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# John Collier and Mexico in the Shaping of U.S. Indian Policy: 1934-1945

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John Collier and Mexico in the Shaping of U.S. Indian Policy: 1934-1945

by

Wilbert Terry Ahlstedt

A DISSERTATION

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In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

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Under the Supervision of Professor Victoria A. Smith

Lincoln, Nebraska

May 2015

# JOHN COLLIER AND MEXICO IN THE SHAPING OF U.S. INDIAN POLICY:

1934-1945

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University of Nebraska, 2015

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Relations between Mexico and the United States have often been tense and yet they have always been interrelated. In the nineteenth century Mexicans were viewed by their northern neighbors as degenerate racial hybrids. In terms of Native Americans and their relationship to land, Mexico was seen as an example of how not to conduct Indian policy. But during the 1930s, significant numbers of officials within the Roosevelt administration expressed interest in and admiration for Mexican domestic policy, especially in relation to Indian policy. One of the most enthusiastic proponents of Mexico's federal Indian policy was U.S. Indian Commissioner John Collier. Collier was especially interested in Mexican *Indigenismo*, the pursuit of greater social and political inclusion for indigenous peoples in an effort to protect their interests and ensure that they received the same rights as all other citizens. Reacting against previous U.S. policies that attempted to destroy Indian culture while stressing private property holdings, Collier, inspired by Mexico's program of Indigenismo, sought to overhaul United States Indian education, restore Indian self-government, and move Indian land tenure back towards its traditional communal structure. In this he was promoting a Native American form of self-reliance through modernist principals that was closely related to Mexican integrationist models. This work explores the history of Indian land tenure and contrasts

it with European expectations. It will examine Collier's efforts to change prevailing Indian policies. It scrutinizes the influence that he derived from Mexico. To better understand this process of change, it will view the transition in United States and Mexican Indian policy that helped to produce this change. This study will approach the matter primarily from the perspective of land-its use and ownership-that most important asset of both the Native Americans and their European colonial "guests".

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## INTRODUCTION

### JOHN COLLIER AND MEXICO IN THE SHAPING OF INDIAN POLICY

The people of the United States attributed their victory in the U.S. - Mexican War (1846-1848) to a notion that Mexican people were a “mongrel and motley” product of the union of Spaniards and Indians producing an “offspring of sin”<sup>1</sup> Some Americans believed that “The greatest misfortunes of Spanish America” could be “traced to the fatal error of placing these colored races on equality with the white race.” They held the belief that this “... error destroyed the social arrangement which formed the basis of society.”<sup>2</sup>

Many Americans believed that Mexico was weakened by an overly accommodating relationship with its indigenous population that left the nation morally bankrupt and economically crippled. They viewed this as the product of an “Indian Problem” a conviction, held by many people in the United States and Mexico, that Native American people impeded national economic progress. To many, a prime example of this perception was evident in the relationship of the native peoples to their lands. This dissertation compares and contrasts U.S. and Mexican Indian land policies concerning both nation’s colonial and early national development. Its primary focus is on the early twentieth century and the years, 1933-1945 when John Collier was the U.S. Indian Commissioner in charge of the U.S. Indian Office.

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<sup>1</sup> Alvin R. Sunseri, *Seeds of Discord: New Mexico in the Aftermath of the American Conquest, 1846-1861* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979), 98; From Bartlett, *Personal Narrative*, 300; *Missouri Republican*, April 29, 1847; “Wilson’s Explanation of Mixed Population,; Ritch Collection, microfilm, roll 4; *Missouri Republican*, December 24, 1855. In this work it is common for the author to refer to those in the United States as “Americans.”

<sup>2</sup> John C. Calhoun, *Congressional Globe*, 30 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 17, 51 (January 4, 1848). In the nineteenth century U.S. officials saw nothing of value in relation to Mexico and sought to avoid incorporating into the United States areas with large Mexican populations. This view was shared by much of the public.

Land figures prominently in the Native American narrative. Imre Sutton states that “So much pivots around land as a locus of tribalism that in many ways land constitutes the fundamental access, the one through which, as if it were a window, observers must look in order to discover the Indian. No matter how hard one tries to look elsewhere, land comes into view.” Sutton continues: “Factors such as religion, diffusion of cultural traits and material culture, the impact of commercialization, and industrialization, urban relocation, and education all contribute to the ways land may be used, acquired, or disposed of, and to the ways Indian peoples aggregate social, political, or other terms.”<sup>3</sup>

As Indians identified themselves with the land so did white observers identify Indian land use with the Indian. U.S. visitors, settlers, and U.S government officials who arrived in the lands newly acquired from Mexico as a result of the Mexican War saw Mexican policy in this region as too accommodating to Indian practices and thus wrongheaded and contrary to American ideas of progress. As a result, newly arrived Americans considered Mexican culture to be deficient. Nineteenth century American visitors to Mexico often remarked about the poor habits of the nation’s Indian population and their apparent resistance to “beneficial” change. In their opinion the large Indian population lacked cultural aptitude and its deficient use of the land plagued the countryside and threatened to plunge the nation into perpetual poverty. These Americans believed that if they adopted Mexican ways, especially as they were displayed in the countryside, they would recede into the sorry state that they observed Mexico to be mired in.

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<sup>3</sup> Imre Sutton *Indian Land Tenure: Bibliographical Essays and Guide to Literature* (New York: Clearwater Publishing, 1975), 2.

But in the 1930s many American observers developed a different view of Mexico. The President of the United States and many in his administration expressed support for Mexican land policies that included a form of communal land ownership patterned after traditional Indian land practices. The U.S. Indian Commissioner, John Collier, exhibiting his enthusiasm for Mexican policies, stated that: “Mexico has lessons to teach the United States in the matter of schools and Indian administration which are revolutionary and which may be epoch-making.”<sup>4</sup> His boss, President Franklin Roosevelt, agreed adding: “What a pity that the Yankees cannot improve the processes of their civilization by emulating Mexican culture.”<sup>5</sup> This is a marked change by U.S political leaders from condemnation to admiration. And while many in the United States continued to possess racist viewpoints towards Mexico the period from 1920 to 1945 would be a time when many Americans saw Mexico as a place with lessons to offer. Since many Americans were interested in Mexico as a place offering new ideas it stands to reason that one might wonder if United States Indian policy was influenced by Mexico. This dissertation contends that the United States Indian Commissioner, John Collier, studied the results of Mexico’s 1910 Revolution, weighed the results of that revolution in regards to that nation’s indigenous population, and tried to emulate, with certain modifications, important aspects of Mexico’s indigenous policies in an effort to reform the United States Indian program. In other words, John Collier was influenced by Mexico in his efforts to reform U.S. Indian policy.

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<sup>4</sup> Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations between the United States and Mexico 1920-1935* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992), 122.

<sup>5</sup> John Dwyer *The Agrarian Dispute: The Expropriation of American-Owned Rural Land in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 167.



Collier was interested in Mexico's *ejido* land program and its emphasis on communal use of land holdings. As Commissioner he studied it, seeking a way to modify and adapt it for use on U.S. Indian reservations. He also sought the assistance of various similar land programs developed by other U.S. federal agencies during the New Deal. Collier was highly interested in Mexico's cooperative credit system, devising a copy of it for his "Indian New Deal." When faced with a congressionally mandated program that he found wanting, he enlisted an Indian Office employee to extensively study Mexico's credit system; a system he considered to be superior to the one practiced in the U.S.

Collier was influenced by the work of several Mexican intellectuals particularly Moisés Sáenz and Manuel Gamio. He was influenced by Mexican *Indigenismo* as advocated by these two men. He shared with Sáenz a desire to develop intergovernmental programs using various federal agencies in a cooperative effort to form solutions in pressing Indian problems. He believed that Mexico was ahead of the United States in such measures. Collier was fascinated by Mexican efforts to commercialize Indigenous arts and crafts and enlisted Mexico's leading authority in arts and crafts commercialization to head his office's Indian Arts and Crafts Board. Collier, in his desire to learn more about the cultural makeup of U.S. Indians under his charge, was influenced by the anthropologist Manuel Gamio and his extensive studies of Indigenous culture. In this interest Collier shared with Gamio a desire to study Indian culture with the intention of finding problems and effecting solutions. He shared with Gamio a desire to use this knowledge to change Indian culture and alter their nature as a unique people. He believed, like Gamio, that the most effective way to produce lasting, meaningful and productive change for indigenous people was to thoroughly study them learning both

their history and their culture with the plan to preserve what they considered meaningful while seeking to end that which they believed detrimental. Both Collier and Gamio expressed great enthusiasm for Indigenous culture but, in the end, their primary goal was for the eventual incorporation of Native people within the dominant culture of their lands.

To effect these changes Collier shared with Mexican *indigenistas* a belief that education could be used as a tool for social change. Seeing Mexico's indigenous education program as an existing model of this agenda he, along with various Indian Office agents, conducted extensive studies of Mexico's Indigenous education programs. As a result of these studies Collier's education office often borrowed from Mexico's action pedagogy. Collier shared, with leading Mexican educators, the notion that schools needed to be both places of learning and a hub for community action.

Mexico's action pedagogy and Gamio's methods of cultural study figured prominently in the creation of Collier's "action research," a method of cultural study of Indians where researchers worked actively within the studied community to find problems and effect, with the cooperation and participation of those studied, solutions to those problems. Because of knowledge learned from Mexico Collier would design a cultural study and problem solving regimen that he felt had a universal value throughout the world. These experiences influenced Collier's belief in social evolution and the capacity to improve and perfect mankind; something that he believed was not only possible but essential for the survival of the human race.

This influence figured in Collier's singular piece of legislation, his lasting achievement, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. The IRA was described as "the

progressive transfer of municipal functions to the organized tribe.” John Collier referred to it as the “Indian New Deal” stating that it held two purposes. “One was the conservation of the biological Indian and of Indian culture, each with its special purposes. The other purpose was conservation of the Indian’s natural resources-of the potential remnant of what had once been their vast land...conserved by them through ten thousand years.” It was Collier’s intent to depart from earlier attempts to replicate Anglo-American patterns and seek to promote a form of community self-determination that would allow Indians to function in the modern world while retaining traditional cultural institutions. It was intended to allow economic development without disrupting traditional society.<sup>6</sup>

To help achieve this goal Collier looked to Mexico where he saw efforts to retain a traditional indigenous culture that was capable of functioning as an integrated part of a modern society, holding its place in the greater national mainstream. All his life Collier maintained that primitive societies, with a strong sense of communal values, held within them a set of tenets needed for the survival of humanity. He looked to Mexico as a place that confirmed his beliefs and offered methods to bring them to fruition. To him Mexico was an experimental way station where one could observe the ways and means to save the communal values of native people in a strong viable modern sense.

John Collier was not alone in this belief. In his study of the social reformers George Isidore Sanchez, Loyd Tireman, and Ralph L. Beals, Ruben Flores discovered that these men shared a discursive relationship with Mexican social scientists based on

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<sup>6</sup> Graham D. Taylor *The Indian New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934-1945* (Lincoln Ne: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 30.; Felix Cohen *Handbook of Federal Indian Law* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1941), 122.; John Collier *Every Zenith: A Memoir: And Some Essays On Life And Thought* (Denver: Sage Books, 1963), 236.

the ideas of John Dewey and Franz Boas. He contends that this was not an isolated example but is indicative of relationships between many American and Mexican intellectuals based on American interest in Mexican consolidation projects. These Americans viewed the Mexican state as a platform for political action in the United States. Flores indicates the need for scholarly examination concerning the influence of Mexico's post-revolutionary consolidation projects on assorted other episodes of social conflict in the American West before World War II. Historian Carlos Castaneda, attorney Felix Cohen, literary critic Joaquin Ortega, activist Bert Corona, sociologist Herbert Manuel and, most importantly to this study, the United States Indian Commissioner, John Collier were influenced by post-revolutionary events in Mexico. Flores states that "At the very least, the influence on these individuals points to the need to understand the influence of Mexican intellectual and political history on American political change." He adds that it might suggest that American historians must find ways to "add the influence of the Mexican state on social reform to existing studies of the comparative intellectual and political history of the U.S., Europe, and Russia."<sup>7</sup>

Issues and questions:

To study this transformation in relations to Indians and land it is necessary to address a number of issues. One must explore the colonial pasts of Mexico and the United States to see how their colonial heritage shaped political and social attitudes toward their indigenous peoples and native land tenure. It is important to note these people's status as either subjects or sovereign people. One needs to consider the sort of

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<sup>7</sup> Ruben Flores "States of Culture: Relativism and National Consolidation in Mexico and the United States 1910-1950" (PhD Diss. University of California, Berkeley, 2006), 26-27

“civilizing mission” practiced by the ruling powers of these colonies and in what way the remnants of this “mission” continued during the formative periods of U.S. and Mexican nationhood. It is essential to find out how and in what ways these two nations sought to “manage” their indigenous peoples. This provides the foundation for the primary time period of this study: the period between the 1910 and 1945. This was a process with deep roots going into the nation’s colonial past and their results live on into the present day. This work will explore how the changes in regards to Native people and their land affected US and Mexican perceptions of each other.

More importantly, this study explores how the United States and Mexico regarded each other. It can be said that often people in the United States saw in Mexico what they wanted to see. John Collier certainly was one of these. But it must be remembered that many in Mexico saw in the United States what they wanted to see as well. In this we see a glimpse of how these two nations studied each other with the intent of learning how to, and how not to, reform and reshape their national Indigenous peoples. This study considers how and in what ways the U.S. views of Mexican indigenous policy changed during the period and why so many American New Dealers embraced Mexican programs.

One of those who embraced these policy changes was John Collier. Prior to his appointment to the U.S Office of Indian Commissioner in 1933, Collier was in contact with members of the Mexican *Indigenismo* movement, particularly Sáenz and Gamio. This movement was pressing for a greater social and political role for the indigenous peoples of the Americas with the desire of making them ready for inclusion into the mainstream of Mexican society. This was seen as a revindication of indigenous rights that included modification of the past wrongdoings of the colonial and republican states. With

this in mind, it is important to consider what ways and to what degree the Indigenismo movement influenced Collier and to what degree was he willing to adopt Mexican theories into United States Indian Policy. How much does the United States Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 owe to Mexico? And in what ways does it differ from policies in Mexico? How successful and how pervasive were these efforts at change? And most importantly, how much were the native people allowed to participate in these movements, Mexican and American? This study will consider transformations in Indian policy in both the United States and Mexico in the 1930s and 1940s and consider transnational influences in the formation of these changes.

This study is primarily concerned with how John Collier examined Mexican efforts at reform in relation to the nation's indigenous population. The primary focus of this investigation will be a particular group of intellectuals concerned with reform of Indian policy in the United States and Mexico. Primarily it examines the United States Indian Commissioner, John Collier, and how the Mexican *indigenistas*, Moisés Sáenz and Manuel Gamio influenced him. By intellectual I refer to José Antonio Aquilar Rivera who defines intellectuals as "Individuals endowed with the ability to *represent*: to embody or articulate a message, vision, attitude, philosophy, or opinion before a public." Also included is his limiter stressing that these men were *Public Intellectuals*, "those who direct their energies to the larger, educated, nonspecialized reading public interested in broader themes and issues."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> José Antonio Aquilar Rivera trans. By Rose Hocker and Emiliano Corral *The Shadow of Ulysses: Public Intellectual Exchange Across the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Lanham Maryland: Lexington Books, 2000), xvi,xvii.

It's important to note that Collier could not speak Spanish, the language of Mexico, while Gamio and Sáenz were fluently bilingual. In Collier's exploration of post-revolutionary Mexico and the nation's indigenous experiments, policies, and programs he relied heavily on these gentlemen as well as American expatriates, like Sáenz's American secretary Mary Louis Doherty, to frame his view of Mexico and Mexican Indigenismo. Therefore this work does not claim to be an all-inclusive history or description of Mexican Indigenismo. It is in effect, one American's viewpoint with all the flaws and limitations that implies and how that viewpoint helped shape his nation's course concerning its policy towards its first residents. To help in this process it will review the backgrounds of John Collier and his Mexican contacts as well as the progress and setbacks of their ideas.

These two nation's histories figure in this account. But this is primarily a study of how one man, John Collier, viewed the events of the Mexican Revolution and how he viewed the nation as a laboratory of social engineering. It details land policies both in the United States and Mexico. It is concerned with how Indians and their land were regarded in both these nations. In the examination of Indigenismo and Mexican Indigenous policy it is recognized that this subject is extremely complex. If viewed from this proper perspective this study provides one with considerable fresh insight on this issue.

This study relies on correspondence. Much of it comes from the John Collier collection at Yale, from records preserved by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other sources. Some of this correspondence was direct and some was through mutual friends and third parties. More information was found concerning Collier's contacts with Sáenz. Much of the correspondence came, as the result of the relationship between Collier and

Sáenz's secretary Mary Louis Doherty. Collier's policies, statements and actions indicate considerable influence from Gamio but, as yet, correspondence was more limited.

Historians writing about Collier have faced the daunting task that much of the information concerning Collier as a Native American advocate and, later, as United States Indian Commissioner has come from one source: John Collier. This resulted in interpretations of Collier's record that are colored by Collier's attempts, which are often self-serving, to explain his record. But, increasingly in the 1970s and 1980s, numerous historians sought to evaluate Collier's record.

In this appraisal of Collier and the IRA some historians spoke of him with praise. Vine Deloria jr. described the IRA as "perhaps the bright spot in all Indian Congressional relations" and Angie Debo considered Collier to be "aggressive, fearless, and dedicated"... "an almost fanatical admirer of the Indian spirit." But other historians, like Lawrence C. Kelly, Graham D Taylor, and Kenneth R. Philp considered the IRA to be highly controversial and, in many cases, a failure. They noted that the act was highly contested by the Native Americans whose benefit was the stated goal. They argue that Collier's policies often failed to properly address Native American problems like the economic, educational, and health needs of the reservations. Furthermore, Collier and his policies enhanced the suspicions of an increasingly conservative Congress that viewed his policies as socialistic and felt that he granted Native Americans too much autonomy and special privileges while perpetuating their status as wards of the state. To them this was too costly, too bureaucratic, and not in the best interest of the Native Americans or the American taxpayer. Kelly argues that Collier and the IRA laid the seeds for the era of



termination when the Congress sought to end federal responsibility for Native American welfare along with the dissolution of the BIA and the breaking up of reservations.<sup>9</sup>

Later day criticism laid bare certain troubling aspects of Collier's record that he tended to gloss over in his numerous books, essays, and articles. While envisioning himself as a champion of democratic grassroots democracy. Collier commonly perceived of his role as an administrator to Native Americans to be similar to the role of a colonial administrator. In fact Collier seemed to idealize British indirect colonial rule as an ideal for Native American administration and a worthy model for the rest of the world. While being a stated champion of democracy it appears that he expected participants in the democratic process to agree with his democratic viewpoints. Much like the indigenistas in Mexico he seemed to view citizenship as the right to be a subject in the public sphere. This right conferred the subject with certain material and symbolic benefits but it came with the understanding that the state, as represented by John Collier, had the right to exercise control over those deemed not ready for citizenship. To Collier the democratic process came with a caveat that the prospective citizens, Native Americans, needed to understand proper instruction in the long term process taking them from proto-citizens to the final status of citizens of a modern state.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Vine Deloria jr. *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Avon, 1969) 48.; Angie Debo, *History of the Indians of the United States* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 290-291; Lawrence C. Kelly "John Collier and the Indian New Deal: An Assessment" *Indian-White Relations: A Persistent Paradox* ed. Jane F. Smith Robert M Kvasnika (Washington DC.: Howard University Press, 1981), 240.; Graham Taylor *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934-45* (Lincoln Ne: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), xii, 66, 68. Lawrence C. Kelly "The Indian Reorganization Act: Dream or Reality?" *Pacific Historical Review* 44 (1976): 291-312.; Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977), 1-3, 187-95, 210-12.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), xix, xx.

But John Collier was a complex figure. His legacy was varied and not without beneficial aspects for Native Americans. Vine Deloria jr argued that “The fact remains that the man (Collier) engineered a complete revolution in Indian affairs.” Collier marshalled Congress to reverse itself on its earlier programs of assimilation, secured the authorization of a form of Indian self-government suitable for the time, effected changes in Indian education, and the established a preference in the hiring of Indians at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He states that Collier secured from Congress and the federal government funding for new programs never before considered. But Deloria believed that the greatest and most lasting achievement of Collier and the IRA was that he secured a shift for tribal self-government from delegated to inherent powers. Collier’s legal experts secured a determination that Native American governments had “inherent” sovereign powers, “powers that could only be surrendered on initiative of the tribe or changed, but not abolished by Congress.” This would be the basis of modern tribal sovereignty. He contends that Collier set “the powerful theoretical framework” that would eventually result in a “nationalistic revival” for the Native American people.<sup>11</sup>

Collier’s years as Indian Commissioner were an important time for the history of Native American people. He was able to revitalize Native American tribalism, giving Native Americans a sense of renewed dignity and a hope for the future as a unique people living within a diverse and colorful land. He and his works mark a new trend towards a pluralistic society. His programs, especially the IRA, referred to as the Indian New Deal, suffered from many flaws but they allowed the preservation of tribal culture even during the hard times characteristic of the Great Depression and the end of land allotment, which

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<sup>11</sup> Vine Deloria, jr. and Clifford M. Lytle *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 158-159, 188.

this writer believes was a cancer eating at the heart of Native America. His tenure was a watershed that marked the rise of a new generation of Native Americans who would embrace the concept of Pan-Indianism and continue the fight for cultural independence.

Chapter One observes the nature of land ownership among Native American peoples. In doing this it compares and contrasts the nature of native land ownership and the relation of indigenous people with their colonial “masters.” It explores how indigenous people in what would become the United States and Mexico were viewed as citizens and land owners. The second half of the chapter examines the idea, held by many Americans, of a similarity between Mexicans and Indians and the growing efforts to assimilate and or marginalize indigenous people. This process was accompanied by a growing institutionalization of racialism and the belief that Indians and Mexicans are slaves to their primitive natural impulses. This was a time of the primacy of Social Darwinism and the concept of a societal “survival of the fittest.”

Chapter Two examines the process, occurring during the turn of the twentieth century towards a valorization of primitive cultures. It introduced to John Collier, the principal player. Collier, at an early age developed a faith in the saving graces of primitive cultures and the belief that they possessed a sense of communal fellowship that was eroding in modern, capitalistic industrial societies. This chapter introduces the concept of primitivism where practitioners often sought a return to a primal prelapsarian existence and vitalism a progressive doctrine that sought to unify mind and matter in an ascending process towards eventual perfection. While these seem unrelated, vitalists often sought in primitive culture a means of social rejuvenation that allowed for full and effective progressive growth. It argues that John Collier was both a primitivist and a

vitalist. Having failed in his goal of using a primitive past for the upward and onward growth of society he found a new outlet for his goals after being introduced to American Indians. During this time Latin American countries discovered a new sense of their cultural value and their unique value as a people. With José Vasconcelos's "Cosmic Race" and the concepts of *mestizaje* and *luso-tropicalismo*, mixed-blooded people, once seen as racially inferior became the basis of Latin American national salvation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> José Vasconcelos Calderón (1882- 1959) was a Mexican writer, philosopher and politician. He is one of the most influential and controversial personalities in the development of modern Mexico. His philosophy of the "cosmic race" affected all aspects of Mexican sociocultural, political, and economic policies. Vasconcelos is often referred to as the father of the "indigenismo" philosophy. In recent times, this philosophy has come under criticism from Native Americans because of its negative implications concerning indigenous peoples. To an extent, his philosophy argued for a new, "modern" mestizo people, but at the cost of cultural assimilation of all ethnic groups. Vasconcelos' first writings on philosophy are passionate reactions against the formal, positivistic education at the National Preparatory School, formerly under the influence of Porfirian thinkers like Justo Sierra and Gabino Barreda. A second period of productivity was fed by a first disappointment in the political field, after Madero's murder. Then he wrote, in 1919, a long essay on Pythagorism, as a dissertation on the links between harmony and rhythm, and its eventual explanation into a frame of aesthetic monism. As he argued that only by the means of rhythm is the human being able to know the world without any intermediation, he proposed that the minimal aspects of cognition are conditioned by a degree of sympathy with the natural "vibration" of things. In this manner, he thought that the auditive categories of knowledge were much higher than the visual ones. During a later period, Vasconcelos developed an argument for the mixing of races, as a natural and desirable direction for humankind. This work, known as *La Raza Cósmica (The Cosmic Race)*, would eventually contribute to further studies on ethnic values as an ethic, and for the consideration of ethnic variety as an aesthetic source. (Contrary to popular belief, 'The cosmic race' is not a science fiction work). Finally, between 1931 and 1940 he tried to consolidate his proposals by publishing his main topics organized in three capital works: *Metaphysics*, *Ethics* and *Aesthetics*. Vasconcelos was elected as Minister of Education during the brief presidential period of Eulalio Gutiérrez. Later, after a brief period of exile in the United States following a disagreement with Venustiano Carranza (1915–20), he returned and directed the National Autonomous University of Mexico (1920) and created the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), in 1921. He served as the first Secretary of Public Education under Álvaro Obregón. He resigned in 1924 because of his opposition to President Plutarco Elías Calles. He worked in favor of the education of the masses and sought to make the nation's education secular, civic, and Pan-American (*americanista*) lines. He ran for president in 1929 but lost to Pascual Ortiz Rubio in a controversial election and again left the country. He later directed the National Library of Mexico (1940) and presided over the Mexican Institute of Hispanic Culture (1948).

Chapter Three examines Indigenismo, the Latin American movement to study and incorporate indigenous populations into the dominant cultural base of the nation. It examines how the deteriorating land situation of the rural indigenous population, which came to a boil with the Mexican revolution of 1910 forced the government of Mexico to address the issue of rural unrest through land reform and seek a “scientific” solution to the problem it faced with a large alienated, poverty stricken, and unstable indigenous base. Among the “scientists” working on this problem were the Indigenistas, “experts” seeking to “Mexicanize” the nation’s Indians. This chapter introduces Manuel Gamio, the Mexican anthropologist, archaeologist and sociologist who was a leader of the indigenismo movement. It examines three ways to “Mexicanize” the Indians: Vasconcelos’s amalgamation, intended to completely submerge Indian culture, Gamio’s *incorporación*, intended to slowly absorb native culture, with some cultural retention, and Saenz’s *integración*, which allowed for a pluralistic society where the dominant culture would eventually absorb the secondary one. These ideas were actively observed by individuals in the United States.

Chapter Four provides a description of the intellectual climate of the time. It deals with the period from the 1920s through the 1930s when people in the United States possessed a growing fascination with things Mexican. Mexico became a place where American radicals believed that they could witness political and social changes like those they hoped to see in their own country. By the 1930s the United States’ Good Neighbor Policy led to more relaxed relations between the United States and Mexico. During the 20s and 30s the U.S. and Mexico would experience the greatest exchange of ideas and culture that the two countries have ever experienced. During this time many Americans,

like John Collier, would view Mexico as a social laboratory and show great curiosity for the results. The purpose of the chapter is to establish that Collier was not just an isolated kook or an eccentric dreamer. During this time period many Americans believed that Mexico offered them solutions to existent social problems happening in their own country. In doing this they often ignored those realities of Mexico that might interfere with their vision. Seeing Mexico as they wanted to see it they seemed strangely unaware of its realities. They romanticized the rural landscape seeming to ignore the unrest of events like the Cristero War or even the day to day personal conflict of village life; something that made these places less idyllic than some wished them to be.<sup>13</sup>

Chapter Five explores the relationship between John Collier and Mexican educator and indigenista Moisés Sáenz. While coming from different nations and cultures similarities in education Sáenz's Protestant background made it possible for these two men to find common ground and a sense of commonality and purpose. This presents an example of how members of two cultures that some deem unable to form an accommodation found a common language allowing them to work towards a common goal. It will explore Collier and Saenz's encounters prior to Collier's appointment as U.S. Indian Commissioner and Saenz's evolution in ideas concerning his nation's Indigenous

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<sup>13</sup> The Cristero War or Cristero Rebellion (1926–1929), also known as La Cristiada, was a widespread struggle in many Mexican states against the rule of the Secularist, anti-Catholic, and anticlerical Mexican government. Based in central-western Mexico, the rebellion was set off by the enforcement of the anticlerical articles of the Mexican Constitution of 1917 by Mexican President Plutarco Elías Calles also known as the Calles Law in order to eliminate the power of the Catholic Church as well organizations affiliated with the Catholic Church as an institution, but also suppress popular religious celebrations in local communities. The massive, popular rural uprising was tacitly supported by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and was aided by urban Catholic support. With diplomatic negotiations brokered by the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, Dwight W. Morrow, between the Calles government and the Catholic Church, the Church withdrew its support for the Cristero fighters and the massive and violent conflict came to an end in 1929. It can be seen as a major event in the struggle between Church and State dating back to the 19th century with the Reform War, but it can also be interpreted as the last major peasant uprising in Mexico following the end of the military phase of the Mexican Revolution in 1920.

population as well as remarkable similarities between these two men in relation to ideas for reform in Indigenous policy. In this chapter and in latter chapters one sees a similarity in language between the two men concerning theories for the reform of Indian policy. It must be taken into account that there were also differences this figures prominently in the conclusion when a fundamental difference in viewpoints in regards to Indigenous policies led to a major divide between the two men.

Chapter Six presents a review of John Collier's belief that U.S. Indian policy had Spanish roots. It explores this through Felix Cohen's essay, "The Spanish Origin of Indian Rights in the Law of the United States," which argues that much of American law in regard to Indians has Spanish roots and influences. Cohen identified four salient features of existing Federal Indian law: the principles of the legal equality of races, of tribal self-government, of Federal sovereignty in Indian affairs, and of government protection of Indians. He found these four features, referred to as works in progress, to be similar to those advocated by the Spanish Colonial Empire. This chapter also reviews the influences of Francisco de Vitoria, Bartolomé de las Casas, and Vasco de Quiroga. It concludes with Collier's impression of the positive legacy of Vasco de Quiroga that Collier witnessed at Patzcuaro and the positive and negative lessons learned from the Jesuit experiment in Paraguay.

Chapter Seven reviews Collier's term as U.S. Indian commissioner examining how Mexico and the Mexican Revolution influenced his Indian New Deal. It starts with Mexican influences in reservation land reform, economic policies, credit, education, and federal approaches to problem solving. It displays proof that Mexico provided Collier with reinforcement in his preconceived ideas about social evolution and influenced the

way that he sought to study cultures and arrive at solutions. What comes to light is the conclusion that Mexican influences ultimately enhanced Collier's worldview and his messianic vision of human salvation. Like many progressives, such as Woodrow Wilson, Collier felt it was his personal mission to save the world from evils he perceived to threatening humanity. This Mexican influence figures in the development of action research. In developing action research Collier believed that he had the basis for a process of social evolution, a process that started with individuals and small groups leading to a transformation of all society. While always holding a belief in social change his experiences with Mexico provided him with a greater framework for this process.

The last part of this work examines Collier's efforts to establish a united international effort towards reform in Indian policy. It shows that Indigenismo was more than a Latin American phenomenon. It was an international effort by intellectual elites to solve the "Indian Problem." It is during this time that an apparent betrayal of trust developed as John Collier and Moisés Sáenz diverged in how they wished to solve this problem. It then finishes with a review of the triumphs and failures of John Collier, progressive Indian reformer.

John Collier was an intellectual, filled with complex ideas. Some may say he was a dreamer and much of what he envisioned never went beyond his dreams. As an intellectual he worked with complex theories. In studying Mexico, Collier always operated with a greater world view in mind. This was a viewpoint that led from the simple to the complex and sometimes back again. This viewpoint came to him early in life. He merely sought the resources and the tools to make it come into fruition. One place with such resources was the postrevolutionary state of Mexico. In reviewing Collier



and his study of Mexico one needs to appreciate this complex process and take it into full consideration.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE INDIANS AND THEIR LAND

In 1893 visitors to the midway at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago marveled at the sight of scantily clad “savages”: Indians and Blacks as well as Cubans, Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans. In the parlance of the time these people were “enslaved” by natural urges they couldn’t control. These “slaves of nature” were accompanied by a showcase of freaks: bearded ladies, sword swallowers, and grotesquely fat men and women. If the audience felt overwhelmed by the “savage” display of “primitive naturalism,” they could seek refuge in the surrounding “Great White Way,” viewing, with self-satisfaction, the latest achievements of the white man’s science and technology. Here audiences were mesmerized by awe inducing displays of advanced machinery representing, to the spellbound spectators, the ever increasing power and ever improving magnificence of civilization’s growing capacity to leave nature enthralled. As the fairgoers looked at the wonders of modern progress they thought of the “savages” on the midway, those people that time left behind, and felt reassured about the forward march of the racially pure Anglo Saxons in their establishment of dominance over the dark races supported in their view by the supremacy of the majestic Great White Way over the chaotic, sleazy midway.<sup>1</sup>

Robert Rydell notes that visitors to expositions were regaled by oration that “made explicit the connection between America’s imperial past and its imperial future and the burden of America’s destiny.” At the 1898 Omaha Trans-Mississippi International Exposition one of these orators informed an audience that “Uncle Sam’s

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Rydell *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 93-94 167, 143, 118.

wards in Cuba and the Philippines are liable to be as intractable as its wards in the Indian reservations.” The audience was familiar with the message and with taking up “the white man’s burden.” All over the nation, residing in isolated confines, lived an earlier example of this “burden,” the “red men,” needful of Anglo-Saxon instruction, requiring training in the rules of “civility,” as well as familiarity with the white man’s value of property, and his “enlightened” sense of how to use the land. <sup>2</sup>

White Americans long felt the need to “enlighten” their Indian neighbors on the subject of land use. Lewis and Clark, following their expedition, reported that the Indians had “no idea of an exclusive possession of any country.” Considering the tradition of individual property ownership that Americans inherited from their British ancestors this seemed true. But David Wishart states that “Indians had an intense attachment to specific homelands that they identified as their own.” Their history was “etched in the landscape in place-names commemorating people, deeds, visions, and disasters.” Their names for months were not abstract terms printed on a calendar but were based on descriptions of changes in the local environment over the course of each year. Land was part of nature, part of the greater creation in which all was connected to the individual and the individual was connected through “the family and band and out into nature.” Land was a part of them; their history, their life, and their soul.<sup>3</sup>

Indian land tenure enabled Indians to make the best use of the land to meet their needs. Each people and each culture developed a rational way to assign and transfer land. Douglas R. Hurt says that certain generalizations could be made about Indian land tenure

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<sup>2</sup> Rydell *All the World’s a Fair*, 167, 143, 118.

<sup>3</sup> David J. Wishart, *An Unspeakable Sadness: The Dispossession of the Nebraska Indians*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 12-13.

in North America. “Title to a general territory was a group right, not an individual right. North American Indians usually did not think of private property as an absolute individual right or consider land as a commodity that could be bought, sold, or permanently alienated in some fashion.” Simply put, “. . .the community owned the uncultivated land, while the individual created a control or use claim by cultivating a specific field or plot of land.” He adds that “If arable land was plentiful, the individual’s claim lapsed whenever the land became exhausted or abandoned.” This usufruct characteristic of land tenure was common in what is now the eastern United States. In the Southwest however, where the climate limited the supply of arable land, an individual’s claim to land remained valid, even during periods when the land lay fallow.<sup>4</sup>

This form of land ownership was also common in what would become Central Mexico. Common to this region was the *Calpuli*, a form of land ownership where land was held under corporate control and where village members were entitled to land plots in usufruct. This basic unit of agricultural practice among the Aztecs was similar to the communal ownership of land found among the other Indian nations and empires of the area. These plots were retained until the family line died out. But these communal lands lived in an uneasy relationship with powerful dynastic entities. The various ruling factions that controlled the region awarded lands, referred to, by the Aztecs, as *Tecpantlalli* and *Pillali*, to office holders. These lands were the spoils of conquest awarded to faithful lieutenants. These estate holdings retained the services of peasants who were tied to the land. In the case of *Pillali*, the peasants were often former *Calpuli* holders who, as representatives of a losing faction, suffered the loss of their freedom. The

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<sup>4</sup> Douglas R. Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America: Prehistory to the Present* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987), 74-75

Spaniards would retain the Aztec *Calpuli* system as the basis of their colonial indigenous land policy and, in modified form, it would resurface as the ejido.<sup>5</sup>

The European people who arrived in this “new world” reached accommodations with the first people of these lands based on differing circumstances. For Euro-Americans coming to North America the major problem with Indian land use was a matter of scale. It was not that the newcomers didn’t acknowledge that Indians used their land for farming like they did but that Indians didn’t use enough of it. When British American settlers first stepped foot on the land they called the “New World” they looked upon these natives and perceived them to be living in a state of perpetual poverty failing to understand the different ideas Indians held about the accumulation of wealth. Perplexed by such a sight they asked themselves: “What sort of people are so poor in a land so rich?”<sup>6</sup>

It would never occur to the colonists, with their European technology incorporating plows, cultivators, and the draft power of horses and mules, that any land should be left idle or that a people could settle for a subsistence lifestyle. They were part of a market system that allowed them to sell their surpluses to artisans, merchants, and others at home and abroad. Market demand made commercial farming possible and commercial farmers required more land. To Europeans idle land was both a waste of resources and a lost opportunity. These Europeans recognized that increasing production

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<sup>5</sup> William T. Sanders and Barbara J. Price “The Native Aristocracy and the Evolution of the Latifundio in the Teotihuacán Valley, 1521-1917” *Ethnohistory*, (Winter2003), Vol. 50 Issue 1, 70-71; John A. Crow *The Epic of Latin America* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Berkeley: University of California, 1992), 54. Crow got his information about Indian land from: George M. McBride *The Land System of Mexico* (New York, 1923). *Tecpantlalli* were lands dedicated to the households and palaces of kings and noblemen. *Pillali* were *Tecpantlalli* lands transmitted by a particular nobleman to his heirs.

<sup>6</sup> William Cronon *Changes in the Land: Indians Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: 1983), 33. ; Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America*, 74-75.

increased profits. But with increased production came overproduction and falling commodity prices. This situation encouraged an increase in production hoping that economy of scale, producing more units at a lower per unit profit, would increase or, at the least, maintain profit levels. This only increased the desire for more farm land.<sup>7</sup>

With more colonists needing more land and more speculators looking for new lands to buy cheap and sell high, the Anglo-Americans hungered for more Indian land. But they did not wish to live with Indians who squandered such a precious resource with underproduction. Instead, the Anglo-Americans sought exclusive rights to lands through purchase, or through conquest. Being more interested in the Indian's land than in the Indians inhabiting it, the British colonials were highly desirous of gaining clear title to their land. This clarity relied on the establishment of the native inhabitants as the original possessors of the land. In the interest of legality and the establishment of a clear title to their land they found it convenient to treat the Indian tribes as sovereign entities thus separating the Indian community from the whites. Originally individuals contracted with Indians to buy their land. But this led to confusion with multiple sellers and buyers of the same land.<sup>8</sup>

The British Crown sought to clarify the issue with the Royal Proclamation of 1763, stipulating that only the British government and its appointed contractors could legally buy Indian land. In doing this they claimed the right of preemption, the contractual right to be the first and sole acquirer of Indian lands. This practice continued

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<sup>7</sup> Douglas R. Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America*, 74-75.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Holland Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain Mexico and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962), 345-346.; Stuart Banner *How the Indians Lost Their Land: Law and Power on The Frontier* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005) 106,107.

under the newly formed United States starting with the Intercourse Act of 1790. As the sole purchaser of Native lands, agents of the government negotiated treaties with Indians making Indian land government land. After it became government land the federal government decided who could later acquire this land. It was clear that the British government, by removing Indians from their land and their homes prior to the arrival of settlers, never intended to include the Indians in their empire. The newly independent United States continued this practice, establishing a growing non-Indian nation by pushing Indians, now bereft of their land, ever westward.<sup>9</sup>

The power of the sword, the hunger for Indian land and the desire to separate Indians from whites culminated in the U.S. removal policy. This was the time when the federal government, at the urging of President Jackson, forced most of the eastern Indian tribes to migrate west of the Mississippi River. By 1838 over eighty thousand Indians followed a “trail of tears” westward. While this was a time of hot debates over national policy and constitutional law nothing was new in this. Stuart Banner states that “If the 1830s were an era of removal, so to were the previous two centuries.”<sup>10</sup>

Before the nineteenth century Indian removal had been more a byproduct of land purchases than government policy but the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 provided the federal government with sovereignty over millions of acres of thinly populated land west of the Mississippi. This “empty” land provided the government with an asset useful for exchanges of Indian land in the east. Congress quickly authorized the President “to stipulate with any Indian tribes owning lands on the east side of the Mississippi, and

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<sup>9</sup> Banner *How the Indians Lost Their Land*, 106,107.; Edward Holland Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 345-346.

<sup>10</sup>Stuart Banner *How the Indians Lost Their Land*, 191-192.

residing thereon, for an exchange of land, the property of the United States, on the west side of the Mississippi, in case the tribes shall remove and settle thereon.” Removal thus became a means where Indians and Whites could be separated, providing protection of Indians from white hostility and allowing the Indians time to assimilate into white culture.<sup>11</sup>

But the United States’ rapid westward settlement outstripped the westward movement of displaced Indians. The federal government’s idea of creating a separate western “Indian Territory” beyond the Mississippi river was impeded by the rapid spread of American settlement. The idea of incorporating Indians as citizens into the American nation was an alien concept to American viewpoints but the Indian Territory created to house Eastern tribes was, due to European encroachments, too small to hold both the transplanted and resident western tribes so it was decided to form separate enclaves beyond the Indian Territory where land could be reserved for individual tribes. These reservations were intended to be “dependent domestic nations” whose residents had a legal right to the land they occupied. But they were not intended to be integrated into the United States. Originally there was no liaison between tribal governments and the laws of the United States did not apply within their boundaries. Later plans to civilize the Indians, and maintain national dominion over them, resulted in an admission of these lands within the territorial sphere of influence of the United States. This was marked by

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<sup>11</sup> Stuart Banner *How the Indians Lost Their Land*, 194; Francis Paul Prucha *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln NE: The University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 191, 197-199.



a shift of Indian administration from the War Department to the Department of the Interior in 1849.<sup>12</sup>

Each of the major programs that characterized Indian policy in the United States during the nineteenth century from the removal of Indians to the establishment of reservations was the product of a coalition of two groups of whites: those seeking to protect Indians by segregating them away from harmful white influences and those seeking the Indian's land. As it would turn out the more successful group were the latter. The former group had hoped that segregation offered Native people a chance to adapt by their own devices to western "civilization," to abandon their primitive ways, and recognize and embrace the "virtues" of the "white man's path."<sup>13</sup>

While the British Colonials followed an exclusionist path their Spanish counterparts followed a different track. In what is now modern day Mexico the newly arrived Spanish found a land both rich in people and in potential. When the Spanish made contact with the mainland, in the sixteenth century, they found a stratified and greatly extended empire, the Aztecs. While the British encountered a less complex and sedentary set of societies that they quickly outnumbered, the Spanish, few in numbers, encountered a land of massive populations. Since it was the professed duty of Spain to bring the "heathen" into the "fold of Christianity" the millions living in Meso-America provided the potential for a vast increase in the membership of the Church and since these potential Christians farmed great acreages of farm land they provided another potential: great wealth for those willing to seize the opportunity and exploit the situation. Jeremy

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<sup>12</sup> Edward Holland Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 344-346.

<sup>13</sup> Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land*, 257.

Adelman and Stephen Aron state that in order to do this “the Spanish developed policies to incorporate vast tributary domains.” After military conquest, “The idea was to integrate Indian fiscal and tributary structures to serve Madrid’s dynastic ambitions.” With the accomplishment of this goal the Spanish established communities of Indian and non-Indian villages. The Indian villages, *Puebos de Indios*, were established to ensure the more efficient collection of taxes and provide needed manpower. In the land that would someday become the Republic of Mexico the Indian was not a sovereign but a subject.<sup>14</sup>

With the Indians as subjects the Spanish crown needed to legitimize its rule by incorporating the Indians into its land as vassals. It recognized that Indians in their *Puebos de Indios* required social protection and assistance in order to be integrated into the new imperial order and ensure the “king’s legitimacy”: the right of the Spanish Crown to rule their new lands. To ensure this right, the Crown established separate Indian courts giving Indians what Ethelia Ruiz Medrano describes as “different political mechanisms.” They were provided with “rights engendered for purposes of command and negotiating power.” This implied that the conquered vassals of the Castilian king had the right to bring charges against the king’s representative in the king’s overseas colony. These special legal protections, regardless of their level of effectiveness, allowed the Indigenous population avenues to keep and maintain traditional communal land holdings and helped the Crown to reinforce the assertion of its rights over its New World territory; something it sought not only for legitimacy but also for profitability.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron. “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History” *American History Review*, vol. 104 No. 3 (Jun., 1999), 829.

<sup>15</sup> Ethelia Ruiz Medrano, trans. Russ Davidson, *Mexico’s Indigenous Communities: Their Lands and Histories, 1500-2010* (Boulder : University Press of Colorado, 2010), 2, 284-285.

This arrangement needs to be considered in the light of John Tutino's concept that Spanish colonial Mexico was comprised of two regions: Spanish Mesoamerica and Spanish North America. In Spanish Mesoamerica the interaction of silver discoveries and disease related depopulation resulted in a commercial economy based on self-governing landed indigenous republics where social relations depended on mediations between Spanish power and native communities. For a long time most of the population retained their indigenous languages and ethnic identities. In Mesoamerica there was a sharp divide between Spanish Hispanic life with its commercial impetus focusing on mining, commercial estates, and larger urban centers, all of which were linked to a global economy and indigenous villagers who perpetuated land autonomy with the goal of family subsistence and the support of local markets. In the indigenous villages the residents forged a Native Christian culture that maintained a sense of community integration. A commonality that bridged these two cultures was a patriarchal emphasis divided into two hierarchies, one that organized cities and another that integrated native communities. The two communities were linked by the villager's provisions of food stuffs to city markets and the seasonal labor provided for commercial estates. Judicial mediations helped to maintain some sense of stability throughout much of the colonial period.<sup>16</sup>

In Spanish North America Spaniards hunting for silver, wealth, and power encountered natives without states. Unlike the indigenous people of Mesoamerica the northern Indians were sparsely located and mobile, living by hunting, gathering, and

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<sup>16</sup> John Tutino "Capitalistic Foundations: Spanish North America, Mexico, and the United States" from *Mexico and Mexicans in the Making of the United States* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 50-51.

cultivating were soil and water supplies allowed. Tutino states that here the Spanish didn't conquer, they colonized, building a society of people from the Atlantic world, a society defined by commercial goals that denied autonomy and "was orchestrated by patriarchy and defined by dependence." Here people of diverse origins met and mixed while living in commercial communities. By the late seventeenth century the Spanish language dominated culture and people lived in a society where ethnic boundaries were porous and identities were "fluid and subject to change." The colonizers of Spanish North America drove north, always in conflict with peoples seeking to retain their independence.<sup>17</sup>

The Spanish had a mission to build a society that encompassed both Indians and Spaniards. To the British and their colonial successors the need for new land outweighed the need for new subjects. The new world assets that they sought to incorporate were not the native dwellers but their land. Those Indians that still remained within the United States were referred to as the residents of "dependent domestic nations," and their land that was not politically integrated into the United States. In contrast to this concept, the Spanish, encountering a large hierarchical society with a powerful elite and a large sedentary peasant base, simply replaced the Indian ruling elite with a Spanish elite providing that elite with an Indian laboring base. Unlike the Spanish, the British and their successors did not have sets of liaison officers linking them with whites like the Spanish *Alcalde* system.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> John Tutino "Capitalistic Foundations," 51.

