SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND IN THE
NOVELS OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North
Texas State Teachers College in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Sibyl C. Robinson, B. A.

Nocona, Texas
August, 1940
88407
CONTENTS

Chapter   Page
I. THE BACKGROUND OF THE REVOLUTION.        1

II. THE REVOLUTIONARY BACKGROUND IN THE NOVELS  14
    OF AZUELA AND LOPEZ Y FUENTES

III. THE REVOLUTIONARY BACKGROUND IN THE WORKS  40
     OF THE MINOR NOVELISTS: GUZMAN, ROMERO,
     MUÑOZ, CAMPOBELLO

IV. CONCLUSION.                                  73

BIBLIOGRAPHY                                    77
CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE REVOLUTION

To understand the novels of the Mexican Revolution, it is necessary to understand the history on which these novels are based. The causes of the Revolution were many, and a study of them must begin with a study of conditions in Mexico many years before Mexico became an independent country. It must begin with conditions before Spain discovered and laid claim to the land we now call Mexico. The causes may be divided into agrarian, ecclesiastical, political, industrial, and educational.

The agrarian question lies at the base of, and furnishes the core for, the other causes. In Mexico there is a shortage of land that is suitable for agriculture. Much of the land is mountainous; some of it is desert land; some is composed of saline flats. In much of the country there is not sufficient water for farming, and in many places there is enough surplus water to cause the land to be swampy. In some of the most fertile and best-watered sections the prevalence of insects and tropical diseases makes living conditions most undesirable.

The earliest tribes who settled in Mexico sought out the most desirable agricultural sections and worked out plans for
the division of the land. Among the Aztecs there were individual and communal ownership of land, and that which belonged to the clan or village could not be sold. When a villager moved away, he lost his right to the land. The use of the land was directly heritable by individuals.

With the coming of the Spaniards some of the Aztec regulations were preserved. Each village was given a town site of about 1200 yards square and an additional adjoining section of land a league square. Sometimes more land was given if it was needed. Some caciques who rendered services during the conquest were given individual holdings. All of these grants were made after the conquerors had been well rewarded with good land. The grants which were made to the conquerors included the native population of the lands given.

In the grant made to Cortés probably began one of the greatest points of contention that later caused trouble.

Gruening says of it:

The Marquesado del Valle conceded to Cortés measured 25,000 square miles. It embraced the valleys of Oaxaca, Toluca, Guernavaca, the Pacific half of the Tehuantepec Isthmus, a third of the present State of Vera Cruz, and much besides, including twenty-two towns with their surrounding land, and a total population of more than a hundred thousand souls. Mines, woods, waters, the entire civil and criminal jurisdiction, and the right to the labor of the inhabitants were included in this mayorazgo, or entailed estate, which being indivisible, passed to the direct descendants.¹

This and similar grants caused the mistreatment of much of

the native population, because it meant practically robbing and enslaving them.

The ill treatment of the Indians that were used for the work in the mines caused many of them to prefer the wild mountain life to work in the mines. The only real stronghold the Indian had was the ejido, the small tract that he received when land was given to the village. In the little time that he was not required to work for his master, he tried to raise enough for his own upkeep and to pay the tribute to the king and to the clergy.

Legally, the ejidos could not be sold, but the estate owners, the hacendados, often evaded this regulation. There were no surveys. Some hacendados took possession of lands that were not originally included in their grants. They held them because there was no way for the villagers to prove their ownership. Others would persuade a few influential occupants of the village to sell the land for a price that was too small or for a price that they later found excuses for not paying. Indians whose lands were thus usurped often suffered from famines. When Hidalgo in 1810 decreed the return of their lands, they flocked to him, but his revolt failed.

These conditions were checked to some extent when the Congress in 1823 abolished the further entailing of estates, but even this action did not strike one of the greatest abuses of land ownership. It has been estimated that the church owned about one half of the real estate of the country. "It
held the mortgages on most of the remaining agricultural properties and had become the national money lender."²

Smaller than the hacienda, the land owned by the hacendado, was the ranche, which was usually conceded to an individual soldier who came to be called the ranchero. These rancheros became the nation's real farmers and represented the rural middle class of Mexico.

The terrenos baldios were stretches of land owned directly by the crown. When independence was won, state governments disposed of some of these, but most of them remained undefined and unsurveyed. Later, one third of the territory surveyed was offered to those who would survey it. This caused a great part of the land to pass into the hands of the "development companies." "For the disposal of one fifth of the national area, less than eight million pesos entered the treasury."³

Furthermore, many legally-owned pieces of property were included by the surveyors. This process continued until the end of the Diaz rule in 1911. Few villages were able to retain their holdings, and a few people came into possession of most of Mexico's land. Conditions grew so bad that in the last years of the Diaz rule foodstuffs had to be imported.

The hacendado was unfairly favored. His taxes were not in proportion to his property, and he could secure loans at the Mexico City Bank when he pleased. On the other hand, the

²Ibid., p. 120. ³Ibid., p. 126.
ranchero paid his taxes according to the property he owned, but often he was refused loans.

In 1910, although the agricultural workers and their families represented more than three fifths of the people of Mexico, their living conditions were steadily growing worse. The peon's wage was sometimes as low as three cents per day.\(^4\)

When the majority of the people in a country that depends largely on agriculture for support are left without any land and without any means of obtaining land, it is natural that the unrest of the people will be sufficient cause in itself for revolution. However, the agrarian question in Mexico might have been settled more peaceably if it had not been closely connected with the activities of the church.

Along with their desire to find gold, those who took part in the Spanish Conquest were zealous for the spread of the Catholic faith. This they undertook immediately. "The natives of New Spain were en masse converted to the new faith and subverted to the economic desires of their new masters."\(^5\) In their enthusiasm, Spaniards enslaved Indians in the name of the church.

Among the clergymen, Fray Julián García, Fray Juan de Zumarraga, Vasco de Quirogo, and Fray Bartolomé de las Casas became spokesmen for the Indians. They were opposed and hindered by so many other clergymen that, although they accomplished much immediate good, after their day the protest died.

\(^4\)Ibid., pp. 136-137. \(^5\)Ibid., p. 171.
and the clergy had little interest in the souls of Indians.

Before long ... the clergy itself rivaled the laity as taskmaster. Churches and convents sprouted like mushrooms and the Indians did the work. ... At the end of the sixteenth century, seventy-five years after the Conquest, New Spain was dotted with four hundred convents belonging to the regular brotherhoods of Spain.6

During this time the clergy was constantly growing richer. Charges made for burials, masses, nuptial masses, and marriages became so excessive that a limit to the charges for these was set by the queen. Seizures of property when people could not pay fees were common. All of this wealth enabled the church to maintain great pomp and outer show. The clergymen became so corrupt that betting and gambling took place among them.

The church realized that a constitution for Mexico like that of the United States would mean the loss of much of its power and wealth. To keep the people in ignorance about such a constitution would hinder its being adopted.

After American independence the Holy Office turned its spiritual and temporal arsenal against books and pamphlets which discussed the Constitution of the United States favorably or pictured the happiness of its citizens.7

In the fight for independence a few clergymen, such as Hidalgo and Morelos, became leaders in its favor, but the church as a whole opposed independence.

Meanwhile conditions constantly grew worse among the poor people. Marriage fees were so great that many couples

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6Ibid., p. 174.  
7Ibid., p. 182.
had to live together without a marriage ceremony until they could save enough to pay for it. In some church services, only well-dressed people were allowed. Even free burial was denied and the poor were not allowed places in the cemeteries. When the government tried to intervene, the church and the army joined in protest. The Constitution of 1857 plainly aimed at taking away from the church a part of its wealth and at redistributing the wealth left to it. This caused conflict between the church and state for many years.

During the rule of Díaz, the church was providing fuel for the flames of revolt which broke out in 1910. While foreign capitalists were gaining so much control, the priests did not protest against the cruel treatment of the Indian laborers; they tried to satisfy the Indians by telling them about the rewards that they would receive in the future life. At the same time, they added to the Indian’s misery by taking his tithe.

Because all of the people of Mexico belonged, at least in name, to the same church, loss of confidence in its leaders because of outstanding abuses of which they were guilty furnished cause for change which it seemed impossible to bring about except through revolution.

Ever-present political unrest added its share to the disturbance of the people. Gruening describes it as follows:

Even before the news of an election could reach the whole country, cabecillos (little chieftains) declared against the new government. And as every election was
accomplished by force and fraud, the pretext to overthrow it by force and fraud was always available. If the "outs" were able to unite sufficiently, they became the "ins" till they in turn fell out over the division of the spoils.8

In the army, official positions were created for the sake of honoring soldiers and granting them privileges and salaries until there were many times the number of officers needed. These officers fared well and enjoyed army life, but the condition of the private was quite different.

The private shared in no spoils. Tattered, ill-fed, kicked and buffeted about by drunken and sober officers, his chief ambition was to desert and to return to the family from which he had been dragged by the iniquitous levy. Such a soldiery was, needless to say, found wanting in its legitimate mission, defense of the country against a foreign enemy.9

"By 1892, Diaz was able to put through indefinite reflection, ... and was ruthless enough to imprison the entire staffs of newspapers whose editors opposed it."10 He wanted power and he was willing for Mexico to pay the price for it. Through oppression of the people, through introduction of foreign capital, and through spending public money on individuals, he gained power for himself, but "the Mexico he left in 1911 had all its problems, the problems of four centuries, still to solve."11

Fifty million pesos vanished into receptive pockets in the financing of the railways. Contractors received pay for miles of supposedly completed trackage that had never known a tie. ... Steel bridges purchased abroad

8Ibid., pp. 295-296.  
9Ibid., p. 297.  
10Ibid., p. 58.  
11Ibid., p. 65.
lay in a jungle, while lumber interests kept replacing
the wooden bridges.\textsuperscript{12}

In all of its history, Mexico knew no way to bring about
change except by open revolt of some kind. There was no cen-
tral government to which the people were loyal. They wel-
comed the opportunity to express their wishes after being sup-
pressed during approximately thirty years by the rule of one
man, Díaz, who was wholly absorbed by a desire for power.

Disturbance in the industrial life contributed its share
to the general unrest of the country. From the time the first
Indians were used as slaves, Mexico’s laboring people were op-
pressed. The priests, the hacendados, and the foreign "devel-
opment companies" all had their part in this oppression.
Gruening describes their condition thus:

Over these theoretically free workers hung the con-
stant menace of downright slavery. A word from the fore-
man, and a troublesome workman found himself under arrest
to swell the next labor consignment to the hot lands.
Many a jefe político dealt directly with "Pancha" Robles,
a notorious woman of Tuxtepec, who bought the enganchado
at 40 pesos a head and sold him for 65 pesos delivered at
the plantation. A contract apparently engaged him for
six months at so much a day. But when he sought to col-
lect wages he was told of his debt for transportation and
clothes. If he ran, the police who hunted him down were
charged to his account.\textsuperscript{13}

Such conditions encouraged a hatred that could be erased only
by radical change.

During all of the years from the Conquest until the Rev-
olution, almost nothing was done for the education of the

\textsuperscript{12Ibid.}, p. 60. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{13Ibid.}, p. 335.
people as a whole. The church did not want the common people educated because their education meant the weakening of the hold that the church had on them. As a whole, leaders in governmental affairs opposed education for the masses. They considered them servants who needed no education.

Popular education was unknown in Mexico before the Revolution. Illiteracy was variously estimated at from 80 to 85 per cent. ... Rural schools were virtually non-existent.\textsuperscript{14}

With most of the land passing from the ownership of the common people into the hands of a few already-powerful owners, with the churches growing wealthy at the expense of excessive fees taken from poor people, with corruption showing in every department of the government, with the laboring classes oppressed and suffering unjustly, and with efforts being made everywhere to keep the masses in ignorance, it was an easy matter for the Revolution to find a starting point in Díaz\textsuperscript{1} announcement in 1908 that he would not be a candidate for re-election after the expiration of his term in 1910. To add to the commotion, Díaz soon let it be known that he intended to be re-elected. Thus, during the election of 1910 began the Revolution.

