirian development policy in conjunction with the completion of the rail construction in northern Mexico. Taking advantage of its privileged position in Monterrey, the Sociedad Metallúrgica Mexicana, the Guggenheims' Mexican subsidiary to ASARCO, expanded mining claims throughout San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas. The Guggenheims bought an incomplete railway running east toward Rio Verde, from San Luis Potosí, increasing silver, lead, and gold production from the once deserted Cerro de San Pedro mine.³

While many members of Mexico's elite took advantage of the quick cash offered by foreign investors during the 1880s and early 1890s, these once powerful land owners blamed the foreign corporations for the economic distress developing in 1892. Camilo Arriaga was among the discontented Mexican elite and formed Liberal Clubs in San Luis Potosí to challenge the Porfirian foreign investment practices. The Liberal Clubs

² Juan B. Barragan, *Discursos pronunciado el 15 de Septiembre de 1879 por el C. Lic Juan B. Barragan, en la inauguracion del primero tramo de Ferrocarril construido en el Estado* (pamphlet) 1890, Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

³ "Foreign Mining News, Mexico" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, (25 October 1890).

manifested vehement opposition to Díaz, charging him with “selling the country to the nation next door.”⁴

The 1890s proved to be challenging for Mexico’s elite as well as Mexico’s working class peasants. As the nation felt the impact of the growing silver crisis in 1892-1895, many indigenous fortunes were exhausted and workers protested wage reductions throughout the northern desert region. Arriagas family had mined silver for several generations, owning the largest silver mine in San Luis Potosí, the *Compañía Minería de la Concepcion*, amassing a substantial fortune over the years. In 1893, the largest mine at the Concepcion complex caved in, causing great strains on the Arriaga fortune as they struggled to make a profit from less productive mines and pay to repair the damaged mine. Three months later the *Casa de Moneda de San Luis Potosí* closed, reducing national demand for silver, and forcing silver prices down further. While foreign investors took this opportunity to purchase failing silver mines at cutthroat prices throughout San Luis Potosí, the Arriagas could not recover from the physical and economic disasters.⁵

The economic crisis of 1893 disrupted life throughout the western desert, leading to major strikes against railroads and mines across the US West and Mexico. In response to the growing economic trouble facing the nation’s middle class, a young Democrat from Nebraska, William Jennings Bryan led the charge to protect the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, proclaiming that inequitable loan terms under a gold standard would force

⁴ Quoted from Díaz’s “Plan de Tuxtepec, 1876” as he protested President Lerdo de Tejada’s effort to sell the national debt to the US in the 1876 election.

⁵ *Compañía Minería de la Concepcion, Estatutos aprobados para el trabajo y laborio de la Mina de la Concepcion uricada eb el Mineríal de Catorce* (pamphlet) 1893, Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

many farmers and small businessmen who had received loans paid in silver to repay in gold, resulting in a bankrupted nation of farmers and small businessmen.

Bryan chastised his colleagues in the Senate during his speech on August 16, as he proclaimed the evils of the gold dollar. On October 30, the vote to repeal the Sherman Silver Purchase Act passed, 42 in favor and 32 against with 10 abstentions. As the Congress came to a close three days later, two Populist Senators, William Peffer from Kansas and William Allen from Nebraska, begged in vain to prevent Congress from adjourning before it passed legislation to provide relief for the millions of destitute people across the US.⁶

The economic situation was so desperate that on the opening day of the Fifty-third Congress, on December 4, the key point of discussion was what to do about the nation's economic crisis. Senator Peffer, introduced a bill to provide \$63.3 million in silver dollars "lying idle in the treasury." Senator's Peffer's bill was defeated by the Republican Senate majority, qualifying their vote on the grounds that it is the people's responsibility to aid the government, not the government's responsibility to provide aid to the people.⁷

In 1896, the Democrats hoped to capture the presidency by uniting the Democratic and Populist Party voting blocks with their nominee, Bryan. Bryan's nomination splintered the Democratic Party with pro-gold Democrats nominating their own presidential candidate, Illinois Senator John M. Palmer. Fully aware of the consequences of a divided party in the election, Palmer announced to fellow Democrats "I will not consider it any great fault if you decide to cast your vote for William

⁶ *Congressional Record*, 53rd Congress, 1st Session, 2 November, 1893, 3077-78.

⁷ *Congressional Record*, 53rd Congress, 2nd Session, 19 December 1893, 384-87.

McKinley” the Republican pro-gold candidate.⁸ Bryan struggled to capture non-agrarian votes in the election, winning the South outright and a large portion of the western mining states, however, the industrial cities of the Northeast, (backed by corporate giants such as the Rockefeller, Guggenheim, and Morgan, as well as moderate labor leaders including Samuel Gompers), carried McKinley to victory, earning him 7.1 million votes to Bryan’s 6.5 million and 271 electoral college votes to 176. While the Populist Party won its largest presence in the Congress, with six Senators and twenty-five Representatives, the organization began its quick decline into obscurity.⁹

The political situation in Mexico was also precarious as opposition to the Porfirian government increased through the 1890s and early 1900s. In the wake of the economic slump in silver prices, local elites from San Luis Potosí met with President Díaz, urging him to replace the sitting state Governor, Carlos Diez Gutierrez, after two decades in office. Gutierrez used most of the municipal funds collected to enrich himself, refusing to fund minimum budgetary requirements, leaving San Luis Potosí with a 2 million peso debt.¹⁰

Díaz was urged to appoint Blas Escontria, an engineer and prominent businessman from San Luis Potosí. Escontria was appointed in 1898, after Gutierrez had died in office. Escontria followed the Díaz policy of foreign investment led growth to resolve the state’s economic crisis. The Guggenheims took advantage of the favorable investment opportunities purchasing mines throughout the bankrupt state. The

⁸ “Bryan’s Day” *Idaho Statesman*, (24 July 1896); James A. Barnes, “The Gold Standard Democrats and the Party Conflict” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol 17 No 3 (December 1930), 437.

⁹ Elmer Ellis, “The Silver Republicans in the Election of 1896” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol 18 No 4, (March 1932): 519-534.

¹⁰ Compania Industrial “Cerveceria de San Luis Potosi” *Estatutos de la Compania Industrial “Cerveceria de San Luis” Sociedad Anonimo* (pamphlet) 1898. Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

Guggenheim Sociedad Metallúrgica Mexicana purchased a semi-finished railway creating a new line to connect their mines at Rio Verde to San Bartolo in San Luis Potosí, connecting to their Perth Amboy refinery, improving rail connections between their expanding mining empire and extensive smelting operations in the US and Mexico. In 1902 the Guggenheims established a state of the art smelter at Matehuala to process lead, silver, and gold. New smelters were built in San Luis Potosí adjacent to the Mexican National Railway, with assets in Mexico totaling near \$10 million.¹¹

The rapid arrival of the Guggenheim, Rockefeller, Doheny, and other foreign investment interests alarmed the Mexican elite, who felt that Díaz policies to accept foreign investment, was actually selling Mexico to foreigners. While Camillo Arriaga protested the invasion of foreign investors buying up mines and businesses in San Luis Potosí, many others welcomed the infusion of capital and technology that invigorated the economy of San Luis Potosí. Peasants, on the other hand resented the changing lifestyle forced upon them with land privatization and industrialization of the region. The traditional lifestyle of peasants being housed and fed by Hacendados was quickly being replaced by a wage labor system, where the new laboring class struggled to pay rents and purchase food at inflated prices while their wages continued to decline.

In the Western US, corporate leaders expected local and state government leaders to provide support in much the same way that Díaz provided in Mexico. When a battle erupted at the Bunker Hill and Sullivan mines in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho in 1899, mine managers turned to the Governor for support. Miners in the region had gained increased

¹¹ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Sección Guardia y Custodia, Libros Corporativos o carptas verdes, Department of titles and Deeds, Deed of sale and transfer of properties, concessions, shares, and water rights executed by the Gran Nacional Fundición and the Guggenheim Smelting Company, in favor of the American Smelting and Refining Company, sheet 8-9 (Mexico, DF: 8 August 1901).

wages and union recognition after the 1892 strike, except for the Bunker Hill and Sullivan mine, the largest mine in Idaho. The Bunker Hill miners continued to press for equal wages and union recognition to no avail. Negotiations on April 29, 1899, achieved a partial victory when they received equal wages to other miners in the region; however the managers refused to acknowledge the union. Disgruntled miners destroyed the Burke Mill with dynamite and forced the managers to flee the mines that same night.¹²

Mine managers and owners petitioned the state for assistance and won legislation enforcing a state operated permit system that prevented uncertified miners from working in the mines.¹³ Hoping to defeat the strike with the same tactics that succeeded in Homestead and Chicago, mine owners asked Governor Frank Steunenberg to call for military assistance. The Governor requested federal troops and instituted martial law. Among the units dispatched by President McKinley was an African American unit from Brownsville, Texas. The African American soldiers were detested by the striking miners. Bill Haywood accused the mining company of using race to inflame the miners and provoke them to greater violence. A similar tactic worked in Cripple Creek when striking miners attacked African American soldiers dispatched to protect replacement workers. The striking miners were denied work permits and replaced by 800 workers imported primarily from Missouri. After most of the striking miners were forced out of Coeur d'Alene, Governor Steunenberg released the federal troops; however he did

¹² "Trouble in Coeur D'Alene" *Butte Weekly Miner*, 27 April 1899.

¹³ Union members were often refused work permits.

maintain a permanent police contingent at the mines as a deterrent to disgruntled miners returning for revenge.¹⁴

Farther south the labor war continued unabated with strikes erupting throughout the northern Mexican desert. Opposition groups broadened their calls rallying behind demands to reform the government and called for an end to the Porfiriato. In January 1901, striking miners at the Matehuala paralyzed the region when they walked out due to high maize prices and poor work conditions. The miners had grown increasingly concerned as food prices increased and their wages remained static, forcing them to spend more for food for their families. Conditions in the mines were also quite hazardous with several accidents a month and very little concern on the part of the mine managers for improving work conditions for the safety of the miners. While the miners successfully froze mining operations for a month, mine managers requested military support to end the strike and forced the workers back to the mines. When the federales arrived the strike ended and the workers demands were ignored.¹⁵

On the political front of the mining war, Camillo Arriaga's Liberal Clubs had spread across the desert mining region of Mexico, with fifty clubs organized in the states of Hidalgo, San Luis Potosí, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Durango, Zacatecas, Michoacan, Nuevo Leon, Puebla and Veracruz. Arriaga held his national convention in February where he called for democratic reforms in Mexico. He argued that reforms

¹⁴ "Anarchy Up North Bunker Hill & Sullivan Mill at Wardner Destroyed by Mob of Union" *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 30 April 1899; "Troops are Ready to be Hurried Off to Wardner if Necessary" *The Minneapolis Journal*, 1 May 1899.

¹⁵ *El Contemporaneo*, 20 January 1901; 27 January 1901.

must be led by “private initiative, which should be seconded and extended until made into collective action” to effectively change the government.¹⁶

In September 1900 Arriaga’s Liberal Clubs began printing their first opposition newspaper, *Renacimiento*. The newspaper was applauded by Ricardo Flores Magón and his staff in Mexico City who remained dedicated to printing their own opposition newspaper *Regeneración*. Ricardo Flores Magón was excited to meet with Arriaga and his compatriots at the Liberal Congress in February to unite their opposition forces and plan for the defeat of the Porfirian dictatorship.¹⁷

The hosts of the Liberal Conference, Arriaga, Díaz Soto y Gama, and Sarabia, condemned clerical privilege; called for the end of the jefe political system in Mexico, called for fair elections of local and state level leaders, demanded legislation to prevent the president from appointing his own supporters and finally, demanded an end to the flood of foreign investors who were draining the wealth of Mexico. While the majority of the congress remained cautiously defiant, Ricardo Flores Magón’s fiery speech captured the crowd as he openly condemned the Díaz administration and called for his immediate removal. Inciting the crowd, Flores Magón roared: the “Díaz administration is a den of thieves!” receiving a lukewarm response from the crowd, he screamed out again, this time with a stronger response. When he defied Díaz a third time the crowd erupted with shouts of approval.¹⁸

In light of Flores Magón’s incendiary rhetoric, the congress’s resolutions remained moderate, calling for the end of clerical privilege, protection of the free press,

¹⁶ Camillo Arriaga, *Invitación al Partido Liberal* (pamphlet), 1901. Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

¹⁷ Enrique Flores Magón, “La Vida de los Flores Magón” *Todo*, January 30; February 6, 1934.

¹⁸ *El Contemporáneo*, February 7, 1901.

enforcement of free elections, the creation of a Public Health Commission, and the administration of justice in accordance with the law.¹⁹ In March, the Liberal Clubs adopted a Manifesto to the Nation, attacking the “dominating dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz”, renouncing the semi-official press controlled by the state, and calling for a national party that would “expose the traitors and puppets in today’s government.”²⁰ Disturbed by the growing opposition to his government, Porfirio Díaz ordered the arrest of the Flores Magón brothers in May, assuming that their disappearance would end the opposition movement.

As tensions between Mexicans and foreign investors continued to increase, the Guggenheims faced new labor demands at the Ignacio Morales Mine in 1903. Miners requested a reduction in their work days to ten-hours and asked for a 50 cent per day wage increase to resolve the persistent division in pay scales between US and Mexican workers. When the demands of the men were refused they left the mine and were quickly replaced by new workers willing to work under the original conditions. When the striking miners shot at the replacement workers as they entered the mines, the Guggenheims were quick to request state and federal support to end the strike.²¹

When the federal forces arrived they arrested the 55 striking miners, prompting nearly 1,000 miners to walk out in protest of the arrests. Taking advantage of the federal forces deployed to the mine, the Guggenheims replaced the striking miners with new workers and continued operations with the protection of the Mexican Army. The federal

¹⁹ *Regeneración*, February 28, 1901.

²⁰ *Regeneración*, March 31, 1901.

²¹ Moises Gonzalez Navarro, *Historía Moderna de Mexico, El Porfiriato: la Vida Social* (Mexico: Editorial Hermes, 1957) 313; Primo Feliciano, *Historía de la San Luis Potosi Vol 4* (Mexico: Sociedad Mexicana de Geographica y Estadística, 1946) 163.

government remained dedicated to industrial efforts to protect the supply of cheap labor until 1910, repeatedly sending troops to suppress strikes whenever requested.²²

While the Guggenheims received continuously favorable government support in Mexico until 1910, they faced many challenges in the US, particularly in Colorado where the Populist Governor Davis Waite supported the plight of the state's miners. Waite supported the movement toward an eight-hour day. Colorado's first eight-hour day legislation was discussed by the State Senate in 1887. While the Senate's Labor Committee reviewed the measure, no action was taken and the bill died at the end of the term. While the State Senate approved an eight-hour law in 1893, it was later repealed. Miners and reformers continued to press for an eight-hour law when strikes erupted in 1903.²³

The WFM seized on the initiative in Colorado for an eight-hour day and called on Cripple Creek managers to meet this demand or the miners would strike. Ninety-five percent of Colorado miners walked off the job on November 9, 1903. Families were evicted from their homes and forced into the streets of Trinidad and Walsenburg, Colorado. The disruption of the coal industry led to work stoppages in the steel mills as well, with steel workers laid off due to supply disruptions.²⁴

In the White House, President Teddy Roosevelt faced pressure to continue the reforms and improve life for everyone in the United States, rich and poor, man, women, and child. Among the reformers calling for presidential action was Mary Harris,

²² Ibid.

²³ David Lawrence Lonsdale, "The Movement for an Eight-Hour Law in Colorado" 1983-1913. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Colorado, 1963.

²⁴ "Colorado Mines Idle Ten Thousand Miners Quit Work on Order of the United Mine Workers" *Grand Forks Daily Herald*, 10 November 1903; "Thousands of Miners Are out. Strike in the Great Coal Fields of Colorado on in Earnest" *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 10 November 1903;

commonly referred to as Mother Jones. Mother Jones devoted her life to working men and women, assisting striking workers in the garment industry and the mining industry. While supporting the striking miners throughout Colorado, she called for presidential action to protect the nation's children from the dangerous environment of manufacturing. She appealed to the president to assist with the plight of labor in the United States.²⁵

Addressing the President as the “father and leader” of the nation, Mother Jones urged President Roosevelt to act to end the “slavery” of labor in modern industry by supporting an eight hour law as well as compulsory school for children.²⁶ Though Roosevelt did not answer Mother Jones directly, his political reforms did move to protect the rights of children as the future hope of the nation in 1908.

Mother Jones arrived in Cripple Creek in late November to provide support and encouragement to the striking miners. Mother Jones praised the miners for their conviction, assuring them that their loyalty was critical to the success of the strike. When violence erupted at the Victor Mine in Cripple Creek, Colorado, Mother Jones joined the striking miners and protested the exploitation of labor by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. The company town provided housing and a company store for the miners; however, the CF&I charged high rent and inflated prices at the company store. Miners were paid by the ton; however, the mine inspectors required 2,400 pounds of rock per ton and routinely rigged the scales.²⁷

²⁵ Key works on Mary Harris include: Elliot J. Gorn, *Mother Jones: The Most Dangerous Woman in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); Edward M. Steel, ed. *The Correspondence of Mother Jones* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1985).

²⁶ Letter, Mary Harris to President Theodore Roosevelt dated 15 July 1903. Steel, *The Correspondence of Mother Jones*, 45-48.

²⁷ “Almost a Riot at Pueblo Bloodshed at Meeting at Miners Narrowly Averted Pueblo” *The Idaho Daily Statesman*, 13 December 1903.

The union called a convention to end the strike in March 1904; however, as the committee met, Colorado Governor James Hamilton Peabody declared martial law and dispatched the National Guard to the mines, to “preserve law and order” and escort replacement workers to the mines. Union agitators were deported, weapons were confiscated, and union newspapers were shut down; the union had no choice except to continue the battle against CF&I. The strike had cost the UMW over \$500,000, paying for food, shelter and transportation to the strike zone for the miners and their families. Sheriffs continued their violent defense of the mines, bombing homes, beating miners, and killing several of the striking workers protesting at the mine. The strike continued for a year and only ended when divisions between the UMW and WFM collapsed the union and UMW miners returned to work.²⁸

In the wake of the Colorado battles, miners in Clifton-Morenci, Arizona joined the fight in June 1903. Arizona passed the eight-hour law for underground miners in March 1903. The law was intended to assist the cause of union employees who contracted for eight-hour days at \$3.00 a day. The Arizona Company and the Phelps Dodge Company, both owned by the Phelps Dodge Corporation, routinely hired Mexican laborers who would work ten to twelve-hour days for \$2.25-\$2.50 a day, undercutting the union wage.²⁹

In response to the eight-hour law, the Phelps Dodge companies offered “nine-hours pay for eight-hours work.” This effectively reduced the wages for the large population of Mexican and Italian miners, who had been receiving ten-hours pay. Over

²⁸ “Martial Law Prevails in Colorado Governor Peabody Issues an Order as to Telluride Agitators Barred Out” *The Macon Telegraph*, Georgia, 4 January 1904; “Soldiers Drive out Union Miners Former Attorney General of Colorado, is Also Expelled from Disturbed” *The Duluth News Tribune*, 5 January 1904.

²⁹ Park, Joseph F. “The History of Mexican Labor in Arizona During the Territorial Period” (M.A. Thesis, University of Arizona, 1961), 254.

3,000 miners walked out on June 1, protesting the 10% pay cut. The mine owners were surprised by the strike; this was the first large-scale strike by Mexican workers anywhere in the US West.³⁰ The workers' demands included union membership for Mexican and Italian miners; \$3.00 pay for eight-hours of work for all miners; reduced prices at the Detroit Copper Company store; the elimination of mandatory hospital deductions from miners' pay; and a locker room for workers to change clothes before and after their shift.³¹

On June 10, the state dispatched the Arizona Rangers and 50 deputies to maintain the peace. Striking miners paraded around the mine and gathered for speeches and protests with very little violence in the initial days of the strike. In response to the Army of Rangers and deputies being massed by Phelps-Dodge, miners began displaying their weapons while marching on June 11. The miners took defensive measures to protect themselves from further reinforcements and severed the telephone and telegraph lines and posted men in the hills overlooking the camp, fortifying their positions. Company managers, desperate to end the strike, called for federal help; President Roosevelt dispatched the Army to break the strike.³²

The US Cavalry arrived on June 12, and the miners faced an armed force of nearly 800 men; the Arizona Rangers, 50 deputies, 230 Arizona National Guardsmen, and the US Cavalry troops. In an effort to prevent violence from the majority Mexican workforce, the Mexican government dispatched their Consul to the US to influence the strikers to return to work and avoid the pending battle. The leaders of the strike were arrested and the Phelps-Dodge managers re-opened the mine the following day. While

³⁰ *Arizona Republican*, 11 June 1903, 1.

³¹ *Arizona Republican*, 12 June 1903, 1.

³² *Copper Era*, 18 June 1903, 2 editorial.

the strike continued for two more weeks, many of the miners returned to work at the rate of nine-hours of pay for eight-hours of work. Ten of the arrested leaders were imprisoned at Yuma City, the strike had been broken and the miners defeated.³³

WFM organizing efforts in Arizona and Mexico were complicated because Mexicans were barred from skilled positions and union membership. Mine owners exploited the race divisions and replaced strikers with members from the opposite ethnic group. The company imported Mexican replacement workers from Phoenix, smuggling them through the picket lines in boxcars with armed deputies protecting them. Defeated, the striking employees destroyed the mines water pumping plant with dynamite before retreating from the region. By 1903, the WFM recognized that ethnic divisions were self-defeating and voted to allow membership for Mexicans at the National Convention, and censored the *Globe Arizona* mine for continuing to enforce racial divisions.³⁴

As labor continued to fight the war in the western battlefields and in Congress, Mother Jones continued her petitions to protect all laborers throughout the Great Western Desert. Understanding that miners both sides of the US-Mexico border were struggling against the same challenges and battling a common enemy, Mother Jones worked to unite the wage earning classes in their transnational struggle against large scale industrialists. In 1901 she visited striking miners in Mexico, calling for the US to end its support of the Porfirian dictatorship. In 1903 she praised Mexican miners for standing with their brothers in the United States in the Colorado coal strike; she then moved on to Bisbee,

³³ *Arizona Republican*, 13 June 1903, 1.

³⁴ Michael J. Gonzales, "United States Copper Companies, the State, and Labour Conflict in Mexico, 1900-1910" *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol 26, No 3 (Oct 1994), 664.

Arizona to protest the two-tiered labor system requiring Mexican miners to work longer hours for less pay than white miners.³⁵

Big business was the news of the day as mergers and monopolies filled the headlines in the 1890s and 1900s. In an effort to limit competition and increase profits, industry leaders such as Rockefeller, Morgan, and Carnegie were the trailblazers of industrial consolidation. In an effort to limit competition and increase profits, corporations in industrial production, steel & iron, oil, automobile, agricultural machinery, telephone, copper, and meat packing industries, formed trusts or built monopolies. In every example, the mergers formed initially large market shares, which shrank over time due to growing competition. In many cases, smaller competitive companies incorporated new technologies faster, or adjusted to changing demands quicker than the giant trusts.

As mines in the western US continued to face hostile unions and restrictive progressive legislation, Daniel Guggenheim was re-evaluating the company's holdings and planned for new acquisitions in Mexico. In January 1903 Guggenex hired John Hays Hammond as a consulting engineer to select new Mexican acquisitions. The Guggenheims agreed to Hammond's exorbitant salary of \$250,000 for a five year contract, in addition to a 25% interest in all new mines, and publicized their success in securing the mining wizard who had revolutionized the gold fields of South Africa. The campaign was very successful for the Guggenheim stocks, raising an additional \$11 million for expansion in Mexico.³⁶

³⁵ Gorn, *Mother Jones*, 155.

³⁶ John Hays Hammond, *The Autobiography of John Hays Hammond*, vol II, Annotated by George C. Webb, 1935.

Taking advantage of their leadership role in ASARCO, the Guggenheims sold several unprofitable Guggenex properties to the trust in 1903. In the early part of the year the Dolores Mine ran into leaner and more complex ore and rather than building a new concentration mill for the mine, Guggenex sold the property to ASARCO for \$3 million. ASARCO funds were also used to pay the \$3 million to pump water from the flooded Santa Francisca y Annexes mines. New electrical pumps were installed in the main shafts in addition to a narrow gauge branch rail line connecting the mines to the Mexican Central Railroad. By the end of the year this ASARCO property was supplying the Guggenheim Aguascalientes smelter, paying inflated transportation prices fixed into the smelter fees. While the ASARCO annual report detailed the property sales, the purchase prices and details were omitted, increasing the strained relations between the Guggenheims and the other ASARCO investors as the Guggenheim brothers continued to increase profits for their private company at the expense of ASARCO investors.³⁷

Separate from ASARCO, Guggenex continued to expand its Mexican holdings, purchasing the Jimenez mineral fields in Chihuahua, located near the Jimenez Station of the Mexican Central Railroad. Additionally the company bought the Jimbosa, Hercules, and Cibola mines, with 24 mining claims of medium grade copper-silver ore covering 260 acres at a cost of 200,000 pesos, shipping the ore to the Aguascalientes smelter.³⁸

As the Guggenheims continued to transform their business into a global corporation, the US government was changing as well. While the Congress had traditionally served as the main platform used by reformers calling for progressive

³⁷ ASARCO, *Fifth Annual Report of the American Smelting and Refining Company*, (30 June, 1904), 4-5; Abstracts of Official Reports, "The American Smelting and Refining Company" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, (12 September 1904), 477-478

³⁸ Special Correspondent "Foreign News, Mexico-Chihuahua" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXXVII (2 February 1904), 251.

programs, Theodore Roosevelt transformed the role of the president in the legislative process. The president's new role was to set priorities for resolving major problems, first in the courts and later in Congress. Taking advantage of the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act, Roosevelt looked to the courts to disband the industrial trusts, hoping to defeat the corporate monopolies that had been blamed for the 1893-1897 economic crisis.

In 1902, Roosevelt pressed for the prosecution of the Northern Securities Company, a railroad conglomeration created as a result of the rate wars between E.H. Harriman, J. Hill, and J.P. Morgan for control of the Northern Pacific railroads. This combination ended all competition in the region and allowed for exorbitant freight rates throughout the northwest. The courts ordered that Northern Securities be broken up, a success for Roosevelt. After twenty-five anti-trust cases were tried under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, Roosevelt shifted his strategy and worked for increased anti-trust legislation from Congress.³⁹

The 1903 Elkins Act prohibited railroads from giving rebates to favorite customers, forcing railroads to charge all customers equally. While many manufacturing companies were infuriated by this law, most railroads favored this legislation because it reduced the stresses associated with corporations requesting preferred rates. Congress also formed the Bureau of Corporations to report on the activities of interstate business. While the Bureau was designed to assist corporations in matters of interstate business, many of its findings resulted in anti-trust suits. Congress passed additional reforms in 1906, the Hepburn Act allowing the Interstate Commerce Commission to set railroad

³⁹ "The Northern Securities Company" *The Yale Law Journal*, Vol 11 No 8, (June 1902), 387-398; "The Northern Securities Decision and the Sherman Anti-Trust Act" *Columbia Law Review*, Vol 4 No 5, (May 1904), 315-337; "The Northern Securities Case and the Sherman Anti-Trust Act" *Harvard Law Review*, Vol 16, No 8 (June 1903), 539-554.

freight rates for interstate transportation. In response to public outcries for health protections the US Congress passed the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906 as well.⁴⁰

Manufacturing companies, however, were not the only industries requiring federal reform. The vulnerability of banks in recession and depression periods led America's bankers to call for central reform as early as 1893. The Bank Panic of 1907, however, forced the issue to the surface and Roosevelt agreed with the bill sponsored by Senator Nelson Aldrich initiating limited reform and creating the Congressional National Monetary Commission, led by Arsène Pujo, to study the entire financial and banking system of the country.⁴¹

Satisfied with the work he had accomplished, Roosevelt decided to retire at the end of his second term. His popularity in the US allowed him to essentially select his own successor, Secretary of War, William Howard Taft. Taft ran against the Democratic nominee, William Bryan Jennings, in his final bid for presidency, and Eugene V. Debs, running on the Socialist party ticket. Taft swept the 1908 election, receiving 321 electoral votes to Jennings' 162. Debs made a strong showing, receiving 421,000 popular votes.⁴²

Taft won passage of the Mann-Elkins Act in 1910, allowing the ICC to initiate rail freight rate changes and extending ICC control to telegraph and telephone companies.