<sup>18</sup> Edward Holland Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 345-346. *Alcalde* is the traditional Spanish municipal magistrate, who had both judicial and administrative functions. An *alcalde* was, in the absence of a *corregidor* (a local, administrative and judicial position in Spain and its empire), the presiding officer of the Castilian *cabildo* (the municipal council) and judge of first instance of a town. *Alcaldes* were elected

The contrast in Native American policy between the heirs of the British Colonies and the Spanish Colonial America came into focus with the capture of Northern Mexico following the war of 1846-48. As a result of its victory over Mexico, the United States government assumed that it had acquired the whole territory and that its citizens were free to travel though any territory or settle where ever they wished. Paradoxically, when the United States claimed the territory of Northern Mexico at the end of the Mexican War they recognized the Indians as separate political units capable of making binding treaties but not as citizens or subjects of the United States or holders of American property.<sup>19</sup>

Unfamiliar with a governing system where Indians were subjects within a political unit, the United States government provided no basis for mutual adjustment of interest. This constituted a reversal of the Spanish policy which recognized the land rights of the Indians but not their political independence. Coinciding with this new acquisition of land was the shift of the management of Indian Affairs from the War Department to the Department of the Interior. This ushered in a new mission to “civilize the Indians.” In the southwest this new mission along with the establishment of “separate dependent nation” reserves resulted in reservations for the Navahos, Mescalero, and Jicarilla Apaches, the

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annually, without the right to reelection for two or three years, by the *regidores* (council members) of the municipal council. The office of the *alcalde* was signified by a staff of office, which they were to take with them when doing their business. The office of the *alcalde* evolved during the Reconquista as new lands were settled by the expanding kingdoms of León and Castile. As fortified settlements in the area between the Duero and Tagus rivers became true urban centers, they gained, from their feudal lords or the kings of Leon and Castile, the right to have councils. Among the rights that these councils had was to elect a municipal judge (*iudex* in Latin and *juez* in Spanish). These judges were assisted in their duties by various assistant judges, called *alcaldes*, whose number depended on the number of parishes the town had. The title *alcalde* was borrowed from the Arabic al-qadi (قاضي), meaning "the judge." The word *alcalde* originally was used for simple judges, as in Andalusian Arabic. Only later was it applied to the presiding municipal magistrate. From 1635 in Peru, and probably simultaneously in New Spain, the office of *alcalde provincial* was instituted, which closely paralleled that of the *alcalde de hermandad*. *Alcaldes de indios* were minor officials in the civil *reducciones* (Indian settlements) who answered to the *cacique* (local Indian chief) and the Spanish corregidor of the district.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 344-347.

Pimas, Yumas and Mojaves and other tribes. But the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo forced the United States to recognize the land rights of Pueblo and Zuni Indians by virtue of old Spanish land grants.<sup>20</sup>

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo would hold another enduring legacy for those Anglo-Americans claiming Mexican territory for the United States. While often viewed as the conquest of lands taken from Mexico in 1848 much of the society and culture, especially the economic ways and ethnic amalgamations of Hispanic North America, persisted within the newly formed states that ranged from Texas to California. Not that the Anglo-Americans didn't stack the deck in their favor. The new arrivals engaged in acts of racism designed to limit Hispanic political rights and Anglo entrepreneurs used every means from legal power, to judicious marriage, to fraud to gain control of the land they sought, for their own benefit. But when Anglo-Americans wrote the state constitutions and legal codes for these new states they sought to retain old Spanish mining and land provisions, not to favor the old residents but to facilitate the Anglo-American entrepreneur's ability to profit. As in their acquisition of Indian land it was important for one to have clear title to one's land. Thus in the interest of ease of profitability the new residents of the old Spanish lands sought to continue ways of production and labor relations based on Spanish and Mexican tradition.<sup>21</sup>

So the Anglo-Americans inherited and perpetuated a capitalistic commercial system developed by the earlier Spanish and Mexican settlers. This system was based on mining, irrigated agriculture, and commercial grazing. These trends would continue to

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 344-347.

<sup>21</sup> John Tutino, "Capitalistic Foundations," 69

shape not only those lands originally populated by Hispanics but would spread into Idaho, Utah, Montana, and Nevada. The Anglo-Americans found this not only convenient but they also favored the Spanish-Mexican systems of patriarchy, recognizing it to be similar to systems operating in their nation's commercial north and the plantation south. They adopted this patriarchal commercial system and claimed it as their own superior Yankee patriarchy while seeking to marginalize the old Hispanic residents as laborers. The Anglo-Americans wished to adopt the commercial features of the new land but they refused to participate in its racial amalgamational aspects.<sup>22</sup>

In summary, the United States professed no interest in the Indian way of life nor did they possess any great regard for their land usage. Contrary to this viewpoint was the Spanish, and later Mexican, understanding which allowed the existence of traditional Indian lifestyles within allowable parameters. In effect, these Hispanic Indians, while subjects of Spain and latter Mexico, were allowed some degree of independence, at least in a local sense. It would seem that while subjects of Spain and latter Mexico, some of the Indians of Mexico retained more control over their land than would later be the case with their counter parts in the United States. In what is now Mexico there were in effect two republics, Indian and non-Indian, united as Spanish subjects but semi-autonomous in function. Their agriculture, though influenced by their European conquerors, still allowed them much freedom of action. None-the-less they were all subjects of Spain. In time, racial mixing resulted in a cross-cultural mixing and a growing mestizo population. As will be related, this practice was viewed by the people of the republic in the north as

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 69, 71 and Introduction, 32.

cultural accommodation producing a mixed race nation where the quality of humanity was reduced to its lowest racial denominator.

#### THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

In his account of the U.S.-Mexican War M.C.M. Hammond observed that when the American soldiers retired to their “warriors repose” on the evening prior to the assault on the Mexican castle of Chapultepec it was with the conviction that the next day would decide the fate of Mexico. “It was to decide.” Hammond continued, “Whether a great question of human progress was involved in the American struggle, and by issue, whether we or the Mexicans were to be, under the decree of Providence, dominant in principal for the world’s benefit.”<sup>23</sup>

Hammond was influenced by English translations of French philosopher Victor Cousin’s *Introduction à l’Histoire de la Philosophie*, first appearing on Boston shelves in 1832. Writing of the “spirit of the age” Cousin advocated that each nation (or its “people”) represented an idea and it was the nation whose idea was most in accord with the spirit of the time that would dominate. He declared that each nation “has an idea to realize” and when this idea was fully realized it exports its idea by war, thus “every civilization which advances, advances by conquest.” To Americans Cousin’s work justified the Mexican War as a war of progress. Robert Johannsen says that behind this belief in progress was “...the ever-present and much-touted beliefs in racial hegemony. The war came at a time when expressions of Anglo-Saxon superiority were at a peak” In

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<sup>23</sup> Robert W. Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 289 taken from *North American Review*, LIII (July 1841), 1, 6; Victor Cousin, *Course of the History of Modern Philosophy* (2 vol., New York 1866), I, 183, 191; *Southern Quarterly Review*, XXIII (Jan. 1853), 20-21.



fact, America's war with the Mexicans became a major catalyst for the appearance of overt Anglo-Saxon racialism.<sup>24</sup>

This emergence of a perceived Anglo-Saxon superiority coincided with an American view of their nation as place that was always up to date and successfully pursuing a path of linear progress; a progress measured in material accomplishments and always accompanied by moral, spiritual, and cultural advancement. In contrast, historian Fredrick Pike maintains that many, in the United States, viewed Latin Americans as a people "trapped in a primitive state of nature, the victims of rather than the masters of nature." Americans believed that Latin Americans found the attainment of full human potential difficult because that potential was "realizable only in proportion to the degree to which people manage to conquer nature, both within and without," something Latin Americans couldn't achieve. The people of the United States considered themselves the "civilized people" and those "Others": Indians, imported African slaves, and later, Latin Americans, Orientals, the Irish, and Central, Southern, and Eastern Europeans were perceived as to submissive to natural forces and thus trapped in a "state of nature."<sup>25</sup>

"Civilized Americans" considered people who existed in a state of nature to be similar to children. Because of this viewpoint, "natural persons," whether they were Indians, blacks, Latin Americans, unassimilated immigrants, or the indigent in general, were considered to be childlike. Because of this childlike state they needed to be managed as wards of the state. And since white American males, the "movers and

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<sup>24</sup> Robert W. Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas*, 289-290; Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981), 208, 181.

<sup>25</sup> Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America: Myths and Stereotypes of Civilization and Nature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), xiii-xvi.

shapers” of civilization, assumed that women were enslaved by their nature it was taken for granted that women were also prevented from attaining the “heights of civilization.” This equating of primitivism with women is seen in the descriptions of the “wild frontier” in feminine terms. According to this understanding people thought to be in a “benighted state of nature” were considered both childlike and effeminate or “unmanly.”<sup>26</sup>

Among those viewed as childish and lacking in the attributes needed to achieve a civilized zenith were Mexicans. To nineteenth century Anglo-Americans Mexicans and Indians were viewed as pretty much one and the same. Added to the perceived mixture of Spaniard and Indian was an inclusion of a Negroid element producing new dimensions of alleged Mexican inferiority. One Texan said, “We feel toward the Mexicans just like toward the nigger, but not so much.” The conquering Anglos labeled the large population of Hispanics incorporated into the United States as a result of the Mexican War as *greasers*; Hispanic people who were part Negro, part Indian. They were fully reviled as filthy and greasy in appearance and immoral and treacherous by nature. Americans saw in the Mexican people a mixed breed descended from low-class Spaniards and savage Indians. It was felt that as mixed breeds they inherited the worst traits of both races.<sup>27</sup>

Nineteenth and early twentieth century American travel accounts perpetuated the notion that Mexicans were “a weak, effete, mongrel, withered race,” a “dirty” people who tolerated “all kinds of filth within arm’s length of the door.” One observer quipped that they were people so lacking in sanitation and hygiene that “filth and stench filled their

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<sup>26</sup> Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America*, xiii-xvi.

<sup>27</sup> Patricia Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of The American West*. (New York: Norton, 1987), 247.; Arnoldo DeLeon, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes Toward Mexicans in Texas 1821-1900* (Austin University of Texas Press, 1983). 16; Juan R. García “The Mexican In Popular Literature 1875-1925” *Down Mexico Way*, (Tucson: Tucson Public Library, Arizona Historical Society, 1983), 2.

hovels and the wonder is how they survive so long the unwholesome conditions.” So immoral were these “Indians” that men, women, and children were observed, much to the horror of Northern observers, to be frolicking together naked in streams and ditches without any Victorian regard for “decency.” Travelers observed that they lacked in industry and had no regard for sobriety being frequently drunk on cheap pulque. They were viewed to be “quick to anger, quicker to violence; quick to betrayal, and quicker to robbery.” To observers they seemed to lack a sense that time was money and “they found no reason to save either.” They cared not a bit for progress or “for the new-fangled labor saving machinery of the nineteenth century.”<sup>28</sup>

American observers noted, with Protestant Anglo-Saxon reasoning, that the United States was richer than Mexico because it was modern and progressive while Mexico was poor because it was primitive and backward. Visitors traveling in rural Mexico observed people who seemed to be living in the Stone Age. One observer noted that the people were, “clinging yet with Indian pertinacity to ancient customs, following, even in dress, traditions two or three hundred years old.” He observed that, “...they seem

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<sup>28</sup> William H. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club: and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 78, 79, 80. Travel accounts: J.R. Flippin *Sketches from the Mountains of Mexico* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1889), 7, 294; Sidney George Fisher, *The Laws of Race, as Connected with Slavery* (Philadelphia: William P. Hazard, 1860), E.H. Blichfeldt, *A Mexican Journey* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1919), 226; Wallace Gillpatrick, *The Man Who Likes Mexico*, (New York: Century Co., 1911), 212. . Pulque is an alcoholic beverage made from the fermented sap of the maguey (agave) plant. It is traditional to central Mexico, where it has been produced for millennia. It has the color of milk, somewhat viscous consistency and a sour yeast-like taste. The drink’s history extends far back into the Mesoamerican period, when it was considered sacred, and its use was limited to certain classes of people. After the Spanish Conquest of Mexico, the drink became secular and its consumption rose. The consumption of pulque reached its peak in the late 19th century. In the 20th century, the drink fell into decline, mostly because of competition from beer, which became more prevalent with the arrival of European immigrants. There have been recent efforts to revive the drink’s popularity through tourism. Consult “Aztecs’ Sacred Drink Pulque Losing Out to Beer in Mexico” Medindia. 2007-11-23. *The People’s Guide to Mexico* (13th edition, 2006) contains a treasure trove of information about tequila, pulque and other products. Also *Tequila, Mezcal y Pulque: lo Autentico Mexicano* by Lennart Blomberg (Editorial Diana, Mexico). A Spanish-language book, printed in 2000. History, production, distilleries, caballitos, and culture, with photos (b&W and colour) and line drawings. Difficult to find outside Mexico, but a worthwhile addition if you can read Spanish.

as removed from the pressures of changeable events as the fossil remains of another age.” The Anglos believed that democracy and national progress could never find root in a region populated by primitive, priest-ridden Hispanic people clinging to backward medieval values.<sup>29</sup>

While traveling in New Mexico an American soldier recognized “Mexican” traits he found displeasing saying: “These Spaniards (Mexicans) are the meanest looking race of people I ever saw, don’t appear more civilized than our Indians generally.” He added that they were “Dirty filthy looking creatures.” Another soldier confidently stated that “like the . . . Indian, the Mexican is doomed to retire before the more enterprising, energetic Anglo Americans. The fertile plains north of the Rio Grande will soon know him no more.”<sup>30</sup>

Common to American literature of the time is the image of the docile Mexican peon. Nineteenth century writings are replete with depictions of Mexicans as irresponsible children who wanted nothing more than to spend their life in endless pursuit of drinking and gambling. Novelist William Macleod Raine wrote: “It was an indolent happy life the peons of the estate led. There were girls to be loved, dances to be danced, and guitars to be strummed. Wherefore then, should the young men feel the spur of ambition to take the world by the throat and wring success from it?”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> William H. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club*, 67, 79. Quote from Mary Elizabeth Blake and Margaret F. Sullivan *Mexico Picturesque, Political, and Progressive* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, Publishers, 1888), 80.; Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, *Roots of Resistance: Land Tenure in New Mexico, 1680-1980* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 71; Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America*, 86-87, 99.

<sup>30</sup> Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, *Roots of Resistance*, 71; Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America*, 86-89, 108-109.; quote from W.A. McClintock, “Journal of a Trip through Texas and Northern Mexico in 1846-47,” *Southern Historical Quarterly* 34 (1930-31): 157

<sup>31</sup> Juan Garcia “The Mexican In Popular Literature 1875-1925 *Down Mexico Way*, 7-8

This is a reflection of changes in racial theories. By the mid-nineteenth century modern racial theory that fused “scientific” concepts of biological heredity with “romantic” political traditions of a *Volksgeist* emerged in Europe. These new ideas changed the understanding of what determines a people and how culture shaped a nation. This new union of concepts concerning race and nationhood resulted in what Kwame Anthony Appiah identifies as racialism. A binary opposition that separated “us” and “them” became conceptualized in terms of biologically inherited racial attributes. During this time the concepts of “race,” “nation,” and “people” were used interchangeably. Race was not simply something based on skin color or physical features but also those cultural, moral, and intellectual characteristics shared with other members of the community that distinguished one people from another. Those countries lacking in a homogeneous populace, the component that Western theoretical ideology considered necessary for the construction of a nation state, were judged inferior and backward.<sup>32</sup>

These changing views colored the way that the Mexican elite viewed the masses, blaming their Indian heritage for their shortcomings. Prior to Mexico’s Independence the Creole (American-born descendants of Europeans) elite developed a sense of themselves as *nosotros, los Americanos* (we Americans), laying claim to Mexico’s Aztec archeological past. But they expressed little interest in living indigenous people. With independence in 1821, the elite increasingly identified with West European liberal concepts. Many indigenous Mexican communities sought political self-determination and a place in the liberal state structure of the new republic. But this clashed with the

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<sup>32</sup> Kelly R. Swarthout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” (New York: Peter Lang publishing, 2004), 8.; Kwame Anthony Appiah “Race” *Critical Terms for Literary Study* Ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1995), 276.; Anthony D. Smith *Nationalism and Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 10.

liberal vision of the Creole elite. National spirit, as it was, consisted of a nation confined to a Creole elite and its acculturated mestizo brethren. The best it could assume from the popular classes was that they might become civilized enough to form a grasp of the elite's notion of civilization. The prominent mid-nineteenth century intellectual Francisco Pimentel stated that until indigenous people shed every trace of a pseudo culture, consisting permanently of an incoherent amalgamation of preconquest deities and superstitions, and adapted their every practice to coincide with the intellectual concept of the Creoles they could never hope to be part of the Mexican nation. Despite internal conflict the elite struggled to keep the states and regions of Mexico unified and under its control.<sup>33</sup>

This viewpoint was the product of related process of state and nation formation which are mutually reinforcing but dissimilar. The *state* defined by Rick A. López refers to, "...the apparatus of governance that institutes particular structures of domination and political participation. It finds expression through regulations, laws, courts, police, bureaucracies, ordinances, property rules, cadastral surveys, census taking, military activity, public schools, voting, town councils, government patronage, diplomatic representatives and treaties, systems of taxation and wealth redistribution, and so forth."<sup>34</sup>

The term *nation*, traditionally, a large aggregate of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, is a term endowed with a long history. In modern times it "acquired the expectation that it include all the people born and raised within the territory claimed by the state, and that subjects of the state should subordinate their

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<sup>33</sup> Rick A. López. *Crafting Mexico Intellectuals Artisans, and the State After the Revolution*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 2-3.

<sup>34</sup> Rick A. López. *Crafting Mexico Intellectuals Artisans*, 12.

regional and ethnic identities (and the power relations that animate these identities) to a transcendent sense of belonging and metaphysical unity.” López points out that in “Latin America and, in particular Mexico, the state preceded the nation.” This created an expectation that “rather than creating new states around ethnic solidarities, the nation,” the aggregate of people, “should conform to the political territory claimed by the state.” In this sort of view “organic” ethnicities were not the seeds of nation-state formation but were instead seen as obstacles.<sup>35</sup>

The obstacle that was ethnicity was on the mind of Mexican liberals when they pondered the reasons for their defeat in the Mexican War. They postulated that the Mexican State was more fiction than fact hampered by a confused ineffective collection of poor Indians, foreign artisans, overly taxed and regulated merchants, poorly trained soldiers, and greedy priests. Enhancing this discorded state were Indian and church communal land holdings that enhanced racial inferiority. They argued that Mexico’s problem was an Indian problem caused by outmoded collective land customs that produced ignorant backward people who wallowed in a languishing state of racial inferiority. This was contrary to the spirit of modernity and prevented the necessary move

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<sup>35</sup> Rick A. López. *Crafting Mexico Intellectuals Artisans*, 12. López refers to Joseph and Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*; Dore and Molyneux, eds. *Hidden Histories of Gender and State in Latin America*; Mallon *Peasant and Nation*; Rubin, *Decentering the Regime*; Thompson, “Popular Aspects of Liberalism”; Guardino, *Peasants*; Purnell, *Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico*; Lomnitz-Asler, *Exits from the Labyrinth*; and Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*. He states “Benedict Anderson shows that modern “imagined communities” construct myths that place their origins far in the past. Deutsch, Armstrong, Hutchinson, and others argue that nations’ claims to ancient histories are based on an objective reality: Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication in the Foundations of Nationality*. To a large extent debates over the recentness of nations have been shaped by differing understandings of what a “nation” is. See Connor, “A Nation is a Nation”; “When Is a Nation?”; and “The Timelessness of Nations.” See also Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*. Weber’s thesis regarding the lateness of French national integration has been the subject of considerable debate since it was first published, but, though it has been refined and nuance, its fundamental view of the French nation as a recent construct remains compelling.” Rick A. López. *Crafting Mexico Intellectuals Artisans*, n301.

toward private property, capitalism, industrialism, secularization, rationalization, and a centralized nation state. The solution to this problem was a liberal bourgeois solution, *La Reforma*, the political attack on ecclesiastical holdings and communal Indian properties.<sup>36</sup>

In the past many elites viewed the Mexican people as the descendants of a grand pre-Hispanic civilization. But with independence a new memory of the pre-colonial past developed, suggesting that the Spanish conquest had been a great civilizing influence for Mexico's indigenous people. Rebecca Earle states that the governing authorities "...reached a point of believing that the Spanish conquest and colonization had actually been a great service to the Indians, who were, prior to the conquest, merely savage animals incapable of aspiring to the state of civilized beings." But it was also the contention of the political elite that this civilizing mission had failed, leaving the Indians a regressive people lacking in education and refinement. Seeing the colonial past as something that had degraded the Indians socially and politically old colonial ideas like a separate Indian judicial system were viewed as anachronisms<sup>37</sup>

In the United States many shared this belief in the enlightening mission of Western European liberalism. The "Indian expert" Carl Schurtz believed that the "civilizing mission" of the United States most not fail, adding that "the progress" and "the development of the country" now "made the old ways of Indian existence obsolete," that Indians faced "civilization or extermination" with "civilization enabling them to become in all important respects a part of the population among which they are to live."

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<sup>36</sup> W. Dirk Roat and Michael M. Brescia, *Mexico and the United States: Ambivalent Vistas* (Athens : University of Georgia Press, 2010), 87-88 and 97-98.

<sup>37</sup> Ethelia Ruiz Medrano, *Mexico's Indigenous Communities*, 156, Rebecca Earle, "Creole Patriotism and the Myth of the 'Loyal Indian'" *The Past and Present Society* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2001), 125-145, 172.; Florencia E. Mallon *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Post-Colonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 16.



If Native Americans failed to become “civilized” they would suffer “extermination in a vain struggle to maintain the habits of savage life against the progress of superior forces or rapid decay as miserable paupers and outcasts by the failure of self-sustaining ability.” In Mexico a spirit of liberal modernity inspired by the United States and Western Europe ushered in a growing desire to convert communal lands into private holdings as was advocated by the Ley Lerdo. This desire was supported by many in the U.S. and Mexico who had covetous aspirations for Indian lands. In both nations concerns for national cohesion influenced the need of the governments to achieve a goal of seeing their indigenous population eventually vanish.<sup>38</sup>

But in the United States American Indians seemed to be impervious to the “civilizing opportunities” presented by those interested in their “uplift.” A year after Custer’s defeat at the Little Big Horn the American press attempted to establish a connection between the recalcitrant Indians and the hordes of immigrants who stubbornly resisted Americanization clinging instead to their alien influences. To the press the frontier “savages” seemed to be combined with the urban barbarians in a threat to the “American way.” In 1877 one journalist wrote of how the alien strikers in industrial America were joined in an unofficial alliance with Indian insurrectionists “to make war on civilization itself,” a message that many popular journals repeated with juxtaposed references of “Custer’s Last Stand,” accounts of Negro disorder in the south, and crime waves in the North.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Carl Schurtz “Aspects of the Indian Problem” *The American Missionary* Vol. 37, No. 4 (April, 1883), pp.105-107.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization 1800-1890*. (New York : Atheneum, 1985), 352-353 and 481.

This sense of crisis reinforced the mission to “uplift the Indian.” Anglo Saxons could no longer suffer the Indians to remain “half civilized wanderers and vagabonds.” Thomas Jefferson Morgan, Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the late 1880s, was certain that the Indian must be “completely Americanized” through a form of “benevolent assimilation.” Advocates for change insisted that Indians needed to be detribalized and made fit for full employment in the American mainstream. U.S. Army Lt. James Calhoun, one of these advocates, envisioned a transformation of Indians through education, predicting that “hives of industry will take the place of dirty wigwams,” that civilization would triumph, “and throw heathen barbarism into oblivion.” Francis Paul Prucha noted that men, like Carl Schurz, were confident that Indians could be “sufficiently civilized to support themselves, to maintain relations of good neighborhood with the people surrounding them, and altogether cease to be a disturbing element in society.”<sup>40</sup>

Senator Henry Dawes of Massachusetts, maintained that unless the Indian learned self-reliance by abandoning “primitive outmoded” notions of tribal or communal ownership “he will never be a man.” He proposed to “put the elements of man into an Indian” by transforming Native Americans into fee-simple owners of individual property. “Civilized” Americans would teach the natives to “stand alone, then to walk, than to dig, then to plant, then to hoe, then to gather, and then to keep.” He emphasized that “The last and best agency of civilization is to teach a group of Indians to keep.” He and others felt

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<sup>40</sup> Francis Paul Prucha, *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the “Friends of the Indians” 1880-1900* (Cambridge:, Harvard University Press, 1973) 15, 194; and *The Great White Father: The United States Government and The American Indians* (Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 245; Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York; Knopf, 1978), 150.; Fredrick Pike, *The United States and Latin America*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 173.

that the Indian's communal property traditions produced "womanly men" causing them to lose the "manly" quality of selfishness that lay at the heart of modern, progressive, civilization; something they needed in order to climb beyond the bottom rung of civilization's ladder.<sup>41</sup>

Dawes's sentiments were shared by a growingly influential body, known as the "friends of the Indians," who, starting in 1883, met every year at Lake Mohonk, New York. The attendees of these conferences were convinced that Indians must immediately become Christianized Americans and that they needed to be fully indoctrinated into the competitive, individualized, American way of life. They strongly believed that Native Americans, in order to keep pace with their progressively proper American neighbors, needed to learn English and be able to read and write. In the interest of Americanization "old ways" must be abandoned. They believed that hoary remnants of a primitive past like Native ceremonies, healing practices, sacred histories, and all matters of Native "superstition" retarded development. Among the "old ways" that needed to be abandoned was the "primitive" concept of tribal, communal land holdings. The "friends of the Indians" believing it essential for tribalism to end advocated, as a necessary step in this

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<sup>41</sup> Francis Paul Prucha, *Americanizing the American Indians*, 137. West's Encyclopedia of American Law, describes Fee Simple as: "The greatest possible estate in land, wherein the owner has the right to use it, exclusively possess it, commit waste upon it, dispose of it by deed or will, and take its fruits. A fee simple represents absolute ownership of land, and therefore the owner may do whatever he or she chooses with the land. If an owner of a fee simple dies intestate, the land will descend to the heirs. The term *fee* used independently is an adequate designation of this type of estate in land. The term *simple* is added to distinguish clearly this estate from other interests in real property." West's Encyclopedia of American Law edition 2. Copyright 2008 The Gale Group, Inc. Gerald N. Hiss and Kathleen T. Hill, co-authors of 25 books on land, law, and public policy use this definition: fee simple n. absolute title to land, free of any other claims against the title, which one can sell or pass to another by will or inheritance. This is a redundant form of "fee," but is used to show the fee (absolute title) is not a "conditional fee," or "determinable fee," or "fee tail." Like "fee" it is often used in deeds transferring title as in "Harry Hadit grants to Robert Gotit title in fee simple..."

direction, the breaking up of collective tribal lands. This would free Indians from their tribal past and provide Native Americans with Americanized “emancipation.”<sup>42</sup>

The avenue for this emancipation and the means towards assimilation was the General Allotment Act, also known as the Dawes Act of 1887. This act, followed by future amendments, envisioned carving the reservations into fee simple plots of land owned by individuals or families in a way similar to small farms worked by whites, an Indian Homestead Act. This would result in surplus land that would be sold and the revenues from these sales would be used to establish boarding schools whose mission would be to teach Indian children how to be like whites. It was hoped that by making Native Americans into private property holders that they could be melded into the visage of the proper white American.<sup>43</sup>

The historian Tom Holm refers to this as the “vanishing policy,” a policy that was based on the assimilationist concept of peoplehood that stressed individualism and the notion that the ownership of private property would confer individuals with a true sense of freedom. Vanishers expected American Indians to abandon their cultural heritage and enter the American mainstream while shifting from tribal loyalty to an allegiance with the federal government; the protector of their right to private property. Reformers referred to assimilation as “shrinkage,” a belief that the Indian population would melt into the dominate society leaving fewer and fewer visible Indians. Through the use of Indian boarding schools, allotment, and the abandonment of tribal culture Indians would be free to compete on a level playing field with their white neighbors. Once cut off from tribal

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<sup>42</sup> Tom Holm, *The Great Confusion in Indian Affairs: Native Americans and Whites in the Progressive Era* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 8

<sup>43</sup> Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land*, 257. ; Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 352-353 and 481.

bonds and no longer dependent on the federal government those who had achieved independence and were filtered into American culture would “become a contingent worth saving.” They would be saved from a doomed ethos that William Pratt opined was a culture not to be “dignified with the term.”<sup>44</sup>

But in time these earlier notions of assimilation began to shift. By the early twentieth century many missionaries and educators in the United States began to doubt the ability to uplift not only frontier Indians but those belonging to the “lower classes” in the cities or the blacks in the rural south. Fredrick Hoxie states that between 1900 and 1920 “There was to be a new category of Americans: those who did not share in the dominant culture but who served it and were expected to benefit from their peripheral attachment to civilization.” The dominate culture couldn’t uplift them but it could at least impose on them the discipline needed to make them efficient laborers and establish their proper “place” in society.<sup>45</sup>

During this time a preoccupation with modernity and a sense that traditional Indian culture was a hindrance to modern development dominated Mexico. Under the rule of President Porfirio Díaz the ruling elite believed that not only were the indigenous communities too backward to achieve modernity but were also, in effect, separate from the Mexican nation. They argued that much of this Indian population could never be assimilated and that they could never be incorporated into the modern state. They felt that since much of the indigenous populace was hopelessly backward and unadaptable that their lands, which they could never properly use, were best utilized by those that could

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<sup>44</sup> Tom Holm *Great Confusion in Indian Affairs*, 11-14.

<sup>45</sup> Fredrick E. Hoxie *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians 1880-1920* (Lincoln, Neb. : University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 110-111, 187.

successfully conform to a modern progressive Mexican state. Much like their counterparts in the United States, they argued that Indians should be limited to the task of laborers; at least until the time when they would inevitably disappear.<sup>46</sup>

According to their understanding of Western Liberalism, Mexicans and Americans believed that Native American culture offered no avenue for inclusion within the ruling concept of Liberal Democracy. For Native Americans the only hope, faint as it was, came through a total repudiation of all cultural aspects of their existence. They needed to vanish as a people in order to reappear as full citizens of their respective nations. In both nations this citizenship involved the relegation of indigenous people to the status of a permanent underclass. Implicit in this liberal philosophy was a threat to indigenous concepts of communal land. In effect this threat to communal land holding was a threat to indigenous culture.

The economic growth of the White Anglo Saxons, who championed Liberalism and dominated the United States, was viewed as an affirmation of “survival of the fittest,” with the fittest being White Anglo Saxons. Herbert Spencer, the author of this phrase, believed that biology was connected to social progress. He suggested that biological principals of natural selection guided social interaction and race relations. When viewed from this prospective, the advanced white race appeared to be more biologically fit and thus destined to triumph over those dark, less fit races.<sup>47</sup>

Social Darwinists and their colleagues, the Social Evolutionists, developed elaborate paradigms supporting the imperial expansion of light skinned races based on

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<sup>46</sup> Alexander Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 3. Rick A. López *Crafting Mexico Intellectuals*, 3-4

<sup>47</sup> Kelly R. Swarthout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” 2.

the genetic inferiority of darker skinned people. The poverty of the non-whites proved their inherent lack of fitness. At this time the United States was engaged in what Fredrick Pike describes as a “genteel version of ethnic cleansing” as it placed quotas designed to restrict immigration of “undesirable” races and cultures while many states advocated the prohibition of interracial marriage and the promotion of compulsory sterilization. These measures were supported by the “science” of eugenics which captured the attention of many academics both in the United States and Mexico. Groups like the Klu Klux Klan, with its doctrine of keeping the racially inferior and the culturally suspect “in their place,” enjoyed powerful followings.<sup>48</sup>

By the turn of the twentieth century science, integrally linked to nation building, had acquired profound political and social legitimacy throughout the Western world. The newly formed social sciences of anthropology, sociology, political science, psychology, and economics were becoming specialized instruments invested in the creation of objective theories and methods needed to measure human progress. Nancy Leys Stephan explains that “(s)cience derives its political weight in the modern world from its conceptual claim to be neutral, empirical, secular, and uniquely authoritative (because uniquely objective) form of knowledge..”<sup>49</sup>

Evolutionism was the most significant of scientific concepts in the nineteenth century making a particularly deep impact in the field of anthropology. Following Spencer’s lead, and adopting the “scientific” term “social evolutionism,” they found a

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<sup>48</sup> Kelly R. Swarthout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” 9; Fredrick B. Pike *FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy: Sixty Years of Generally Gentle Chaos* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 97.; Marvin Harris *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), 80-107.

<sup>49</sup> Kelly R. Swarthout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” 10-11.; Nancy Leys Stephan *The Hour of Eugenics. Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 63.; William Y. Adams *The Philosophical Roots of Anthropology* (Stanford: CSLI Publications, 1998), 2

link between racial types and cultural progress suggesting that the European race represented a complex type of civilization that evolved from earlier primitive ones. They based their conclusion on the idea that all societies developed unilinearly because they possessed a common human nature and, based on the “comparative method,” elaborated on by Henry Lewis Morgan, that there existed a progressive hierarchical sequence in human culture from lower savagery to barbarism, to civilization.<sup>50</sup>

Indians, viewed as remnants of the culture of lower savagery, suffered under this perception. Benjamin Keen states that:

“The evolutionists, as they regarded the Indian from the glorious height of European cultural superiority, tended to think of him as a being who had lost out in the struggle for existence, as a living fossil, as a datum to be studied, measured, described, and assigned to his lowly place in the grand evolutionary structure.”<sup>51</sup>

This Eurocentric worldview had a particularly negative influence in the direction of anthropological studies in Latin America. Because of their large indigenous populations. Reinforcing this view was Arthur de Gobineau’s *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*. Gobineau, like latter Social Darwinists, saw racial inequality as the reason for the lack of development of non-assimilated cultures in Latin America. He argued that racial mixing produced weak and decaying societies where unity of actions and ideas was impossible. Many among the New World’s elite agreed with this idea.

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<sup>50</sup> William Y. Adams *The Philosophical Roots of Anthropology*, 49.; George W. Stocking *Race Culture and Evolution* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), 75, 114.; Henry Lewis Morgan *Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization*. Ed. Eleanor Burke Leacock (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1963), 199,202. “The comparative method grew out to the type of conjectural analysis practiced in the travel literature of eighteenth-century European writers, such as Alexander Von Humbolt, to explain the similarities between ‘primitive’ autochthonous cultures of the contemporary world and those of ancient Europe.” Kelly R. Swarthout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” 11-12.

<sup>51</sup> Benjamin Keen *The Aztec Image in Western Thought* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1971), 381



They viewed as true the theories suggested by Spencer and Gustave LeBon that racial mixing in Latin American countries had contributed to the political chaos suffered in nineteenth century Latin America.<sup>52</sup>

As Mexico went from Juárez through Díaz it hoped to construct a narrative of Mexico moving steadily toward modernity in a manner reminiscent of Britain, France and the United States. These nationalists, who historian Mauricio Tenorio has dubbed “wizards” for their efforts to recast Mexican history, focused on the elite and the small middle class hoping to overcome complicated regional notions of race and ethnicity in favor of a single social hierarchy consisting of a narrow select elite. They sought to reassign the defects that foreigners attributed to all Mexicans onto the popular masses, especially those identified as indigenous. These popular classes could not be a part of the modern Mexican nation until they proved that they could embrace the modernist evolution of the Mexican nation. Until they rejected their identities and practices they had no place except in the bottom rung of society.<sup>53</sup>

But while Mexico hoped to find its place in the Great White Way at the liberalist fair the United States viewed Mexico and its people as it viewed its Indians: as a marginalized social group suitable for a lesser supportive capacity within the dominant hegemony, The United States. Like Indians and blacks, Mexicans were suitable for certain lesser laboring tasks and the State of Mexico was expected to occupy a lesser supportive role within the greater US industrial complex. Mexico, seen as a land of

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<sup>52</sup> Kelly R. Swarthout “*Assimilating the Primitive*” 9-10, 23. Gustave Lebon’s *The Influence of Race on History* was highly critical of race mixture in Latin America. Among the Latin American works influenced by these ideas was Carlos Francisco Bulnes’s *El porvenir de las naciones latinoamericanas* (1899), Octavio Bunge’s *Nuestra América* (1903), and Alcides Arguedas’s *Pueblo enfermo* (1909)

<sup>53</sup> Rick A. López *Crafting Mexico Intellectuals*, 3-4.

laborers, was to function as a source of resources, especially minerals and agricultural products.<sup>54</sup>

Thus the agents and advocates of modernism felt confident that those permanently stuck in the past and to adherent to “old ways” had become obsolete in a brave new world with its new economic, social, and political conditions. Like the fair goers at the Columbian Exposition they were confident that the modern world, that they were a part of, held sway over a vanishing, primitive, “savage” past represented by the “new worlds” vanishing denizens. These dwindling remnants of a primitive and outmoded past could be allowed a few menial tasks before they faded away. So was the spirit of the age.

But this armored suit of cultural superiority had more than its fair share of chinks. And those who sensed discord in the midst of seeming success would find an unlikely source for their salvation, the primitive past.

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<sup>54</sup> Randolph Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p 190-1.; Carolyn Zeleny “Relations Between The Spanish American and Anglo Americans in New Mexico” (PhD diss. Yale University, 1944),175-181.

## CHAPTER 2

### A RETURN TO PRIMITIVISM

The message of the cultural supremacists lost some of its luster with the coming of the Great Depression. With the ranks of the “ethnically right,” and the “proper citizens” reduced by economic decline and proving, by their own Social Darwinist standards, to be human failures many Americans began to ponder the question of whether economic backwardness was innate or the product of culture. A new antiracist sentiment reflected “the expanding space created by nurture at the expense of nature” and was an essential foundation of FDR’s New Deal. For it made little sense to try to aid those down in their luck through nurturance if their condition was the result of some fixed racial component that left them culturally unalterable. Historian Frederick Pike describes this as “an interesting and fruitful symbiosis” that “developed in which science was driven by social attitudes, and social attitudes in turn were influenced or justified by scientific theory.”<sup>1</sup>

The new social attitudes influenced a new science that challenged old rationales about poverty and wealth. Sociologist and paleontologist Lester Frank Ward argued that “There was no reason to consider the lower classes as any less worthy genetically than the upper classes” He insisted that only the former’s lack of socio, political and educational opportunities had left them in in their position. Pragmatists like John Dewey

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<sup>1</sup> Fredrick B. Pike *FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy*, 97. Social Darwinism is the application of Darwinism, the concept of survival of the fittest, to everyday social circumstances. These can range from wealth debates to political debates, with the general principle being that the strong should see their wealth and power increase while the weak should see their wealth and power decrease.

and William James stressed that there “could be no set of fixed values because conduct determined values and conduct altered constantly.”<sup>2</sup>

These new ideas were the product of an Americanization of the social sciences that occurred between the 1880s and the 1920s. The Americanization was a product of a fusion of American pragmatism into philosophical and political discussions. This American pragmatism sought a balance between prevalent polar opposites in science and politics looking for a middle ground between early-twentieth century political extremes. Pragmatism promoted scientific methods for all areas of intellectual inquiry and supported the idea that all ideas and hypotheses must be judged according to their ability to solve problems. Philosophers like John Dewey established the philosophical basis for a science that faced up to the dilemmas confronting modern democracy and provided a solution to those dilemmas that didn't require the abandonment of liberal beliefs or religious faith while retaining a focus on rational individualism. This solution was based on the adoption of utility rather than the reliance on fixed absolute truths. David Ricci states that Pragmatism provided American social science with, “Ideas that could be used to appraise the nation's political situation and still maintain liberal confidence, providing experimentalism, science as method, democracy as method, and morality.”<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile many Latin Americans expressed their disagreement with earlier North American perceptions of Latin American inferiority while extolling the importance of Latin culture. One of these advocates was Uruguay's José Enrique Rodo. In his essay

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<sup>2</sup> Fredrick B. Pike *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy*, 96

<sup>3</sup> Mauricio Tenorio Trillo “Stereophonic Scientific Modernisms” *Social Science between Mexico and the United States, 1880s-1930s The Journal of American History* (December 1999) 1165-1166.: David M. Ricci, *The Tragedy of Political Science: Politics, Scholarship, and Democracy* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1984), 107.

*Ariel*, Rodo postulated that Latin America's people possessed a superiority of spirit and sensitivity to enduring moral and aesthetic values that placed them on a higher cultural plain than the crude, Calibanian, materialistic northerners stuck with their bourgeois mediocrity and plagued with the moral laxity that was indicative of industrial nations. Rodo believed that the Latin people needed to safeguard the cultural distinctions that elevated them above the shallow grasping northerners. With their distinctions secured, they would someday fulfill their mission: the taming of the brutish northern louts and the harnessing of their strength, vitality, and useful instincts. Once tamed, the Latin people could guide the northern Caliban's aptitude for "mechanical invention" in a way that would embrace and elevate their cultural aesthetics and enrich their spiritual values. Much like refined New World Greeks, the Latinos would form a union with the crude Romans of the north resulting in a fusion of opposites.<sup>4</sup>

Mexico's José Vasconcelos further championed the supremacy of Latin American culture. In his essay, *La Raza Cósmica* (The Cosmic Race), he told of the impending demise of English based cultures in North America as the Latin American nations reached a maturity that would mark the end of North America's domination of Latin America; a domination that followed the decay and collapse of the Spanish Empire in the Americas. Vasconcelos believed that Hispanic culture would triumph over English culture through the biological fusion of the world's racial stock into a unitary mestizo race that he referred to as the "cosmic race." In his view, Spanish culture would win out because of English culture's refusal to assimilate biologically with other races. He maintained that the Spanish had the "advantage of [a] tradition [that has] greater facility

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<sup>4</sup> Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America*, 194.

of sympathy toward strangers.” The Spanish willingness to amalgamate was based on the “abundance of love” characteristic of the Spanish creation of a New World race composed of Spanish, Black, and Native American cultures. Vasconcelos felt that this amalgamation had a unique mission declaring that “our civilization, with all of its defects, may be the chosen one to assimilate and transform mankind into a new type; that within our civilization, the warp, the multiple and the rich plasma of future humanity is being prepared.”<sup>5</sup>

Vasconcelos stated that Latin American civilization would become ascendant as the Latin American states unified into a super-national cultural and political block, reversing their nineteenth century descent into powerlessness. Once Latin American civilization became ascendant the world would experience a utopian emergence of an aesthetic wonderland of love and passion where *Latino* intuition would win out over cold, impersonal, machine-like *Norteño* reason as man ascended into newfound heights of boundless human joy. Vasconcelos believed that the instrument of change was not man; it was some transcendent force that he referred to as a “Spirit,” “God,” or “Destiny.” Steeped in mystical prophecy, his vision seemed to lack an institutional path for the creation of this Latin American utopia.<sup>6</sup>

Vasconcelos, in *La Raza Cosmica*, described the term *mestizaje*. This concept was the product of the Mexican Revolution expressed in official rhetoric, mythology and public ceremonies. It insisted that race, with certain racial predispositions, can, through mixing, generate a new better race, not a herd of “half-breed mongrels,” the common

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<sup>5</sup> Ruben Flores, “States of Culture, 47-50; José Vasconcelos *La Raza Cós mica* 17

<sup>6</sup> Ruben Flores, “States of Culture, 49, 51.

observation of nineteenth and early twentieth century North Americans. Thus *mestizaje*, as a concept, valorized mixed blood heritage and gave it a Hispanic nationalistic or pan-nationalist understanding of identity.<sup>7</sup>

The argument against Latin American racial inferiority was strengthened by the anthropologist Franz Boas and new anthropological theories. Previously, during the Nineteenth century, anthropologists aided colonialists' efforts by providing scientific proof of the inferiority of subject peoples but, by the turn of the century, the scientific community began to discard these positivists' theories in favor of pragmatic relativistic philosophies that rejected rigid systems and universal laws. Boas spearheaded these efforts with his studies of specific cultures and their unique historical contexts. He made it his personal mission to rid his discipline of all "amateurs and armchair specialists" and their abuse of scholarly standards. In doing this he sought to formulate scientific conclusions "free of prejudice and distrustful of all schemes."<sup>8</sup>

Highly influential, Boas brought anthropology from the museum to the University. Teaching at Columbia University for 38 years he trained some of the twentieth century's most important names: Manuel Gamio, Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Ruth Benedict, Gilberto Freyre, Margaret Mead, and M.F. Ashley Montagu. As a teacher he trained his students to rely on data gathered by systematic scientific methods like ethnographic and stratographic analysis instead of inferred and speculative syntheses.

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<sup>7</sup> Gregory Velazco y Trianosky "Mestizaje and Hispanic Identity," Wiley Online Library, January 1, 2010, written by author October 16, 2008, accessed Sept 17, 2013, [http://www.academia.edu/809628/Mestizaje\\_and\\_Hispanic\\_Identity](http://www.academia.edu/809628/Mestizaje_and_Hispanic_Identity) "Mestizaje and Indigenous Identities," accessed Sept 17, 2013, <http://jg.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/Peasants/mestizaje.html>

<sup>8</sup> Kelly R. Swarthout (*Assimilating the Primitive*, 2004), 13.; Marvin Harris *The Rise of Anthropological Theory*, 250. Actually Boas, by today's standards, would have been considered an amateur since he was originally trained as a physicist in Germany.

He emphasized “cultural relativism” inspired by Immanuel Kant’s insistence that “everything and everyone must be understood on its own terms....without reference to anything else or to any other purpose.” Boas felt that the cultural evolution of distinct societies could not be hierarchically compared since all groups of people possessed the same talents and qualities. He considered the assumption of white superiority held by the European scientific community high facile.<sup>9</sup>

One of the concepts Boas emphasized to his students was that “culture” was distinct from “race.” He accepted the validity of a scientific study of race but sought to restrict use of the term race to biological, “value free” definitions. Racial characteristics were considered innate, the product of ancestry, while cultural traits were considered to be something that one acquired through environmental experience. He concluded that all organisms possessed the same ability for advancement and, if provided with positive environments, could progress at the same rate. On the basis of his doctrine of cultural relativity he was highly critical of evolutionist’s attempts to rank races by achievement. In his opinion, assumptions of achievements based on racial qualities relied on nothing but suppositions and inferences offering no real conclusions. Thus one could not deduce evolutionary uniformities between cultures nor could one judge one race superior or inferior to another <sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> William Y Adams *The Philosophical Roots of Anthropology*, 277, 298-317.; Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York: McMillan, 1938), 2-3.; Kelly R. Swarthout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” 13-14.

<sup>10</sup> Kamala Visweswaran “‘Race’ and the Culture of Anthropology” *American Anthropologist* (Dec. 1998); 71-72.; Kelly R. Swarthout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” 13-14.; Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, 2-3.;



Boas's race theories became a major impetus behind Latin American cultural nationalism experienced in Mexico and Brazil in the 1920s and 30s. A major influence was his study of racial hybridity in the 1890s. Working with Indians in the U.S.'s Pacific Northwest, Boas employed principles of physical anthropology, measuring and comparing stature, crania, fertility, and growth patterns of Indians and white-Indian hybrids. In his findings Boas refuted the popular notion that racial hybrids were inferior. In fact, he reached the opposite conclusion, finding that in many ways racial hybrids were superior to "pure stock."<sup>11</sup>

His new ideas on race and his principle of cultural relativism provided Latin American countries with the necessary tools to formulate a response to Western allegations of their inferiority. It can be argued that Boas's training of Manuel Gamio and Gilberto Freyre helped these two to give Mexico's *mestizofilia* and Brazilian *lusotropicalismo* their national focus. No longer did Latin Americans have to accept a standard of inferiority based on European standards. Latin American social scientists determined that it was their patriotic duty to study primitives and anthropological studies became an important part of these country's nation building strategies, strategies that involved the inclusion of the regions indigenous people in the "discourse of futurity," the nation building efforts to build a Western sense of modernity. The advocates of these new ideas realized that knowledge of the nation's historical patrimony was necessary in order to create a sense of common origin amongst the political corporate entity that was the

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<sup>11</sup> George W. Stocking *Race, Culture and Evolution*, 178.

people of the nation. By expanding the knowledge of the autochthonous peoples living within the nation social scientists could devise plans for their assimilation.<sup>12</sup>

Kelly Swarthout points out that:

“Scientists like Gamio and Freyre used Boas’s anthropological constructs on race to defend their civilizations from the disabling effects of Eurocentric scientific determinism and to predict future grandeur for the mix-race civilizations of Latin America. Mexican *mestizofila* of the 1920s and Brazilian *lusotropicalismo* of the 1930s glorified race mixing and made it the key factor around which national identity was formulated.”<sup>13</sup>

While Latin American intellectuals began to praise the merits of mixed blooded people who were once thought of as enslaved by nature many of the United States leading thinkers began to note an uncomfortable development in the midst of the “high achievements of men of intellectual art.” Some feared that the material gain, the technical sophistication, and the unrelenting conquest of nature came at the cost of morality and resulted in a soul killing materialism that undermined the cultural vitality of the people. They postulated that whites devoted too much of their scarce nervous energy to the enervating activities of white civilization. The result was an exhausting enfeebling disease that physicians, like Dr. George M. Beard, referred to as neurasthenia. They argued that this was an ailment specific only to white civilization for only the high level of civilization achieved by whites could weaken their bodies and drain their nervous systems. People like the psychologist, educator, G. Stanley Hall, sought a remedy this ailment by reconstructing education and childhood development through a controlled reintroduction of acceptable levels of savagery. He referred to this as racial recapitulation. According to this concept, normal human development depended on a

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<sup>12</sup> Kelly R. Swarthout “*Assimilating the Primitive*, 15-16.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-16.

recognition of basic human savagery and that this natural tendency needed “civilized” outlets, like sports or an occasional bout of physticuffs. Through the channeling of savagery and a healthy savage boyhood civilized men could develop powerful resources of necessary nervous energy.<sup>14</sup>

Hall believed that through the application of racial recapitulation men could develop into super-men resolving the problem of overcivilized effeminacy, where manly strength, intelligence, sense of altruism, and morality were seriously sapped leaving the white male weak and vulnerable. By removing this threat to white dominance mankind could strive towards racial perfection. By the early twentieth century Lamarckian evolutionary ideas, like racial recapitulation were under assault in Western Europe and the United States. In response many, like Hall, began to look toward “primitives,” non-white “adolescent” races as the hope for the future. Some sought to use this hope for the future thorough racial mixing and others believed in salvation through the emulation of primitive lifestyles. In doing so they embraced primitivism.<sup>15</sup>

Western Primitivism was a philosophical construct that criticized society’s lack of connectedness with its natural surroundings. It was part of an ongoing longing by technically complex societies for a return to a “simple,” emotive, instinctual path. Primitivists opposed the belief that history followed an ascending path resulting in the ultimate perfection of the human species. Primativists often believed in a descent rather than an assent of human civilization. They believed in a time when man, in a more

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<sup>14</sup> Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America*, 194.; Gail Bederman *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 94, 96-97, 117-119.