From the foregoing discussion of the causes of the Revolution, it is evident that it actually began as a political revolt against the unconstitutional rule of Díaz. However, in the beginning years the people as a whole had in mind no

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 515.
defined purpose or cause for which they were fighting. All was unrest, and to fight was the fashion.

In 1908, Madero issued "The Presidential Succession" in which he asked for effective suffrage and no reelection. Soon he was nominated by the anti-reelectionist party as a candidate for the presidency. Díaz, who was determined to be reelected, had Madero jailed and had himself declared reelected. Madero soon broke jail, and in his "Plan of San Luis Potosí," formally proclaimed a revolution. After the first battle, at Ciudad Juárez, a treaty was signed. In it Díaz agreed to resign in May, 1911. One month later Madero entered Mexico City, and in October he was elected president.

The unrest was growing and the forces opposing Madero were many. Zapata contended for the return of the land to the people, and the Díaz government retained much of its power. Madero was deeply concerned about reform, but he was not a wise president for a people so disturbed as the Mexican people were at that time. In February, 1913, he was murdered.

At Madero's death, Huerta assumed the presidency. Almost immediately, trouble began. Leading the revolutionists were Zapata from the south and Carranza, Obregón, and Villa from the north. In July, 1914, Huerta resigned.

The next trouble was between revolutionary leaders. Villa withdrew his forces and caused constant disturbance until his defeat in April, 1915. He continued to be a disturbing element by becoming a bandit leader. He was killed in 1923.
The Constitution of 1917 provided for reforms of every kind. Carranza was elected president, but his administration was corrupt, and he failed to carry out the provisions for agrarian reform. This had been the strongest point of contention.

For the native the three years following the constitution spelled deep disillusion. . . . Widespread banditry, in which the simon-pure bandit, the bandit posed as a revolutionist, the revolutionist who behaved like a bandit, and the poor peasant who had to maraud in order not to starve, were often indistinguishable—all this bloody devastation had left the country in ruins, industry prostrate, a people in rags, diseased, despairing, dying.15

Carranza was killed in May, 1920.

In December, Obregón was elected president.

The seven years from the fall of Madero to the coming of Obregón into power were years of blind groping, of misdirected and undirected striving, of the loosing of every passion. It was a disordered and anarchic reversal of the ordered and tyrannical regime which preceded.16

Under Obregón real reconstruction began.

When Calles was elected president in 1924, he began pushing the reform program. The agrarian reform was put into practice.

From Calles' closing year, 1928, to 1934, there were three presidents.

In November, 1934, Lázaro Cárdenas was elected president. His six year plan began, more actively than any previous plans, to carry out the reforms provided in the Constitution of 1917.

15Ibid., p. 105.  
16Ibid., p. 96.
and to make Mexico a nation of happy, healthy, educated, and independent people. Public schools were established, and recreation centers were provided for the poor people. Although the Revolution has not ended, there is much evidence that Mexico is traveling the path that leads to better conditions than the masses of the people have ever known.
CHAPTER II

THE REVOLUTIONARY BACKGROUND IN THE NOVELS
OF AZUELA AND LOPEZ Y FUENTES

It was unnecessary to search for signs of the causes of the Revolution; they were in view of Mexicans everywhere. These and the rapid action that followed the outbreak of the Revolution in 1910 furnish ample subject matter for novelists. Carleton Beals says, "The revolution is crude, the revolution is loud; it is battle and cannon-fire and stentorian hopes, futility and false creeds, land-seizures and strikes, bastard ambitions and strutting generals." Such things are discussed freely by the authors who have written novels based on this bloody period in Mexican history.

Those authors who know the Revolution because they saw it or because they took part in it are capable of stamping its scenes on the minds of their readers. Englekirk and Kiddle say:

Those who were eye-witnesses to the "bola" as it swept past them in the provinces or in the capitol gave written form to their impressions. Others narrated childhood memories of the Revolution. These writings constitute the human record of the years 1910-1917. They are of inestimable value to the historian. They are realistic accounts of the day-by-day events of the period.  

1Carleton Beals, "The Noise-Makers," Bookman, LIX (1929), 280

2Mariano Azuela, Los de abajo, edited by John E. Englekirk and Lawrence B. Kiddle, pp. xli-xlv.
Mariano Azuela and Gregorio López y Fuentes, the most important novelists who have gathered their subject matter from the Revolution, were among those eye-witnesses. Azuela’s opportunity to acquire first-hand, accurate information came when he served as a doctor for the men under the command of Julián Medina, one of Villa’s chiefs. Beals says that “he has seen the revolution; he has smelled it; he has felt it.” He reserves nothing in his fearless and forceful descriptions of the things he witnessed in those days. "Graphic, terrible, true, his portrayal of what he saw is the most important human document that has come out of the Revolution.” Englekirk and Kiddle give a detailed outline of his views:

Indignation and concern are the motive forces of his pen, and he does not write either for pleasure or for fame. The abject poverty and the age-old injustice that stand out so sharply in the Mexican comedia humaine move him deeply and demand of him an explanation of their causes, incite him to cry out against those responsible for his country’s tragedy. And so throughout his novels, in greater or less degree, he is fighting for a cause. Social conflict is his theme. Now, in his earlier works, he points accusingly to social conditions that condemn the tyrannical oppression of los de arriba; later, in the tragic brutality of the Revolution itself, he boldly strikes at those responsible for plunging his country into a class war without any clearly defined program of social reform; and more recently he paints us a somber picture of post-Revolution society, more corrupt and degenerate than before.

López y Fuentes, too, stands in sympathy with the revolting

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3Mariano Azuela, The Under Dogs, translated by Munguía, with preface by Carleton Beals, p. xi.


5Englekirk and Kiddle, op. cit., pp. xiv-xv.
people. He lived among the Mexican Indians as a journalist and as a school teacher. He learned their conditions, their thoughts, and their feelings. In his novels he presents military camp life, the agrarian problem, the life of military leaders, and the oppression of the Mexican Indians.

These have placed him immediately after Azuela as a novelist of the Revolution... An increasingly more artistic and more penetrating treatment of his country's basic problems merited the recognition he received in 1935 when he was awarded the national prize in literature for his novel El indio.6

In discussing the observations of these two authors in their novels, I shall use Los de abajo, Los caciques, Las moscas, Mala yerba, and San Gabriel de Valdivias by Azuela, and Campamento, Tierra, Mi general, and El indio by López y Fuentes.

The frequent references of both of these writers to the poverty of the great native Indian population are sufficient to show that they see it as one of the forceful underlying causes of the long struggle to bring about a complete change in conditions in Mexico. Few of the Indians had sufficient clothing; many were hungry; their huts were so small and poor that they provided little sanitation and comfort.

Demetrio's was probably the average Indian home.

El cuartito se alumbraba por una mecha de sebo. En un rincón descansaban un yugo, un arado, un otoño y otros a peros de labranza. Del techo pendían cuerdas sosteniendo un viejo molde de adobes, que servía de cama, y sobre mantas y destrozadas hilachas dormía un niño.7

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6Englekirk and Kiddle, op. cit., p. xlvi.
7Mariano Azuela, Los de abajo, p. 1.
López y Fuentes mentions the "muchachos casi desnudos y mujeres desmelenadas." In Campamento he says, "El guía tiene a un lado todos sus bienes terrenales: sus huaraches, el sombrero, y el morral." He makes it clear that such poverty was not due to the Indian's laziness, for he was not given an opportunity to show himself lazy. His time was so completely usurped by his employer that he did not have an opportunity to work for himself enough to better his condition. The following account shows these conditions to be almost unbearable:

Y al final de la semana, una liquidación que no alcanza ni para la manta con que la mujer haga calzones y camisa a los muchachos, si es que el trabajo no fue en solvencia de una vieja deuda. Siempre la misma desproporción entre el salario y las necesidades: un señuelo que no se alcanza nunca!

Y esto es cuando los tiempos parecen buenos, porque en otros cuando se han perdido las cosechas por la falta de lluvia, en todas partes les dicen no haber trabajo.

When he speaks of "el temor tradicional de una raza que ha sufrido hambre," we understand something of the length of the period during which this poverty has been endured.

However, López y Fuentes believes that in spite of these conditions, many of the Indians would have been happy to provide for their families to the best of their ability if they had been given the liberty to do so. When asked if his wages

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8Gregorio López y Fuentes, El Indio, p. 9.
9López y Fuentes, Campamento, p. 96.
11Ibid., p. 234.
were sufficient for his living expenses, one Indian answered that with the help of his dogs he was able to supply many needs of his family by hunting.12 Another who had been unjustly taken from his family and imprisoned, described the satisfaction in which he had lived: "Tengo mi tierrita, tengo mi yunta, tengo dos mulotas. ¿Para qué más?"13

But they were seldom allowed to live in peace. One of the great contributions to the ease with which uprisings could be started was the oppression that the rural people had to endure. It lasted so long that it caused among the poor people a sadness so commonly seen that it is spoken of as "la inocua tristeza de su raza sufridora y resignada."14 López y Fuentes says that they are "ya cansados de persecuciones, fatalistas ante toda promesa de mejora."15 The old people of the tribes were so accustomed to suffering that they quietly described years of hunger and sufferings that were the result of some disobedience by which the tribe angered the white people.16

The hacendado enjoyed the authority which brought about these conditions. No injustice to the laborer was too cruel for him. As long as he was a wealthy dictator, he was happy, and the means he employed to gain such power never worried him. "Lo primero que hizo Francisco al llegar fue increparlos

12López y Fuentes, Campamento, p. 96.
13Ibid., p. 167.  
14Azuela, Mala yerba, p. 162.
15El indio, p. 221.  
16Ibid., p. 30.
duramente y darles de golpes, con la pistola, haciéndoles sangre."17 Not even children escaped from the hacendado’s cruelty. A young man and a few of his friends armed themselves and left the hacienda to join the army. On the following day the hacendado ordered the administrator to beat the small brother of the leader in order to make him tell the names of those who left, where they were going, and how they were armed.18

Laborers were forced to buy their supplies at the hacienda store, and bookkeepers were obliged to be sure that the peones remained always in debt. Thus the hacendado strengthened his hold. If the laborer found an opportunity to improve his condition he was not allowed to leave the hacienda to do so. The man who tried to escape was forced by government officials to return. "El juez recibió instrucciones de aprehender a Urbano y conducirlo a la hacienda. Debía mucho y de ninguna manera estaba dispuesto el patrón a perder con la cuenta, un trabajador más."19 Yet mistreatment at the hands of the police was not due solely to commands from the hacendado, for government officials felt themselves by nature superior to the peons on the haciendas. One of the rural police called them a "raza inferior." He then added, "Si el gobierno, del centro me autorizara, yo entraría a sangre y fuego en todas

17López y Fuentes, Tierra, p. 32.
18Ibid., p. 61. 19Ibid., p. 37.
los ranchos, matando a todos, como se mata a los animales salvajes!"20 In the words of a soldier in the revolutionary army, Azuela summarizes the feeling of the people towards such treatment:

—. . . Mañana correremos también nosotros, huyendo de la leva, perseguidos por estos condenados del Gobierno, que nos han declarado guerra a muerte a todos los pobres; que nos roban nuestros puercos, nuestras gallinitas y hasta el maíz que tenemos para comer; que queman nuestras casas y se llevan nuestras mujeres, y que, por fin, donde dan con uno, allí lo acaban como si fuera perro del mal.21

Another revolutionary soldier related how he was seized by police when he was peacefully working as a carpenter and how he was forced to leave his aged, invalid mother at home alone for more than a month.22 In Mala yerba, Marcela, the daughter of a faithful laborer on the hacienda, was so abused by the hacendado that she left her home. The hacendado found her and killed her, but because of his position, he was never punished in any way.

