

A revolution is a rapid

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



A revolution is a rapid, far-reaching or violent change in the political, social or economic structure of society; revolution is more often manifested in political form. The Great revolution in Mexico consisted of the years between 1910-1920. However, more revolutionary ideas and battles continued on until about 1940 when a right turn was made and the revolution ended. In order to assess the causes of the revolution, it is necessary to look back to before to find out what was happening then. There were many consequences of the revolution, too many to be accounted for in this essay and probably many more to come still. The Mexican Revolution was brought on by, among other factors, tremendous disagreements between the people of Mexico over the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. The era of the Díaz regime was one of the most important stepping-stones leading to the Great Revolution. Díaz ruled for a period of about thirty years between 1876 and 1911. Díaz was a dictator who was supported by conservative landowners and foreign capitalists. He centralized the state at the expense of the peasants and Indians, and dismantled all local and regional leadership. He faced mounting and revolutionary opposition in his final years and was forced into exile in 1911 after Francisco Madero stole the presidency over him. Madero kept a close eye on Díaz during his dictatorship. He criticized Díaz's policies as counterproductive. Shortly before the elections in 1910, Madero was imprisoned in San Luis Potosi when Díaz began to feel threatened by Madero's looming presence. At this point, Mexico was on the brink of a revolution, shaken by an unstable and unpredictable political atmosphere. When Madero issued the 'Plan of San Luis', it declared that the elections had been a fraud, and that he would not recognise Díaz as the legitimate

President of the Republic. Instead, he made a daring move - declaring himself President Pro-Temp until new elections could be held. Madero's call for uprising on 20 November 1910 marked the beginning of the Mexican Revolution. Although it is obvious that Díaz must have been doing something right, as he stayed in power for so long, he was always changing his ideas and going back on his word, causing the Mexican people to doubt him. He lacked ideas in the program for government. However, the reason he probably stayed in power for so long was because he had the upper class of society on his side, i. e. the Church, the Military and the wealthy landowners. In Mexico during the years leading up to the revolution, much of the land was split disproportionately. Shockingly few people owned a large percentage of the land. This obviously caused major disputes and was a cause for riots and protests. Throughout the Revolutionary period in Mexico, new rulers entered and left the government. This chopping and changing sent the Mexican people into pandemonium, not knowing where they were with whom. The basic principal aim of the rulers of any country is, above everything else, to stay in power. Without power they can impose none of their policies. In order to do this, they have to maintain Aristocratic sympathies, whether it goes with their ideas or not. Because the elite have the power to vote electoral members into the government, they also have the power to vote them out again. If the rulers of a country try to take away too many of the elitist's privileges (for example, their land), they can find themselves in danger of losing power altogether. Therefore, although Carranza and Villa, amongst several others, wanted to help lift the lower class into the heart of society, they also had to be careful they did not

aggravate the elite too much. On the other hand, Díaz completely shunted out the lower class, so much so that he was eventually forced into exile and fled to France where he died in 1915. There were three basic different social classes in Mexico during the revolution, all wanting different things: the rulers wanted to stay in power, the aristocracy tended only to think of themselves and what they wanted (which was to keep as much of their wealth and land as possible), and the lower class wanted more say in the voting and running of the country, as well as for the land to be shared out and distributed more evenly. Quite clearly there was no way that all these wishes could be carried out; at least not without compromise. Aside from conflicts between the social classes within the country, there were also major disputes between Mexico and the U. S. Due to the fact that Mexico was so economically dependent on other countries at the time, it relied heavily on North America. President Taft disliked Díaz's anti-U. S. attitude, and hoped that Madero would display a more positive approach towards U. S. interests. However, with the U. S. constantly trying to interfere with Mexican relations, how was she ever going to find her own feet and gain complete independence? Almost from the day Madero took over office in 1911, counterrevolutionary revolts sprouted in various parts of the country. The revolution got off to a shaky start when Madero returned from the U. S. to find few supporters waiting for him, but it soon gathered momentum with the peasant revolt response. Madero legalized trade unions and strikes to help the working class to achieve better wages and working conditions. However, Madero's conception of democracy was: "a formal democracy that would give the masses the illusion of power and participation in political life