<sup>15</sup> Gail Bederman *Manliness and Civilization*, 77, 94, 96-98, 117-119, 184-186.

primitive state, lived in greater harmony with nature; a mythical “Golden Age,” a time superior to the corrupted, overly rational, modern technological present.<sup>16</sup>

While glorifying a primitive “Golden Age” Western Primitivism did its admiring from a safe “civilized” vantage point. Primitivism was about “playing the savage in a civilized world.” From this perspective its believers could praise the virtues of a simple life lived in harmony with nature without actually having to live the life of a primitive. The “noble savage,” a variant of the primitivist’s “Natural Man,” served as a mythical reminder to “civilized” society of who they ought to admire and how, ideally, they should live in an ideal world. While admiring the “noble savage, primitivists did not want the return of modern society to the material conditions of a primitive existence. They believed that it was possible to instill in modern society a love of Nature and a pursuit of a pure and spontaneous life without having to endure the physical hardships of a materially primitive lifestyle.<sup>17</sup>

Primitivism was especially popular in the creative arts where it gave meaning to a dreamlike inner world of feeling and thought as opposed to a conscious, external, quantifiable reality. One primitivist, the writer D.H. Lawrence, felt confined by the mechanical consciousness of the modern world and sought to imbue it with a primitive “blood consciousness.” As a European Romantic primitivist he sought to recuperate man’s psychic “oneness” and reconcile humankind with nature; to reconcile

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<sup>16</sup> William Y. Adams *The Philosophical Roots of Anthropology*, 78.; Michael Bell, *Primitivism* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1972), 1

<sup>17</sup> William York Tindall. *D.H. Lawrence and Susan His Cow* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 87.; Kelly R. Swarhout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” 4-5.

consciousness with unconsciousness. Like his American primitivist counter parts he saw the Americas as a place of renewal.<sup>18</sup>

Latin Americans were uneasy with these primitivistic preoccupations. Their reaction to primitivism marked a contradictory nature in Latin cultural discourse. Post-independence Creoles favored a Western-oriented “discourse of futurity” where pre-Columbian Indigenous civilizations were written out the continent’s past in the interest of Western oriented nation building. Nor could a primitivist attack on reason appeal to those who saw it as an attack on modernity and the notion of progress necessary for the construction of national identity. While many, in the North and in Western Europe, questioned modernity and industrial and urban development as things responsible for the dehumanization of society the majority of the Latin intelligentsia showed little interest in rejecting it. It was generally thought that their countries had yet to achieve modernity. Latin Americans saw a return to their roots as a way to recuperate their emotive spontaneous state but they didn’t see such a return as a movement to reject Western modernization. In this they were more like progressive vitalists.<sup>19</sup>

Progressive vitalism was like primitivism in its quest to reintegrate humankind’s emotive instinctual capacities. But while primitivists often sought a return to a primal prelapsarian existence, vitalism was a progressive doctrine that sought to unify mind and

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<sup>18</sup> D.H. Lawrence *Fantasia of the Unconscious. Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1971), 183.; D.H. Lawrence *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence* James T. Boulton ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), vol. 3, 25; vol. 4, 541. Roger Ebbatson *Lawrence and the Nature Tradition* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1987), 5.; Kelly R. Swarthout “Assimilating the Primitive,” 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> Carlos J. Alonso *The Burden of Modernity: The Rhetoric of Cultural Discourse in Spanish America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 15-17 Kelly R. Swarthout “Assimilating the Primitive,” 6-8.; Renato Rosaldo, Forward. *Hybrid Cultures. Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* by Nestor García Canclini Trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L López (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), xxi

matter in an ascending process towards eventual perfection. Vitalism fulfilled the spiritual quest of its practitioners while maintaining that national progress be continual and forward facing; onward and upward. For the vitalists the synthesis of reason and intuition was to be achieved through progress, not regression. An example of this thought can be seen in Mexico in the 1920s. Here the state sought to incorporate the indigenous people while, at the same time, seeking to eliminate indigenous cultural traits. While Vasconcelos glorified the mestizo as a spiritual redemption of the people he had little regard for what he saw as the ugly, material aspects of the indigenous peasant or the urban proletariat. And while Manuel Gamio expressed admiration for Pre-Columbian civilization he viewed the living Indian as someone who must be assimilated and through assimilation moved forward into a modern progressive state.

Progressive vitalism was the motivator of Indigenismo, Mexico's program to solve the "Indian problem." Officially Indigenismo intended to transform indigenous people into citizens of a Mestizo nation. This was an idealized Mestizo nation that was to be the product of genetic miscegenation and cultural hybridity. Indigenismo followed two objectives: One to achieve a national program of integration and second, to portray indigenous people as the foundation of an emerging modern nation. While glorifying indigenous people as the key components of national ideology and the threads of the ideal revolutionary tapestry it offered indigenous people little access to the creation of the policies that effected their lives. Rather than be dominated by an obsession with an ideal

past, the past was homogenized and recreated in a manner befitting of a future that was onward and upward in scope.<sup>20</sup>

Connected to this sense of progressive vitalism was a sense, reinforced by the barbarous horrors of WWI, that Europe and European culture were becoming spiritually and intellectually bankrupt. Oswald Spengler in, *The Decline of the West*, dismissed the evolutionary notion of the linear progression of mankind through stages of “ancient,” “medieval,” and “modern” as a “incredibly jejune and meaningless scheme.” Instead, he suggested that world history was part of an organic cycle of life, death, and rebirth; much like the seasons with the rebirth of spring and death marked by winter. According to Spengler Western civilization, filled with materialism, skepticism and agnosticism, was in decline as it entered its winter. He believed that it would be replaced by other ascending civilizations. Many intellectuals, both in North and Latin America, saw the new world as entering a “spring” and found a new sense of common ground through a sense of cultural superiority to a “decadent” Europe.<sup>21</sup>

One man, looking for the new world’s spring like aspects and concerned with modernity’s soul killing materialism, would, on a January night in 1921, witness the Pueblo Red Deer Ceremony, and “discover the American Indian;” a moment that would mark the beginning of a change in U.S. Indian policy. This significant shift in Indian policy in the Americas resulted from an encounter in Taos, New Mexico between the former social worker John Collier, his associate from his Gotham years, Mabel Dodge

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<sup>20</sup> Maria L. Olin Muñoz, “‘We Speak For Ourselves’: The First National Congress of Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Indigenismo In Mexico, 1968-1982” (PhD diss. University of Arizona, 2009), 75-76.

<sup>21</sup> Oswald Spengler *The Decline of the West* (New York: Knopf, 1926, originally published 1918), 7, 16, 12.; Kelly R. Swarthout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” 20-21.; Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America*, 194.; Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of things Mexican*, 10, 193

Luhan, and D.H. Lawrence, the popular novelist and mystic seeker of human regeneration. Lawrence and Collier were lured, enticed, and implored to join Luhan at Taos: Lawrence to write about the pueblo people and Collier to use his considerable organizing talents to fight the Bursum Bill, a piece of legislation that threatened the economic future of the Pueblo Indians, including the people of the Taos Pueblo; a community held in high esteem by Mabel Luhan.<sup>22</sup>

While residing at Mabel's Taos artist colony Collier and Lawrence witnessed the Taos Pueblo's Red Deer Ceremony. Lawrence, who urged Americans to "catch the spirit of their dark aboriginal continent...starting with Montezuma," declared the ceremony to be a remnant of "a vast old religion which once swayed the earth" and "lingers in unbroken practice there in New Mexico." He thought it something, "Older perhaps than

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<sup>22</sup> William Willard "The Plumed Serpent and the Red Atlantis" *Wicazo Sa Review* Vol. 4. No. 2 (Autumn, 1988), 17-18. The Bursum Bill allowed non-Indians to retain any land they had squatted on before 1902. It further gave the state court the right to settle any future land disputes. Since state courts were in the hands of whites who were generally adversarial to Indian rights, unscrupulous non-Indians would have promptly brought valuable land into dispute. Senator Holm O. Bursum of New Mexico introduced S.R. 2274, which effectively legalized almost all non-Indian claims on Pueblo lands. One section called on state courts (which would certainly favor non-Indians) to adjudicate Pueblo water rights and contested land. The Pueblo would be compensated in the form of "public agricultural land" (which was virtually nonexistent) or cash (which could in no way help them continue their way of life). Drafted in large part by Interior Secretary Albert Bacon Fall, the Bursum bill did not consider the option of compensating the squatters, for the underlying philosophy of the bill's framers was to dissolve the reservations and develop New Mexico's public domain lands. (The idea of compensating the squatters was later introduced in hearings by Pueblo leader Pablo Abeita in 1923.) The Bursum bill passed the Senate in 1922 with no public hearings. In the House of Representatives, however, Congressman William E. Borah of Idaho called for public hearings, so the bill was referred back to the Senate Committee on Public Lands. The fight against the Bursum bill was one of the first modern Indian rights campaigns (see, for example, General, Levi and the fight for Iroquois sovereignty in the early 1920s) as well as the prototype of many Indian legal battles of the 20th century. What made it modern was the relative absence of Christian organizations and specifically Christian priorities and its embodiment of a critique of American culture: The insistence that the United States did not benefit by destroying traditional Native cultures, but that, on the contrary, the survival of Native cultures was of great importance to all Americans. The public education effort was very sophisticated, especially with John Collier's impassioned articles and the writer and art patron Mabel Dodge Luhan's publicity campaign, which first enlisted the support of well-known artists. Mabel Dodge had by that time met the Pueblo Indian Antonio Luhan who she married as soon as she divorced her previous husband.



anything in the world.” To him the Taos people were a “Red Atlantis” preserved from a time before the flood. Collier believed the ceremony was a vision of “an eternally inexhaustible earth and a forever lasting peace.”<sup>23</sup>

After spending time in Taos with Luhan, the self-styled “culture carrier,” and her menagerie of mystical pioneers, D.H. Lawrence traveled to Mexico equipped with a letter of introduction from John Collier addressed to Collier’s long time correspondent the “indianist” Manuel Gamio. While he was in Mexico, Lawrence wrote *The Plumed Serpent*, advocating the need for the revival of the supposed ancient Atlantean religion through a second Mexican revolution that would destroy all remnants of Spanish colonial religion and culture and restore Mexico to a pre-Hispanic Aztec state. Lawrence spoke “of the shadow of the old, preflood world, the old mode of consciousness, the old dark will, the unconcern for death, the subtle, dark consciousness, non-cerebral, but vertebrate, the strange, dark intercommunication” of, “That which is aboriginal in America (and) still belongs to the ways of the world before the flood.” The writer Frank Waters suggests that Lawrence’s writing proposes that, “the dark, somber serape clad Indians have the magic of the Red Indians of the North.” In Lawrence’s view, both Indians and whites needed to dance the Round Dance played to the rhythm of Pueblo drums.<sup>24</sup>

John Collier wrote his own account of the Red Deer ceremony and the people that danced it in the “Red Atlantis” an article published in the October 1922 issue of *Survey Graphic*. Much like Lawrence, Collier claimed to witness “a whole race of men” who epitomized the “very expanse of cosmic survival and victory” possessed of the “inner

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<sup>23</sup> William Willard “The Plumed Serpent and the Red Atlantis,” 18, 20-22.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22

core-value, complex and various,” that “has not been killed.” They were, to him, like the lost continent of Atlantis, rediscovered; a Red Atlantis. In the article he called for the recognition of Indian civil rights, the conservation of the remaining reservations through cooperative enterprise, the preservation of the communal tribal way of life, and agricultural and industrial assistance. As an agent with the Indian Welfare Committee of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, he fought to stop the Bursum Bill winning a victory for the Pueblo people by agitating for the successful defeat of the bill. Encouraged by this victory Collier would utilize his organizing talents and his skills as a political manipulator in a mission to bring, in his belief, a sense of conscience to the cold musty halls of the Office of Indian Affairs.<sup>25</sup>

John Collier was born in Atlanta, Georgia on May 4, 1884. Collier’s family was wealthy and socially prominent. His mother, Susie Rawson, was the only child of a transplanted Vermonter, who after walking to Georgia, established a farm, became a wealthy slave-owner, and later made a fortune speculating on Atlanta real-estate. This fortune would support the Collier family for many years. John’s father, Charles A. Collier, was the son of a Georgia jurist who had moved from Milledgeville to Atlanta hoping to profit from that town’s boom as a railroad center. Charles studied law but was drawn into a career in banking and commerce. By 1890 he was the vice president of the Capital City Bank of Atlanta as well as the president of the Gates City Gaslight Company

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<sup>25</sup> William Willard “The Plumed Serpent and the Red Atlantis,” 19, 24-25.; John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1947), 19-20.

and the Refrigerating Construction Company. His growing business stature led to involvement in civic affairs and local politics.<sup>26</sup>

In 1875 the twenty-seven year old Charles married twenty-two year old Susie. The beautiful Susie and the gifted, charming Charles seemed the epitome of grace but John latter wrote that the charm concealed an emotional coldness that marked a family “tradition of undemonstrativeness.” John was the middle child in a family with seven children: three boys and four girls. His oldest sister, Julia, married Julian Harris, the son of writer Joel Chandler Harris. Until he was thirteen he was blessed with a happy childhood but not one without mishaps. When he was a baby John nearly died of pneumonia and when he was four he was bedridden for almost a year after a fall from a bannister at the family home resulted in a broken arm. When it failed to heal properly the arm was rebroken. Collier’s siblings resented his long convalescence feeling that he was babied and spoiled but it did enhance his love for reading and heightened a deep sense of introspection.<sup>27</sup>

John states that the family was possessed, “of a vigorous Methodist tradition,” and lived, “with a constant atmosphere of public work.” This atmosphere was spurred on by Charles Collier’s interest in civic affairs. This interest led to his involvement in the building of the “New South,” an attempt to prescribe an attractive future for the American South based on a growing economy. As a proponent of the “New South,” he was involved in the promotion of a number of expositions crowned by the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition of 1895. This work secured his election to the office

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<sup>26</sup> Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation: John Collier and the Origins of Indian Policy Reform*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983) 3-5

<sup>27</sup> Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation*, 3-4

of Mayor of Atlanta. During his four years as Mayor, Charles Collier secured the reduction of the city's property taxes through a program of efficiencies and campaigned for the public ownership of utilities. He was able to secure city ownership of electrical utilities but failed in his bid for expansion of the municipal owned water department. In his farewell address, in 1899, Charles Collier denounced the monopoly operated by the street railroad company and admitted that the city had failed to provide adequate schools for Atlanta's Negro population. During this time John Collier's mother imparted on her son a sensitivity towards nature and a love of literature that John Collier would combine with his father's inspiration for a "higher calling" in public service.<sup>28</sup>

Then, suddenly, the Collier family experienced a change of fortune. The recollections of this change of fortune were a matter of dispute between John and other members of the family. John claimed that in 1897 a financial scandal tarnished his father's reputation. Collier's mother, distressed by the event, tried to sooth herself with laudanum and died from an overdose. Records do indicate that Susie Collier had been suffering from depression which may have been enhanced by her husband's depletion of the family fortune. Collier's account of his mother's death fails to note that after spending time in New York, where she was treated for "nervous prostration," she became ill with a fever after having her tooth extracted and died a few weeks later. John Collier claims that his father, grief-stricken from the loss of his wife, committed suicide but police records

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<sup>28</sup> Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation*, 3-4, 8-9; Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977), 4.; 800,000 people attended the Cotton States and International Exposition which would become best remembered for the "Atlanta Compromise" speech given by Booker T. Washington on September 18, promoting racial cooperation.

indicate, and other family members claim, that it was the result of a shooting accident, possibly the result of an effort to deal with an intruder.<sup>29</sup>

After his mother's death, Collier, who had earlier attended a private Methodist school, spent a year living in Sharon, Georgia the home of a Catholic convent school operated by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. During this one-year retreat he became close to many of the nuns and briefly turned away from his families' Methodist faith embracing Roman Catholicism. At this time John Collier devised a mythology of his parent's death as the result of the product of the strains of the modern world. Blaming modernity for his families' reversal of fortune, Collier later wrote that after his father's death he promised that he would not seek "any success in the society" involving the capitalistic process that he believed was responsible for destruction of his parents. In his oddly esoteric, poetic style he later recalled standing beside his parent's grave in October 1900 and pledging, "To live in behalf of the world's hope." He declared that, "I saw my life, short or long, as one among the countless billions wherein the striving of the cosmic purpose moves, in joy that contains regret and pain, toward ends which are multitudinous, yet are one, on the road which is the goal." This would be one of many cases where Collier sought to "enhance" his personal history.<sup>30</sup>

At first the road he traveled was a lost, rambling road of confusion. After his father's death Collier felt "the doom of the house of Usher had descended on the family." He finished high school where he "learned nothing practically." Grieving deeply, he

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<sup>29</sup> Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation*, 3-4; Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 4.; John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 25, 31

<sup>30</sup> Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 4-5. Taken from John Collier, "Autobiographical Sketch, July 23, 1959, Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico," Collier Papers; Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation*, 10-11.

found solace in his summers spent wandering through the southern Appalachians. It was at this time that he developed a deep devotion to wild places, far from man's imprint, where he could experience some sort of rejuvenating catharsis.<sup>31</sup>

After rejuvenating, Collier enrolled at Columbia University. While at Columbia, Collier enthusiastically read Prince Peter Kropotkin's book, *Mutual Aid*. In this book Kropotkin advocated a classless society, repudiating Social Darwinist ideas of competition and survival of the fittest. Kropotkin was troubled by the idea that the strongest or fittest should survive and flourish in society, while the weak and unfit should be allowed to die. Instead, Kropotkin called for a society where mutual support among members resulted in an ever improving form of social evolution. An advocate of the "noble savage," Kropotkin emphasized the importance of cooperation among pre-capitalist societies like the Eskimos and other "primitives" who shared their food, lived on communal tracts of land, and followed the general rule of "each for all." Collier believed that *Mutual Aid* was "one of the great books" on community life, proving that "cooperation and reciprocity" had been the mode of human life for centuries. In his opinion, Kropotkin proved that these communities, "like countless flowers in a long April," held within them the ways of "enriching, tempering, and socializing" the human psyche.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation*, 11.

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 8. Prince Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin; (December 9, 1842 – February 8, February 1921) was a Russian zoologist, evolutionary theorist, philosopher, scientist, revolutionary, philologist, economist, activist, geographer, writer, and prominent anarcho-communist. Kropotkin advocated a communal society free from central government and based on voluntary associations between workers. He wrote many books, pamphlets and articles, the most prominent being *The Conquest of Bread* and *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, and his principal

Along with Kropotkin, Collier studied the writings of William Morris. He especially appreciated Morris's *Sigurd the Volsung*, a story Morris adapted from an Icelandic saga. In the story Morris placed an emphasis on heroic deeds and noble self-sacrifice, while romanticizing old archaic codes of honor that respected family and community; something Morris contrasted with his observations about the "crass money grubbing commercialism" of modern industrial life. Collier agreed with Morris's disapproval of social advancement through wealth.<sup>33</sup>

Collier also identified with Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of *Übermensch*; the belief that it was the task of one's life to order society to "invoke the beyond man from the present man" and follow a form of development that sought personal improvement via inner transcendence in order to rise above one's limitations. Collier supported the sociologist Lester Frank Ward's advocacy of the concept of "sociocracy" which advocated the "scientific control of social forces by the collective mind of society." He shared Ward's belief that social advancement could come through education and

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scientific offering, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*. He also contributed the article on anarchism to the *Encyclopædia Britannica Eleventh Edition*.

<sup>33</sup> Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 8. William Morris (March, 24 1834 – October 3, 1896) was an English textile designer, artist, writer, and libertarian Marxist associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and English Arts and Crafts Movement. He founded a design firm in partnership with the artist Edward Burne-Jones, and the poet and artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti which profoundly influenced the decoration of churches and houses into the early 20th century. As an author, illustrator and medievalist, he helped to establish the modern fantasy genre, and was a direct influence on postwar authors such as J.R.R. Tolkien. He was also a major contributor to reviving traditional textile arts and methods of production, and one of the founders of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, now a statutory element in the preservation of historic buildings in the UK. Morris wrote and published poetry, fiction, and translations of ancient and medieval texts throughout his life. His best-known works include *The Defense of Guenevere and Other Poems* (1858), *The Earthly Paradise* (1868–1870), *A Dream of John Ball* (1888), the utopian *News from Nowhere* (1890), and the fantasy romance *The Well at the Worlds End* (1896). He was an important figure in the emergence of socialism in Britain, founding the Socialist League in 1884, but breaking with that organization over goals and methods by the end of the decade. He devoted much of the rest of his life to the Kelmscott Press, which he founded in 1891. Kelmscott was devoted to the publishing of limited-edition, illuminated-style print books. The 1896 Kelmscott edition of the *Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* is considered a masterpiece of book design.

scientific method. Influenced by Ward, Collier advocated the intelligent direction of social activity towards a desired and understood end. He shared Ward's belief that the psychic force of the mind and the spirit could be used to control and direct this evolutionary process.<sup>34</sup>

After studying in Columbia University, Collier traveled to Europe where he poured over the writings of utopian socialists. He took their ideas to heart when he moved to New York City in 1907. In New York he became the Civic Secretary for the People's Institute. The People's Institute, founded by Charles Sprague Smith in 1897, sought to teach the theories and practices of government and social philosophy to workers and recent immigrants to New York City. It sponsored lectures, classes, concerts, and other community activities at the Cooper Union and various New York locations principally in Manhattan's Lower East Side. The Institute was representative of the Progressive Movement that was sweeping the United States. Progressives sought to address the social changes of the late nineteenth century caused by industrialization and rapid population growth in urban cities: the result of rural migration and the arrival of immigrants from Europe. Progressive reformers attempted to address quality of life issues like government corruption, child exploitation, poor sanitary conditions, health problems, and lack of social services.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen J. Kunitz and John Collier jr. "The Social Philosophy of John Collier" *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Summer, 1971), 215-216; John Collier 1914.; John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, (Denver: Sage Books 1963) 116.; People's Institute Records 1897-1933, The New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division [http://archives.nypl.org/uploads/collection/pdf\\_finding\\_aid/peoplesinst.pdf](http://archives.nypl.org/uploads/collection/pdf_finding_aid/peoplesinst.pdf) cited September 30, 2014. Charles Sprague Smith (1853-1910) was born in Andover, Massachusetts, the son of Charles and Caroline Louisa (Sprague) Smith. A gifted child and the son of middle class parents, Smith graduated from Phillips Academy at fifteen and graduated from Amherst College with a Bachelor



After going to work for the Institute Collier assumed the editorship of the Institute's bulletin. Collier was a vigorous opponent of the Americanization policy that pressured immigrants to give up their native languages and cultures. Working as a progressive reformer in New York, he advocated societal reform and the return to what he saw as an age-old concept of societal communalism. Collier believed in a society where people of all ranks were bound together by a sense of community and shared obligations. To him deviant behavior was the result of an erosion of traditional norms and their replacement with new anti-social patterns resulting from the socio-economic changes of the nineteenth century. These changes had destroyed old social bonds substituting selfish economic forces in place of mutual concerns.<sup>36</sup>

But he believed that this damage could be undone because he assumed that human nature was not set and immutable but was malleable and shapeable within the context of a group. It was within a group that behavior was learned, either social or anti-social, and change in the composition of a group could result in the modification of individual behavior. He would later say, "...the individual fares best when he is the member of a group faring best." Collier maintained that "All human beings, in young childhood at least, are members of groups. The group is the tree and they are the fruit it bears. At least up to a certain age level, the individual reft from his group is hurt or destroyed." As an

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of Arts in 1874. Smith's early adulthood was spent abroad in Berlin studying languages and literature in Berlin and at the Sorbonne in Paris. Returning to the United States in 1880, Smith embarked upon a career as an educator. After teaching at Columbia University, Harvard University and elsewhere, Smith turned his focus on the inadequacies of the American education system. As a result of his concerns, Smith founded the Comparative Literature Society in 1895. This Society, a precursor to the People's Institute, aimed to integrate immigrants into American society. In Smith's book *Working with the People* (New York: A. Wessels, 1904, p. 2), he defines the People's Institute as "[a] new institution, upon whose board of control all sections should have representation, and whose platform, free from class or partisan influence, should become a forum for the untrammled discussion of all subjects affecting the people's interest..."

<sup>36</sup> Stephen J. Kunitz and John Collier jr. "The Social Philosophy of John Collier," 215-216; John Collier 1914.; John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 116.

urban reformer, Collier shared the common perception of many American sociologists that traditional communities were succumbing to the social malaise of gangs and deteriorating morality; the product of the crucible of the growing urban slum.. He believed that immigrant groups, when exposed to the isolating individualism of the modern *Laissez-faire* capitalist world, experienced a breakdown of traditional group cohesion.<sup>37</sup>

Collier expressed a belief that the quality of life was in decline. He stated that “society as shaping and sustaining life was implicitly, even explicitly denied to exist” by the Industrial Revolution whose doctrines of “free market” and laissez-faire resulted in individuals controlled by a universal, and therefore interchangeable, rationale of calculating economic self-interest. Collier felt that many viewed the law of the free market as the laws of life, dominating conduct and salvation, but he believed that these laws wrought havoc on societies, on heritages, on ethical and esthetic values, on family and community life, and even on the natural resources of the earth itself.<sup>38</sup>

He was part of a group who looked back fondly at rural village America and romanticized traditional feudal and tribal societies. They believed that the most important characteristic of society was a web of mutually shared, reciprocal obligations. Stephen Kuntz says that Collier “believed that only organized groups of people, joined in tasks of

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<sup>37</sup> Kurtz 215-216 and John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 93, 116; John Collier “United States Indian Administration as a Laboratory of Ethnic Relations” *Social Research* vol. 12, no. 3 (September 1945), 302.

<sup>38</sup> John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 93; John Collier and Edward M. Barrows *The City where Crime is Play* (New York: The People’s Institute, 1914), 457.; John Collier *The Indians of the Americas*, 23-25.

cooperative self-expression could discover a new state of social consciousness and thus save man” from the ravages of the industrial age.<sup>39</sup>

His views were part of a common thread of social thought dating back into the nineteenth century: a reaction to the perception of a disintegration of traditional society caused by increasing urbanization and industrialization. For many this was an assumption that before the imposition of modern trends society was harmonious, well integrated, and essentially free of deviant behavior. This is reflected in Collier’s assumptions about grouphood and the atomizing effects of *gesellschaft* on traditional ways of life. He believed in a form of cultural pluralism: a belief that traditional cultures contained something of value not just to themselves but to the rest of America. Collier shared a view with his anthropological consultants that cultures, and the threats to them, possessed a similarity akin to a universal law and, with the knowledge of this law, it was possible for social scientists to “lend assistance to the aeon old genius of the social organism” and save group society from “becoming a dust heap of individuals without links to one another.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Steven J. Kunitz and John Collier “The Social Philosophy of John Collier,”

<sup>40</sup> Stephen Kunitz “The Social Philosophy of John Collier,” 223. The following is taken from a Wikipedia entry but seems to explain the subject well. *Gemeinschaft* (pronounced [gə 'mamʃaft] and *Gesellschaft* German pronunciation: [gə 'zɛlʃaft] (lit. community and society) are categories which were coined by the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies in order to categorize social ties (now called social networks) into two dichotomous sociological types. The dichotomy was proposed by Tönnies as a purely conceptual tool, built up logically, not as an ideal type coined by Max Weber which accentuated the key elements of a historic/social change. According to the dichotomy, social ties can be categorized, on one hand, either as belonging to personal social interactions, roles, values, and beliefs based on such interactions *Gemeinschaft*, German, commonly translated as "community"), or as belonging to indirect interactions, impersonal roles, formal values, and beliefs based on such interactions *Gesellschaft*, German, commonly translated as "society"). *gesellschaft* describes all of the associations in which, a larger group never takes precedence over the individual's self-interest, and these associations lack the same level of shared mores. *Gesellschaft* is maintained through individuals acting in their own self-interest. A modern business is a good example of *gesellschaft*: the workers, managers, and owners may have very little in terms of shared orientations or beliefs, they may not care deeply for the product they are making, but it is in all their self-interest to come to work to make money, and thus the business continues. *Gesellschaft* society involves

This was reflective of a radical conservative impulse towards the recreation of an earlier way of life held by many progressives; a way of life destroyed by the industrial and democratic revolutions of the nineteenth century. If viewed from this perspective, the Progressive Era can be understood as a conservative reaction to the forces unleashed in the last one hundred years. As such, it had much in common with what Robert Nisbit termed the most distinctive and fertile aspect of nineteenth century thought, “Not individualism but the reaction to individualism.” This was expressed as a fear that modern science proscribed a form of individualism that denied an important human drive toward community as it left people without the aid of their fellows in combating the centralizing power of the national state <sup>41</sup>

Holding to such views Collier, in one aspect was a primitivist. He saw in the past a lost but needed ingredient that offered life-affirming lessons for modern life. But he was also a progressive vitalist believing that past lessons needed to be learned not to restore the world to a primeval state but in the interest of onward and upward growth.

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achieved status. You reach your status by education and work, for example, through the attainment of goals, or attendance at Universities. This is contrasted *Gemeinschaft*. Individuals in *Gemeinschaft* are regulated by common mores, and beliefs that people use about the appropriate behavior and responsibility of members of the association, to each other and to the association at large; their ties are characterized by a moderate division of labor, strong personal relationships, strong families, and relatively simple social institutions. In such societies there is seldom a need to enforce indirect social control, due to a direct sense of loyalty an individual feels for *gemeinschaft*. Tönnies saw the family as the most perfect expression of *gemeinschaft*; however, he expected that *gemeinschaft* could be based on shared place and shared belief as well as kinship, and he included globally dispersed religious communities as possible examples of *gemeinschaft*. Gemeinschaft community involves ascribed status. You are given a status by birth. For example, a person that was born of farmer will come to occupy the parent's role until death. The second edition, published in 1912, of work in which Tönnies coined the concept turned out to be an unexpected but lasting success after the first edition was published in 1887 with subtitle "Treatise on Communism and Socialism as Empirical Patterns of Culture", followed by seven more German editions, the last in 1935. It belonged to the general stock of ideas pre-1933 German intellectuals were quite familiar with. The book sparked a revival of corporatist thinking, including the rise of Neo-medievalism, the rise of support for guild socialism, and caused major changes in the field of sociology.” “Gemeinschaft and Gessellschaft,” accessed September 23, 2013,

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gemeinschaft\\_and\\_Gesellschaft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gemeinschaft_and_Gesellschaft)

<sup>41</sup> Stephen Kuntitz “The Social Philosophy of John Collier, 223-224; Robert A. Nisbit, *The Sociological Tradition* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), 8

Like a primitivist he believed in a fusion of the dreamlike, unconscious world of feeling with the rational conscious quantified machine-like world. But the purpose of this meld was not to return mankind to an ancient Garden of Eden but to move the world into a progressive edenistic utopia, were anything was possible and there were no limits to the realm of creativity and growth.

In this forward progressive quest and while working toward this goal of saving communities from themselves, he met and befriended Mabel Dodge, a wealthy social advocate who viewed Blacks and Indians as cultural representatives of primitivism. She believed that these people retained a quality that offered an antidote to the evils of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant materialism. By 1912, Collier had become a frequenter of Mabel Dodge's weekly salons in New York City. This was a place where leading intellectuals of the day gathered to share radical ideas. Dodge was to play a pivotal role in Collier's entry into American Indian advocacy a few years later.<sup>42</sup>

Collier worked at a frenzied pace as a writer, poet, lecturer, and social reformer. One of his jobs was the organization of pageants: events that showcased and valorized unique cultural aspects of New York's immigrant population. To train people in the establishment of community centers, which would function as a medium for the salvation of community values and the retention of culture, Collier established a training school for community workers and becoming editor of the publication of the National Community

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<sup>42</sup> Joel Pfister *Individuality Incorporated: Indians and the Multicultural Modern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 154-155.; Kenneth Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 16-17. Mabel presided over one of the most famous salons in American history at 23 Fifth Avenue. From 1913 to 1916 she hosted "Wednesday Evenings" at her New York home, a gathering spot for pre-World War I "movers and shakers" who supported avant-garde ideas in the arts, politics and society. Revolutionary at the time, salon topics ranged from psychoanalyst A. A. Brill discoursing on the ideas of Freud, journalist Hutchins Hapgood debating the virtues of free love, or Emma Goldman presenting an anarchist's view of working-class struggles.

Center Conference. In 1917 the election loss of his key ally, Mayor John Purroy Mitchel, resulted in a loss of funding. During the war the People's Institute, seeking to survive, pursued federal backing. Collier, along with others attempted to justify their work as part of the war effort. The activist nature of government during the war helped maintain the Institute, but the shift to conservatism in post WWI American resulted in a total evaporation of funding and support.<sup>43</sup>

Later on, Collier attributed the failure of the People's Institute and his endeavors to the defeat of the Mitchell administration, the loss of financial support for his training school and general collapse of the community center movement following the end of WW I. But the most serious reason for his failure he attributed to the triumph of the "gesellschaft mode of life." He stated that the People's Institute was formed, "expressly to counteract this isolating of the self within the crowd," but attempts "to bring to the common folk of New York... the gemeinschaft mode of life (the sufficing brotherhood within innumerable local communities which are moved by shared purposes)... faded before the scorching onset of the gesellschaft mode of life before the shattering aggressive drive toward competitive utility."<sup>44</sup>

While this explanation, one often expressed by post war intellectuals, might have been, in some sense true, it belies certain traits that Collier had developed by 1920. During his time at the People's Institute Collier developed a lifelong dedication to the democratic process and a belief in the capability and the desire of the common man to participate in matters of public concern. In his dedication to these beliefs it also appears

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<sup>43</sup> Kenneth Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 20-25

<sup>44</sup> John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 93.

that Collier believed that the goals and desires of the common man were identical to his own.<sup>45</sup>

But he came to the conclusion that the common man had to be aroused to participate and needed to be guided towards the right activity. When he created his training school Collier embraced the concept of the need for a “social expert” to direct the activities of the “organized laity.” He felt that this “expert” would need to develop certain techniques that would be used to arouse “the spirit of individual spontaneity and also sustain group thinking” from the residents of the neighborhoods that these experts were working in. Lawrence Kelly states that “the disparity between his earlier faith in the ability of the common man and his new instance upon the elite was possible only because Collier was certain that the ideas and values of the two were identical.” He adds: “It would have been inconceivable to him that substantive differences might arise between him and his constituents or between him and other men of goodwill.”<sup>46</sup>

This characteristic made it difficult for him to work with other people. For Collier was, especially in the area of Indian reform, someone convinced of the righteousness of his cause and the purity of his motives. Because of this, he found it difficult to compromise or to tolerate opposition to his ideas. Those who seemed to question his authority or doubt his methods were, in his opinion, either corrupt, representatives of vested interests, or obviously misguided ignoramuses. This trait, developed during his years with the People’s Institute, produced a black and white sensitivity that turned discord into struggle and struggle into warfare as Collier saw himself as someone

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<sup>45</sup> Lawrence C. Kelley *The Assault on Assimilation*, 96-7.

<sup>46</sup> Lawrence C. Kelley *The Assault on Assimilation*, 97-98.

engaged in righteous crusades against injustice. His unyielding tenacity brought him loyal followers but also implacable foes. It hampered him as a reformer providing him with a dogmatic approach that emphasized the one way to solve problems: his way.<sup>47</sup>

Collier also exhibited what Lawrence Kelly describes as “a difficulty matching means with ends.” Although “...he was usually quite clear in describing means he often found it difficult to articulate ends or goals with the same precision.” This is displayed in his efforts to reform federal Indian policy. In the 1920s he became the leading critic of the federal government’s archaic and antiquated means for the enforcement of Indian programs. The means he addressed for reform won him many supporters. But the vagueness of his statements resulted in support from different camps. Sometimes he seemed to envision the isolation of Indians from the corrupting influence of white society. This appealed to intellectuals who extolled the virtues of “primitive” society. But at other times, he seemed to call for interaction between the two cultures; something that appealed to the supporters of traditional assimilation. This vagueness was advantageous when he was the head of a private organization seeking supporters and donations but when he became the Commissioner of Indian Affairs it became necessary to define goals. He encountered supporters who favored financial autonomy for Native Americans but were opposed to cultural independence. Others favored cultural autonomy but couldn’t accept the idea of Indians governing themselves apart from their white neighbors and some who favored political autonomy but were opposed to financial or cultural independence.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 98-99.

<sup>48</sup> Lawrence C. Kelley *The Assault on Assimilation*, 99-100.



Collier retained the traits he learned in New York and carried them, like baggage, the rest of his life. Disillusioned with the collapse of the community center movement in New York, and complaining about losing faith in “the occidental ethos and genius” as the hope of the world he traveled west seeking believers in millennialist visions. He found work with the California Adult Education program. But his enthusiasm for the Russian Revolution and his calls for an arousal of the spirit of American communalism provoked the wrath of conservatives who saw him as a “red.” As a result, he experienced a demotion of his duties. Discouraged with urban renewal, he resigned his post and seeking self-renewal, planned to travel to Mexico hoping to discover, in the midst of Mexico’s revolution, a working plan for a new social order. He was detoured by an invitation from Mabel Dodge, now Mabel Dodge Luhan, to join her in her new home in Taos. While at Taos he discovered the Native American.<sup>49</sup>

His first contact with the Indians of the Taos Pueblo offered him a vision of what he had hoped to achieve in the slums of New York. He states:

The discovery that came to me there, in that tiny group of a few hundred Indians, was of personality forming institutions, even now unweakened, which had survived repeated and immense historical shocks, and which were going right on in the production of states of mind, attitudes of mind, earth loyalties and human loyalties, amid a context of beauty which suffused all the life of the group. Yet, it might be that only the Indian, among the people of the hemisphere at least, were still the possessors and users of the fundamental secret of human life---the secret of building great personality through the instrumentality of social institutions.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> John Collier , *From Every Zenith*, 116: Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America*, 240. She acquired the name from Antonio Luhan, a Taos Pueblo man she met soon after her arrival in Taos. He became her fourth husband in 1923 and was referred to by Mabel as “Tony”

<sup>50</sup>John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 126. Collier presented these revelations to readers in a 1922 article in *Survey Graphic* titled “The Red Atlantis.”

After his visit to Taos, Collier championed Native Americans as people living in contrast to the individualistic one-dimensional society characteristic of civilized modernity. Fredrick Pikes said that he saw “the Indian as the last remnant of natural perfection, a model that must be preserved for human rejuvenation.” To him the Pueblos possessed the gift of being “both communists and individualists at the same time.” Using the Pueblos as an example of a “Red Atlantis” he declared that Anglo American society could learn from these people important aspects of communal life by adopting or at least learning from the Indian value system or, in his limited viewpoint, the Pueblo values system.<sup>51</sup>

Collier saw virtue in the “primitive democracy” of the Taos Pueblo and, in it, an example that could help rejuvenate American society. But he feared it couldn’t survive without guidance in order to preserve and protect it, and adapt it for survival in a modern world. Thomas Biolsi contends that Collier meant for professionals to maintain control until “some unspecified and mysteriously receding point in the future” when Native Americans would be prepared to manage their own affairs as American citizens. While being enthusiastic about community E.A. Schwartz argues that Collier felt that “only a scientific approach would resolve the problems that the modern world presented to (Native American) communities.” While impressed with the way of life followed by the residents of the Taos Pueblo, Collier was concerned that they might not be able to integrate into “modern economic life” and be able to use the “concepts of modern science” while retaining their “psychic and social present” in a society where each individual had “a communal function status,” and “intense productive group experience.”

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<sup>51</sup> Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America*, 240. Kenneth R. Phillip *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 172.; John Collier, “The Red Atlantis” *Survey* 49, (October 1922), 18.

While in later years he championed the metaphysical powers of his “Red Atlantis,” he “implied that experts could reduce those powers to formulas.”<sup>52</sup>

After witnessing the Red Deer ceremony Collier found a new role, as an advocate of Native rights. But by 1923 he was at war with other reformers over Pueblo related legislation. As a remedy to this problem, he began to enlist people supportive of his stance, forming the American Indian Defense Association with Collier named to the important position of executive secretary. Collier explained the objectives of the AIDA in a pamphlet entitled “Announcement of Purposes.” He stated that the AIDA was interested in the preservation of Indian civilization through educational programs that would encourage rather than suppress group loyalties, the development of native arts and crafts, and religious and social freedom. He expressed his opposition to the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 that dissipated Indian land in the interest of individual properties and the rapid assimilation of Native Americans into the dominant white culture. He suggested that Indians receive agricultural lands and an extension of the trust period on allotted lands to help make the tribes “self-supporting, self-sufficient, and prosperous.” He also called for an end of the Indian Office’s monopoly over Indian affairs proposing a cooperative enlistment of other state and federal agencies to bring the sort of government services that Collier felt were available to non-Indians. Viewing the cooperative need to be especially pressing in the area of medicine and agricultural services he called for

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<sup>52</sup> E.A. Schwartz “Red Atlantis Revisited: Community and Culture in the Writings of John Collier” *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Autumn 1994), 510, 513, John Collier, “The Red Atlantis,” 16-18.; John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 126.

assistance from the United States Public Health Service, the Agricultural Department, and the United States Reclamation Service.<sup>53</sup>

To Collier it was clear that the Dawes Act and other allotment acts designed to make the Indian a self-sufficient part of white society had failed. In fact, they were disrupting Native cultural development. Before allotment a substantial number of Indians were living as farmers and ranchers and although their farms were small they had improved rapidly. But allotment resulted in an increase in leasing and the sale of allotted land to whites. The sale of large amounts of land at the time of allotments, meant to provide funds to further Indian assimilation, resulted in the loss of most of the Indian's land: from 138,000,000 acres in 1887 to 48,000,000 acres in 1934 (See Appendix A). Rather than making the Indian self-sufficient it increased dependency on the Federal government. The 1928 Merriam report, *The Problems of Indian Administration*, painted a bleak picture of widespread poverty. The report concluded that the allotment acts benefited neighboring whites, who profited from acquiring Indian land, at the expense of the interests of reservation Indians. They also found that the Office of Indian affairs seemed to be primarily concerned with property and not with the teaching of Indians to become self-sufficient members of mainstream of society. Senator Henry Teller was prophetic when he predicted that the ultimate consequence of allotment would be to "despoil Indians of their lands and make them vagabonds on the face of the earth," the very thing that the "Friends of the Indians" had professed to prevent.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 46-47

<sup>54</sup> Leonard A. Carlson, *Indians, Bureaucrats and Land: The Dawes Act and the Decline of Indian Farming* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 16, 19, 165-168. Francis Paul Prucha, *Americanizing the*

To save the people of the Taos Pueblo, and all Indians, Collier would rely on science. He shared a belief, held by the post-revolutionary leadership in Mexico, in the power of social science. Like his contacts in Mexico, the indigenistas Gamio and Sáenz, he believed that social problems could be solved through empirical approaches. They felt that science could be applied to the “deficiencies” of the Indians; this would be the goal of the indigenistas. Collier, interested in the benefits of their “scientific management,” was drawn, like metal to a magnet, to Mexico. Side tracked from finding “the redeeming Other” in Mexico by Mabel Luhan he would later visit Mexico and express excitement at what he saw as the Mexican revolution’s attempt to forge a new society based on the foundation of Indian communalism. This was something he found especially compelling in the Mexican indigenismo movement.

### CHAPTER 3

#### INDIGENISMO

While Collier worked and ultimately floundered in the city of New York, Mexican Liberal attitudes were reaching a moment of change. The liberal modernity drive seeking to remove the Indian as a hindrance to development reached its full fruition during the rule of Porfirio Díaz (1877-1909). During the *Porfiriato* Indians were considered so insignificant that it was felt that their interests and even their existence could be ignored. Much of the rural populace was indigenous and convinced that liberal based policies were designed to destroy peasant community autonomy. During this time a growing number of rural families became direct dependents of landed elites. By 1910 ninety five percent of all rural heads of families were landless. They believed that the large scale disempowerment that they were suffering from was the source of their poverty. Some envisioned a solution that called for the breakup of large land holdings and the restoration of an idealized past where land was held by small landholders; prosperous and contented with their little plots of land. Francisco Madero's ouster of President Díaz unleashed a torrent of rural demands for land reform making prophetic the words of an exiled Díaz: "Madero has unleashed a tiger; let's see if he can ride it."<sup>1</sup>

To American observers Mexico seemed like a tiger; unruly and capricious: a fragmented land plagued with the social unrest of its rural populace making it difficult for the central government to control the countryside. The American anthropologist and

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<sup>1</sup> Ethelia Ruiz Medrano *Mexico's Indigenous Communities*, 156, 184-186.; Dana Markiewicz *The Mexican Revolution and the Limits of Agrarian Reform* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), 16-20.; John Tutino *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence 1750-1940* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 312, 356. Until the end of the nineteenth century the central highlands remained the most densely settled agrarian core of Mexico. Much of the population was indigenous or mestizo.

ethnolinguist, Robert Redfield, aptly described Mexico to be "...a group of heterogeneous, isolated, rural communities that have remained disorganized since the shock of racial and cultural interaction four hundred years ago." During the post-revolutionary period leaders of Mexico were anxious to unite these disorganized elements into a cohesive modern state. This is understandable because as Alan Knight said, "The key to the social revolution (in Mexico) lies in the countryside."<sup>2</sup>

Social revolution was spurred on by the languishing economic poverty suffered by most rural Mexicans. Between 1792 and 1910 agricultural income was in a state of steady decline and yet the price of corn had increased by 197 percent, beans by 565 percent, chili by 123 percent, rice by 75 percent, and flour by 711 percent. This was in a country where 71 percent of the labor force was employed in agriculture, living in small rural communities where 87 percent of the people could neither read nor write and where a million and a half people could only speak their native Indian language.<sup>3</sup>

Rural unrest seemed to follow a certain pattern. John Tutino notes that among rural agrarian people in Mexico "autonomy is prized over dependence: with dependence, security becomes essential; and with insecurity, mobility is the only compensation." Basically, peasants, accustomed to subsistence autonomy, became outraged when that independence was threatened by a visible elite. This outrage was compounded when a loss of autonomy was not compensated for by access to some form of security and the people were moved to insurrection if the loss of security was not offset by some sort of

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<sup>2</sup> Ruben Flores "States of Culture, 41; Quote: Robert Redfield review of Manuel Gamio *La Población dell Valle de Teotihuacán* from *The Journal of Sociology* Volume 30 (November 1924) 362.; Alan Knight *The Mexican Revolution, vol. 1: Porfirians, Liberals, and Peasants* (Cambridge, Cambridgeshire; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 78.