The cacique was the hated political boss. He considered no measure too cruel if it made his power felt and brought to him wealth that he desired. The greatest feelings of hatred were expressed when the poor people mentioned him: "¡Mueran los caciques! ¡Mueran los ladrones del pueblo!"23 The same thought was expressed by a revolutionist who saw no punishment

20López y Fuentes, El indio, p. 53.
21Los de abajo, p. 12.
22Ibid., p. 19.
23Azuela, Los caciques, p. 150.
too cruel for the cacique: "¡Mal ajo pa esos condenados ca-
ciques! ... Si no hubiera infierno, Dios debía de hacer uno
para meterlos a ellos no más..." 24

It was the cacique who was to a great extent responsible
for the illiteracy of the people. As long as he could keep
the people in ignorance, he could keep them practically en-
slaved. The weak link came in the fact that the people rea-
lized that their illiteracy was helping to hold them down.
Following that realization came dissatisfaction. One simple
declaration that Azuela makes through the voice of a peon
makes clear this feeling: "¡La ignorancia de las masas es la
desgracia nacional! Quien no lucha contra la ignorancia es
un criminal." 25

Demetrio recognized his lack of education and knew that
that lack was a drawback to him when he became the leader of
a section of the army. Natera was trying to explain some
simple points of government and politics to him. Demetrio
interrupted with, "Mire, a mí no me haga preguntas, que no soy
escuelante..." 26 Demetrio and his friends regarded Luis
Cervantes, a journalist who joined the army, as a person of
unusual talent because he could read and write. 27 López y
Fuentes condemns the hacendado for making the illiteracy of
the masses such an asset for continuing his oppression.

26 Azuela, Los de abajo, p. 106. 27 Ibid., p. 39.
Those who were given permission to see their accounts at the hacienda store were unable to ask for adjustments because the accounts meant only a mixture of marks "que nada dicen a su inteligencia." Don Bernardo took some visitors with him to watch a celebration conducted by the natives on his hacienda. The Indians were dressed in their best clothes, and their momentary happiness made a good appearance. Don Bernardo displayed with pride all of the marks of accomplishment on the farm, but when one of the visitors suggested that he establish a school for the children of his workmen, he exclaimed: "La escuela me los ocharía a perder. ¡Quién los aguanta sabiendo leer y escribir! Lo primero que se les ocurra: pedir tierras y aumento de jornal." 29

The same author condemns the government for taking this attitude. Two government officials were discussing plans for more peaceful control of the Indians. One suggested education. He was quickly opposed by the other:

—¡Edáquezse al indio y veremos después quién cultiva la tierra! De no exterminársele, es necesario dejarlo en el estado en que se halla, trabajando para los que física e intelectualmente somos superiores. 30

According to the belief of those who held the Indian in subjection, his education would be not only useless to the nation, but dangerous.

In many instances the church became a partner of the

28 Tierra, pp. 35-36. 29 ibid., pp. 56 and 57.
30 López y Fuentes, El indio, p. 59.
The hacienda. Corrupt clergymen allowed themselves to be used by him to frighten the people. The religion of Don Bernardo was nothing more than one of the tools that he used to control his subjects.

No le han importado el altar, ni los santos, pero en cambio sí le importa su política: dar a conocer su reverencia por el cura, pues le conviene que sus peones, tomándolo como ejemplo, respeten y teman al sacerdote. El cura se lleva al hacendado hacia la sacristía. Cierran la puerta, y ya solos rompen con el formalismo. Se dan fuertes palmadas en la espalda.31

While the hacienda schemed to make his people loyal to the priest so that they would not cause him trouble, he won the priest's friendship so that he was not condemned for his questionable actions.

"El enorme brazo del amo, deseo de abarcar toda la tierra"32 succeeded in taking possession of most of the land once held by the Indians. When land was taken, the original holders were not allowed so much as the privilege of harvesting the crops that they had planted.33 The process of land seizure continued during so many years that the boundaries of many tracts of land were entirely forgotten.34 López y Fuentes sees such usurping of lands as an outstanding cause of the Revolution. Since a great part of the population of the country was rural, the cry for ownership of land arose from the Indians who were being robbed of all of their land. The

31López y Fuentes, Tierra, p. 45.
32Ibid., p. 12. 33Ibid., p. 86. 34Ibid., p. 126.
desire for land drove them to fight for possession of that which rightfully belonged to them:

¡Tierra! Todos quieren luchar por la recuperación de las tierras. La gran ambición, poseer un pedazo de tierra, mueve de entusiasmo hasta a los niños. Parece que la tierra, zarandeada en la disputa, va a dar a luz hijos a miles. 35

With conditions as they were, enlisting men and collecting supplies for revolutionary armies was not difficult in the beginning. Both authors give some detailed accounts of the methods used.

—Por la noche salimos a una excursión. En ocho leguas de ida y vuelta pasamos como a cinco haciendas, donde nos hicimos de algunas armas, buenos caballos, y no menos de quince muchachos se nos unieron con todo entusiasmo. 36

In comparison with the ammunition used in the most modern warfare, the bombs that the revolutionists made were crude and inefficient. Enthusiasm and determination on the part of oppressed Mexicans made such ammunition effective. "Algunos... se encargaron de preparar bombas: perillas de cama y pedazos de tubo, rellenos con retacería de fierro, clavos, tuercas y hasta piedras." 37

Jail doors were broken open, and the prisoners were given freedom on condition that they fight in the revolutionary army. Others followed because the rural police had done them some injustice or because they were being hunted by the police. Some followed because they were ill-treated by the master or

35 Ibid., p. 38. 36 López y Fuentes, Mi general, p. 41.
37 Ibid., p. 47.
some relative of the master. Great numbers followed because they wished to regain their land.38

Demetrio was living peacefully in his mountain home until federal soldiers killed his dog, abused his wife, and burned his hut. He and his neighbors were so enraged by the incident that twenty-five of them united to fight. Their number grew until they became a large section of a revolting army.39 In a similar way, many of the poor people were drawn into the war. Everywhere the enthusiasm spread. López y Fuentes says: “De todos los rincones del país, los revolucionarios avanzan, cantando...”40

Few of the soldiers sensed the complete purpose of the Revolution. Many of the leaders were ambitious for power for themselves and seized the opportunity to collect forces when the people were discontented. Various kinds of appeals were made, and there was no centralized direction of the Revolutionary forces. Generals collected their men and supplies independently of other generals and without any command from any person or group.

—Si no me equivoco, entonces no teníamos ni programa, ni propósitos, ni finalidades. A nosotros, como a los indios, nos guiaba el instinto propio de los pájaros, una orientación subconsciente.41

38 López y Fuentes, Campamento, pp. 182-184.
39 Azuela, Los de abajo, pp. 1-11.
40 Mi general, p. 64.
41 López y Fuentes, Campamento, p. 50.
Azuela aptly expresses the aimlessness of the fighting when he says, "¿Contra quién? ¿En favor de quiénes? ¡Eso nunca le ha importado a nadie!" 42

The men enlisted under these conditions naturally became an ill-fed, poorly dressed, and poorly organized army. Finding friendly houses did not always mean finding food because federal soldiers were careful to leave no food near the path over which they passed. 43 "Los campañeros del señor Ríos ya desfallecen de hambre. En vano se detienen en cada jacaluchó que encuentran; ya los que pasaron primero lo agostaron todo. . . . Todo les niega." 44 López y Fuentes pictures the distress as much more unbearable. The soldiers "van por las casas en demanda de unos huevos, de un pedazo de carne o cuando menos de unas tortillas con chile." 45 Later he says, "El hambre comenzaba a sentirse en forma intolerable." 46 After one battle in which many soldiers in both armies had been killed, hogs that ate parts of the decaying human bodies were killed and eaten by soldiers. The resulting suffering from illness became worse than the suffering from hunger. 47

Little effort was made to obtain uniform clothing for the soldiers. They wore whatever clothes they could find.

La uniformidad en el vestir está rota: algunos llevan gorros marchitos por la lluvia; otros soldados llevan sombreros de palma. Las guerreras se hermanan pesimamente

con algunos pantalones charros. Los que llevan zapatos, tienen torcidos de tacones; los más calzan huaraches. Las cananas están huérfanas de tiros. 48

Such soldiers often became dissatisfied. Demetrio's men found fault with him. 49 At times he was discouraged and was unable to engender any enthusiasm in his men. At such times, he refused to express his feelings; they were detected because of his lack of energy and activity. 50

The wealth of enthusiasm with which the Indians entered the army began to disappear after the first few years of fighting. One of the youngest soldiers probably expressed the feeling of many when he said, "Yo entré con grandes entusiasmos. Los tengo todavía, pero en ocasiones se pierden." 51 Another soldier voiced a kindred feeling when he said, "¿Qué ha sido la revolución? Un tiroteo en que murieron unos cuantos rurales?" 52 Azuela finds a similar attitude in Luis Cervantes. "¿Cansado? ... Tengo veinticinco años y usted lo ve, me sobra salud. ... ¿Desilusionado? Puede ser." 53

Both Azuela and López y Fuentes find cruelty and brutality outstanding marks of the Revolution. Federalists and Revolutionists alike were guilty. The Federals had exercised brutal treatment during so many years that there was no longer any

48Ibid., p. 213. 49Azuela, Los de abajo, p. 116.
50Ibid., p. 98. 51López y Fuentes, Campamento, p. 109.
52López y Fuentes, Tierra, p. 66.
53Azuela, Los de abajo, p. 55.
horror attached to it for them. The people of the revolting
driving armies had seen and felt so much that their hatred removed
all limits on brutal actions. Azuela speaks of the dread in
the minds of the poor people when they heard that the Federals
were coming their way: "Y dicen que vienen haciendo horrores.
No respetan mujeres, niños, ni viejos... Matan gente como
quien se pone a matar hormigas."54

A spy disguised as an old, feeble beggar won Demetrio's
sympathy and deceived him in such a way that Demetrio's men
were drawn into a fierce battle with Federals. During the
battle the rebels recognized the spy. They were not content
with killing him. They enjoyed hearing his bones break: "La
lámina de acero tropieza con las costillas, que hacen crac,
crac, y el viejo cae de espaldas con los brazos abiertos y
los ojos espantados."55

Hanging men after they had been killed was not uncommon:
"Con la ayuda de los hombres suspende el cadáver de Valdivia
de la rama de una encina."56 Two of Demetrio's men who were
killed in their first battle were later found "pendientes de
los brazos de un mezquite."57

The revolting leaders who could not agree turned their

54Azuela, Las moscas, p. 46.
55Azuela, Los de abajo, pp. 51-52.
56Azuela, San Gabriel de Valdivia, p. 135.
57Azuela, Los de abajo, p. 11.
fury against those who previously had been fighting with them. Villa was one of the most powerful leaders who withdrew his men from the other revolting armies. "Villa nos mataba como si estuviera en una cacería."59

The general lack of respect for human life was evident even outside the army. The hacendado secretly rid himself of those who could disclose actions that would cast shadows over his name. "Por el honor del nombre, algo había hecho Julián: dos homicidios calificados de los que supo salir avante y cuando no cumplía veinte años."59

At all times López y Fuentes is deeply touched by the condition of the Indian. Although the revolutionary armies were fighting for rights that the Indian deserved, he was sometimes cruelly mistreated by those who had encouraged him to take an active part in the revolt. The author's deep sympathy is expressed in a description given by a young revolutionary officer who was an Indian:

-La revolución se está haciendo con sangre de indio. . .

-Lo digo por ese indio que acaba de morir desparramado por la fatiga y por la brutalidad.