⁴⁰ Center for Legislative Archives website. Guide to the Records of the U.S. Senate at the National Archives (Record Group 46), <http://www.archives.gov/legislative/guide/senate/chapter-07-interstate-commerce.html>.

⁴¹ Andrew Piatt, "The Work of the National Monetary Commission" *American Economic Association Quarterly*, 3rd Series, Vol. 10, No. 1, Papers and Discussions of the Twenty-First Annual Meeting. Atlantic City, NJ, December 28-31, 1908, 377-383; "The Financial Crisis" *The Times*, London, 18 November 1890, 5; "The Money Market" *The Times*, 5 December, 1890, 10.

⁴² "Patronage Used by Roosevelt? An Alleged Effort to Control the Next Convention" *Philadelphia Enquirer*, 19 January 1908; Election data statistics from University of California Santa Barbara "Presidency" website, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>.

He formed the Bureau of Mines providing assistance to miners across the nation, and the Federal Children's Bureau in 1912 and rallied for Arizona, New Mexico, and Alaska to be admitted as states. His actions directly paved the way for passage of the Sixteenth Amendment, authorizing a federal income tax, and the Seventeenth Amendment, requiring Senators to be elected by popular election.⁴³ While Taft remained dedicated to Progressive legislation, he was not as flamboyant as Roosevelt (and not nearly so pro-business), leaving many to suggest that his administration failed to set a Progressive agenda for domestic legislation, though his record proves his adherence to certain Progressive ideals.

In Mexico, opposition to the Díaz government continued to ferment. Ricardo and Jesus Flores Magón were released from prison on April 30, 1902, after a six month sentence. Juan Sarabia, Díaz Soto y Gama, and Camilo Arriaga were released from prison shortly thereafter and quickly returned to their opposition presses that had caused their imprisonment. In February 1903, the Liberal Club "Ponciano Arriaga" published its Manifesto, demonizing Díaz and his government. The Manifesto condemned Díaz and capitalist power of the foreign investors throughout Mexico. It attacked the company stores of the mines and manufacturing companies that enslaved workers in debt peonage. It lamented the death of the 1857 Constitution, declaring that the promises of freedom, equality, and universal rights were dead under the Díaz regime. While coming short of calling for revolution, the closing sentences of the Manifesto praised Mexican peasants,

⁴³ Frank H. Dixon, "The Mann-Elkins Act, Amending the Act to Regulate Commerce" *The Quarterly Journal of Economic* Vol 24 No 4 (August 1910), 593-633; Owen R. Lovejoy, "The Federal Children's Bureau" *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* Vol 35, Supplement, Child Employing Industries (March 1910) 61-72.

and prepared them for the eventual war to come, urging them to rise up in national unity against the “oppressive tyranny” of capitalistic greed.⁴⁴

Continuing their newspaper attacks on Díaz and their demands for reform, the Liberal Clubs continued to publish new opposition newspapers across Mexico. After another particularly damning attack, Díaz called for the *El Hijo del Ahuizote* in San Luis Potosí to be closed and its leaders imprisoned. On April 16, 1903 federal police invaded the newspaper offices and confiscated all of its publishing equipment and arrested Juan Sarabia, Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magón, and others, sentencing them to Belen prison until October 1903. Next, Díaz moved against the liberal press in Mexico City, closing the opposition presses of *Excelsior*, *Vesper*, *El padre del Ahuizote*, *El Nieto del Ahuizote*, and *La Voz de Juárez*.⁴⁵

Together in the Belen prison, these opposition leaders laid plans for the overthrow of the Díaz government. They all agreed to flee to the United States after their release and continue printing *Regeneración*. They planned to form a recruitment agenda and appeal to workers and peasants to join the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) in opposition to the Díaz government. The PLM would be organized militarily and continue in their efforts to overthrow the dictatorial Porfirio Díaz until they were triumphant.⁴⁶

A solid revolutionary leadership formed on both sides of the international border, with a common cause and goal of enacting political change and defeating the increasing power of international corporations. The international border divided the war geographically prior to 1904, with William Bryan Jennings, Eugene Debs, and Davis Waite fighting their battles in the US and Ricardo Flores Magón, Camilo Arriaga,

⁴⁴ *El Hijo del Ahuizote*, (March 1, 1903).

⁴⁵ De la Vega interview with Cravioto and Perez Fernandez, *El Democrática*, September 2-3, 1924.

⁴⁶ “La Vida de los Flores Magón” *Todo*, May 8, 1934.

Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama at war in Mexico, however, the international border would be disregarded in the battles after 1904. The war for reform and the battles against corporate privilege became indistinguishably entwined from 1906 to 1917, as both nations routinely ignored the border throughout the struggle.

Magónismo's persistent condemnation of the Porfirian government's support of oppressive labor practices in the factories, mines, and plantations of Mexico reinforced the desire for change among Mexico's working class. Dedicated to protecting the rights of the peasant and working class and espousing the ideas of political Liberalism, the Flores Magón brothers began publishing their ideology in the short lived opposition newspaper *El Democrática* in 1893. Six years later, continuing their opposition to Díaz, the Flores Magón brothers began another radical newspaper, *Regeneración*, calling for the end of the Díaz dictatorship and political reforms and if needed violent revolution.⁴⁷ While Ricardo Flores Magón called for systematic change in the early years of the opposition, he remained committed to the ideals of the constitution and Liberal government. As his organization faced increasing pressure in Mexico, the Magónistas fled to the United States to evade Porfirian government agents in 1904.

⁴⁷ Salvador Hernandez Padilla *El Magónismo: Historia de una Passion Libertarian 1900-1922* (Mexico: Ediciones Era, 1984), 16-17.

CHAPTER 6

PROTEST AND REVOLT: LABOR WAR GENERALS

The calls for reform between 1890 and 1905 remained relatively contained within the national borders of the United States and Mexico, as peasants, workers, and displaced middle-class professionals struggled against the burgeoning political power of trans-national corporations. As the labor war waged on both sides of the international border, two armies fought against the growing domination by industrialists and for the protection of wages and workers' rights. Political activists fervently demanded government action to curtail the unbridled power of big business and to preserve the traditional societies which were disintegrating as a result of the industrialization and incorporation of the region and wage workers, through union solidarity, struggled to earn a fair wage in a safe environment, and a sense of equality between workers and corporations.

The US and Mexico were becoming nations increasingly divided between capitalists and workers, with each side supporting reforms and laws that would improve their social condition. Mechanization and automation brought progress and efficiency to the capitalists while at the same time over production, market crashes, unemployment and dangerous working conditions to laborers. Machines brought standardization of process and decreasing production times; increasing efficiency and profits for industry and reducing the reliance on specialized and skilled labor, replacing many skilled craftsmen with cheap non-skilled laborers in mechanized factories.

Separate economic cultures developed, dividing the rich and the poor in the cities and one of the few forums in which they met was politics. The machine politics in the west similar, but smaller in scope, to New York's Tammany Hall, provided a mechanism to mobilize the poor through such economic incentives as bribes and jobs, while appeasing the rich with political favors and favorable taxes. Though the cities were united in this sense, urban and rural political interests diverged, sparking the Populist movement of the 1890s. Indeed, many farmers blamed cities and their banks for threatening the traditional American farming culture.¹

After securing political control of Mexico during the Tuxtepec Revolution in 1876, Díaz's economic development program brought new social struggles to Mexico. As communal properties were privatized and redistributed, new government policies encouraged industrial development by providing land and tax incentives for foreign investors in an effort to modernize Mexico. As US corporations took control of much of Mexico's industrial production, workers grew increasingly resentful of the capitalistic wage labor system that replaced the feudal peon society. The labor war that erupted in Mexico during the Porfiriato began as a workers' rebellion fought directly against the corporate invaders through violent labor strikes. Over time, as foreign capitalists used their economic strength to influence government policies at the municipal, state and federal levels, Mexico's middle-class and elite voiced their opposition to the Díaz government, calling for government reforms to preserve traditional Mexican society. The all encompassing class struggle in Mexico, which the government continued to suppress and ignore, erupted into full-scale revolution in 1910.

¹ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture & Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982).

Prior to the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, cooperation between the warring factions in the US and Mexico increased. In the US, leaders of AFL, IWW, and WFM rallied support for industrial workers in Mexico, and welcomed Mexican laborers into many of the locals in the Great Western Desert as they continued the fight against their corporate oppressors. The initial call for revolution began as middle-class and elite opposition groups in the US and Mexico demanded reform of pro-business governments at the local, state, and federal level. The call for revolution was issued simultaneously in the US and Mexico, with Anarchist and Socialist groups like the PLM, IWW, and WFM leading the way as early as 1906. Governmental action increased in 1906 as well, with the US arresting members of the PLM and providing militia and direct military support in Mexican battles as the labor war intensified. The PLM was the most active group pressing for radical political, actively leading labor uprisings and calling for the violent overthrow of the Mexican government. While the PLM was harassed by government on both sides of the border, the reform leaders such as Francisco Madero, Eugene Debs, and Mother Jones watched the PLM closely as they continued their march for political and economic reform.

There are many similarities between the developing economies throughout the western hemisphere in the pivotal years between 1876 and 1920. The labor system was in the throes of change while industry leaders struggled to adapt to the maturing capitalist market economy. Aside from Mexico and a few other Latin American countries, immigrant labor made up a large portion of the wage laborers in industrializing nations, Mexico's exemption was based largely on its large Indian population and peasant population, relieving it from the pressure to import large numbers of immigrants, while at

the same time providing an available surplus labor population for the United States. Conversely, however, foreign corporations in Mexico imported many skilled laborers, mirroring the class divisions between skilled Anglo workers and unskilled wage workers routinely divided by race.

As the emergence of monopoly capitalism brought social transformation, it also resulted in new political challenges as conservatives, moderates, and radicals in the middle- and upper-classes struggled for political and economic control in both nations. In the US, social struggles led to the Populist movement, Progressivism, and increased radicalization of labor unions like the International Workers of the World and the Western Federation of Miners, while at the same time in Mexico, labor unions, clerical groups, Indian farmers, moderate landowners, and anarchists fought against Porfirio Díaz and foreign corporations.

One obvious difference remains: Porfirio Díaz ruled the Mexican government as a dictator with nearly unlimited power while the US government functioned as a flawed democracy, but a democracy nonetheless where power transfers between political parties continued to occur every few years with minimal violence. Mexican politics mirrored democratic practices; nominating candidates from opposing parties, campaigning, and holding elections, maintain the façade of democracy and providing relative economic and political stability for thirty-five years. While elections in the US were definitely not free of political corruption, the political corruption was not systemic. Power-shifts in the US government occurred regularly, often in unexpected ways, such as the election of populist governors and senators in western states. While the freedom of elections is not a solution to all political problems, as witnessed by the increasing violence of labor strikes

throughout the US West, the belief of free elections was enough to prevent a radical call for political revolution in the US, whereas the belief that the government will never change without a revolution was most certainly a deciding factor in the war that erupted in Mexico in 1910.

The labor generals of the western labor wars, Eugene Debs, Samuel Gompers, Bill Haywood, Ricardo Flores Magón, Camilo Arriaga, and Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama, led the industrial workers in the United States and Mexico into battle from 1880 to 1904, primarily as independent armies fighting for organizational goals. In the late 1890s, many US labor unions joined forces in support of their cause, forming organizations such as the American Federation of Labor, International Workers of the World, and the Western Federation of Miners. While similar consolidations occurred in Mexico, as seen by the Congreso General Obreros Mexicanos (CGOM), Gran Círculo de Obreros Libres (GCOL) and the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), Mexican labor unions did not form an overarching labor union like the AFL until the 1930s with the formation for the (Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana) CROM. By 1904, it became clear to the labor generals on both sides of the border that they were fighting the same war against the same enemy and they consequently coordinated their efforts when possible.

Just as corporate leaders had ignored the border in their pursuit of profits prior to 1904, government leaders sent armed forces across the border, in both directions, with impunity after 1904. Government forces suppressed newspapers and imprisoned labor agitators, often without trial throughout the mining west. Mexican labor leaders fled to the US hoping to escape persecution by the Díaz government only to be met with increased opposition by the US government. Authorities in the US apprehended and

imprisoned labor leaders from the US and Mexico accusing and convicting them of seditious activities.

In the years after 1904, the generals on both sides of the struggle used military, political, and economic power as a means to total victory. In the US, the Guggenheims, Rockefellers, Carnegies, and other corporate leaders had effectively used their political and economic power against the weaker labor unions from the very beginning of the conflict. However, as the labor unions increased in political and economic strength during the Progressive Era, the battles became much less one sided. The success of the labor front in the US, led Ricardo Flores Magón, Juan Arriaga, Francisco Madero, and other Mexican opposition leaders to coordinate their efforts from inside the US borders. The arrival of Mexican opposition leaders increased dialog between the US and Mexican leaders resulting in greater cooperation among labor organizations fighting the war on both sides of the international border.

The united labor front caused great concern among corporate and political leaders in the US, forcing them to escalate the war, moving private militias and government troops across the border whenever required. Díaz more or less accepted these periodic intrusions into Mexico in exchange for US support against revolutionary Mexican groups operating north of the border. The US allowed Mexican agents to surveil opposition leaders and US authorities regularly arrested suspected agitators.

Labor unions in the US took advantage of the growing discontent among Mexican laborers on both sides of the border, eventually integrating the two distinct labor groups into a consolidated force against the common corporate enemy. Opposition leaders in the US and Mexico struggled to replace pro-business lawmakers with pro-labor

representatives and shift the balance of power away from the corporate giants. As the opposition groups became increasingly active, government officials in the US and Mexico, such as Idaho Governor Frank Steunenberg, Colorado Governor James Hamilton Peabody, Sonora Governor Juan Isabel, in addition to a multitude of local sheriffs and judges cooperated with the Guggenheims, Rockefellers, and Colonel William Greene in raids against the revolutionary activists; the international border held very little meaning during this phase of the labor war.

Complicating the labor wars' escalation in this period were periodic market fluctuations in the early 1900s which had a significant impact on the finances of both business and labor. The adoption of the gold standard in Great Britain and the United States at the turn of the century forced Mexico to reconsider its own fiscal policies. Mexico continued to hope that the US and Great Britain would agree to a bimetallic currency system, though in the 1890s it became clear that Mexico would have to choose between bimetallism and the gold standard, simply to endure the hardships imposed by the larger economies effecting international trade. Furthermore, the defeat of Bryan in 1896 and the American Currency Act of 1900 forced Mexico's hand toward the gold standard.

In 1903, Mexico and China made a last effort to persuade the US government to set a stable ratio between gold and silver. At the same time Mexico's monetary experts met in a conference and reluctantly decided that Mexico must adopt the gold standard in order to continue favorable international trade. Many feared that the expenses associated with the transition to the gold standard would bankrupt the nation and that a sudden change would ruin heavily mortgaged farmers and drive away foreign investment. The

Mexican government faced greater fiscal problems due to servicing its growing debt on gold currencies while earning taxes in silver. Taking advantage of an unexpected rise in international silver prices in late 1904, Limantour introduced the reform bill fixing silver at 75 centigrams of gold, half the value of the US dollar. In early 1905 both gold and silver pesos were made legal tender.²

Complicating fiscal matters further, silver production techniques transformed during this same period, reducing the cost to refine silver ore. At the turn of the century, silver smelting techniques in the US relied on ore with high lead contents to effectively separate the silver. While processing the ore the silver would collect on the lead, which cooled at a lower temperature, to allow for easier collection of the silver. Smelters throughout the West, Denver, Pueblo, Omaha, Kansas City, and San Francisco imported Mexican ore high in lead content to blend with ore mined throughout the US West to reduce the smelting costs for the silver.³

While mines in the Hidalgo District of Mexico could produce profitable ore in the 1890s, by the early 1900s they found that the increasing smelter rates became prohibitive to production, resulting in the collapse of mining throughout the Hidalgo District.⁴ Mine owners across Mexico complained about the stranglehold ASARCO had obtained over mining interests throughout Mexico and the US West. Controlled by the Guggenheims after 1901, by 1905 ASARCO smelters stretched across Mexico, with the region divided into districts with fixed rates and quotas for mines across the Great Western Desert.

ASARCO forced many small mining interests such as the Candalaria Mining Company in

² Ibid., 46, 53.

³ William E. French, *A Peaceful & Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class in Northern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

⁴ James Hyslop to Crawford Cook, 6 October 1904, in James Hyslop collection Acc No. 890, University of Texas at El Paso, Special Collections, Box 3.

Chihuahua into long-term contracts at fixed rates.⁵ The Hidalgo District newspaper, *El Hijo del Parral*, bitterly complained against the stranglehold of the foreign smelter trust that had enslaved the mining communities of Mexico.⁶

National mining and smelting operations competing against the US conglomerates routinely found that the tax breaks and other government incentives provided to the foreign firms made competition impossible. In 1902 the Madero family began smelter operations in Torreón in an effort to break the monopoly of ASARCO. While the Madero smelter offered lower smelting rates than ASARCO, the leverage of the Guggenheim trust against small miners and the limited smelting capacity of the Madero smelter forced miners to continue their contracts with ASARCO.⁷ Opposition to the government's blatant favoritism of the foreign firms over domestic companies was an instrumental aspect to Francisco Madero's growing opposition to Díaz.

By 1904, a new refining process using cyanide was taking hold throughout the western mining industry, reducing the reliance on self fluxing ores to process silver. The Creston-Colorado Mining Company began using the cyanidation process at its Minas Prietas mine near Sonora in 1904. The plant was described as the most advanced ore processing facility in Mexico and the best of its kind in the world.⁸ Cyanidation plants spread across Mexico rejuvenating unprofitable mines in Guanajuato, Chihuahua, and San Luis Potosí. Combined with reduced electricity costs, this new ore processing

⁵ A.S. Dwight, Vice President Candalaria Mining Company, to C. Reeves, New York, 20 April 1909, in Thomas Wentworth Peirce, Jr. Papers, University of Texas, Austin, Benson Latin American Collection.

⁶ "Brillantes Augurios. La Fundicion" *El Hijo del Parral*, 20 November 1904, 1:1.

⁷ "The Miners' Hope: A Stubborn Opposition Will Meet the Smelting Trust" *Chihuahua Enterprise* 15 February 1902, 10:3.

⁸ Willis, H.T. "The Cyanidation of Silver Ores of Parral" *Mexican Mining Journal*, (May 1909), 18.

technique resulted in a 400% increase in silver production in Guanajuato from 1905-1906.⁹

In this period of fiscal uncertainty and general disgust with pro-business politics, labor leaders on both sides of the border continued to look for more successful techniques to win the labor war. While some leaders, such as Eugene Debs and Francisco Madero, continued to struggle within the existing political systems, other leaders, including Ricardo Flores Magón and “Wild Bill” Haywood led their troops as generals, into violent conflicts against corporate and government forces.

Released from prison on January 30, 1904, the Flores Magón brothers left Mexico for the presumed safety of the United States, crossing the Rio Grande border at Laredo, Texas. The Flores Magóns met Manuel Sarabia, Camilo Arriaga, Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama, and other Mexican Liberals in Laredo where they planned to continue publishing the newspaper *Regeneración* in defiance of Porfirio Díaz. In addition to facing difficulties obtaining printing supplies in Laredo, the defiant rebels remained under constant surveillance by Mexican agents. In an attempt to escape Díaz’s grasp, they moved their operation to San Antonio in May and began printing on November 5.¹⁰

However, the United States would not be the land of dreams for the PLM. Even before they arrived, President Theodore Roosevelt proposed the deportation of anyone involved in radical plots or groups attempting to radicalize unions in his address to Congress in 1901. In 1903 a law was passed allowing the deportation of radicals from the United States. In response to these measures, Ricardo Flores Magón complained that even in the land of the free, working men were routinely prohibited from forming and

⁹ “Guanajuato Correspondence” *Mexican Mining Journal*, (October 1909), 36.

¹⁰ Ward Albro, *Always a Rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1992), 23-25.

joining labor unions. When men did take a stand, they were subject to police harassment and stiff penalties from the courts, and now, deportation.¹¹

Within a month of reopening the *Regeneración* press, the Díaz government sent an assassin to kill Ricardo Flores Magón in San Antonio. Enrique's quick reaction saved his brother's life; however, the resultant struggle resulted in his arrest by four Pinkerton detectives and a sentence of three months in jail for disturbing the peace. Another Mexican agent attacked Juan Sarabia with a knife in February 1905, and Enrique Flores Magón was arrested again and sentenced to another three months in jail. *Regeneración* faced additional restrictions in San Antonio when the US Post Office ruled that the publication did not meet the criteria for fourth class mail and required that it be mailed at second class rates, effectively doubling the mailing costs.¹² Realizing that the Mexican dictator continued to threaten their lives in San Antonio, Ricardo decided to move the paper further away from Mexico, this time to Saint Louis, Missouri.

In 1905, the exiled Flores Magón brothers held a meeting in St. Louis to reform the PLM, rededicating the group to defeat the conservative government of Díaz and radically reform Mexico to free working class from the bondage of capitalism. Flores Magón and the PLM formed the central tenets of the new organization based on the anarchist theory of the time. The principal points of the Liberal program were reduction of the presidential term to four years; no reelection for governors; an end to mandatory military service; an end to the death penalty except for traitors; an increase in the number of school officials and mandatory education for children until fourteen years; prohibition

¹¹ Salvador Hernandez Padilla, *El Magónismo: Historia de una Passion Libertarian 1900-1922* (Mexico: Ediciones Era, 1984), 24.

¹² Archivo de la Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores Ricardo Flores Magón documents, L-E -918, MSS 0582 Mandeville Special Collections Library, UCSD.
<http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=kt5t1nc7w6&chunk.id=scopecontent-1.2.7&brand=oac>.

against foreigners acquiring real estate; the obligation for priests to pay taxes on the temples in the same manner as mercantile businessmen; nationalization of Church property in relation to the Reformation laws; maximum eight-hour work day and minimum wage of one peso daily; regulations for domestic service; prohibitions on child labor until the age of fourteen years; the obligation of managers to ensure hygienic lodging for workers; obligation of managers to pay compensation for work accidents; annulment of fees of journeymen to the masters; abolition of company stores and any payment in script; obligations for companies to prefer Mexican workers and managers instead of foreigners; and the creation of an agricultural bank for poor farmers.¹³

While Arriaga provided the majority of the funding to set up the *Regeneración* operations in San Antonio, he could not afford the move to St. Louis by himself, so he turned to Francisco Madero for support. Aroused to action by the brutal slaying of fifteen people protesting the reelection of General Bernardo Reyes as state governor, Madero formed the Coahuila based Partido Democrático and supported other Liberal groups protesting the Díaz dictatorship. Madero provided \$2,000 through additional subscription orders, and donations for the protection of the *Regeneración* staff and continuation of their Liberal newspaper.¹⁴ Madero praised the work of the *Regeneración* publishers, exclaiming in a letter to Ricardo Flores Magón that “*Regeneración* would assist in the

¹³ Vicent Fuentes Díaz. *La Clase Obrera: Entre el Anarquismo y la Religión* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1994), 141-2.

¹⁴ Francisco I. Madero to Ricardo Flores Magón, 17 January 1905, Archivo de Don Francisco I. Madero, No.2. Epistolario (1900-1909), Edición establecida por Agustín Yanez y Catalina Sierra (Mexico: Ediciones de la Secretaría de Hacienda, 1963), 109-110; For more information about the relationship between Francisco Madero and Ricardo Flores Magón see Stanley Ross, *Francisco I. Madero: Apostle of Mexican Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955); Enrique Krauze, *Mistique de Libertad: Francisco I. Madero* (Mexico: Fondo De Cultura Económica Inc, 1987); Albro, *Always a Rebel*.

regeneration of the Fatherland by arousing Mexicans in noble indignation against their tyrants.”¹⁵

When the *Regeneración* staff arrived in St. Louis, the more radical members began meeting with Chicago Anarchist Emma Goldman and Spanish Anarchist Florencio Bazora, aggravating their relationship with more conservative Liberals such as Francisco Madero, and Camilo Arriaga. Arriaga broke away from the increasingly radical Ricardo Flores Magón and returned to San Antonio to assist with the publication of *Humanidad*. Madero also broke with the Flores Magóns, explaining in a letter to his grandfather that Mexico was “progressing even if not as rapidly as desirable” however a radical revolution in lines with Flores Magón’s plan would resort in “more evil to the nation than the tyrannical government currently in power.”¹⁶

While Madero and Arriaga publicly broke with Flores Magón, *Regeneración* still maintained many loyal followers, dedicated to radical reform in Mexico, including the overthrow of Díaz. Distributed through an elite smuggling network throughout northern Mexico, *Regeneración* was distributed by independent merchants all along the US-Mexican border and Mexican exiles sent thousands of copies along the robust railroad network connecting Mexico’s manufacturing and mining centers with the US. Among the most notable subscribers were future Mexican presidents, Francisco Madero (1911-1913), Eulalio Gutiérrez (1914-1915), Plutarco Calles (1924-1928), Yucatan Governor

¹⁵ Letter, Francisco I. Madero to Ricardo Flores Magón, January 17, 1905. *Archivo de Francisco I. Madero: Epistolario (1900-1909)*, 109-110.

¹⁶ Letter, Madero to Evaristo Madero, October 1906. *Archivo de Francisco I. Madero: Epistolario (1900-1909)*, 172-73.

Salvador Alvarado (1915-1918), and revolutionary general Adolfo de la Huerta. By 1906, circulation had increased to 30,000.¹⁷

On September 28, 1905, *Regeneración* announced that Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magón, Manuel and Juan Sarabia, Librado Rivera, Antonio Villareal, and Rosalio Bustamante would lead the new *Junta Organizadora Partido Liberal Mexicana* (PLM) and vowed to fight to the end until Díaz was overthrown. The leadership of the PLM issued the party's founding statutes calling for the formation of secret cells throughout Mexico to prepare for the revolution. The PLM guaranteed secrecy of its membership rolls to protect the revolution from Díaz's agents.¹⁸

The PLM found solidarity with Socialist groups in the US. The Socialist Party, was formed in 1901 through the merger of several socialist groups across the US. The Socialist Party was America's single largest radical organization, and electing candidates to office was its goal. For Debs, socialism meant a return to normalcy, before national and international corporations placed workers into bondage. In 1905 radical Socialists came together in Chicago to form the new organization in response to their dissatisfaction with Gompers and the AFL. The IWW sought to abolish the wage system and create a society where the workers owned the factories. Bill Haywood opened the IWW founding conference with a speech signaling the creation of the IWW as the means to emancipate the workers from the slave bondage of capitalism. Mother Jones started work with the Illinois Socialists in January 1905. She believed that the working class could take control of the government at the ballot box, usurping the industrialists.¹⁹

¹⁷ Valadés, "El Hombre que derrumbo un regimen: Ricardo Flores Magón" *Todo*, May 21, 1924.

¹⁸ *Regeneración*, 30 September 1905.

¹⁹ *Proceedings of the First Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World* Reported by W.E. McDermott, (New York: Labor News Company, 1905).

Interim Governor of Chihuahua, Enrique Creel, grew increasingly concerned over the apparent monopoly controlled by the Guggenheims. In 1904, working with interested groups of prominent miners, bankers, industrialists, and others involved with the development of Chihuahua, Creel funded a study of the mining conditions of the state to determine the future development plan.²⁰ The committee's report was highly critical of ASARCO, condemning the company's aggressive property purchases, its monopoly over the limited smelting options in Mexico, and the inflated smelting charges. The recommended solution was to construct an independent modern smelting plant in Chihuahua capable of smelting all of Chihuahua's ore.²¹ The committee recommended that a copper-matte smelter be constructed in one of three central construction sites; Hidalgo de Parral, Jimenez, and Chihuahua City. The copper-matte smelter would operate better on the siliceous silver ores available in the Chihuahua fields and would not require large quantities of self-fluxing ore, a commodity controlled almost exclusively by the Guggenheims.²²

Governor Creel spoke with several companies about the project, offering liberal state subsidies and tax exemptions, pre-arranged loans and investment capital through the Banca Minero de Chihuahua, and assistance with federal concessions. While three companies were interested in opening small-scale smelters that would be used exclusively by their own companies, the Guggenheims were the only company willing to

²⁰ Special Correspondence "Monterrey, May 4, 1904" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXXXII, (12 May 1904), 696; Editorial, *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXXVII (19 May 1904), 729.