<sup>3</sup> James Wallace Wilkie *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure of Social Change Since 1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 45-46.

mobility. By 1910 few regions of Mexico retained autonomy. The alternative of dependent security offered by the large estates had withered under the face of an expanding population. Labor scarcity in Northern and Central Mexico once gave rural people some sort of power but now it was a thing of the past because workers were plentiful and cheap. These ingredients for insurrection needed one more crucible: a deep division among the ruling elite, something presented to the populace in the wake of Díaz's removal and the breakdown of state power. Central instability meant, to the rural agrarian people, that now was the time to strike and make right old injustices.<sup>4</sup>

Highly influential to those seeking to right old wrongs were the villagers of Morelos and other Central Highland regions. These people retained values that idealized communal cohesion within the community. The local leaders of these communities, steeped in peasant concerns regarding communal land values, were active in rural insurrections. These rebels remained agrarian in outlook and looked to Emiliano Zapata, the leader of the Nahuatl speaking village of Anenecuilco, Morelos, for leadership. They insisted on retaining traditional structures of power and fervently championed agrarian issues like land reform and community autonomy. This persistence by agrarian rebels forced all contenders for power in the revolution to make agrarian reform the "primary social quest of the time" resulting in a "revolutionary transformation."<sup>5</sup>

These leaders, in their quest for power, encountered many calls for land reform amongst Mexico's diverse population but the Zapatistas, made up of revolutionaries from Central Mexico, epitomized the popular view of using land reform as a means to

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<sup>4</sup> John Tutino *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico*, 31, 320, 326-327, 362.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 324-325, 338.



return to an idealized past. Unhappy with the lack of pace in land reform, Zapata and his associates produced their Plan of Ayala, demanding that Mexico's land be redistributed among its communities putting the land into the hands of peasants, most of whom were expected to farm it in usufruct. The Zapatistas believed that the agrarian community constituted the nation's basic social unit and because of this, the nation's agrarian problems needed to be the central theme in a plan to reorder Mexican society. This objective was to be addressed by first returning land to the communities that historically possessed it and, secondly, by giving these communities local autonomy so that they could organize the productive use of their land in keeping with their resources and traditions. These local autonomous municipalities would be the basic units of the nation with state and federal governments existing to provide services and coordination.<sup>6</sup>

The Zapatistas proposed the restoring of communal land to Indian Pueblos making the land nontransferable grants that would be owned and managed by cooperatives. To do this all land, not in the possession of small holders, would be expropriated and brought under government control, by force if necessary. The owners of the redistributed land would present their titles to a revolutionary court, part of a government appointed by revolutionary councils. Though the impetus of the Plan of Ayala was diminished with the assassination of Emiliano Zapata, land reform would be the recurring demand of poor rural Mexicans and the Plan of Ayala was often cited.<sup>7</sup>

Madero in overthrowing Diaz envisioned a slow orderly transition with a consolidation of the land problem until after the upheaval ended. He commented that he

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<sup>6</sup> Ethelia Ruiz Medrano *Mexico's Indigenous Communities*, 156-184.; Dana Markiewicz *The Mexican Revolution and the Limits of Agrarian Reform*, 16-20.

<sup>7</sup> Ethelia Ruiz Medrano *Mexico's Indigenous Communities*, 185-186.

was an advocate of small property holdings for peasants but insisted that no existing landholders should be despoiled of their property. But the overthrow of the authoritarian Diaz regime meant that the masses clamoring for immediate reform would not be content with promises of future bliss. Zapata refused to lay down his arms until the people recovered their land. Madero was unable and unwilling to act decisively, something that much of the rural populace demanded. In fact he seemed interested in perpetrating many of Diaz's latifundian policies including Diaz's policy, reminiscent of the U.S. Dawes act, which granted communal land into severalty. This policy had the same effect in Mexico that it had among Indians in the United States. Once land was placed in individual hands overwhelming economic pressures usually resulted in the landholder losing his land.<sup>8</sup>

Madero had sought to be a conservative nineteenth century liberal at a time when the countryside called for revolutionary change. Having disappointed the rural populace he was vulnerable to conservatives and became the victim of a power hungry opportunist General Victoriano Huerta, who deposed and murdered him. This resulted in chaos. In the chaotic period that followed Venustiano Carranza, the new President and leader of the conservative Constitutionalists defeated the rural Zapatistas and Villistas and established tenuous power of Mexico. To stay in power he reluctantly agreed to the Constitution of 1917 offered as a form of olive branch to the rural populace with its Article 27, intended to open the way for future land reform.<sup>9</sup>

Rural demands for land reform were seen as a utopian return to an idealized past and the conservative revolutionary elements, the Constitutionalists, who were victorious

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<sup>8</sup> James Wallace Wilkie *The Mexican Revolution*, 44-49.

<sup>9</sup> Enrique Krauze *Mexico: Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico 1810-1996* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997) 387.; James Wallace Wilkie *The Mexican Revolution*, 44-49.

over the Zapatistas, viewed the Plan of Alaya as an economically crippling threat that would have undermined the validity of land titles and endangered private property. They sought less radical agrarian reforms: establishing a National Farm Commission to allocate and reestablish land holdings. They planned a centrally controlled and managed classification of small land holdings and communal land properties into cooperatively managed ejidos.<sup>10</sup>

The ejido, used as an instrument of post-revolutionary land reform, had colonial origins. The term ejido was used in Spain to designate a certain tract of land reserved for common use by the entire community. The word “ejido” was derived from the Latin word *exitus* meaning “on the way out” since these lands were generally located on the outskirts of town. In Mexico the ejido included all public lands while in Spain it was only a limited part of the land, usually small well-defined areas like the village pond, the public threshing and winnowing floor, and the community rubbish heap and slaughter pen. Ejidos were just one of the land tenure systems of the colonial pueblos de Indios that had been imposed on the Mexican Indians by the Spanish colonial authorities. In the nineteenth century peasants reclassified their communal lands as ejidos in order to prevent their breakup into private property due to the Ley Lerdo of 1856 and to combat actions by the regime of Porfirio Díaz. Since common lands, like ejidos, were exempted from disentanglement (the breaking up of community land) this reclassification practice was

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<sup>10</sup> Ethelia Ruiz Medrano *Mexico's Indigenous Communities, 185-186.*; Dana Markiewicz *The Mexican Revolution and the Limits of Agrarian Reform*, 27.

adopted by Indians as the surest defense against the encroachment of haciendas, outsiders, and liberal reformers<sup>11</sup>

This Indigenous tradition was now used as a means designed to appease peasant demands for land reform. The newly formed Constitution of 1917 contained article 27 seeking “to take control of, and find a solution for, the agrarian problem.” To enact this solution the post-revolutionary Mexican government reinvented the ejido. This reinvention provided an avenue for the breaking up of large land holdings and the establishment of new ejidos that were created from land unlawfully taken or, as often was the case, land the government chose to grant to rural residents. In doing this, the state sought to control land expropriations from large land holders, control the redistribution of these lands, and thus exert control over the rural populace. In essence the Revolutionary government appropriated the name ejido as a term “most easily understood by the agricultural Indians.” This was a recognition of the ancient Indian use of communal land

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<sup>11</sup> Ethelia Ruiz Medrano *Mexico's Indigenous Communities, 185-186.*; Dana Markiewicz *The Mexican Revolution and the Limits of Agrarian Reform*, 27; John A. Crow *The Epic of Latin America*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 54 “Historical Notes on Mexico’s Land Reform,” The University of Manchester, UK, accessed October 28, 2013, [http://jg.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/Peasants/mexican\\_land\\_reform.html](http://jg.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/Peasants/mexican_land_reform.html) ; David Fry *Indians Into Mexicans: History and Identity in a Mexican Town* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 25  
Lay Lerdo or the Lerdo Law, was named after Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, Treasury Secretary under President Ignacio Comonfort. It was one of the Liberal “reform laws” intended to reduce Church power in Mexico. Under this new law, the government began to confiscate Church land. This proved to be considerably controversial. The purpose of the law was to convert lands held by corporate entities such as the Church into private property, favoring those who already lived on it. It was thought that such would encourage development and the government could raise revenue by taxing the process Lerdo de Tejada was the Minister of Finance and required that the Church sell much of its urban and rural land at reduced prices. If the Church did not comply, the government would hold public auctions. The Law also stated that the Church could not gain possession of properties in the future. However, the Lerdo Law did not apply only to the Church. It stated that no corporate body could own land. Broadly defined, this would include communal land owned by Indian villages. Initially ejidos were exempt from the law, but eventually these Indian communities suffered an extensive loss of land.

tenure. The government sought to use the word ejido as stylized cosmetic label for what was, in effect, a new program of government controlled land redistribution.<sup>12</sup>

The reform program was more notable for its limitations than for its accomplishments. Post-revolutionary governments did undertake some land reform but it was always premised on the idea that capitalism would remain dominant in the countryside. What was to be abolished was what the government referred to as “parasitic, traditional landlordism.” The post-revolutionary government intended for Mexico’s rural future to consist of large scale agroindustries and prosperous medium-scale private capitalist farms. Land grants to peasants were to be part of a transitional process used to dismantle the large estates, the haciendas that were considered to backward and wasteful of resources to be allowed to continue.<sup>13</sup>

Early revolutionary presidents saw the ejido as a “stopgap measure.” They wanted a strong centralized state and were interested in increased production, based on anticlericalism and improved education. Eventually private property would replace the state enacted ejidos. The implementation of ejidos served mostly as a way to quell rural unrest and rebellion, create some adjustments in the patterns of land ownership, and help to institutionalize the new political power that emerged from the revolution. Ejido styled land reform was limited by lack of will among the post-revolutionaries to fully realize the promise of comprehensive land redistribution. Government leaders were more interested

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<sup>12</sup> Ethelia Ruiz Medrano *Mexico’s Indigenous Communities, 185-186.*; Dana Markiewicz *The Mexican Revolution and the Limits of Agrarian Reform*, 27. Susan L. Harris *Conservation Easement on Mexican Ejidos: An Alternate Model for Indigenous Peoples* A Thesis Essay of Distinction Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Environmental Studies The Evergreen State College January 2008, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Dana Markiewicz, *The Mexican Revolution and the Limits of Agrarian Reform*, 1-7, 83, 87-88.

in central control and capitalistic economic growth then in bettering the lot of the rural residents or addressing agrarian problems.<sup>14</sup>

During the *sexenio* of President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), the government faced political unrest that compelled the post-revolutionary government to take measures to secure support amongst the nation's *campesino* population. The government, seeking greater consolation, placed a higher priority on demands of the rural populace. Cárdenas' *sexenio* implemented, on a scale not seen before, the popular social aim of land redistribution. To achieve this, the government emphasized ejido development. This served two goals: to quell the ongoing unrest caused by peasant demands for land and to enhance federal political power in the rural regions. The government sought to achieve its goals through political patronage created via land distribution to millions of rural residents. A rural populace, dependent on the central government for land, would lead to an increase in federal control of the countryside.<sup>15</sup>

Like the colonial system that it was based on, the title of ejido lands rested with the community as a whole and could not be bought, sold or rented to outsiders. Post-revolutionary land reform beneficiaries could receive a plot of land awarded to individual families, or ejidos could be collective, based on the cooperative work of land held in common. In each community an ejido board distributed land to families who retained possession of the land as long as they farmed it. Ejido members met monthly to discuss

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 1-7, 83, 87-88.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 1-7, 83, 87-88.; Dwyer's book 213-214.

improvements on their holdings, to pass judgment on alleged violators of ejido policies and to discuss redistribution of lands lost by claimants.<sup>16</sup>

This was part of an effort to enhance federal power, a task hindered by the disruptions of a civil war and an “Indian Problem;” the persistence of eighty different ethnolinguistic groups that caused many to fear that Mexico was too heterogeneous to ever hope to be a modern state. In indigenous regions the cultural and linguistic differences left federal officials at the mercy of local power brokers who could manipulate, block, or manage to their own advantage, federal efforts to extend the power of the federal state.<sup>17</sup>

Influenced by the Sonoran ethos, with its northern bourgeois sensibility, Presidents Carranza, Obregon, and Calles believed that social problems, like the “Indian problem” could be solved through social science. After all, if science could be used to improve livestock, enhance the management of the nation’s treasury, and transform the nation’s infrastructure why, they asked, couldn’t science, through the use of the social sciences, be used to regulate “bio-power” to administer the population and control its habits in a way that would allow the state to “measure and define what the population lacked and ultimately eradicate human deficiencies? The eradication of deficiencies was the goal of the Indigenistas, who advocated indigenismo, a political, intellectual, and

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<sup>16</sup> David Fry *Indians Into Mexicans*, 25 Land was supposed to be held as communal property. In practice, however, land titles have been bought and sold in ejidos, and ejidal land might be rented to capitalist entrepreneurs from outside the agrarian community for long periods. But these were informal and illegal practices up to December 1991, when the neoliberal administration of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (elected in July 1988 amid widespread accusations of electoral fraud) amended constitutional Article 27 in ways which will in practice make legal sales of ejido land possible for the first time and allow peasants to put up their land as collateral for a loan.

<sup>17</sup> Alexander S Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, xvi, xvii.

artistic movement that celebrated indigenous peoples in the Americas, on the one hand, but also sought to develop, educate, and otherwise “change” them, on the other.<sup>18</sup>

Science and scientific solutions were long in fashion among Mexico’s elite. In the nineteenth century a small but well-trained scientific, political, and intellectual elite, the *científicos*, supported the demand for a strong state and a measured society seeking to craft a manageable culture through the use of statistics, maps, and anthropological studies. They were influenced by Positivism, the philosophy originated by the French philosopher, August Comte; a philosophical system that held that every rationally justifiable assertion can be scientifically verified or is capable of logical or mathematical proof. Positivism rejected metaphysics, theology, and idealism as means of solving national problems. The *científicos* advocated what they considered to be the practical application of scientific methods, specifically in the social sciences, to problems of finance, industrialization, and education. As a major body of a well-articulated urban public sphere they produced Mexico’s first solid infrastructure of science creating, according to some, the closest thing to a state that the independent nation of Mexico had ever experienced.<sup>19</sup>

A large body of *científicos* held that Indians were backward, and considered the “hybrid races” like mestizos and mulatos to be degenerate. They emphasized whitening the population through European immigration and colonization along with an uplifting of the Indian population through civic assimilation and education. But, by the turn of the century, some Porfirian intellectuals began to challenge these ideas. They challenged the

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<sup>18</sup> Alexander S Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, xvi, xvii.

<sup>19</sup> Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, “Stereophonic Scientific Modernisms: Social Science Between Mexico and the United States, 1880s-1930s” *The Journal of American History* Vol. 86, No. 3, The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History: A Special Issue (Dec., 1999), 1162.



notion that mestizos were the depraved product of mongrelization but were instead a virile and vigorous mixture of Indians and Europeans. The writer Andrés Molina Enríques, in his book, *Los Grandes Problemas Nacionales* hailed the mestizo as a beacon of national progress. With the end of the battles in 1917 a new set of post-revolutionary leaders seized on the idea of the mestizo as an icon of racial and social interaction adopting a perspective of racial mixing colored by optimism and paternalistic romanticism.<sup>20</sup>

The revolution of 1910 interrupted scientific efforts at social betterment but the post-revolutionary environment provided a perceived need for social science as a source of national salvation. A segment of these post-revolutionary social scientists were the Indigenistas. These scientists were deeply concerned about the poverty and backwardness of Mexico's Indian population. They believed that the solution to this problem was through modernity and nationhood. They stated that Mexico's Indian past was something to be celebrated and appreciated for its contribution to Mexico's originality and that the modern Indian needed to become a part of a modern society. Alexander Dawson states that Indigenistas "wished to liberate people from traditional values, to expand knowledge of and possession of the nation (and consumption generally), to encourage perpetual improvement of society, and to promote democratization." This called for the creation of a "single homogenous national community," which could only be created by assimilating all the "inferior" groups into a modern, secular society. As progressive vitalists

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<sup>20</sup> Alexandra Minna Stern "From Mestizophilia to Biotypology: Racialization and Science in Mexico 1920-1960" from Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 189-190.

Indigenistas, together with other urban elites, made themselves “the arbitrators of the values that defined society”<sup>21</sup>

Indigenistas argued that Mexico’s Indians were not racially inferior, rejecting the earlier popular notion of immigration and racial whitening as a means to improve Mexico’s racial stock. They saw the process of *mestizaje*, the mixing of races in Mexico, as a natural ongoing process and they argued that a cultural process of mestizaje was essential. Often they used the terms “Indian race” and “Indian culture” interchangeably for in Mexico race and culture played an ambiguous role. Though they challenged long held assumptions about Indians, Indigenistas often suffered from what Antonio Gramsci describes as the concept of “contradictory consciousness,” a process where two incompatible conceptions of the world seemingly exist in a person’s worldview. This concept applies particularly well in regards to Indigenista projects and ideas that were often complicated by tensions between race and culture. To resolve this tension, they chose to replace the concept of race with culture.<sup>22</sup>

Because of the complexities in regards to race and culture, Indigenistas used a variety of racial and cultural data to differentiate between Indians and mestizos creating widely diverging estimates of Indian population ranging from 30 to 50 percent of the population. This ambiguity was reflected in the practices of federal education inspectors who used linguistic and cultural factors to describe race. Often, a community was defined as Indian if the majority of its people didn’t speak Spanish. By 1930 many leading figures believed that a combination of cultural markers and not biology should be the basis for

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<sup>21</sup> Alexander S Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, xvii.

<sup>22</sup> Alexander S Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 19.; Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith eds. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976), 325-326.

how the population should be classified and race was eliminated from the national census in favor of linguistic classifications. This indicated a belief in the constructiveness of race and it proposed that *mestizaje* was as much a cultural as a racial process. According to this belief, any Mexican could become a mestizo, the end result of *mestizaje*, as long as they displayed the sensibilities associated with modernity and *mestizaje*.<sup>23</sup>

Still, Indigenistas faced a culture with long held hierarchical classifications predating “scientific” concepts of race. These prevalent taxonomies used racial classification as a catchall explanation for poverty and inequity; basic reference points for explaining Indians. These traditional racial labelings used age-old categorizations based on class, gender, education, morals, customs, eating habits, language, and dress to describe Indians. While indigenistas challenged race they did not challenge the old hierarchies. Instead they retained them and reinforced their importance as a set of obstacles, portraying them as culture based deficiencies that could be and most be overcome in the interest of national development.<sup>24</sup>

So even though Indigenistas expressed opposition to the racist assumptions of the preceding “Westernisms” they continued to operate within what Alan Knight describes as a “racist paradigm.” While some indigenistas fervently insisted that race was a socially defined characteristic others continued to use race as an independent factor that operated alongside distinct social and historical factors. Because of this, the apparent paradoxes between hybridity and homogeneity made the concept of *mestizaje* a difficult national metonym. Alan Knight states that the invented racial doctrines “tended to reproduce

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<sup>23</sup> Alexander S Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 18-19.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

many of the racist assumptions” of Western theories that indigenistas strongly expressed opposition to. Thus even though they denied race as a marker for the national population they left unchallenged certain means for identification that marked the Indian as an impoverished subject or incomplete citizen.<sup>25</sup>

Though they allowed the label of incomplete citizen to remain they believed that Indians were perfectly able to enter the modern *mestizaje* world. It remained for the state to find the means to assimilate them into the mainstream. In the conservative climate of the 1920s, education appeared to be the best assimilative method. It seemed to forestall the need for costly and controversial land reform measures because it theoretically offered rural Mexicans a capacity to improve their lives without risky state remedies. Education offered the potential to make rural Mexicans more efficient and productive and provide a more stable and, later on, a more secular constituency. Education offered the promise of providing Indians with a better sense of community and the desire to cooperate with one another for the good of all. To implement this program Mexico created the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP).<sup>26</sup>

The use of education would be a continuing factor in indigenous land reform. Schools were always used as a tool to further indigenous people into a homogenized mainstream. But the school was always more than simply a place for teaching the “three Rs.” The school was an avenue for social transformation. It was intended that land reform

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<sup>25</sup> Alexander S Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 19.; Alexandra Minna Stern “From Mestizophilia to Biotypology: Racialization and Science in Mexico 1920-1960,” 198-199.; Alan Knight “Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico 1910-1940, 87-88. Hybridity is a cross between two separate races or cultures. A hybrid is something that is mixed, and hybridity is simply mixture. Homogeneity is the quality of being similar or comparable in kind or nature; as in, “there is a remarkable homogeneity between the two companies”

<sup>26</sup> Alexander S Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 20.

should be more than just giving Indians land. It was intended to be part of greater task of transforming the Indian. The ejido was originally conceived as a stopgap, quieting the masses and giving time for their preparation as mestizos. As the reservation in the United States was designed to buy time until the Indian could be prepared for his proper place in the dominate culture so was the ejido. And in both the United States and Mexico education was intended to prepare the indigenous people to find their economic footing. Education and land reform went hand in hand in the intended goal of social, cultural transformation.

Early directors of the SEP believed that the best way of homogenizing Mexico's Indians was by focusing on introducing students to modern civilization. Like modern, secularized versions of sixteenth-century missions, the schools taught students to speak Spanish, salute the flag, celebrate national holidays, sing the national hymn, venerate national heroes, and learn the nation's history. The schools would teach Indians modern agricultural practices to make their soil more productive, better health, better methods of living, and better means of communication in order to live in better homes. Modernity, the goal of the schools, was the measure for a number of things. A modern community was expected to have large numbers of Spanish speakers, clean schools and homes, residents versed in the latest agricultural techniques, and the willingness to visit modern doctors and use modern medicines. A modern community would be free from what SEP

director José Puig called “the tragic triangle of fanaticism, alcoholism, and premature sexual unions, the factors of racial degeneration.”<sup>27</sup>

The founder and head of the SEP from 1920-24 was José Vasconcelos, the SEP’s first *Secretare*, later famous for his work, *La Raza Cosmica*. He believed that modern Mexico had no room for Mexico’s indigenous cultures. Vasconcelos felt that no cultural structures could be aggregated into Latin American civilization that fell outside of the ritual and mythology of the humanism of the Spanish Empire and the Spanish Catholic Church at the height of their greatest hemispheric extent prior to Latin America’s independence movements. In his opinion, the indigenous cultures of Mexico were barbarian and semi-human, deserving no consideration as contributors to the Pan-Latin American civilization he wanted to create. What’s more, Vasconcelos reasoned, the arrival of Europeans to Mexico had begun the cultural and biological transformation of Indians in the Continent. In the process of being hispanized into a Latinized environment indigenous cultures were in the process of vanishing and becoming extinct. Therefore, they offered nothing of merit. It was his contention that such cultures needed to become submerged into the *mestizaje* ideal that he envisioned; a racial amalgamation that, by the

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<sup>27</sup>Alexander S Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 21. Anthony Gibbens describes modernity as...a shorthand term for modern society, or industrial civilization. Portrayed in more detail, it is associated with (1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation, by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society—more technically, a complex of institutions—which, unlike any preceding culture, lives in the future, rather than the past Anthony Gibbens *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 94).

grace of spiritual components outside the realm of human endeavor, would result in a the rebirth of Latin culture.<sup>28</sup>

The SEP, as created by Vasconcelos, was part of an intense consolidation project based on ethnoracial amalgamation. His project was inspired by a romantic mix of classicism and Catholic metaphysics. Assuming that God, or some spiritual entity, was the arbitrator of man's fate, it left no room for man or science to question what he saw as the fundamental truths about Spanish and Mexican Christianity. This contrasted with the Mexican social scientists who chose to marginalize Catholic ethics, and adopt science and experimentalism learned from the Americans Franz Boas and John Dewey of Columbia University as the instruments for the rebuilding of the Mexican State. These social scientists were men like Manuel Gamio and Moisés Sáenz.<sup>29</sup>

This contrast is strongly displayed when one compares Vasconcelos's, *La Raza Cosmica* with Manuel Gamio's, *Forjando Patria* (Forging the Fatherland). While Vasconcelos envisioned a romantic utopia that is short on institutional planning or the understanding of Mexico's multitude of pluralisms, Gamio listed, in chapter after chapter of banal analysis, the religious, economic, and cultural aspects of the nation, along with sectional conflicts, providing a guide for institutional reconstruction for official builders. While Vasconcelos relied on paradisiacal Christian ethics and Catholic visions that would somehow will a utopia into existence, Gamio advocated the scientific method and an earthly accord constructed through the consensus of human institutions. Vasconcelos heralded the triumph of a Pan-Latin continental community while Gamio called for the

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<sup>28</sup> Ruben Flores, "States of Culture," 50-51.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 45 Experimentalism is the philosophical belief that experiments yield truth; empiricism.

rebirth of a Mexican nation state residing within its post 1848 borders. For this rebirth, Gamio identified science and government as the mechanical instruments of national consolidation that held the promise of rebuilding the institutions of the Republic of Mexico. While Vasconcelos relied on “destiny” and “sprit” Gamio turned to history.

Ruben Flores states that:

“Finally, where Vasconcelos mandated morality by authoritarian fiat across a proposed biological fusion of human communities, Gamio argued for the elimination of Church ethics as the basis of affiliation and a consensual, more diverse social community whose cultural and political vibrancy depended on the defense of Mexico's cultural enclaves as part of a consolidated republic.”<sup>30</sup>

Gamio, the first Mexican to earn a PhD in anthropology and the student of the renowned American anthropologist Franz Boas, asserted that the science of anthropology offered the means for “good government in Mexico.” In his opinion it presented the potential to unite all Mexicans into a common culture. It provided the means to study the physical and mental capacities of a population and could be used to “deduce the appropriate methods to facilitate their normal evolution.” He stressed that Mexico’s cultures needed to be studied, understood, and improved. In *Forjando Patria* he elaborated on the role of anthropology calling for cooperation between social scientists and government towards “the achievement of an ideal social, economic, political and physical life.” He bemoaned the present state of Mexico as a series of *pequeña patrias* that were linguistically and racially heterogeneous. This offered no future for the state. *Forjando Patria* attested that the Revolution of 1910 was a popular mandate for the

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<sup>30</sup> Ruben Flores, “States of Culture,” 63-64.



“fusion of the races,” the linguistic, cultural, and social unification of Mexico that would “constitute a powerful country and a coherent nationality.”<sup>31</sup>

Those in support of *mestizaje* joined other post-revolutionaries in praise of Gamio’s primer on nation building, *Forjando patria*. It caused a stir when it was published in 1916 moving future president Alvaro Obregón to insist that all Mexicans should read it. In 1917 the acting president, Venustiano Carranza, was equally impressed with its message and fascinated with its vision of unifying the nation thorough science while believing that it managed to avoided sticky issues like egalitarianism and land reform. He agreed to provide Gamio with the funds to start the Dirección de Antropología(Directorate of Anthropology, DA). The DA came into existence during the time of the inauguration of the new Constitution.<sup>32</sup>

The DA would become a venue for what James Clifford calls the “controlled fictions of difference and similitude,” using science to classify and transform a previously unknown national population and enhance the process of nationalism. In doing this the DA and future social scientific federal bureaucracies were examples of “regulative strategies” of the state that “produce the subject they come to subjugate” by creating categories that can be used to understand the population. The DA collected the scientific data on Mexico’s heterogeneous population and the regions they inhabited as part of a strategy to diagnose national needs and to monitor progress. While race was a consideration in their studies, most of the work focused on regional cultures, languages, economics, histories, climates, geography, flora, and fauna. This was a function of

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<sup>31</sup> Alexander Dawson, *Indian and Nation In Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 6,7

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

ethnography that is “inescapably allegorical” in that it connects the subject of the study to the reader through “controlled fictions” of “difference and similitude” in which the different parts combine to form a “consistent whole.” This is a means of self-definition that, in effect, makes the “other” a part of the self, something necessary for most forms of nationalism.<sup>33</sup>

These were the basis of “state simplifications,” central to the mission of anthropology as an engine for state making. Through this process the nation was defined according to a series of characteristics that could be either preserved or improved in the name of progress. The DA would determine if methods of production and capacities for development in a community were “normal” or “abnormal” determining the “evolutive state” of that community and the needs of each member of the “gran familia” that constituted the Mexican state.<sup>34</sup>

The references to “gran familia” assumed an interest in the study of Mexico’s diverse population but the DA’s ultimate goal was to incorporate Mexico’s Indians into national life and increase their affinity to the nation. The DA, in its study of Indian traits, determined which were positive or negative providing the means to decide which characteristics should be preserved and which should be discarded. While interested in all

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<sup>33</sup> James Clifford, ‘On Ethnographic Allegory’, in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, 1986), 99-101; James Clifford *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography: A School of American Research Advance Seminar*. (Berkeley: University of Californian Press, 1986), 101.; James C. Scott *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 9-98.; Judith Butler *Gender Trouble; Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 98.; Philip Abrams “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1 (1) 58-89.

<sup>34</sup> Alexander Dawson, *Indian and Nation In Revolutionary Mexic*, 7-8.; and Alexander Dawson “From Models of the Nation to Model Citizens: Indigenismo and the ‘Revindication of the Mexican Indian 1920-40” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 30, (1998) 284. James Clifford, ‘On Ethnographic Allegory’, 99-101; James Clifford *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography: A School of American Research Advance Seminar*. (Berkeley: University of Californian Press, 1986), 101.

traits the DA was primarily concerned with understanding differences in order to eliminate them. The mandate of the DA was to stimulate a process of “racial approximation, cultural fusion, and linguistic unification” intended to unite all Mexicans into a coherent, modern, and secular nation through field work and the collection of knowledge. To accomplish this, the agency was given the directive of promoting economic development in the field with agents petitioning for land redistribution, seeking wage improvements, working on schools, creating workshops, and rural improvements involving mechanized agriculture, farm education and the teaching of industrial skills. The efforts by agency employees indicate that they seemed to understand the solutions to the “Indian problem” even before they studied real rural problems.<sup>35</sup>

Dawson says that Gamio drew influences from nineteenth century naturalists combined with “an evolutionary commitment to mestizaje (the cultural mixing of Indians and Europeans) mixed with a limited reading of Franz Boaz’s ideas on cultural relativism to argue that the Indian was not inherently inferior.” His interpretation of Boaz was limited because Boaz would have objected to Gamio’s image of Indians as “foggy headed” and Gamio’s use of a linear projection of human evolution from primitive to modern. Boaz challenged racial and hierarchical assumptions of anthropology. Emphasizing culture and environment in human society, Boaz warned that “anthropologists should not make normative judgments (whether something is desirable or undesirable) about other cultures.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Alexander Dawson, *Indian and Nation In Revolutionary Mexico*, 7-8.

<sup>36</sup> Alexander S Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 6, 13-14.; Kelly R. Swarhout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” 89-91.

But Gamio was seeking a homogenous nation and believed that a strict adherence to Boaz's concepts of cultural relativism would hamper this goal. Selective in his approach, Gamio adopted the Boazian concept that behavior was culturally determined allowing a discarding of the primacy of biology. He drew on the idea of cultural diffusion that noted the past transfer of cultural practices from Europeans to support the use of the state as an instrument of accelerated and directed diffusion. According to this idea of diffusion Indians were hybrids who were "Mexican in their spiritual culture but primitive in their material culture" Manuel Gamio distorted his mentor's concept of cultural anthropology in the interest of nation building. Dawson points out that Gamio's departures from his mentor "...were well suited to the needs of a revolutionary state and the native intellectual tradition of viewing the Mexican people in evolutionary terms."<sup>37</sup>

To prove the validity of his theories in *Forjando patria* and to demonstrate the possibility of transforming the Indigenous people of Mexico from their under-developed state into a socially inclusive modern condition Gamio chose to conduct a study of the Valley of Teotihuacán. In the resulting work, *The Population of the Valley of Teotihuacán*, subtitled: *The Environment in which it has Developed, Its Ethnic Evolution, and Social Initiatives to Achieve its Improvement*, he recorded a study in ethical reconstruction and the formation of formulate reform policies. Based on his interpretation of cultural relativism he argued for government intervention in the social development of

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<sup>37</sup>Alexander S Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 6, 13-14.; Kelly R. Swarthout "Assimilating the Primitive," 89-91.

cultural populations. The book reflected his faith in relativistic science; attacking the fundamental morality of nineteenth century knowledge.<sup>38</sup>

In his relativistic, positivistic view, he did not look toward God, biology, or the assumptions of metaphysical philosophers to form conclusions about the quality of village life. Instead he advocated that the only way that men could form conclusions about life was through the study of history and context. Changes were the result of the accidents of life, not the result of superhuman agents who had ordained them to be so. Gamio insisted that men could only be understood through the comprehension of all the complex patterns of life. To him history and function, not God or biology, were the impetus of change.<sup>39</sup>

In *Forjando patria* Gamio referred to *incorporación* stating, “The Indian continues to follow the same prehispanic patterns of culture and shall continue to do so until such time as we agree to incorporate him gradually with forethought and empathy into our contemporary civilization.” *Incorporación* meant the sociological movement of Mexico’s subregions and cultures into harmonious coexistence in what Flores describes as “a centrifugal action that would fix the definition of Mexican culture as a set of social traits accepted by all yet constructed from elements of distinct communities.” In essence, when all the elements of Mexico’s subregions acquired the same ethnic markers, the same language, and the same set of cultural practices, *incorporación* would be achieved. *Incorporación* meant the gradual absorption of the indigenous elements of Mexico into a civil society following a single model. Aggregation of Mexico’s subregions into a single

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<sup>38</sup> Ruben Flores, “States of Culture,” 85, 88-90.; Kelly R. Swarhout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” 89-91, 97-98, 104-105.

<sup>39</sup> Ruben Flores, “States of Culture,” 85, 88-90.

unit was the first goal of *incorporación* and the second goal was their absorption into a national society defined by a capitalist economy, as well as modern technology, science, and literacy in the Spanish language. Once these goals were achieved the government would serve as a mediator of social conflict. In this sense, *incorporación* meant the evolution of indigenous regions toward a social model characterized by a similarity to European and U.S. society.<sup>40</sup>

Gamio proposed that this would be a voluntary Europeanization of Mexico's Indians along with an effort to make the Europeans more like the Indians. While Vasconcelos postulated the eventual disappearance of Mexico's indigenous people Gamio looked favorably to the Indian's cultural presence as an important part of the new nation. Gamio believed that through the study of human diversity it was possible for social scientists to find a government administrative method useful for the formulation of a necessary process of education, economic transformation, and social welfare. Once this method was achieved it would accelerate the consolidation of a heterogeneous Mexican Republic. To forge the fatherland Mexico needed to incorporate the sciences of man and it needed to cultivate a knowledge of Mexico's cultural communities in order to facilitate their unification into a national community.<sup>41</sup>

In *Teotihuacán* Gamio emphasized the role of "integral education" as a part of an attempt to institutionalize public education in pursuit of *incorporación*. He intended that these schools serve the greatest benefit of the community. Rather than the pursuit of a

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<sup>40</sup> Ruben Flores, "States of Culture: Relativism and National Consolidation in Mexico and the United States, 1910-1950" PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2006) 75, 77; Gamio *Forjando patria*, "III. The Role of Anthropology." An ethnic marker is an identifiable cultural characteristic that identifies members of a particular ethnicity. This can include language, dress, rules of marriage, and customs.

<sup>41</sup> Ruben Flores, "States of Culture," 75.

classical humanistic education as Vasconcelos desired, Gamio argued that education should reinforce the functions that mirrored the cultural life of the community. He recommended a regimen for social improvement that included economic revitalization, health maintenance, construction, and familiarization with law and with the larger community outside of Teotihuacán Valley. He advocated that education should be accorded to all members of the community, both young and old, declaring that the development of rural Mexican villages depended on all members of the social community. Gamio's description of the role of education in Teotihuacán reflects his role as one of the founders of the functionalist philosophy of education. Despite the fact that he was an anthropologist rather than an educator his work at Teotihuacán represents the origin of the state's role in educational reform in rural Mexico that was later taken up by Dewey disciples like Moisés Sáenz.<sup>42</sup>

In the United States many Americans found *incorporación* to be a powerful model of consolidation. They found its belief in the use of government and science appealing. One of these was John Collier. Gamio's use of social science and advocacy of government administration displayed at Teotihuacán became one of the most important models of institutional change for American progressives visiting Mexico in the 1930s. They noted that Mexico's attempts at the incorporation of cultures seemed to present an avenue for resolution of conflict and inequality commonly exhibited in the area of Native American relations. This interest encouraged inquiry into the use of government administration and social sciences for the reformation of U.S. Indian policies. Many Americans saw Gamio as a person attempting to preserve the indigenous cultures of

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<sup>42</sup> Ruben Flores, "States of Culture," 158.

Mexico in a way that adapted them for a modern world, making his ideas a convincing model for cultural consolidation in the United States. It is worth noting that there were those in the United States that adhered to Indigenista viewpoints on race. One of these was John Collier who found the word “race” to be troublesome and preferred the use of words like “ethnic” and “minority” in the description of Native Americans.<sup>43</sup>

But there were those in Mexico that questioned the concept of *incorporación*. Moisés Sáenz, as a functionary within the SEP, had attempted first the *Fusión* strategies created by SEP’s first director Vasconcelos and later forms of *incorporación* advocated by those influenced by Gamio. By the 1930s he had reached the conclusion, held by many indigenistas, that the last ten years had produced little or no results. Manuel Gamio’s political influence waned in the mid-1920s when his accusations of corruption in the SEP led to his exile. The DA was shut down and the SEP devoted fewer resources to the study of rural education. Gamio’s desire to develop scientific knowledge of indigenous people was generally ignored by out of touch, overconfident educators determined to instill progress through cultural assimilation that was designed to bestow what they believed was a superior culture upon the Indian communities. They showed little interest in indigenous culture; nor did the SEP offer much in the level of resources for the understanding of indigenous people. Rural teachers were poorly prepared, often incompetent, and generally little motivated to succeed in performing the tasks expected of them.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ruben Flores, “States of Culture,” 80, 96.; John Collier, letter to Dr. Louis Finkelstein, March 3, 1945 MS 146 Series I, Box 6, John Collier Papers, Yale University.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander Dawson, *Indian and Nation In Revolutionary Mexico*, 30.



Hoping to remedy this problem Rafael Ramírez, who followed Sáenz as chief of rural education with the SEP, established a series of *internados indígenas* in Indian regions throughout the country. These schools were intended to harmonize their practices with local cultures and conditions using local idioms as a mean for communication and teaching. Eventually Luiz Chávez Orozco, head of the DIA (Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas), a department latter designed to solve the “Indian problem,” would argue that the Indian’s mother tongue was the best means for Indian education. Rather than viewing the native tongue as a primitive encumbrance Orozco argued that the Indian’s language was a reflection of their world and the best means for educators to know, understand, and reach their native students. As the head of the DAI he advocated efforts to prepare native people as teachers and preserve their culture.<sup>45</sup>

During this time Moises Saenz, along with Orozco and labor leader Vicente Lombardo Toledano, developed a belief that the nation’s indigenous population was growing relative to the nation’s population; giving a lie to the notion that they would eventually disappear. Instead of viewing them as a vanishing “other” they began to rely on the Stalinist theory of oppressed nationals to explain the continued diversity of the nation. In their viewpoint, Mexico was not one nation but many, each with its right to self-determination based its own distinct history, geography and culture. They began to conclude that these differences did not represent a threat to the nation’s future but instead offered a source of strength.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Alexander Dawson, *Indian and Nation In Revolutionary Mexico*, 35, 79.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80.

This approach would culminate in the Primera Asamblea de Filólogos y Linguistas in Mexico City in May 1939. Organized by the Anthropology department of the IPN (Instituto Politécnico Nacional) and the DAI it was attended by the Indigenistas Daniel F. Rubín de la Borbolla, Miguel Othón de Mendizábal, Luis Alvarez Barret, Alfonso Caso, and Rafael Ramírez along with delegates from sixteen Indian communities. From the assembly came a call for the use of local vernaculars and local administration with a practice of putting economic decision making in the hands of local indigenous people steeped in the customs and psychology of their region. Rather than dismissing Indians as inferior, and linking cultural differences to signs of inferiority that needed to be eradicated through assimilation, they advocated programs that respected diversity. It was thought that if this was done with an emphasis on providing real opportunities for progress every ethnic group would have the same possibility of arriving at a “civilized state.”<sup>47</sup>

Sáenz, in *Mexico Integro*, criticized the popular view that the national evolution of the nation along the model proposed by Gamio would be achieved automatically once Mexico assimilated its Indians and solved “the economic and cultural riddles that he presents.” Sáenz argued that, while Gamio may have advocated *incorporación*, this did not mean the eradication of Mexico’s indigenous cultures. He argued that the programs of the central government were doing exactly what Gamio argued should not be done: forcing a model of culture onto the indigenous enclaves of the nation without their participation. He stated that, “We make contact with our Indians, in order to force upon them a particular theory of the nation and a particular socio credo. We approach them, in

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 79-80.

other words, with a course of events that has already been predestined.” In his opinion, “We are still unilateralists.”<sup>48</sup>

To him this “predetermined” viewpoint, that he considered the “automatic” course of government consolidation, revolved around a social model defined by science, technology, capitalism and the Spanish language. To Sáenz this social model was destructive not because of what it advocated but because of its failure to emphasize to the Indians why such ideas should prevail. “We undervalue the ethical values that our Indians bring to our national life, and we appreciate his universe only superficially. We are, in fact, just as ignorant of the Indian as any tourist who happens upon him.”<sup>49</sup>

He argued for *integración* where *centro social* (social action centers) operated according to the principles of Deweyan active learning and involved every agency of the government in an effort to involve indigenous peoples in the consolidation of the nation providing a place for the cultural structure of Indians in the fatherland Gamio was attempting to forge. According to Flores, Sáenz felt that *incorporación*, placed too much emphasis on inserting Indians into a fixed unified cultural model and “to little emphasis on unifying disparate elements of the country, whatever form such consolidation might eventually take.” Despite his expressed differences, he respected Gamio’s scientific approach to problems and wasn’t opposed to cultural unification. He just wanted it to be more sensitive to indigenous culture and aspirations as it followed a more pluralistic approach.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ruben Flores, “States of Culture,” From Moisés Sáenz “Política indiana,” in *México íntegro* (Lima: Imprenta Torres Aguirre, 1939), 211, 229.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 157-156.

<sup>50</sup> Ruben Flores, “States of Culture, 156-160.

Mexicos Indigenistas moved from a policy of fusion preferred by those favoring Vasconcelos vision of a new Hispanic culture to Gamio's concept of *incorporación* which many viewed as a scientific approach to *mestizaje*. But there were those, like Sáenz, who recognized that the change that they saw as necessary for Mexico's indigenous people could not be achieved without the willing cooperation of these people. If one wished to modernize, and thus amalgamate, them into the nation and make them more like the mestizo ideal it had to be in a way that made sense to them, that represented to them something that was in their best interest and allowed them to retain, at least in some way, their culture. This process needed to be an instrumentalist approach: a form of negotiation between locals and those seeking to help them from the outside; a process where ideas were tried and adopted or rejected based on success. In essence this was a process where the local populace was "instructed" by "enlightened professionals" on how to learn to conduct their own affairs in a way that was both modern and inclusive to a greater Mexico and a *mestizaje* ideal. Sáenz's *integración* was a pluralistic view, where local cultures would continue under the auspices of the national elite.

These instrumentalists' ideas taken from Boas and Dewey rather than Vasconcelos's Neo-Spanish, pan-Latin Catholic imperatives were the major reason why the amalgamation models advocated by Gamio and Sáenz, were more relevant to social scientists in the United States including the U.S. Indian Commissioner John Collier. Collier, like Sáenz, had great regard for Gamio's scientific method. But Sáenz's pluralistic *integración* was a philosophy that held great appeal to Collier who was advocating that Native Americans should be able to retain their culture while integrating into the greater nation. In fact, when Collier became U.S. Indian Commissioner, this

instrumentalists approach would become the basis for his development of “action research.” Collier, in the 1920s and 1930s was increasingly curious about the “experiments” conducted by the post-revolutionary Mexicans. As we will see, John Collier’s interest is not an isolated case of American curiosity.

## CHAPTER 4

## TRANSNATIONAL MEETINGS, THE LAND MYSTIC, AND MEXICO

In the United States a new curiosity for things Mexican developed in the 1920s and 30s. Earlier, the events of the Mexican Revolution strained U.S.-Mexico affairs. But the 1920s heralded new changes in U.S. - Mexican relations starting with the replacement of the dyspeptic U.S. Ambassador James R. Sheffield, who dismissed the social goals of the Mexican Revolution as Bolshevick leanings, with the more personable and sympathetic Ambassador Dwight Morrow. The U.S. ambassadors, Morrow and Josephus Daniels, who were respectively appointed in 1927 and 1933, won the confidence of Mexico's leadership. This thaw in relations was helped by a change in U.S goals.<sup>1</sup>

In a departure from the past, American interests would ignore short term profits and place more emphasis on the improvement of Mexico's long-term political stability and economic growth. Mexican leaders in politics and business became less fearful of U.S. military intervention and American business interests, with the exception of some U.S. oil giants, no longer considered it feasible to send in the Marines to enforce property rights. These changes freed Mexican leadership to focus on how to create economic opportunities through the attraction of competing interests from both Mexico and the United States. The period of 1920 to the 1940s witnessed changes in relations that evolved from mutual tension and Mexican fear of American invasion to an increasing affinity that resulted in a spirit of cooperation during World War II.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jon S. Middaugh "Transnational Cultural Market: A Concept For Understanding Cultural Transmission Across the Mexico-United States Border, 1920-1946" (PhD diss. Washington State University, 2010), 9, 12-13.

<sup>2</sup> Jon S. Middaugh "Transnational Cultural Market," 9, 12-13, 86-90.

During this time Mexican and U.S. government officials, businessmen, migrants, and tourists were the multiple agents of cultural transmissions where their political, economic and cultural activities complimented each other. This was what Jon S. Middaugh describes as a “transnational cultural market.” This cultural market existed alongside more traditional economic operations like the supply of goods, capital, and labor. The 1920s saw the enhancement of social and economic ties in the improvement of road networks, irrigation systems, and the gradual installment of electrical grids. These ties established linkages that continued to transmit culture even during the Great Depression and the oil nationalization episodes of the 1930s. Once formed, these migratory and commercial networks acquired an ever increasing capacity for moving goods, and people in both directions. They brought the two countries closer socially, shaping cultural relations and allowing positive personal connections. These developments established new boundaries for economic trade and investment that helped transmit culture.<sup>3</sup>

For example, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation sponsored academic sabbaticals for Americans and their Latin American counterparts. Simon Guggenheim made his fortune through mining in Mexico and throughout Latin America. His experiences in Latin America moved him to affect “a similar commerce of things of the mind, of spiritual values” between the U.S. and Latin America. Several Americans including the historian Lesley Byrd Simpson and ten Mexicans including the educator Moisés Sáenz received Guggenheim fellowships to study in one another’s countries from

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<sup>3</sup> Jon S. Middaugh “Transnational Cultural Market,” 8, 20, 257.; Helen Delpar *The Enormous Vogue of things Mexican*, 74-75, 110.

1930-32. Guggenheim's program also allowed hundreds of American teachers to attend the Summer School, the *Escuela de Verano* of the National University in Mexico City.<sup>4</sup>

The Escuela de Verano, was encouraged by a Mexican government that sought to bring American educators and scholars to its country. While it was a place for U.S. Spanish teachers to improve their language skills and for Mexican students to enhance their pedagogical methods it was also a place where intellectuals could gather and learn about post-revolutionary cultural changes and debate their significance. One of its founders, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, an expatriate from the Dominican Republic, intended the school to be a place that would change the perceptions of both Americans and Mexicans. Courses and field trips offered students a cultural rediscovery of the country, of its folksongs, dances, practices, and manual arts. The leading educators and artists of both Mexico and the United States provided patrons with the opportunity to learn about new educational and cultural orientations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Jon S. Middaugh "Transnational Cultural Market," 104.