-Lo digo porque todos los beneficios que pregonan la revolución no parecen comprenden al indígena, que sigue siendo el mulo de la llamada gente de razón. Llegamos a una parte . . . y lo primero que se nos ocurre es obligar al indio a traernos en sus lomos la pastura. Necesitamos correros que crucen los peligros de un campo enemigo, y ahí está el indio. . . . ¡Queremos guías, y echamos mano de

58Azuela, Las moscas, p. 65.

59Azuela, Mala yerba, p. 107.
los indios! ¡Hay que atacar, y echamos por delante a los indios! 60

Like Azuela, he is stirred by the absolute indifference towards human feelings. A young student who tried to desert the army and return to his home was forced to stand with his back bared while another soldier struck him twenty times with a sword. The beating was so severe that it caused the blood to run down his back. 61 On another occasion some women and children who insisted on following a group of soldiers were unable to cross a rising stream. An officer tried to force them to attempt to swim the stream. When they begged for permission to wait until the water was not so swift, he seized a boy who had tuberculosis and threw him into the water. His second victim was a boy who was crippled too badly to swim. 62

In relating the following incident, the author expresses pity for those people who were murdered heartlessly when they were striving to obtain the one thing that was promised to them so often: land. Some of the followers of Zapata were taken prisoners. They were placed against a wall and shot, and they fell on the land that had been promised to them. A pathetic note is expressed in the statement that they were not even buried on that land. Their bodies were suspended from limbs of trees, posts, and telegraph wires and left there to decay. 63

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60 López y Fuentes, Campamento, pp. 82-83. 61 Ibid., p. 239.

Innocent people were driven from their homes in the night in order that the soldiers might occupy the houses. "La mujer recoge a toda prisa unos hilachos. Con una cobija envuelve al muchacho que duerme en el camastro de carrizo. Carga también con algunos cacharros. Toman el rumbo del monte resignados."64

The paths of armies could be traced by the signs of destruction that they left everywhere. The descriptions of the two authors run almost parallel on this subject. Azuela says, "Y los gorrudos regresaban tan alegremente como habían marchado días antes a los combates, saqueando cada pueblo, cada hacienda, cada ranchería y hasta el jacal más miserable que encontraban a su paso."65 Much of their plundering and robbery was done in the name of necessity. Soldiers who went out on excursions in search of spoils did so on the pretext of collecting arms and horses for the army.66 López y Fuentes says that respect for property was practically unknown to most of them. "Un jacal abandonado es destruido para hacer lumbr con sus maderas."67 Whole villages were sacked and then burned. Federal soldiers in particular were guilty of burning property while the people who had occupied the houses were hidden near enough to return after the fires and search

64López y Fuentes, Campamento, pp. 73-74.
65Azuela, Los de abajo, p. 57. 66Ibid., p. 93.
67López y Fuentes, Campamento, p. 21.
for any belongings that were left. The extent of the de-
struction of an hacienda settlement is described in the fol-
lowing paragraph:

No quedan más que los escombros negros, en los cuales a
ún arden algunos maderamenes. Las gallinas, los cerdos
y alguna vaca que brama a su hijo, vagan por entre las
ruinas, por lo que fueron calles del lugar. . . . Mientras
buscan en los sitios donde estuvieron sus casas algo que
pueda haberse salvado, vuelven los ojos repetidas veces
hacia el camino, temerosos de que vayan a regresar los
federales.68

At another hacienda all of the houses were burned, and before
the people could return, grass grew in the fields that had
been prepared for sowing. "En los campos que fueron de la-
branza, crece la hierba en lugar de la espiga. Junto a los
que fueron barbechos hay arados negros, como quemados por el
sol. Todo, una ruina."69

Stealing was so closely associated with general destruc-
tion that they were often one process. Stealing food became
almost a pastime for soldiers. The extent to which a family
needed the food was never a consideration in the mind of the
soldier. One mother complained: "¡Este hombre se lleva la
cena de mis hijos! ¡Es lo único que había salvado!"70 Another
mother whose son brought his friend to the house for a meal
answered them: "Tenía una canasta con huevos y se los llevaron
todos, los soldados. . . . Tenía también un manojito de tajado

68López y Fuentes, Tierra, p. 109.
69ibid., p. 143.
y se lo llevaron. "71 In some places the fields could not be cultivated because the soldiers took the oxen that were used for the plowing. "72

Drinking, a national sin in Mexico, held an important place in the Revolution. In Los de abajo, the night following a battle, the night before any definite move was to be made, and most of the leisure time were spent in drunkenness. Every celebration was accompanied by drinking. Both authors describe many scenes similar to the following one, taken from López y Fuentes: "Ya está completamente borracho. Comienza a oscurecer. Hay muchos trabajadores caídos de embriagues. Otros son llevados por sus amigos, arrastrando los pies."73

Both writers attack the priests because they encouraged rather than discouraged the drinking habit, and they themselves drank with the people. "El cura saca una botella."74 "El señor cura sonríe y apuró con fruición el resto de su copita."75 Even religious festivals sometimes ended in drunkenness. Concerning one of these Azuela says: "... Saturnino hace traer cuantos cántaros de pulque se encuentran en los alrededores para convertir en borrachera el festejo religioso."76

In the midst of such conditions one is not surprised to find a lack of respect for women. In López y Fuentes' treatment

71Ibid., p. 107.  
72Ibid., p. 109.  
73tierra, p. 59.  
74Ibid., p. 45.  
75Azuela, Los caciques, p. 136.  
76Azuela, San Gabriel de Valdivia, p. 41.
of this subject, he leaves the impression that his sympathy is for the women. A widow who had witnessed murders and robberies could give accounts of them, but "lo que más la espantaba era esa versión de que ninguna mujer es respetada, cuando un pueblo cae en manos de los revolucionarios."77 Speaking to a strange woman who came into the camp, one of the soldiers said: "Te llevaremos, preciosa. Serás la mujer de todos nosotros."78

Azuela in his novels seldom speaks of women except those who followed the army. His treatment of these shows a tendency towards blaming the women for the lack of consideration shown them. By following the army and forcing a place for herself in all of their affairs, La Pintada invited the abuses she received.79 Had Camila been satisfied to live peacefully at home where she first met Luis and Demetrio, she would not have been the victim of Luis' deceit, and there would have been no occasion for soldiers to stand by and watch her being stabbed as the result of jealousy.80 The women in Las moscas met their hardships because they insisted on following the army.

While the masses of the people suffered, those in high government offices enjoyed and wasted the nation’s finances.

77Campamento, pp. 10-11. 78Ibid., p. 102.
79Azuela, Los de abajo, pp. 66-98.
López y Fuentes describes the life of one of these high officials:

Banquetes. Fiestas. Atenciones. Influencias. Un verdadero dominio. Había políticos que, al amanecer, ya estaban en la puerta de mi casa, como perros que pasan la noche en la calle, esperando que abriéran sólo para ofrecer a mi compañera un ramo de flores.

Azuela condemns the same condition in more forceful language. Tax burdens were heavy for the poor while government officials selfishly wasted the money.

Para el líder y su camarilla de canallas, las cajas de la tesorería de la nación abiertas sin reserva alguna; para el trabajador, las gabelas, exacciones, injusticias e iniquidades de los mandones. Y mientras el pueblo verdadero no alcanza ya ni a comer, por falta de trabajo, la maldita comparsa de politicastros levantada de la hez del pueblo, se ahita, sin más deberes que mantenerse en su desgraciado papel de cosa, en las mascaradas oficiales.

Generals in the army were not free from similar selfish uses of their offices. They could always find apparent good qualities behind which they could hide their selfish motives and actions. “Eso son capaces de colgar a quien roba una gallina; pero también son capaces de echarse al bolsillo todo el país, siempre con el pretexto de que lo quieren para salvarlo.”

A just trial for a condemned person probably would have caused more comment than an unjust trial caused. No one expected the condemned man to be given a fair hearing. One man

81Mi general, p. 157.
82San Gabriel de Valdivias, p. 20.
83López y Fuentes, Campamento, pp. 68-69.
gave an account of the method used for his imprisonment:

"Decían que yo había matado a un hombre, y aunque no pudieron probarme nada me encerraron en el chero."84

Many of the people realized the instability of the national government. They realized that the kind of government depended solely on the military leader who was able to force himself into the office. Azuela sees large numbers of people who for this reason did not try to formulate their own ideals. It was less difficult to allow themselves to be commanded by the leader in power than to fight for ideals.

Y entre uno y otro grupo andan también los pasivos, los que viven siempre a la expectativa; los que hoy están con Saturnino Quintana porque es él ahora el del paso y el mando, como estarán mañana con el que logre quitárse-los: la recua.85

Often they failed to see wherein conditions could become any better after all of the disturbance caused by the various revolts.

—Supongamos que el maderismo triunfa, que el maderismo se suicida convirtiéndose en gobierno, —pues el gobierno no es más que la injusticia reglamentada que todo bribón lleva en el alma. . . . ¿Es ilógico ser hoy maderista y mañana antimaderista?86

Early in the war Luis said that all of their sacrifices to destroy a despot had resulted in building "un enorme pedestal donde pudieran levantarse cien o doscientos mil monstruos de

84 Ibid., p. 157.
85 Azuela, San Gabriel de Valdivia, p. 54.
86 Azuela, Los caciques, p. 105.
la misma especie."87

In spite of all of the feeling of unrest and uncertainty everywhere, it was a common belief that the Revolution would last only a short time. The revolutionists believed that the first few victories in battle meant that the trouble was ended and that they could regain their lands and begin a life of freedom from any kind of political boss. In such expressions as the following, López y Fuentes discloses their misconception of the enormity of the movement that they had begun:

"El triunfo está cerca. Un mes más y estaremos de camino para el centro."88 "Yo también ofateo el triunfo."89 A soldier under Zapata received from him a letter in which he spoke of the complete triumph of democracy and stated that the people would soon have the liberty to vote as they wished and to elect their representatives.80 Laborers were happy because they were told that soon they would be free to sow and to harvest at the proper season without interruption by a command that they work for the hacendado first.81 Azuela observes evidences of the same belief. When the Revolution had hardly begun, Don Timoteo expressed the opinion of most of the common people: ":... Puesto que la revolución ya había triunfado, no había que ser cruel con los pobrecitos vencidos."82

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87 Azuela, Los de abajo, p. 64. 88 Campamento, p. 113.
89 Ibid., p. 116. 90 López y Fuentes, Tierra, p. 70.
91 Ibid., p. 75. 92 Los caciques, p. 128.
Although few people realized the extent of the movement that was the Revolution, they did realize that its force in the country was growing steadily. López y Fuentes describes that growing force as "un río muy caudaloso. Comenzaron unos cuantos allá muy lejos: hilitos de agua. Caminaron y se les unieron otros hilitos de agua." Azuela feels that this force is stronger than the river just described. He says: "La revolución es el huracán y el hombre que se entrega a ella no es ya el hombre, es la miserable hoja seca arrebatada por el vendaval. . . ."

In San Gabriel de Valdivias, Azuela follows the poor people into the years in which reconstruction began. Here his descriptions show that conditions after the fighting years, when many people believed that the Revolution was over, were as unfavorable for the elevation of an oppressed people as they had been before the Revolution began. The hacienda of San Gabriel was divided by the governor, and in a mass meeting of the people on the hacienda, each family was assigned a part of the land, of which it became the owner. The name of the hacienda was changed to Comunidad Agraria. The governor designated Saturnino Quintana, who had been a supporter of the Revolution, as president of the Comunidad. Soon Quintana succumbed to the desire for power and used his presidency to gain control of all of the land. He became a cruel

93_4 Campemento, p. 36. 94_Los de abajo, p. 55.
hacendado under the name of president. One of the Indians said: "Son tierras que el gobierno nos dio..." Before he could complete his statement, his neighbor interrupted with: "Y que Saturnino, que es el gobierno, nos quita."95

Azuela and López y Fuentes observed the Revolution from the viewpoint of the oppressed people, and in the novels in this study, they give either the same or parallel ideas. The few beliefs that are held by only one are not opposed by the other. Both of them see oppression with all of the evils related to it as the great cause of the Revolution. Both of them see the horrors of the fighting days and useless destruction of life and property. Both of them see the turmoil in every phase of the nation's life. By describing conditions after the attempts at reform began, Azuela goes one step farther than López y Fuentes.