²¹ Special Correspondence "Mexico, January 23, 1906" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXXXI (10 February 1906), 299.

²² James Malcolmson, "The Custom Smelting Industry in Chihuahua, Mexico" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXXVIII (7 July 1904), 23.

devote its resources to a large smelter.²³ An exceedingly liberal smelter concession was negotiated with Governor Creel on May 6, and approved by the state legislature a week later. A preliminary Federal concession was not required, because the original contract granted by President Díaz in 1890, permitted Daniel Guggenheim to construct three smelter complexes anywhere in Mexico, of which only Monterrey and Aguascalientes had been exercised to that point.²⁴

By the end of 1905 ASARCO began construction of a new copper and silver smelter in Avalos, Chihuahua and reconditioned the El Paso smelter it has acquired from the Kansas City Company.²⁵ The discovery of vast lead-silver ore in the Santa Eulalia fields of southwestern Chihuahua and an abundant supply of self-fluxing lead-silver ore in the Jimenez fields, led to a rebirth of the dormant mining region. The mining rush was accompanied by the completion of the Mexican Central Railroad's 56 mile Jimenez-El Ojiti branch line to the Jimenez fields and the Santa Eulalia branch line connecting the Hidalgo de Parral, Santa Barbara, Jimbosa, and Minas Nuevas mining camps to the main routes of the Guggenheim smelters.²⁶ ASARCO and Guggenex continued to purchase major lead-silver-copper mining properties throughout the northern Mexican desert of

²³ "Foreign Mining News, Mexico-Chihuahua" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXIX (6 February, 1905) 321; Special Correspondence "Mexico-May 1, 1905" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXXIX (1 June 1905), 1064. Among the interested groups were the San Francisco del Oro Mines, Limited of Parral, the Eugene Davis combine of Washington, DC, and the Schwabe Steel Corporation of New York; Special Correspondence "Mexico-April 25, 1905" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXXIX (4 May 1905), 882.

²⁴ Archivo Histórico de Grupo Industrial Minería Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico, Planta de Chihuahua, document #1. Contrato celebrato entre Senor Enrique C. Creel, Gobernador Interino Constitucional del Estado de Chihuahua, por una parte y el Senor H. R. Simpson apodero de la American Smelting and Refining Company, por la otre, para el establecimiento de una Hacienda Metallúrgica en la Municipalidad de Chihuahua, Distrito de Iturbide, del Estado de Chihuahua. 6 Mayo 1905. Armando Herrera Acosta, Norario Publico #18, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

²⁵ ASARCO, 7th Annual Report, 5 May 1906.

²⁶ George James "Through the Sierra Madres In Chihuahua, Mexico" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXXIV (2 August 1902), 140-144; G.A. Burr and Luis S. Cates , "The Mining Distract of Parral, State of Chihuahua" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXXV (7 Feb 1903), 216-217.

Chihuahua, in an effort to control the revitalized fields, and connect them to the El Paso and Aguascalientes smelters.²⁷

At the same time that the Guggenheims were experiencing opposition to their business practices in Mexico, labor unions in the US continued to struggle against employers and the US government in their efforts to improve relations between workers and business. While radicals like Big Bill Haywood and Emma Goldman continued to capture the headlines across the US, not all labor leaders wanted to overthrow the capitalist system. In 1906 Gompers began an era of increased political action for the labor cause. Gompers called a meeting of the heads of the national unions and developed “Labor’s Bill of Grievances” and delivered it to Congress and the President. The Bill provided for legislation for an eight-hour day for federal employees, protection from competition from convict labor. Immigration restrictions, Chinese exclusion, labor exemption from anti-trust laws, the right of federal laborers to petition Congress for grievances, and the abolition of the use of injunctions against labor organizations. With Congress’ refusal to attend to the list of grievances, Gompers encouraged labor to support sympathetic candidates at all levels of political office to ensure future sympathy for labor’s cause.²⁸

While US labor leaders continued to consolidate their positions, a foolhardy act of retribution created serious set-backs for labor. On December 30, 1905, a bomb exploded in front of Frank Steunenberg’s house in Caldwell, Idaho, killing the former Idaho governor. A discontent miner who was among the WFM strikers run out by Governor

²⁷ Special Correspondence “San Luis Potosi, April 21, 1904” *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXVII (29 April 1904), 669.

²⁸ Louis Reed, *The Labor Philosophy of Samuel Gompers* (Port Washington, NY: Kennecott Press 1930), 105.

Steunenberg during the Cripple Creek Strike confessed to the murder. While he was awaiting trial, the sheriff offered the suspected bomber a deal, if he would provide evidence against the men who recruited him. Coached in his testimony, he quickly implicated the WFM leaders.²⁹

With the testimony in hand, Idaho officials set out to arrest the WFM leadership, arresting WFM President Charles Moyer, Secretary-Treasurer William “Big-Bill” Haywood, and George Pettibone. These men were secretly shipped from Denver to Idaho where they awaited trial.³⁰ Enraged over the kidnapping and suspected framing of the key union leaders, Eugene Debs, Samuel Gompers, Mother Jones, and other labor leaders denounced the Idaho lawmakers for their illegal acts and outrageous claims against the WFM brotherhood.³¹ After a year in jail, the three men were acquitted. While the trial proved successful in securing the freedom of the WFM leaders, the costs associated with the eighteen-month ordeal nearly bankrupted the WFM. Bill Haywood moved on to lead the IWW and Moyer moved the WFM toward Gompers and the AFL.³²

Ricardo Flores Magón’s ideologies fit well with those of organizations like the Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World. He established contacts with these liberal organizations that were struggling for reforms against

²⁹ Elliot J. Gorn. *Mother Jones: The Most Dangerous Woman in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 153; J. Anthony Lukas, *Big Trouble in America: A Murder in a Small Western Town Sets off a Struggle for the Soul of America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997).

³⁰ “Says Several Bloody Acts Were Planned Harry Orchard under Arrest for Murder of Steunenberg” *The Duluth News Tribune*, 20 February 1906; “Charge Murder: Complaints of Idaho Officials against Western Federation Officials” *The Idaho Daily Statesman*, 20 February 1906; “Moyer and Haywood Charged with Murder” *Morning-News Herald*, Omaha, 20 February 1906.

³¹ “Socialists Speak for Federation Men. Resolutions Denouncing Arrests Are Adopted” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 14 March 1906; “Debs Denounces Arrest of Leaders Calls it a Murderous Plot of Plutocracy Against the Unions” *The Grand Forks Daily Herald*, 4 March 1906; “Gompers Says He is Not Lukewarm Talks of Moyer-Haywood-Pettibone Affair” *Ft. Worth Telegram*, 4 March 1906; “Socialists Will Aid Haywood Fund Started at Meeting Held Sunday” *Ft. Worth Telegram*, 12 March 1906.

³² “Haywood Found Not Guilty. Verdict Returned by Jury at 7:56 After 21 Hours of Deliberation” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 29 July 1907; “Haywood is Acquitted” *The Evening News*, San Jose, California, 29 July 1907.

monopoly capitalism in the United States, in the hope of strengthening his opposition fight against the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz and the foreign monopolies in Mexico.

While Flores Magón would find many allies for his cause in the United States, the US government, cooperating with the Díaz regime, and fighting radicals within its own borders, continued to oppose the Flores Magóns at every step. Facing increasing pressure from the governments of Mexico and the United States, the Magónistas became increasingly more radical in their calls for the overthrow of Díaz and the end to capitalist oppression. In an effort to spark a larger rebellion PLM organizers focused on three high profile foreign owned companies in 1905 and 1906: the Cananea mines in Sonora, the Ferrocarril Centro, and textile industry in Rio Blanco. While scholars have debated the success of these strikes in influencing the events that would spark the Mexican Revolution in 1910, the magnitude of these strikes in Mexico and the similarities with the 1899 Coeur d'Alene and 1903 Cripple Creek strikes in the US highlight the growing transnational discontent among industrial workers throughout the western desert region.³³

Determined to end the capitalist oppression of workers in Mexico's industrial sectors, the PLM sent José Lopez, Enrique Bermudez, and Antonio Arujo to the Cananea mines in 1905. Owned by the Greene Consolidated Copper Company, Mexican workers comprised about 70% of the workers, with US immigrants constituting the remaining 30%. Mexican laborers worked longer hours, were confined to lower paid jobs, and were

³³ In his article, "The working class and the Mexican Revolution" Alan Knight explains that the violent strikes at Cananea and Rio Blanco, seen as the antecedents to the larger Revolution do not fit the model of restrained industrial protests. In both cases, the workers were bent on asserting moderate economic claims: specifically against the differential wage scales which favored American employed, and the decision to change shift practices and increase workloads. While many historians would like this to have been the case, Knight disagrees, explaining that in neither case were the workers engaged in subversive political agitation, with the role of the PLM exaggerated. In each case, the workers resorted to violence when forced into action due an absence of non-partisan government which could mediate the dispute. The company owners ran the town as a feudal empire and the workers violence was aimed at achieving a voice in their social, political, and economic affairs; *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol 16 No. 1 (May, 1984), 70.

paid in silver pesos and company scrip valid only at company stores, whereas the North American workers were paid in gold standard US dollars. The first step of the PLM leaders in Cananea was to introduce their radical newspaper *Regeneración*, in an attempt to increase awareness of the inequities at the camp for the Mexican laborers.³⁴

While 70-80% of the Mexican laborers were illiterate, groups formed where literate workers would read the PLM newspaper to the other workers. Many of the uneducated workers began to ask to have articles reread and they would recite the articles to others by memory to spread the news throughout the mine. The PLM leaders would also use their contacts among Chicano leaders to reach migrant Mexican workers in the United States who moved back and forth between the mining fields of Arizona, New Mexico, and Cananea throughout the year. These migrating workers would also spread the ideas of the PLM throughout the mining region preparing Mexican miners to fight against the oppressive practices of the mine owners.³⁵

In the Cananea mines, the primary concerns leading to the strike were equal pay for equal work among Mexican and US workers. Mexican workers received 3.5 Mexican Pesos a day (complicated by high inflation in Mexico), working ten-hours or more, while US immigrant workers received \$5.00 a day for eight-hours work. The Mexican workers, led by Manuel Dominguez and Baca Calderon, formed a strike committee to negotiate the strike planned to begin on June 1, 1906. The primary demands of the striking workers

³⁴ Key works discussion the strike at the Cananea mines are: Albro, *Always a Rebel*; Hernandez Padilla, *El Magónismo*; Rodney D. Anderson, *Outcasts in their Own Land: Mexican Industrial Workers, 1906-1911* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1976); Anne Browning-Aiken, "The Transformation of Mexican Copper Miners: The Dynamics of Social Agency and Mineral Policy as Economic Development Tools" (PhD dissertation, The University of Arizona, 2000); and Michael J. Gonzales "United States Copper Companies, the State, and Labor Conflict in Mexico, 1900-1910" *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol 26, No.3 (October, 1994) 651-681.

³⁵ Albro, *Always a Rebel*, 74.

were for \$5.00 a day for eight-hours of work. The mine manager, Arthur Dwight, called the demands of the workers absurd and refused to negotiate.³⁶

When the workers attempted to strike on June 1, the mine managers and the US miners attacked the unarmed Mexicans. In retaliation the Mexican workers used dynamite to destroy mine property. Colonel Greene declared that he would keep law and order in the camp and requested help from the US Department of State and the Mexican Governor in Sonora. Governor Izabel arrived at Cananea to find over 300 Arizona Rangers; soon after Emilio Kosterlitzky arrived with a group of Mexican rurales to restore law and order to the mining field. The Arizona Rangers had killed and injured up to 200 Mexican miners and arrested many others, including Dominguez and Calderon, declaring them to be the leaders behind the strike.³⁷

By 1906, the governments of the US and Mexico had become increasingly alarmed at revolutionary labor agitators on both sides of the border. In an effort to disassemble revolutionary groups both the US and Mexican governments and employers cooperated to apprehend agitators. The methods used to eliminate the revolutionary threats on both sides of the border included an elaborate espionage network and robust police structure. The Pinkerton, Theil, Furlong, Hurst, and Burns and Sheridan Detective Agencies as well as government employed lawyers and informers reported suspicious activities.

³⁶ “Forty Five Americans Killed by Mexican Strikers, Greene’s Big Copper Camp in Flames” *Duluth News Tribune*, 2 June 1906; “Fifty Killed in Riot; US Troops are sent for Mexicans and Americans” *The Fort Worth Telegram*, 2 June 1906; “Mexican Miners in Fierce Riot; Greene’s Mine is Attacked” *The Evening News*, San Jose California, 2 June 1906.

³⁷ “Two Americans Killed in Mexico, Eleven Mexicans Dead, A Small Lumber Yard Burned” *The Bellingham Herald*, Bellingham, Washington, 2 June 1906; “American Consul Requests Troops Sent to Mexico” *The Lexington Herald*, 3 June 1906; “Governor of Sonora Calls on “Uncle Sam” for Help; Peace was Restored” *The Macon Daily Telegraph*, 3 June 1906; “Orders to Suppress Rioters: Mexican Government Takes Steps to Restore Order” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 4 June 1906; “Crime Rules in Cananea” *The Fort Worth Telegram*, 5 June 1906.

The US Army Intelligence corps, Secret Service, and Bureau of Investigation regularly shared information about suspect Mexican nationals with the Mexican Consul and President Díaz. One dispatch from the US Department of Justice explained that “there is evidence on both sides of the border line of serious unrest and intrigue. Have situation on American side of border well in hand and with assistance of federal officers of Customs, Immigrations, etc., United States Marshalls, Bureau of Investigation Agents, United States Secret Service men and United States Cavalry will keep it so.”³⁸ Jesus Flores Magón was certain that the postal inspectors in the US and Mexico were collaborating to prevent circulation of his revolutionary newspaper *Regeneración*.³⁹ The US government used the 1899 treaty of extradition and immigration and neutrality agreements to justify its investigations, arrests, and deportations of suspected Mexican revolutionaries.⁴⁰

President Díaz was convinced from the beginning that the Cananea strike was political in nature and instigated by the PLM leaders currently in exile in St. Louis, and their socialist allies in the US (WFM and others).⁴¹ Colonel Kosterlitzky maintained that the strike was promoted from within the US by the PLM as well as members of the WFM in Denver.⁴² Two days after the outbreak of the strike, US Ambassador Thompson met with President Díaz who informed him that the strike had been initiated by at least twenty

³⁸ Luther Ellsworth, US Consul at Ciudad Porfirio Díaz, to Secretary of State, 19 Nov 1910. National Archives, Washington DC, Records of the Department of Justice, Record Group 60, file 90755/285.

³⁹ Jesus Flores Magón to Ricardo Flores Magón, Mexico, 26 September 1905, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, Silvestre Terrazas Collection, Box 26 folder 2a.

⁴⁰ Charles Bevins, *Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America*, 12 vols (Washington, 1968-1974), IX, 900-907.

⁴¹ Guadalupe Mendoza to Ricardo Flores Magón, Cananea, 2 November 1905, Coleccion Porfirio Díaz, Cholula, Mexico, leg 31, document 6229.

⁴² Kosterlitzky to Díaz, Magdalena, Sonora, 31 May 1906, Coleccion Porfirio Díaz, Cholula, Mexico, leg 31, document 6183-6184; Kosterlitzky to Fenochio, Magdalena, 1 June 1906, Coleccion Porfirio Díaz, Cholula, Mexico, leg 31, document 6201-6202.

revolutionaries hiding in St. Louis. Thompson forwarded this information to the US State Department the same day.⁴³ While it appears that there was only circumstantial evidence to support Díaz's claims, in the climate of the time both governments were eager to take action against suspected anarchist and socialist agitators.

By July 12, the US Attorney for eastern Missouri, David P. Dyer, was ordered by the State Department to begin investigating the PLM and its leaders. Four days later, several copies of *Regeneración* had been forwarded to Dyer's office and Dyer concluded that the writers/publishers could be tried under both criminal and civil law and, as aliens, deported under the Immigration Act of 1903.⁴⁴ From the material seized, Green delivered PLM membership lists and a directory of revolutionary agents to US border authorities.⁴⁵

Before Dyer had finished preparing his case against the Flores Magón brothers and other members of the *Regeneración* staff, Colonel William Greene, owner of the Cananea Consolidated Mines had filed a libel suit against the newspaper which resulted in the seizure of the printing office on September 12, 1906, in an effort to thwart suspected plans for another uprising on September 16, (Mexico's national independence day).⁴⁶ Within two weeks of the action in St. Louis, Ambassador Thompson requested that the presses of *La Reforma* be shut down in El Paso as well. Between 1906 and 1910,

⁴³ Thompson to Díaz, 3 June 1906, Coleccion Porfirio Díaz, Cholula, Mexico, leg 31, document 7217; Thompson to Secretary of State and Thompson to Díaz, Coleccion Porfirio Díaz, Cholula, Mexico, leg 31, document 7221-7222.

⁴⁴ Acting Attorney General to Dyer, 12 July 1906; Dyer to Acting Attorney General 16 Jul 1906. National Archives Microfilm Publication, Washington DC, Record Group 59, Domestic Letters of the Department of State (microcopy 40, vol 291, roll 170.)

⁴⁵ Fall to President Woodrow Wilson, 30 July 1913, Papers from the United States Senate Office Files of Senator Albert Bacon Fall Relating to Mexican Affairs, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

⁴⁶ Greene to Bacon, New York City, 12 September 1906, National Archives, Washington DC, Records of the Department of State, Numerical Files, 1906-1910, Record Group 59, record case 100/39; Folk to Bacon, Jefferson City, MO, 17 September, 1906, National Archives, Washington DC, Records of the Department of State, Numerical Files, 1906-1910, Record Group 59, record case 100/81.

at least ten revolutionary newspapers were seized in the US, their property confiscated and staff arrested. Included among them were *Revolución* in Los Angeles and *Punto Rojo* in El Paso.⁴⁷ While the seizure of the *Regeneración* offices was determined to be illegal by the appellate court, it effectively stopped the publication of *Regeneración* until June 1907, when the staff relocated to Los Angeles, California.⁴⁸

Working for Enrique Creel, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs in Mexico, the Furlong Detective agent, Ansel Samuels, had infiltrated the *Regeneración* offices by the summer of 1906, by soliciting for advertising space in the publication. By November 1906, Furlong personally traveled to Toronto and Montreal to locate Ricardo Flores Magón, though Flores Magón had left Canada months earlier. Furlong returned to Mexico City to be briefed by other agents in his service and upon returning to the US discovered the Flores Magóns in Los Angeles.⁴⁹

While Díaz was convinced that the PLM was intimately involved in the strike at Cananea, Green was convinced that the WFM was also complicit in the labor action. In a memo to company officials, Green reported: “that the socialist club had three meetings at midnight on the night on May 30...[and] that agitators of the Western Federation of Miners had been through the mines inciting the Mexicans, and that they had been furnishing money for the socialistic club that had been established at Cananea.”⁵⁰

In his efforts to investigate the linkages between the PLM and the WFM, Greene planted a spy in the Denver branch of the WFM. By June he identified that funds had

⁴⁷ Alvey Adey to Thompson, 29 September 1906, National Archives, Washington DC, Records of the Department of State, Numerical Files, 1906-1910, Record Group 59, record case 100/106.

⁴⁸ *St Louis Post-Dispatch*, 21 November 1906; *St Louis Globe-Democrat*, 3 Dec 1906.

⁴⁹ Enrique Ornelas to Ignacio Mariscal, San Antonio, 17 June 1907, Archivo General de la Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores de Mexico, Mexico City, Box 855, 118-R5.

⁵⁰ Colonel William Greene. “Brief Resume of the recent disorder s in Cananea” 11 June 1906, files of the Compañia Minería de Cananea, S.A. de C.V. Cananea, Sonora, Mexico.

been dispatched to Bisbee, Arizona for several months before the June 1, strike, from Denver to Bisbee, Arizona, where Joe Carter, the WFM organizer, would distribute money and literature to US and Mexican laborers in Nacozari and Cananea.⁵¹

Two weeks after the formation of the PLM in Los Angeles, Pinkerton detectives raided the *Regeneración* offices, confiscating all printing presses and printing supplies, and detaining the Flores Magón brothers and Juan Sarabia. The three men were charged with libel and defamation and held in jail awaiting trial for extradition to Mexico. The three PLM leaders were released on a \$10,000 bond, raised through donations by Mexican supporters as well as US Socialist and Anarchist groups. Fearing that the Mexican government might succeed in their extradition, they fled to Toronto, Canada, where Pinkerton detectives continued to harass them, hoping to earn the \$20,000 reward offered by the Mexican government. In May 1906 the PLM group left for Montreal, hoping to evade the bounties on their heads.⁵²

One month after the Cananea strike, the Union de Mecánicos Mexicanos organized a strike on the Ferrocarril Central, making demands similar to those of the Cananea miners. Using tactics that many Mexican railway workers witnessed in strikes by the US labor unions, the Mexican labor leaders coordinated actions to gain maximum effect in the strike. In July, company managers hired thirty-three Hungarian mechanics to work in Aguascalientes paying them 6 pesos per day. Union leaders were outraged by this because Mexican mechanics performing the same work received only 4.5 pesos and demanded equal pay. When the Aguascalientes union leaders were fired, mechanics in

⁵¹ Rowen to Greene, Denver, 20 Jul 1906 and 23 Jun 1906, National Archives, Washington DC, Records of the Department of State, Numerical Files, 1906-1910, Record Group 59.

⁵² Junta Organizadora Partido Liberal Mexicano (St Louis, Missouri) circular to "Estimado correligionario" December 8, 1905. *Archivo de Francisco I. Madero: Epistolario (1900-1909)*, 58-9.

Aguascalientes, Chihuahua, Silao, Cárdenas, Tampico, and Monterrey walked off the job in retaliation. The Union Internacional de Caldereros declared a sympathy strike and shop employees and foremen of maintenance crews between Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez suspended all work. Members of the Gran Liga distributed flyers in support of the strike encouraging all Mexican railroad men to demand equal wages and the dismissal of all foreign employees.⁵³

The strikers demanded equal compensation for equal work; union recognition; union control over promotion practices in their shops; establishment of fixed hours and time and a half for over-time; and company recognition of worker seniority. Within a week more than 3,000 employees had walked off the job, paralyzing the nation's largest railroad. The union had 70,000 pesos and continued to pay workers at 50% wages during the strike.⁵⁴

Claiming that radical elements had infiltrated the workers and organized the strike, company managers called on the government for assistance. On August 8, Díaz met with the union leaders and promised to support the strikers' efforts to receive equal wages. Díaz hesitated to agree to any of the other demands and strongly encouraged the workers to return to work. The strikers, rather than risk losing everything, accepted Díaz's proposal and returned to work on September 13, 1906. The railways took no retaliatory measures against the strikers, though they did not rehire any workers who had taken part in violent acts against the railroad.⁵⁵

⁵³ El Imparcial, 1,2,3,5 August 1906.

⁵⁴ El Imparcial, 8, 9 August 1906.

⁵⁵ El Imparcial, 13 August 1906. Lorena M. Parlee provides a detailed description of these events in her article "The Impact of United States Railroad Unions on Organized Labor and Government Policy in Mexico (1800-1911)" *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol 64 No 3 (August 1984) 443-475.

Second only to the mining industry, the textile factories in Mexico led the industrial development in Mexico during the early twentieth century. Like mining, the textile industry was controlled by foreign investors, primarily from France. Realizing the importance of the textile industry to the cause of the PLM, José Niera went to Orizaba in March 1906 to gather support for the liberal movement among the textile workers. With 2,350 workers in the Rio Blanco factory and over 6,000 in other factories in the region, the PLM understood the need to have the support of the textile workers in addition to the miners.⁵⁶

Textile workers in Puebla and Tlaxcala organized a strike beginning in December 1906, when industry managers agreed to new industry regulations increasing the number of hours employees were to work each day and reducing the number of days off, effectively reducing wages for textile workers throughout Mexico. To prevent a larger strike from erupting, the textile industry managers association, Centro Industrial Mexicano, closed mills in the Federal District, Tlaxcala, Puebla, Veracruz, Jalisco, and Queretaro, locking out 50,000 workers. When representatives of the workers met with Porfirio Díaz, he agreed to arbitrate the dispute. After meeting with managers and workers, Díaz ordered all mills to reopen and all workers to return to work by January 7, 1907.⁵⁷

The strike at Rio Blanco was a critical part of the PLM's liberal plan to gain worker support for a revolt against the oppressive Díaz government. Historian Salvador Hernandez Padilla argues that the PLM played a pivotal role in the strike due to Niera's

⁵⁶ Hernandez Padilla. *El Magónismo*, 50.

⁵⁷ *El Tiempo*, 5 January, 1907; *The Mexican Herald*, 4 January 1907.

affiliation with the PLM from 1903. While Niera formed the GCOL in 1906, his previous affiliation with the PLM was the bedrock for the new union.⁵⁸

On January 7, the mills reopened and the workers returned, except at Rio Blanco where José Niera and the strikers remained committed to their original demands. Díaz and the foreign owners of the Rio Blanco mill realized the danger of the continued strike due to the recent experience at Cananea. It was necessary for Díaz to act against the Magónistas, who he felt were intimately involved. The undersecretary of war, General Rosalino Martínez, led a contingent of 2,000 soldiers to Rio Blanco where they eventually fired upon the aggravated strikers. Men, women, and children were removed from their homes and shot in barracks. Many other strikers and their families were pursued and summarily murdered in response to their support of the strike. While the exact number of deaths is not known estimates range from 50 to over 200.⁵⁹

The massacre at Rio Blanco was instrumental in spreading the PLM message, garnering support of workers throughout Mexico against the oppressive Díaz government. Unable to hide the brutality with which the strike had been broken, the Mexican government was faced with rising opposition. By 1907, more than 16,000 Mexican railroad men belonged to labor organizations.⁶⁰

As the Rio Blanco strike came to an end in Mexico, a major strike at Bisbee Arizona in 1907 occurred when workers the Phelps Dodge managers introduced modernized equipment, reducing the number of underground skilled workers required to operate the mine. At the same time a recession forced the Calumet and Copper Queen

⁵⁸ Hernández Padilla. *El Magónismo*, 50.

⁵⁹ Albro, *Always a Rebel*, 75.

⁶⁰ Lorena M. Parlee. "The Impact of United States Railroad Unions on Organized Labor and Government Policy in Mexico (1800-1911)" *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol 64 No 3 (August 1984), 460.

mines in Bisbee to reduce wages for all miners. About 3,000 workers walked off the job. The mine companies replaced the striking workers with replacements primarily from Mexico. The Bisbee mines remained non-union until WWI.⁶¹

On July 1, 1907, the day before Bill Haywood was released in Idaho, Manuel Sarabia was seized in Douglas, Arizona and smuggled to Sonora. Mother Jones denounced Díaz and the kidnapping and organized a letter writing campaign to secure the release of Sarabia. After spending nine months in jail, he was released by authorities in Sonora, Mexico.⁶² However the US District Court in Arizona indicted Sarabia, Villareal, Rivera, and Flores Magón on charges that they conspired to launch an attack against the Mexican government from the US, in violation of the 1903 neutrality laws. They were arrested and detained in Los Angeles, and brought to Arizona for trial.

After building the case against the Flores Magóns, Furlong traveled to Los Angeles and arrested the Flores Magón brothers in June 1907, and remained in Los Angeles to assist with the government case against the rebels until February 1908. Furlong agents testified against the Flores Magóns who were convicted and sentenced to 18 months in prison in Arizona.⁶³ Like the Haywood trial before it, Eugene Debs, Sam Gompers, and Mother Jones criticized the US government for its brutal repression of the Mexican Liberals. After two years in jail waiting for a trial, the PLM leaders were found guilty of violating the US neutrality laws and sentenced to an additional eighteen months

⁶¹ Carlos A. Schwantes, *Visions and Enterprise: Exploring the History of the Phelps Dodge Corporation* (Phoenix: University of Arizona Press, 2000), 146.

⁶² Gorn. *Mother Jones*, 154.