<sup>5</sup> Rick A. López *Crafting Mexico Intellectuals*, 101-102. The Escuela de Verano employed educators like Moisés Sáenz and Jaime Torres Bodet (who later served as a minister of education and foreign affairs and as an official with UNESCO in the 1940s-1960s); the art historian Manuel Romero de Terros; attorney Manuel Gómez Morín (later a founder of the Catholic Conservative Party Partido Acción (PAN)); the poets Carlos Pellicer and Salvador Novo; the archeologist, Alfonso Caso; the ethnologist Pablo González Casanova; the journalist Rafael Helidoro Valle; the historian Jesús Silva Herzog; and diplomat Ramón Beteta. Foreigners included John Dewey, René d'Harnoncourt, and Frances Toor. Pedro Henríquez Ureña was born in Santo Domingo, the third of four siblings. Henríquez's father was Francisco Henríquez v Carvaial, a doctor and politician who was also an intellectual who maintained permanent contact with the most important representatives of the Hispanic Modernism movements from the early 20th century. Henríquez Carvajal would become president of the Republic for a brief period in 1916, before the American occupation. His mother was the eminent poet and feminist Salomé Ureña. Both played a key role in Pedro's formation and education. In 1921 he traveled to Mexico where his *americanismo* would acquire a new vigor. Influenced by this atmosphere of enthusiasm towards the culture, he wrote his famous article "The Utopia of America." In 1923 he married Isabel Lombardo Toledano, sister of the famous Mexican union leader Vicente Lombardo Toledano. The two had a daughter, Natacha, the following year.



Seeking to present an inclusive national ideal to the world, Mexico actively sought the interest of U.S. intellectuals, artists, and tourists. There was a belief among Mexican elites that Mexico suffered from too much European cultural dominance and it was hoped that American interest would help enhance Mexico's independence from the old world. In doing this Mexico was seeking to construct a new inclusive national heritage. Government founded projects sought to use teachers, government workers, and members of the urban elite in an effort to disseminate to the rural communities a national identity of non-European origin. Anthropologists, like Manuel Gamio, and educators, like Moisés Sáenz, were employed to produce a new mestizo national identity that would help in the construction of a cohesive single entity in which local cultural differences became components of a new mestizo singularity.<sup>6</sup>

As part of a goal of producing a new national image the Mexican government employed bilingual scholars like Sáenz and Gamio to work with their American counterparts. They were part of a widespread effort to promote the country's indigenous peoples. To do this Mexican government funded projects intended to valorize its indigenous folk cultures, the coordination and promotion of festivals and folk markets, organization of large scale museum exhibitions of Mexican folk art, architectural surveys, and studies of Mexico's rural, and in particular, mestizo population. Mexico sought to promote its folk art traditions and its mestizo heritage by inviting Americans to summer school projects, cultural exchanges, lectures and conferences, and the bilingual publication of conference proceedings.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Jennifer McLerran *A New Deal for Native Art: Indian Arts and Federal Policy, 1933-1943* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009), 37.

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer McLerran *A New Deal for Native Art*, 37.

These efforts included the publication of bilingual journals like *Mexican Folkways*, a journal intended for both Mexican and American audiences. Frances Toor, inspired by Mexico's 1921 Exhibition of Popular Art, and her experiences at the Escuela de Verano, created a magazine designed to encourage appreciation for the culture and arts of the Mexican countryside. Published in English and Spanish, it offered a collaborative form designed to quell urban fears of a dangerous, savage, rebellious countryside and replace this disquieting image with a celebration of folkloric culture and popular art. As a collaborative effort Toor, the foreigner, sought domestic credibility by working with Mexican contributors, like Manuel Gamio, Pablo González Casanova, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and other artists and researchers. *Mexican Folkways* attempted to collect and disseminate Mexico's cultural vernacular and present it in a coherent package. In keeping with the ideals of Gamio and other like-minded proponents it presented Mexico as rural and indigenous, while emphasizing its variations in language, tradition, and culture.<sup>8</sup>

There were also those in the U.S. who were interested in promoting greater cultural awareness of Mexico and Latin America. In 1926 the Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America was founded. Funding came largely from the Rockefeller family who were seeking greater cultural understanding while hoping to better protect their extensive oil holdings in Mexico. The committee members included the writer Stuart Chase and educator John Dewey. The first meeting of the committee was held in Mexico in 1926. The annual meetings of the committee, which centered on education,

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<sup>8</sup> Rick A. López *Crafting Mexico Intellectuals*, 102-103.

became popular, attracting North American artists, writers, teachers, and social scientists.<sup>9</sup>

The Mexican revolution had made Mexico interesting to “the folks next door” particularly American radicals. In the words of Patricia Albers, Tina Modotti’s biographer:

Mexico City teemed with fanatics, bohemians, idealists, radicals, and visionaries. Intellectuals who had once looked to Europe for cultural revelation now turned their backs upon the old continent, embracing instead the genius of peasants and indigenous peoples whose inclusion in the Mexican community promised to bring forth the ‘regeneration and exaltation of the national spirit.’<sup>10</sup>

One alleged radical, Frank Tannenbaum, American historian, political analyst, and activist wrote in 1924, “There is a future in Mexico, a cultural future that may well prove the greatest Renaissance in the contemporary world.” With most of the armed phase over and Mexico engaged in national reconstruction, many American intellectuals saw Mexico and its revolutionary experiments as a laboratory where new techniques in social transformation were being tested with the potential to do away with old injustices. Many American reformist intellectuals saw Mexico as a quaint preindustrial country that was engaged in a “profound process of social change and self-discovery.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Jennifer McLerran *A New Deal for Native Art*, 37-38

<sup>10</sup> Patricia Albers *Shadows, fire, Snow : The Life of Tina Modotti* (New York : Clarkson Potter, 1999), 115.

<sup>11</sup> José Antonio Aguilar Rivera trans. Rose Hocker and Emiliano Corral *The Shadow of Ulysses*, 3; Frank Tannenbaum, “Mexico-A Promise,” *Survey* May 1924 cited by Charles A. Hale, “Frank Tannenbaum and the Mexican Revolution” *American Hispanic Review* 75, no. 2 (May 1995) 232. Helen Delpar *The Enormous Vogue of things Mexican*, 25-30.; Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, “The Cosmopolitan Mexican Summer, 1920-1949” *Latin American Research Review*, vol.32, issue 3, (July 1, 1997) 224-225. Trillo reviews several books on the subject. Frank Tannenbaum was considered a radical on the basis of his leadership in Industrial Workers of the World. The IWW, known as the Wobblies, contended that all workers should be united as a social class and that capitalism and wage labor should be abolished, a message considered ultra-radical. Tannenbaum, a member of the IWW-affiliated Waiter's Industrial

These people are described by Helen Delpar as “political pilgrims,” people drawn to Mexico “because of their interest in the revolution’s impact on society and the arts...” One of these pilgrims was Mary Louis Doherty who came to Mexico in January of 1921. Prior to her arrival she had worked as a social worker on Staten Island, New York. While employed there she meet Agnes Smedley, who was later known as an apologist for Red China. Smedley persuaded Doherty to go to Mexico. Upon her arrival she stayed with Smedley’s former brother-in-law Thornberg Haberman, editor of the English-language edition of *El Herald*. She stayed there until August, once briefly losing her bed to the visiting labor agitator Mother Jones. While staying with the Haberman’s Doherty became acquainted with the writer Katherine Anne Porter. *El Herald* noted that Porter had come to Mexico to gather material for a book and work on “a great pageant-play on the stirring history of this romantic land.” With less dramatic flair than Porter but with a more enduring sense, Doherty found Mexico to be a delightful place and soon became the Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana’s (regional confederation of Mexican workers,

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Union, proposed a campaign of demanding relief from New York City churches. Starting in February, he led masses of workers to churches, disrupted services, and demanded that they be given food and shelter. Although most churches complied, the New York press, notably the New York Times, decried Tannenbaum and the Wobblies. On March 4, Tannenbaum led a group of unemployed workers from Rutgers Square to the Catholic St. Alphonsus Church on West Broadway. There, they were met by a phalanx of police and the parish rector, who refused their demands. Tannenbaum and 190 other protesters were arrested; Tannenbaum was charged with inciting to riot and given an extraordinary \$5,000 bail. At trial one protester received 60 days in jail, four 30 days, three 15 days, and the rest were let go; Tannenbaum was sent to jail for a year and fined \$500. He spent the year on Blackwell’s Island. When he got out of jail, Tannenbaum remained active in the IWW, and he was arrested alongside Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Alexander Berkman during the Bayonne refinery strikes of 1915-1916, in Bayonne, New Jersey. After Bayonne, Tannenbaum soon abandoned his youthful radicalism. With the help of several philanthropists, he attended Columbia University, where classmates included Samuel Roth. In 1921, Tannenbaum received his bachelor’s degree from Columbia. He received his Ph.D in economics from the Brookings Institution. He then served in the U.S. Army, stationed in the south. He then moved to Mexico, where he conducted research on rural education and served as an adviser to President Lázaro Cárdenas. In 1931, he reported to the Wickersham Commission study on Penal Institutions, Probation and Parole (Volume 9). In 1932, he returned to the United States to teach criminology at Cornell University. In 1935 he joined the faculty at Columbia, where he became professor of Latin American history. He retired from Columbia University in 1965. He died in New York City in 1969.

CROM) second gringa employee, while teaching Indian children twice a week at Xochimilco, a village south of Mexico City.<sup>12</sup>

A skilled letter writer, she later maintained correspondence with John Collier and Moisés Sáenz. Doherty worked for Sáenz from 1925 to 1928 when he was an Under Secretary of Education through 1928 when he became Secretary of Education. When Sáenz was appointed Director of Public Welfare for Mexico, DF in 1931 Doherty followed him out of a sense of deep loyalty and friendship. Doherty's responsibilities at the Department of Education included editing, writing English correspondence, serving as secretary to the summer school of the National University, assisting visiting foreign scholars, and serving as secretary of the Program Committee for the annual Seminar in Mexico of the Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America (directed by Hubert Herring). Later, as an employee at the Department of Public Welfare, Doherty supervised twenty-two social workers.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Helen Delpar *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*, 15. Delpar states the term was used by sociologist Paul Hollander to characterize intellectuals who visited the Soviet Union and other revolutionary societies in the twentieth century. Thomas F. Walsh *Katherine Anne Porter and Mexico: The Illusion of Eden* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 14, 25-26. The *Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana* (CROM) is a federation of labor unions in Mexico. It was founded in Saltillo in 1918 at a congress of labor delegates called by Mexican President Venustiano Carranza. The federation, of which Luis Napoleón Morones was a major leader, marked a departure from the traditionally anarchist stance of Mexican labor to a nationalist position. From its inception, the CROM was controlled by a small group of union leaders called *Grupo Acción* ("Action Group") who supported the post-revolutionary government. After supporting President Carranza, the CROM was a key base of support for two of his successors, Álvaro Obregón and Plutarco Elías Calles. The political vehicle of the federation was the Mexican Labor Party. Under Obregón, the labor movement was co-opted as its leaders were appointed to posts within the government. By the end of Obregón's term, labor had abandoned its goal of destroying capital in favor of establishing a balance between capital and labor that would benefit workers. Labor leaders defended the government's right, established in Article 123 of the Constitution of 1917, to arbitrate labor disputes, since they felt that their interests were represented in the government.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Louis Doherty Papers, University of Maryland. University Libraries Digital Collections, assessed November 21, 2013, <http://digital.lib.umd.edu/archivesum/actions.DisplayEADDoc.do?source=MdU.ead.litms.0015.xml&style=ead> During this period, Doherty carried on an active social life. Among her acquaintances were

Doherty was described as “less self-centered and ambitious” than Porter and more committed to Mexico’s social progress. Porter ridiculed this sense of devotion calling her “a kind of virgin office wife” a “hanger on and born gooseberry,” a single person who would tag along with a couple, the acquaintance one can’t bear to leave out lest she feel alone and left out. Characteristic of her nature, and in a manner that she would later show with Sáenz, Doherty deferred to her talented friend, rescuing crumpled pieces of writing Porter had discarded. Doherty became the model for Porter’s character Laura in her story “Flowering Judas.”<sup>14</sup>

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Edward Weston, Tina Modotti, Paca Toor, René d'Harnoncourt, Alfonso Goldschmidt, Anita Brenner, Carleton Beals, Fred Davis, Pablo O'Higgins, Jean Charlot, Diego Rivera, Roberto Montenegro, Adolfo Best-Maugard, Miguel Covarrubias, Rose Rolando, Rufino Tamayo, Maria Izquierdo, Lola Alvarez Bravo, Frida Kahlo, William Spratling, David Alfaro Siquieros, Blanca Luz, Ramón Beteta, Carlos Chavez, Elizabeth Anderson, Natalie Scott, Hart Crane, Emily Edwards, and Sergei Eisenstein.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas F. Walsh *Katherine Anne Porter and Mexico: The Illusion of Eden* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 14, 25-26. Plot of Flowering Judas, Story: Laura is a young woman living in Mexico during the Mexican Revolution. She is beautiful but reserved. Some feel that she is haughty, others that she is pure, or cold. Her tasks include running messages for the revolution including taking drugs to political prisoners. This is not an action story, but rather a journey inside the thoughts of Laura. She is being courted by Braggioni, a leader of the revolution, yet he has a wife whom he treats rudely. Braggioni comes to her house to sing to her each evening. His singing, appearance, and actions repulse Laura, but she is afraid to antagonize him. Through her thoughts we learn of her dedication for the revolution, and of the many men who would like to ravish her. A young man comes and sings at her window each night, and follows her through the streets. Her reputation, however, is that she always says “no,” and maintains her virginity. We learn that she teaches English to children, and outwardly supports the revolution. However, she yields to a desire to return to pray in church, secretly hoping that she is not caught. She remains “holy” by returning always to the word “no.” She also rebels against the worker ideal of the revolution by preferring hand-made lace on her collars. Braggioni warns her of a coming conflict between the revolution and the church and makes her load his pistol for use on that fateful day. She tells him of young Eugenio who has chosen to overdose on the drugs she has delivered and to die in prison. Braggioni replies that Eugenio is of no consequence, and that he is a fool. But Laura is apparently secretly in love with Eugenio. This is a complex and confusing story of external and internal conflict. Much has been written about what “Flowering Judas” means. It is often used as an outstanding example of symbolism. Yet, it’s not always clear just what the message is meant to be. Certainly there is the conflict of the political purity of the revolution with the rigidity of the Church. Yet the Church stands for personal purity which the leaders of the revolution seem to completely lack. Laura feels the pull of all these forces within her, and tries to ignore committing herself by remaining aloof, and a virgin from genuine involvement. Then, she is confronted in a dream, at the conclusion, with her own evil. Will she embrace the holiness of Christ (the Eucharist) or accept the body and blood of Judas?

From January 1936 to December 1938, Doherty was employed at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Relations, under Assistant Secretary Ramón Beteta, one of Moisés Sáenz's closest friends. Her duties included research in economics (agrarian, labor, trade), public relations, and assistance with editorial work, translations, and English correspondence, and interpreting. She also assisted with organization and publicity and taught in the *Centro de Estudios Pedagógicos e Hispanoamericanos de México*. After briefly working at the Department of the Interior in Washington, D. C., in early 1939, Doherty travelled, from April 1939 to July 1940, to all of the countries of Central and South America, except Venezuela, though a traveling fellowship in the social sciences she obtained from the Rockefeller Foundation. The purpose for this trip was to gather information and prepare for the First Inter-American Conference on Indian Life at Pátzcuaro, Mexico in April 1940.<sup>15</sup>

While the Mexican Revolution fascinated many in the U.S., American intellectual interest in Mexico predated this event. The development of the social sciences in the U.S. and Mexico resulted in shared influences and cultural projects between the two nations. One example of this was Franz Boas, one of the most influential figures in anthropology in the early 1900s. In 1910, during the celebrations of Mexico's Independence Centennial, Boas inaugurated the International School of Anthropology (*Escuela Internacional de Anthropológia y Etnología*). One of Boas's students was the Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio. In 1922, while attending Columbia University, Gamio

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<sup>15</sup> Mary Louis Doherty Papers, University of Maryland. University Libraries Digital Collections, assessed November 21, 2013  
<http://digital.lib.umd.edu/archivesum/actions.DisplayEADDoc.do?source=MdU.ead.litms.0015.xml&style=ead> In September 1940, Doherty returned to Mexican government service, once again under Ramón Beteta, who was now Under Secretary of Finance and Public Credit in the Ministry of the Treasury; her duties were virtually identical to those she formerly performed for Beteta at Foreign Relations.

became the first Mexican to earn a doctorate in anthropology. According to Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, Boas and Gamio complemented each other: “Boas wanted science to be the tool for the universal demystification of old racial myths and his own source of authority and fame.” Trillo states that “Gamio desired the latter end for himself as well, but as an instrument for Mexican nationalism:-the incorporation of Indians into modern national development and the incorporation of Mexico into the concert of nations.”<sup>16</sup>

Both saw a mutual advantage in their intellectual exchange:

Boas needed Gamio’s anthropology to support the study of tradition and primitivism and achieve a truly professional science, universal and cosmopolitan...Gamio needed Boasian anthropology, theoretically, to advance his belief in the feasibility of modernity for a mestizo nation, and, politically, to consolidate his own influence through his links with international science.<sup>17</sup>

Relationships like Gamio and Boas’s were what José Rivera describes as “hanging bridges that united the two countries, albeit precariously, in the twenties and thirties.” These were fragile relationships built on personal relationships but these bridges allowed the flow of a great number of ideas. An important source of binational fascination centered on the figure of John Dewey. Trillo states that the philosophical, epistemological, political, and institutional roots of contemporary social sciences can be traced back to the philosopher and educator’s influence. Among these influences was Dewey’s view that absolute truths did not exist in religion, philosophy, or politics; expressing a commitment to a morality where what mattered was the real world

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<sup>16</sup> José Antonio Aguilar Rivera, trans. Rose Hocker and Emiliano Corral *The Shadow of Ulysses*, 4. Rivera refers to Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, “Stereophonic Scientific Modernism: Social Science Between Mexico and the United States, 1880-1930,” *Journal of American History*, 86 (December 1999), 1156-1187. He relied on a previous version of this work “Contrasting Social Sciences: Mexico and the U.S., 1880s/1940s. Histories of Interactive Moments” working paper, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, Mexico City, Mexico, 1994), 45, 47.

<sup>17</sup> Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, “Stereophonic Scientific Modernism,” 1179.



consequences of one's actions. Appealing to the spirit of the age was Dewey's distrust of metaphysics and his belief that scientific method should be the basis for moral decisions. With his eyes always on the future, old ways did not excite him, education was the road to democracy, and the use of reason could solve social problems. Always interested in progress, the fall of Mexico's old regime and the nation's apparent reinvention and its educational reforms interested him.<sup>18</sup>

Dewey's fascination with progress was shared by many in Mexico. Following the bloody conflict post-revolutionary Mexico was trying to put its human infrastructure back together. The area most in need of regeneration was the rural countryside. Avid believers in Dewey's methodology recognized this would require extraordinary efforts; in fact, in 1923 Mexico would devote 15 percent of its national budget to a social engineering project where teachers would be the chief construction workers. Mexican teachers, working under a plan created by assistant secretary of public education and the foremost Dewey elucidator, Moisés Sáenz, became the avant-garde of educational experimentation. Inspired by Dewey the Mexican pedagogy of the time adhered to the "school of action," a place where children learned to work and live and "only secondarily to read and write. While Sáenz was a major proponent of this "action pedagogy" his superior at the time, José Vasconcelos, the head of the Education Ministry (Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP), seeking to end the traditionalist rut of teachers infected with

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<sup>18</sup> José Antonio Aguilar Rivera trans. Rose Hocker and Emiliano Corral *The Shadow of Ulysses*, 4-5.; Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, "Contrasting Social Sciences: Mexico and the U.S., 1880s/1940s. Histories of Interactive Moments" working paper, Cento de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, Mexico City, Mexico, 1994), 66.; "Profiles: John Dewey," *Prospects* 13, no. 3 (1983).

“trivial encyclopedism,” was the one who sent a young teacher, Eulalia Guzmán, to the United States to learn and introduce to Mexico the “learn by doing” method<sup>19</sup>

With the ebb in tensions between the two countries, Mexico’s art and culture became magnets for American visitors who, in turn, introduced Mexicans to cultural trends in their country. The later 1920s and the 1930s marked a time when various institutes, artists and intellectuals north and south of the border became enchanted with their neighbors. American artists and writers were especially fascinated with revolutionary Mexico and its ostensible validity. The result of this was an outpouring of books, paintings, and other works. By the 1930s Mexico enjoyed a “vogue” in the United States. In 1935, one critic, noting the large amount of publications on the subject, humorously noted that Americans were finding it difficult to escape their “Mexican heritage.” The United States became the destination of cultural migrants from Mexico: painters, composers, actors, and others who contributed to the vogue; enjoying success even as Americans debated the desirability of Mexican immigration in general.<sup>20</sup>

The economic decline in Mexico in the late 20s, the stock market crash in America, and the subsequent Great Depression resulted in mutually opposing tariff policies, slumping of business interest in foreign investment, and U.S. pressure to repatriate Mexican workers. Still, the flow of cultural transmission continued. Both governments, with an eye towards the future, continued road construction projects and

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<sup>19</sup> José Antonio Aguilar Rivera trans. Rose Hocker and Emiliano Corral *The Shadow of Ulysses*, 5-6. Taken from Enrique Krauze, “La Escuela Callista,” in E. Krauze, J. Meyer, and C. Reyes, *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana, 1924-1928: La Reconstucción Económica* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1977) 297-299. ; Stephen E. Lewis *The Ambivalent Revolution: Forging State and Nation in Chiapas, 1910-1945* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 36. Vasconcelos would later become one of the harshest critics of Dewey.

<sup>20</sup> Helen Delpar *The Enormous Vogue of things Mexican*, x, 74-75.

education campaigns that continued to provide useful conduits for culture. Mexican artists, like Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco, held highly successful U.S. exhibitions. At the same time the repatriation of Mexican migrants introduced American culture to Mexico as returning workers arrived with products, values, and ideas acquired in the north. Anthropologist Manuel Gamio believed these *repatriados* were technically and culturally progressive, offering a form of enlightened culture needed by the state to promote development. He felt that the repatriados returned to Mexico with knowledge that provided the potential for them to be “teachers in life in general.” Meanwhile, some American intellectuals, feeling that American values had been tainted by excessive consumerism in the 20s, acquired an appreciation for Mexican ideals, believed to be more “simple” and “honest.” They thought that Mexican culture offered progressive assets needed by the United States.<sup>21</sup>

The events of the Great Depression produced a sense of failure among many Americans who, in a new sense of humility, felt a sense of solidarity with their equally distressed Latin American counterparts. According to John A. Britton, “The continuing severity of the business collapse, the eclectic experimentation of the Roosevelt administration, and the ascent of leftist cultural values in the United States gave discussions of Mexican communal agriculture, socialist education, and government management of large sectors of the economy a familiar and receptive context.” In a general sense, “Roosevelt and Cárdenas seemed bound in the same direction....Media

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<sup>21</sup> Helen Delpar *The Enormous Vogue of things Mexican*, 83-90.; Jon S. Middaugh “Transnational Cultural Market,” 87.; Casey Walsh *Building the Borderlands: A Transnational History of Irrigated Cotton Along the Mexico-Texas Border* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M Press, 2008), 61. Gamio’s comments on repatriados came from his *Hacia un México Nuevo: Problemas Sociales* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1987 (1935), 72. 76.

commentators soon discovered that the Mexico of Cárdenas made ‘good copy’ in harmony with the New Deal ethos.”<sup>22</sup>

The Great Depression influenced a change in U.S policy towards Latin America. President Roosevelt wanted to fight the Depression by stimulating trade and investment in the region. The United States, with an underutilized economy, needed customers to purchase its manufactured and industrial goods and absorb its capital surplus. Mexico needed a restored market to the United States that would buy the nation’s output of raw goods and precious metals. These mutual needs influenced the development of the Good Neighbor Policy; an inter-American ideal, predicated on the premise of replacing acts of force inflicted on Latin American nations by the United States with a policy of cooperation in the interest of mutual benefit. With this in mind, the United States withdrew Marines stationed in the Caribbean and Central America, pledging to end “gun boat diplomacy” and military intervention.<sup>23</sup>

In accordance with this new policy, the United States sought the creation of inter-American alliances that were intended to exclude Europe and Asia from the Western Hemisphere while attempting to replace mistrust and fear among American nations with trust and confidence. The new policy sought to block regional alliances and prevent barter arrangements with extra-hemispheric powers. The Good Neighbor Policy also sought the extension of credit to Latin American nations along with the creation of an

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<sup>22</sup> Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of things Mexican, 10, 193*; James William Park, *Latin America Underdevelopment: A History of Perspectives in the United States, 1870-1965*, (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 140-42; John A. Britton *Revolution and Ideology: Images of the Mexican Revolution in the United States* (Lexington, Ky. : University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 140, 171-72

<sup>23</sup> W. Dirk Raat and Michael M. Brescia *Mexico and the United States*, 141.

inter-American banking system. In reflection of the change in U.S. policy Roosevelt did not intervene in the 1933 Cuban Revolution.<sup>24</sup>

In the past actions, like Mexico's confiscation of U.S. owned land in the late 1930s, would have resulted in harsh retaliatory acts by the United States. But the Roosevelt administration, in light of its developing "Good Neighbor" policy, responded not with harsh reactions but, instead chose a conciliatory process of negotiated settlements. One reason why the Roosevelt administration seemed more accommodating was that the President and US ambassador to Mexico, Josephus Daniels, were sympathetic to the plight of Mexico's peasantry and saw land redistribution, the result of Mexico's confiscation of U.S. owned land, as a way to address that nation's problems with poor living and working conditions. This would result in a stabilized Mexico, something important to American interests. The peaceful resolve of Mexico's confiscation of U.S. owned land would later provide a way for a similar peaceful resolve when Mexico nationalized all its oil resources.<sup>25</sup>

This new U.S understanding of rural conditions in Mexico coincided with American viewpoints concerning the value of rural land. One holder of such values was John Collier. As a champion of Native American rights Collier recognized the Native American's connection to the land. Fredrick Pike states that "Collier believed in the superiority of the Indian way of life because it was rooted in the land." Collier believed that ultimately all Americans would adopt Indian values that favored a pre-modern, anti-urbanist, partially collectivist view point based on a reverence for the land. In the

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<sup>24</sup> W. Dirk Raat and Michael M. Brescia *Mexico and the United States*, 141.

<sup>25</sup> John Dwyer, *The Agrarian Dispute*, 165.

Roosevelt administration, Collier's view was not an aberration. His superior, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, had a great respect and regard for the land. He shared Collier's faith in nature's rejuvenating powers believing that the nation's parks, with over eight million acres added during his tenure, presented a chance for urbanized Americans to leave the cities and experience personal renewal in the wild places. Ickes understood and respected Collier's viewpoint. In this he was influenced by his first wife, Anna, who also possessed Collier's belief that the Indians of the Southwest were a positive role model for all Americans.<sup>26</sup>

These men were not alone in their veneration of the land. President Franklin Roosevelt subscribed to the "agrarian myth," what Pike refers to as the belief "in the redeeming, uplifting effect of the proximity to," and "intimacy with, the land." In a 1931 article Roosevelt declared that "land is not only the source of wealth, it is also the source of human happiness." Proponents of the agrarian myth believed that not only happiness but human virtue sprang from the land and that "good people remain in touch with the land." In their opinion, those who exploited the land based solely on desire for profit were not "contributors to human development and economic might" but were "plunders of the national bank of virtue."<sup>27</sup>

Capitalism seemed, to many, to be the engine of plunder and onset of the Great Depression eclipsed the reputation of big business resulting in a questioning, at least for a while, of capitalist modernity. This development encouraged Roosevelt to act in accord with his convictions concerning the purity and virtue of an American life rooted in the

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<sup>26</sup> Fredrick B. Pike, *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy*, 179.

<sup>27</sup> Fredrick Pike, *The Good Neighbor Policy*. 177-178. Roosevelt quote from Walter L. Creese, *TVA's Public Planning: The Vision, the Reality* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 52.

land. To him, and others, natural events, like the Dust Bowl, seemed to display the effects of rapacious business' assault on nature. This climate made it easy for Roosevelt to act contrary to the wishes of business interests. An example of this was his desire to act in opposition to lumber companies in the creation of Olympic National Park protecting large stands of old growth forest.<sup>28</sup>

In accord with a disapproval of capitalistic rapacity, the theme of natural ties to the land often figured in Roosevelt's rhetoric. In his dedication of Shenandoah National Park Roosevelt spoke in praise of, "the perspective that comes to men and women who every morning and night can lift up their eyes to Mother Nature," and closed by recalling a figure from Greek mythology, the giant Antaeus, who was invincible on the ground but was defeated by Hercules when he lost contact with the earth. "There is merit for all of us in that ancient tale," he said. Rexford G. Tugwell, one of Roosevelt's "brain trust," undersecretary of agriculture, and head of the Resettlement Administration, described the President as a "child of the country" who saw the cities as nothing "other than a perhaps necessary nuisance." Sharing in the President's rural idyllic belief, Tugwell stated that Roosevelt believed that "We shall solve the problems of the cities by leaving the city."<sup>29</sup>

The Jeffersonian spirit, which celebrated the virtue of the "yeoman farmer" and the village craftsman, influenced Roosevelt's interest in rural planning and conservation. In a 1931 address to the University of Virginia, Roosevelt speculated on the possibility of

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>29</sup> Fredrick Pike, *The Good Neighbor Policy*, 178-79. Roosevelt quote from Stephen Fox, *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 199; Tugwell quote from Roger Biles, *A New Deal for the American People* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991), 211. Tugwell and Roosevelt quotes from letters Tugwell to Roosevelt and Roosevelt to Tugwell, August 26, 1937 and reply, Roosevelt to Tugwell, August 29, 1937, Roosevelt Papers, PPF, 564 FDRL,.

creating a cooperative effort resulting in “some new form of living which will combine industry and agriculture.” In his inaugural address he expressed, in romantic Jeffersonian terms, the necessity to recognize the over-abundance of the nation’s urban population gravitated in industrial centers and the need to redistribute some of this excess population to the country side, “to provide a better use of the land for those best fitted for the land.” Seeming to have readapted Turner’s thesis concerning rural lands as a “safety valve” Roosevelt felt that it was necessary to move millions of permanently unemployed city dwellers back to the land where they could produce their own food on small farm plots. His wife, Eleanor, desired a government attack on runaway urbanization through the establishment of rural-industrial communes that would allow people to escape from the crowded cities while helping to alleviate rural poverty. Even his tough pragmatic adviser, Lewis Howe showed enthusiasm for resettlement programs, industrial decentralization, and the establishment of small scale rural based factories, a view shared by industrialist Henry Ford.<sup>30</sup>

The lure of the agrarian myth would stay with Roosevelt even at the end of World War II, when Roosevelt momentarily supported the proposal, suggested by his Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau jr., that the best course for a defeated Germany was to dismantle the nation’s industry and embark on a massive return of the German people to land. “What better way,” wrote one of Roosevelt’s biographers, “to remake a people than

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<sup>30</sup> Fredrick B. Pike, *FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy*, 187, 191; Pike refers to Gabriel Hunt, ed. *The Essential Franklin Delano Roosevelt* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1995).; Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin* (New York: New American Library, 1971), 408, 522-524, 544-545, 549; Walter L. Creese, *TVA’s Public Planning: The Vision, the Reality* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 29, 51, 247, 250, 526-527.; Frank Freidel *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 85.



to dismember their political institutions, and simultaneously move them out of the industrial age and into contact with their honest, peaceful, Jeffersonian agrarian roots,”<sup>31</sup>

It is understandable that concern for rural America should be vital to the Roosevelt administration. In 1930 almost 44 percent of the nation’s population lived in the country. Because of this, agrarian sentiments colored many New Deal projects including the Farm Security Administration, The Rural Resettlement Administration, the Rural Electrification Administration, and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). The TVA, for example, showed influences of a return to land spirit expressed in an “overwhelming ambition to bring two unlike entities, the old and new, the shiny machine and the leafy bough, into close alignment along an extended valley.” With a utopian spirit, Roosevelt envisioned a valley where “man and nature must walk hand in hand,” a place where a community of farmers and engineers, would work with rustics and intellectuals. One young man told the writer Studs Terkel that the TVA was “a sort of regeneration and so forth” and in a 1937 Fireside Chat Roosevelt said, “Year by year, we propose to add more valleys to take care of thousands of other families who need the same kind of second chance in new green pastures.”<sup>32</sup>

Many Americans, even urban based northern entrepreneurs, looked nostalgically back to an earlier time, a golden age of small towns and agrarian tranquility. While once feeling disparagement for the people of the South, whether they were of the American

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<sup>31</sup> Fredrick B. Pike, *FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy*, 191.; Warren F. Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 76.

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Census Bureau “Urban and Rural Population: 1900 to 1990” (Washington D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 1995), accessed April 18, 2015, <https://www.census.gov/population/censusdata/urpop0090.txt> Fredrick B. Pike *FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy*, 180.; Richard Lowitt *The New Deal and the West* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 204.; Walter L. Creese, *TVA’s Public Planning*, 16, 65.; Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), 25.; October 12, 1937, broadcast, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, ed, Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 102.

South or Latin America, now these places were envisioned as places that retained their sleepy little villages and relaxed lifestyles. The vision of a place with easy-going little farms seemed an antidote for those hustling urban jungle fighters who, by the early thirties, were occupying more soup lines and less assembly lines. Many a northerner had come to the conclusion that these “southerners knew the secret to the “good life.” One northerner, John Collier jr., son of the U.S. Indian Commissioner and employed by the Resettlement Administration, viewed the disruption of once close knit communities by industrialism and viewed such American modernity as an “American tragedy.” Novelist John Dos Passos appreciated the advantages that Americans enjoyed as they grew up “with only the sky over their heads” instead of the cramped skies of congested urban America. Architect Frank Lloyd Wright declared that “the true life” was lived “close to the soil” in small rural settlements. Harold Ickes agreed with this view adding that nature was “preeminently the master artist” in the fashioning of good people while the product coming from the urban mold was warped humanity. This was a time when the sophisticated song writer Cole Porter said “Oh, give me land, lots of land under starry skies above” in his song, *Don't Fence Me In*.<sup>33</sup>

During the Depression years Mexico offered new vistas for weary Americans. In the 1920s the Revolution lured Americans to Mexico. But in the 1930s they were drawn to a culture perceived of as free of the political and cultural hegemony of Europe and uniquely American in a pure Jeffersonian sense. With doubts about the virtues of the perceived linear progress of capitalism many looked to Mexico as an alternative way of

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<sup>33</sup> Fredrick Pike *The Good Neighbor Policy*, 180,181.; David P. Peeler, *Hope Among US Yet: Social Criticism and Social Solace In Depression America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 99; Linda W. Wagner, *Dos Passos: Artist As American* (Austin: University Of Texas Press, 1979), 115; Meryle Secrest, *Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 385.; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. “Aggressive Progressive,” *New York Review of Books*, April 25, 1991, 51.

life. American visitors noted the wantlessness of the Mexican peasant and the coherence of village life despite the grinding poverty.<sup>34</sup>

Some frustrated New Dealers looked at Mexico as an alternative model for reform. Rexford Tugwell faced disappointment when the Supreme Court declared his program, the Resettlement Administration, unconstitutional and he found next year's legislation, the Tenancy Bill, utterly watered down and weak. Disenchanted with events in the United States Tugwell told Roosevelt, "I shall have to go to Mexico to see the aims of the Resettlement Administration carried out...it is really too bad that the tenant bill as it(Congress) passed allowed nothing for communal and cooperative activities." Roosevelt agreed telling him, "What a pity the Yankees can't improve the processes of their civilization by emulating Mexican culture." In fact many American observers like the anthropologist Robert Redfield, historian Frank Tannenbaum, economist Stuart Chase, the journalists Carelton Beals and Betty Kirk, the writers Waldo Frank, Katherine Anne Porter, John Dos Passos, and Anita Brenner, the missionary William Cameron Townsend, Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace, and Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier viewed Mexico as "a laboratory of socioeconomic innovation."<sup>35</sup>

Visiting Americans took note of this laboratory. Two writers, the economist Stuart Chase and the journalist Carleton Beals, published bestselling books based on their observations of life in Mexico. In 1931 Chase, collaborating with Marian Tyler, wrote

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<sup>34</sup> Helen Delpar *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*, 89.

<sup>35</sup> Fredrick B. Pike *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy*, 178,; all taken from, Rodger Biles *A New Deal For The American People* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991), 211.; John J. Dwyer *The Agrarian Dispute: The Expropriation of American-Owned Rural Land in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 167.; Tugwell and Roosevelt quotes from letters Tugwell to Roosevelt and Roosevelt to Tugwell, August 26, 1937 and reply, Roosevelt to Tugwell, August 29, 1937, Roosevelt Papers, PPF, 564 FDRL,.

*Mexico: A Study of Two Americas*. In the book Chase compared two communities, the fictional American town of Middletown and the real Mexican village of Tepoztlán. In a reversal of the nineteenth century condemnations of rural Mexicans by visiting gringos, Chase celebrated the frequent fiestas while applauding how Mexicans took no “backtalk” from the time clock. He reveled in the Mexican art of living contrasting Middletown “where work is the gospel” with Tepoztlán where “play was the gospel.”<sup>36</sup>

His message of Mexico as a place where people found pleasure without material rewards appealed to Depression era readers who found little material reward in their lives. He believed that mass industrialism was not inevitable in Mexico and that Mexico offered an example of how the negative traits of mass industrialism could be reversed in the United States. Chase believed that Mexico offered a chance to evolve a master plan “whereby the machine is admitted only on good behavior.” Sounding like John Collier in his praise of the Taos Pueblo people, he urged a synthesis between the lifestyle of Middletown and Tepoztlán where the Mexican village preserved “all that is rich, beautiful and useful” in its Indian culture while absorbing “all that can be used of the new and modern science.” With this Middletowners, while clinging to their modern inventions, would learn to cherish the soil under their feet, derive substance from group life, and embrace the beauty of arts and crafts instead of longing for mass produced consumer goods.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Fredrick B. Pike *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy*, 188; Stuart Chase, *Mexico: A Study of Two Americas*, written in collaboration with Marian Tyler (New York: Macmillan, 1931), 327, 199, 16, 9, 314-315, 311, 323, 327. Chase failed to spell Tepoztlán with the proper accent.

<sup>37</sup> Fredrick B. Pike *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy*, 188; Stuart Chase, *Mexico: A Study of Two Americas*, 327, 199, 16, 9, 314-315, 311, 323, 327.

In *Mexican Maize* Carlton Beals argued that Mexican peasants were happier than American workers because they found pleasure in their work while American workers, living disjointed compartmentalized lives, sought pleasure outside work. Both Beals and Chase imagined a world where Mexicans adopted the drives of a modern industrial world while retaining what they believed to be the wisdom of the rooted-in-the-soil peasant. They felt that the “Colossus of the North” would benefit from shedding its obsession with urban based capitalism by embarking on a program of deurbanization and industrial decentralization with the movement of factories to rural towns and farms, allowing workers to feel the benefit of the differing realms of farm and city.<sup>38</sup>

American intellectuals and artists commented about the quality that made Mexico, “something fresh and pure and wholesome—a quality which is deeply unconventionalized.” Aaron Copeland noted that, “The source of it is the Indian blood which is so prevalent.” He added, “I sensed the influence of Indian background everywhere----even in the countryside.” In the United States and Mexico the Indian had become the new focal point of interest. During Hubert C. Herring’s 1930 seminar Mexican economist Ramón Betata opined that the Indian population of Mexico was its most important social force influencing Mexican diet, dress, housing, medicine, and its national character. In the United States the Indian became the object of heightened national interest. Robert F Schrader states that, “In the aftermath of world war many Americans awakened to a new interest in Americana and found the Indians were at the core of America’s national experience.” To artists, seeking to foster the development of authentic American arts the Indian, both north and south of the border, became the source

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<sup>38</sup> Fredrick B. Pike *FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy*, 188.; Carlton Beals *Mexican Maize* (New York: Book League of America, 1931), 117, 158.

of new aesthetic inspiration. And those neoromantics, who rejected industrialism and urbanism, looked to the Indians in New Mexico and Old Mexico as examples of a primitive and yet satisfying civilization based on community instead of isolating individualism.<sup>39</sup>

Many Americans viewed Mexico as an example of central planning worthy of examination. For example, the rural western American social scientists like educator Loyd Tireman, educator and philosopher George I. Sanchez, and anthropologist Ralph Beals, brother of Carlton Beals, all expressed frustration with the lack of progress in social and economic reform in the United States. Seeking viable methodologies that they could use in the United States they took pilgrimages to Mexico, a place of experimentation in the very programs they advocated. Mexico presented to these men a place offering ideas and inspiration.<sup>40</sup>

Such intelligence pursuits were not limited to individuals. The Rockefeller Foundation's General Education Board and the Rosenwald Foundation, seeking agrarian reform in the American Deep South, expressed interest in projects initiated by Mexico as models for improvements that a reform minded central state might seek in a rural surrounding. With equal curiosity the U.S. Federal Government dispatched representatives of the Department of the Interior to study rural Mexico's "educational renaissance." They concluded that, "Mexico seems to have started out to build a

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<sup>39</sup> Helen Delpar *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*, 89-90, 91-92. Robert Fay Schrader *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board: An Aspect of New Deal Indian Policy*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 12.

<sup>40</sup> Ruben Flores "States of Culture," 3, 31.

democracy through education; to incorporate into its national life the rural native population through its rural schools."<sup>41</sup>

This was the environment that John Collier lived and worked in. His interest in Mexico as a place offering viable alternatives to the policies practiced in the United States was not an interest limited only to him. He was not an isolated eccentric. During this time many Americans came to Mexico seeking alternative answers to the social problems facing their nation. Many were radicals hoping that Mexico would go further in the direction they believed the United States must follow. Often they were disappointed, since Mexico had its own path to follow, a path that steered away from radical solutions.

Many American “pilgrims” saw Mexico as a laboratory of social experiment; a place where government officials and social scientists were willing, out of expediency, to go further than their American counterparts. These “pilgrims” seemed to gravitate to the rural places. Some, disenchanted with the urbanization of America hoped to find a vital component of a rural-urban fusion that might possibly offer mankind the best of both worlds. Others hoped that Mexico offered a means for the advancement of the poor and poor minorities. They traveled to the land and visited the farms and schools hoping that Mexico offered some new approach to age old problems. Sometimes they were too quick to latch on to what they viewed as a solution. As we will see with John Collier they sometimes showed a remarkable ability to copy Mexican social experiments and, as in the case of its education program, replicate its failures.

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<sup>41</sup> Ruben Flores “States of Culture,”ii, 149, 373. ; Katherine M. Cook *The House of the People: An Account of Mexico's New Schools of Action* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1932), 16-18.; Moisés Sáenz quote from *Sobre el indio ecuatoriano y su incorporación al medio nacional. Publicaciones de la Secretaría de educación pública* (Mexico City: Publicaciones de le Secretaría de Educación Pública 1933)

In the 1920s and thirties Mexico was the place for socio-political pilgrims from the United States. Moises Sáenz put it aptly in 1933's *El Indio Ecuatorio* when he proclaimed "Let our friends come to Mexico so that they may see our resolve, filled as it is with lessons both in things we have done right and in things we have done wrong."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ruben Flores "States of Culture," ii, 149, 373; Moisés Sáenz quote from *Sobre el indio ecuatoriano y su incorporación al medio nacional. Publicaciones de la Secretaría de educación pública* (Mexico City: Publicaciones de la Secretaría de Educación Pública 1933)



CHAPTER 5  
MOISÉS SÁENZ AND JOHN COLLIER

One of these friends was John Collier. Collier, based on his experiences in New York and California, was convinced he knew the wrongs the U.S. had done. He, having come in contact with primitive virtue, felt he was aware of what could be done right. But he was also convinced that both those inheritors of primitive virtue and their industrial urban contemporaries were in need of some expert guidance. So Collier looked to Mexico for an expert. He felt he had found one with Moisés Sáenz, a man who, according to Collier, was worthy of great praise. Seeing him as an expert Collier often attached to his name that mark of the expert, “doctor.” Collier’s first face to face meeting with Moisés Sáenz was in 1931 when he met Sáenz at his home in Taxco. Collier was impressed with Sáenz and invited the educator to visit him the next time he traveled to the United States. Collier later told Frank Tannenbaum that even though this was his first meeting with Sáenz he knew of Sáenz through “a number of common acquaintances.”<sup>1</sup>

For many years Collier wanted to see Mexico. In 1920 he planned to camp in Sonora, Mexico and spiritually rejuvenate. But that was the year when he “discovered” the Indian, delaying his visit to Mexico. He still wanted to see Mexico, so in 1930 he loaded up his wife, three boys, and his dog into his 1925 Pierce Arrow and embarked on an arduous journey from Mills Valley, California to Mexico City and then to Acapulco where the family camped out. He carried with him letters of recommendation from a well-placed member of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. But he had no interest in meeting officials, only in meeting the people and experiencing Mexico au naturel. He

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<sup>1</sup> John Collier papers. Yale University Library Letter to Frank Tannebaum Jan 14, 1932 Box 11, Folder 206, Reel 6.

found the country beautiful and was impressed by the inventive resourcefulness of the people. He was particularly charmed by the warmth and generosity of Mexico's indigenous people. After experiencing many mishaps, and much wonder, his family returned to the United States but Collier vowed to return next year.<sup>2</sup>

The next year Collier states that "we" (he doesn't specify who "we" were) revisited Mexico. But, unlike the previous year, he sought formal contacts. With the help of Mabel Luhan and Frank Tannenbaum they were able to arrange meetings with officials and "encountered the anthropological and 'Indianist' leaders of Mexico." In this visit he became acquainted with Mexican educator Moisés Sáenz, spending time at his home in Taxco. Sáenz, having read the 1928 Merriam report and its attacks on allotment, discussed with Collier solutions to Indian land loss. Collier also met with the anthropologist Manuel Gamio, and other Mexican officials. Collier would retain a close personal relationship with Sáenz and Gamio for the rest of these two men's lives. During the visit Collier and Sáenz embarked on "cultural missions," visiting sites of interest. In this Collier didn't specify where, but based on later writings he visited not only around Mexico City but appeared to have contact with more distant areas, something suggested by his later allusion to the considerable differences in the effectiveness of ejido and educational programs in different areas. Since Native Americans in the United States

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<sup>2</sup> John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, (Denver: Sage Books 1963) 354-356.; Abraham Hoffman *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), 10-11.; 354-356.; Helen Delpar *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*, 67-68, 122-123.; John Collier to Lewis Merriam, September 1, 1931, Reel 3, Box 8, File 155, John Collier Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven.; Ruben Flores "States of Culture," 3, 31,

lived primarily in rural areas Collier choose to visit the Mexican countryside, accompanied with Sáenz and other officials.<sup>3</sup>

In 1932, Collier, stimulated by his visits to Mexico, and aware of differences he saw in policy, applied for a Guggenheim Foundation grant. On the application he stated that his purpose was make a comparative study of present day Indian policies in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Influenced by Manuel Gamio, he added that the results would be interpreted in light of the subject's history and conducted with a detached sociological viewpoint. Use of the subject's history and a detached viewpoint were trademarks of Gamio's work. Collier hoped to produce a view of policy as seen through the eyes of Indians. He was confident that this study would result in a book and several articles.<sup>4</sup>

Collier had never visited Canada but felt that a week in Ottawa and three weeks in the field would give him a good overview. He felt confident enough about his knowledge of Indian policy in the United States to rely only on some readings from the University of California and the Library of Congress. For his study of Mexico Collier maintained, "My two summers spent there have given me orientation and some realization of the manifold inter-involvement between the Indian situation and the program and the total situation and program of Mexico." He added that "An experiment and an adventure are there in progress, whose future is uncertain and whose possibilities are gigantic." He noted that "There is specialization upon the Indian and the rural task in Mexico but it is not possible

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<sup>3</sup> Helen Delpar *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*, 122. ; John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 356; (Letter to Lewis Meriam September 1, 1931, Reel 3, John Collier Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven.; Paul C. Rosier *Serving Their Country: American Indian Politics and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009), 82.