but would vest all decision making in the hands of an elite." (from source 1) So although Madero was trying to give the impression that he was going to help the lower class to increase their standard of living, he was in fact just as bad as Díaz by handing over the main decisions to the oligarchy in order to stay in favour of them and therefore retain his power. Although originally popular with President Taft, Madero managed to alienate the U. S. due to his independent spirit and inability to cope with the peasant revolution and establish stability. The U. S. ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, became hostile towards Madero and began to favour Huerta who seemed to have more sensible, U. S.-friendly ideas in the running of Mexico. After Madero came many different presidents and rulers who all seemed to have mixed ideas about how society should be run. Huerta managed to force Madero out of power by secretly murdering him. While no one knew of this, the U. S. and especially the aristocracy were happy; once again their 'Díaz paradise' would be restored and there would be no more talk or attempts to confiscate their land. CONSEQUENCE Throughout the revolution were three very prominent figures: Emiliano Zapata, Venustiano Carranza, Pancho Villa and Alvaro Obregón. All four opposed Huerta's regime in favour of helping the lower classes of society. All had similar ideas but went about in different ways to achieve them. The revolutionary wave, still running strong, rose even higher in reaction to Madero's brutal murder and the imposition of a terrorist regime. Zapata intensified his struggle against local great landowners, Huerta's allies and federal troops. Villa tried to aid the lower class by ordering a reduction of meat prices and distributing money, clothing and other goods to the poor. He set up over fifty schools in Chihuahua City

(which Huerta had captured) in order to improve education amongst the lower classes (Villa himself was virtually illiterate). He thought confiscated estates should remain under state control until victory of the revolution, and that revenues from the estates would be distributed among widows and orphans of revolutionary soldiers, whereas Zapata distributed confiscated estates among the peasants. Carranza, Villa and Obregón got together in an anti-Huerta movement to call for overthrow of the dictator and the restoration of constitutional government. By the beginning of 1914, Huerta's fall seemed inevitable. Huerta was suspected by President Wilson of cutting deals with British and German investors to allow them privileged access to Mexican markets at the expense of U. S. business. Growing tensions between Germany and England, ultimately leading to World War I, dramatically affected the regime's security and international backing. Storms were arising between the U. S. and Mexico due to the revolution. Carranza was finding himself in major disputes with Wilson, as well as Huerta. Wilson's main intention was to eliminate Huerta and establish a new provisional government that he could control. Huerta eventually realised that his situation was hopeless and that his fall was imminent. As the day of complete victory drew close, it became apparent that there were conflicts within the Constitutionalist camp, especially between Carranza and Villa over jealousy of potential rivalry. Relations had also deteriorated between Carranza and Zapata. Zapata had "waged war against Huerta independently of Carranza's forces and refused to recognise his leadership." (Source 1) Perhaps the most important thing Carranza did was to write the Constitution of 1917. This constitution was written in such a way that it

seemed as though Carranza was helping out the lower class. For example, Article 27 declares that all land and water in Mexico belonged to the Nation and not to individual landowners; therefore the government could distribute the land fairly to the lower classes. In theory this was a nice idea, and even though it has been altered many times to suit the changing times, the Constitution still governs Mexico today. However, in the three remaining years of Carranza's presidency, official corruption existed on a big scale. Carranza returned many confiscated haciendas to their former owners and others he gave to his favourite generals. In May 1920 Carranza killed Zapata and ended up fleeing with the National Treasury. Eventually Guerilla forces found him and killed him, and the money was returned. Over the years that entailed and led up to the official end of the Revolution in 1938, things gradually started to dissolve back to how they were before the revolution. By 1930 grain production had fallen below the levels of 1910, and Calles (who was now in power), concluding that peasant proprietorship was economically undesirable, announced the abandonment of land distribution. Gradually the gap widened once again between the oligarchy and the peasantry. Labor reform took place in 1935 with strikes, and protests for women's rights became commonplace. The presidency terms were now six years long, and every term a continual turnover of Presidents would take place. Private investment was encouraged under the presidency of Miguel Alemán, irrigation projects were set up and under Alemán's successor, Adolfo Ruiz, the pace of land distribution was further reduced. In the late sixties - early seventies, debt crises reached a head:" Whatever the outcome of economic collapse, at the heart of Mexico's continuing economic, political and social

crisis was the debt problem and the system of dependent capitalism that produced it." (Source 1) In the second half of the twentieth century, Mexico hasn't suffered quite like most Latin American countries, but it has suffered huge economic problems, as the country became more reliant on foreign investors and loans. In 1994 Mexico joined NAFTA (North American Free Trade Area). The idea was to regenerate the economy, but would this improve the lifestyles of the population? This is one question that at this time cannot be answered. Who knows what may happen in the future, and even if it has helped now, there is no telling of whether things may turn backwards in reverse once again. The consequences of the revolution may then continue on indefinitely.