95San Gabriel de Valdivia, pp. 38-39.
CHAPTER III

THE REVOLUTIONARY BACKGROUND IN THE WORKS
OF THE MINOR NOVELISTS: GUZMÁN,
ROMERO, MUÑOZ, CAMPOBELLO

In addition to Azuela and López y Fuentes, there are other novelists who may be called novelists of the Revolution. Some of these wrote only one novel on this subject; others wrote two; and a few wrote three. I shall discuss novels by four of this group. They are Martín Luis Guzmán, José Rubén Romero, Rafael F. Muñoz, and Nellie Campobello.

In his two revolutionary novels, El águila y la serpiente and La sombra del caudillo, Guzmán portrays excellently numerous pictures of the Revolution. He knew many of the most prominent leaders and knew them intimately enough to study them. Gruening says that "Guzmán . . . sees the Revolution through its leaders' eyes."\(^1\) Another commentator says that Guzmán "loved Villa, and never deserted him in his darkest hour."\(^2\) Through his close contact with the generals when he was a journalist in the midst of the armies of the northern part of Mexico, he acquired valuable information.

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\(^1\) Ernest Gruening, "The Under Dogs," Nation, 129 (December, 1929), 690.

that enables him to draw definite pictures of the inside workings of the Revolution. He feels free to express his own opinions concerning leaders and their ideals. "... He describes their physical being; boldly and candidly he states his own estimate of them as men and as revolutionists."\(^3\) In discussing *La sombra del caudillo*, Arturo Torres-Rioseco says:

"... En ella se demuestra la subida política del caudillo, el proceso de las conspiraciones, la trágica frecuencia de la traición, el triunfo del matonismo."\(^4\) For subject matter he uses many of the same topics that Azuela and López y Fuentes use. However, Guzmán delves farther into the political side of the situations.

In spite of his love for Villa and some of the other generals, Guzmán, like Azuela and López y Fuentes, gives much attention to the brutal treatment administered by Mexican generals. The following story of the wholesale murder of a group of prisoners is one of his best examples of the heartlessness of a leader: Pierro was ordered to shoot a group of prisoners. In groups of ten, he let them out of one pen to cross another pen and climb a steep wall. Those who succeeded in climbing the wall before Pierro could shoot them were to be allowed to go free, but only one of the group ever reached the top of the wall. This killing lasted almost two hours.

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\(^3\) Mariano Azuela, *Loe de abajo*, edited by John E. Englekirk and Lawrence B. Kiddle, pp. xlv-xlvi.

\(^4\) *La novela en la América Hispana*, p. 238.
During the night, when one of the wounded who had not died began crying for water, Piero commanded his orderly to shoot the man in order to stop the disturbance.  

Guzmán sees more lack of justice in trials than López y Fuentes describes. Accused men were often imprisoned or shot without a chance for any kind of trial. Those who were given a kind of hearing seldom had an opportunity for a reasonable appeal for life. Courts were conducted according to the command of the general or the political leader, and those who failed to carry out his commands were in as great danger of losing their lives as was the accused man. On one occasion, a general sentenced five men and ordered that they be shot "for a crime which he himself, the judge, committed: manufacturing money for his personal use." Two men who robbed a store were ordered to stand against a wall to be shot. One of them begged for trial, but instead of refusing his request, the officers ignored his pleas. He then asked them to bring a priest so that he might make a confession. The priest was called, but the shooting took place before he had time to reach the condemned man.

This author sees a lack of regard for human life equal to that described by Azuela and López y Fuentes. One general who needed money, assigned to each of five men the amount of

6Ibid., p. 130. 7Ibid., p. 289. 8Ibid., pp. 131-143.
money that he must raise within a given time. To one who was a poor man he gave the shortest time to raise the money. In spite of pleas from numerous sources, he ordered that the man be hanged because he could not pay the required amount at the time it was due. After the hanging, some of the soldiers told the general that the man was poor and that it was impossible for him to pay the money. The general answered that he had known the conditions and that he had used the hanging of this man as an example of his determination so that the four wealthy men would pay the amounts he demanded from them. 9

Other novelists attack political corruption, but none put into such attacks the force and condemnation that Guzmán uses. As he pictures the leaders, they were ruled constantly by a desire for power and wealth, and they were so ambitious for such power that they were willing to use the most extreme measures to gain it. The statement that Villarreal "had not yet been bitten by the tarantula of presidential ambitions" 10 makes plain the force and popularity of such ambitions. He says that Villa's one guiding principle was "to accumulate power at any price, to get rid of obstacles by any means whatsoever." 11 He also calls Villa an "uncontrolled blind force that stopped at nothing." 12 Concerning Carranza he says: "The truth is that Carranza dreams of ... becoming

9 Ibid., pp. 154-173.  
10 Ibid., p. 217.  
11 Ibid., p. 146.  
12 Ibid., p. 145.
another Porfirio Díaz."15 Later he says that Carranza "had completely yielded to the temptation of becoming a despot, which is irresistible to the redeemers and liberators of Mexico."14 Even in minor leaders he observes the same fault: "Don Venustiano savored in silence the pleasure of dictating even over our ideas."15 "Iturbe knew how to command, make his plans, carry them out, and win. . . ."16 La sombra del caudillo is the story of the struggle between Ignacio Aguirre and Hilario Jiménez, two candidates who were consumed by an ambition for the presidency of Mexico.

Such ambitions naturally caused strong contests. Few plans that did not have murder as the final objective were used to meet competition. Guzmán points out the prevalence of this type of murder. Zaldívar was accused of the attempted murder of Axkaná, an assistant to Aguirre. When he saw that he had been discovered, he admitted to Aguirre that Jiménez, the opposing candidate, had forced him to attempt the murder.17 Throughout the whole campaign, one murder plot followed another until finally Aguirre's part of the race ended with his death at the hands of the opposing party.18

The author gives his opinion of the bitterness caused by

13Ibid., p. 176.  
14Ibid., p. 200.  
15Ibid., p. 27.  
16Ibid., p. 66.  
17Martín Luis Guzmán, La sombra del caudillo, p. 208.  
18Ibid., p. 329.
competition when he says of Pierro that "to him victory was complete only when it meant the utter rout of the enemy."\textsuperscript{19}

Claiming close kinship to this bitterness in competition were deceit and treachery. The hope of gaining some office or some material wealth caused men to oppose their leaders and leaders to oppose fellow leaders. One general "oozed treachery from every pore."\textsuperscript{20} Describing his impressions of Villa, the author says, "I could never free myself from my distrust of Francisco Villa."\textsuperscript{21} A criminal within Villa's ranks planned to cultivate that leader's confidence until he could see the opportunity to murder him, but the plan was discovered by faithful partisans.\textsuperscript{22} On one occasion a disturbance arose in the camp. "Both sides were Villa men, and it was a case of hurricane against hurricane. It was kill or be killed."\textsuperscript{23}

Aguirre told Akaná, his most trusted friend, that "el honor, entre políticos, maldito lo que garantiza."\textsuperscript{24} Later, Akaná expressed the same lack of confidence in people:

\begin{quote}
Ocurre que al otro día de abrazarse y acariciarse, los políticos más cercanos se destrozán y se matan. De los amigos más íntimos nacen a menudo, en política, los enemigos acérrimos, los más crueles. . . .
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{19}Guzmán, The Eagle and the Serpent, p. 100. 
\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 243. \textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 249. 
\textsuperscript{24}Guzmán, \textit{La sombra de caudillo}, p. 11. 
\textsuperscript{25}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 80-81.
Even those generals in highest command could not be trusted. "Ya sé que el Presidente puede ordenar que Encarnación entregue el mando; pero también es posible que Encarnación en vez de someterse a la orden, se levante en armas."26 In a plot to destroy a group of opponents by mob murder, each man was assigned the task of murdering a certain man in the opposing group. On the following day "el capitán venía a contar al líder político como había aspiado la vispera la ocasión de matarlo, y cómo, por último, en vez de cometer el crimen, había resuelto relatárselo. . . ."27

With treachery and deceit everywhere, bribery was inevitable:

Las cuatro defecciones, en efecto, eran típicas: a uno de los diputados, que era coronel, el Gobierno le había dado un regimiento a condición de que su suplente se uniera, en la Cámara, al grupo de los "hilaristas;" otro, por compromiso semejante, había recibido promesa de una misión diplomática; y los otros dos, sin muchas fórmulas, se habían vendido por dinero: uno por cinco mil pesos que le entregó la Secretaría de Gobernación; el otro, por siete mil, cubiertos por la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.28

Elections were a constant source of trouble. The weak system that existed was so ill-observed that it was of little value. The following statements are significant pictures of the lack of system in elections: "En política no hay más guía que el instinto. . . ."29 "La política de México, política de pistola, sólo conjuga un verbo: madrugar."30 Suffrage

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26Ibid., p. 93.  
27Ibid., p. 267.  
29Ibid., p. 52.  
30Ibid., p. 275.
in Mexico meant very little:

Nos consta a nosotros que en México el sufragio no existe; existe la disputa violenta de los grupos que ambicionan el poder, apoyados a veces por la simpatía pública.

En México, si no le madruga usted a su contrario, su contrario le madruga a usted. 31

Under such circumstances, the army naturally became an important factor. Every candidate was anxious to secure the good will of the soldiers, but in the early stages of an electoral contest the army was never a decided group. "Los más de ellos engañaban, de hecho o en apariencia, a los dos bandos: permanecían semiocultos en la sombra, se mostraban turbios, vacilantes, sospechosos." 32

Probably one great asset of leaders in keeping alive disturbances was hero worship. Many of the leaders seemed to have unusual ability to attract people to follow them blindly. In Villa, especially, could be felt such a seemingly magnetic power. After describing that general's faults, Guzmán admits that he followed him and obeyed him as a loyal soldier regardless of the harshness of his commands. 33 Olivier's men "lo secundaban a ciegas; le servían de meros instrumentos." 34 Axcánat was so devoted to Aguirre that he was happy to receive death from the same gun that

31 Ibid., pp. 280-281. 32 Ibid., p. 84.
33 The Eagle and the Serpent, pp. 261-261.
34 Guzmán, La sombra del caudillo, p. 103.
shot Aguirre, and he even tried to fall in the same position in which Aguirre fell.35 Devotion of this kind led people to follow their heroes regardless of the principles for which those heroes stood.