<sup>4</sup> John Collier, application for Guggenheim Grant, August 12, 1932, MS 146, Accession 1978-M-005 Box, 4, John Collier Papers, Yale University, 1-2

(as largely, as it is in Canada or even in parts of Indian Country of the U.S.A.) to hold the Indian programs aloof from the intermediate and determining national preoccupations.” Hence, “...the subject matter and the bibliography which must be considered in interpolation or prediction with respect to the Indians of Mexico is far more generalized, variance(d), and nominally remote from the subject, than in the U.S.A. or Canada. Wide collaboration is needed for the description and interpretation of the Mexican Indian problem.” He concluded by commenting, “These remarks are inserted in order to explain why I should not expect, within the limits of the present project to learn to deal exhaustively with the Mexican phase of the subject.” This complexity of subject matter would later result in extensive investigations by Collier and his agents.<sup>5</sup>

Collier declared that the ultimate purpose of this study was the understanding of the practical influences of “cultural complexes” both with respect to native survival values and to their interactions. He pointed out that these findings would be discovered in an environment of intensified government experimentation in both the United States and Mexico. He added that Mexico, in the interest of national survival, required the maximum use of extension and development to serve its need for change. To perform the needed changes Collier expected Mexico and the United States to use indirect administration and believed that Canada might follow suit.<sup>6</sup>

He intended that his study would view the Indian problem as an international (transnational) quandary uniquely suited to educational, economic, and social pioneering. He believed that remedies were possible through social experimentation and he hoped

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<sup>5</sup> John Collier, application for Guggenheim Grant, 1-2

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1-2, 4

that this study would contribute to the reality of Indians as a growing race capable of “uniting the most advanced forms of economic and social organization with their aboriginal tradition.” Viewing Indians as culturally dynamic, and in the middle of their journey towards a positive progressive future, he believed that the lessons learned in this study would be helpful to workers in the U.S., Mexico, the lands south of Mexico, and for so-called “backward” people all over the world.<sup>7</sup>

Collier admitted that he had no foreign university or institution that could provide him with help in his study Mexico. He suggested that it would be necessary to rely on quausi-official connections with the rural education organization of Mexico. Those he would most closely rely on were “Dr. Moisés Sáenz, Senior Rafael Ramierez, Dr. Miguel Mendizubal and Miss Vesta Sturgis.” He expected that, barring the intrusion of political events, that a six month leave of absence in 1933 would give him the time to conduct his research. Political events would indeed intrude on this goal.<sup>8</sup>

Seeking to enhance the comparative experience, Collier wanted Moisés Sáenz to study the “Indian problem” in the United States. In a letter to Frank Tannenbaum, Collier agreed with Tannenbaum’s proposal that Sáenz be commissioned to study Native American conditions in U.S. reservations believing that he was uniquely suited by experience, academic training, and personality to study Native American conditions and make suggestions for reforms. He believed that the Mexican educator’s vast knowledge of Indians gained through personal observation and work experience equipped him with knowledge of the limits “that practicality may place on theoretical possibilities.” Collier

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

was impressed with Sáenz's abilities to "space" the problem of "what he calls 'incorporation' ie., the amalgamation of Indian social heritage with white." Impressed with his skill as a sociologist, he felt that Sáenz's inspection would bring good results. Earlier he told Lewis Meriam that: "My impression of what has grown up in Mexico under his hand, strengthens as I gain perspective..." It is clear that Collier considered his expertise to be helpful in the reforming of U.S. Indian policy.<sup>9</sup>

Earlier, Collier told Lewis Meriam that he considered Sáenz to be "the furthest in the world from being a propagandist." He believed that "his attention to Mexico is exhaustive" and wide ranging, that he had "world-wide interests and a profoundly sophisticated understanding." In his view, Sáenz was "one of the most evolved, experienced and educated humans I have ever met." Collier added that Sáenz's use of English was "perfect," and that his "power of expression is great." In Collier's opinion, "the English language becomes living when he speaks or writes it." He considered Sáenz to be a natural born "'communicator of ideas.'" He concluded by telling Meriam: "Further item, with respect to contacts hereafter between our Indian works and those in

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<sup>9</sup> John Collier, letter to Frank Tannebaum, Jan 14, 1932, Box 11, Folder 206, Reel 6, John Collier Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven Yale University.; Letter, John Collier to Lewis Meriam, September 1, 1931, Reel 3, Box 8, File 155, John Collier Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven. Lewis Meriam was born in Salem, Massachusetts in 1883. He received degrees in English and government from Harvard University, law degrees from the National Law School and George Washington University, and a Ph.D. from the Brookings Institution. He worked for several government bureaus, including the bureaus of Census and Children's Welfare. In 1926, Interior Secretary Hubert Work chose Meriam to head a survey team to investigate Indian Affairs because of his experience with the technical study of government operations, as well as his expertise in government administration. Meriam spent 3 years working on this project, which became known as the "Meriam Commission" or the "Meriam Report". His involvement in Indian affairs ended in 1936 because of his skepticism of the New Deal. In 1946 he was appointed as Vice President of the Brookings Institute. He died in Kernsigtan, Maryland, on October 30, 1972.

Mexico, Dr. Sáenz appears to have an almost unequaled prestige within and without the governing group of Mexico.”<sup>10</sup>

People found Sáenz to be an impressive personality. He was tall with dark wavy hair and a broad forehead. They considered him to be pleasant with an insightful sensitive manner. He was approachable and always ready to probe the depths of bureaucracy while shouldering burdensome responsibilities; all with an engaging smile. He was a fluent conversationalist and an adept platform speaker, ever ready to discuss educational needs and government programs. In Spanish his speech was direct, vigorous, and colorful. Isidro Castillo observed that he was careful in enunciating his ideas, seeming “to syllabize his words incisively.”<sup>11</sup>

A vigorous, highly active man, Sáenz displayed little patience with those he regarded as fools. He could be curt and sometimes irritable. Sometimes he was quick to act negatively but, unlike John Collier, he was willing to acknowledge his errors and make amends. While some distrusted him as a Protestant, resisted his methodology, and questioned his priorities, his colleagues considered Sáenz to be an honest and energetic administrator, a brilliant sociologist, and a masterful educator interested in teaching, investigation, and writing. They noted his strong sense of personal responsibility.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> John Collier, letter to Frank Tannebaum January 14, 1932, Box 11, Folder 206, Reel 6, John Collier Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven.; John Collier, letter to Lewis Meriam, September 1, 1931, Reel 3, Box 8, File 155, John Collier Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven

<sup>11</sup> Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution: The Social Concern of Moisés Sáenz Mexican Educator (1888-1941) (PhD dissertation, The American University, 1970), 20-21.; Isidro Castillo, “Prólogo” to *Carapan*, ix.; See description Sáenz by William Spratling in “Figures in a Mexican Renaissance” *Scribner’s Magazine*, vol. LXXXV (85), no. 1, (January 1929): 15-16

<sup>12</sup> Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution,” 21-23

With a love of the land and a desire to help the underprivileged he often expressed compassion for those he felt were neglected. He believed that a neglected territory could become alienated in spirit as well as in space. He felt that a loss of synchronization with the life of the country was quite apparent when the “psychic rhythm” of life of that region in relation to the rest of the nation was broken or not established. He believed that when a region was badly administered or neglected it was in danger of being lost and if this deficiency wasn’t understood the region was already lost. “Not to know how to organize, to administer, to govern a section of our country is a lamentable deficiency,” he declared adding, “Not to love it nor feel it is to commit treason.”<sup>13</sup>

Moisés Sáenz Garza was born in Nuevo León in 1888. He grew up on the margins of the high central plateau that makes up much of Mexico’s territory north of Mexico City. While biographers often portrayed him as a metropolitan intellectual, he grew up on a farm in El Mezquital, a rural dairy farming community on the outskirts of Monterrey. Living on a farm until he was fourteen, his rural upbringing allowed him a chance to understand the nuances and rhythms of rural life and provided him with a chance to understand the potential influence of Deweyan ideas of “learning by doing” in rural Mexico. These early years began a process that marked the development of Sáenz’s finely honed attention to the details of rural life; a skill that would later elicit praise from anthropologists in regards to the specificity and depth of his ethnographic portraits of Mexico’s rural communities. Mexican anthropologist Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán wrote that

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 23-24. Rosser paraphrased quote and partially translated from Moisés Sáenz’s forward to Beteta’s “Tierra del Chicle” in Ramón Beteta, *Pensamiento y Dinámica de Revolución Mexicana* (Mexico: Editorial México Nuevo, 1951), 27-28



“Saenz’s model of anthropology, (in fact), follows and perfects that of Gamio at Teotihuacán”<sup>14</sup>

Saenz’s family were Northern Mexican Protestants belonging to the Presbyterian Church. Protestantism found appeal with Mexicans who were religious dissidents favoring the Laws of Reform, the *Leyes de la Reforma*. They were advocates of a separation of Church and State viewing religion as a private matter and not the province of state churches. They favored a horizontal democratic society in place of the vertical hierarchical structure of the Mexican Catholic Church. They embraced the conversion to Protestantism offered by American missionaries for the resources that these churches offered, their organizational acumen, and the schools that these churches provided. As a rule, Northern Mexican Protestants desired an autarkic mode of life; seeking to be self-sufficient and free from the need for external assistance.<sup>15</sup>

Mexican Protestants combined a desire for progress with an admiration for American organization that moved Protestant missionaries and their Mexican ministers to establish primary, secondary, and normal schools serving people who had converted to mainstream American Protestant denominations. They were in variance with the prevailing liberal elite political platform that sought industrialization and capitalism as the necessary conditions for progress. Instead Protestants, who defended social

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<sup>14</sup> Flores, “States of Culture,” 107-108 and Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán editor, *Antología de Moisés Sáenz* (Mexico City: Ediciones Oasis, 1970), xv.

<sup>15</sup> Victor José Rodríguez “The Practical Man: John Dewey, the Idea of America, and The Making of the Modern Mexican, 1898-1934” (PhD diss., UCLA, 2009), 153-157. Autarky is the quality of being self-sufficient. Usually the term is applied to political states or their economic systems. The latter are called closed economies. Autarky exists whenever an entity can survive or continue its activities without external assistance or international trade. Autarky is not necessarily economic. For example, a military autarky would be a state that could defend itself without help from another country. Autarky can be said to be the policy of a state or other entity when it seeks to be self-sufficient as a whole, but also can be limited to a narrow field such as possession of a key raw material.

democratic bonds as a priority, made education a more important precondition than industrialization. Holding strong nationalistic views, their ministers maintained a theology that advocated a vigorous democratic philosophy supporting an intelligent and well educated populace as the only foundation for a democratic nation. They held a viewpoint that modes of social organization were an important channel for establishing a foundation for political advocacy. To them modern ideas were related to modern forms of association and relations with individuals.<sup>16</sup>

This viewpoint was a reflection of what was known as the Protestant complex, a spatial manifestation of a new pedagogy that was intended to enable democratic and practical social interaction. American Protestant congregations in Mexico possessed a unified field of action where the hospital, the school, and the Church worked together in a pedagogy of democratic life based on a continuum of education, medicine, and religion producing a social bond that was horizontal, immediate, and transparent. This was intended to result in a democracy in everyday practice and a practical orientation towards life. Mexican Protestants maintained that the history of American Protestantism exemplified a practical utilitarian orientation to life, an *educación para la vida* that hallmarked American progress. Protestant churches sought to cultivate in Mexicans “the character of the individual” through the transmission of “values that served the progress of the social order” and in order to accomplish this goal created a complex to facilitate practical and democratic subjects. They implied that such practicalities were possible in

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<sup>16</sup> Victor José Rodríguez “The Practical Man,” 157.

Mexico as well as in the United States that practicality was a social invention that was not an inherent value of American Anglo-Saxons.<sup>17</sup>

This seems to be a major deviation from conventional Mexican ideas concerning Mexico's relation with the United States. Edmundo O'Gorman maintains that in the course of Mexican history there developed what he referred to as *La Gran Dictomia*, The Great Dichotomy, an understanding, held by many intellectuals, of an unbridgeable separation between the United States and Mexico based on the idea that each nation represented the development of an essential and morally opposite trait or spirit. But Mexican Protestants advocated an instrumentalist orientation that saw ideas as instruments that functioned as guides of action that could be tested and determined by their success. In their pedagogy they implicitly demonstrated that American concepts of practicality might be viewed by some as limited to that nation but that these concepts were transmissible as long as one oriented one's social practices towards a practical utilitarian orientation of life. It was understood that the teaching of modern ideals could exist within any existing social arena. Along with this understanding was a sense of certainty that they could give a distinctive Mexican voice to the pragmatic and instrumental ideas concerning human values that were part of American progressive pedagogy and the American Social Gospel.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 157-158 and 160.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 160-161. See O'Gorman, Edmundo. *Mexico: El trauma de su historia*. Ciudad Universitaria, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico. Primera edition, 1977. The American Social Gospel movement is a Protestant Christian intellectual movement that was most prominent in the early 20th century United States and Canada. The movement applied Christian ethics to social problems, especially issues of social justice such as economic inequality, poverty, alcoholism, crime, racial tensions, slums, bad hygiene, child labor, inadequate labor unions, poor schools, and the danger of war. Theologically, the Social Gospellers sought to operationalize the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:10): "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." They typically were post millennialists; that is, they believed the Second Coming could not happen until humankind rid itself of social evils by human

This progressive schooling was grounded in the notion that democracy and social justice were the tools of advancement. Their recognition of an instrumental nature of values emphasized a negotiated nature of human interaction that stressed a pragmatic viewpoint of social life where values were mediating factors. They adhered in their teaching to pragmatic tolerance *tolerancia practica*. Protestant teacher Flores Valderrama stated that the Protestant school had to, “teach what the official schools had not and will not be able to teach, that is, a practical tolerance to all religious ideas and mutual respect to all civilized men.” According to this viewpoint, competing groups in society and in government could meet face to face to resolve problems under the understanding that they were not in competition for one single truth.<sup>19</sup>

Moisés Sáenz was immersed in this viewpoint. Early in his life Sáenz was a strong advocate of Protestantism. In his early work as a Protestant advocate he found it necessary to balance his Presbyterian viewpoints with those of other Protestant denominations since interdenominational harmony was vital for the survival of the Mexican Protestant minority. This along, with his early learning of “practical tolerance to all religious ideas” and “mutual respect to all civilized men” provided Sáenz with a need to develop an appreciation for the value of pluralism, not racial and ethnic pluralism as he would later champion but a religious pluralism that he found necessary for the development of revolutionary Protestantism. He felt that while Protestants were a minority they had an important role to play as a catalytic agent like leaven in bread; fomenting change and producing transformation. Later on Sáenz became more interested

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effort. The Social Gospel was more popular among clergy than laity. Its leaders were predominantly associated with the liberal wing of the Progressive Movement and most were theologically liberal, although they were typically conservative when it came to their views on social issues. Important leaders include Richard T. Ely, Josiah Strong, Washington Gladden, and Walter Rauschenbusch.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 161-162.

in the political and educational aspects of post-Revolutionary Mexico but his earlier experience working as a Protestant advocate instilled in him a need to accentuate the similarities in distinct houses of thought rather than dwell on their differences. In this he sought a balanced approach.<sup>20</sup>

In fact Sáenz could see no reason for artificial distinctions between the secular and the sacred. In his view sociology, politics, economics and all disciplines could transcend the realm of the material into the spiritual converging in an organic synthesis which was nothing less than religious. He saw no incongruity between the cross on one wall and the bright poster advocating rural education on another. Under God this synthesis was everywhere evident, all it took was eyes to see it and a heart to comprehend and appreciate it. He felt it was foolish to let jealousy and dissension interfere with the spirit of uplift and reconstruction offered to those willing to listen to and weigh each belief and viewpoint.<sup>21</sup>

He believed that the Mexican Catholic Church had failed to follow this balanced approach. He was critical of the role played by the Catholic Church under the Díaz regime observing that “The Church, secure under a policy of nullification and tacit acceptance, free to keep and increase its riches was once more the efficient partner of the system, charged with the mental stupification of the people and the administering of consultation. Pity in place of justice was its policy.” He argued that during the Cristero War of the 1920s the Church functioned as a beacon of counter revolution. But with the end of the war he hoped that the Catholic faith, though “nebulous,” might be a source of

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<sup>20</sup> Ruben Flores “States of Culture,” 114-115.; Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution,” 230-233,

<sup>21</sup> Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution,” 233. From *Mexico Integro*, 257

healing influences needed to bring the Mexican people together in a new spirit of union and order and, with the restoration of order by the civil government, Mexico would “restore “The long lost rhythm of her life.”<sup>22</sup>

Sáenz also included indigenous faith in his religious synthesis. Like Gamio, he stressed the importance of including indigenous cultural values in the rebuilding of Mexico. He stated:

If religion is to appeal to our mind as to our senses, we must either destroy or harmonize the duality of Christianity and paganism which the Spanish domination brought to Mexico. I am frankly for harmonization, thinking that somehow out of pagan feeling and Christian conception and practice, a new manner of religion may come about where a complete synthesis of life will be realized.<sup>23</sup>

But, he added, religious understanding could only come if the Church honestly faced the pressing realities of the social and political ideals that the country was seeking to achieve. For, “No final harmony can come over Mexico so long as there is maintained a policy of opposition between present and future life, between material and spiritual values.”<sup>24</sup>

Sáenz’s contemplation of different cultures and philosophies was influenced by his place of birth. During Sáenz’s youth Monterrey was in the process of becoming

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<sup>22</sup> Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution,” 230-233, quotes taken from Moisés Sáenz, *Mexico Integro*, 257, and Moisés Sáenz “The Mexican Situation” discussion with Guy Stevens at the 117 Luncheon of Foreign Policy Association on April 6, 1929 (New York: Foreign Policy Association Pamphlet No 58 Series 1928-29, May 1929, 8, 10.; Views on Protestantism from Albert Rembao *Outlook on Mexico* (New York: Friendship Press, 1942), 36 from a interview in New York 1940.

<sup>23</sup> Moisés Sáenz *Mexico: An Appraisal and a Forecast* (New York: The Committee on Cultural Relation with Latin America, 1929), 15.

<sup>24</sup> Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution,” 235.; Quote from Moisés Sáenz *Mexico: An Appraisal and a Forecast* (New York: The Committee on Cultural Relation with Latin America, 1929), 15-16 Manuel Gamio’s views concerning indigenous faith can be observed in *Consideraciones sobre el problema indigena* (Mexico: Instituto Indidgenista Interamericano, 1966), esp. 181, ff.

Mexico's leading manufacturing center. Residents of The Northwestern state of Nuevo León were long time advocates of a pro-business federalist constitution allowing regional control of market access to America's growing Gulf and Mississippi entrepôts. Ties to the North were close and in 1836 members of Nuevo León's elite considered annexation to the state of Texas. During the regime of Porfirio Díaz Monterrey prospered as a new rail road network connected it to Mexico City, Houston, Dallas and the Mississippi Valley. In Monterrey the powerful oligarchies, the Garza and Sada families, became Mexico's wealthiest with business interests established through intermarriage and reciprocal trade pacts.<sup>25</sup>

Moisés Sáenz was familiar with this setting; his mother, Concepción Garza, was a member of the Garza family. His brother Aarón, who would become governor of Nuevo León, was a close ally of Plutarco Elías Calles, president and de facto ruler of Mexico from 1924 to 1934. Aarón was considered for Presidency of Mexico on the platform of reducing burgeoning government intervention. Moisés sister, Elisa, married the son of President Calles. Moisés Sáenz was also connected to the wealthiest and most powerful industrialists, the *regiomontanos*, of Monterrey.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ruben Flores, "State of Culture," 110.

<sup>26</sup> Ruben Flores, "State of Culture," 110. Aarón Sáenz served as Secretary of Foreign Affairs during Calles' time as President. During his tenure, he continuously defended the Calles Administration's decision to cut oil to the United States when US Secretary of State Frank Kellog tried to bargain for a deal. He soon became Governor of Nuevo León and maintained close ties with Calles; as Governor, he even sat with Calles when he questioned the assassin of President-elect Alvaro Obregon in 1928. It was also announced that Calles had plans to nominate him as the Chairman of the National Revolutionary Party. President Pascual Ortiz Rubio appointed him Secretary of Public Education on February 1930. By 1934, Saenz had been dubbed as the "Shadow of Calles" and was named Governor of Mexico's Federal District by Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas. Cardenas and the Mexican Congress, however, soon turned on both Calles and Saenz and condemned their continued persecution against Catholics in the country. After leaving office in 1935, Saenz established a sugar corporation and quickly revolutionized sugar production in the country. He was also known as the "king of Mexican sugar", founding a dynasty which

Considering such a background it wasn't surprising that he recognized the importance and power of capitalistic economic growth but Moisés Sáenz felt that government must function as a check against the excesses associated with the accumulation of wealth. While his visits and time spent studying in the United States provided him with ample evidence of the possibilities of capital to generate a vibrant economy and the possibilities that such economic growth could generate, Moisés was critical of the unwillingness of Mexican capital to generate the public wealth necessary to establish social institutions adequate for the needs of the people. While his brother sought unfettered business activity and reduced government control of Porfirian era corporations, he felt that central planning by teams of professionally trained government specialists should become the economic ideal of Mexico.<sup>27</sup>

He recognized Mexico's lack of developed resources but added that this problem was exacerbated by the lack of a coherent policy designed to create an education system that could serve the entire nation and create professional trained specialists who would have a determinate role in the future of the republic. He argued that the formation of such specialists would provide Mexico with a team of people free from the vagaries of politics, free from the bias of class and political ambition. John Collier shared this viewpoint. E.A Schwartz states that Collier believed, "...that social scientists can learn to

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survives until this date, led by his son Aaron Saenz Couret and grandson Aaron Saenz Hirschfeld, at the head of the leading sugar company in Mexico. At one point, he held a virtual monopoly of Mexico's sugar industry. His monopoly, however, was brought down during the administration of Mexican president Adolfo Ruiz Cortines by 1953. Saenz was married to Margarita Couret, with whom he had eight sons. For some time they all managed varied branches of the family's businesses, most of which have since ceased to exist or passed into others' ownership. Aarón Sáenz was related to Raul Sáenz, a prominent Mexican businessman in Chihuahua.

<sup>27</sup> Ruben Flores, "State of Culture," 112,113. Moisés Sáenz, "El municipio y la escuela ¿un fracaso de la democracia?," in *El mundo cristiano* 1 (July 24, 1919). Original in Spanish.



create and regenerate communities; and that communities should be led by self-effacing experts.”<sup>28</sup>

Later, while serving in the Secretaría de Educación Pública, Sáenz noted that the excesses of the Porfirian economy inflicted on the Mexico’s laboring classes were an intensification of a historic struggle between the aristocracy and the people. He recalled the saga of the landed gentry, who owned too much, and the enserfed peons, who owned too little, but were forced to labor, too much, under unbearable conditions while their families lived the most meager of existences. In prerevolutionary Mexico inadequate resources were left in the hands of industrialists who refused to configure their wealth generating activities towards the needs of the majority. He accused Díaz and his government technocrats of giving the material inheritance of the nation to foreigners who “managed to become millionaires at the expense of a nation of paupers.”<sup>29</sup>

His family, as part of their middle-class Protestant heritage, believed in the importance of education. With this in mind, it was natural that Sáenz should be enrolled in the Presbyterian Seminary and *Colegio* in Coyocán, Mexico. Following graduation he became a minister and parson in 1907. He then obtained his teacher’s certificate at the prestigious national teacher’s school, the *Normal De Jalpa*. In 1912 he traveled to the United States earning a Master’s degree at the Presbyterian founded Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania. When he returned to Mexico Sáenz embarked on a public service career where he was named director of education in

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<sup>28</sup> Ruben Flores, “State of Culture,” 112,113. Moisés Sáenz, "El municipio y la escuela ¿un fracaso de la democracia?," in *El mundo cristiano* 1 (July 24, 1919). Original in Spanish.; E.A. Schwartz “Red Atlantis Revisited,” 524-525.

<sup>29</sup> Ruben Flores, “State of Culture,” 113-114 Moisés Sáenz "Investments and Nationalism," in Sáenz and Priestly, *Some Mexican Problems* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), 6.

Guanajuato, Mexico. In 1919 he became the director of the *Preparatoria*, Mexico's preparatory secondary school. In 1920 Sáenz, due to political differences influenced by a distrust of his Protestant background, was forced to resign his position. He then left Mexico to attend Columbia University.<sup>30</sup>

Sáenz received stipends from the Mexican government to attend Columbia where he intended to earn his doctorate in the study of comparative education and the study of the organizational management of secondary schools. There are very few documents that indicate what he did at Columbia. It is likely that he had little time for his educational work since he spent much of his time lecturing on behalf of Mexico's revolutionary government, assuaging public fears that Mexico was under Bolshevik influence, and expressing admiration for American education and industry. Despite being removed from office, his loyalty to the revolution grew while he enhanced ties with Americans. In 1922 he traveled to France to finish his dissertation. But he never developed a dissertation and never completed his doctoral studies. In 1923 the person who Collier would later refer to as "Dr. Sáenz" returned to Mexico.<sup>31</sup>

Upon his return he resumed his career in education and in 1924 he was appointed by President Calles, to be sub-secretary of public education at the SEP. As sub-secretary

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<sup>30</sup> Victor José Rodríguez, "The Practical Man," 169-170. In fact Sáenz was a victim of his Protestant background. José Vasconcelos, fearful that Sáenz might be named to be head of the educational secretariat instigated a widespread smear campaign against Sáenz. At his urging hundreds of teachers and educational officials wrote letters of protest implying that Sáenz was an agent of the United States intent on turning Mexico into a Protestant Americanized state.

<sup>31</sup> Victor José Rodríguez, "The Practical Man," 176, 178. Rodríguez's assertion is supported by a check with the Columbia Teaching College. Mathew Bolton at the TC Registrar's office says: "Mr. Moises Saenz attended Teacher's College in the 1920-1921 academic year, and was awarded a Master of Arts degree on June 1, 1921. He continued in the summer of 1921 and the academic year 1921-1922 in a PhD program, but his record ends there. He was not awarded a PhD degree from the TC. His major field of study was Secondary Education." Source: E-mail from Mathew Bolton, October 16, 2013.

Sáenz worked on experiments with new educational techniques he'd learned while participating in Deweyan educational trials conducted by Columbia's Lincoln School. Prior to Sáenz's appointment to the SEP Dewey's ideas had made inroads in Mexico City and the revolutionary state at Yucatán. While considered John Dewey's number one disciple in Mexico, there is no proof that during his time at Columbia he ever personally met Dewey. Still, Dewey's influence figured highly in Sáenz's thinking.<sup>32</sup> In anticipation of a visit by Dewey to Mexico in 1926, he made an address at the University of Chicago expressing his indebtedness to Dewey saying:

John Dewey has gone to Mexico. He was first carried there by his students at Columbia; he went later in his books---*School and Society*---is a book we know and love in Mexico. And now he is going there personally. When John Dewey gets to Mexico he will find his ideas at work in our schools. Motivation, respect for personality, self-expression, vitalization of school work, project method, learning by doing, democracy in education---all of Dewey is there. Not, indeed, as an accomplished fact, but certainly as a poignant tendency.<sup>33</sup>

During his time in the United States Sáenz became fascinated with American efficiency. He asked himself: "why had Mexico not made the transition to modernity like the United States and how could it do so and survive as a nation?" To him the American business man was the epitome of practicality. He observed that the business man did not go into world taking rote learned knowledge accumulated from books selected by some stuffy academic, no he obtained his information while inserted into the business world and, after evaluating his information, he decided the validity of it. Jean-Pierre Bastian states that Sáenz "Took from Anglo-Saxon liberal Protestantism this concept of the individual engaged in an effort for the common good (where) private and public interest

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<sup>32</sup> Victor José Rodríguez, "The Practical Man," 178-179.; Harry Edwin Rosser "Beyond Revolution," 74-75. In a 1926 visit to Mexico Dewey stated that Sáenz had taught at the Lincoln School

<sup>33</sup> Harry Edwin Rosser "Beyond Revolution," 75.

must coincide in the defense of nationalism open to foreign pedagogical models and the economic model from North America.” Sáenz felt that the proper pedagogy required one to disdain the accumulation of knowledge in favor of creating an experiential subject that obeys the results of one’s actions. He said “we make an effort to achieve all that which economizes time and effort and we look attentively in the results more than in the process to obtain these results. Would it not be then...legitimate... to make an effort to economize time and effort... and do certain things, not so much for the “mental discipline” provided, but for the results that accrue as a result?”<sup>34</sup>

During his time with the SEP he worked at expanding the outreach work in rural education. Sáenz was also instrumental in the creation of schools known as secundarias, or secondary schools. In doing this he engaged in a major expansion of basic education in Mexico. His reforms allowed more Mexicans to have the ability to attend school past the fourth grade. Prior to this time Mexican education had been centered in urban areas. The positivist government of Porfirio Diaz found rural Mexico to be contrary to the modernized society it wished to create. So the rural places were ignored and resources were allocated to the urban areas. With a new emphasis on rural education and the implementation of Sáenz’s policies, including the secundaria system, rural education in Mexico improved remarkably with higher literacy rates. It can be argued that this was Saenz’s most significant and lasting contribution to the formation of post-Revolutionary

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<sup>34</sup> Víctor José Rodríguez, “The Practical Man,” 179-180; S Moisés Sáenz, *Lo esencial en la educación del estudiante*, opus cit., 559; Bastian, opus cit., 166.

Mexico; an increase in the basic level of education for a larger segment of Mexico's population.<sup>35</sup>

These educational programs followed a relativistic model first advocated by Manuel Gamio as "integral education." Under this model a school was intended to benefit the entire community by institutionalizing the pursuit of *incorporación*. These schools were intended to mirror the cultural life of the community rather than the cultivation of classical education as was Vasconcelos's wish. Integral schools recommended social improvements for both the young and the old including economic revitalization, health maintenance, construction projects, and familiarization with the law and the greater Mexican community. These goals were characteristic of the educational social reform projects of the Mexican government for the next four decades. Its synthesis approach to the problems faced in the rural communities of Mexico agreed with Deweyan-trained educators like Sáenz who populated Mexico's scholastic "golden age" of the twenties and thirties. During this time, when educators used the experimental model of John Dewey, federal school spending on rural schools reached its highest level. Gamio's example became the central model for educational reform employed when Sáenz became the Subsecretary of the Ministry of Public Education.<sup>36</sup>

In the 1920's John Dewey was at the height of his prominence as an American philosopher, psychologist, and educator. Although today he is better known for his work in philosophy he was, especially at this time, highly influential in the area of education.

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<sup>35</sup>Bradley A. Levinson. "Hopes and Challenges for the New Civic Education in Mexico: Toward a Democratic Citizen Without Adjectives". *International Journal of Educational Development* 24 (3) (2004): 269–282.; Harold H. Punke, "Recent Developments in Mexican Secondary Education". *The School Review* 9 40 (1932): 693–706.; Schoenhals, Louis (1964). "Mexico Experiments in Rural and Primary Education: 1921-1930". *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 44 (1): 22–43.

<sup>36</sup>Ruben Flores, "State of Culture," 94-95. A synthetic approach attributes to a subject something determined by observation

By this time Dewey was recognized as a leader of the “progressive” educational movement. Philosophically, his ideas emphasized the importance of community. This sense of importance carried over into his thoughts on education. He believed that effective schools needed to be agents of socialization for their students and that the ideal school needed to prepare the student for integration into society. Opposing rigid traditional forms of education, Dewey advocated a more creative and flexible type of schooling. He placed a premium on activity within the learning environment advocating a school of active learning. Dewey’s theories are classified under the label of “pragmatism.” Theoretically they were meant to pragmatically prepare students to be independent, productive members of society. Dewey’s ideas gained him a devoted following that stretched beyond the borders of the United States; among their ranks was Moisés Sáenz.<sup>37</sup>

Sáenz’s most important link to Dewey was through that educator’s notion of inquiry. Dewey’s epistemology and philosophy of education emphasized productive forms of inquiry. In this process progress in inquiry required that the results of prior inquiries be treated as raw materials for further inquiries and not as determinate results. For Dewey inquiry was on-going and never-ending, constantly generating new meanings in an active process involving the constant reconstruction of experience. It was a reflective process involved in the production of new meanings. He believed that intelligent social practices required the constant production of new meanings.<sup>38</sup>

As a pragmatist, Dewey believed that scientific inquiry was not to be set apart from ordinary life, with the observer operating in a detached contemplative manner.

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<sup>37</sup> Deron Boyles, “John Dewey’s Influence in Mexico: Rural Schooling, ‘Community,’ and the Vitality of Context.” *Inter-American Journal of Philosophy* 3 (2) (2013): 98–113.

<sup>38</sup> Victor José Rodríguez, “The Practical Man,” 217-218.

Inquiry, whether scientific or philosophic, arose from the course of human life. It was shaped by context and needed to be fed back into the flow of collective activities that made up the wider scope of human society. Inquiry for pragmatists consisted of a course of action suffering from the frustration of failed expectations with further inquiry being used to solve these frustrating problems thus allowing the continuation of the activity.<sup>39</sup>

To achieve this continuation, Dewey championed scientific reasoning. In his view science was not restricted to specialists but was representative of the highest form of rational thinking about problems and therefore needed to be diffused throughout society. He believed that a properly formed understanding of scientific inquiry was vital for democracy. It was his contention that scientific inquiry was necessary in order to ensure a process of collective deliberation about what policies were best for all in dealing with the problems of society.<sup>40</sup>

Dewey felt that this approach could be used in education. He felt that his progressive ideas in education were intended to be forward looking. In this advancing process one needed to accept science as a translatative force capable of turning modern democratic ideals into reality. Science and empiricism were to be used in creating the modern citizen who would work to create a democratic egalitarian world. Socially, progressive education was intended “to liberate individuals and institutions from the shackles of oppressive ways of life.”<sup>41</sup>

The process of inquiry, as he presented it, was vital to education. He maintained that the educational practices provided data, the subject matter needed to form inquiry on

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<sup>39</sup> Martyn Hammersley “Action Research: A Contradiction in Terms?” Paper presented at the annual conference of the British Education Association, University of Exeter, England, September 12-14, 2002, assessed January 17, 2015, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00002130.htm>

<sup>40</sup> Martyn Hammersley “Action Research: A Contradiction in Terms?”

<sup>41</sup> José Antonio Aguilar Rivera *The Shadow of Ulysses*, 8.

new problems. These practices could then be scientifically tested on their worth. He argued that only in actual practice could scientific theories on education be determined to serve an educational purpose. In his opinion, the best way to confront educational problems and achieve a scientific result was by inviting researchers, practitioners and others that worked in the educational community to address their efforts towards educational enquiry in a collective way. This was, “action pedagogy,” a collective process originally intended as a response to the needs of a U.S. society that was increasingly urban and stratified. Action pedagogy was part of an effort to soften class conflict and create a sense of community and purpose, something perceived as increasingly lacking in the modern industrial U.S.<sup>42</sup>

Though Mexico was neither industrial nor nearly as urban as the United States, Moisés Sáenz and other SEP officials were attracted to action pedagogy with its emphasis on pragmatism, community development, the internalization of discipline and work habits, and the prospect of a reduction in class conflict. According to this pedagogy, the teacher’s work was intended to “spill out into the pueblo especially the humble homes where the real need of knowledge is greatest.” Since it continued to be the view of many within the SEP that peasant unrest and poverty were based on the deficiency of moral character, teachers were expected to be beacons of positive moral influence. Though the work of teacher and layman social problems would be addressed, remedies implemented, the results observed and, if found wanting, new remedies would be presented.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Stephen E. Lewis *The Ambivalent Revolution*, 36.; H. Sezgi Sarac-Suzer, Hacettepe University, “Action Research” *Karen’s Linguistic Issues* (February 2007), assessed January 17, 2015, <http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/actionresearch>

<sup>43</sup> Stephen E. Lewis *The Ambivalent Revolution: Forging State and Nation in Chiapas, 1910-1945* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 36-37.



As a student of Columbia University John Collier was familiar with John Dewey and his ideas. Collier recognized and adapted Dewey's methodology of scientific inquiry and the use of collective deliberation in dealing with social problems. As early as 1917 Collier wrote of the need of social science to inform action. He stated that the role of the People's Institute was "...action not talk, experimental sociology in action." In 1918 he wrote of model community centers set up by the People's Institute as "laboratories of method." Later, as the U.S. Indian Commissioner, he continued the scientific method of inquiry. He would eventually call this form of inquiry, "action research." Like "action pedagogy" action research required joint cooperation between those initiating the work and their recipients. Action research required the researchers to actively work with the subjects of their study collectively identifying problems and solutions.<sup>44</sup>

Collier stated that action research demanded feedback of the results from all parties:

...since the findings of the research must be carried in effect by the administrator and the layman, and must be criticized by them through their experience, the administrator and the layman must themselves participate creatively in the research, impelled as it is from their own need.<sup>45</sup>

Dewey's influence on Collier ran deep. Collier's idea of community centers, where public schools were used as neighborhood school-social centers for educational and recreational purposes, was influenced by John Dewey. Dewey was one of the advocates of the concept of neighborhood social centers based in schools. In 1902, before leaving to work at Columbia University, Dewey established a school social center in

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<sup>44</sup> Eric H. Nelson "But let us not forget John Collier" *Action Research* Volume 4(4), 391.; Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation*, 86.

<sup>45</sup> John Collier "United States Indian Administration as a laboratory of ethnic relations" *Social Research* vol. 12(3) (September 1945), 275-276

Chicago. Collier expanded on this concept arguing that America's Public schools, because of a need to avoid sectarianism and religious influences, had sacrificed "ethical and civic virtues" as well as "the social and environmental development of the child" at a time when the influences of family and church were waning. Collier hoped that establishing social centers in schools would fill this growing void with classes in "citizenship, ethics, social goodwill, play, and aesthetics."<sup>46</sup>

Collier, a father himself, felt that modern schools were too lacking in the qualities needed to educate his children. Thus he relied on home schooling. While working as the Civic Secretary for the People's Institute he acquired, through his wife's father, a pre-revolutionary Dutch farm house in Sparkill, New York. The Colliers decided that it would make a perfect place to establish a small private school for their three sons and their friend's children. Since John and his wife Lucy worked in New York City they decided to hire Mattie Bates, a middle-aged disciple of John Dewey. She was charged with the responsibility of "teaching and moral life for the children."<sup>47</sup>

In keeping with Deweyan frameworks, the school avoided discipline in favor of permissiveness. The Colliers limited enrollment to twelve children, ages of seven through nine, who were taught physical skills along with academic subjects. Collier wrote that the curriculum was designed to keep the children "perpetually absorbed in varied activities which were joyful." "Work, play, and study," Collier wrote, were supervised by Miss Bates who Collier described as a person with "experimental and creative interests in the development and nourishment of intellectual interests through responsible constructive activity." The children lived an idyllic existence. In the summer they tended the garden,

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<sup>46</sup> Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation*, 32-36.

<sup>47</sup> Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation*, 51-54.

went naked, and swam in the old mill pond. The Collier home school continued until 1919 when the family moved to California.<sup>48</sup>

At the same time Collier relied on Dewey as an advisor when he established the New York Training School for Community Center Workers. The school's purpose was to prepare professionally trained directors for placement in "community centers."

Influenced by Dewey, and based on Collier's personal tastes, the school lacked formal academic methods and requirements. There was no entrance exams and no admission requirements. All that was required of students was "a natural ability to do this kind of work," and a grasp of "basic educational tools."<sup>49</sup>

In Mexico Dewey's progressive aims were used in the context of dealing with what Andrés Molina Enriquez referred to as *Los Grandes Problemas Nacionales* (The Great National Problems): land reform, the rightful place of Mexico's indigenous people, and the creation of citizens that conformed to a universal ideal of citizenship. In the process of solving these problems they were concerned with the task of creating a "national soul" and what Victor Rodriquez describes as "an autochthonous self-sustaining modernity for Mexico."<sup>50</sup>

Dewey's pedagogy was a tool used with the intention of creating a universal category of a citizen, *el técnico* who was in subordination to the issues of social justice. Alexander Dawson states that to Indigenistas the concept of citizenship was "a claim, a will to an identity that would confer material and symbolic benefits on the possessor." Rather than seeing citizenship in the classical liberal way where specific rights were

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<sup>48</sup> Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation*, 51-54

<sup>49</sup> Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation*, 59-60.

<sup>50</sup> Victor José Rodriquez, "The Practical Man," 78-79. Autochthonous: (of an inhabitant of a place) indigenous rather than descended from migrants or colonists.

guaranteed through the judicial process, this definition used the title of citizen in a more symbolic sense, indicating that the possessor of citizenship was a political subject with the right to represent themselves before the state and with the right to demand an education, land, and the fulfillment of the promises made in the 1917 Constitution.<sup>51</sup>

According to this view citizenship was not defined through individual rights but through the “legitimation of corporate identities such as peasant and worker, and only respected inasmuch as those subjects proved themselves to be modern.” While possessed of the right to the public sphere this definition provided the basis for the state to exercise control over those deemed not ready for citizenship. The Mexican State reserved the right to create new citizens including the incorporation of Indigenous people into what was called the “universal.” In this process of citizenship, Victor Rodriquez states that “Mexican intellectuals sought to accommodate the nation to American ideas—and foreign influences as well—in order to contain them and produce a modernity capable of saving the nation from American economic domination.”<sup>52</sup>

This development of modernity required education. Sáenz believed that the task of education was “dual.” It was the creating of a nation and a national soul while contending with the civilizing mission to the Indian. He worked for the socialization of education; the process were individuals acquired the knowledge, language, social skills, and values to conform to the norms and roles required for integration into a group or community. This was intended to foster the homogenization of the nation, and the creation of a new técnico or hombre práctico. Like many converts to Protestantism he

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<sup>51</sup> Victor José Rodriquez, “The Practical Man,” 78-79.; Alexander S. Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, xx.

<sup>52</sup> Victor José Rodriquez, “The Practical Man,” 78-79.; Alexander S. Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, xx.

linked the commercial prowess and productivity of the United States to the practical epistemology of the Anglo-Saxon and he believed that practicality was a transferable trait. He conceived of socialized education as a national task and the creating of the practical man as a Deweyan task. In one the nation was united and in the other it was uplifted.<sup>53</sup>

When considering Sáenz's use of Dewey it is important to remember historian Guillermo de la Peña's suggestion that Indigenistas like Gamio and Sáenz often served as "intellectual intermediaries" for their North American mentors (Franz Boas and John Dewey respectively) "acting as conduits through which some foreign ideas could be introduced into Mexico." But, "They were however, selective interlocutors. Only some ideas would be translated (and often transformed), depending on their specific appeal to the modernizing project of the post-revolutionary state." Gamio departed from his mentor's criticism of nationalism and evolutionism. With proper modifications Gamio believed that Boas's ideas were well suited to the native intellectual tradition of viewing the Mexican people on evolutionary terms. In this way he believed that "Mexico's cultures could be studied, understood, and improved." As Gamio sought to adopt, adapt, and improve Boas's theories and Sáenz adapted Deweyan concepts John Collier sought indigenismo ideas that he could use in the United States. He was willing to listen to those whose ideas suited him and modify their ideas to fit his needs. This was a transference of mutually supportive ideas, from north to south and from south to north.<sup>54</sup>

In the area of Indigenous education Sáenz was influenced by his Protestant heritage that advocated that man must act in faith as a Christian and as a citizen. From

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<sup>53</sup> Victor José Rodríguez, "The Practical Man," 191-192, 207, 211.

<sup>54</sup> Alexander S Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, xix.

this viewpoint came the belief that education must teach not only good citizenship but be self-consciousness about the meaning of citizenship. To do this Sáenz sought to combine the principles of Dewey's Laboratory schools with Dewey disciple William Heard Kilpatrick's Project Method; a medium of instruction that allowed the student to solve problems with as little teacher direction as possible. Rather than engaging in rote learning and the use of textbooks, students were encouraged to experiment. The teacher functioned as a facilitator, helping students to achieve knowledge through personal discovery, not as a dispenser of knowledge and information. A project method classroom focused on democracy and collaboration to solve "purposeful" problems.<sup>55</sup>

While somewhat successful when tried in *escuelas tipos* (model schools), Sáenz's project method was largely a failure, especially in the rural areas where it was felt that progress was most needed. In most areas teachers failed to understand the project method and fell back on traditional methods of memorization and oral examines. Supervisors reported widespread disorientation in schools and a preference for *peor es nada educación* (better than nothing education), students neglected reading favoring manual work or, in some cases, simply took over the classroom. Teachers mocked the method. Parents complained that their children were being asked to become Protestants and found it silly that their children were being asked to do the same thing their parents taught them on the farm. On top of these complaints and problems, many educators found Sáenz's methodology alien to their view that education was the art of philosophers.<sup>56</sup>

Seeking a way to rectify this failure, the SEP created the Comisión de Investigaciones Indias. While assimilation was still assumed to be the ultimate goal it was

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<sup>55</sup> Víctor José Rodríguez, "The Practical Man," 165, 216.

<sup>56</sup> Víctor José Rodríguez, "The Practical Man," 453-454.; José Antonio Aguilar Rivera *The Shadow of Ulysses*, 16-17.

decided to implement a test program that more carefully considered local conditions, hoping to find “the most appropriate method of education for incorporating this race into modern civilization.” Initially two projects were started: Carlos Basauri’s in the Valle de Mezquital, Hidalgo in 1931 and the Estación Experimental de incorporación del Indio, in the Tarascan village of Carapan, Michoacán under the direction of Moisés Sáenz.

Basauri’s project was canceled in order to devote all resources to the Carapan project.

Sáenz arrived in the village with a team made up of the most important experts on indigenous issues. This team of state missionaries arrived confident of success. Within a few weeks the machinations of the local caciques and the hostility of the local populace left their confidence shattered. Sáenz would later acknowledge that the apostolistic zeal, romantic fixations, and the demand for scientific results were fatal to the project. The program of study was designed in Mexico City by people with little knowledge of the *meseta tarasca* (tarascan plateau), and the professionals assigned to the project lacked familiarity with the culture and politics of the area. As a result, the experiment was based on a “mirage of idealism.” Ignorant of the people, the would-be professionals were unaware of the deep distrust held by a local population that had long faced exploitation by outsiders and government officials. Nor did they realize the deep cognitive gap between the members of the Estación and the locals. To the Tarascan people Mexico was an unreal world, a foreign land, Spanish was an alien tongue, a useless language, and the print tradition and culture of Mexican society offered little of value to them. The prize that the team offered them was a white elephant, a useless luxury unneeded in a land where people struggled with practical day-to-day concerns. Dawson states that “Never

before had so many important experts seen how little they actually understood about the complexities of education, incorporation, and progress.”<sup>57</sup>

Sáenz lamented that “the more we came to know them the more Indian they seemed to be.” He recognized that the gulf between indigenous Mexicans and their educators could not be resolved through a simple process of assimilation performed in schools where Indians were spoon fed mestizaje indoctrination. The lesson of Carapan and ten years of failure would lead to new efforts like the *internados indígenas*, schools charged with harmonizing their practices with local cultures and conditions. These new institutions provided new forums for social reform along with a halting recognition, among some, of Mexico as a plural nation. One of these was Sáenz who argued that cultural groups present in Mexico must, in some way, be tolerated and that the inclusion of their culture was desirable and socially beneficial.<sup>58</sup>

Prior to his pivotal encounter with the village of Carapan, the Mexican educator contributed an article in the American magazine, *Progressive Education*. In the article entitled “The School and Culture” he talked about how the revolution in Mexico had forced Mexico to consider the reconstruction of its social order and realize that while the “Revolution was not made by the Indian, it was in a certain sense for the Indian.” Seeking “the incorporation of the Indian into the fold of the greater Mexican family” he advocated schools that would be part of a “vital social force” that was to “become one of the most efficient means of enhancing our nationality and creating an integrated Mexico.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Alexander S. Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 30-34.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 33, 35.

<sup>59</sup> Moisés Sáenz, “The School and Culture” *Progressive Education*, (February 1932) Vol. IX 2,99. In his 1923 article “The Red Atlantis” John Collier stated that the Pueblo people because of Spanish Oppression had become withdrawn and inward thinking.