⁶³ William Dirk Raat. "The Diplomacy of Suppression: Los Revoltosos, Mexico, and the United States, 1906-1911" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* Vol 56 No 4. (November 1976), 546.

of incarceration; they would finally be released a few months before Madero's 1910 revolt would shake the very foundations of the Díaz regime.⁶⁴

The Furlong agency remained on the Mexican government payroll, arresting suspected revolutionaries on both sides of the border. Throughout 1910 the Furlong agency attempted to locate and apprehend Francisco Madero, though Madero routinely thwarted every attempt. Unlike the Flores Magóns and many other peasant revolutionary groups, Francisco Madero was able to use his wealth to thwart the detectives' efforts to find him. Madero himself used similar tactics, hiring detectives, lawyers, revolutionary police, and informants to support his cause and gain information about his enemies.⁶⁵

The Guggenheims continued to purchase Mexican properties throughout 1907, registering forty-three new property titles for mines in Tepezala and Asientos, all programmed to supply ores for the Guggenheim smelters. As the Guggenheims continued to struggle with government reform in the US, Simon Guggenheim won the US Senate seat for representing Colorado in January.⁶⁶

In the Galena District of Chihuahua, Pedro Alvarado, the owner of the Palmilla Mine, attempted to force the sale of communal agricultural lands in Rancho del Las Animas based on inadequate commercial use of the land. Political connections and financial resources allowed Alvarado to use the law to his advantage to force the sale of the communal lands so they could be included among his mining properties.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Gorn. *Mother Jones*, 156.

⁶⁵ Sherburne Hopkins testimony, US Congress, Senate, *Investigations of Mexican Affairs*. 2 vols, 66th Congress, 2nd Session, Doc 285, 1920, II 2520-2574.

⁶⁶ "Senator Guggenheim of Colorado" *New York Times* 20 January 1907; *Memorias de Secretaria Haciendas, Modificaciones al Registro General de inas ocurridas durante el ano fiscal 1907-1908*, document number 205, pp 2-231.

⁶⁷ Isidro Aguilera, Rancho de Las Animas, 6 August 1906, Parral Chihuahua, Archivo Municipal box 1906M.

The concentration of mining properties throughout the northern portion of Mexico created far-reaching problems for agricultural communities further south. Mining towns in the northern desert were required to import food to support the mines. While the northern mining towns paid higher prices for food staples, the export of food led to food shortages in regions where the food was produced. In 1908 the poor harvest in San Antonio del Tule was barely enough to feed the region's own residents, however this food was sold to the northern mines at high prices. In Zaragoza, 30% of the maize and bean crops were exported north and San Isidro de las Cuevas followed suit as well exporting an abundance of its fruit, regardless of the needs of the local community.⁶⁸

Forced from their communal lands, many Mexican workers looked to the US for higher wages. Facing the exodus of much of the lower class peasantry to the US, the Mexican Secretary of the Interior, Joaquin Cortazar began a campaign to deter workers from leaving Mexico by emphasizing the dangerous conditions in the US and the "lies" of higher wages in the US.⁶⁹ Despite the attempts by the Mexican government to reduce the flow of workers from Mexico to the United States, the US Bureau of Labor estimated that between 60,000 and 100,000 Mexican immigrants entered the states each year from 1900 to 1910. Another report indicated that Mexican nationals comprised 7.1% of the total workforce in the metal mining industry and 12.8% of the US workforce in the western smelting and refining industry.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Francisco Chavez, jefe municipal, Valle Zaragoza to jefe politico, Parral, 17 Oct 1908, Parral Chihuahua, Archival Municipal, Box 1908Q.; Emiliano Moreno, jefe municipal, San Antonio del Tule, to jefe politico, 17 October 1908, Parral Chihuahua, Archival Municipal, Box 1908V; and Jesus Solic, jefe municipal, San Isidro de las Cuevas, to jefe politico, 31 Dec 1909, Parral Chihuahua, Archival Municipal, Box 1909M.

⁶⁹ "El Canciller encargado del Consulado de Mexico , en Los Angeles" Joaquin Cortazar, Secretaria del Gobierno, to jefe politico Distrito de Hidalgo, 21 October 1904, Parral Chihuahua, Archival Municipal, Box1904 E; 19 August 1904. Box 1904H.

⁷⁰ French, *A Peaceful & Working People*, 43.

In 1908, Díaz agreed to free elections with opposition parties to take place in 1910, and he vowed to stay out of the race. As the election date approached, many of Díaz's closest advisors convinced him to run for another term, prompting Díaz to take steps to reduce his competition. José Limantour and Bernardo Reyes were reassigned to positions making them ineligible to run for office. While Díaz initially underestimated Francisco Madero's popularity, he ordered his arrest in the summer of 1910 to eliminate the competition from the election.

Placed under house arrest in San Luis Potosí, Madero needed to decide what he would do, either roll over and accept that Díaz had won again, or stand-up and risk a violent revolution. Making his choice, Madero escaped from San Luis Potosí and went into exile in San Antonio, Texas. Madero quickly formed a revolutionary committee comprised of his political allies from the US and Mexico, including Abraham Gonzales of Chihuahua. He began fund raising, recruiting, and stockpiling weapons, ammunition, and other supplies needed for the pending revolution. Madero issued his Plan de San Luis Potosí, establishing November 20, 1910 to begin the revolution. When the appointed date arrived, Madero moved to lead his troops against Díaz, only a handful of people had answered the revolutionary call. Convinced that his call for Revolution had failed, Madero left to prepare for exile in Europe.

What Madero failed to realize was that the rebellion was indeed evolving throughout Mexico, though it was not following his forecasted plan. In Chihuahua, Abraham Gonzales had recruited and armed forces led by Pascual Orozco and Pancho Villa, who captured the mountain villages of Guerrero and San Andres, where Gonzales would establish an insurgent government over Chihuahua. Recruiting volunteers made

up of migratory mine and railway workers, Gonzales and Villa continued to make gains throughout Chihuahua.

Excited by the revolutionary movement underway in northern Mexico, Madero formed a foreign legion of expert troops to lead into battle. By April 1911, Orozco and Villa moved toward El Paso-Juárez City, the gateway between the US and Mexico. Concerned about fighting so close to the US border and fearing that the US would intervene for the slightest indiscretion, Madero was hesitant to capture the city. After weeks of preparations, smuggling in weapons, ammunition, and other supplies for the battle, Madero decided to call off the advance. While Orozco and Villa had received the orders to retreat, unexpected shots were fired between federal troops and rebels on May 8, leading to the Battle of Juárez.

The first shots of the Revolution occurred on the southern side of the international border, but no one was certain that the war would remain isolated in Mexico. Both the US and Mexican governments actively pursued extremists within the confines of their own national borders, and occasionally across the international border sometimes with permission from their neighbor, and other times without. All of the opponents in this complicated struggle had armed themselves by 1910 and many had already fought violent battles against their enemy. State and federal governments on both sides of the border had employed military units at times proactively to prevent violence from erupting and other times reactively in cases where blood had already been shed.

The Guggenheims faced trouble as their industrial empire continued to grow and routinely exercise monopolistic abuses of power in the US and Mexico. As seen in Governor Creel's attempt to keep the Guggenheims out of Chihuahua and through

thousands of newspaper articles condemning the trusts and congressional hearings discussing the evils of the trusts in the US, as ASARCO grew larger, so did its political opposition.

The Guggenheims, however, fought a different war than most of the other participants in this conflict. As a monopoly capable of setting prices for not only silver, copper, and lead ores, but also rail rates and smelting charges, the Guggenheims were less likely to face a striking union in times of economic distress. The Guggenheims used their control over the ASARCO trust for their personal gain, selling unprofitable properties to the trust, paying for expensive repairs at marginal properties, and raising fortunes in stock investment for further growth. By setting ore prices low and charging high rail rates and high smelting rates, the Guggenheims would profit greatly when processing ores from mines owned by their companies, while competing mines struggled to stay in business, constantly looking for ways to reduce costs anywhere they could; which more often than not meant labor cuts or wage cuts, leading to strikes at smaller mines, rather than the Guggenheim properties.

When the shots were fired at Juárez, the powder keg was lit and the revolution was in motion. Was the revolution a simple political transfer of power, or did the workers rise up and overthrow the oppressive capitalists in the manner described by the extremists such as Ricardo Flores Magón, Big Bill Haywood, and others? In the US the unions took up arms against the Pinkerton detectives who protected the mines, while government military forces remained ready to intervene if required. While the PLM was the most willing to formally call for revolution, Bill Haywood, Eugene Debs and other socialists in the US supported the ideas of radical political and economic transformation.

As the PLM was dismantled and its members imprisoned on both sides of the border, and little hope remained that Díaz would allow political or economic change in Mexico, more moderate reformers such as Francisco Madero, Alvaro Obregon, and Abraham Gonzalez joined the revolutionary ranks, openly calling for the overthrow of Porfirio Díaz.

CHAPTER 7

THE INTERSECTIONS OF REVOLUTION AND LABOR CONFLICT

The political revolution in Mexico, beginning in 1910, overshadowed the ongoing labor battles waged during the same period. While many political leaders at the time and historians since have postulated that the labor battles in Mexico were integrated events of the larger political revolution, it is important to delineate the struggle for political power by the Mexican elite from the wage laborers' fight for economic survival. Workers on both sides of the border fought against employers for wages and employee rights. Strikes that resulted in bloody battles were often attributed to the Revolution or to radical elements determined to overthrow the larger capitalist system, while more peaceful labor disputes remained relatively unnoticed. When revolution erupted in Mexico, many observers assumed that the early strikes in Cananea and Rio Blanco were precursors to a violent uprising against the capitalist system.¹ While government officials in the US and Mexico attributed the violent strikes in Mexico to the overarching revolution at the time, the US experienced a greater number of violent strikes, often with more casualties, yet no revolution erupted.

There are two underlying questions that must be considered to understand the similarities, and differences, of the labor wars that continued across the international border throughout the years of the Mexican Revolution. First, why did some strikes

¹ Alan Knight, "The working class and the Mexican Revolution" *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol 16 No. 1 (May, 1984) 70.

descend into bloody battles while others did not? And, why was there not a revolution in the US if the greater western desert region experienced the same struggles between workers and industry on both sides of the border?

The determining factor in predicting if a strike would become violent was the level to which the regional and municipal government was involved and impartial. While the Mexican Revolution overshadowed the labor struggles fought throughout the western mining region, the labor war began earlier and coincidentally continued throughout the revolutionary period. The revolutionary decade can be divided into three distinct phases: I) the political liberalism and moderate labor reforms under Madero; II) the Huerta military dictatorship where political freedom was stripped and workers experienced government hostility; III) constitutional rule under Carranza, with political ambivalence toward labor.² A similar framework can be constructed to describe the overarching labor movement throughout the Great Western Desert mining region: I) political liberalism and moderate reform movements; II) increased labor hostility when an impartial government was absent; and III) renewed efforts toward liberal reform through political action, when permitted by a supportive or impartial government.

In the early 1900s, labor leaders in the US and Mexico continued to stress the importance of working within the established political system to reform work conditions, while ensuring the protection of the underlying wage labor system to safeguard their economic livelihood. Speaking at the 1906 AFL convention, Samuel Gompers urged workers into political action, warning them that labor had yet to form an independent party that was not hinged on radical theory or based on self aggrandizement. He argued that political action was necessary and urged central union bodies and local unions to

² Ibid., 72.

nominate pro-labor candidates to ensure labor was represented and supported by the government.³ In Mexico, José Niera, leader of the GCOL, advocated for government reforms and supported Madero's run for the presidency. During the course of the Revolution, the GCOL continued to press for fair labor principles with negligible violence, while preserving jobs in Mexico's industrial centers.

Radical labor leaders emerged on both sides of the border; yet many of these key leaders began as moderate reformers. They grew more radical as they felt increasingly alienated from the political system. When Eugene V. Debs was released from jail in 1896, he led what remained of the ARU to support William Jennings Bryan's campaign for the presidency. Debs encouraged union members to actively participate in politics and support candidates who could help the labor cause. Bryan's defeat and increased government resistance to Debs's labor agenda reinforced his belief that business interests controlled the US political process, in direct opposition to labor. This belief caused Debs to become more radical, embracing socialism and advocating radical reform of the economic system as a whole. In Mexico, as the Díaz regime continued to harass the PLM with complicity from US officials, Ricardo Flores Magón's call for liberal reform grew increasingly radical as he called for the overthrow of the Díaz regime and capitalism as a whole. With the rise of socialism and anarchism on both sides of the border, many progressive legislative measures were no doubt enacted at the turn of the century in an effort to reduce the appeal of radicalism.

Both nations had radical labor organizations that attempted to recruit workers to support a revolution that would destroy big business and pro-business government, though these movements remained isolated to the fringe of the political spectrum. Both

³ Samuel Gompers, "Initiative, Referendum, and Recall" *American Federationist*, (August 1906): 542.

nations advocated a commitment to the liberal democratic system and representative government of laws and private property rights, remaining committed to enacting change through the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government. In the US, opposition candidates ran for office in open elections. While many of these candidates were defeated at the election polls, the success of the few who took office, such as Governor Davis Waite in Colorado, Governor Thomas Campbell in Texas, and Kansas Senator William Peffer, reassured voters that the political process remained effective in the US. In Mexico, while Díaz promised free elections where opposition candidates could run for office, his conservative advisors and other loyalists convinced him to remain in power for another term. When the Mexican government actively prevented political opposition, through imprisonment and forced exile, this confirmed the belief that the government remained corrupt and closed, which in turn resulted in an armed insurrection and a coup to remove the entrenched bureaucracy in an effort to restore democratic processes.⁴

While labor radicals worked to recruit workers, the majority of organized labor remained committed to maintaining the existing economic and political system in an effort to protect the increased standards of living achieved by many in the working class.

Because the working class was removed from the means of production, owning no

⁴ Frederick Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution* (Chicago, 1981); John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). Scholars of the Mexican Revolution have debated the use of the term Revolution in describing the political struggles in Mexico from 1910-1920. Frederick Katz and John Mason Hart view the role of multi-national corporations in Mexico as having a significant impact on laborers and their demands for change in Mexico, blaming foreign enterprises for creating a system with split pay scales and low wages. Alan Knight however, disagrees with this overarching argument, acknowledging that while foreign corporations did disrupt traditional society, wage laborers were more likely to press for limited reforms in the existing political system and preserve the status quo system rather than support a violent destruction of the system as a whole which would threaten their individual livelihoods.

property and having minimal skills, a total transformation of the economic system in place would jeopardize many workers.

In remote areas, where labor competition was limited, mob violence against the local strongmen was more common than in the more industrial regions. Struggling against low wages and rapidly increasing food prices in town stores, miners in Angangueo and Pachuca near Mexico City, Los Reyes and Hostotipaquillo near Guadalajara, and Concepcion del Oro in Zacatecas rioted against police and store managers controlled by the jefe politico.⁵ In the US West, miners recognized that anti-union employers regularly took the law into their own hands in towns and camps where the government was weak. While WFM miners turned to state legislatures in the 1890s and early 1900s for assistance with mine safety, wages, and working hours, employers retaliated using spies, scabs, private militias, and blacklists to defeat the unions. When conventional reform politics failed and local and state government seemed to be controlled by the business leaders, the WFM turned toward socialism and radical tactics.⁶ While miners in the more remote regions were more likely to resort to violence, miners in the politically mature communities relied on unions and government to leverage their demands against employers.

While many pro-labor candidates from the Progressive Party and more radical organizations were defeated at the polls, many reform minded politicians were elected to offices from the local to the federal level. Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson led reform-minded administrations, reforming the federal government and introducing increased government oversight over many aspects of the new urban-industrial life in the US. At

⁵ Aguirre to Gobernacion, 22 July 1911, Archivo Gobernacion 898; G. Sanchez to Gobernacion, 22 July 1911, Archivo Gobernacion 898.

⁶ Western Federation of Miners, *Convention Proceedings*, 1902.

the state level governors such as Davis Waite in Colorado, Robert La Follette in Wisconsin, John Leedy in Kansas, and Simon Bramberger in Utah, supported legislation to protect labor rights and improve living standards in the growing urban centers. While the Progressive Party membership remained based in the Protestant middle class, with lawyers and businessmen providing the leadership, the reform platform advocated by the Progressives was appealing to the wage earning class as well.

While voters in the US were encouraged by the election of reform politicians, the politics in Mexico remained in a dire situation. Unemployment and economic recession after 1907 throughout Northern Mexico increased pressure on the Díaz administration for political change. In the state of Coahuila, Díaz and his *cientifico* staff ousted Governor Miguel Cárdenas, who had been appointed by opposition forces after the 1893 revolt. Díaz rejected Venustiano Carranza's bid for the Coahuila governorship and appointed Jesus del Valle instead, continuing the practice of appointing political cronies as governors. The elite of Coahuila called for popular elections for governors and national legislators and an end to the presidential appointment system.⁷

In March 1908, When Díaz declared his intention to allow open elections in 1910 many political chiefs aligned themselves with emerging opposition candidates.⁸ By November 1908, Díaz supporters encouraged him to reconsider his decision and began a campaign for his re-election. Content with Díaz's decision to run again, the political liberals in Guyamas, Sonora were concerned over the possible re-election of the sitting vice-president Ramon Corral. To prevent Corral's continued presence in government, the

⁷ Douglas W. Richmond, "Factional Political Strife in Coahuila, 1910-1920" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 60:1 (Feb 1980) 51.

⁸ James Creelman, "Porfirio Díaz, Hero of the Americas" *Pearson's Magazine*, XIX, No 3 (8 Mar 1908), 231-277.

Guyamas group organized a political club to support the candidacy of General Bernardo Reyes as a vice presidential candidate. When Díaz selected Corral, the liberals in Guyamas shifted their alliance, supporting Madero's presidential bid and subsequent call for revolution. While the liberals were frustrated that the Díaz policies and political appointees excluded locals from political power, their concerns remained focused on the Mexican elite, with little interest in the affairs of peasants, Indians, and wage laborers in general.⁹

In his efforts to mobilize the disaffected middle class, Madero's political agenda appealed to the rising industrial working class who were engaged in their own battles, fighting for social and economic improvements. In 1909, many mutual aid societies became anti-re-election clubs supporting Madero's cause. These clubs included white-collar professionals as well as industrial laborers as seen in a range of places including Cananea, Rio Blanco and Múzquiz, Coahuila, where the Club Obreros Liberal were led by Maderistas.¹⁰

Committed to the ideals of liberal government, Madero immediately attempted to have the election results invalidated through the courts after his release on July 19; however, Díaz's stranglehold on the government left Madero no recourse. With no political conduit available for change to occur, Madero called for a revolution to remove the Porfirian dictatorship. Madero saw 1910 as an opportunity to create change through the Liberal government structure and preserve the peace; however, when Díaz removed

⁹ Michael J. Gonzales, "US Copper Companies, the Mine Workers' Movement, and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920" *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol 76, No 3, (August 1996), 505; Bryan Templeton "Mexican Politics in Transition, 1900-1913: The Role of General Bernardo Reyes" (PhD Dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1969).

¹⁰ Records of the Workers Mutual Aid Society, Arquiles Serdan, Cananea, 27 September 1919; Cooperative Mutualist Society, Rio Blanco, 16 Feb 1920, Archivo de Departamento Trabajo, 34/2/8, Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México.

the opportunity for peaceful exchange of power, Madero turned revolutionary, determined to force a transfer of political power while maintaining the Liberal Constitutional government.

On August 3, Ricardo Flores Magón and his brother were released from prison in Florence, Arizona. Flores Magón opposed the Maderista program because it was focused on restoring liberties within the existing political structure, rather than destroying the current government to establish a nation controlled by all Mexicans. While most Mexican rebels were planning the revolution from Texas, the Flores Magóns returned to California, where they had made contact with US Socialists, and resumed publication of their Liberal paper *Regeneración*.¹¹ In the first new issue of *Regeneración*, Flores Magón exhorted Mexicans not to take up arms to remove Díaz just for the purpose of installing another master, urging Mexicans to fight for a revolution that would completely destroy the current vestiges of government. While his article was directed at General Bernardo Reyes, it applied to Madero and later presidents as well.¹²

In the November 19, edition of *Regeneración*, Antonio Villareal called on Mexican workers in the US to “organize and rise” believing that unionism would “not only improve the standard of living of Mexicans, it will also put a stop to the degrading humiliations and irritating outrages heaped upon our race.” Mexican unions were encouraged to fight to end the practice of split pay scales in the US and Mexico, as well as ensure that Mexican workers received the same treatment and benefits as other

¹¹ *Regeneración*, 3 September 1910.

¹² *The People's Paper*, Los Angeles, 3 September 1910, in Department of Justice Record Group 74, File 90755-239.

workers. Villareal believed that it was an act of duty for Mexicans to join labor unions in the US and Mexico.¹³

Madero called for his revolution to begin on November 20, 1910 in his Plan of San Luis Potosí; however, the emerging wage workers were not the ones who heeded his call as he expected. Madero's call to arms was adopted by workers, peasants and Indians, eager to free themselves from the feudalistic hacendados in Matehuala, Guanajuato and eastern San Luis Potosí. The Revolution began as a series of popular uprisings to resolve an array of local grievances and political discontents.¹⁴ While Madero's revolutionary plan did not begin as he envisioned, Mexican federal troops were forced to deal with sporadic fighting in other sections of the nation. The federal troops' initial successes led US Ambassador to Mexico, Henry Lane Wilson, to conclude that the revolution was basically over, insisting that the federal troops had maintained control throughout the nation, with a few rebels remaining in Chihuahua, which the Army would quickly get under control.¹⁵

Just before Madero's revolt was planned to begin, PLM rebels Candido Donato Padua and Santana Rodriguez Palafox, a bandit better known as Santanón, initiated a revolt near Veracruz. They planned to attack the San Andes Tuxtla village to capture the bank to fund a larger attack against Veracruz. Santanón attempted to recruit workers to join his rebellion, though he was only able to convince fifty-nine men to join his army.

When his small force arrived in San Andres Tuxtla, they were opposed by a force of sixty

¹³ *Regeneración*, 19 November 1910.

¹⁴ William E. French, *A Peaceful & Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class in Northern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 114; US Department of State Record Group 59, Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929, National Archives, Ellsworth to Department of State, 19 November 1910, 812.00/430.

¹⁵ US Department of State Record Group 59, Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929, National Archives, Wilson to Secretary of State, 24 November 1910, 812.00/444.

rurales and a cavalry unit under the command of Colonel Manuel Jaso and Captain Francisco Cárdenas. In a pitched battle, the rebels were defeated and Santanón was killed.¹⁶

In response to the growing tension in Mexico, on November 21, 1910, the US Secretary of War, Jacob Dickinson, authorized US military commanders along the US-Mexico border to aid civil authorities to enforce the neutrality laws. The US forces were required to provide a warning to Mexican military commanders when US citizens or their property were threatened and to give notice that military forces would move in to protect US interests.¹⁷ As Dickinson prepared for increased tensions along the border, President Taft issued strict orders that US military forces were not to intervene in Mexican territory without orders from Washington.¹⁸

While President Taft was contending with the increasing frictions in Mexico, labor tensions in Colorado re-emerged in December 1910. Colorado's coal country was divided between its northern and southern fields. In the northern fields, centered in Boulder and Weld counties north of Denver, miners lived among the larger community, purchased homes or rented property from people other than the mine owners. While the mine operators still exerted considerable influence, municipal elections were much less susceptible to fraud than in the southern mines, giving the northern coal miners more stability with an impartial government to mediate in disputes.¹⁹

¹⁶ Candido Donato Padua, *Movimiento Revolucionario 1906*, (Tlalpan, D.F.: no publisher, 1910) 114-121.

¹⁷ Secretary of War to Secretary of State, 26 January 1916, *Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929*, 812.00/17207.

¹⁸ Adjutant General to commanding officer, Department of Texas, 19 November 1910, *Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929*, 812.00/436.

¹⁹ Testimony of James Blood, Director of Northern Coal and Coke Company, US Commission on Industrial Relations/National Archives, Record Group 7220.

In the southern fields between Colorado Springs and the Raton Pass into New Mexico, towns were few and far between. Because of the remote nature of the coal seams in the south, CF&I and other mine owners established camps to house workers, establishing their own laws and enforcement mechanisms to protect the mines. In the southern district, the mine superintendent was the highest authority in the camps, overseeing deputized camp marshals, acting as judge and jury in the camp. One miner explained that “in these towns a man has no rights... there is no machinery that he [can] call to his aid [to] redress a wrong. If he doesn't like it, he can quit.”²⁰

Despite the political turmoil, the Guggenheims continued to expand their ASARCO interests in Mexico. ASARCO purchased controlling shares of the Compañía Metallúrgica Mexicana de Matehuala at 60 pesos per share, a 40% savings on its market price at the time. The Matehuala smelter was reorganized and enlarged to smelt up to 10,000 tons per month in order to fully support the Dolores y Anexas and other Matehuala mines.²¹ In early 1910, the capacity of the Chihuahua smelter increased to 450 tons per day, stimulating mine production across northern Chihuahua. By the end of the year ASARCO built two additional furnaces to accommodate ores from Santa Eulalia, Santa Barbara, and the Parral fields, processing 750 tons of lead each day.²² ASARCO profits in 1910 decreased to \$7.7 million due to reduced demand for non-ferrous metals during the sluggish recovery for the 1907 recession in the US.²³

²⁰ M. McCusker, “Report on the Colorado Situation”, US Commission on Industrial Relations/National Archives, Record Group 174.6.1. Reel 4.

²¹ Special Correspondence, “Mexico-San Luis Potosi” *Engineering and Mining Journal*, LXCCIX, (12 February, 1910), 387; *Mexican Mining Journal*, (April 1910), 35.

²² *Mexican Mining Journal*, (March 1910), 36; *Mexican Mining Journal* (September 1910) 6.

²³ ASARCO, *11th Annual Report of the American Smelting and Refining Company*, 6.

In the US, the UMWA won a contract with the Northern Coal and Coke Company in Colorado's northern lignite fields in 1908. Initially, miners were paid different rates throughout the mining fields, based upon how difficult the ore was to extract. When the contract expired in 1910, the UMWA pushed for a 5.5% wage increase and standardized labor rates throughout the coal fields. Northern Coal and Coke managers rejected the union's demands. Encouraged by the wage increase won by striking miners in Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, with a \$400,000 strike fund the union was prepared to push for their demands and the UMWA called for a strike. The UMWA miners in the northern fields walked off the job on April 1, demanding an eight hour workday, the right to join a union, freedom to shop outside of the company stores, and a system of checks to ensure that miners' tonnage was properly weighed and that miners were paid according to the tonnage mined. Other miners in the region quickly followed the UMWA example, eventually stopping all coal production in the northern region.²⁴

Northern Coal and Coke hired the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency to protect the mine property and ensure the safe passage of replacement workers to and from the mines. When the striking miners began harassing replacement workers the company paid to have its train tracks extended into the fenced mining compound, preventing the union men from interfering with the new workers.²⁵ Northern Coal and Coke then appealed to Boulder County Sheriff M.P. Capp to protect the mines. When Capp refused, the Northern Coal and Coke managers accused him of being pro-union and went to court seeking an injunction against the striking miners.

²⁴ "The Coal Mining Industry in 1910" *Telluride Daily Journal*, 9 January 1911.

²⁵ Testimony of James Blood, Director of Northern Coal and Coke Company, US Commission on Industrial Relations/National Archives, Record Group 7220.

In order to determine the validity of the injunction request, Colorado Secretary James Pearce, who also acted as the state labor commissioner, went to the scene of the strike to survey the situation in the northern fields on August 9. He concluded that the strikers did not pose an immediate danger to the coal mines and that Capp, rather than being a union supporter, was a sheriff who impartially enforced the laws of the state.²⁶ While the mine owners were unsuccessful with Secretary Pearce, they finally found a sympathetic judge in Denver, Greeley Whitford, who signed an injunction against the miners in the northern fields, preventing them from accosting replacement workers, gathering in large groups, picketing or using signs, placards, or any other means to try to intimidate new miners into quitting their jobs.²⁷

While the miners in Colorado's northern mining district seemed to be losing ground in their strike, the US government remained concerned over the increased threat of revolution in Mexico. In early December, Luther Ellsworth was informed that a band of rebels were moving through the Big Bend region to attack the small town of Ojinaga. Ellsworth went to Presidio, Texas to meet with the Mexican rebels to determine their objectives, then left for Ojinaga, Mexico where he found that the town was ill-prepared for the suspected attack. The Mayor of Ojinaga asked Ellsworth to visit the rebel camps outside the town, though Ellsworth needed permission from the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations before he could legally get involved. While Ellsworth decided not to make the trip, he sent Robert Dowe, the US Customs Inspector, to meet with the rebel group. When Dowe returned he relayed that Chihuahua Governor Abraham Gonzales

²⁶ Edwin Brake, *Twelfth Biennial Report to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of Colorado, 1909-1910* (Denver: Smith-Brooks Publishing, 1911), 10.