Guzmán notes the illiteracy of the people, but his condemnation of this condition is not as great as is that of Azuela and López y Fuentes. In particular, he calls attention to the illiteracy of people in official positions. He says that the story of the life of one of the generals "era el de magia, en gobernadores o ministros: analfabetos, con patente de incultura, en los cargos públicos de responsabilidades más altas."36 He calls Villa "an illiterate guerrilla leader."37 A general, in speaking to a group of people who were serving under his command, said: "Así al menos sabrán ustedes (digo: los que sepan leer) lo que les doy."38

Like the other novelists, he sees destruction everywhere. However, his ideas of the destruction of property seems to be that it is the ordinary condition existing in war. He describes many scenes like the following:

We had to pass the plundered stores with their broken-in doors and empty shelves. . . . The abandoned houses, which the mob had despoiled of all their furnishings, merely brought to mind the confusion of a passing moment of disorder.39

36Ibid., p. 111.  
38Guzmán, La sombra del caudillo, p. 140.  
39Guzmán, The Eagle and the Serpent, p. 49.
He strikes the destruction of the general moral and religious conditions with much stronger force. "The atmosphere and the state of affairs put a premium on the lack of faith. It was, one might almost say, an official duty to deny God." \(^{40}\)

He adds later that "the downward tendency was like a snowslide; only violent measures could have held it back." \(^{41}\)

"... Very few revolutionists of the day dared to confess openly their religious beliefs, even if they had any." \(^{42}\)

Everybody knew that Aguirre maintained three residences, and that the woman to whom he went most often for advice and considered first in matters of importance in his life, the woman with whom he expressed his most intimate thoughts, was not his legitimate wife. Although he was on good terms with the latter, he seldom set foot inside her house. \(^{43}\)

To Guzmán, also, drunkenness stands out because it could be seen so often. In Zapata's army, "everybody was drunk, some more, some less." \(^{44}\) Later he says that "they were so busy drinking that they could not waste the time fighting with us." \(^{45}\)

In describing the extent of the damage done by stealing, this author agrees with López y Fuentes. In an attempt

\(^{40}\text{Ibid.}, p. 66.\)

\(^{41}\text{Ibid.}, p. 83.\)

\(^{42}\text{Ibid.}, p. 65.\)

\(^{43}\text{Guzmán, La sombra del caudillo, pp. 74-75.}\)

\(^{44}\text{Guzmán, The Eagle and the Serpent, p. 302.}\)

\(^{45}\text{Ibid.}, p. 304.\)
to avoid raids on their property, wealthy people often offered free lodging to soldiers and gave special attention to officers. The following statement refers to the revolutionary soldiers: "To these rascals the revolution means a chance to steal and destroy everything they can lay their hands on." Later he calls the revolution "a system to wipe out opposition by kleptomaniac methods."

He joins Azuela and López y Fuentes in condemning the misuse of the national treasury. It became a bull's-eye toward which all people aimed and which many struck. "En México, Olivier, no hay mayoría de diputados o senadores que resista a las caricias del Tesorero General." The caudillo "extremaba sus complaciencias con los generales más sospechosos; abría para ellos, de par en par, las grandes cajas de la Tesorería."

Guzmán shows by his observations about the general unrest and unsettled political conditions that he has made a close study of the Revolution as a whole and that he has a broader view of its scope than he has revealed in his novels. There is a natural tendency in Mexicans to fight, and once that tendency is stirred into action, they fight without definite purposes. In the first years of the Revolution,

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49 Guzmán, La sombra del caudillo, p. 101.
50 Ibid., pp. 272-273.
many were lured by the promise that it would bring about economic balance. They began fighting believing that in the end there would be no rich people and no poor people.51

The people sensed the uncertainty in all branches of the government. The officer who was making his plans for a definite move had to take these conditions into consideration: "El conocía a fondo a diputados y senadores; sabía cuán frágil, cuán falsa y corrompible era la personalidad de casi todos ellos."52 The following description discloses the covering placed over the corruption: "Todo lo otro, programas, propagandas, sufragios, elecciones, es puro jarabe de pico, escenario para que la cosa tome aire democrático en los periódicos..."53 Many of the presidents of Mexico have been victims of this general unrest. During the Revolution, shooting was a common occurrence: "En México... todos los presidentes se hacen a balazos."54

Guzmán realized the danger that the national government faced. He says: "We also knew that in Mexico's national sport, civil war, Mexico City is like the cup in an athletic tournament."55 Speaking of the weaknesses in the government and its leaders, he says, "Nobody seemed to know what to do with it."56 Everybody was caught in or struck indirectly by

53Ibid., p. 223. 54Ibid., p. 272. 55Ibid., p. 276.
"the whirlwind of the revolution." He summarizes his opinion of the whole situation in this statement:

What days those were, when murders and robberies were like the ticking of a clock, marking hours that passed! The revolution which had dawned four years before as a noble hope was threatening to disappear in deceit and crime. . . . A moment that was essentially idealistic and generous had fallen into the hands of the most selfish and the most unprincipled.

Although Guzmán has written only two important novels using the Revolution as subject matter, he has crowded into them much information that is valuable for a complete understanding of the movement. Englekirk and Kiddle say that these two novels "have assured him a permanent niche in the gallery of writers of the Revolution."

To discuss José Rubén Romero's portrayal of the Revolution I shall use El pueblo inocente and Desbandada. Romero does not see as much influence of the Revolution on the people of his country as do the other Revolutionary novelists. Englekirk and Kiddle say of his novels that "the Revolution serves only as a period background, for the author is primarily intent on showing how little it actually affected the pastoral life of his region." Torres-Rioseco says, "La revolución está siempre presente en estos relatos, cerca o lejos, y el espíritu nuevo se anuncia en su desprecio por

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57 Ibid., p. 129.  
58 Ibid., p. 312.  
59 Los de abajo, p. xliv.  
60 Los de abajo, p. xlviii.
curas, soldados y políticos."61

Through Romero, we see the Revolution from the standpoint of the people who enjoyed comfortable living at the time of the beginning of the Revolution. They were not those who stood at the top of the ladder in power, nor were they those who were so severely oppressed that they had no freedom of thought and action.

The plots of the two novels are in reality one plot built around a family that was able to hold its place, through the schemes of the father, among the moderately well-to-do people in a small town. The father opposed any revolutionary movement, and tried to quiet all the political discussions that took place in his state. Daniel, a son who had gone away to school for a short time, returned with a strong sympathy for the revolting people. Through him, the author describes the Revolution.

The introduction that he gives three of the people who joined in the political discussions at the store reveals the beliefs of the two factions. Perea "es de los que defienden los privilegios, las categorías sociales y la ilimitada autoridad de los amos, y repudian todo lo que huele a revolución, considerándolo como un crimen contra el derecho de los ricos."62

The following paragraph introduces another frequent visitor at the store:

61La novela en la América Hispana, p. 239.
62Romero, Desbandada, p. 55.
—Don Rutilio es un viejo inteligente, asiduo a nuestra tertulia y, como Perea, impugnador del nuevo orden de cosas. Administra una hacienda cercana, cuyo nombre es Pino Solo; por esto y por sus ideas aristocratas le dicen en el pueblo El Marqués de un Solo Pino.63

He says that Brunito, another one of the company, "defiende a capa y espada los procedimientos de la Revolución que tanto disgustan a nuestros contetulios."64 Although their differences were clearly defined, their discussions took place without any feeling of violence on the part of either partisan. Perea and don Rutilio felt free to say that "Villa es un bandido."65 and to call Carranza "un viejo traidor que tenía preparado un levantamiento contra Madero."66

Romero observes many abuses in connection with the church, but in uncovering them he neither defends nor condemns the guilty people. He uses Vicente, a close friend of Daniel's, but not a person of particularly high ideals and ambitions, to make known the abuses he sees. Vicente was describing the conduct of the new priest: "Y ya no pone rezos de penitencia. ¡Qué va! A don Jesús, El Inocente, le digo que en lugar de veinticuatro credos a San Rafael, le mandara veinticuatro pollos..."67 Later he called Daniel's attention to other questionable habits of the priests:

—¿Por qué, pues, el cura perdona sin dificultad al que echa mentiras, y amaga con el infierno al que sucumbe.

63Ibid., p. 54. 64Ibid., p. 55.
65Ibid., p. 55. 66Ibid., p. 55.
haciendo lo que le manda su naturaleza? Y la vara no es la misma pa' medir a los hombres que a las mujeres. Pongo por caso: te confiesas tía, Daniel, y el cura te oye, y todo lo más te pregunta cuántas veces has hecho esta o l'otro porquería. Tá respondes. . . . Con esto, quedas en paz con Dios. . . . Pero va una mujer al confesionario y el cura se intrigue, quiere saber qué es la tapada, le pregunta cómo se llama, cómo si esto fuera el primer pecado y se acorrida a ayudarle pa' que haga una buena confesión. . . . Y la pobre doncella, oyendo el cura, piensa que está condenada en vida y que la tierra se abriría para tragársela.\textsuperscript{68}

On another occasion, after Daniel had been away from his home for several months, a friend was telling him news of the town. He was discussing Daniel's sweetheart: "La chica está embarazada, y de un cura también."\textsuperscript{69}

The author places the responsibility for the condition of the poor in relation to the church on the priests' habit of yielding to the demands of the rich people.

-Creo en Dios como el que más, pero en un Dios amigo de nosotros los de abajo, y no en el Dios despotra y cruel, que han inventado al servicio de los ricos. . . . Los ricos tienen en su favor los tlacos y con ellos se agencian recomendaciones hasta pa' el cielo: misitas de San Gregorio, rosarios de ánimas, responsos y demás ganchas pa' abrir las puertas de la gloria.

-¡Hora ya la Virgen tiene túnicas de raso, y los ricos no la dejan bajar de su camarín de oro a consolar a los desvalidos. . . .\textsuperscript{70}

He also speaks of "los falsos sacerdotes que no predicen con el ejemplo."\textsuperscript{71}

Romero does not draw as dark a picture of the oppression

\textsuperscript{68}Ibid., pp. 66-68. \hfill \textsuperscript{69}Ibid., p. 209.
\textsuperscript{70}Ibid., pp. 152-155. \hfill \textsuperscript{71}Romero, Desbandada, p. 106.
of the poor as do some of the other novelists. As he sees it, the people who were most conscious of the oppression were "los que tienen un peso y no se avienen a soltarlo." 

He says that when the Presidente Municipal called a mass meeting of the citizens, it was not the poor people who were disturbed. They were chatting and laughing without worries. In connection with the oppression, he considers so lightly the dictatorship of officers that he jests about the amount of power that they assumed. He says that the Presidente Municipal had the following sign placed in the garden: "Se prohíbe la caída de las hojas." His one note of dissatisfaction caused by dictators he expresses through Daniel:

-Nos roban, y besamos la mano que nos quita lo nuestro; nos escarnecen, y aún encontramos medios de que se glorifiquen el escarnecedor; nos humillan, y sonreímos cobardemente; nos hielen, y olvidamos el golpe aunque la cicatriz perdure.

The same lack of seriousness can be seen in his attitude towards the illiteracy of the people, but he does not deny that the people are uneducated. A citizen who left a mass meeting was asked why he left before the end. He answered, "Forque yo no soy intelectual." Daniel was describing the duties that he performed for his customers. One of them

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73 Ibid., pp. 111-112. 74 Romero, *Desbandada*, p. 57.
75 Romero, *El pueblo inocente*, p. 211.
76 Ibid., p. 45.
came to him with a request that he write a letter to his sweetheart. Daniel was also writing the answers that the sweetheart dictated to him.\textsuperscript{77} Another customer composed verses, but because he could not write, he repeated the verses to Daniel who put them on paper.\textsuperscript{78} There were many customers who had a habit of going to the store to listen while Daniel read to them.\textsuperscript{79} The municipal president wanted to name as his successor a person who could not surpass him in ability. In appealing to the people to show preference for his selection, he said, "no sabe leer ni escribir; pero yo les aseguro que sabrá obrar, y esto es lo importante."\textsuperscript{80} This incident gives Romero the opportunity to condemn very mildly the practice of permitting power to slip into the hands of untrained persons. He believes that this was the cause of much of the misuse of the public money. He says that these people that are put into office "comienzan de a veinte reales y acaban de a tostón."\textsuperscript{81}

Although he frequently gives the drinking habit a place in his novels, Romero does not show, as do the other novelists, its harmful influences. To him, it is simply a pleasure for the people. "¿Y con qué se alegra el alma sino con vino? ... De los vicios gordos no hay más que uno alegre: el de la copita."\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{77}Romero, Desbandada, p. 44. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{78}Ibid., p. 45.
\textsuperscript{79}Ibid., p. 48. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{80}Romero, El pueblo inocente, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{81}Ibid., p. 117. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{82}Ibid., p. 91.
The cruelty that is discussed to such great extent by the other novelists of the Revolution does not hold a prominent place in Romero’s novels. His one dark picture of the horrors of the war is painted in his account of the attack that a band of Revolutionists made on the small town which serves as the setting for the novels. The people were warned that the rebel band was coming. In this warning are described some of the horrors that are so frequently discussed by other writers.