Besides education of the children he advocated education of the adults to socialize them. To him socialization meant “division of work, specializing it and sharing with others its responsibility, interests and profit: shielding it with collective understanding, with a common ideal” a process where men were taught to work with others, “sharing functions and obligations” He stated that this was a necessity because traditionally the nation had been made up of individuals and autocratic institutions. In order for the individual to survive in an environment of obsessive autocracy he had been forced to become reserved and self –centered. This was often expressed through mysticism and apathy. He stated that through socialization of the people one could reestablish a sense of equilibrium between individual and group, and between the isolated group and the entire nation. He advocated that the school of the revolution would lay the foundations for democracy and lead people to a sense of coordinated action.<sup>60</sup>

Sáenz believed that in order to revitalize Mexican society it was important to create “a number of cultures that understand and complement each other as parts of an integrated whole,” a society that integrated action so that a “common ideal may be realized in terms of individual ideals.” In this notion, he was in agreement with Collier’s notion of an ideal native culture that encompassed both communalism and individualism. Like Collier, who believed that one could find some saving grace in the age old cultures of rural indigenous peoples, Sáenz believed that Mexico would best succeed in the goal of social revitalization among the rural peasant “primitive communities,” especially the Indians, were one could most easily put into practice a “unified and elemental program” amongst people who were “sufficient unto themselves” living a life that is “still natural

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<sup>60</sup> Moisés Sáenz, “The School and Culture,” 110.

and undivided” were “common sense and good will” could most easily apply. Like Collier, Sáenz saw primitive cultures as a laboratory for the improvement of all mankind. Through his rural educational program, serving both children and adults, he hoped to produce the seeds of a new integrated, democratic, communal Mexico. Sáenz’s experiences in rural education and his jarring encounter at Carapan would temper these remarks as he learned that good intentions mean nothing to those who distrust the reformer or feel, with great resentment, that they are being left out of the formulation of the process of reform.<sup>61</sup>

In the same issue of *Progressive Education*, John Collier offered a companion piece in which he talked of his travels in Mexico remarking that it was a “journey far into the years---the years, if they ever come, beyond this present generation of schoolmen and scholars and beyond the hopes in the United States---years beyond the desuetude of Nordic community living.” Mexico’s experiments were “... saddening to one concerned with freedom, opportunity, life, and termination of the nightmare for our Indian tribes mournfully located north of the Rio Grande.” He thought that if Mexico took “the bolder step” and with the help of education dug “deeper in the anthropological lode” and sought “a profounder understanding of the Indian cultural pattern, there may emerge the structural elements of a new Western Civilization.” In this article Collier expressed approval for the Mexican programs in agrarian reform and efforts by that government that capitalized on the Indians’ communal nature.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 108, 110.

<sup>62</sup> John Collier, “Mexico: A Challenge,” *Progressive Education* 9 (February 1932), 95-98 quotes on 98. Desuetude: a state of disuse.

In their writings Collier and Sáenz often used terms like “communal holdings” and “communal efforts.” Because of this they were frequently accused of being socialists or communists. When Sáenz visited the United States he was accused of importing “Mexican socialism” to the United States and when he consulted with John Collier it was said that his purpose was to radicalize U.S. Indian policy. In the 1920s critics claimed that Collier’s work with the Indian Rights Association and the *Journals of American Indian Life* were “subsidized by Soviet money.” Collier and his Pueblo associates were proclaimed, “Agents of Moscow.” Other critics claimed that the Council of All New Mexico Pueblos that Collier founded was “financed by Moscow.” To many critics Collier and Sáenz’s support of common land ownership and social welfare reeked of socialism. Their advocacy often drew the ire of U.S. capitalists who maintained the notion that the United States was the bastion of possessive individualism and the accumulation of private property. To these people the unequal distribution of resources was indicative of capitalistic independence and those who advocated communal property and shared economic activities were people who seemed a little to “red” for their taste.<sup>63</sup>

Collier’s response to these critics was that he didn’t believe in socialism but in Indianism. Collier stated that “Liberals, socialists, cooperative common wealth proponents, all believed in the same nature of man as did those who opposed their doctrines of human sameness, and all believed that the narrow segment of man they saw, or thought they saw—nineteenth century western man—was universal man...the isolated, economic man.” Collier considered socialism, like capitalism to be concerned with

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<sup>63</sup> Joel Pfister, *Individuality Incorporated*, 200, 254.

economic value and the promotion of a productionistic, materialistic concept of self that was conclusively tied to labor and a narrow Eurocentric, nineteenth century viewpoint.<sup>64</sup>

Collier viewed socialism as a national government movement that attempted to replace the sense of social welfare present among friends, family and neighbors in the local community. It attempted to produce a similar semblance of the old local village within a larger national community. This social evolution harmed the role of local communities and hampered their function as centers for the molding of lives and the values of individuals. The statist replacement of traditional communities detached the person from a close intimate social group replacing the economic independence of the family oriented clan with a detached distant state mechanism.<sup>65</sup>

Collier argued that Native American society was “scarcely conscious, or not conscious at all, of doctrinaire revolutionary philosophies or upheavals in other parts of the world.” No, it was “...a society busy at the work of equipping itself with the modern techniques of cooperative action.” This was a tribal socialism based on a family, clan, and community orientation; much like a big family. He envisioned it acting like a public corporation that distributed community funds, sponsored public works, and set up cooperatives. To Collier, the unique aspects of Indian culture with its indigenous aspects of socialism could be put forward as more palatable than the capitalist production of isolated self-centered “individuals.” To him the ecological and spiritual “deep community” of Taos was a more favorable than the economic experiments in Russia. The homegrown model of socialism as multiethnicism offered a more organic model for an

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<sup>64</sup> Joel Pfister, *Individuality Incorporated*, 200, 254.

<sup>65</sup> T.H. Marshall “Citizenship and Social Class,” 73-82, 92; “Changes in Social Stratification,” 127; “The Nature of Class Conflict,” 172-173; “Social Selection in the Welfare State,” 236-237. in T.H. Marshall *Class Citizenship and Social Development: Essays by T.H. Marshall* (New York: Doubleday, 1964).

improved United States. Moisés Sáenz shared Collier's belief in the benefits of the age old nature of Native American culture as a model for social improvement. He also recognized a traditional tribal form of socialism that contained a spiritual religious aspect.<sup>66</sup>

In later years Native intellectuals and activists added to Collier's argument about a difference in Native communal values and Western Socialism, rejecting the ideological tendency amongst socialists and capitalists to hold to schemes of "civilized progress that classified Native cultures as "primitive," "precapitalist," "preindustrial," or "presocialist." They assert that socialism is too much an ideological outgrowth of capitalism in its imagining of outcomes and too devoted to the "inevitability of industrialism" while ignoring native cultural relationship aspects like kinship.<sup>67</sup>

As well as expressing agreement with Collier concerning Native American communalism Sáenz shared with Collier a similar view concerning America's industrial revolution. While he saw America's technological achievements as something that he hoped to see accomplished in Mexico he also believed that these accomplishments had come at a terrible cost. He found the moral use of technology in America to be disturbing. While lauding the idea that America had used technology to conquer the environment he believed that it had resulted in fractured social communities. "The most recalcitrant minority groups in the United States, the Blacks and the Native Americans, have not proven a hindrance to the American drive to govern through the sure and easy rules that have produced control there," he argued. Sáenz deplored the ruthless drive of American

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<sup>66</sup> Joel Pfister *Individuality Incorporated*, 200, 254.; John Collier "Mexico: A Challenge, 96-97.; Alexander S. Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 69-70.

<sup>67</sup> Joel Pfister *Individuality Incorporated*, 200, 254.

society at the cost of its sense of humanity. He felt that it had produced an Indian policy where Indians "...have either been isolated on 'reservations' or ignored, testament to the extent which they have been excluded from the spiritual life of the nation."<sup>68</sup>

With similarities in viewpoints, Collier felt a connection to Sáenz and believed he could count on the educator to teach the U.S. public about Native Americans. In 1932 Collier asked Sáenz, who at the time was preparing for his mission at Carapan, to assist him in the creation of a display organized under the leadership of anatomist and Indian advocate Dr. Ernest Huber, of Johns Hopkins. This display, the product of an inter-American group, was intended to be presented at the Third International Eugenics Conference. Collier placed Sáenz's name on a committee for organizing the display and, in a letter written on May 14, 1932, sought his assistance in enlisting the aid and participation of Manuel Gamio. Collier's need for data and his use of Sáenz as a source of information on population and vital statistics of Indigenous peoples living in Mexico confirmed to him the need for an international clearinghouse of information on indigenous people throughout Latin America.<sup>69</sup>

Collier sought to create a display covering twenty five feet of wall space that would display the migration and diffusion of Native American people throughout the Western Hemisphere, the population of Native American at the time of European contact, changes in the physical and social environment effecting Native American population following European contact, and the location, distribution, and effects of the reservation system in the United States and Canada as well as the loss of Indian land holdings

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<sup>68</sup> Flores, *States of Culture*, 143.; Quote from Moisés Sáenz "Contrast" in *México Integro*, 5.

<sup>69</sup> John Collier, Letter to Moisés Sáenz, May 15, 1932, Box 10, Folder 195., Reel 5 John Collier Papers, Yale University.; John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 292.

throughout the Americas. This was intended to be a permanent display that could be freely moved throughout the United States. Collier expressed the need for Sáenz's participation because of his intimate knowledge of Mexico's indigenous peoples as well as his contacts with people studying the indigenous peoples of Central and South America.<sup>70</sup>

Collier's use of Sáenz in this capacity began with his visit to Sáenz's home in Taxco. At that time they began to discuss work on an international clearing house for Indian data. Collier already viewed the issues concerning indigenous people not simply on a national level but as an international issue. The difficulty of compiling needed data and promise of providing needed information that would deliver the tools for enlightenment and change was underscored by the graphic display used for the Eugenics Conference. Collier's meeting with Sáenz in Taxco and their work at the Eugenics conference would become the basis for the concept of an Interamerican (governmental) Institute for the Indian, the beginnings of the *Instituto Indigenista Interamericano*.<sup>71</sup>

Collier's need for Sáenz's expertise in this matter was displayed in a letter he wrote two days later. Besides naming him an honorary chairman of the committee drafted to create the display, Collier asked Sáenz to contact the wide circle of authorities on Indigenous peoples in Central and South America that Sáenz had established over the years. Collier was confident that Sáenz could provide the data needed for the display, a

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<sup>70</sup> John Collier, letter to Moisés Sáenz, May 15, 1932, Box 10, Folder 195, Reel 5. John Collier Papers, Yale University.; John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 292.

<sup>71</sup> John Collier, letters to Moisés Sáenz May, 15, 17, and 18, 1932; Reel 5, Box 10, Folder 196 John Collier Papers, Yale University.; Harry Edwin Rosser "Beyond Revolution," 357.; John Collier *The Indians of the Americas*, 292. ; John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 356; John Collier, letter to Lewis Meriam September 1, 1931, Reel 3, Box 8, Folder 155, John Collier Papers, Yale University.

display that would have an international audience. He also used Sáenz to communicate with other Mexican authorities in the extension of invitations to the conference.<sup>72</sup>

While both the conference and the display are long forgotten the display entitled “A Graphic Display of the Population Record of the Native Races of America” is noteworthy. Collier would later claim that a major reason for the display of Native American population figures was to dispel the long held notion that Native Americans were a vanishing people and instead present the survival and growth of Native American populations. Collier could proclaim, for all to see, that it “showed the Indians to be not a dying but a growing people.” He felt that the inclusion of Mexico in this display was indispensable since the Native population of that nation showed the most impressive growth.<sup>73</sup>

Collier’s understanding of the international issue of Native American Affairs was not simply something based on sudden revelations inspired by bioeugenic conferences or meetings with influential Mexicans; it was based on a deep understanding of the multinational history of European and Native relations. This will be studied deeper in the next chapter.

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<sup>72</sup> John Collier letter to Moisés Sáenz, May 17, 1932, , Box 10, Folder 195, Reel 5 John Collier Papers, Yale University.; John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 292.

<sup>73</sup> John Collier, letter to Moisés Sáenz, May 17, 1932. John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, (New York, New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1947), 292. Interestingly in this correspondence Collier contacted Harry Hamilton Laughlin (March 11, 1880 – January 26, 1943), a leading American eugenicist in the first half of the 20th century. He was the director of the Eugenics Record Office from its inception in 1910 to its closing in 1939, and was among the most active individuals in influencing American eugenics policy, especially compulsory sterilization legislation. A biographer, Law Professor Paul A Lombardo, has described him as "among the most racist and anti-Semitic of early twentieth-century eugenicists."



## CHAPTER 6

THE SPANISH MOMENT IN AMERICAN INDIAN POLICY: COLLIER'S  
HISTORICAL SUPPORT

John Collier had always looked at Indigenous matters through an international lens. In the 1920s he argued that the solution to Native American policy was through “indirect rule,” a concept he picked up from the British. He claimed that the validity of this solution could be supported by Spanish colonial policy administered for the Pueblo Indians in New Mexico. He maintained that the Spanish colonial government adopted a policy of indirect rule because of the “wise influence” of the Franciscans. In fact, Collier believed that United States Indian policy owed much to the Spanish and Mexicans. Collier elaborated on this rationale when, as U.S. Indian Commissioner, he worked with his chief legal counsel, Felix Cohen, to establish a legal and historical basis for his ties to Mexico in Native American policy.<sup>1</sup>

Collier indicated that the thinking that went into what he referred to as the Indian New Deal, his vision of Native American reform, evolved from knowledge of the Spanish colonial record in the Western Hemisphere from the time of Bartolome de Las Casas in the 1530s, through the end of Spanish rule, through the Mexican Independence, and the “ejidal achievements” of Mexico’s agrarian revolution. Indirect rule, something that he believed to be successful in Spanish colonial government, was, in his opinion, continuing successfully in modern times. This view was influenced by Britain’s system of indirect administration in Fiji and Ghana and other parts of Africa and Asia as described by Julian Huxley in his book, *African View*. Indirect rule was a type of European colonial policy in which the traditional local power structure, or at least part of

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<sup>1</sup> John Collier, “The Red Atlantis,” 63, 66.

it, is incorporated into the colonial administrative structure. Collier rejected the existing Indian policy of direct rule in which the government imposed its will through a large centrally managed bureaucracy. Instead, Collier favored Huxley's concept of "indirect rule," or "indirect administration in which the day to day government of localities was left in the hands of traditional (native) rulers," a democratic colonial form of administration, where the colonial ruling government would encourage local pride and initiative while effecting social change through the use of native institutions.<sup>2</sup>

Collier, like his Mexican associates Manuel Gamio and Moisés Sáenz, greatly admired the sixteenth century pro-Indian ecclesiastics Las Casas and Bishop Quiragoa of Michoacán. Collier, and his Mexican counterparts, shared an admiration for these figures seeing them as moral beacons in their cause to alleviate the plight of Native Americans. They appropriated these long ago reformers as the foundation for their constructive efforts for reform. And Collier used their examples and their inspiration as part of his goal to bring an end to a misconceived assimilationist policy.<sup>3</sup>

For example, Collier contended that the Spanish, in their administration of the Pueblo tribes, believed that, rather than breaking down tribal relationships, the Pueblo Indians should be, "conserved, encouraged and helped to make their own adaptations." He adds that this Spanish policy toward the pueblo groups was similar to what British colonial administrators refer to as "indirect administration." An advocate for indirect rule in the administration of reservations, he saw this Spanish form of indirect rule as an antecedent of the policy he advocated. Collier felt that in the past the American

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<sup>2</sup> John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 216.

<sup>3</sup> John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 217; B P Boast "Felix Cohen and the Spanish Moment in Federal Indian Law: A Study in Law, Politics and Historiography" *Victoria University of Wellington Law Review* vol. 39, issue 3, 2008, 431.

government had engaged in an assault on the tribal relationship of the Pueblos. As result, the Picuris, Santa Clara, and San Juan pueblos, suffered a loss of vitality as “Americanization,” through direct rule drove into the underground the spirit of community life, moral sustenance, and adaptive capacity.<sup>4</sup>

Collier contended that the Spanish past presented an example of an alternative solution better than “Americanization.” And it was, in fact, the basis of much of today’s Indian policy, though often misapplied and misunderstood by previous “friends of the Indian.” Felix Cohen’s article “The Spanish Origin of Indian rights in the law of the United States” supported Collier’s argument concerning the Spanish roots of United States Indian policy. Cohen, the Assistant and Associate Solicitor for the Department of the Interior, was the legislative draftsman in the creation of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. In 1942 he published his article in coordination with Collier’s article “The Indian in a Wartime Nation.” Both Collier and Cohen wished to defend the IRA as an instrument responsible for creating independent sovereign communities willing to rally in defense of the nation’s democratic principles in the United States’ hour of crisis faced by its entry into World War II. Collier recognized that the war increased the need to improve relationships with Latin America and he felt that American Indian policy could be held up as reassuring example for his nation’s hemispheric allies.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> John Collier, “The Red Atlantis,” 19-20. Dr. James Garza of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln makes an interesting comment on this adaptive process stating that while Indian groups in Colonial Mexico had their own municipal governments that copied Spanish administrative structure they continued to be ruled by traditional Indian elites. Adaptation often happened despite Spanish policies as a form of syncretion that was officially frowned on by Spanish authorities. This is true but following the Pueblo Revolt of the 1680s Spanish administrators and religious leaders tended to pretend such practices didn’t happen, provided the Indians maintained a pretense of compliance.

<sup>5</sup> B P Boast “Felix Cohen and the Spanish Moment in Federal Indian Law,” 432-433. Cohen became a leading figure in Legal Realism, a legal movement that challenged the Formalist idea that legal principles could be discerned in the abstract, separate from their enforcement, judicial interpretation, or impact on

Cohen, like Collier, linked Indian sovereignty back to the Marshall decisions of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century establishing the concept that Indian nations were “district independent political communities.” In addition, Cohen identified four salient features of existing Federal Indian law: the principles of the legal equality of races, of tribal self-government, of Federal sovereignty in Indian affairs, and of government protection of Indians. He found these four features, referred to as works in progress, to be similar to those advocated by the Spanish Colonial Empire.<sup>6</sup>

In the principal of legal equality, Cohen stated that the legal status of tribal Indians, though different from their white countrymen, was not inferior. Even when Native Americans were considered non-citizens, their legal status as humans was not subordinated to that of whites and their lives and properties were held to be to be legally protected against violence. Concerning this principle Cohen, influenced by James Brown Scott, cited the works of the Spanish theologian and jurist Francisco de Vitoria.<sup>7</sup>

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society. Cohen's most famous contribution to this debate was "Transcendental Nonsense and the Functional Approach," which ran in the *Columbia Law Review* in 1935 and remains among the most-cited law review articles ever written. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal administration brought Cohen from academic study to public service. Cohen worked in the Solicitor's Office of the Department of the Interior from 1933–1947. In this position, Cohen was the primary legal architect of the Indian New Deal, a federal policy that sought to strengthen tribal governments and reduce federal domination of Indian tribes. Cohen was the drafter of the centerpiece legislation of this era, the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. In 1939 he became Chief of the Indian Law Survey, an effort to compile the federal laws and treaties regarding American Indians. The resulting book, published in 1941 as *The Handbook of Federal Indian Law*, became much more than a simple survey. The Handbook was the first to show how hundreds of years of diverse treaties, statutes, and decisions formed a comprehensive whole. Today, Cohen is credited with creating the modern field of Federal Indian Law.

<sup>6</sup> John Collier “The Indian in a Wartime Nation” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* vol. 223 (Sept 1942), 33.; Felix Cohen “The Spanish Origin of the Indian Rights in the Law of the United States” *Georgetown Law Journal* vol. 31, number 1, 1942, 11-16; B P Boast “Felix Cohen and the Spanish Moment in Federal Indian Law,” 433.

<sup>7</sup> Felix Cohen, “The Spanish Origin of Indian Rights in the Law of the United States,” *The Georgetown Law Journal* vol. 31, number 1, (November 1942), 3-4.; B P Boast “Felix Cohen and the Spanish Moment in Federal Indian Law,” 438-440; James Brown Scott, J.U.D. (June 3, 1866 – June 25, 1943) was an American authority on international law. Scott was born at Kincardine, Ontario, Canada. He was

Vitoria was confronted by the argument that Indians, as heretics tainted with mortal sin and lacking rational behavior, should be denied the rights of humans including property rights. He replied that even heretics and sinners were entitled to property and could not be punished for their sins without trial. He also added that Indians were at least as rational as some of the peasants of Spain. Vitoria used the legal precedent of the cases of heretics and sinners, whose rights were acknowledged by the highest Church authorities, to argue that certain basic rights “inhere in men as men, not by reason of their race, creed, or color, but by reason of their humanity.”<sup>8</sup>

Vitoria’s doctrine was supported by Pope Paul III’s 1537 Papal Bull, *Sublimes Dues*, which stated that Indians and all peoples discovered by Christians were not to be deprived of their liberty or property even if they “be outside the faith of Jesus Christ” and that they should freely and legally enjoy liberty and property free from the threat of slavery which was declared to be illegal. Cohen stated that these rights were repeated

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educated at Harvard University (A.B., 1890; A.M., 1891). As a Parker fellow of Harvard he traveled in Europe and studied in Berlin, Heidelberg (J.U.D.), and Paris. Following his return to the United States, Scott practiced law at Los Angeles, Cal. from 1894 to 1899. He founded the law school at the University of Southern California, and was its dean, though his participation in the Spanish-American War interrupted that role. He was dean of the college of law at the University of Illinois (1899–1903), professor of law at Columbia, and professor of law at George Washington University (1905–06). In 1907 he was expert on international law to the United States delegation at the Second Hague Peace Conference. He also served on a State Department commission which made recommendations to Congress on the reform of United States nationality law, which would result in the Expatriation Act of 1907. In 1909 Professor Scott lectured at Johns Hopkins. He served as secretary of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and wrote several works on the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 (1908, 1909, 1915). Besides serving as editor in chief of the *American Journal of International Law* and as editor of the *American Case Book*, and writing numerous articles on international law and the peace movement. He also was the champion of the Spanish school of international law of the 16th century, claiming that writers like Francisco de Vitoria and Suarez had already said about that department of the law what about a century later was stated by Hugo de Groot in his *De iure belli ac pacis* (About the law of war and peace).

<sup>8</sup> Felix Cohen, “The Spanish Origin of Indian Rights in the Law of the United States,” 11, 12. In the article Cohen referred to Vitoria, *De Indis Et De Jure Belli Reflectiones* (Nyes’ ed. 1917) part 1 pars. 4-19 of Francisco de Vitoria’s dissertations delivered in 1532 at the University of Salamanca while he was a professor of theology.

almost word for word in the first important law of the United States concerning Indian relations, the Northwest Ordinance. He added that the Spanish Laws of the Indies contained references to the principal of racial equality along with protection of Indian property and mining rights. These Spanish principals were included in the Plan of Iguala, at the dawn of Mexican Independence stating:

All the inhabitants of New Spain, without distinction, whether Europeans, Africans, or Indians, are citizens of this monarchy, with the right to be employed in any post according to their merit and virtues.

In conclusion Cohen maintained that the guiding principle of the United States is one with Spanish jurisprudence, “whatever may have been the failure, on both sides to make practice conform to ideal.”<sup>9</sup>

In regards to the second stated principle, Tribal Self-Government, Cohen informed the readers that tribal self-government was first clearly enunciated by Chief Justice Marshall in *Worcester v. Georgia* where Marshall declared that Indian nations: “had always been considered as distinct, independent, political communities, retaining

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<sup>9</sup> Felix Cohen “The Spanish Origin of the Indian Rights in the Law of the United States,” 12, 13. Quote from *United States vs Ritchie*, 17 How. 525, 538 (U.S. 1854). This case upheld the property rights of a California Indian based on the stipulation that he had the right to the land based on the Plan of Iguala. The Supreme Declared that one Francisco Solano held legal title to land in Sonoma California and that he, on the 10th May, 1842, Solano sold and conveyed the premises to Mariano Guadaloupe Vallejo in full property for the consideration of one thousand Mexican dollars, and on the 29th May, 1850, Vallejo sold and conveyed the same to A. A. Ritchie, the appellee, for the consideration of fifty thousand collars. Justice Nelson states: “The Indian race having participated largely in the struggle resulting in the overthrow of the Spanish power, and in the erection of an independent government, it was natural that in laying the foundations of the new government, the previous political and social distinctions in favor of the European or Spanish blood should be abolished, and equality of rights and privileges established. Hence the article to this effect in the plan of Iguala, and the decree of the first Congress declaring the equality of civil rights, whatever may be their race or country. These solemn declarations of the political power of the government had the effect, necessarily, to invest the Indians with the privileges of citizenship as effectually as had the declaration of independence of the United States, of 1776, to invest all those persons with these privileges residing in the country at the time, and who adhered to the interests of the colonies.”

their original natural rights,..." Cohen proceeded to add that Marshall applied "the accepted rule of international law stating: "...the settled doctrine of the law of nations is, that a weaker power does not surrender its independence-its right of self-government- by associating with a stronger, and taking its protection." Cohen noted Marshall's ruling that the state of Georgia had no right to interfere with the laws and territory of the Cherokee tribe. In conclusion, he declared that it is established that Indian tribes have all the powers of self-government of any sovereignty "except in so far as those powers have been modified or repealed by act of Congress or treaty."<sup>10</sup>

Cohen states that the writings of Vitoria present the first clear formulation of the principal of tribal self-government. Vitoria declared that all rational beings have a *dominium* (the right of the owner of a thing to use it or dispose of it at his pleasure). He added that only irrational beings do not have a *dominium*. Vitoria argued that Indians were rational beings, something confirmed by their tribal governments in that: "there is a certain method in their affairs, for they have polities which are clearly arranged and they have definite marriage and magistrates, overlords, laws, and workshops, and a system of exchange, all of which call for the use of reason; they also have a form of religion." Therefore, they are "undoubtedly possessed as true dominium, both public and private, as any Christians." Vitoria argued that as rational beings Indians, like Christians, had "a right to their territories, their families and possessions" and "Christians cannot use these arguments (of irrationality) to support their right to disposes the barbarians of their goods and lands."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Felix Cohen "The Spanish Origin of the Indian Rights in the Law of the United States," 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> Felix Cohen "The Spanish Origin of the Indian Rights in the Law of the United States," 13-14.; Adrien Jahier, "Francisco de Vitoria and On the American Indians: A Modern Contribution to International

Vitoria also recognized that by democratic process a tribal group might limit its powers, transferring certain powers of sovereignty to another protecting nation, without destroying its internal autonomy. Cohen stipulated that the United States recognized a similar capacity on the part of tribal governments: the basis of 400 treaties. He added that this principal of treating with tribes through voluntary agreement continues with the adoption of tribal constitutions and charters that were the result of the IRA in 1934.<sup>12</sup>

Concerning principal three, Federal Sovereignty, Cohen asserted that it is a rough general rule that Indians living in reservations are not subject to the local law of the state in which they reside. He states that this derives from the fact that the U.S. Constitution vests the Federal Government, rather than states, with three powers upon which national Indian policy are based: war making power, treaty making power, and the power to regulate commerce with Indian tribes. The Supreme Court stated: “These Indian tribes are the wards of the nation....They owe no allegiance to the States, and receive from them no protection. Because of the local ill feeling, the people of the States where they are found are often their deadliest enemies.” Cohen added that Indians, in conflicts of interest with non-Indian neighbors, have been able to call of the Federal Government to aid in the protection of their rights.<sup>13</sup>

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Relations” (E-international Relations: The World’s leading website for students of International politics) 2008, 5, assessed November 13, 2012, <http://www.e-ir.info/2009/09/24/francisco-de-vitoria-and-on-the-american-indians-a-modern-contribution-to-international-relations/>.

<sup>12</sup> Felix Cohen “The Spanish Origin of the Indian Rights in the Law of the United States,” 13-14.; Adrien Jahier, “Francisco de Vitoria and On the American Indians: A Modern Contribution to International Relations” (E-international Relations: The World’s leading website for students of International politics) 2008, 5. Assessed November 13, 2012, <http://www.e-ir.info/2009/09/24/francisco-de-vitoria-and-on-the-american-indians-a-modern-contribution-to-international-relations/>.

<sup>13</sup> Felix Cohen “The Spanish Origin of the Indian Rights in the Law of the United States”, 5-6. The Supreme Court ruling referred to was *United States v. Kagama*, 118 U.S. 375, 383 (1886) This is a United States Supreme Court case that upheld the Constitutionality of the Major Crimes Act of 1885. *Kagama*, a Yurok Native American accused of murder, was selected as a test case by the Department of



Cohen stated that the idea of central control of Indian affairs in the United States and in the provinces of New Spain, as opposed to local control, “was cardinal in both systems and served the same function.” He affirmed that just as the federal courts and officials had to intercede for the protection of Indian rights so too did the Spanish Crown need to intercede to protect Indians from similar threats. To do this, the Crown bestowed the office of “Protector of all Indians” upon the leading champion against corruption and incompetence, Bartholomew de las Casas. Cohen claimed that four centuries latter a worthy successor could be found in John Collier, who was appointed to a similar office by President Franklin Roosevelt. He added that the Spanish Crown vested its Council of the Indies, established as a direct advisor to the King, with supreme control over all local officials in questions relating to Indian affairs. Vitoria advocated that Spaniards of the New World, even when unjustly attacked by local Indians, could build fortresses and defensive works but could wage war only with the authorization of their sovereign. Cohen found similarity in the language of the Northwest Ordinance which declared: “...and in their property, rights, and liberty they (Native Americans) shall not be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress...”<sup>14</sup>

Cohen observed that it was a striking fact that in both the history of Spain, Spanish America, and the United States oppression of Indians generally came from local neighbors and officials and help came from a far-off central government. He opined that,

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Justice to test the constitutionality of the Act, which was passed as a rider to an appropriations bill. This Congressional Act gave the federal courts jurisdiction in certain cases of Indian on Indian crimes, even if the crimes were committed on an Indian Reservation. The importance of the ruling in this case was that it upheld the constitutionality of the Act and confirmed Congress’ plenary power over Indian affairs. Plenary power over Indian tribes, supposedly granted to the U.S. Congress by the Commerce Clause of the Constitution was not necessary to support the Supreme Court in this decision; instead, the Court found the power in the tribe’s status as dependent domestic nations. This allowed Congress to pass the Dawes Act the following year.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 14-15

“Perhaps it is easier for legal ideas to live in a place far enough from the facts in which they are applied so that perspective in judgment is possible and long-range values are not sacrificed to immediate, petty advantages.”<sup>15</sup>

In regard to the fourth principal, U.S. Federal protection of Indians, Cohen states that early on in North America white traders exploited Native Americans offering weapons “new drinks,” and new tools that were capable of destroying native life, health, and culture in exchange for the acquisition of Native land resulting in tribes that were “warped, poisoned, and armed with deadly weapons. Displaced of their land, these Natives would move west spreading the “seeds of destruction,” planted in their hearts, amongst previously untouched Natives. The Federal Government, hoping to end this process of exploitation and extermination, attempted to control trade with Native Americans. It also tried to end trade abuses connected to the most important Native American possession, their land, by prohibiting private transactions and stipulating that the only way that Indians could sell land was through treaties with the Federal Government. By maintaining control of these transactions the government assumed control over the welfare of Native Americans, managing the income received by tribes. It also assumed protection of Native rights: rights of personality, and self-government, and most importantly Indian property rights, the most important of these being the right of the tribe to land occupied “from time immemorial.”<sup>16</sup>

Cohen claimed that under Spanish law the Crown assumed a special responsibility for the protection of Indian rights. The King’s attorneys were required to appear in

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 7-8. Note the term “occupied.”

behalf of Indians in all land cases and in all cases that involved land grants in which Indians were parties. In suits between Indians and the crown the court was required to appoint a special attorney to represent the Indians. Spain adopted ordinances to protect Indians from white trespass and outlawed all property transfers of Indian property that were not made by appropriate judicial officials entrusted with the power to ensure adequate return for the Indian.<sup>17</sup>

Cohen conceded that, in practice, the Spanish colonialist often engaged in acts of cruelty and oppression to those first inhabitants of the “New World” But “against the cruelties of the Spanish invaders the clear voice of protest was raised by loyal Spaniards and faithful Catholics to the King of Spain and to the Pope himself.” He added that both Pope and King repeatedly denounced the acts of oppression and “while the acts of cruelty and treachery of lawless men wrought havoc that eventually brought Spanish rule in the New World to an end,” the legal ideals which Spanish teachers proclaimed and the Crown and Papacy ratified provided “a human and rational basis for an American law of Indian affairs.”<sup>18</sup>

He declared that while some might argue that such similarities in law might simply be fortuitous or simply the result of similar practical situations that called for similar legal treatment these similarities were the result of definite Spanish influences on the development of the legal doctrine of the United States. He maintained that United States Indian law originated as a branch of international law and that in the field of international law the basic concepts of modern doctrine were fabricated by Spanish

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

theological jurists during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The most notable of these being Francisco de Vitoria. Cohen observed that the Seventh Pan-American Conference held on December 23, 1933 declared Vitoria to be the man “who established the foundations of modern international law.” He added that while Vitoria was not directly cited by early opinions made by the U.S. Supreme Court concerning Indian cases these opinions often cite statements made by the eminent jurists, Hugo Grotius and Emer de Vattel, who copied and adapted earlier statements made by Vitoria.<sup>19</sup>

He added that many of the early opinions of the United States Supreme Court cite Spanish decisions, statutes, and other authoritative sources. Part of the reason for this was that much of the territory of the United States was once under Spanish control and under the accepted doctrine of international law the law of the prior sovereign remains in force

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Felix Cohen, 17. Hugo Grotius (10 April 1583 – 28 August 1645), also known as Huig de Groot, Hugo Grocio or Hugo de Groot, was a jurist in the Dutch Republic. With Francisco de Vitoria and Alberico Gentili he laid the foundations for international law, based on natural law. He was also a philosopher, theologian, Christian apologist, playwright, historiographer, and poet. Grotius's influence on international law is paramount, and is acknowledged by, for instance, the American Society of International Law, which since 1999 holds an annual series of Grotius Lectures. Additionally, his contributions to Arminian theology provided the seeds for later Arminian-based movements, such as Methodism and Pentecostalism and he is acknowledged as a significant figure in the Arminianism-Calvinism debate. Because of his theological underpinning of free trade, he is also considered an “economic theologian.” Grotius' concept of natural law had a strong impact on the philosophical and theological debates and political developments of the 17th and 18th centuries. He influenced among others Samuel Pufendorf and John Locke, and by way of these philosophers his thinking became part of the cultural background of the Glorious Revolution in England and the American Revolution. In Grotius' understanding, nature was not an entity in itself, but God's creation. Therefore his concept of natural law had a theological foundation. The Old Testament contained moral precepts (e.g. the Decalogue) which Christ confirmed and therefore were still valid. They were useful in interpreting the content of natural law. Both biblical revelation and natural law originated in God and could therefore not contradict each other. Emer de Vattel (25 April 1714 – 28 December 1767) was a Swiss Philosopher, diplomat, and legal expert whose theories laid the foundation of modern international law and political philosophy. He was born in Couvet in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, in 1714 and died in 1767 of edema. He was largely influenced in his philosophy by Gottfried Leibniz and Christian Wolff and strove to integrate their ideas into the legal and political system. He is most famous for his 1758 work *Droit des gens; ou, Principes de la loi naturelle appliqués à la conduite et aux affaires des nations et des souverains* (in English, *The Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law Applied to the Conduct and to the Affairs of Nations and of Sovereigns*). This work was his claim to fame and won him enough prestige to be appointed as a counselor to the court of King Augustus III of Saxony.

in ceded territory until changed by the assenting action of the new sovereign. This meant that decisions involving Indians often required an examination of Spanish legal texts.

Also, the relevance of Spanish law was recognized in treaties in which the United States sought to recognize property and other rights held by the inhabitants of the ceded territory under prior sovereignty. In Indian cases involving residents of former Spanish territories it became pertinent to consider the rights of Indians under the former sovereign.

Considered in this inquiry was the fact that neither the French, in case of the Louisiana cession, nor Mexico, in the Mexican cession and the Gadsden Purchase, had made any important changes in regards to Spanish law. Thus all paths of research inquiry lead to Spanish law.<sup>20</sup>

For his final claim of Spanish influence on American Indian law Cohen observed that during the formative period of the nation's Indian law Native Americans represented a powerful group that competing colonial powers sought as allies in their hegemonic contests. This meant that Britain and, later, the United States were competitors with Spain in the courting of Indian favor. He claims "that if the Indians could gain security for their lands and respect for their tribal autonomy from Spain, they were not likely to accept the protection of Britain or the United States under lessor terms." So, it stands to reason that "in competition for acceptance the doctrine of Indian rights first advanced by Vitoria had

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 18-19. Cohen uses as an example the Walapai case (U.S. 339 (1941) In this case council for the railroad argued that land occupied by the Walapai Tribe was located in the Mexican Cession, and they argued that Spanish law recognized no Indian right of occupancy so the Walapai tribe came under the dominion of the United States without any land rights. Cohen states that "The Solicitor of the Interior Department, on the other hand, cited many passages from the writings of Vitoria and from the Laws of the Indies to show that Spain recognized tribal occupancy rights to the same extent as did the United States." In its final ruling the United States Supreme Court rejected as unsound the argument of the railroad on Spanish law and held that Indians in former Spanish territories were in as favorable of legal position in respect to land rights as Indians in the United States, "citing in support of this holding earlier cases which required the community of doctrine between Spain and this country(the United States) on this point."

such an appeal to the Indians that Britain and the United States both felt compelled to accept it as a basis of bargaining.”<sup>21</sup>

John Collier had additional supports for the idea that U.S. Indian policy had a Spanish past. He believed that American Indian policy was influenced by the example of Friar Bartolome de Las Casas The 16<sup>th</sup>-century Dominican friar, social reformer, historian and the first officially appointed “Protector of the Indians.” He noted that “More than any other interpreter, through the present, he understood within a form of reference valid for the whole race of man.” Collier was of the opinion that, “He, for all time, is the master voice, the fountainhead, of the American Indian cause.”<sup>22</sup>

Collier states that Las Casas believed that “man is a spirit, a spark from the cosmic fire who needs to burn towards God.” God, said Las Casas, burns towards man and that union between man and God that is the “far-off event” in which the “whole creation moves.” But this union could only exist in perfect freedom where the will and love of free men are struggling to bring the whole man, body and soul, and the whole of society, in a state of freedom, to the mystical cosmic alter.<sup>23</sup>

Collier believed that to Las Casas the first and last reality and law of human life, the “supreme mainspring” was impassioned spiritual inwardness. Good successful human society could be nothing less than the free cooperative commonwealth which supremely relied upon and made itself the minister to that impassioned inwardness whose first and

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>22</sup> John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 123.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 126.

last law was freedom. This would be a practical society for nothing else could be practical for the genius, the intellectual and creative power, of human life.<sup>24</sup>

Based on the desire for a free commonwealth, Las Casas urged that the Crown forbid the entry to the American continental lands of anyone who was a secular adventurer, mercenary or soldier, or missionary seeking to proselytize through coercive rhetoric or force. Instead entry should be limited to those ecclesiastical agents who could be demonstrated to be moved by love and a belief in freedom. Thus all the millions of the Americas could be brought, by the love of God, to Spain making that nation great in spirit and impregnable in nature.<sup>25</sup>

Collier's reading of Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas' *History of the Indies* inspired in him a hope that the Wheeler-Howard Act, which established the IRA, might lead to the establishment of Las Casas' "utopian dream." This dream was based on the Spanish friar's belief that the Indians, prior to being colonized by Europeans, had lived in a golden age unspoiled by "civilization." Las Casas felt that Indian social, economic, and religious institutions were "not only good but excellent and far superior to those of many nations." Collier thought it was possible to recreate a "free co-operative commonwealth" like the society created by the Jesuits in early seventeenth century Paraguay.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 126. In using the term "genius" Collier is likely referring to intellectual and creative power. As someone interested in Friedrich Nietzsche Collier believed in the philosopher's definition of genius as a coherent and lively recollection of what the individual experienced, as opposed to spontaneous, innate, "natural" or "naïve" ability. Nietzsche's definition is a finite conception of genius based on the individual's capacity to organize, render coherent and recollect experience.

<sup>25</sup> John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 127

<sup>26</sup> From John Collier, *American Indian Life*, July 1931, 32-38.; Bartolomé de Las Casas, *History of the Indies*, ed. Andree M. Collard, (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), ix-xiv.

Collier observed that Las Casas's utopian dream had potential but the forces of the Crown and the Church were neglectful of such lofty pursuits and were instead engaged in dynastic intrigue and the flow of gold to royal coffers. Only in Paraguay was Las Casas's vision attempted. Between 1609 and 1768 a few unarmed Jesuit missionaries created a network of *congregaciones* that served one hundred and fifty thousand Indians. A product of this creation was what Collier called a "fusion of work, play, worship and art, and a personal and communal advantage, just as Las Casas had foretold." He claims that all the documents tell of the "winging, blossoming joyousness of the life of these communes, and their many-sided, abundant economic productiveness within an abbreviated work-week bourn upon music and ceremony." The Crown was content with its full tribute and tolerated the manufacturing of weapons by the people of the *congregaciones* since the fielding of its own militia helped keep in check the unwanted advances of the Portuguese.<sup>27</sup>

But in 1768 the Jesuits were expelled and, leaderless; the communes were overrun by the Portuguese. In this failure Collier noted an important point: Las Casas's view of individual power. He states that those who worked in Las Casas' tradition perceived of the individual Indian: "...potent, sweet, practicable, resourceful, co-operative and often splendid. *But they did not perceive the societies which had formed this Indian personality*" (italics used by Collier). He states that they didn't know what none in their age guessed, what even those in Collier's own time failed to comprehend except in the most timid or negative sense: "*the ineluctable potency of native society*" (italics used by Collier); the role of leadership in native societies, the selection of leaders, the give and

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<sup>27</sup> John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 128-129.



take between leaders and people. The education process of native societies and the ways that innovation was embraced was mysterious to seventeenth century Jesuits and, sadly, continued to be profoundly mysterious in Collier's day, or even today.<sup>28</sup>

Collier noted that these Jesuit followers of Las Casas substituted fiat leadership for native leadership, fiat forms for native forms, and fiat motivation for native motivation. They substituted fiat society for native society. While their substitution considered native inclinations, temperaments, and social forms it was, in Collier's words, like "the substitution of a hothouse, with ecologically untrained gardeners for the age-formed complexities of the forest." What they achieved could only endure as long as the followers of Las Casas endured. He states that "It is precisely the almost unapproached greatness of their achievement---the loveliness joined with virile power, within freedom-- --which makes intense, solemn and immortal their lesson to the world." But he adds:

Colonizer, missionary, moralist, idealist, crusader for causes, it is to the hurt of all that you love, to the defeat of your own purpose and the ruin of men, if you, plunging toward your aim in terms of individuals, aggregations of individuals, or external material results, ignorantly or impatiently by-pass the society.

Collier's admiration wasn't limited to Las Casas. While attending the Pátzcuaro Conference in 1940 he got a firsthand glimpse of the legacy of Vasco de Quiroga. De Quiroga, a member of the second audiencia of Mexico and, later Bishop of Michoacán, was an avid reader of Sir Thomas More's work *Utopia*. Unlike More, the Bishop had the chance to implement some of More's ideas in the vicinity of Lake Pátzcuaro among the Tarascon Indians. He created hospital schools where Indians received religious instruction along with training in arts and crafts, and instruction in the fundamentals of

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<sup>28</sup> John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 129-130.

self-government. In a form of primitive socialism, each person worked six hours a day while being expected to contribute on an equal basis to the common welfare of the community. Collier viewed the legacies of this work. He observed that the skills implanted among the residents of the Pátzcuaro region continued to be passed down to their descendants who had become some of the finest craftsmen in Mexico. Quiroga had trained his pupils in a variety of disciplines and his method of specialization that continued into Collier's day. One could go to Pariacho for guitars, to Tzinzuntzán for pottery, Santa Clara for copper products, and Nurió for woolen goods.<sup>29</sup>

Collier, who as Indian Commissioner sought greater self-government for Native Americans, also desired greater economic vitality and self-sufficiency for Native Americans. The Indians Arts and Crafts Board established during his tenure was one effort to emulate the achievement of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Bishop of Michoacán. He hoped that he could establish a new legacy much like the one he saw along the “dreamlike lake” and the “purple mountains,” communities with local self-government and industry located throughout the countryside.<sup>30</sup>

What Collier found preserved in this, and surviving despite all obstacles, was the Native peoples of the “New World” triumphing despite centuries of oppression. The Spanish conquest had failed to snuff out the collective spirit of these people. Despite efforts to “Hispanicize,” “Anglicize,” “Francosize,” or “Americanize” the natives of American they still retained the qualities needed by the occidentals who were spiritually

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<sup>29</sup> John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 114, 149, 293.; Jim Tuck, “Vasco De Quiroga: Notes on a Practical Utopian (1470-1565), assessed September 7, 2013, <http://www.mexconnect.com/articles/312-vasco-de-quiroga-notes-on-a-practical-utopian-1470%E2%80%931565> Published andr Updated on: October 9, 2008 by [Jim Tuck](#) © 2008.

<sup>30</sup> John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 293.

impoverished by “the Cartesian Century” and the Industrial Revolution. Despite their oppression the native peoples retained their “romantic view of life” where the gods “walked on every road of man.” They retained their passion for the earth, their psychological maturity, and reverence for the human heart balancing tranquility with intensity. After conquest and repression their spirit was able to resurface in Paraguay in the seventeenth century and again in the post-revolutionary Mexican ejido. The Spanish heritage that Collier and Cohen claimed was connected to their nation’s history and judicial heritage was evident in what Collier believed was a resurfacing of the Indian communal spirit in the IRA and his Indian New Deal policies. These were, to him, a reconnection to an ancient path. Retaining an ancient spirit, the Indians of Mexico embraced the ejido’s communal agricultural program while the North American native used the Indian Reorganization Act to prove that “the individual fairs best” as a member of a group.<sup>31</sup>

Collier found in Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexico’s President, a new embodiment of the old spirit. Describing Cárdenas as a man whose “heart was so rich and so pure,” Collier believed that the President’s achievements on behalf of the Indians to be second only to those of Las Casas. He linked Cárdenas to Miguel Hidalgo, José María Morelos, and Emiliano Zapata in his championing of Mexico’s Indians. He considered the work of Mexico’s President, who was formerly governor of Michoacán, to be the culmination of another resident of that state, Don Vasco de Quiroga.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform*, 219-220. John Collier, *Indians of the Americas* abridged edition ed. (New York: The New American Library, 1954), 11, 22, 99, 73-76, 93, 170, 186.

<sup>32</sup> John Collier *The Indians of the Americas*, 163.

Collier claimed that the legitimacy of his Indian policy and his ideas ran deep. He believed that he brought to the job, not just the heritage of his nation but the history and heritage of Spain, Mexico, and the Native peoples who first came to the lands that he now lived upon. He believed that he was a part of that age old process, a part of its continuity when he came to be Indian Commissioner.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE INDIAN OFFICE, AND MEXICO

The election of 1932 heralded major changes for United States Indian policy. Franklin Roosevelt named Harold L. Ickes to the post of Secretary of the Interior. Ickes, a long time progressive, was prominent in Chicago politics and a longtime member of Collier's American Indian Defense Association. His interest in Indian rights originated with his wife Anna, a tireless advocate long interested in the affairs of Southwestern tribes. Through her work with the General Federation of Woman's Clubs' Indian Welfare Committee (GFWC) and this organization's involvement in fighting the Bursum Bill she and her husband became acquainted with John Collier. Collier's influence inspired Ickes to form the Chicago Indian Rights Association. Later Collier invited Ickes to become a charter member in the AIDA. Considering their long association it was quite logical that when Ickes was appointed Secretary of the Interior that he would appoint Collier to head the Office of Indian Affairs. Despite stiff opposition from assimilationists Collier was appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs on April 20, 1933.<sup>1</sup>

In the button-downed world of Washingtonian bureaucracy John Collier presented an unusual picture. Stooped-shouldered, and adorned with round wire glasses and unkempt hair, Collier's preferred attire was an old baggy long-sleeved green sweater. He had a reputation for being a dreamer and wags joked that he kept a frog in his pocket. But this "long legged somewhat humorless "Savonarola" burned "with zeal for the Red Man." Sitting in his swivel chair, "coiling his legs into a kind of nest," while smoking a corn cob pipe he kept in an empty water glass, Collier was a man whose intense

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<sup>1</sup> T.H. Watkins *Righteous Pilgrim: The Life and Times of Harold L. Ickes, 1874-1952* (New York: Henry Holt, 1990), 201-4, 270-71.; Jennifer McLerran *A New Deal For Indian Art*, 75-76.; Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 114-117.

calculating responses to perpetual crises brought success. He had a record of employing every stratagem to raise funds and influence people in the relentless pursuit of his humanistic goals. After years of conflict in the public arena Collier often seemed attentive to opponents and neglectful of friends. Though he was a hard driving public leader he was a man of contrasts; tough on opponents and yet gentle enough to raise a family of mice in his desk drawer at the Office of Indian Affairs.<sup>2</sup>

Collier often talked in a prose style that dazzled and confounded his audience. D'Arcy McNickle remembered that on one occasion, when Collier spent hours "speaking elegantly on Indian values and world views before a congressional committee the members trooped out glassy eyed." The clerk of the committee shook his head dejectedly. "What a pity," He remarked, "They didn't understand a word he said."<sup>3</sup>

In fact Collier had doubts about the new job he would hold. He latter confided to his second wife, Laura Thompson, of his "desperate effort not to be commissioner." He tried to get someone else to take the job. But the candidates he tried to put forward were either rejected or refused the difficult task asked of them. "Actually," He added, "the battle to keep out of the job went on until two weeks before I was appointed."<sup>4</sup>

But once he was appointed Collier moved quickly. On May 31, 1933 he successfully secured passage of the Pueblo Relief Bill, appropriating funds for both the

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<sup>2</sup> Lawrence C. Kelly *The Assault on Assimilation*, xii.; Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 117.