²⁷ Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 2007), 54; Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

was leading the group of Maderistas, who emphasized that his group had no affiliation with the Magónistas.²⁸

In California, PLM leader Praxedes Guerrero left Los Angeles in November 1910 to lead PLM troops in the Revolution. Guerrero led an initial force of twenty-two men into Mexico, intent on capturing several small towns in Chihuahua and to build an army large enough to capture Ciudad Chihuahua. On December 19, he moved his force into Mexico and commandeered a train, blowing up bridges behind them as they traveled through Chihuahua. When they reached Guzman, Guerrero's force had grown to forty-nine men and he split his force intending to capture the villages of Casas Grandes and Corralitos.²⁹

While the rebels were successful in capturing Corralitos, Guerrero encountered a force of 450 federal soldiers and a regiment of rurales in Casas Grandes. The jefe municipal requested additional troops from Ciudad Juárez to defend Casas Grandes, though Guerrero had abandoned the battlefield and retreated to Corralitos before the reinforcements arrived. Encouraged by his victory at Corralitos, Guerrero moved to attack the village of Janos on December 29. While Guerrero's force was initially successful, 150 federal troops arrived as he captured Janos and drove the rebels from the village, killing Guerrero.³⁰

In an effort to capture the revolutionaries operating in the US, particularly Madero, the special Ambassador to the US, Joaquin Casasus met with US Attorney

²⁸ US Department of State Record Group 59, Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929, National Archives, Ellsworth to Secretary of State, 6 December 1910, 812.00/556; Ellsworth to Secretary of State, 11 December 1910, 812.00/569.

²⁹ Ward S. Albro, *Always a Rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992), 124-25.

³⁰ Ethel Duffy Turner, *Ricardo Flores Magón y el Partido Liberal Mexicano* (Morelia, Michoacan; Editorial Erandi, 1960), 221-239.

General George Wickersham in January 1911. Wickersham promised Casusus that he would issue a warrant for Madero's arrest as soon as he was provided with evidence indicating that Madero planned to launch his rebellion from within the US, similar to the previous agreement between the US and Mexico in the pursuit of Ricardo Flores Magón and other PLM members.³¹ When a group of Maderista Revolutionaries captured Mexicali from across the border in California on January 29, the Taft administration grew increasingly concerned about Mexican revolutionary activity in the US, due to suspicions that the IWW, PLM, and other radicals had assisted the Maderista revolutionaries in this battle.³² On June 14, when many PLM leaders had returned from Mexicali and Baja California, the Flores Magón brothers and other key PLM leaders were arrested in Los Angeles. Accused of violating the neutrality laws, Ricardo Flores Magón remained free on bail until his trial where was sentenced to 21 years in prison.³³

On March 6, 1911, Ambassador Wilson advised President Taft that 90% of the Mexican people supported the revolution and that Díaz would certainly be overthrown. Nervous about anti-American violence associated with the collapse of the Díaz government, Taft mobilized 20,000 troops to patrol the border region. Many people in the US and Mexico remained concerned that the additional troops meant inevitable military intervention.³⁴ As the military and political control of Mexico deteriorated in 1911, Taft ordered the creation of the Maneuver Division, headquartered in San Antonio,

³¹ Fabela Isidro and Jesefina de Fabela, eds. *Documentos Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana*, 24 Vols (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Economica y Editorial Jus, [1960-]) vol 5, 177-92, Carlos Pereya, Mexican Chargé d'affaires at Washington, 26 January 1911; Joaquin Casusus to Secretary of Foreign Relations, 26 January 1911, 27 January 1911.

³² Dorothy Peirson Kerig. "A United States Consul on the Border During the Mexican Revolution: The Case of Luther T. Ellsworth" (M.A. Thesis, San Diego State University, 1974), 85.

³³ *Regeneracion*, 24 June 1911.

³⁴ US Department of State Record Group 59, Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929, National Archives, Ellsworth to Secretary of State, 11 March 1911, 812.00/969.

Texas. While the Texas newspapers suggested that the unit was moved to prepare for military intervention in Mexico, Secretary Dickinson maintained that US military forces had no intention of intervening in Mexican affairs.³⁵

With the deployment of troops along the US southern border, leaders on both sides of the Revolution remained concerned about the possibility of US intervention. Pascual Orozco provided advanced warning to the US Consul in Chihuahua of his planned assault on Juárez in February 1911. While Madero was prepared to call off the siege, out of fear of US intervention due to collateral damage in El Paso, Orozco continued with the attack and conquered the city in two days. Despite the few US casualties along the border, the US maintained its neutral stance.³⁶

While labor violence during the early years of the Revolution remained low, workers did continue to press employers for fair treatment. Throughout the mining regions in the Hidalgo District, the early years of the Revolution remained uneventful. Political leaders across the regions reported normal activities in Santa Barbara, San Francisco del Oro and Los Azules. More concerned about external threats than internal threats of worker-led violence, Augustin Paez, the jefe municipal at the El Rayo Mining and Development Company, requested military troops to protect the mines against raiding bandits that threatened continued operations of the property.³⁷

In the years of the Revolution, modern industrial enterprises found that fully employed workers continued to rely on standard opposition in the form of union protests and strikes rather than revolutionary activity. The workers' acceptance of the

³⁵ *San Antonio Express*, 8-18 March 1911, *El Paso Morning Times* 8-18 March 1911.

³⁶ Linda B. Hall and Don M. Coerver, *Revolution on the Border: The United States and Mexico, 1910-1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 45.

³⁷ Augustin Paez, jefe municipal, Sant Barbara, to jefe political, Parral, 1 March 1911, Parral, Chihuahua Archival Municipal, caja 1910L.

government and preparedness to invoke the authority of the state required the political leaders to meet them at least part of the way. Where unionism and traditional forms of protest were denied to the workers they joined revolutionary forces in the armed struggle. Most miners quickly understood that it was better to have a low paying job that provided a reliable paycheck than to become a revolutionary conscript never knowing when money or rations might come.³⁸

By 1911 revolutionary activities gradually increased as guerilla bands, led by revolutionary chiefs such as Pascual Orozco, Pancho Villa, and Thomas Urbina, began raiding isolated mining camps and small towns and disappearing into the open desert before federal forces could react. Despite the government's insistence that these "bandit raids" were isolated from the revolutionary trouble erupting in other parts of Mexico, ASARCO officials grew more concerned over the safety of their properties in Mexico.³⁹

As the revolutionary bands grew in size and activity, inevitably a few raids occurred at ASARCO properties which produced a flurry of telegrams to the US State Department, protesting the attacks. In response to the increased threat posed by rebel bands in Mexico, President Taft dispatched troops to the border as a signal to Madero and other revolutionary chiefs, to respect properties owned by US citizens.⁴⁰ In March rebel

³⁸ Knight, "The working class and the Mexican Revolution" 71. Knight notes that semi-proletarians (part-time workers) participated actively in the armed revolution because they were not fully employed. Fully employed workers were less likely to revolt in radical violence that might threaten their employment. Once the process of proletarianization – the making of a working class – had matured, the dangers of violent revolution were reduced, as workers, who had a vested interest in the continuation of industrial system, formed unions to provide leverage against the power of the modern industrial leaders.

³⁹ *Engineering and Mining Journal*, XCI, (12 February, 1911), 263-264; *El Imparcial*, (December 31, 1910), (January 1, 1911), (January 19, 1911).

⁴⁰ Reports of first raids on ASARCO mines and smelter, Valerdena, Durango, MX and requests from Senator Simon Guggenheim for protection of ASARCO properties in Chihuahua and Durango; Consul Freeman, Durango to Secretary of State, February 14, 1911 US National Archives, 76, 11.195/O.E.; Guggenheim to Secretary of State, February 15, 1911, US National Archives 76, 312.115 Am3/5; Acting Secretary of State H. Wilson to Hanna Consul Monterrey, February 16, 1911, US National Archives, 76, 312.115 Am3/5.

forces occupied Chihuahua, signaling to ASARCO the need to negotiate with the rebel leaders in order to continue mining and smelting operations. ASARCO officials met with Francisco Madero in Ciudad Juárez and received guarantees protecting ASARCO operations in exchange for payment of export taxes and railroad fees to the revolutionary government.⁴¹

In a series of non-violent protests, miners in the US continued to press for labor reforms as Mexico was swept into revolution. In the wake of the UMWA coal strike in Colorado, the WFM local in Lead, South Dakota organized a strike demanding higher wages at the Homestake Mining Company. While foreign workers remained dedicated to the strike, higher-paid US-born workers quickly returned to the mines, in effect defeating the strike. In June 1910, over 800 Eastern European miners walked off the job demanding a wage increase and an end to the discriminatory wage scale at the Globe Smelter in Pueblo, Colorado.

Another strike exploded in Arizona, when 750 ASARCO workers at the Kearny Concentrator operating at the LLC Ray Mine demanded a wage increase after their contract had expired on June 30, 1910. In support of the miners at the Ray Mine, another 750 workers from the Hayden Smelter, the Silver Bell Mine at Marana, the Mission Mine near Sahuarita and refinery at Amarillo, Texas walked off the job.⁴²

With the collapse of the Díaz regime in May 1911, Madero set about building his administration. Madero appointed leading Revolutionary supporters as governors in the key northern states that had supported his call to arms. In Coahuila, Madero appointed Venustiano Carranza. While Carranza was not well received by the state's elite land

⁴¹ Mining News, "Mexico-Chihuahua" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, (20 May 1911), 1033.

⁴² *Solidarity*, 1 June 1910; *Solidarity*, 267 August 1910.

owners, his reformist/liberal programs received overwhelming support from the middle class merchants, artisans, miners and other wage workers. Carranza initiated innovative responses to the social problems of Coahuila; he created agencies to assist the poorest segments of society; he expanded health services throughout the state, and cracked down on drinking and gambling. In Chihuahua, Madero appointed Abraham Gonzales as Governor, who undertook similar legislation as Carranza, giving wage laborers throughout the state hope that the government would be responsive to their concerns.⁴³

Discouraged by Madero's victory, Ricardo Flores Magón, wrote to Samuel Gompers on March 11, 1911 in his efforts to gather additional support for his cause. Flores Magón asked him to appeal to US workers and the US Congress to protest against the threatened US intervention into Mexico, which threatened PLM plans to move against Madero. While Gompers replied, asking what the goals of the PLM were, he ultimately refused to support the radical PLM.⁴⁴ Discouraged by Gompers' refusal, Flores Magón wrote to Eugene Debs on April 6, asking for financial assistance. Debs, a radical in his own right, understood the dangers in associating with an anarchist and told Flores Magón that the masses of Mexican workers were "ignorant, superstitious, unorganized, and all but helpless." In Debs' opinion, they were not ready for the type of revolution Flores Magón was proposing.⁴⁵

Soon after Madero took office, Mother Jones met with the new president to discuss the plight of the Mexican working class. She later met with Ricardo Flores Magón, who accused her of working with the traitorous Madero. Mother Jones expressed

⁴³ Douglas W. Richmond, "Factional Political Strife in Coahuila, 1910-1920" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 60:1 (February 1980), 54.

⁴⁴ Ricardo Flores Magón to Gompers, 20 March 1911, in *Regeneración*, 1 April 1911.

⁴⁵ Eugene Debs, "The Crisis in Mexico" *International Socialist Review*, July 1911, printed in *Writings and Speeches of Eugene V. Debs* (New York: Hermitage Press, Inc., 1948), 337-340.

that in her discussions with Madero, he seemed to understand the economic plight of Mexican workers and appeared committed to reforming the national economy to benefit the majority of Mexicans.⁴⁶

Relying on the government to protect their political rights and freedoms, workers pressed their demands against employers with a wave of strikes during the summer of 1911. Miners in the La Paz, Catorce and Matehuala mines held an uninterrupted series of strikes from 1911-1913. While the miners maintained relatively peaceful modes of demonstration, Maderista troops were occasionally deployed and several miners lost their lives.⁴⁷ Smelter workers, factory workers, and seamstresses in Ciudad Chihuahua, declared strikes demanding higher wages and decreased hours. Madero vigilantly worked to resolve these disputes with varying success.⁴⁸

During the early years of the revolution, Cananea miners continued to work under more moderate managers than during the 1906 strike. While miners' wages were higher than the revolutionary army pay, miners continued to press for economic gains with limited success. In Rio Blanco, a Maderista stronghold, the textile factory continued to operate at 90% capacity during the Revolution with higher pay than the revolutionary army, making recruitment very difficult in both regions.

Some mines were not as fortunate as those in Cananea. The Chicago Exploration Company silver mines operated on a 250 acre concession in eastern Sonora and faced many challenges due to limited resources. The Mina-Mexico, the primary mine on the property, was purchased from Don Carmen Ortega, who had extracted 8,000 tons of ore,

⁴⁶ Edward M. Steel, ed. *The Correspondence of Mother Jones* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 100-101, Mother Jones to Ricardo Flores Magón, 4 November 1911.

⁴⁷ *El Estandarte*, 21 January 1912.

⁴⁸ William Beezley, *Insurgent Governor: Abraham Gonzalez and the Mexican Revolution in Chihuahua*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 1973, 99-105.

at an estimated value of \$2,000,000 between 1886-1907. The investors in the Chicago consortium believed that Ortega had only excavated a fifth of the available silver and copper ore and that the advanced mining and smelting techniques available to the Chicago Company suggested that at least 50,000 tons of ore remained in the existing mine dumps and even greater amounts still in the mine.⁴⁹

Throughout 1911, the Mina Mine felt the effects of the Revolution, with scarce labor, mules, and fuel to run the mine's activities. The Southern Pacific railroad stopped services to many of the outlying routes due to banditry and sabotage to tracks throughout the northern Mexican desert. While the mine managers continued to operate the mine to the best of their ability, the mine showed a meager profit of \$22,610.16 in its December records.⁵⁰

While Mexico was in the throes of revolution, the ongoing labor war experienced another bloody battle led by the IWW in Lawrence, Massachusetts that would have far reaching effects into the western mining towns of Colorado. As many as 23,000 workers walked off the job on January 11, 1912, in protest against a reduction in wages stemming from a new state law which reduced the number of hours in the work-week without increasing the hourly rate to compensate. As the IWW grew in strength throughout the strike with about 3,000 union members at the start of the strike, and roughly 20,000 by the end. Realizing the resolve of the striking workers, mill owners agreed to wage increases throughout the mills.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Letters from J.D. Hubbard, president of the Chicago Exploration Company, to Governor Frank O. Lowden. 27 December 1909. Papers of Governor Lowden, University of Chicago Library.

⁵⁰ Letters from Hubbard to stockholders 2 December 1911. Papers of Governor Lowden, University of Chicago Library.

⁵¹ Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All* (New York: The New York Time Book Co, 1969), 230-255.

Another violent clash occurred in April, when coal miners in West Virginia walked off the job when mine owners refused to renegotiate the expired labor contract. With more than 7,500 miners picketing the ninety-six mines of the Paint Creek and Kanawha River coal fields, the various owners coordinated actions to break the strike and resume operations. In May, mine owners hired the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency to break the strike, over 300 armed guards arrived at the mines by May 10.⁵² The primary objectives of the detectives were to evict the miners from the company housing and make life as difficult as possible for them. The UMWA assisted with the construction of a tent village as miners and organizers continued their persistence in the strike.

The strike grew increasingly violent after the Baldwin-Felts agents arrived at the mines. Labor officials accused Baldwin-Felts detectives of planting explosives at mine property to strengthen their appeals for National Guard mobilization. Miners exchanged gunfire throughout the next year while mine owners attempted to bring in replacement workers throughout the region. On February 7, 1913, the skirmishes exploded into full-scale battle. Mine guards moved into the miners' tent colony in an armored train car and opened fire.⁵³

Violence in Massachusetts and West Virginia, the Mexican Revolution on the southern border, the spectre of radicalism in the US spreading throughout the country, and disagreements within the political parties over the direction of political and social reform for the nation left voters with difficult decisions in the 1912 national elections.

⁵² Shogan, Robert. *The Battle of Blair Mountain: The Story of America's Largest Labor Uprising*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 33-40.

⁵³ David Alan Corbin, ed. *The West Virginia Mine Wars: An Anthology* (Charleston, WV: Appalachian Editions, 1990); Lon Savage, *Thunder in the Mountains: The West Virginia Mine War, 1920-21* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1990); Ken Sullivan, ed. *The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars* (Charleston, WV: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1991).

With 42% of the popular vote, Woodrow Wilson won a four party race, defeating Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft (whose dispute had split the Republican Party), and Eugene V. Debs. In addition to Wilson's victory, the Democrats won a majority in both houses of Congress and many new governor positions across the nation. While Wilson's legacy as a statesman would eventually rest with the outcome of the Great War in Europe, he began his foreign policy forays in Mexico.⁵⁴

Before the new president-elect took the oath of office, President Taft faced a myriad of overwhelming events in Mexico. A rebellion in the spring of 1912 erupted in Laguna, Torreón, Mexico where radical labor organizers convinced miners and other wage workers to strike for increased wages. Drought and a weak crop led to food shortages and steep price increases for staple goods throughout Mexico. With nearly 6,000 men unemployed in Laguna, workers quickly realized that a radical revolution threatened their livelihood. Soldiers in the region, originally dispatched to protect mine properties, acted to stop the armed mobs of strikers from lynching the radical organizers, though the radicals were run out of the state. Workers went so far as to take up arms to defend Madero's government against other radical rebels.⁵⁵

Working in a relatively lawless camp, with the rules dictated by the Phelps-Dodge Corporation, miners at Cananea continued to press for improved work conditions. In October 1911, Esteban Baca Calderon and Manuel Diegues, PLM leaders in the 1906 strike, who were released from prison as part of Madero's amnesty program. They returned to Cananea and assisted with the formation of the Union Obreros de Cananea and convinced the miners to strike in response to harsh treatment by US foremen at the

⁵⁴ James Chance, *1912: Wilson, Taft, Roosevelt and Debs – The Election that Changed the Country* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2004).

⁵⁵ Carothers, Torreón, 24 Feb, 19 March 1912, State Department Archives, 812.00/3085, 3362, 3421.

mines.⁵⁶ During the strike, rebel leader Juan Cabral met with hundreds of miners to organize an election for a new town council. Ignacio Pesquiera, a local leader who was acceptable to miners and Phelps-Dodge, was appointed as the municipal president Alexander Dye, the US Consul in Sonora, sent a report to the State Department explaining that the transition in power in the mining camp was orderly and legal.⁵⁷

In early 1912, Benjamin Hill, the Maderista military general in Sonora, announced that striking miners would be arrested and punished in accordance with Mexican law. Hill prevented union meetings, unless a Maderista representative was present at the proceedings, and agreed to investigate the foremen accused of abusive behavior. Authorities arrested the foremen, upsetting the mine managers and US Consul Alexander Dye, leading Governor Mayortaña to request 300 additional troops to protect the state from possible US intervention.⁵⁸ When mine managers stopped all mine operations and threatened to close the mine, miners realized their tenuous position, facing starvation without employment. The miners returned to work five days later.⁵⁹

With Mayortaña serving as the governor of Sonora, and military leaders such as Abraham Gonzalez and Alvaro Obregon in Chihuahua, Madero enjoyed wide support throughout the northern states in early January 1912. Sonora had not seen many Revolutionary battles, leaving its economy relatively intact. Mines in the state continued production, providing Madero's government with much needed tax revenue and kept

⁵⁶ George Young, Secretary, Cananea Consolidated Copper Company, to Senior Don José Mayortaña, Constitutional Governor of the State of Sonora, no date, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, Cananea Papers, MS 1032, box 1.

⁵⁷ Alexander Dye, US Consul to Nogales, to Secretary of State 23 October 1911, National Archives, Washington DC, decimal file 812.5045/24 M274, reel 167.

⁵⁸ Alexander Dye, US Consul to Nogales, to Secretary of State 19 October 1911, National Archives, Washington DC, decimal file 812.5045/25 M274, reel 167

⁵⁹ *Mexican Mining Journal* 13:5 (Nov 1911), 36.

Sonora's workers employed.⁶⁰ While workers continued to press for improved work conditions and higher wages, the labor struggles remained peaceful and separate from the insurrection being waged against Madero.

Madero's selection of Abraham Gonzalez as the Chihuahua Governor enraged Pascual Orozco, Chihuahua's chief of the rurales. Feeling that he had been ignored and isolated from power, Orozco resigned his post and began a revolt against Madero. In April 1912, Orozco's forces attacked the city of Parral, and moved toward other mining towns in an attempt to divert the mining taxes to support his army. Madero's government was also challenged by General Bernardo Reyes who invaded Coahuila in 1912 forcing Carranza to take refuge in Sonora. While Carranza regained control of Coahuila after crushing the Orozquista army supporting Reyes, the loss of Coahuila caused permanent damage to Madero's government.⁶¹

Madero dispatched General Victoriano Huerta to subdue the rebels in the northern states. While Huerta was able to route many of Orozco's forces from Chihuahua by May 1912, many Orozco supporters continued to wage a guerrilla war. Taft remained concerned about another Battle of Juárez, though he remained committed to his policy of nonintervention. In an effort to prevent a long protracted war along the border, the US initiated an arms embargo on March 14, though Madero's federal forces were exempt from the measure. General Orozco managed to maintain control of Juárez, a key economic hub for US-Mexican trade, until all commerce was terminated between the US

⁶⁰ Gonzales, "US Copper Companies" 510.

⁶¹ Douglas W. Richmond, "Factional Political Strife in Coahuila, 1910-1920" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 60:1 (February 1980): 56.

and Juárez in May. With supplies running low, Orozco's army was only able to hold off Huerta until August.⁶²

The increased revolutionary violence in 1912 led most mining companies in the northern states to stop operations, though a few companies persisted as best they could.⁶³ In Santa Barbara, the San Francisco del Oro Company, the El Rayo Mining Company, and ASARCO continued to mine and process ore. ASARCO officials continued to operate the Chihuahua smelter assuring stockholders that the company had been well treated by both federal forces and revolutionary leaders.⁶⁴

While Huerta continued to battle rebel armies in the north and south of the country, by February 1913, Madero's situation grew dimmer when General Felix Díaz and General Bernardo Reyes joined forces to initiate a coup on February 8. Madero's forces killed General Reyes on the first day of the attack and struggled to maintain control of the National Palace continued until February 18, when General Huerta, conspiring with Díaz and Reyes, arrested and killed Madero and his vice president José María Pino Suarez, taking control of the nation's capitol. In the US, President Taft, who only had a few days left in his term as president, withheld formal recognition from Huerta. As President Wilson began his presidential term, he also refused to recognize Huerta, which complicated matters as Huerta faced continued opposition from Carranza, Obregon, and Villa in the northern desert.⁶⁵

⁶² Linda B. Hall and Don M. Coerver. *Revolution on the Border: The United States and Mexico, 1910-1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 46.

⁶³ Eduardo Sander, comerciante, Parrall, to Tesorero Municipa;, 2 November 1912, Parrall, Chihuahua Archival Municipal, caja 1912F.

⁶⁴ "Maderistas Did Not Loot Parrall" *El Paso Morning Times*, 9 April 1912, 1:4; "American Smelting and Refining Company" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 12 April 1913, 773.

⁶⁵ Manuel Calero, *The Mexican Policy of President Woodrow Wilson as it Appears to a Mexican* (New York: Press of Smith and Thomson, 1916), 7; William E. French, *A Peaceful & Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class in Northern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 154.

Confronted with Madero's murder and Huerta's subsequent claim to the Mexican Presidency, President Wilson also faced the escalating labor dispute in the Colorado coal fields. As the strike in the northern coal field limped along toward the end of the year, the miners realized that they needed to change their strategy. At the start of the strike, coal production in the state had dropped by 20%, though the mining companies had regained half of that loss a year later, and there was nothing the union miners could do to stop the replacement workers from entering the mines. In December 1911, the UMWA decided that it needed to extend the strike into the southern coal fields.

Mine operators in the southern coal fields were well supported by Huerfano County Sheriff Jefferson Farr, who had grabbed political power in Walsenburg and much of the southern Colorado region. Farr maintained political control through blatant manipulation of the election machinery in Huerfano County. Farr would have county districts redrawn to create single precincts of individual mining towns, giving mine operators greater influence in their "town," while allowing Farr to retain greater control in the County.⁶⁶

While the union prepared to expand the strike into the southern coal fields in early 1912, mine operators made preparations of their own. Baldwin-Felts Detectives flooded into the region and were deputized by Sheriff Farr; he had deputized 326 men between January and September. In response to the growing militia placed at the disposal of the mine operators, union officials met with Las Animas County Sheriff James Grisham to request that he force the detectives to disarm, though the sheriff took no action. In an effort to protect themselves, union men armed themselves.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ John Lawson testimony, US Commission on Industrial Relations/National Archives, Record Group 8039.

⁶⁷ US Commission on Industrial Relations/National Archives, Record Group 7299-7311.

As Labor Day approached, the UMWA had shipped hundreds of tents to construct a tent village, similar to the efforts made by the union in West Virginia. Additionally, union leaders made arrangements to lease a plot of land to use for the tent city and strike headquarters for miners who would inevitably be evicted from company housing when the strike began. On September 2, 1913, mine managers and Baldwin-Felts Detectives closely watched the Labor Day rally in Walsenburg, with over 600 miners in attendance to hear Mother Jones and other speakers who encouraged the miners in their demands. Violence erupted even before the strike began. Eight miners were shot at from the Del Agua Mine as they left the Labor Day rally.⁶⁸ When the strike did begin on September 23, mine operators and miners alike were confident that they would prevail in the struggle.

Violent battles began almost immediately. On October 1, striking miners exchanged gunfire with mine guards in a skirmish that lasted 30 minutes outside the Suffield Mine near Trinidad. Two days later, a bomb exploded in Lafayette, destroying one of the barracks housing Bulgarian strikebreakers at the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company's Mitchell Mine in the northern district. The explosion was followed by a pitched gunfight.⁶⁹

On October 7, another fierce gun battle erupted as the chief of the Baldwin-Felts Detectives drove near the Ludlow tent compound. It is unsure who fired first, however miners exchanged fire with the four men in the car. The Baldwin-Felts men escaped to Hasting where they dispatched a squad of 30 guards to return to the tent colony. The Baldwin-Felts guards were met by a squad of miners positioned along rail cars and

⁶⁸ Minutes from union meetings, Edward Lawrence Doyle Papers, Denver Public Library Western History Collection Box 1, FF53.

⁶⁹ "Bomb Wrecks Mitchell Mine Bulgar Shack" *Rocky Mountain News*, 4 October 1913.

canyon walls, forming a solid defense for the tents. Hundreds of shots were fired over the course of the three hour battle.⁷⁰

The battle resumed the next afternoon near Berwind Canyon where mine owners were receiving a caravan of equipment to fortify the mines. As the caravan moved through the canyon, a group of fifty miners attacked. Several of the ambushed guards escaped to Ludlow to summon reinforcements. A detachment of thirty-five National Guardsmen from Trinidad were rushed to the battle zone. As the Guardsmen marched in, the strikers faded into the mountains ending the two hour battle.⁷¹

Violence continued on both sides throughout the next few months, with mine operators and Sheriff Grisham calling for the National Guard to be dispatched to stop the escalating war. Governor Ammons agreed to the request, dispatching a National Guard unit on October 28; the unit arrived in Ludlow a few days later. While the presence of the National Guard reduced the episodes of violence, the majority of the National Guard unit left Ludlow on March 28, 1914; two companies, composed primarily of mine guards, remained at the mines. On April 21, the remaining National Guard units engaged miners at Ludlow in a ten hour battle, in the tent colony housing some 1,100 strikers and their families. Seven men and one child were killed in the ensuing gunfight, and an additional two women and eleven children died, trapped in an underground pit, when the Guardsmen set fire to the tent city.⁷²

The strikers retaliated against the massacre in a ten-day battle which destroyed many of the mining camps as well as property owned by corrupt municipal leaders

⁷⁰ Red Cross "Report on the Colorado Strike" National Archives, Record Group 200 825.00 Box 55 folder 816; Andrew, *Killing for Coal*.