... Quemaron las casas, asesinaron a los hombres, forzaron a todas las niñas; Inés Chávez mató con sus propias manos a dos inocentes criaturas porque no quisieron satisfacer sus depravados instintos.83

The body of a girl who tried to resist Inés was butchered. When her sister wept, she met the same fate.84 “En Cozene cortó las plantas de los pies a los prisioneros, y ahí los hizo andar por los caminos pedregosos.”85 At another place that this band was raiding, a woman “se introdujo en un horno encendido para ocultarse de sus perseguidores, y allí quedó carbonizada.”86 During the same raid, a man “volvióse loco, mirando cómo abusaban de su esposa en el mismo lecho en que uno de sus hijos yacía agonizando.”87

When the rebels reached the town, they attacked the store that belonged to Daniel’s father. Because he refused to tell

83Romero, Desbandada, p. 115. 84Ibid., p. 114.
87Ibid., pp. 116-117.
them where he had hidden his money, they tied him and searched
the store. Failing to find what they wanted, they began
searching the house, and the leader ordered his men to seize
Daniel's mother. A servant who had hidden saw the soldiers
abusing her mistress and tried to interfere. In the end, the
father was taken away; the servant was killed; and the mother
was left seriously wounded and insane from shock and fright.88
After the revolutionists left, Daniel went to determine the
result of the general plundering in the house and in the store.
He learned that everything of value had been stolen or de-
stroyed. "Era mi casa una jaula rota de la que huyera para
siempre la alondra de la alegría. Habían resultado estériles
todos mis esfuerzos constructivos..."89

In addition to that connected with the attack that has
just been described, Romero mentions looting one other time.
Vicente was asked if he would steal. His answer makes us
aware of his feeling that thievery could be justified and
that it was honourable. He said that he did not deny that he
had stolen, but he defended himself by saying that he always
stole from the rich, that he gave one tenth of it to the
church, and that he enjoyed making gifts to the poor.90

The cry for land, a cry so prominent in López y Fuentes' works, is almost ignored by Romero. Vicente believed that

88Ibid., pp. 140-143.  
89Ibid., p. 147.  
90Romero, El pueblo inocente, p. 20.
possession of a piece of land was the means by which the peon could rise. In a later statement, Vicente, in a few words, showed the attitude of the poor people: "La Revolución había de levantarse al grito de 'Tierra y Mujer,' que es lo que ha menester al hombre del campo. A los labriegos nada nos importa la política." The other novelists of the Revolution make many comments on the lack of defined purpose, but no one of them gives enough of the viewpoint of the middle and upper classes to contrast the ideas of the Revolutionists and those of the Federals. Through the casual remarks of his characters Romero attempts this task. It is doubtful that Vicente understood the full meaning of the following words, but he expressed his belief in the Revolution because it was trying to guarantee to the people "igualdad, justicia, democracia." A note of sarcasm may be read into the words of a member of the middle class when he said that the Revolution was "colmando a los pobres de bienes y dejando a los ricos sin cosa alguna." The sharpest contrast between the two factions is pictured in the following words from one of los de abajo and a wealthy hacendado. When the poor man was asked for what the Revolution had served, he answered:

--Para que los peones coman, para que los maestros se multipliquen en las ciudades y en los campos, para que

91Ibid., p. 19.  
92Ibid., p. 70.  
93Ibid., p. 19.  
94Ibid., p. 112.
los explotadores del pueblo, negreros de apellidos ilustres, se larguen del país! Y, sobre todo, para que usted tenga libertad de discutir estas cosas sin que lo lleven a la cárcel, como en la época de don Porfirio.95

This brought from the hacendado a sarcastic answer: "Sí, sí, para que los tontos se lo crean y gobiernen los audaces y vivan sin trabajar los sinvergüenzas."96 In these few words Romero crowds a wealth of information. He mentions the hunger of the poor people, their desire for an education, their hatred for those who used their power to abuse them, and the common belief of the ruling people that the revolting people were striving to gain power in order to stop working.

In the following statement he shows the sharp line that had always existed before the Revolution between the poor people and the people of wealth and power: "La Revolución que en su primera sacudida mezcló nuestras capas sociales y despertó en los de abajo la esperanza de una igualdad por tanto tiempo ambicionada."97 Like López y Fuentes and Azuela, he sees that the people did not realize the significance and force of the movement that caused that awakening:

—También es culpable el Gobierno, cuya lenidad le hace cómplice de estos crímenes. ¡Otra cosa sería si hubiera perseguido a García Chávez cuando lo acompañaban catorce hombres solamente!98

That mysterious force that drew people into the conflict was as evident to Romero as it was to the other writers, and

95Romero, Desbandada, p. 56.
96Ibid., p. 56.
97Ibid., p. 66.
98Ibid., p. 117.
Daniel was its victim. After the revolutionists destroyed his property and robbed him of his family, his old friend who opposed the revolutionary movement asked him if he was ready to condemn the Revolution. Daniel answered:

—No, compadre Perea, pillaje y saqueo no son Revolución. Revolución es un noble afán de subir, y yo subiré, es esperanza de una vida más justa, y yo me aferro a ella. Hoy más que ayer me siento revolucionario porque de un golpe volví a ser pobre. La Revolución, como Dios, destruye y crea y, como a El, buscanosla tan sólo cuando el dolor nos hiere... 99

That Romero saw the Revolution cannot be doubted, but his novels leave with the reader the feeling that the disturbance was not as extensive as the other novelists would have us believe it to be.

Of the works of Rafael F. Muñoz, ¡Vámonos con Pancho Villa! is the outstanding novel of the Revolution. "One of the classics of the period and undoubtedly the most popular work of many that have been written about Villa is his ¡Vámonos con Pancho Villa!"100 Torres-Rioseco says: "Ha querido hacer una novela de audacia, heroísmo, altivez, sacrificio, crueldad y sangre, alrededor de la figura imponente de Francisco Villa."101 Muñoz knew Villa and spared nothing that would make his pictures of him life-like. All of his descriptions are centered around life as it was with Villa.

99 Ibid., pp. 151-152.
100 Azueta, Los de abajo, p. xlvi.
101 La novela en la América Hispánica, p. 238.
"The tales of Muñoz, with lightning strokes, give us the cruelty, the heroism, the ferocity, the pathos of the period."102 Most of the conditions that Muñoz portrays are the same in subject matter as those that are discussed by other authors, but the pictures are not complete without his touch of realism. He spends little time with the causes of the Revolution; his interest is in its progress and its results.

The lack of understanding of the true purpose of the revolt is of interest to him. He, like most of the other writers, sees that each man fought for some minor cause and that none realized that the Revolution was a giant that was to bring about countless significant changes in life in Mexico.

Ellos mismos no sabían a punto cierto qué quería la Revolución, pero cada cual tenía sus motivos de queja, y sus deseos de una situación mejor. Sus odios, sus deseos de venganza, sus anhelos de mejoramiento económico, todo creían poderlo satisfacer.103

Some men said that they were fighting because they hated the cacique who had burned their houses. The following is a fair sample of the other reasons for fighting:

- Becerrillo, acabaremos con los jefes políticos...
- Lucharemos hasta tener nuestras tierras.
- No trabajaremos más para los amos.
- Vengaremos a don Abraham.104

Finally, he says that "los muchachos soldados habían combatido


103Rafael F. Muñoz, ¡Vámonos con Pancho Villa!, p. 20.

104Ibid., p. 31.
por la revolución social de México, sólo por instinto."\textsuperscript{105}

Muñoz observes some of the same dissatisfaction that Azuela discusses. It came as a result of the hardships and abuses that the soldiers had to endure. Tiburcio never complained, but he was only one of the many who followed Villa with difficulty: "Tiburcio, que no tenía en qué montar, iba corriendo a trote de indio, a la mitad de la columna, dispuesto a no dejarse adelantar por ningún jinete."\textsuperscript{106} Not all of the soldiers were content to endure hardships: "Usted no sabe lo que es esto: no es un ejército, sino un infierno."\textsuperscript{107} Complaining men tried to pacify other dissatisfied men by shifting the responsibility for war conditions to the generals. "No es matar soldados el objeto de esta guerra, Botello... Son los jefes, como Huerta, a quienes debemos odiar, y no a los soldados."\textsuperscript{108}

Water was so scarce that on one occasion, after traveling a long distance without drinking, men and horses contested for places at a stream. The men put their faces to the water to drink in order to cool and wash at the same time that they were drinking.\textsuperscript{109}

Hunger, that ever-present terror that is described by the other novelists, repeatedly demands the attention of Muñoz. The lack of food became so serious that soldiers

\textsuperscript{105}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 137.  \textsuperscript{106}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 103.  
\textsuperscript{107}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 117.  \textsuperscript{108}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 46.  \textsuperscript{109}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 117.
were quick to recognize and take advantage of any opportunity to seize something to eat regardless of the cost.

Están en la llamar, cae la nieve, tienen hambre. Pasa un tren, lo detienen, quitan a los pasajeros su ropa, comen unos cuantos bocados y se van.

Llegan a un pueblo, piden comida, se la niegan, la toman a fuerza.\textsuperscript{110}

Robbery that seemed necessary for soldiers to live became so common that it led to general destruction. With no gain in view, houses were burned, railway bridges were destroyed, and even the rails were taken away.\textsuperscript{111} The following description of the path of destruction left by the army so resembles those of Azuela, López y Fuentes, and Guzmán that any one of them might well have written it:

Las estaciones estaban todas incendiadas, los ranchos lejanos abandonados; la guerra ha pasado por allí y no ha quedado nadie para recordarla.

Tierras que se han quedado barbechadas y en las que nadie ha puesto semilla; corrales vacíos... Chozas de un durmiente de alto y láminas oxidadas por techo; y afuera botes vacíos, resoldos de algún vivaz, esas tomas de animales perdidos por la sequía, perros fantasmas... Ni un alma. La guerra, la guerra...\textsuperscript{112}

Another description, also, that is almost identical with those of other authors is the following one that shows the prevalence of drunkenness: "Casi todos estaban borrachos y armaban un mitote terrible: cantaban, rompían botellas en el suelo, platicaban a gritos sus hazañas..."\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{110}\textit{ibid.}, p. 113. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{111}\textit{ibid.}, pp. 113-114.

\textsuperscript{112}\textit{ibid.}, pp. 29-30. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{113}\textit{ibid.}, p. 60.
All of the novelists of the Revolution agree that a discussion of the horrors of the brutality that was practiced cannot be eliminated from complete accounts. Little was known about the prevention and treatment of disease. One of the soldiers was suffering from smallpox, and Tiburcio was the only man who would go near him. When it seemed that there was no chance for him to recover, the general ordered Tiburcio to burn his unconscious friend and all of his belongings. The young man’s sorrow was almost unbearable as he set fire to the leaves that he had heaped upon the body of the unconscious man and left so quickly that it was impossible for him to know whether or not he died before the fire reached him.\textsuperscript{114} Tiburcio deserted the army and went to live with his wife and two children on a small farm. After Villa severed connections with the other generals and was living as a bandit, he came to the farm and asked his former follower to join his band. When Tiburcio replied that he could not leave his wife and small daughter, Villa calmly shot them and informed the stricken man that he had done it to free them from suffering because of his absence.\textsuperscript{115} During his days of banditry, few of Villa’s followers ever complained. Too often, they had seen him shoot a complainer rather than allow him the opportunity to desert him and betray him.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{114}ibid., pp. 68-71. \textsuperscript{115}ibid., pp. 93-94. \textsuperscript{116}ibid., p. 102.
More often than other writers, Muñoz notes the hero worship that made possible Villa's grip on the people. He spread terror where he passed, and the people knew it, but they were loyal to him. Although he murdered Tiburcio's wife and daughter, was the cause of the son's death in battle, and made him suffer unnecessary hardships, that faithful follower remained true to him even enduring torture rather than betray him when the United States soldiers were searching for him.117 When Villa was seriously wounded, "Tiburcio Maya lloraba, como no lo hizo cuando Villa le mató a la mujer, cuando le mató a la hija, cuando murió, llamándole, su hijo."118

Such loyalty resulted in much discontent among men who tried to lead normal lives after they left the army. While Tiburcio plowed his fields he reviewed in his mind the days he had spent with Villa and made plans to join him again. The small son who stayed by his side caused constant conflict in his mind by asking what would be the fate of his mother and sister. He was never contented away from Villa.119

Men who had never committed any kind of crime before the war became the most cruel bandits during the early reconstruction days. They no longer fought for the ideals that had appealed to them in the beginning of the Revolution.120 Great numbers of people emigrated to the United States. In

117Ibid., pp. 202-209. 118Ibid., p. 170. 119Ibid., pp. 86-89. 120Ibid., p. 112.
describing the methods the United States used in admitting
the Mexicans, Muñoz paints a pitiful picture. He cannot
resist criticizing this country for its treatment of these
people, but he does not suggest that they would have found
conditions better if they had remained in Mexico.