⁷¹ "Strikers in Ambush Fire upon Guards; 1 Killed, 3 wounded" *Rocky Mountain News* 8 October 1913.

⁷² Martelle, *Blood Passion*, 4.

throughout the strike zone. Greatly concerned over the disruption of coal shipments and the uncontrolled violence in the region, President Wilson ordered federal troops to Ludlow to restore the peace. More than seventy-five people died in the fifteen month coal war; most of them had been shot in the first eight months of the struggle.

The miners were fighting for their lives and the livelihood against a corrupt system of corporate feudalism. While the miners may have broken the law in their struggle, they were operating in a lawless environment, a condition created by local strongmen and the coal companies. The miners were routinely harassed and arrested without charges and their homes searched without warrants. The actions of the mine owners and their guards, supported by the municipal authorities, fueled the miners' rebellion.

When considered in the context of the labor war in the US, the Mexican labor movement followed an expected strike pattern: increased strikes during periods of economic growth, with workers demanding a greater portion of the return; and reduced strike activity in difficult economic times as workers sought to preserve their jobs. Through Madero's revolutionary struggle, strikes in Mexico continued along this similar pattern. However, after Madero was assassinated in 1913 Huerta enacted new taxes on foreign mines which led to increased unemployment as many US mines released workers and stopped operations. After the initial anger at mine owners and managers, many wage earning miners grew increasingly militant against Huerta's authoritarian regime.

Northern Maderista governors who were replaced with loyal Hueristas, took up arms against the new president. General Carranza moved against Huerista troops in Coahuila while General Obregon and Pancho Villa moved against troops occupying

Sonora and Chihuahua. These new Revolutionaries, opposing Huerta's military dictatorship, became known as the Constitutionalists, fighting to restore Mexico's constitutional government.⁷³

When the news of Madero's assassination reached the mines at Pilares de Nacozari and Moctezuma, riots broke out with miners demanding Huerta's arrest. Pedro Bracamonte, the military commander near the mines, offered to send a militia of 420 armed miners to remove the military dictator. Pre-empting a similar uprising at Cananea, Huerta dispatched 500 federal troops under the command of General Pedro Ojeda. While this may have prevented an armed uprising, it did not prevent the miners from denouncing the coup. Shortly after receiving word of the uprising at the mining camps, Governor Pesqueira urged the state legislature to denounce Huerta. More convincing than the governor's plea, however, were the actions of General Salvador Alvarado, who burst into the legislature with his soldiers threatening a military revolt unless the state of Sonora denounced Huerta and the assassination of Madero.⁷⁴

Sonora's governor quickly joined Carranza and the Constitutionalists in their efforts to remove Huerta. Pesqueira joined military operations to oust federal troops from Sonora, placing Alvaro Obregon at the head of Sonora's Sección de Guerra. By March 1913, mine managers, resenting the federal government's inability to protect their operations, complained that regional disruptions in rail and communication lines prevented the shipment of fuel to the mines and ore exports. Despite the destruction of the railway network in Sonora, the Mina Mexico managers refused to close down the

⁷³ Calero, *The Mexican Policy of President Woodrow Wilson*, 18.

⁷⁴ Gonzales, "US Copper Companies, the Mine" 510-11.

mine and by the end of April were operating at a monthly loss of \$15,000.⁷⁵ By summer, ASARCO suspended all of its northern Mexico operations, closing its last mine in Santa Barbara on June 22.⁷⁶ Growing attacks by Villa, Obregon, and Carranza in the north disrupted the economy throughout the northern mining districts, forcing most mines and smelters to shut down, and throwing thousands of miners out of work throughout the northern region.⁷⁷

The small group of foreign mining firms that dominated the northern Mexican desert – the Guggenheims' ASARCO, the Rockefeller' Greene-Cananea Copper Company, Robert Towne's Montezuma Lead Company, the Batopilas Mining Company, the Alvarado Mining Company, and the German-owned America Metals Company – were better able to wait out the problems in Mexico as revolutionary activity disrupted operations. The 1913 revolutionary unrest, occurring in concert with declining world metals prices, provided a convenient opportunity for these large mining operations to cut back on the less profitable Mexican mines.⁷⁸ While ASARCO reduced its mining operations in Mexico, it took advantage of depressed mine prices purchasing \$2.7 million in Mexican mines from small operators who were unable to continue operating in the dangerous environment.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Letters from Potter Palmer Jr. to stockholders 12 Jun 1913. Papers of Governor Lowden, University of Chicago Library.

⁷⁶ W.M. Drury, Mining Department, ASARCO, Mexico, "Summary of the Situation at Various Mining units in Mexico" 3 Sep 1913, Washington National Records Center, Record Group 76, Box 221, Docket 2312.

⁷⁷ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 95:13 (24 March 1913) 684; 95:14 (5 April 1913) 732; Douglas W. Richmond, "Factional Political Strife in Coahuila, 1910-1920" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 60:1 (February 1980): 57-8.

⁷⁸ Meyers, William K. "Pancho Villa and the Multinationals: United States Mining Interests in Villista Mexico, 1913-1915" *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol 23 No 2 (Cambridge University Press: May 1991): 344

⁷⁹ John H. Davis, *The Guggenheims: An American Epic* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1978), 117.

Mine managers faced a wide range of threats, many much more expensive than the collateral damage associated with the revolutionary battles. With most of the northern railroads destroyed or confiscated by the opposing armies, several mines attempted to transport their ore and receive food and other supplies, in wagon caravans. The Alvarado Mining and Milling Company in Santa Barbara sent two shipments with over \$400,000 in silver bars on wagon trains to the US in June and December, 1913.⁸⁰ The Tigre Mining company lost three tons of silver bullion when Inez Salazar raided the mine in the summer of 1913. When federal troops captured Salazar, his mule train scattered throughout the desert. Overloaded with the stolen silver, the mules died in the Sonora Mountains and the El Tigre mine owners recovered their lost silver by following the circling buzzards through the desert.⁸¹

In addition to logistical problems, generals on both sides of the Revolution saw foreign mines as a quick source of much needed funds. During Villa's attempts to gain control of Chihuahua, Huerta's military commander of the state, General Manuel Cho, approached ASARCO managers in Santa Barbara, demanding 5,000 pesos to pay for the "protection" provided by his federal troops. When the ASARCO superintendent, W.P. Schumacher, refused the demand, Cho explained that without the money, he might not be able to prevent his own forces from raiding the mines. Schumacher reluctantly gave General Cho 2,750 pesos.⁸² Edward Houghton, manager of the Corralitos Company in Chihuahua, estimated that between his mine, Mormon agricultural colonies, ranchers and

⁸⁰ French, *A Peaceful & Working People*, 156.

⁸¹ "Conditions in Sonora" *Mining and Scientific Journal*, CXI (July 17, 1915): 80-1.

⁸² W.P. Schumacher, Superintendent, Minas Tecolotes y Anexas, Santa Barbara, to Mining Department American Consular Agent, Parrall, 17 Mar 1913, Washington National Records Center, Record Group 76, Mexican Claims Division, Awarded Claims, 1924-1938, Box 221, Docket 2312.

other mines in the area, Orozquista forces had confiscated at least \$1,000,000 in gold.⁸³

Despite the increasing problems of the Revolution, ASARCO managers provided food and other supplies to miners at the Santa Barbara mines, in lieu of cash payments to keep the mines in operation and prevent widespread revolt.⁸⁴

Miners at the Cananea mines demanded the resignation of the mine's General Manager, James Douglas after severe layoffs in 1913. The Mexican military commander stationed near the mine recommended that Douglas leave Mexico, explaining that he could not guarantee his safety from the upset miners. Constitutionalist Governor Pesquiera brokered a deal with the remaining mine managers to provide military protection for the mine and ensure that railways and telegraph lines were available to the mine, if the mine paid its outstanding taxes. Rather than pay the exorbitant taxes demanded by Huerta's government, mine managers accepted the provisions of the Constitutionalist leaders and worked with them to feed unemployed miners and provide transportation to those who opted to enlist in the Constitutionalist military. By May 1913, mine production in Cananea returned to its pre-revolutionary levels, exporting \$1 million worth of copper.⁸⁵

ASARCO managers appealed to Secretary of State William Bryan Jennings in July 1913, complaining that they had been forced to close down all operations in Mexico, except the Aguascalientes plant, because of revolutionary violence. Revolutionaries and bandits had wantonly killed miners and taken food, money, machinery and other supplies

⁸³ United States Subcommittee on Foreign Relations (62nd cong, 1913) *Revolutions in Mexico* (Washington D.C., 1913), 3-22.

⁸⁴ Edward Brush and S.W. Eccles to Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, Washington, 15 July 1913, Washington National Records Center, Record Group 76, Box 130D, 435.

⁸⁵ *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 95:19, (10 May 1913): 976; Frederick Simpich, US Consul, Nogales, Sonora, to US Secretary of State, Washington, 24 April 1913, National Archives, Record Group 59m Box 3793E.

at gunpoint. ASARCO's vice president, S.W. Eccles, asked Bryan to "warn" Huerta and other revolutionary leaders to respect the lives and property of foreigners in Mexico.⁸⁶

By 1910, the United States and Mexico had become involved in two very distinct political battles, though many Conservative political leaders saw little difference between them. The first struggle, beginning as early as 1870 with the rise of populists and similar reform political groups, was fought in legislatures, court rooms, and at the ballot box, in an effort to change and challenge laws from within the political system. The second battle, led by radical reformers, called for the existing political and economic system to be dismantled and a new economic and political system, led by the working-class, to replace it.

The labor war, which erupted at the turn of the century, was in many ways fought along these same lines. In the US, conservative labor organizations fought for reform through non-violent protest and worked to reform the existing political system, pushing for pro-labor legislation like an eight-hour law, fighting injunctions in the courts, and, electing reform politicians to many offices at the polls. While Mexico faced distinct challenges with Díaz's authoritarian government, many labor organizations continued to fight for reforms through the existing political process, striking for changes and, wherever possible, supporting opposition within the existing political structure.

While the conservative labor leaders encouraged non-violent methods to demand reform, this was much more effective in areas where a representative government ensured laws were obeyed on both sides of the picket lines. In regions where government structures were weak or corrupt, industry leaders commonly acted as the government,

⁸⁶ Edward Rush and S.W. Eccles, Vice President ASARCO to the Honorable William Jennings Bryan, Secretary of State, 15 July 1913, National Archives, Washington DC, Record Group 76, Box 130D, 435.

establishing rules, penalties, and security forces to maintain order and control. Where government was ineffective, labor organizations, with no protection from industry owners and managers, were much more likely to take up arms to protect themselves. When workers demanded reforms in company towns, the political system inevitably reacted by silencing workers and protecting company interests. Without an impartial government to provide oversight, confrontations between workers and industry managers often turned violent, as the workers literally fought bloody battles in an attempt to overthrow the feudalistic structures that developed where there was no representative government.

While the story of labor reform is rendered dramatic by the actions of the radicals such as Haywood and Flores Magón: Gompers, Madero and other moderate reformers achieved the most effective changes for labor. However, without the efforts of those pressing governments for radical reforms, the moderate leaders may have been much less successful in their campaigns. The labor struggles experienced at Cananea, Ludlow, and Laguna during the early years of the twentieth century were the peak of a series of violent labor battles that had waged throughout the region since the 1870s.

When the Revolution erupted in Mexico, leaders on both sides of the border were greatly concerned over the influence of radicals in the labor unions. While government officials in both nations worked to disrupt radical organizations operating across the international border in the early years of the Revolution, US leaders seem to have been increasingly concerned about collusion between US radicals and Mexican rebels. Convinced that the numerous labor battles in the US since 1910 were somehow encouraged by the ongoing Mexican Revolution, Wilson enacted an aggressive intervention policy in Mexico.

CHAPTER 8

BATTLING THE RADICAL MENACE

The transnational labor war provides an important, indeed a central backdrop to understand US-Mexican relations during the period of US intervention during the Mexican Revolution and World War One. As tensions between the US and Mexico continued to escalate, the labor war in the West greatly influenced the labor struggles spreading across the US. Following the examples of industry leaders in the Leadville, Bisbee, and Cananea strikes, US military forces were spread across the US, responding to labor unrest in West Virginia, Colorado, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Michigan throughout 1914 and 1915 and strike violence prompted the Governors of New Jersey, New York, Louisiana, and California to implement martial law as a means to restore order. In Butte Montana, IWW miners accused WFM leaders of election fraud and collusion with copper companies during the period of martial law, convincing union members to renounce the WFM and join the ranks of the IWW. When radical IWW members dynamited the WFM union hall, Governor Sam Stewart dispatched the Montana state militia to Butte.¹

During the course of Wilson's 1912 election campaign, he distanced himself from the large-scale companies and pledged that he would not commit troops to rescue corporations from difficult situations. However, with an increasing number of violent strikes erupting across the US and a bloody Revolution underway in Mexico, Wilson

¹ Christopher P. Connolly, "The Labor Fuss in Butte," *Everybody's Magazine*, 31 (August 1914), 205-8.

became increasingly concerned over the perceived radical presence throughout the western desert. Throughout his presidency, National Guard and federal troops were deployed to dozens of strikes across the US, while he also embarked upon an aggressive intervention policy in Mexican.

Throughout the Mexican Revolution, leaders on both sides of the border remained concerned about radicals and their growing influence with labor unions. Government officials in both nations worked to disrupt the anarchists and socialists, such as the Partido Liberal Mexicano and the Western Federation of Miners, operating across the international border in the early years of the Revolution and US leaders became increasingly concerned that radicals in the US who assisted Mexican rebels might receive reciprocal assistance in an expanded revolution. In his desire to disrupt the radicalism that threatened US interests in Mexico, Wilson deployed US military units along the border and into the Gulf of Mexico to increase pressure on Huerta to resign.

Widespread mining violence in Colorado resulted in the deployment of National Guard units to Ludlow, Colorado as violence spread throughout the southern region of the state. Arizona experienced a wave of strikes in late 1914 and early 1915, when 1,700 workers were thrown out of 24 mines and processing plants in the region. On September 11, 1915, a strike was called in the Clifton-Morenci region, with 5,000 more miners walking off the job. After striking miners ran replacement workers out of town Governor George H. W. Hunt dispatched 450 Arizona Guardsmen to keep the peace. While the

strike was settled peacefully in January, workers received a wage increase in exchange for forswearing union membership.²

In an effort to maintain the economic freedom US business interests had grown accustomed to in Mexico, Wilson felt compelled to resolve the chaos erupting south of the border. Determined to prevent dictators from rising up through violent coups, President Wilson's early Mexico policy began by denouncing Huerta and refusing official recognition of Huerta's government. Wilson maintained an arms embargo and trade restrictions in an effort to force Huerta to relinquish the presidency and restore democracy to Mexico. As Huerta continued to consolidate his power, Wilson's policy became increasingly anti-Huerta. Wilson justified his initial forays into Mexico on ideological grounds, labeling Mexico's President as a unlawful dictator and a criminal who murdered the Liberal Francisco Madero in his quest for power. With Huerta clinging to power, President Wilson rescinded the arms embargo in February 1914, permitting Huerta's rival, Venustiano Carranza, to purchase a massive cache of arms for his opposition forces while denying much needed supplies to Huerta. After several months of re-supply, Carranza distributed the modern weapons provided by the US to his troops, transforming the Constitutional Army from a band of agitators into a quasi-professional military force capable of a sustained campaign against Huerta's federal army.³

The northern Constitutionalist forces opposed to Huerta were composed of competing military bands led by Carranza in Coahuila, Obregon in Sonora, and Villa in

² Carlos A. Schwantes, *Visions and Enterprise: Exploring the History of the Phelps Dodge Corporation* (Phoenix: University of Arizona Press, 2000), 151-2; Thomas Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

³ Bryan to Page, 29 January 1914, National Archives Record Group 59, Department of State, 812.00/10712; *El Imparcial*, 2 February 1914.

Chihuahua. Encouraged by the repeal of the arms embargo, Carranza understood that US support for his provisional government rested on his success in ousting Huerta. In an effort to establish clear authority over the rebel forces in the north and increase his visibility as the leader of the rebellion, Carranza moved his provisional government from Hermosillo to Chihuahua.⁴ With support from the US, the Constitutionalist forces gained control of the northern mining states of Mexico.

Rebel violence against ASARCO properties seemed to be declining as 1913 began. The mines and smelters in Aguascalientes, Nuevo Leon, and San Luis Potosí had escaped the rebel violence and extortion that hampered the Chihuahua properties. The Chihuahua plant was slowly increasing production and the Velardeña plant was preparing to return to full-scale operation again. Freight traffic to Chihuahua via the Mexican Central and Northwestern Mexican railroads was restored and the Guggenheims were optimistic that Mexico would have profitable year in 1913.⁵

By February, the Huerta coup d'état against Madero increased the problems faced by US mining companies in Mexico. Rebel raiders pillaged the Velardeña smelter and mines forcing ASARCO to close the property and evacuate its US employees.⁶ Rebels obstructed the major railroad lines, limiting ore shipments to the Chihuahua, Monterrey, and Aguascalientes plants, causing them to run below 50% capacity.⁷ By the end of July ASARCO officials met with US Secretary of State Bryan to discuss the rapidly deteriorating situation in Mexico. Rebel forces had captured the Mexican Central railroad which had all but stopped, isolating the majority of ASARCO properties in

⁴ Hostetter to Secretary of State, 23 February 1914, National Archives Record Group 59, 812.00/11045.

⁵ Editorial "Chihuahua" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, XCV (4 January 1913): 43; Editorial, *El Imparcial*, 23 January 1913.

⁶ Hamm to Secretary of State, February 22, 1913, National Archive Record Group 59, 812.00/6733.

⁷ Eccles to Secretary of State, July 15, 1913, National Archive Record Group 76, 312.115 Am3/59.

Northern Mexico, while the Mexican International Railroad was completely closed down, forcing the San Luis Potosí mines and smelters to shut down.⁸ ASARCO profits decreased by \$3.5 million, which Daniel Guggenheim contributed “to the unfortunate condition of affairs in Mexico.”⁹

By the end of 1913, Villa controlled all of Chihuahua and he tried to convince US mines to resume production in order to reap the tax revenues so desperately needed to continue fighting the revolution. Villa encouraged mine owners by restoring rail service between Chihuahua and the US. As early as January, ASARCO coordinated with the Villa government to reactivate installations in Chihuahua and Durango by paying taxes and a fee of \$500,000 for the return of previously confiscated ores.¹⁰ By April 1914, ASARCO resumed all smelting operations in Chihuahua and Durango.¹¹ ASARCO made alternative arrangements with the Carranza government, providing payments for the release of rail cars to move ores from Monterrey, Aguascalientes, and Matehuala for export to the Perth Amboy plant in New Jersey.¹²

In his efforts to force the radical Huerta out of power, Wilson expanded his support to the Mexican Constitutionalist forces in the North by increasing the US military presence in the Gulf of Mexico, positioning a small naval fleet near Veracruz. Huerta’s government protested the increased naval presence by informing the US that the Mexican Constitution only allowed for foreign war vessels to remain in national waters for a period of one month. Huerta’s notice was ignored and US ships remained in the area throughout Huerta’s rule. In response to Huerta’s outrage, President Wilson sent John

⁸ “The Railroad Situation in Mexico” *Engineering and Mining Journal*, XCVI (26 July 1913): 171.

⁹ ASARCO 15th *Annual Report of the American Smelting and Refining Company*, (31 December 1913), 7.

¹⁰ Bryan to Carothers, January 19, 1914, National Archive Records Group 59, 312.115 Am.3/5.

¹¹ “Chihuahua Enjoys Revival of Trade” *El Paso Morning Times*, 10 April 1914, 3:4

¹² *Mexican Mining Journal*, (September 1914): 200.

Lind as an emissary to deliver a message to Huerta in October, inviting him to abandon his rule over Mexico and allow for elections; making it clear that Huerta was not expected to run in those elections.¹³

Not only did Huerta ignore this message, in an act of protest he dissolved the Mexican Congress and arrested 110 Maderista congressmen ten days later. President Wilson and the Constitutionalist rebels in Mexico saw this move to eliminate Maderista supporters from the government as the coup de grace in transforming Mexico into a military dictatorship. Wilson continued to increase the pressure on Huerta by restricting loans from US banks and negotiating with European allies to do the same. While several French banks had already agreed to provide loans to Huerta's government, they agreed to suspend the disbursements.¹⁴

With tensions rising between Wilson and Huerta, the US naval fleet in the Gulf of Mexico sparked a crisis on April 9, when Huerta soldiers detained a small group of sailors dispatched to Tampico to procure gasoline for the fleet. The US sailors were mistakenly taken into custody and released when commanders realized the men were US servicemen. The resultant diplomatic conflict from this episode provided Wilson justification to escalate his anti-Huerta policies.¹⁵

¹³ Lind is Racing Against Time" *The Grand Forks Herald*, "1 January 1914; "Insults to Wilson on Mexican Stage" *New York Times* 1 January 1914.

¹⁴ Manuel Calero, *The Mexican Policy of President Woodrow Wilson as it Appears to a Mexican* (New York: Press of Smith and Thomson, 1916), 18.

¹⁵ *El Imparcial*, 26 April 1914; 30 April 1914; While the US insisted that its actions in Veracruz were based on the insults of the USS Dolphin crew and not a military move against Huerta, similar events in western Mexico were treated much differently. On June 18, the US ship Annapolis, anchored in Mazatlan, sent sailors into port to search for US refugees. Two officers were immediately arrested by Carrancista guards when they stepped foot onto Mexican soil. The officers were quickly released by the Carrancista military commander. When the US sailors returned to the Annapolis and pushed from the wharf, Carrancistas fired on the vessel killing one of the sailors. While Wilson justified the occupation of Veracruz in response to the brief detention of US sailors in Tampico, its strategic importance seems to have been the more compelling rationale.

When Wilson received intelligence that a large shipment of ammunition and arms was headed to Veracruz he ordered the US Marines to invade and intercept the shipment. When the US Marines captured Veracruz the city had been under siege by Carranza's forces and Huerta's military commanders had implemented martial law, restricting movement in and out of the city. The US invasion of Veracruz was a point of contention for Mexican leaders on both sides of the ongoing revolution. While the Constitutionalist Army was gaining ground with victories in Torreón, Hermosillo, Ceyala, and Zacatecas, Wilson saw his actions as assisting the effort to remove Huerta from power. Though Carranza benefited from the US occupation of Veracruz which deprived Huerta of critical tax revenue, the US occupation delayed the Constitutionalist victory; Carranza called for the immediate evacuation of US forces from Veracruz. Anxious to remain on good terms with the US and undermine Carranza's growing popularity with US leaders, Pancho Villa supported the US occupation and expressed deep friendship and gratitude to the US for its assistance.¹⁶

When Carranza's forces toppled Huerta, the US unofficially recognized Carranza, creating great concern for Pancho Villa. Carranza's forces, led by General Calles, fortified their positions in Agua Prieta and, with approval from the US, established a re-supply chain through Douglas, Arizona to continue the fight. Pancho Villa invaded Sonora with 12,000 men and attacked Agua Prieta for two days, though he failed to dislodge Calles. Short on supplies, Villa withdrew from the battle to re-supply his forces from the Cananea mining camps. After a week of mayhem and looting, Villa's army left

¹⁶ Canada to Secretary of State, 27 April 1914; 22 April 1914 "US Marines invade Vera Cruz"; 29 April 1914, "Martial Law declared in Vera Cruz"; National Archives Record Group 59, 812.00/11429; Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 123-26; Carrothers to Secretary of State, 23 April 1914, National Archive Record Group 59, 812.00/11654.

the Cananea mines just two days before General Obregon arrived with Constitutionalist forces ready to dislodge Villa's army.¹⁷

As the civil war continued between Carranza and Villa many of the rail lines were attacked and overtaken by both rebel and constitutional forces. Carranza cut the line between Nogales and Cananea and the Villistas stopped traffic between Agua Preita and Nacozari. The US State Department intervened on behalf of the US mining interests with both sides, securing permission to repair the destroyed railways and continue operations.¹⁸

By November, Villa requested additional support from the US government and mining leaders. Villa agreed to remove restrictive decrees against miners and they began re-opening the mines. ASARCO re-opened five plants in Villista territory; however, no mining operations were resumed in Carranza's zone due to restrictive taxes charged at eight times the rate in Villa's zone. From 1913-1915 Villa took swift action against militant labor protests. Villa quickly arrested IWW agitators in 1914 and deported them from Chihuahua at the request of ASARCO.¹⁹ The demand for metals continued to increase as war brewed in Europe and ASARCO managers reopened mining operations throughout Chihuahua in May 1915 and resumed smelting by June.²⁰

As Villa faced increasing trouble against the Obregon's Constitutionalist forces, ASARCO experienced renewed production challenges. With Obregon's victory at Ceyala, mines in Aguascalientes and Zacatecas shutdown as Obregonista forces occupied

¹⁷ C.E. Wiswall, Cananea, to Mrs. R.F. Torrance, Albuquerque, 24 June 1949, Arizona Historical Society, Robert Torrance Papers, MS 1033, box 1, folder 27; *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 100:18 (30 October 1915):739.

¹⁸ "Conditions in Sonora" *Mining and Scientific Journal*., CXI (July 17, 1915), 80-1.

¹⁹ *Engineering and Mining Journal* vol 98 no 10 (15 August 1914; 5 September 1914).

²⁰ Edward Brush, Vice President ASARCO, to Secretary of State Robert Lansing, Washington, 30 July 1915, National Archives, Box 3729, 312.11/6394.

the cities. Villista forces regrouped and fought a bitter battle in Torreón as the anti-Villista cuadrillo attacked and looted Parral, destroying the Parral-Durango rail line as well as the buildings and machinery at the ASARCO mines and smelters in Veta Colorado and Tecolotes. The smelter in Matehuala closed in July after the Villista governor Saturino Cedillos abandoned the city to advancing Carrancista forces.²¹

After Villa's defeat, ASARCO executives changed their allegiance and described Villa as dangerous and in a constant rage. Anticipating problems associated with the US plans to recognize Carranza's government, the State Department issued a warning to US citizens and companies, ordering all US citizens to leave Mexico. ASARCO and other US held mines shut down in accordance with the order and Carranza received de-facto recognition in October.²²

As Carranza was consolidating his control in the north, miners in Eastern Arizona, near the border disputes in Naco, Mexico, demanded union recognition from the mining companies in the area: Arizona Copper, Shannon Copper and the Phelps Dodge Corporation. When the companies refused to negotiate with the miners, a strike began on September 11. Having struggled against replacement workers from Mexico in the past, the WFM had accepted many Mexican miners into the union before meeting with the mine owners.²³

Mine owners moved replacement workers into the area and then quickly requested military protection from Arizona Governor George W.P. Hunt. Concerned

²¹ Drury to Loeb, 15 April 1915, 17 Apr 1915; Loeb to Neale, 17 Apr 1915; Neale to Secretary of State 18 April 1915, National Archive Record Group 76 312.115 Am 3/139.

²² Edward Brush, Vice President ASARCO, to Secretary of State Robert Lansing, Washington, 30 July 1915, National Archives, Record Group 59, Box 3729, 312.11/6394.; S.W. Eccles, New York, to George Benedict, San Diego, CA, 21 September 1915, ASARCO Archive, Tucson, Drawer 11, File 245-10-4.

²³ *The Idaho Daily Statesman*, 4 January 1916.

about repeating the mistakes made in Ludlow the previous year, the Governor sent a political envoy to investigate the situation, finding a generally peaceful situation where workers were protesting conditions in the mines. Governor Hunt dispatched 48 members of the National Guard, to protect property as well as the strikers' rights from renegade violence; many strikers were deputized to assist the Sheriff. Successfully preventing violence from breaking out in the Arizona strike, the Governor assisted with the mediation between the workers and managers, with the strike ending in January.²⁴

With Villa nearly defeated, Carranza's Constitutionalist government needed funds and once again looked to the foreign dominated mining industry as an obvious source of income. Carranza and his governors instituted a unilateral tax increase, abolished company stores, and created state level labor tribunals to assist Mexican laborers in an effort to gain more control of the export economy of Mexico. By 1916, the industrial mining companies protested the higher taxes and loss of concessions, and shut down operations, though mineral prices steadily increased. The companies pressed the US government for increased involvement, though President Wilson refused to take action against Carranza's government. One month later the mining companies in Cananea paid their taxes and resumed production.²⁵

Desperate for financial resources and angry at the loss of US support, Villa attacked a mining train on the Mexican Central Railroad in Santa Isabel, Chihuahua on January 10, 1916, killing sixteen US mine workers, and nineteen Mexican miners. Two months later Villa attacked Columbus, New Mexico with four hundred armed rebels.

²⁴ "Arizona Guard Ordered to Clifton" *The Idaho Daily Statesman*, 4 October 1915; Ronald Filippelli, *Labor Conflict in the United States* (New York: Garland Publishing Co, 1990), 26-7.

²⁵ Assistant Secretary, Cananea, to Young, Los Angeles, 8 August 1916, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, Cananea Papers, MS 1032, box 1.

Primarily focused on looting resources to continue their fight in the Revolution, Villa's men smashed storefront windows yelling Mata los Gringos (kill the Americans) as they rampaged through town. The raid resulted in the death of seventeen Americans and about one hundred Villistas. The blatant violation of US sovereignty moved President Woodrow Wilson to approve a military expedition to capture Villa, led by General John J. Pershing.²⁶

With orders from the War Department, General Pershing made his way to Columbus to head the expedition into Mexico to capture Villa and ensure his forces would no longer be a threat to the border. Pershing's initial orders were to work with the Carrancista officials and withdraw if the Mexican forces were sufficient to continue the pursuit.²⁷ The US sought Carranza's approval to move ahead with the expedition; however, Carranza was hesitant to allow an extended US military presence in Mexico, considering a movement of US troops across the border as a violation of sovereignty. On March 13, Carranza reconfirmed a long-standing agreement between Mexico and the US to allow for reciprocal crossings while in pursuit of bandits, and Wilson conveniently interpreted this as permission for the expedition. Pershing's initial forces crossed into Mexico on March 15.²⁸

As 1916 came to a close, the Great War in Europe continued in its destructive stalemate. Searching for an opportunity stop US economic and material support for England, Germany continued to search for new allies that could turn the tables of the war

²⁶ "La Revolución día a día", *Así Fue*, vol 7, (March 1916), 1481-4; Carrothers to Secretary of State, 8 March 1916, *Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929*, 812.00/480; Andres Garcia to Venustiano Carranza, 9 March 1916, Archivo de la Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City, 7-9-14.

²⁷ Adjutant General to Funston, 10 March 1916, *Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929*, 812.00/17457.

²⁸ Acting Secretary of State to consular officers in Mexico, 14 March 1916, *Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929*, 812.00/17457.

in their favor. In January 1917, British cryptographers intercepted a message from German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmerman to Mexico, offering the return of territories lost to the US in the 1848 war, if Mexico would join the German war effort. While the British did not share this information with the US immediately, news of the telegram broke in the New York Times on March 1, sending the nation into a frenzy.²⁹

With tensions between the US and Mexico already high, Ambassador Henry Fletcher met with Carranza and his staff to discuss the Zimmerman issue and future relations between the two nations. When Carranza ultimately confirmed his commitment to maintaining peaceful relations with the US and agreed to protect US citizens and properties in Mexico, Carranza's government was granted de jure recognition. In April 1917, the US declared war on the Central Powers in Europe and Wilson's Mexico policies were forgotten as the administration focused on the war effort in Europe. While the US resumed full diplomatic relations with Mexico, Ambassador Fletcher continued to report and respond to further anti-US posturing or provocation by Carranza.³⁰ After the US entered the war in Europe, tensions and strikes that were generally tolerated during times of peace were seen as acts of sedition. In January, Wilson ordered the withdrawal of the Pershing expedition, and by middle of the month a phased withdrawal began with the last of the troops returning to the US in early February.

In April the WFM and the IWW were competing for loyalty among mine workers in Bisbee, Arizona. While the WFM had earned a reputation as a radical union that encouraged reform through violence, the IWW was viewed as the more radical of the two

²⁹ For an in depth discussion of the Zimmerman Telegram's impact on US/Mexico relations and the US decision to enter the war, see Barbara Tuchman, *The Zimmerman Telegram* (New York: Viking Books, 1958).

³⁰ Wilson to Lansing, 9 April 1917, National Archives Record Group 59 711.12/36.

unions, calling for a revolution and the dissolution of the wage system, with workers owning the means of production. Protesting the low wages of copper miners while copper prices continued to rise in the early war years, union organizers pressed for a strike that began in Arizona and spread across the western mining region.³¹

Striking copper miners throughout the West were accused of plotting with Germans in an effort to subvert allied copper supplies, allowing German advances in Europe to continue. Butte mines were practically idle in June, where typically thirty-three million pounds of material were sent to the smelters monthly. The Kennecott's monthly production of seven million pounds had also been shut down. In Mexico, the Green Cananea mines, with monthly production of five million pounds were closed due to the strike, with mines in Arizona and Utah forced to close as well. The Shattuck Arizona Copper Company, the Phelps Dodge Copper Queen, Calumet and Arizona, Bisbee, and Globe-Miami mines were all on strike with over 20,000 miners demanding union recognition, wage increases and shorter work hours.³²

Violence broke out in Bisbee and Globe prompting the mine managers to request military assistance. By July, sheriffs in Bisbee and Globe had deputized hundreds of men to assist with controlling violence during the protracted strike. Miners remained positioned along mine property lines preventing strike breakers as well as many officials from crossing the picket lines to include Sheriff Tom Armer and Superior Judge Shute.³³

In May, more miners had formed battle lines in Sonora, Mexico. Miners at the El Tigre mine struck over wages. At Cananea, railroad workers and miners at the Cananea-

³¹ Schwantes, *Visions and Enterprise*, 149.

³² "Big Copper Strike Blamed on Germans" *New York Times* 29 June 1917; "Fears German Plot for a Copper Strike" *New York Times* 30 June 1917.

³³ "Ask Army to Quell Arizona Mine Riots" *New York Times* 4 July 1917.

Duluth mine protested violations to the labor tribunal system. The most contentious issue at Cananea was the miners' demand for the dismissal for six foremen accused of abuse. One of the foremen was imprisoned and the governor demanded that two foreign foremen be dismissed. Upset over the interference of the government, mine managers shut down operations, depriving the state of critical tax revenues. The governor accused the mine management of disrupting social order and threatened to take control of the mine. While the Governor tried to reopen the mines, his efforts failed and the mines remained closed until December.³⁴

On July 7, based on reports that IWW leaders were spreading radical propaganda throughout western copper mines and that they had received money from Germany to support the disruption of copper production in the US, Arizona courts issued warrants to arrest fifteen IWW leaders.³⁵ While Bill Haywood vehemently denied the accusations of German financing of the IWW, the effect of the copper strike on military production was damning for the IWW.³⁶ By mid July, civic leaders throughout the western mining region were actively searching for IWW leaders to route the "Red Menace" from labor.

In Bisbee, over 1,000 IWW members were corralled and deported from Arizona into the New Mexico desert, restoring mining operations in Arizona. IWW leaders were conducting additional strikes in Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Mexico, with new strikes threatened in Nevada, Colorado, and Utah. Montana National Guardsmen were placed on alert on June 19, in response to the growing strike involving copper miners and

³⁴ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 104:20 (17 November 1917): 882, 104:24 (15 December 1917): 1045.

³⁵ "15 I.W.W. Leaders Sought in Arizona" *New York Times*, 8 July 1917.

³⁶ "Outrage Says Haywood" *New York Times*, 13 July 1917.

electricians. Within hours of miners initiating a strike in Butte, Montana on June 19, three companies of National Guardsmen arrived at the mines.³⁷

Officials in Jerome, Arizona deported another sixty-seven IWW members. The Cananea, El Tigre, and Nacozari copper mines in Mexico had shut operation after IWW organizers from Bisbee and Douglas had enlisted the workers to join the strike. Three IWW organizers were arrested in El Paso, Texas accused with intent to dynamite three railroad bridges connecting Mexican mines to US industry. In Idaho, government troops were alerted and remained ready to deploy to suppress violence throughout the west and restore order in the mining camps.³⁸

In July miners at the Chino Copper Company in Gallup, New Mexico, initiated a strike in response to management's refusal to recognize the UMWA. While the mine management had thirty strike leaders deported to Belen, New Mexico, this action was later overturned in court and the men were allowed to return.³⁹ The Gallup American Coal Company refused to honor the union contract miners had held with the Chino Company. When miners went on strike, coal company officials blamed the strike on radical unionism, claiming that the strikers were Wobbly anarchists who were funded by German money. While striking miners initially left the Gallup Company to work for other mines in the region that honored the UMWA contracts, by the end of June, Gallup Company managers brought in hired guards who were deputized to protect mine properties as the company began to import replacement workers to replace the striking

³⁷ "Anaconda Closes Down" *New York Times*, 25 August 1917; "Butte Strike Spreads" *New York Times*, 20 June 1917.

³⁸ "Entire West Alert to Suppress IWW" *New York Times*, 13 July 1917.

³⁹ Katharine Dawson, "Coal, Community, and Collective Action in McKinley County, New Mexico 1900-1935" (PhD Dissertation, Binghamton University, State University of New York, 2004).

UMWA members. By the third week of July, more guards had moved into the city in conjunction with a trainload of replacement workers from Mexico.⁴⁰

Following the precedent set in Bisbee, Arizona, mine managers accused the striking miners of radical IWW affiliation and coordinated with sheriffs to have the newly sworn-in deputies round up the striking miners to be deported to Belen, New Mexico. While these miners were dispatched from Gallup, the deportation created a public outcry and was denounced, most importantly by New Mexico Governor Lindsay. Because of these protests, the deported miners were returned to Gallup in a few days. On August 3, four hundred UMWA miners in Albuquerque and Cerrillos mines in Madrid, New Mexico voted to suspend work until the deported miners were returned. The quick return of the miners to Gallup prevented the sympathy strike.⁴¹

Industry leaders had gained ground against the IWW copper strike with deportations of over 1,000 strikers from Arizona, military forces protecting mine property throughout the west, and dozens of IWW leaders arrested awaiting sentencing. On August 1, IWW leader Frank Little, accused of being the primary organizer of the Arizona copper strike, was abducted from his home in Butte, Montana by six masked men and hanged from a railway trestle.⁴² Industrial leaders had gained the full support of government agencies to eliminate the radical menace.

Gaining ground against the radical menace within its own borders, Secretary of State Robert Lansing was quickly faced with renewed threats from Mexico as Carranza increased taxes on oil and mineral exports. Troubled with a failing economy, Carranza struggled to restore lost income by increasing taxes on foreign industries operating in the

⁴⁰ *Carbon City News*, 14 July 1917; 21 July 1917; 18 July 1917.

⁴¹ *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, 8 August 1917; *Carbon City News*, 4 August 1917; 18 August 1917.

⁴² "IWW Strike Chief Lynched at Butte" *New York Times*, 2 August 1917.

northern states. When mining and oil companies pressed the State Department to take action against Carranza in response to the higher taxes, Secretary of State Lansing advised the corporations to dispute the matter in the Mexican legal system and suggested the US government would not get involved because increasing taxes is not a violation of international law.⁴³

US Ambassador to Mexico, Henry P. Fletcher recommended that Wilson provide additional support to Carranza, expressing that much of Carranza's radicalism was due to financial strains in the government. Fletcher convinced Wilson to release a large shipment of ammunition that had been impounded. Fletcher also urged US bankers to relax credit restrictions on Mexico, however US financiers refused.⁴⁴ Wilson's gesture did temporarily improve relations with Carranza. On August 2, Carranza promised not to confiscate any mining and oil properties currently in operation.

Carranza continued to look for loans from US banks but with no success. He remained suspicious that the US government was increasing financial pressure on Mexico, which appeared to be confirmed in September, when the US embargoed the bullion exports. In retaliation to the US embargo, Carranza implemented a law on September 27, ordering all mining companies to re-import gold coins in an amount equivalent to the total value of all gold exported from Mexico as well as for 20% of all silver exports.⁴⁵ US mining companies pressed the US Treasury Department to intervene.

As Carranza continued consolidated his power-base, he called for a constitutional convention on September 19, 1916 and presented his draft which greatly resembled the

⁴³ National Archives, Department of State, 763.72/3909; 812.011/48a.

⁴⁴ National Archives, Department of State, 812.113/4679; 812.113/8358.

⁴⁵ Emily S Rosenberg, "Economic Pressures in Anglo-American Diplomacy in Mexico, 1917-1918" *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, Vol 17, No 2. (May, 1975): 130.

1857 Constitution. Losing control of the convention, the more radical members of the convention rejected Carranza's draft, amending the new constitution to include a wide variety of anti-clerical and social reforms. One of the more distinctive changes attacked the issue of foreign corporations' control of the extractive industries in Mexico, Article 27, which nationalized all of Mexico's subsoil resources, and authorized the confiscation of foreign holdings in the national interest.⁴⁶ The British government, concerned over the European War, believed that Carranza's administration was a threat to Allied fuel supplies. British officials voiced their concerns to Wilson, who maintained his conciliatory course with Carranza.⁴⁷ In December, Carranza worked to reduce Mexico's reliance on the US for food and money. Carranza met with other Latin American leaders in Chile and Argentina, and opened negotiations with Japan and Germany. Carranza's dialog with Germany caused great concern to British officials who were concerned that Mexican support to Germany might change the balance of the war in Europe.

In addition to Article 27, the Constitution's labor clause, Article 123, established formalized guarantees balancing the legal rights between workers and corporations. Considered by many to be the one of the most important legal provisions to date designed to protect labor, Article 123 established a formal framework of labor protections to include: establishing the maximum duration of work for one day at eight hours; requiring equal wages to be paid for equal work, regardless of sex or nationality; compelling that all wages must be paid in money of legal tender and not in goods, promissory notes, or any other tokens intended as a substitute for money; employers were held liable for labor accidents and for occupational diseases of workers; and guaranteed the right of employers

⁴⁶ National Archives, Department of State, 812.011/4-11a.

⁴⁷ Rosenberg, "Economic Pressures", 126.

and workers to organize for the defense of their respective interests, by forming unions or professional associations. While workers have not always received the protections guaranteed by Article 123, the provisions set forth reach further than any legal protections for labor in the US.⁴⁸

In February 1918, German officials agreed to a loan for Mexico, in return for assurances of Mexican neutrality. In response to the continued US embargo on food and gold, Carranza warned the US that if the restrictions persisted, Mexico would consider restricting some of its exports as well. On February 19, Carranza issued a decree requiring all oil and mining companies to file new manifests with the government to be issued new title deeds. If the companies refused to file for the new titles, the properties would be open to claims by Mexican citizens. However if the companies did file for the new titles, their concessions dates for the properties would no longer date from before the 1917 constitution, subjecting all foreign holding to Article 27 subsoil nationalization.⁴⁹ US industrial leaders remained concerned that Carranza's radical ideas would strip them of their property in Mexico.

As Carranza continued to wait for the promised loans from Germany, defeats in Europe and the allied blockade of the Atlantic prevented the funds from ever reaching Mexico. While US mining companies provided financial support to Chihuahua's Carrancista governor, Ignacio Enriquez, to protect mining operations in his state, Villa continued to terrorize mines across the northern mining desert. In October 1918, Villa

⁴⁸ Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 228; Kevin Middlebrook, *The Paradox of Revolution: Labor, the State, and Authoritarian Mexico* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 45-48; H. N. Branch and L. S. Rowe, "The Mexican Constitution of 1917 Compared with The Constitution of 1857" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 71, Supplement (May, 1917), i-116.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 138.

seized two US miners near ASARCO's Tecolotes mine near Santa Barbara. He held the men hostage, demanding a \$15,000 ransom for each miner. After he had received the money from the mining companies, Villa threatened that if they didn't make regular payments to him to protect their interests, he could not guarantee the safety of US citizens or property in Mexico. Villa raided Santa Eulalia, the largest mining camp in the state, in early 1919, destroying ASARCO mines, and threatening to destroy the Chihuahua smelter in March as an incentive for US companies to heed his demands.⁵⁰

US involvement in the European war led Congress to pass the Espionage Act and the Sedition Act, to increase the level of scrutiny on radicals in the US. The Espionage Act was passed to protect the state from treasonous offences, providing for punishment of \$10,000 fine and twenty years in prison for "conveying false statements or false reports with the intent to interfere with the operation or success of military or naval forces... or to promote the success of its enemies....Willful refusal of duty in the military... or willfully obstructing recruiting or enlistment service."⁵¹ The 1918 Sedition Act prohibited disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the government of the US or the US Constitution, or the armed forces, or any language intended to encourage resistance to the US or promote the cause of its enemies.⁵²

With IWW activists challenging US involvement in the war, most of the US turned against the unpatriotic Wobblies and other radical groups. Headquarters were raided and members seized and deported from towns and cities across the US. Both

⁵⁰ William Loeb Jr. Managing Director ASARCO, to Secretary of State Robert Lansing, Washington, 27 November 1918, National Archives, Record Group 59, Box 3898C, 312.11Am3/184; Willard Moore, Executive Committee ASARCO, to Boaz Long, Department of State, 6 Feb 1919, National Archives, Record Group 59, Box 3893C, 312.11Am3/199.

⁵¹ *Statutes at Large*, XL, 219.

⁵² Congressional Record, Statutes at Large, Vol 41 Session 66, 1012.

federal and state governments fought the radicals with the sedition acts, with federal raids in September 1917, seizing IWW leaders, including Bill Haywood and 165 other agitators. Haywood and 99 other IWW members were found guilty of violating the Sedition Act and sentenced from 10 days to 20 years in prison.

On March 21, 1918, the Flores Magón brothers were arrested again for violating the Espionage Act. When they attempted to mail a manifesto addressed to the “Members of the Party, the Anarchists of the World, and the Workingmen in general.”⁵³ The brothers went to trial in July, while the prosecution had difficulties proving any violation of the neutrality law, the Flores Magón brothers were convicted based on testimony attesting to their radical nature. The brothers were convicted of the charges, with Ricardo receiving a sentence of twenty years and his brother fifteen, which were added to their earlier sentences.⁵⁴ When he was sentenced at the end of the war, Flores Magón conceded that “a sentence of twenty-one years is a life sentence for a man, old and consumed as I am.”⁵⁵ At the age of 48, Ricardo Flores Magón died of a heart attack while serving his sentence in Leavenworth prison.

In June, Eugene Debs was arrested in Canton, Ohio after a giving a speech in protest of the war. Debs discouraged working-men from enlisting in the armed forces and challenged the authority of the government to force them into war. Debs challenged the Espionage Act’s constitutionality as a violation of freedom of speech and he was convicted and imprisoned.

⁵³ *Regeneración*, 16 March 1918.

⁵⁴ W.M. Cookson to Post Office Department Inspector in Charge, San Francisco, CA, 19 July 1918, Parole Record File #14596 Leavenworth, Bureau of Prisons, Washington DC.

⁵⁵ Ricardo Flores Magón to Gus Teltsch, 15 December 1920, in *Epistolario revolucionario*, (Mexico: Ediciones Antorcha, 1983). Available on Antorcha website; http://www.antorcha.net/biblioteca_virtual/politica/epis/carta_gus_15_diciembre_1920.html

When the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, there were nine million people working in wartime industries throughout the US and four million more men in the US military. When news of the armistice was received war contracts were quickly cancelled with contract provisions providing for no more than one month's continued production at the wartime rates. The demobilization effort pushed forth at a rapid rate, within a month after the armistice over 600,000 men had been released from armed service with nearly the entire four million strong force released by November 1919.⁵⁶

AFL membership had skyrocketed from about 500,000 in 1900 to over four million in 1919. During the war years, strikes were less frequent, though after the war, US labor organizations struggled with industry managers who pushed to continue the wage controls instituted during the war. In 1919, laborers across the US found themselves demanding increased wages, shorter hours, and union recognition. In 1919 there were over 3,600 strikes involving four million people.⁵⁷

The armistice in Europe resulted in the cancellation of war contracts and created an abrupt end to the abnormal demand and high prices for industrial metals. On November 15, copper trading was discontinued on the NYSE and other industrial metals fell below pre-war prices. ASARCO reported earnings of \$13.5 million in 1918, a decrease of \$2.5 million from 1917. ASARCO stopped dividend payments until their \$17 million metal inventory could be sold.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Robert Murray, *Red Scare: A Study of National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (New York: McGraw-Hill Co, 1955), 5-6.

⁵⁷ Bulletin of US Bureau of Labor Statistics, CCCLVII (Washington: Government Printing Office, May 1924), 466; By 1919 the purchasing power of the US dollar had decreased to 45 percent of its 1913 levels with food costs increasing by 84 percent, clothing by 115 percent and housing and furniture by 125 percent.

⁵⁸ ASARCO 20th Annual Report of the American Smelting & Refining Company: 31 December 1918, 1-14.

Stagnant wages and increasing costs of living resulted in a wave of industrial strikes in 1919. In an effort to improve the economy, the US lifted the embargos on food and gold, a major cause of Carranza's problems, allowing Carranza to collect payments from Mexico's favorable balance of trade with the US to ease its economic burdens. While the situation in Mexico remained grave, the post-war environment eased economic pressure on the country.

The US economy faced growing pressure associated with the demobilization and conversion from a wartime to a peacetime economy. Prices began skyrocketing while wages remained depressed, with wartime legislation continuing to keep wages artificially low. On January 21, 35,000 Seattle shipyard workers struck for higher wages and shorter hours. Because the workers had broken the contract, the employers refused to discuss any demands until the contract expired, ordering the striking workers to return to the docks. In response to the ship workers' struggle, the Seattle Central Labor Council met on February 2, and agreed to conduct a general strike across Seattle. The proclamation of the general strike created a frenzy across the nation.⁵⁹

Mayor Hanson, an anti-IWW zealot, requested federal troops in response to the call for a general strike, with units arriving on February 6, from Camp Lewis. With 1,500 troops and an additional 1,500 policemen positioned throughout the city, the arrival of the troops emboldened the Mayor, who demanded that the strike committee call off the work stoppage by 8 AM the following morning or he would crush the strike and reopen all affected industries with replacement workers.⁶⁰ National newspapers painted the striking Seattle workers as revolutionaries who were testing the waters for a larger revolution.

⁵⁹ *The Bellingham Herald*, Washington, "40,000 Ship Workers Strike Yards at Seattle" 21 January 1919.

⁶⁰ Ole Hanson, *Americanism vs Bolshevism* (New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1920), 87.

The AFL quickly adjusted its initial support of the strike as labor was increasingly viewed as radical and supportive of revolution in Seattle. On February 10, AFL leaders called for the end of the general strike.⁶¹

President Wilson remained in Europe for six months after the armistice was signed, building international support for his League of Nations proposal, designed to prevent another Great War from destroying civilization. With the president pre-occupied in Europe, Mexico received a new-found freedom from US intervention. In January 1919, public concern over Carranza's stranglehold on the Mexican government increased when Carranza announced a one year moratorium on elections. This announcement increased public suspicion that Carranza would not endorse Alvaro Obregon, and that he intended to keep the political field clear to name his own successor.⁶²

In early June, Obregon declared his candidacy, pledging to eradicate widespread government corruption and reinvigorate the ideals of the Revolution. Carranza endorsed Ignacio Bonillas, the Mexican Ambassador to the US. As the active campaign began in November, Carranza called for the elimination of all military governors and military politicians as candidates, a step to terminate Obregon's candidacy and guarantee Bonillas' victory.⁶³

Carranza arrested key opposition party members and forced the retirements of Obregonista generals, replacing them with his own cronies. Obregon, viewed as pro-labor, coordinated support with the new Confederacion Regional Obrera Mexicana (CROM) for his candidacy. Carranza deployed Generals Diegez and Mugica to Sonora

⁶¹ *Los Angeles Times*, 8 February 1919; *Rocky Mountain News*, 8 February 1919; *Washington Post*, 10 February 1919; *Chicago Tribune*, 7 February 1919.

⁶² *El Imparcial*, 16 January 1919.

⁶³ Edward Lieuwen, *Mexican Militarism: The Political Rise and Fall of the Revolutionary Army* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968), 50-51.

to withdraw the Obregonista governor de la Huerta. The state militia formed defensive positions to protect Sonora from the federal invasion and declared its independence. General Calles occupied the southern railheads, preventing federal troop movements into Sonora, forcing Carranza to request permission to move Mexican troops through the US in order to pursue the rebels in Sonora. While Mexico had been subject to routine border crossing from 1916-1919, the US refused Carranza's request.⁶⁴

By April, Carranza faced a general uprising as military commanders rose in rebellion throughout the nation. On April 30, General Gonzales led his army from Nuevo Leon into Mexico City. General Hill, the military commander in Mexico City and cousin of Obregon, abandoned the capital, leaving Carranza defenseless. Carranza left the capital on May 7, fleeing for Vera Cruz. He was assassinated in the mountains of Puebla and was buried in Mexico City.⁶⁵

While normalcy appeared to be returning to Mexico, radicals continued to plague the industrialized nations of Europe and the US. On February 20, 1919, Premier Clemenceau of France was wounded by a Bolshevik agent and four days later US Secret Service agents arrested fourteen Bolsheviks in New York City who were suspected of plotting to kill US political officials in an organized world plot.⁶⁶

On April 28, a small package containing explosives and acid was delivered to Seattle Mayor Ole Hanson's office. Another package was delivered to former senator Thomas Hardwick's home, injuring his maid and his wife. All in all, thirty-six bombs

⁶⁴ American Embassy Report to Secretary of State, 26 March 1926, National Archives Record Group 59 812.00/24117 "Synopsis of the Sonoran Revolution, Monograph #8, prepared by Lt Col Aristedes Moreno, US Army."

⁶⁵ Horace Marucci, "The American Smelting and Refining Company in Mexico, 1900-1925" (PhD Dissertation submitted to Rutgers University, May 1995), 402-3.

⁶⁶ "General Condition of Premier Clemenceau "Satisfactory" *The Charlotte Observer*, North Carolina, 21 February 1919.

had been discovered in the postal system, clear proof of a radical plot in the US.⁶⁷ On the evening of June 2, a series of mysterious bombing occurred simultaneously in eight different cities, Cleveland; Newtonville, Massachusetts; New York City; Boston; Pittsburgh; Philadelphia; Patterson, New Jersey; and the most spectacular of these occurring at the home of the US Attorney General, Mitchell Palmer in Washington DC.⁶⁸

In late June, the Attorney General readied the US Department of Justice to engage the radical element in the US by appointing William Flynn as the head of the department's Investigation Bureau. Utah Senator William H. King prepared a Bill prohibiting the movement of bomb making materials across state lines as well as prohibiting membership in organizations advocating the violent overthrow of the US government. Montana's Senator Thomas Walsh proposed a bill implementing a \$5,000 fine and five years in prison for anyone urging the overthrow of the US government.

Attorney General Palmer explained to the Congress that the wartime espionage acts were not valid in fighting the radical attacks currently plaguing the US, though the congress provided \$500,000 to the Department of Justice to initiate extensive raids to hunt radicals, anarchists and Bolsheviks.⁶⁹ Fearing a radical reprisal to the Lusk raids in New York, government officials prepared for the violent attacks across the US during Independence Day celebrations. In the US West, military forces were deployed throughout mining regions, discouraging IWW radicals from violence.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *New York Times*, 29 April 1919; 1 May 1919; *Atlanta Constitution*, 30 April, 1919; *Chicago Tribune*, 1 May 1919.

⁶⁸ *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 3 June 1919.

⁶⁹ *New York Times*, 14 June 1919; *Christian Science Monitor* 4 June 1919; *Detroit News*, 12 June 1919.

⁷⁰ *Chicago Tribune*, 4 July 1919; In March 1919 there were 175 strikes, in April 248, May 388, June 303, July 360, and August 373.

President Wilson returned from Europe after brokering the armistice agreement to include the League of Nations. Concerned over the lack of support in the Congress for his League of Nations plan, President Wilson embarked on a western speaking tour in September 1919, to bolster lagging support. While Wilson was away from the White house, several labor dispute erupted, including the famous Boston Police force strike.