Cruzaban la frontera andrajosos, sucios, melemudos,
hambrientos. . . . Se les apelotonaba en grupos, como de
reces. . . . ¡Cuántas veces hubieran querido los ame-
ricanos rechazar hacia Mexico aquella sucia masa humana!
Pero el mexicano era útil, bestia de trabajo incansable
y barata, para los talleres que trabajaban día y noche
fabricando productos que vender a la Europa en guerra.121

Life in Mexico was so unfavorable that they were willing to
endure any hardships in order to escape.

Todo lo admitían aquellos hambrientos; la miseria
era más fuerte que el decoro; el hambre y la esperanza
de un bienestar próximo los hacían contener las lágrimas
de la vergüenza, y entrar a las bañas desinfectantes sin
una protesta.122

Later he gives an account of the disaster that seventeen of
these Mexicans met when the disinfecting tank caught fire
and killed all of them. He says that the story may not be
ture, but that the report of it caused Villa to renew his
disturbance along the border.123

Throughout this entire book, Muñoz keeps present the
sense of the futility of the fighting. "Sintió ganas de gri-
tarles que iba a ser inútil su sacrificio, que la guerra era
infame y los hombres que la hacían ingratos y sanguinarios."124

121 Ibid., pp. 132-133. 122 Ibid., p. 133.
123 Ibid., pp. 133-134. 124 Ibid., p. 81.
At another time he says: "¿Por qué andamos aquí? ¿Qué ideal nos guía? ¿Hacia dónde va esta máquina loca?"125 That same feeling of the uselessness continues:

-A nosotros, hombres desterrados de la Humanidad, ¿qué nos importa el futuro? ¿Y cuál futuro? El nuestro no puede variar; será más o menos prolongado, pero el final es inmutable.

-¿Sabes lo que vamos a hacer, Tiburcio? Pues a escribir un poco de Historia.
-¡Sí ¡a tiros!126

By depicting the life of Tiburcio as he followed Villa, Muñoz, at the same time that he gives an excellent account of the life of the bandit leader and his part in the war, gives us a "supreme example of the blind, unaltering faith in their leader that led to the creation of the Villa myth."127 He reveals much of the Revolution, but he leaves us free to decide whether or not it accomplished enough to justify all of the damage that was caused by it.

In Cartucho, Nellie Campobello gives us a series of definite pictures of the early days of the Revolution. These pictures represent scenes that she witnessed as a child in the northern part of Mexico, and most of them show the horror and destruction of the war. Many events that she describes took place in her own home. Her recollections of those days of the Revolution leave with the reader a sense of the unrest, the uncertainty, and the suffering in those days.

125Ibid., p. 128. 126Ibid., p. 129. 127Azuela, Los de abajo, p. xlvi.
She frequently recalls the prominent place that looting held in the lives of the people. In reproach, she says, "¡... Llama usted labor pacífica andar saqueando casas y quemando pueblos como lo hicieron en Ciudad Juárez!" A soldier in describing the murder of a leader of the enemy said:

—La tristeza que siento es que cuando cayó, todavía, calientito, no se acabaría de morir, cuando los hombres de la escolta se abalanzaron sobre él y le cortaron los dedos para quitarle dos anillos y como traía buena ropa, lo encurtieron al grado que no le dieron ni calzonzillos.

She gives excellent descriptions of the brutality that was common in the territory covered by the fighting. Soldiers were accused by their generals and shot without trial. Concerning one soldier who was falsely accused by an officer and who was never able to learn why he was accused, she says: "El hombre era yaqui, no hablaba español, murió por un beso que el oficial galantemente le adjudicó." Brutality against the enemy was much worse because of the torture that accompanied it. "Quemaron con petróleo a los prisioneros. . . ." Following is the account of the treatment of a personal enemy who was captured:

Budelio Uribe, enemigo personal de Catarino, le hizo su prisionero; lo montó en una mula, lo pasó en las calles del Parral. Traía las orejas cortadas, prendidas de un pedacito lo colgaban; Budelio era especialista en cortar orejas a las gentes. Por muchas heridas en las costillas "por la cintariada" chorreándole sangre por todas

128 Nellie Campobello, Cartucho, p. 113.
129 Ibid., p. 109. 130 Ibid., p. 63. 131 Ibid., p. 69.
partes del cuerpo, en medio de cuatro militares, a caballo, lo llevaban.\textsuperscript{132}

Not all of the cruelty was directed towards the soldiers. She describes an attack that the soldiers made on her mother's home. After they satisfied themselves that the woman was a follower of Villa, they asked her to surrender the supplies and arms that she had stored. She tried to convince them that she had none, but they threatened to burn her house.

\ldots Picaban todo con las bayonetas, echaron a mis hermanitos hasta donde estaba Mamá, pero él no nos dejó acercarnos, yo me rebelé y me puse junto a ella, pero él me dió un empuellón y me caf. Mamá no lloraba, dijo que no le tocaren a sus hijos, que hicieron lo que quisieron. Ella ni con una ametralladora hubiera podido pelear contra ellos. Mamá sabía disparar todas las armas, muchas veces hizo hurt hombres, hoy no podía hacer nada. Los soldados pisaban a mis hermanitos, nos quebraron todo. Como no encontraron armas, se llevaron lo que quisieron. El hombre guero dijo: "Si se queja vengo y le quemo la casa."\textsuperscript{133}

The frequency of killings is well emphasized by a description of the attitude of the children when a wholesale murder was taking place. They were so accustomed to seeing murders in the streets that watching them became a sport. The following statements reveal Campobello's attitude as a child:

\textit{Nosotros ansiosos, queríamos ver caer a los hombres. . . .}\textsuperscript{134}

"Mas de trescientos hombres fusilados en los mismos momentos, dentro de un cuartel, es mucho muy impresionante," decían las gentes, pero nuestros ojos infantiles lo encontraron bastante natural.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{132}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 45-46.  \hfill \textsuperscript{133}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 89-90.
\textsuperscript{134}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 71.  \hfill \textsuperscript{135}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 86-87.
When she describes the physical conditions of a soldier, she agrees with other authors. Because of the lack of organized care for the army, the men received little attention. She says: "Y pasaba todos los días, flaco, mal vestido, era un soldado. . . . Había hambre en su risa. . . ." 136

By Nellie Campobello, who does not mention any cause, purpose, or result of the Revolution, the fighting days are remembered as days in which no one felt any security. All was destruction of life and property. She summarizes it thus: "Matan. Saquean. Se roban las mujeres. Queman las casas. . . ." 137

Although her pictures become connected sketches instead of descriptions taken from novels of the type that other authors have written, they portray, from the viewpoint of a child, the same Revolution which the other novelists describe.

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136 Ibid., p. 43. 137 Ibid., p. 133.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The Revolution in Mexico continues, and novelists continue to use it as subject matter, but the high point in the production of revolutionary novels was from about 1928 to 1935.¹ This means that they give very little attention to the general reform that took place, because most of the systematic improvement of conditions has come during the presidency of Cárdenas, who served from 1934 to 1940. Azuela, who seems to be more vitally interested in the whole Revolution, still uses it as subject matter, and in later novels, he will probably treat the recent years, but most of the novelists have turned to other fields for material.

Some noticeable generalizations grow out of the study of the six writers in this discussion. On the whole, their books are in reality merely detailed accounts of scenes of the Revolution, and realistic descriptions, instead of plot, hold the attention. These descriptions fit with so much ease into the history of the movement that the reader is more aware of the historical setting than of the story. There may be exaggerations, but there is so much truth that we are led to believe that the writers are relating what they saw.

¹Azuela, Los de abajo, pp. xliv-xliv.
With the exception of Romero, these authors describe the struggle from the standpoint of the Revolutionists. Romero gives attention to both sides, but he tends to sympathize with the middle class. López y Fuentes stresses the position of the poorest people; Guzmán deals with the generals and political leaders; Azuela and Muñoz give the relationship between the generals and the most oppressed people; and Campobello sees the fighting from the home of her mother, who was a Villa sympathizer.

All except Campobello give discussions of the causes, but Azuela and López y Fuentes are closer students of this point than are the others. All five agree that the general oppression of the people was the one great cause of the revolt. They hear the majority of the people cry for the ownership of land on which they may produce enough to provide for the necessities of life. They see most of the people illiterate, with no hope for education, because the church and the political bosses do not approve of schools for them. They observe evidences of hunger in every group of laborers. They see the priests refuse them the ordinary privileges of the church. In short, they find no signs of democracy, because the masses of the people had no voice in the government.

The authors are Mexicans, but they see in their people one great fault that is observed by all students of Mexican history. A quick temper and the tendency to fight are
inseparable, and revolt is the Mexican's recourse when he fails to reach a desired goal. Oppression made the people ready to express that spirit in action when the election contest in 1910 caused a break in the power of Díaz. Guzmán is particularly interested in the evils of the election system, and it is he who draws the best pictures of the Mexican's determination to win, regardless of the means he may have to use.

On one point the six writers agree. The early years of the Revolution were years of brutality and bloodshed that left memories of horror in all Mexico. Life meant little and property was seldom respected. After the first few years, no act of terror was great enough to cause surprise to those people who had seen destruction of life and property everywhere. Drunkenness and theft became minor crimes.

Romero is the only writer of the group who does not give a great part of his attention to the revolting generals. Their ability to appeal to the masses, their heartlessnes, their determination, their disagreements, their selfishness and ambitions, and even their physical appearances are discussed at length. The novelists agree that Villa probably had the largest and most loyal following, but at the same time they picture him as the most terrible. Torres-Rioseco says that "Villa ha sido el héroe predilecto de la novela revolucionaria y su prestigio ha salido de las fronteras de su patria para enriquecer la literatura y el cinematógrafo
norteamericanos."2

Although some of them do not make direct statements concerning the disorganization and aimlessness of the revolt, all of these authors leave with the reader a feeling that the Revolution was ill-directed and unorganized, and that much of the fighting was useless. When an army won a battle, the people had little idea of the significance of the victory. Many times it meant only the destruction of the enemy and no gain was visible. Often at the beginning of the Revolution, people believed that victory for one division of their army meant complete restoration of peace and the fulfillment of all of their dreams. They had little conception of the movement which they were beginning. Speaking of the futility of the fighting, Elizabeth Henry says that "careful analysis will show that the novelists see one basic reason which underlies all of the others: the people as a whole lack the proper idealism to begin with and the revolution is unable to supply it."3

In general, the novelists paint what they saw and leave us to determine the value of the Revolution.

2La novela en la América Hispana, p. 237.
3"Revolution as Mexican Novelists See It," Hispania, XV (1932), 430.
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