The increased number of strikes in 1918 and 1919 resulted in growing concern across the US due to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the few high profile acts of radical violence in the US. Organized labor continued to fight for higher wages, reduced hours and union recognition from employers. While employers continued to focus on the radical nature of all unions, Samuel Gompers continued to impress on the nation the need to preserve the rights of labor as well as condemning radicals and Bolsheviks, ensuring to distinguish the differences between respectable labor and radical labor.⁷¹

Throughout the US West, state Governors took severe precautions to preserve coal production, in light of the national strike. In Colorado, Governor Shoup deployed 1,200 National Guardsmen to Golden and Trinidad to ensure replacement workers would be allowed access to the mines. A few days later additional troops were dispatched from Louisville, Kentucky to assist General Woods' protection of Colorado mines. Over 8,000 federal Army troops were moved to protect coal fields in Tennessee, Wyoming, Ohio, and New Mexico, Utah, Oklahoma, Alabama, and West Virginia.⁷²

A massacre in Centralia Washington set off a chain reaction of violence along the West Coast. A war was declared by state and local government officials against radical

⁷¹ Samuel Gompers, "The Truth About Soviet Russia and Bolshevism" *American Federationist*, XXVII pt. 1 (February 1919), 167.

⁷² "Army Reinforced in Coal Districts" *New York Times*, 1 November 1919; "Mobilizes Colorado Guard" 31 October 1919; "Regulars Go to Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico to be Ready to Protect Miners at Work" 3 November 1919.

labor elements in the region. Federal law enforcement officials began a series of raids on November 12, to rid the area of the presumed Bolsheviks. In Seattle, Spokane and Oakland, American Legion deputies rounded up over one hundred IWW members and demolished union halls to eliminate the radicals.⁷³ In early October, Senator Poindexter denounced the inaction of the Justice Department for not deporting radical agitators.⁷⁴

Spurred by the successes of the ARU raids, the Department of Justice expanded its net to include the IWW, the Communist Labor Party, and the Communist Party within the US. The second large scale Department of Justice raid was scheduled for January 2, 1920, resulting in the arrest of over 4,000 radicals in thirty-three major cities.⁷⁵ While raids were conducted throughout the West, few people were arrested due to the success of the raids after the Centralia massacre.⁷⁶

While the US was focused on apprehending the radical menace within its own borders, Carranza focused on eliminating the threat posed by Pancho Villa in the northern mining region of Mexico. Villa continued to raid from his mountain refuge, extorting money and supplies, kidnapping industrial managers, quickly dispersing before federal troops reacted. When General Felipe Angeles joined Villa's forces in 1919, ASARCO properties were targeted as a quick supply of silver. On January 12, Villa's expanded army raided the Santa Eulalia mines demanding protection payments from the mine management.⁷⁷

⁷³ *New York Times*, 13-15 November 1919; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 13 November 1919.

⁷⁴ *Congressional Record*, 66 Congress, 1 Session, 67871-72, 1920.

⁷⁵ *New York Times*, 3 January 1920.

⁷⁶ *Salt Lake City Tribune*, 3 January 1920; 1 person was arrested in Los Angeles, 20 in Portland, 8 in Denver.

⁷⁷ *El Paso Morning Times*, 2 January 1919; Neale to Polk, 14 January 1919, National Archives Record Group 59, 312 Am3/202.

In response to Villa's threat, ASARCO officials requested support from the State Department in the form of arms and ammunition to assist the Chihuahua state militia. The State department agreed to ship 5,000 rifles and 150,000 rounds of ammunition and General Castro, the military Governor of Chihuahua, provided a force of 200 state troops to protect the Avalos smelter and mines in Parral and Eulalia. Banditry in the Mexican mining regions continued throughout 1919.⁷⁸

Desperate to defeat Villa, ASARCO petitioned the US State Department to place an arms embargo on Chihuahua. In 1920, with the fall of Carranza and the success of the Agua Prieta revolt, Villa retired to Canutillo. By the fall of 1920 over 2,000 miners had returned to work with ASARCO in Santa Barbara.⁷⁹ Villa continued to campaign through larger towns in Chihuahua until he was decisively defeated in Ciudad Juárez by Mexican Federal troops assisted by US troops deployed from Fort Bliss.⁸⁰

Workers returned to the mine fields, though they did not meekly accept the status-quo terms of employers. After forming the Union Libre Trabajadores in late 1920, mine workers at the Tecolotes mine declared a strike against ASARCO. Skilled workers demanded a 40% wage increase, and an increase to 3 pesos per day for unskilled workers. By mid October, facing increasingly stressful economic conditions, the miners agreed to a compromise to increase unskilled workers' wages from 1.5 to 1.75 pesos per day.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Neale to Polk, 29 January 1919, National Archives Record Group 312.115 Am3/202; ASARCO Vice President Morse to Long, Department of State, 7 February 1919, National Archives Record Group 59 312.115 Am3/119; *Engineering and Mining Journal*, "Mexico" CVII (8 March 1919): 465; Wooten, "Recent Events in the Mexican Situation" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, CII, (22 March 1919): 541.

⁷⁹ J. de Beraza, Official Ayudante de Departament Trabajo, to Sr. Don Esteban Flores, jefe interno del Departamento del Trabajo, 10 October 1920, in Archivo General de la Nación, México City, México, Fondo Trabajo, vol 211, exp 15, F.100.

⁸⁰ "A Change in Mexican Policy" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, CVII, (21 June 1919): 1097; "Parral is Retaken by Villa Forces" *New York Times* 13 May 1919.

⁸¹ William E. French, *A Peaceful & Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class in Northern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 170.

While the violent revolution in Mexico was finally over with Villa's collapse and Obregon's victory over Huerta, miners and other industrial workers throughout Mexico continued to press employers and their government for economic change. In the US, the presidential campaign in 1920 created a sense of security reducing the panic of the Red Scare, though labor unions would continue to feel its effects for years to come. After the Great War, labor violence in the US and Mexico continued to erupt periodically, but not on the scale seen from 1910 to 1919. Governments on both sides of the border misidentified the post-war labor movement as a radical political threat because of the growing specter of Marxism, which increased after the 1917 Russian Revolution. During WWI the Department of Justice indicted over 400 IWW leaders under the espionage acts and convicted all but a handful in mass trials in Chicago and Sacramento. The courts had imprisoned nearly the entire Socialist Party national committee by the end of 1918.

A firm cultural, political, and economic division developed between the US and Mexico as the US entered the Great War in Europe, dividing the Great Western Desert, stretching from Colorado in the United States to San Luis Potosí in Mexico, at the international boundary. President Wilson's Mexico policy that challenged Huerta and later Carranza as radicals threatening US interests, constituted an effort to establish the same US control in northern Mexico as had been developing throughout the western mining states in the US. When US policy was diverted from Mexico, with Wilson's attention directed solely at the events in Europe, Mexican leaders finally regained the political freedom necessary to establish sovereign control of the northern region previously dominated by US industrial leaders.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION: BORDER LEGACIES

The Great Western Desert, typically divided at the international border between the US and Mexico when discussed by scholars, politicians, and the general public, has remained a trans-national region with intricate environmental, political, economic, and historical continuity. As the US and Mexico underwent an industrial transformation from 1876 to 1920, the desert region as a whole, struggled as it was forced to compete in the global market and its workers were forced to vie for highly competitive wage positions. As the largest US and European corporations moved into the region their substantial wealth quickly allowed them to dominate local politics, ensuring favorable business conditions.

As the desert region struggled against the emerging industrial power structure, political reformers fought to reduce the dominance of big business by proposing legislative reforms and fielding reform minded candidates. At the same time, workers fought their own battles against the industrial giants, resulting in a devastating labor war with casualties spread across both sides of the border. The limited successes of the reform politicians and labor organizations alienated the most devout reformers, often causing them to join more radical groups that called for political revolution throughout the borderlands to release the working class from the bondage of the persistent wage system.

Throughout the Progressive Era the US-Mexico border remained nearly insignificant to the inhabitants of the Great Western Desert region. Industry leaders quickly adapted to the diverse political environment along the border. When Mexico reformed mining laws or amended its Constitution, managers and owners met with local, state and federal leaders to reconfirm their exemptions from the laws. Across the western desert miners and industry leaders alike took advantage of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, expanding silver/lead exports from Mexico to support ore smelting in the US. When faced with the McKinley Tariff, designed to reduce Mexican lead imports, mine operators obtained favorable legal rulings to classify their imports as silver (based on the metal with the highest value in a shipment) to avoid the prohibitive tariff.

Until 1917, the border was routinely ignored by military leaders as well. Prior to the 1910 revolution, the US and Mexico maintained agreements allowing cross-border pursuit of hostile Indian groups in a concerted effort to eliminate that threat. As the Mexican Revolution erupted, many Mexican reformers freely crossed into the US to take refuge, while revolutionary armies occasionally skirted through the borderlands, crossing the permeable border for strategic advantage. Pancho Villa and other bandit groups raided US towns to capture money and military equipment, and in response, the US sent General Pershing and other military expeditions into Mexico to capture the bandits with little regard to the protests from Mexican leaders.

As the economic strength of corporations grew exponentially from the late 1880s through the first decade of the 1900s, unprecedented numbers of workers joined unions to form a cohesive defense against profit focused employers. In their efforts to maintain control over labor and the means of production business leaders pressed government

leaders at the state and federal level on both sides of the border to support their efforts in the escalating battles against labor unions. Many corporations merged forming large trusts across the mining and smelting industries to reduce economic competition and expand their advantage over unions. While the corporate giants were joining ranks, labor organizations were also consolidating their strength into centralized unions such as the Knights of Labor, Industrial Workers of the World, the General Congreso de Obreros Mexicanos, the Western Federation of Miners, and American Federation of Labor. Both industry leaders and union leaders grew increasingly militant, deploying armies of workers and Pinkertons across the front lines of the battlefield. As violent clashes became the expected accompaniment to these aggravated disputes, government leaders routinely deployed military forces to resolve the conflict, typically in favor of the mine owners, though labor did have a few successes when pro-labor officials were in office.

From 1880 to 1900, industrial leaders successfully used the political division at the international border as a convenient tool to divide workers on grounds of race, culture, and nationality. Mexican workers were routinely limited to low paying, unskilled jobs on both sides of the border. Workers from the US remained concerned that immigrants willing to work for lower pay were attempting to take their jobs. At the same time, Mexican laborers grew hostile towards the US employees who kept them from advancing to higher paying jobs as skilled workers, reinforcing the division between the two groups.

By 1900, however, several reform leaders realized that the division among workers threatened the success of the larger labor movement. Mother Jones routinely called for the support of Mexican workers to respect strike lines. The Western Federation

of Miners opened its union halls to Mexican miners to reduce the availability of strike-breaking immigrants. Ricardo Flores Magón worked closely with anarchists in the US to bring about revolution in Mexico and contributed to the radical movements' condemnation of the US government.

As the revolutionary fighting came to an end in 1920, Mexico struggled to reduce US influence throughout its northern states. When Alvaro Obregon assumed the Mexican Presidency, he was faced with an enormous debt and claims by US and British companies for damages over the ten years of revolution. With over 10,000 claims by Mexican nationals and over \$500 million in claims by foreign industries, Obregon saw little choice other than refusing the claims. Spurred into action, neither the US nor Great Britain recognized Obregon's government, restricting aid, trade, and bank credit, complicating matters for the Mexican economy even further.⁸²

In an effort to maintain leverage over the foreign industries that continued to press their financial claims against Mexico, Obregon remained committed to Carranza's policy that Mexico's subsoil resources remained the property of the state, in accordance with Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution. In 1922, Obregon increased exportation taxes on oil and other petroleum by-products, planning to use the increased revenue to repay the staggering national debt. In response to the new taxes, US oil companies shut down their wells and many executive leaders traveled to Mexico to meet with the president and his top financial advisors to resolve the issue. While US wells resumed production almost immediately after the conference, oil companies agreed to purchase Mexican government

⁸² "Keeping the Lid on Mexico" *The Independent*, 23 October, 1920, 130.

bonds in lieu of payment of export taxes, a limited victory for both Obregon and the oil companies.⁸³

In 1923, the US and Mexico held a conference to resolve the disputed claims between both nations since 1868. The resolution reached by both nations in 1923, known as the Bucareli Agreement, adjusted the debts incurred by both nations prior to the revolution of 1910-1920. The agreement further resolved the disputed ownership rights to sub-surface resources, with Mexico relinquishing its Article 27 claims, based on Article 14 of the 1917 Constitution which stipulated that “no laws shall be given retroactive effect” similar to the same article of the 1857 Constitution stating that “no retroactive law shall be enacted.”⁸⁴ With the Bucareli Agreement signed, the US finally recognized Alvaro Obregon’s government in Mexico.

During the boom years of the 1920s Mexican immigrants were welcomed to the agricultural jobs and low paying unskilled jobs in mining, construction and other industries throughout the US. By 1929, after the devastating market crash pulled the world into economic recession, the US Census had calculated that there were 1,422,533 people of Mexican descent in the US, twice the amount indicated in the 1920 Census report.⁸⁵

In addition to resolving political differences with Mexico’s northern neighbor, Obregon also needed to mobilize Mexico’s working-class to ensure popular support of his policies. Formed in 1918, the Confederation Regional Obreros Mexicanos (CROM) supported Obregon’s candidacy, however, once Obregon had won the presidency their

⁸³ “The Financial Outlook of Mexico” *Bankers’ Magazine*, March 1922, 489.

⁸⁴ “The Mexican Problem Solved” *The North American Review*, September 1924, 51.

⁸⁵ “Population of the United States by Color or Race” Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931).

support for Obregon diminished over years of disinterest from the president. Since Obregon was not able control the labor parties of Mexico, he took advantage of internal differences, playing one group against the other, reducing labor's political power while he was president. In the next election the CROM stood by Plutarco Calles, who identified himself as a labor candidate. Calles found that having the support of the CROM was a huge asset during his presidency. CROM led the publicity campaign for the creation of the national bank of Mexico, urging members to deposit their funds with the bank. CROM influenced workers to purchase nationally made products and led the effort to revise the petroleum laws in an attempt to regulate foreign concessions.⁸⁶ While strikes continued to decrease during the Calles presidency, thousands of Mexicans continued to search for work north of the border.

While hundreds of thousands of undocumented workers had entered the US from Mexico since the border was determined in 1848, the economic crisis of 1929 led US government leaders to increase border controls and restrict immigration. Armed with the 1929 Immigration Act, which made illegal immigration a misdemeanor offence with a fine of \$1,000 or a year in jail, federal officials implemented action to repatriate Mexican aliens to reduce the number of men competing for scarce jobs in the US. Thousands of miners were fired and forced to leave mining camps in Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado and forced to return to Mexico.⁸⁷

By 1931, the fear of the large populations of Mexican workers, competing with unemployed US workers for scarce jobs, led the Arizona state legislature to issue a

⁸⁶ Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 202-211.

⁸⁷ Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican-Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), 35.

warning that the Mexican immigrants were a threat to “citizen workers” lowering the standard of living in communities because they often agreed to work for less money than US citizens. Throughout the US West many state leaders supported a policy of wholesale repatriation of people of Mexican descent. The Mayor of Wickenburg, Arizona, Charles Ryder declared public works jobs off limits to all Hispanic people, immigrants and US citizens alike. Colorado Governor Edwin C. Johnson called for the expulsion of all immigrants from his state, the majority having come from Mexico. While Johnson’s plan did not materialize, he did receive supportive telegrams from the governors of Texas and New Mexico, who hoped to enact similar state policies.⁸⁸

While political extremists may not have been as successful as they had hoped in their deportation efforts, the US federal government did implement an intensive repatriation program from 1930 to 1940. People of Mexican descent, regardless of citizenship status, were systematically deported from the US during the harsh years of the depression. While the exact number of deportations during the Great Depressions is unavailable, scholars estimate that as many as 500,000 people left the US and returned to Mexico over the course of the 1930s.⁸⁹

As the Great Depression continued into the 1930s, Mexico struggled to end the legacy of US corporate domination throughout Mexico’s utilities and extractive industries. In 1935, President Lázaro Cárdenas enacted a policy of railroad, purchasing

⁸⁸ “The Lessons of Mr. Johnson” *El Universal*, Mexico City, 11 May 1935.

⁸⁹ James Carl Gilbert “A Field Study in Mexico of the Mexican Repatriation Movement” (MA Thesis, University of Southern California, 1934), 19.

all rail networks in Mexico by the end of the year. In 1937 the government nationalized power and light companies and prepared to nationalize mines and oil properties.⁹⁰

Cárdenas encouraged the various petroleum unions under the CTM to consolidate, forming the Sindicato de Trabajadores Petroleros de la Republica Mexicana in an effort to strengthen the move against the US companies. The union demanded a 65 million peso annual wage increase for its members; the oil conglomerate offered 14 million pesos. As the Cárdenas administration arbitrated the dispute, the union began the strike when negotiations broke down. Cárdenas decided that the oil companies could afford a 26 million peso salary increase. Unhappy with the government's role as arbitrator in the strike, the oil companies went to court. On March 1, 1938 the Mexican Supreme Court ruled in favor of the government, and after a heated discussion the oil companies agreed to the 26 million pay increase, but refused to re-admit union workers or recognize union control. The company's refusal to agree to the arbitration requirements gave Cardenas government justification to seize the properties. On March 18, 1938, Lazaro Cardenas announced his decision to nationalize Mexican oil production. The cooperation of labor was crucial for the success of Cardenas nationalization policies.⁹¹

Continuing to integrate Labor into the political party, Lázaro Cárdenas formed an alliance with the Mexican Labor Confederation (CTM). The CTM, reorganized in February 1936, unified labor and strengthened their political power. By instituting a series of reforms and granting concessions and benefits to the CTM Cárdenas was able to

⁹⁰ John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 392-395.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

integrate the CTM into the Mexico's ruling political party, the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PRN).⁹²

As the US entered World War Two, the national immigration policy shifted again, encouraging temporary labor immigration from Mexico to work in agribusiness throughout the West, replacing the men had been drafted to fight the war in Europe. In August, 1942, US lawmakers initiated the Bracero program, importing thousands of contract laborers from Mexico to undertake critical farm work.⁹³ Thousands of Mexican returned to the US filling farming jobs across the nation.

At the end of World War Two, the Bracero program faced trouble as American soldiers returned from Europe and the US economy entered a post-war recession. Under the spectre of McCarthyism in the 1950s, Mexican immigrants faced suspicion of communist activities. Prominent Mexican labor leaders, who were accused of spreading communistic rhetoric among Bracero workers, were arrested and prosecuted in show trials to validate the predetermined decision of deportation. Panicked over the perceived communist threat posed by Mexican workers, the Immigration and Naturalization Service enacted "Operation Wetback" a systematic deportation program, to remove radical leaders organizers and laborers who had been influenced by communist rhetoric. By 1953, over 293,000 Bracero workers had been returned to Mexico.⁹⁴ As the post-war economic recession eased and the US economy normalized in the later 1950s, the Bracero

⁹² Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena*: 236-238.

⁹³ Manuel Avila Camacho to Eduardo Zepeda, 4 August 1942. Series 19, Folder 60, Archivo San Martin de Hidalgo, Jalisco, Mexico; Ana Elizabeth Rosas, "Flexible Families: Bracero Families' Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries, 1942-1964" PhD Dissertation (University of Southern California, 2006).

⁹⁴ Ernesto Galazara, *Merchants of Labor: The Bracero Story* (Santa Barbara: McNally & Lofton, 1964), 59.

program resumed, inviting Mexican laborers to work in the US at even higher numbers than during the war years.

In 1965, the Mexican government implemented the Border Industrialization Program, designed to encourage foreign assembly plants, *maquiladoras*, to relocate to Mexico in an effort to create jobs and diversify the Mexican economy. The *maquiladoras* received customs advantages, duty free importation of manufacturing equipment and exemption from export fees for products that were re-exported. The *maquiladoras* were built in the northern desert states of Mexico, near the US border, transforming Ciudad Juárez, Tijuana, and Mexicali.⁹⁵ The transnational mining wars are over, but the consequences of the formerly permeable border are still thoroughly pervasive in the attitudes of Mexican migrants who do not view the border as an insurmountable barrier to economic opportunity, just an impediment--though one that often has terribly tragic consequences.

While the Bracero and *maquiladora* programs provided an economic stimulus for Mexico, millions of unemployed laborers continued to flood across the border in search of better opportunities. Deaths associated with illegal border crossings have greatly increased over the past ten years. While crossing the US-Mexico border illegally has traditionally not been an easy proposition for the millions of Mexican immigrants seeking employment in the United States over the past 150 years, new border policies and enforcement initiatives have led to the building of fences and walls, an increase in the numbers of Border patrol agents, and the planting of sophisticated underground sensors and infra-red cameras, all of which has had the effect of forcing increased numbers of

⁹⁵ C. Daniel Dillman, "Assembly Industries in Mexico: Contexts and Development" *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol 25, No 1 (February 1983): 31-58.

Mexican migrants to take greater risks by traveling through the most dangerous desert environments in order to enter the United States.⁹⁶

In June 2004, three Montalau brothers from Tehuvan, Mexico made their final decision to travel to the US to make a better life for themselves. Crossing the northern Chihuahuan desert into the US, sixteen year old Victor de Jesus Montalau died in New Mexico, just west of Columbus. US Border Patrol agents arrested his two older brothers on June 4th about 7:30 AM as they continued on their journey into the US to find employment. After they were apprehended, the brothers explained what had happened to their younger brother; the older brothers then assisted the Border Patrol agents in finding Victor's remains.⁹⁷

A few months later tragedy struck another group of illegal immigrants traveling to the United States. Six immigrants died crossing the treacherous deserts connecting Sonora and Arizona. The four survivors continued on through the baking heat of the 100 plus degree Arizona desert toward their final destination. Losing his struggle against the desert sun, one of the survivors went to a ranch, west of Gila Bend, Arizona for help, where the US Border Patrol was notified of the group's illegal entrance into the US. Within a few hours the Border Patrol apprehended the small group of survivors and recovered the remains of those who did not survive their trip to the United States.⁹⁸

US border policies since the 1990s have been designed to fortify the border and reinforce the separation of the US Southwest from the Northern Mexican states, an elusive political objective the US and Mexico have struggled with since even before the

⁹⁶ Peter Andreas, *Border Games: Policing the US-Mexico Divide* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2000), vii-x; Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the "Illegal Alien" and the Making of the US-Mexico Boundary* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 3-4.

⁹⁷ Associated Press. "Mexican Teen Dies Crossing into N.M." *The Albuquerque Journal*. June 10, 2004.

⁹⁸ Associated Press, "Five Die Crossing US-Mexico Border" *Fox News Channel*, Aug 9, 2004.

victory in the 1848 war created the current international border. The US and Mexico have maintained relatively peaceful border relations since 1848, though issues of illegal immigration have continue to spotlight the porous nature of the border. The latest US strategy to reduce illegal immigration includes the addition of thousands of Border Patrol agents, high intensity lighting, remote surveillance systems, motion detection sensors, construction of walls along the 1,952 mile border, and a biometric identification system to register apprehended illegal immigrants caught crossing the border.⁹⁹

While the new deterrence polices have had limited success in reducing the number of illegal immigrants crossing at traditionally high traffic illegal entry points, it has merely pushed illegal immigrants toward more dangerous routes through deserts, mountains, and waterways, resulting in a greater number of deaths as immigrants continue to cross the border in search of employment opportunities.

While illegal immigration has remained a fact of life for both nations, border controls have traditionally tightened in times of national crisis in the US: the Great Depression, post-war depression of 1950, the 1980 recession, and the current global economic downturn faced in the US from 2007 to 2009 serve as prime examples of this process. In the effort to stem the tide of illegal border crossings during these times of crisis, the US has increased its efforts by building a wall that will physically deter illegal movement between the two nations, in effect, solidifying the permeable international border. Since 1990, the US has built fourteen miles of fencing at the San Diego border area. In Arizona, the wall stretches sixty five miles, with plans to extend the barrier

⁹⁹ Wayne A. Cornelius, "Death at the Border: Efficacy and Unintended Consequences of US Immigration Control Policy" *Population and Development Review*, 27:4 (Dec 2001): 663.

several hundred more miles. In Naco, Arizona, National Guard units patrol the five mile, fourteen foot high wall, as they assist with the planned twenty five mile expansion.¹⁰⁰

While Mexico has traditionally assisted with border enforcement, recently the policies of the Mexican government have challenged the ever tighter border policies implemented after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US. Concerned over the increasing number of deaths associated with illegal immigration to the United States, the Mexican Foreign Ministry began publishing *The Guide for the Mexican Immigrant*, in December 2004. This free publication, printed in a simple to read 32-page comic book format is designed to assist both legal and illegal immigrants traveling to the United States looking for work. Another guide published by the state government of Yucatan, *Guide for the Yucatan Migrant*, is an eighty-seven page book complete with color pictures and step by step instructions on both legal and illegal entry into the United States.¹⁰¹

While the Mexican government continues to work with the US to control the border, these migrant guides have caused alarm in the United States. The Mexican government emphasizes that its guides are published to assist Mexicans seeking to enter the United States legally, providing assistance with visa applications and other documents necessary to enter the United

¹⁰⁰ Charles Bowden, "Fences may make good neighbors, but the barriers dividing the U.S. and Mexico are proving much more complicated" May 2007, *National Geographic* online, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com>.

¹⁰¹ Hawley, Chris. "Mexico publishes guide to assist border crossers" *The Arizona Republic*. Online print edition 1 Jan 2005; *Gui del Migrante Mexicano*. Mexico Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores. <http://www.sre.gob.mx/tramites/consulares/guamigrante/default.htm>; *Gui del Migrante Yucateco*, <http://www.indemaya.gob.mx/guia/contenido.php>

States. However, Mexico cannot ignore the fact that hundreds of Mexican citizens die attempting to cross the US-Mexico border illegally each year, therefore the guides also contain information to help illegal immigrants stay alive along the treacherous northern journey.

The *Bi-national Study: Migration Between Mexico and the United States*, from the US Commission on Immigration Reform, describes the consistently increasing number of Mexican immigrants entering the US from 1960 to 1995 with estimates of illegal immigration at 630,000 per year in 1995.¹⁰² By 2000, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) estimated that there were seven million illegal immigrants living in the United States with a quarterly increase of 500,000, and the US Census estimated that there were eight million illegal aliens in the United States, agreeing with the INS growth estimates. Based on these projections, by 2005 there were 9.5 to 10.5 million illegal immigrants in the United States, the majority of them from Mexico.¹⁰³ A report by CBS News estimated that in 2004, as many as 235,000 illegal immigrants were apprehended in Cochise County, Arizona, estimating that for every person caught four immigrants successfully cross the border, resulting in over one million illegal immigrants entering the US across one entry point on the 2,000-mile US-Mexico border.¹⁰⁴ To increase the concern over the porous border, many extremists have highlighted the threat of terrorists moving freely across the southern border causing great alarm in US

¹⁰² *Bi-national Study: Migration Between Mexico and the United States*. A report of the Bi-national Study on Migration. 1997 <http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/uscir/binational.html>

¹⁰³ "Illegal Immigration" Center for Immigration Studies. <http://www.cis.org/topics/illegalimmigration.html>

¹⁰⁴ "IDs Sold to Illegal Immigrants" CBS News.com *60 Minutes II* 18 April 2005 <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/04/18/60II/printable688900.shtml>

Census reports, INS reports, and testimony in the US Congress as many agencies call for renewed border controls.

In 2006 and 2007, while legal and illegal immigration has continued at high numbers, a 2007 Pew Hispanic Center study indicates that the volume of immigrants moving into the US has significantly decreased due to expanded border enforcement, diminishing employment opportunities and an expanding economic recession in the US. Since 2001, an estimated 500,000 illegal immigrants entered the US across the US-Mexico border every three months. Since January 2007, those numbers have dropped by 50%.¹⁰⁵

As the US economy continued to fall deeper into recession through 2008 and 2009, political reactionaries across the US have gained greater attention in their calls for tighter controls of the US-Mexico border, the deportation of illegal immigrant, and the reduction in immigration allowances into the US. Former presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan argues in his book *State of Emergency* (2006), that the continued flood of illegal immigrants from Mexico is in fact an invasion of the US southwest, an effort to reclaim the territory that President James Polk won for the US in 1848. With quarterly immigration estimates running as high as 500,000 from 2004 to 2006, Buchanan argues that more Mexican immigrants enter the US every month than the total number of troops the US has deployed to Iraq (150,000). In the minds of the reactionary alarmists who do not fully understand the long and integrated history of the US-Mexico border region, the labor wars in the Great Western Desert are continuing even today.

¹⁰⁵ Pew Hispanic Center, "Indicators of Recent Migration Flows from Mexico" 30 May 2007, <http://pewhispanic.org>

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