<sup>3</sup> D'Arcy McNickle "John Collier's Vision" *The Nation* (June 3, 1968), 718. taken from MS 146 90-M-18, The John Collier Papers, Yale University

<sup>4</sup> John Collier, letter to Dr. Laura Thompson, May 3, 1943, Reel 12, *Native Americans and the New Deal the Office Files of John Collier 1933-1945* Robert Lester ed. (Bethesda MD. University Publications of America, in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1993), In the letter Collier told Thompson that he threw away all correspondence concerning his efforts to avoid becoming U.S. Indian Commissioner.

Pueblo tribes and New Mexico Settlers involved in a land dispute. On May 25, 1933 Roosevelt, following the wishes of Collier and Ickes, abolished the Board of Indian Commissioners; a group that the two men believed to be controlled by Republicans and filled with pro-Dawes Act assimilationists, missionaries and Christian welfare groups that Collier believed would function as obstacles to his goal of preserving Indian heritage and the collective use of tribal lands. At Collier's request the Board was replaced by a consultant group of social activists and experts concerned with Indian arts and crafts, cultural anthropology, education, the use of natural resources, regional planning, healthcare, and Indian law. He secured passage of the 1934 Johnson-O'Malley Act providing assistance through agreements between the Interior Department and state and territorial governments to provide educational, agricultural, medical, and social welfare assistance to tribes. The Johnson-O'Malley Act resulted in the reduction of boarding schools and the total elimination of the use of boarding schools for younger Indian children.<sup>5</sup>

Upon his appointment, as United States Indian Commissioner, Collier commissioned Moisés Sáenz to embark on a three month tour of United States Indian Reservations. In the BIA publication *Indians at Work* Collier opined that Saenz's "brief journey here may mark if not make history." Colliers faith in Sáenz was based on the observation that Mexico's Indians, with a dynamically growing population were a "rising race," growing in numbers, a trend standing in opposition to many Americans' viewpoint of Native Americans as the "The Vanishing Americans." The growth of Mexico's indigenous population appealed to Collier whose expressed goal was the prosperous

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<sup>5</sup> Jennifer McLerran *A New Deal For Indian Art*, 75-76.; Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 133-134, 114, 118-119.

growth of the U.S. Native American population. Collier saw Sáenz as a creative leader in the Mexican goal of increasing Indian prospects.<sup>6</sup>

In a letter to Frank Tannenbaum Collier opined that Moisés Sáenz's input would be beneficial to the United States based on Mexico's efforts in behalf of its indigenous population. Collier stated that "Not merely are the schools (and their type of overhead control, the method of getting the SEP established, the methods of finding and training native or local talent, the schools and the communities)... significant." But that there were other aspects of post-revolutionary Mexico that were "equally or more significant" One was the "general policies effecting land and its uses, cooperative organization, and citizenship of the Indians."<sup>7</sup>

In January of 1934 Sáenz, having concluded his inspection of U.S. reservations, presented his findings to a conference held in Washington DC. The conference, convened by Collier, was attended by Secretary of the Interior Ickes, Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, various government officials, and members of the Indian Service. Sáenz presented his impressions and offered his recommendations following visits to the Navaho and Pueblo reservations as well as other native localities in the Southwestern United States. Based on his observations and experience in Mexico he felt that the Indian service workers needed to have a better understanding of Native Americans as a people and that the service need to be better coordinated with a better sense of a common vision and purpose. Sáenz recommended that the Bureau of Indian affairs place less emphasis

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<sup>6</sup> John Collier, *Indians At Work: An Emergency Conservation Sheet for Our Selves* (Washington D.C.: Office of Indian Affairs, November 1, 1933), 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> John Collier, letter to Frank Tannebaum Jan 14, 1932, Box 11, Folder 206, Reel 6, John Collier papers. Yale University.



on the pursuit of clerical, bureaucratic, centralized efficiency and instead embark on a community based program in which local Indians played a major role.<sup>8</sup>

As an observer and an advisor, Sáenz later attended the meeting at the Cosmos Club, a private social club in Washington DC, originally founded by John Wesley Powell in 1878 with the stated goal of “the advancement of science, literature, and art.” They met at the Townsend House, the home of Mrs. B. Sumner Welles, the wife of the diplomat, future undersecretary of State, and friend of Franklin Roosevelt. During the meeting a group of federal officials and Indian Welfare groups formulated what would eventually become the Indian Reorganization Act.<sup>9</sup>

Indian Commissioner Collier called the conference to discuss reversing the land allotment policy started with the Dawes General Allotment Act. Hoping to unite various groups behind a program of legislation to replace the Dawes Act, he assembled representatives from the American Indian Defense Association, the Indian Rights Association, the National Association on Indian Affairs, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Council of American Indians, and the General Federation of Women’s Clubs. Lewis Meriam, chairman of the Institute of Government Research and publisher of the 1926 report on the perilous state of Native Americans, chaired the meeting. Other guests were Anna W. Ickes, wife of the Secretary of the Interior, J. Henry

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<sup>8</sup> John Collier, *Indians At Work: An Emergency Conservation Sheet for Our Selves* (Washington D.C.: Office of Indian Affairs, January 15, 1934) 15.

<sup>9</sup> *Indian Truth*, vol. 11, No. 1 (January, 1934), 3, 4. Meeting lasted from 9:30 A.M. to 10:30 PM. Also noted as being written in “American Indian Life” Bulletin No. 23, January, 1934, 16.

Scattergood, former assistant Indian commissioner, Dr. E.A. Bates of Cornell University and the educator and scholar of Indian life in Mexico, “Dr.” Moisés Sáenz.<sup>10</sup>

The delegates followed many of the suggestions of Meriam’s report and reached a “unanimous conclusion” about what reforms Congress should enact, something that the *Washington Post* pointed out was possibly the first time these associations had ever agreed upon a policy. They determined “That the provisions of the Allotment Law of 1887(the Dawes Act), which required or permitted the transfer of Indian tribal lands to individual Indians and the sale of such lands by Individual Indians to non-Indians should be immediately repealed.” This came with an understanding that this did not affect patent-in-fee Indians.

The conferees proposed: That Indian lands, now held in trust, needed to be consolidated into usable units controlled by the Indian community; that allotted lands be restored to community ownership; that additional lands be acquired; safeguards needed to be placed against the alienation of capital assets; the development of an Indian credit system for land and industrial development; and the modification of present land inheritance and distribution laws that split land into useless tracts. They concluded that the powers now exercised over Indians by the Office of Indian Affairs should be gradually transferred to the Indian community with only the continuance of health, education and welfare services.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform*, 135.; Vera Connolly, “The End of a Long, Long Trail,” *Good Housekeeping* 98 (April 1934), 249. ; *Indian Truth*, 3,4.

<sup>11</sup> Vera Connolly, “The End of a Long, Long Trail,” 249, 250.; Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform*, 135.; *Indian Truth*, 3, 4. The Indian Land Tenure Foundation defines Patent-in-fee in this manner: The “patent” is the title deed by which the federal government conveys or transfers land to people. “In fee” refers to the fee simple ownership in land (Land ownership status in which the owner

*Indian Truth* magazine stated that those at the meeting suggested that Secretary of the Interior “should have the power and duty to recognize and establish Indian communities and endow them with any or all the powers of existing communities of like size and purpose.” They agreed that the Indian community should have the power, “subject to suitable restrictions,” to recall undesirable employees of the Indian Service. Moisés Sáenz, a participant in the meeting, helped lay the foundation for the Indian Reorganization Act.<sup>12</sup>

At this meeting Collier stated that land was the primary issue concerning the United States’ Native American populace. Later that year in an interview with Vera Connolly, Collier insisted “That land reform is a prerequisite of all else. Without it we can do nothing lasting for the Indians. And surely there is no reform so clearly owed the Indians by the Government which has forcibly deprived them of their lands.”<sup>13</sup>

Collier added with, dry indignation, that:

...after seventy years we have not been able, despite our stupid pressure and compulsion, to force the Indian to merge with our white civilization, with the industrial life of our cities. He doesn’t do it! Just why, no one understands. He clings tenaciously to the ancient civilization that he understands and loves. Clan instinct, clan operation of assets, is inherent in him. The tribal Indian remains the self-reliant and self-supporting Indian.<sup>14</sup>

In support of the “tribal Indian” Collier told Connolly that the solution to the “Indian problem” was to encourage and strengthen group loyalty and to help each Indian

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holds title to and control of the property and where the owner may make decisions about land use or sell the land without government oversight). The term “patent-in-fee” describes the title document issued by the U.S. Federal Government to terminate the trust created by the trust patent issued to the allottee. The patent-in-fee operates to vest fee simple ownership in an allottee or their heirs.

<sup>12</sup> Vera Connolly, “The End of a Long, Long Trail,” 250.; *Indian Truth*, 3,4.

<sup>13</sup> Vera Connolly, “The End of a Long, Long Trail,” 252. ; *Indian Truth*, 3,4.

<sup>14</sup> Vera Connolly, “The End of a Long, Long Trail,” 254.

to create his unique future “right where he is within his own group.” He told her that “Our aim is to build each such group, give it land, give it credit, give it technically trained leaders, teach it to pool it’s moneys and natural resources and to operate them in perpetuity. That is the ideal behind this legislation.” Collier was quick to add that no Indian who was succeeding as an individual farmer would be asked to change his life through the plans for consolidation. The proposed legislation, that he supported, was intended to help those Natives operating scattered bits of land unsuccessfully, to give landless Indians a chance to come together, own land in common, organize, and, as a group, learn to run their own affairs.<sup>15</sup>

Before she left Collier handed her a list of upcoming legislative proposals. She asked him “Of all these proposals, which are you most anxious to have the public mass itself behind?” “The land legislation,” Collier answered quickly. “It is the foundation of our whole program of reform. The fundamental need. It must be passed.” John Collier saw the rural land holdings of Native Americans as vital to health and well-being of native communities.<sup>16</sup>

Looking back at what he referred to as the “Indian New Deal” Collier outlined three main objectives: “Economic rehabilitation for the Indians, principally on the Land. Organization of the Indian tribes for managing their own affairs. And Civil and cultural freedom and opportunity for the Indians.” Jennifer McLerran states that Collier sought a “return to a land-based subsistence lifestyle that would lead to the restoration of traditional patterns of consumption and production and would allow for the restoration of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 256

important communal, political, cultural and religious structures and practices that perpetuated that culture.” In his quest to solve the problems caused by divestiture of native land Collier first examined the cooperative movement in Europe but, upon assuming the role of Indian Commissioner, Collier favored Mexico, noting how the revival of indigenous folk cultures, and expressions of mestizo identity had played a major role in the recovery of native lands and livelihoods.<sup>17</sup>

In mid-February of 1934 congressmen Edgar Howard of Nebraska and Burton K. Wheeler of Montana introduced a forty-eight page administrative measure. This would be the piece of legislation known as the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). The bill reflected Collier’s ideas about democratic colonial administration and was influenced by recommendation made at the Cosmos Club conference, along with some personal additions. He later referred to it as the “Indian New Deal.”<sup>18</sup>

In consideration of the importance of land for the revitalization of Native Americans Collier turned to Mexico for ideas and inspiration. Mexico represented a laboratory in progress that both provided ideas and supported his preconceptions. In *Indians at Work*, he noted Mexico’s encouragement of cooperative Indian organizations. He described these organizations as land holding entities offering mutual aid and the rebirth of tribal life in accordance with ancient values and ideals that worked with “the most modern and experimental forms of rural endeavor and rural living.” He contended that these cooperative groups, and not the Mexican government, operated *in loco parentis* (in place of the parents) in the guardianship of tribal interests. Collier believed the

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<sup>17</sup> John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 172-173, 216.; Jennifer McLerran *A New Deal For Indian Art*, 103.; Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform*, 140. From John Collier, *American Indian Life*, July 1931, pp. 32-38.

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth Philp, *John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform*, 140

Mexican guardianship of Indians, or the services to them, reached to the group and was relayed by the group to the individual. He described this as indirect government which “has always been and must always be, the liberalizing, the democratic, and the economical and productive government.” He added that “the world’s experience down many ages is proof of the fact.”<sup>19</sup>

In the same issue Collier added that the cooperative movement formed the backbone of Mexico’s revival. Once again he expressed his belief that Mexico’s example demonstrated that cooperatives could function as viable examples of “indirect government.” He asserted that these community based, shared enterprises functioned “with the Mexican government in a position of guardianship.” To Collier this demonstrated how cooperatives could act as an instrument of the government reaching, in a meaningful way, to the individual through the group. Collier felt that Mexican Indian government had succeeded not through centralization but through governance at the local level. He felt that it was imperative to the improvement of America’s native people that communal land ownership be restored. To him, the post-revolutionary Mexican ejidal system provided a model of how this could be done.<sup>20</sup>

In this matter Collier was quite clear. During the 1934 House hearings on the formation of the Wheeler-Howard Act, and the creation of the IRA, he informed Congress of his admiration of the Mexican ejido. He told the committee that in Mexico there were new Indian communities formed since 1910 that “...have held their land very much as it is contemplated the Indian shall do under this plan (the IRA), and their local

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<sup>19</sup> John Collier, *Indians At Work: An Emergency Conservation Sheet for Our Selves* (Washington D.C.: Office of Indian Affairs, November 1, 1933), 1-2.

<sup>20</sup> John Collier, “The Coming of Dr. Sáenz.” *Indians At Work: An Emergency Conservation Sheet for Our Selves* (Washington D.C.: Office of Indian Affairs, November 1, 1933),1.

self-governing communities are proving very successful.” He stated that these Indians had been “able to take over all civic and economic functions of their collective lives,” that the more progressive Indian members of ejidos were moving into the broad life of Mexico holding important government and professional positions in the Mexican state. He claimed that the benefits of this arrangement were lifting Mexican Indians out of a state of dependency and that, “the ejida, the self-governing community has fitted the Indian into the life of the country.” He pointed out that even though ejido members paid higher taxes than haciendas and despite little in the order of endowments needed for the “right to organize in the modern way for the continued and effective use of the land,” the power to enter into “modern cooperative arrangements,” gave them the capacity to pay higher taxes while experiencing economic growth.<sup>21</sup>

In an unpublished report Collier noted that in his 1930 visit he observed the utter poverty of Mexico’s Indian population and yet felt the sense of hope “encouraged by the revolution and the prospect of land and self-determination.” He added that a latter visit to various ejidos and rural schools presented him with “the vista of a sweeter, deeper day for the Western world.” While noting the difficulties Mexico faced and would continue to experience in its ejido program Collier believed that it was “Mexico’s road to a better and lasting time.” And that it was “the kind of road that other republics with massive Indian populations most travel.”<sup>22</sup>

Collier praised Mexican President Cárdenas’s land reform efforts especially in relation to the promotion of ejidos for Indians. He stated that Mexico was in a struggle

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<sup>21</sup>House Committee on Indian Affairs, House of Representatives, Second Session on HR 7902, (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1934), 66-67.

<sup>22</sup> John Collier *The Indians of the Americas*, 161. Reference to an unpublished 1936 report.

“to achieve a new and better life at the agrarian level as over against industrial fascism on one hand and industrial syndicalism on the other.” He recognized and appreciated Mexico’s land reforms seeing them as an ideal for the United States. As he advocated an end to land allotment and a return of land to the tribes he noted, “Mexico...recognizes its moral obligation to restore to all Indians enough land for a healthy living.” He admired Cárdenas and his government’s resolve in this matter stating: “...our duty of land-restoration affects perhaps only 200,000, while Mexico, a very poor country, has assumed, as a moral obligation the restoration of land to more than 2,000,000 Indians!”<sup>23</sup>

With land reform central on his agenda Collier and his Congressional sponsors offered a bill that contained four sections: Title I calling for “Indian Self-Government.” It was intended to renew Indian political and social structures that were diminished during the period of the Dawes General Allotment Act. Title II calling for “Special Education for Indians,” a reflection of Collier’s view that the government must preserve Native American cultural values. Title III, called for land reform with the restoration of tribal title of land for Indian communities and the end of individual allotments. The last provision, Title IV, sought to establish a federal court of Indian affairs in order to provide just, speedy and effective determinations of legal controversies concerning chartered Indian communities.<sup>24</sup>

The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), as envisioned by Collier, rejected the traditional policy of Americanizing assimilation in favor of a form of cultural pluralism. The act suggested that instead of being a melting pot, the United States should be

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<sup>23</sup> Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*, 122.; Vera Connolly, “The End of a Long, Long Trail,” 252.

<sup>24</sup> Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform*, 141-143.



represented by a pageant of peoples, each unique in its history and culture and each part of the greater whole that is America. And in that pageant, the American Indian, as participant, would have the opportunity to become a self-contained racial group that would help enrich the American culture.<sup>25</sup>

Collier's proposals for the IRA showed many similarities to the proposal for Mexico's Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas(DAI) formulated in the mid-1930s by Moisés Sáenz. Title I of the IRA proposal had a goal of ensuring the right of tribal society to control their lives under a system of home rule. This is similar to Sáenz's goal of preserving traditional power structures while recognizing the eventual incorporation of Indians as full citizens within the Republic of Mexico. Collier sought a similar goal through a form of "federal guidance" that would gradually lead to the full incursion of Native Americans as economically viable citizens of the republic. Sáenz also recognized the importance of economic vitality stating that the first priority for indigenous people in Mexico was "full stomachs."<sup>26</sup>

Collier, like Sáenz, sought to preserve traditional native ties to their land. Title III of the proposed IRA sought to restore traditional native communal land structures. Collier agreed with Sáenz's belief that Indigenous people identified with the soil they lived on and drew subsistence from it. In Sáenz observations Indigenous people had a deep nonwestern spiritual level that needed to be honored and preserved, a viewpoint that Collier shared. In Title II of the IRA proposal Collier advocated the study of Indian

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<sup>25</sup> Laura Thompson, *Culture in Crisis: A Study of the Hopi Indians* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), 147-151. Laura Thompson had become John Collier's wife at the time of publication.

<sup>26</sup> Alexander S. Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 68, Taken from Moisés Sáenz, "Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena," 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.; "Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena," 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.; Sáenz, 1936, 343.

civilization promoting the creation of classes at reservation schools that would provide studies of Indian history, arts, and crafts with the goal of preserving the cultural values of Indian life.<sup>27</sup>

In his proposal for the creation of the DAI Sáenz suggested that the new agency should have exclusive jurisdiction in the regions where linguistic and social differences marked the residents of the region as “genuine Indians.” Here he suggested that economic, educational, cultural and legal issues should be addressed in a unique way recognizing the distinctive nature of the people living there. While denying that these regions would be similar to American Indian reservations he recognized the distinctiveness of the people and their issues. Similar to Collier’s Title II, Sáenz advocated the use of teachers, agronomists, doctors, and social investigators working in communities. Akin to Collier’s legislation, Sáenz expressed goals involving the improvement of farm practices and artismal practices with the objective of elevating the standard of living and, in the process, promoting indigenous social and cultural evolution with the desire to stimulate social harmony between the nation’s people. Collier, in Title IV, advocated that the inimitability of Native American communities required the creation of their own courts in order to enhance and maintain tribal structures. Sáenz, in his proposals, shared with Collier a desire to restore and preserve traditional indigenous power structures.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 68.; Taken from Moisés Sáenz, “Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena,” 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.; “Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena,” 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.; Sáenz, 1936, 335-336.; *Carapan* 198, 200,201,201,

<sup>28</sup> Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 67-68.; Taken from Moisés Sáenz, “Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena,” 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.; *Carapan*, 189, 201

On June 18, 1934, the Wheeler- Howard Bill passed through Congress becoming the legislation known as the Indian Reorganization Act. In its final form the IRA no longer looked like the bill proposed by John Collier. Missing was Title I with its establishment of Indian communities holding the power of municipalities and Title IV that provided for a special federal Indian court. At the urging of Senator Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma the bill excluded Indians living in his state. Stripped from Title III were the provisions for the consolidation of allotted and heirship lands and the abolition of land inheritance. These omissions, resulted in the continuation of checkerboarding, where individual lands were spread out in disconnected and useless little plots. Nor was anything done about fractionalization of heirship lands. Because of this omission a growing number of heirs acquired equal portions of land until eventually each heir had a plot of land too small to be of any use. This would have crippling consequences for the future health and vitality of Native American Reservations.<sup>29</sup>

On a positive note, the IRA legislation abandoned future land allotments and extended the trust period on restricted land, allowed for voluntary exchange of allotments to consolidate areas in reservations where individual lands were arrayed like checkerboards. But Collier noted, to his dismay, that it continued existing practices of fractionalism where the inheritance of land led to a continued diminishment of individual land holdings. He was pleased that it restored to tribal authority the remaining surplus

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<sup>29</sup> Kenneth R Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 158-159. Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land*, 285. Senator Thomas had been opposed to Collier's appointment to the office of Indian Commissioner.

lands created by the Dawes Act and that it provided funds for the purchase of new land. While being a positive step it was, in John Collier's viewpoint a diminished step.<sup>30</sup>

Added to the IRA's woes was an ever increasingly hostile Congress that feared Collier and held his policies in suspicion as a threat to white interests. Many viewed him as a socialist radical, and feared that his policies were divisive and threatening to the standards of American democracy. One of these doubters was the IRA's sponsor, Senator Burton K. Wheeler. The senator was an advocate of "rugged individualism." Concerned that the IRA, as implemented by Collier, was going to segregate Indians from the rest of American and deny them individual growth he called for its termination in 1940. Though Collier was able to successfully fight for the act's survival, Congress repeatedly cut funds, something Collier blamed for disappointing results.<sup>31</sup>

Though the legislation included provisions for buying tribal land, the Congress repeatedly cut funding intended for land purchases. To counter a tightfisted restrictive Congress, Collier attempted his own program of land restoration. More than two million acres were added to tribal use largely through transfers of land from the public domain. He also enlisted the aid of land redistribution programs administered by other departments. One of these was the Subsistence Homestead projects established by the Interior Department that were later consolidated under the Resettlement Administration. Interested in the possible benefits of this program for Native Americans, Collier maintained close contacts with this agency.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Kenneth R Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 158-159..

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 156,, 172, 186, 197-198

<sup>32</sup> Graham D. Taylor *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism*, 120

Collier and his allies followed a belief that the United States had intended public land to be available for family usage. In reference to the Upper Rio Grande Project Collier stated that the purpose of laws like the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Reclamation Act of 1902 was to limit the supply of public land to an applicant and his family. With Native Americans the “family” unit was the tribal entity. He proposed “that as far as possible, the federally owned land should be used first of all to enable the permanent subsistence-seeking populations to make a tolerable living without dependence on the federal dole.” Walter V. Woehlke, Assistant to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, noted the alarming loss of family lands and the increase in the number of tenants. This development was blamed on the failure of many families to keep abreast with new trends and technology in agriculture as well as difficulties caused by drought, floods and low prices. In Mexico there were efforts to increase the number of small family farms following passage of the Constitution of 1917 and as early as 1916 U.S. federal land banks had attempted to provide loans to help tenants become land holders.<sup>33</sup>

With the election of Franklin Roosevelt national programs were established to encourage self-sufficiency along with commercial aptitude. These programs were intended to be operated with the close supervision of government professionals. In techniques reminiscent of Mexican ejido boards, tenant loan programs, like the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act, offered tenants a chance to buy land after the loan was guaranteed by a committee of locals who vouched for the applicant’s character and ability. Applicants were expected to follow guidelines for crop diversification and

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<sup>33</sup> M.L. Wilson “Farm Tenancy and Related Problems” from *Indians and Their Land*, 1, 5; Walter V. Woehlke “Regional Planning For Indians and Spanish Americans by the Interdepartmental Rio Grande Board” 6-7, Contribution by the U.S. Delegation, First Inter-American Conference on Indian Life, Patzcuaro Mexico, April 1940, MS 146, Part III Box 2a, John Collier Papers, Yale University.

conservation practices. Later on M.L. Wilson, director of Agricultural extension, suggested cooperative farming where a number of families obtained a large piece of land and operated it as a unit with the work load distributed. Such a practice would allow access to machinery and ease the obtaining of useful credit. In a similar vein, Collier often used Subsistence Homesteads to help Native Americans.<sup>34</sup>

Subsistence Homesteads were administered through the Department of the Interior's Subsistence Homestead Division. Subsistence Homesteading was intended as a form of urban agriculture that settled families on plots of land where they could grow most of their food, make goods and work at part-time jobs for additional cash income.<sup>35</sup>

The director of the Subsistence Homestead gave this definition of subsistence homesteading:

A subsistence homestead denotes a house and out buildings located upon a plot of land on which can be grown a large portion of foodstuffs required by the homestead family. It signifies production for home consumption and not for commercial sale. In that it provides for subsistence alone, it carries with it the corollary that cash income must be drawn from some outside source. The central motive of the subsistence homestead program, therefore, is to demonstrate the economic livelihood

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<sup>34</sup> ML Wilson "Farm Tenancy and Related Problems" 1, 5; Walter V. Woehike "Regional Planning For Indians and Spanish Americans by the Interdepartmental Rio Grande Board" 6-7. On July 22, 1937, Congress passed the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act. This law authorized a modest credit program to assist tenant farmers to purchase land and it was the culmination of a long effort to secure legislation for their benefit. Following the passage of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act, Congress passed the Farm Security Act into law. The Farm Security Act officially transformed the Resettlement Administration into the Farm Security Administration (FSA). The FSA expanded through funds given by the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act.

<sup>35</sup> Oklahoma Historical Society "RESETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION," assessed Sept 21, 2013, Oklahoma Historical Societies Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/R/RE032.html> ;Ralph Borsodi, (1934-01). "[Subsistence Homesteads, President Roosevelt's New Land and Population Policy](#)", taken from: Ralph Borsodi "Subsistence Homesteads" *Survey Graphic, Magazine of Social Interpretation* vol. 23 no. 1, (January 1934): 11. assessed Sept 21, 2013.

which combines part-time wage work with part-time gardening or farming.<sup>36</sup>

The Subsistence Homesteading program was based on an agrarian back-to-the-land philosophy that supported a partial return to the simpler agrarian lifestyle of the past indicative of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt's assertion that rural life was healthier for the poor than an urban lifestyle. With this program cooperation, community socialization, and community work were emphasized. Homesteads were expected to be worked not just for the good of the families but also for the benefit of the community. The government encouraged adult education, and women's clubs in order to educate families about better and healthier lifestyles. Families were taught farming skills and women were encouraged to work with crafts, especially weaving, as a method of providing additional income for families. With its community emphasis, development of crafts as an income source and adult education the Subsistence Homesteading program offered features that appealed to John Collier and resembled ideas advocated by Moisés Sáenz and others in Mexico.<sup>37</sup>

In 1935 Rexford Tugwell's Resettlement Administration (RA) took control of the Subsistence Homestead program. The RA was a New Deal U.S. federal agency that, between April 1935 and December 1936, relocated struggling urban and rural families to communities planned by the federal government. The RA spent \$1.3 million for self-help projects that assisted Indians in North and South Dakota in constructing water wells, financed the development of canning kitchens, root cellars and low-cost housing that

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<sup>36</sup> Robert C. Carriker, "The Longview Homesteads," *Columbia Magazine*. Volume 24 No. 1 (Spring 2010), assessed March 3, 2012, <http://www.washingtonhistory.org/education/columbiakids/http://archive.is/BXOsq>

<sup>37</sup> Ralph Borsodi, (1934-01)., Taken from: Ralph Borsodi "Subsistence Homesteads" *Survey Graphic, Magazine of Social Interpretation* vol. 23 no. 1, (January 1934): 11. Assessed, Sept 21, 2013, "[Subsistence Homesteads, President Roosevelt's New Land and Population Policy](#)". Eleanor Roosevelt took a personal interest in the project, and became involved in setting up the first community, Arthurdale, WV after a visit to the stranded miners of Scotts Run.

aided over 900 Indian families. The agency also purchased nearly one million acres of grazing land for the Pueblo and Navajo people.<sup>38</sup>

The Subsistence Homestead Division (SHD) was sympathetic and supportive of Native Americans and wanted to make sure that “the Division should endeavor to secure for them the same considerations which other racial groups in the area are enjoying.” Initially projects were planned for Chilocco, Oklahoma, Needles and Lakeport, California, Great Falls, Montana, and Burns Oregon. The SHD provided funds to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for development and management. Providing subsistence homesteads to Native Americans was indicative of the Division’s desire to experiment broadly. This desire to experiment moved the Division to go outside of its scope and provide a loan to assist graduates of the Chilocco Indian School.<sup>39</sup> In a tone reminiscent of John Collier and Moisés Sáenz a spokesman for the SHD explained:

If the Chilocco School is functioning normally and efficiently it is preparing young Indians for effective citizenship. One presupposes they are being trained for a full, wholesome and unrestricted life. This is our concept of effective American citizenship. To train them for that sort of life and then deny them the facilities for the enjoyment of that life is unfair. Consequently, this Division should see to it that its funds be used, in this instance, to raise the standard of living of those Indians to a level comparable to that of the averaged white citizen in that area.<sup>40</sup>

The Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, determined that the special circumstances and needs of Native Americans could not be properly addressed through the SHD. He requested a transfer of projects intended for Native Americans to an Indian

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<sup>38</sup> James Stuart Olsen and Raymond Wilson *Native Americans in the Twentieth Century* (Champaign IL.: University of Illinois press, 1986), 111.; Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform*, 126-127. Charles Young, supervisor of Indian Rehabilitation stated that despite the RA’s assistance 73 percent of Indian families still needed new or improved housing, many continued to live in tents and shacks.

<sup>39</sup> Robert M Carriker, *Urban Farming in the West: A New Deal Experiment in Subsistence Homesteads* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010), 39

<sup>40</sup> Robert M Carriker, *Urban Farming in the West*, 39



Subsistence Homestead Division created within the Indian Office and administered by the Indian Commissioner. Native properties were transferred by Executive order from the Department of the Agriculture to the Department of the Interior and \$400,000 dollars were allocated for administration. Eventually the five planned subsistence homesteads was dropped to two, Needles and Chilocco. Nor were all Native Americans in agreement that such a program was in their best interest. Native representatives of Needles objected to use of subsistence homesteads arguing that what they really needed were large irrigated farms<sup>41</sup>

Another aspect of the ejidal system that Collier found appealing was its cooperative credit system. In the mid-thirties Collier, in a favorable report concerning Mexico's ejido system, expressed the opinion that if Mexico furnished a capital goods credit system designed to be educational in providing instruction in "the transition from native co-operative living to co-operative economic enterprise" it would accelerate Mexico's ejido program. In later years he commented favorably about Mexican President Cárdenas's implementation of an ejido credit bank system that, while lacking in some aspects, proved the feasibility of such a credit program. Collier sought something like what Mexico offered believing this to be vital to his reform efforts. Under the Wheeler-Howard Act a loan fund provided credit to thousands of Indians giving them the opportunity to improve their individual situations. Since much of the tribal lands were

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<sup>41</sup> Robert M Carriker, *Urban Farming in the West*, 40.; Charles Joseph Kappler, *Kappler's Indian Affairs Laws and Treaties*, Vol. VII "Executive Order Transfer of Certain Properties and Functions From the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture, February 1, 1937 Vol. 2 1937 (no. 7546), 231 compiled in *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties Vol. VII (Compiled from February 10, 1939 to January 13, 1971) (Washington D.C. Government Printing Office, 1975), 1402.*; Philip M. Glick "The Federal Subsistence Homesteads Program" *Yale Law Journal* vol. 44, no. 8, (June 1935), 1359.: Department of the Interior, Secretary of the Interior Order, Sept 26, 1934, creating Indian Homestead Authority.

judged to be fit only for grazing, the bureau sought to increase the Indian ownership of livestock through the promotion of cooperatives drawing money from a revolving credit fund.<sup>42</sup>

Despite these efforts Collier believed that the U.S. revolving loan fund for the development of agricultural enterprises left “much to be desired.” He believed that Mexico’s ejido credit system was more desirable and in 1940 he sent Indian Office employee Alida C. Bowler, a former superintendent of reservations in Nevada, on a fact finding trip to Mexico. Bowler, considered by Collier to be an able administrator who had done an outstanding job in the utilization of credit funds was asked to go to Mexico to learn “first hand” the working of Mexico’s ejido and “agricultural credit arrangements,” Mexico’s “credit set up.” In doing this, she was expected to make a comparative study of Mexico’s credit system for Indians and the U.S.’s Native American credit system.<sup>43</sup>

In her report Bowler observed that Mexican and U.S. experiences with Native American credit systems suggested the desirability of a credit system in which the government dealt with a democratically organized and managed group rather than with individuals. She noted a tendency in both countries to lend based on plans of operations that emphasized a sound economic and social status along with an expectation that their goals would be coordinated with the larger economic scheme of the nation. She noted that in Mexico and the United States Indians couldn’t borrow from private sources and while they could borrow for seed, fertilizer, tools, implements, livestock, machinery, the

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<sup>42</sup> John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 161. Reference to an unpublished 1936 report. Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism*, 121, 125.

<sup>43</sup> John Collier letters to Alida C. Bowler, October 24, and 27, 1939, Reel 2, *Native Americans and the New Deal the Office Files of John Collier 1933-1945* Robert Lester ed. (Bethesda MD: University Publications of America, in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1993).

construction of irrigation systems, and roads they couldn't borrow for land acquisition. She concluded that there was a need for technical staffs to consider the resources of the loan applicants and a need to place the applicant on a sound subsistence foundation in order to establish a firmer credit basis. She also noted that while the Native Americans in the United States were limited to borrowing through the Indian Service, Mexican Indigenous loan recipients had better access to funding because they benefited from interdepartmental cooperation.<sup>44</sup>

The need for inter-departmental cooperation moved Moisés Sáenz to advocate comprehensive Indian reform programs involving numerous government agencies working in concert with local indigenous peoples for their betterment. Collier held a similar viewpoint. This was reflected in his involvement in the Interdepartmental Rio Grande Board. Collier was aware of serious erosional problems facing Pueblo Indians along the upper Rio Grande Valley. He also was aware that this problem was not isolated to one particular community. After inducing the Pueblo tribes to reduce live-stock numbers Collier urged Secretary of the Interior, Ickes and the Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace to establish a coordinated strategy using federal and state agencies to address the physical, social, and economic factors that threatened the viability of the watershed. The resulting Interdepartmental board contained eight federal bureaus and two participating departments including the Grazing Service of the General Land Office, The Soil Conservation Service, Farm Security Administration, and the Indian Office.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Alida C. Bowler, "Credit For Indian Landowners in Mexico and the United States," pages, 1, 4, 6, 11, Contributions by the U.S. Delegation, First Inter-American Conference on Indian Life, Patzcuaro Mexico April 1940, MS 146 Part III, Box 2A, John Collier Papers, Yale University.

<sup>45</sup> Walter V. Woehlke "Regional Planning for Indians and Spanish Americans by the Interdepartmental Rio Grande Board" 2, 3, 7, Woehlke was an assistant to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Collier was certain that the intrusion of commercial agriculture into the area had threatened traditional subsistence agriculture used by Native American and Spanish American settlers. The Board sought to protect and restore the resources of the area and protect the use of public resources for the benefit of small family farmers. This was an example of the attempt to transform individual agency level efforts into coordinated regional operations, something that was often seen in New Deal Programs. This would culminate in the Land Use Planning program of 1938-42, an effort to coordinate social and economic development on a regional basis along with efforts to promote the participation of local communities in the planning of the use of their resources.<sup>46</sup>

Collier was also influenced by Mexico's efforts to economically develop indigenous crafts. After taking office as Commissioner he sought to develop Native American artistries as an economic activity through the Indian Office's Indian Arts and Crafts Board. In order to help him in this task he secured the services of someone employed in this work in Mexico, René d'Harnoncourt. D'Harnoncourt was born in Vienna into a titled family of Franco-Belgium origin. While studying chemistry in Graz he developed a taste for art, collecting Dürer prints and organizing, with his two friends, an exhibition of Picasso and Matisse prints. Following the end of World War I the Czech government confiscated his family's estate, impoverishing d'Harnoncourt. In 1926 the penniless nobleman immigrated to Mexico City. Unable to speak Spanish or English, he found life to be hard and was forced to make a living doing freelance paintings of bullfighting scenes for post cards, touching up ads, and decorating shop windows. But

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<sup>46</sup> Graham D. Taylor *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism*, 120.; Walter V. Woehike "Regional Planning for Indians and Spanish Americans by the Interdepartmental Rio Grande Board," Pages 6, 7, 11.

d'Harnoncourt, an imposing figure at 6ft 6 and weighting 230 lbs, soon came to the attention of the Mexico City art world. Displaying remarkable patience, understanding, and a skill at manipulating people, he soon became fluent in English and Spanish and developed relationships with major Mexican artists and art dealers. His most rewarding relationship was with the American art dealer Fredrick Davis. While working with Davis he arranged the 1927 showing of the works of Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and Rufino Tamayo.<sup>47</sup>

Sáenz was familiar with the Mexican art scene and, in his capacity within the Ministry of Education, helped d'Harnoncourt in his promotion of contemporary Mexican folk art at the Davis gallery. U.S. Ambassador Dwight W. Morrow and his wife, Elizabeth, were introduced to d'Harnoncourt via the Mexican Education Ministry and hired him to complete a fresco painted onto the garden wall of their Cuernavaca home. He later helped Elizabeth in the development of her art collection and in the illustration of two books written by her: *Painted Pig* (1930) and *Beast and Fish* (1933). During this time he also published his own book: *Mexicana: A Book of Pictures* (1931). A master of promotion, d'Harnoncourt worked with the Mexican revolutionary, muralist, and promoter of Mexican folk art, Robert Montenegro to revive the art of lacquerware in the town of Olinalá. His success in this endeavor moved the Mexican government to ask him to assist the Ministry of Education in its efforts to preserve and economically enhance the nation's folk art.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board*, 124-125.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board*, 124-125. Pre-Hispanic texts and accounts written by early Spanish explorers and missionaries indicate that lacquer was produced throughout Mesoamerica. One 16th-century commentator, Jeronimo de Mendieta, marveled at the colorful drinking cups made from squash "so finely painted that even if they were under water 100 years, the paint

Ambassador Morrow, sought to improve U.S.-Mexican relations by changing the popular image of Mexico in the United States. To do this he arranged, with the Mexican government, a U.S. exhibition of Mexican art. After gaining the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art as a venue and acquiring funding from the Carnegie Foundation it fell on d'Haroncourt to arrange the exhibit. His display included 1200 examples of Native arts and crafts. The museum's governing board feared that it would be too daring in its breadth but, despite the Museum's misgivings, the display became the greatest art success of 1930 securing U.S. recognition for d'Haroncourt, who landed a U.S. teaching position and became the host of a series of U.S. radio broadcasts.<sup>49</sup>

In 1936 Sáenz arranged a meeting between Collier, who was interested in Mexican expertise in the marketing of indigenous arts and crafts, and René d'Haroncourt, an important architect of this proficiency. John Collier met d'Haroncourt while he was engaged in another capacity. Each year d'Haroncourt spent his summer in Mexico serving on the Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America. This committee was financed and sponsored by the Mexican government as a means of gathering American intellectuals with the purpose of forming a more positive picture of Mexico. American authors, like Stuart Chase and Elmer Rice, meet with Mexican artists, like Rivera and Orozco, in seminars and conferences about the two cultures. Collier, happy to be temporarily freed from what he described as the "jail of U.S. Indian Commissioner," accepted an invitation to attend. While talking to another attendee, Moisés Sáenz, he declared his interest in what Mexico was doing with Indian arts and

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wouldn't come off or fade." The work is still considered extremely durable. Spain's trade with the orient influenced the lacquer art of Mexico.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board*, 124-125

crafts and wished that he could find and retain someone who was greatly experienced with Mexico's projects. Sáenz, described by d'Harnoncourt as "the soul of all kinds of things" knew, first hand of the Austrian expatriate's wide experience with Mexican folk art and suggested that Collier meet him. According to d'Harnocourt Collier, on first meeting him, solicited his help saying: "For heaven's sake, if you've done it for Mexico, why don't you work on it for us?" d'Harnoncourt was soon working for the U.S. Indian office's Indian Arts and Crafts Board.<sup>50</sup>

In 1937 Collier, enthused by d'Harnoncourt's ideas moved him from a supporting role to manager of the Arts and Crafts Board. As manager he was entrusted with carrying out Collier's plans for a revival of native arts and crafts, along with its mission of promoting the economic development of Native Americans. He recognized, based on his Mexican experience, that a broad, generalized procedure would be defeated by the greater diversity of more than two hundred tribal or group entities. D'Harnoncourt recognized that the only workable method for the development of Indian arts and crafts was to work with each local group or tribal subdivision treating each one as a separate entity and dealing with them at the local individual level. He shared with Collier and Manuel Gamio a commitment to the use of research and the assessment of native groups along with an understanding of their history. In order to successfully encourage revivals of traditional arts and crafts, he used full background research, careful consideration of past

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<sup>50</sup> Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board*, 124-125; Jennifer McLerran *A New Deal for Native Art*, 36. Quotes from René d' Harnoncourt, Oral History, Archives of American Art Museum of Modern Art, New York, 42,43. ; Collier quote from Susan L. Meyn *More Than Curiosities: A Grassroots History of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board and its Precursors, 1920-1942* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2001) 86. John Collier letter to Hubert Herring July 1, 1936, Reel 17, *Native Americans and the New Deal the Office Files of John Collier 1933-1945* Robert Lester ed. (Bethesda MD. University Publications of America, in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1993), In the letter Collier describes the difficulty he has taking days off from work to go to Mexico saying, "It is just that, physically speaking being Indian Commissioner here is like being in jail."

history, and an examination of the present conditions of each tribe. Most important to him in this work was the development of close contact with local tribal leaders and local Indian Service administrators.<sup>51</sup>

In his use of research D'Harnoncourt followed Gamio's example in believing that before proceeding it was necessary to conduct detailed surveys of native groups. He selected areas of the United States that he wished to concentrate on, then he placed specialists in those areas with the mission of consulting with native artisans about methods of production, possible improvements, critiques on work produced, and the establishment of the production of marketable items along with the formation of relationships with retailers. Using his extensive experience in the twentieth century Mexican folk revival as a guide, he believed that American Indian arts and crafts could enjoy a lucrative market if they were effectively shaped to appeal to the aesthetic sensibilities of a class conscious consumer.<sup>52</sup>

D'Harnoncourt was able to smoothly transfer his services from Mexico to the United States and, once established in the U.S., he was able to adopt methodologies for the research and development of Native arts and crafts that were similar to those used by Gamio and Sáenz. Collier's use of D'Harnoncourt provides evidence of the communication occurring between Collier, Gamio, and Sáenz. It also indicates a broader range of communication between artist, Intellectuals, and artisans between the U.S. and Mexico. This allowed the acceptance and approval of D'Harnoncourt's methodology in both nations.

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<sup>51</sup> Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board*, 129.; Jennifer McLerran *A New Deal for Native Art*, 4,5.

<sup>52</sup>Jennifer McLerran *A New Deal for Native Art*, 97-99.



While the development of arts and crafts for Indian income was important, land and its efficient use was the most vital issue. Collier realized that in order to ensure land restructuring and economic revival he needed educational reform. In this subject he shared with Moisés Sáenz, a belief that schools could be used not simply as a place to prepare the young but as facilities that could unite communities and improve the knowledge and abilities of the parents.<sup>53</sup>

In his Mexican travels Collier observed conditions in the state of Querétaro along with other areas north and south of Mexico City. In his opinion he thought that he was witnessing something that went beyond the present generation of “schoolmen and scholars” one encountered in the United States. He felt that the education system used to teach Native Americans in the United States suffered by comparison. This was because the U.S.’ education system intruded education into Indian life like a “foreign and hostile body,” failing because it was incapable of being incorporated into tribal community life. It seemed to him that American education entered into Indian social life like a toxin. In contrast, He believed that Mexico offered to help the indigenous community to form their own schools that addressed their own needs. These schools functioned as part of the community, as indigenous property. They were not an invading body but a communal tool for improving life and local conditions.<sup>54</sup>

Collier observed that Mexico’s revolutionary government had a task of using the agrarian revolution of the rural countryside as a means to increase the agricultural productivity and economic self-sufficiency of the nation while raising the standard of

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<sup>53</sup> John Collier, “Mexico: A Challenge,” 98.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

living for its Indians. To do this, cooperative community effort was necessary. This meant that the Mexican school needed to be more than a simple school where the teacher imparted the “Three Rs,” it needed to be a community center and the teacher need to be a “cultural missionary.” As a community leader, the teacher would fail or succeed on the basis of the community action he was capable of engineering.<sup>55</sup>

To Collier it seemed that this community leader needed to be a member of the community. Ideally he should be taken from the ranks of the people he sought to help. He needed to be the recipient of “special opportunities” provided by the central government to prepare him for the task. These skills would be provided to him with the stipulation that he would use his new skills for the service of the community. He would not be alone in his duty but would be reinforced in this task by federal support; both to help him in his teaching duties and in the two- fold task of strengthening the agricultural economy and the quality of life of the community. To do this the government was to assist the community in building a school that became, at the communities’ behest, a place for adult education, agricultural organization, credit union administration, health education, recreation, and other functions. One sees in his analysis an identification by Collier between a community movement in Mexico and his earlier efforts in the community center movement in New York City.<sup>56</sup>

Collier believed that these methods could be utilized by the Indian Service in the United States. He felt it if this was done it would transform the Service and provide Native Americans with, “a new heaven and a new earth,” within one presidency. He felt

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 97-98.

that “similar conditions in the United States would release similar enthusiasm, joy in work, happy self-sacrifice, and a similar genius for teaching and leadership” that he observed in Mexico. To help usher in this new utopia Collier chose to retain Dr. W. Carson Ryan jr., as Director of Indian Education. Collier felt that Ryan was the right man to make such a transformation in education. The Director had experience working within the old system, was critical of it, desirous of change, and interested in what he could learn from Mexico in the interest of reforming Native American education.<sup>57</sup>

Collier was an advocate of John Dewey’s concept of active learning and was appreciative of the Sáenz’s Deweyesk “leaning by doing” principles towards education. In the December, 1933 issue of *Indians at Work* he stated that Mexico was making a valiant effort to give its rural Indians a real opportunity, not just through schools and classrooms but through an educational program that entailed a cultural mission that included both children and adults in a learning program that involved learning by doing in agriculture, the arts, medicine and social activities.<sup>58</sup>

Collier believed that Indian Office officials needed to learn by observing, stating: “It seems to us particularly important, in view of the present expanding activities in parts of the Indian Service, our changing land policies and the developmental programs accompanying it, that as many as possible of our people in the Indian Service see this work in Mexico, not, of course, for the purpose of imitating in detail what is actually

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<sup>57</sup> John Collier, “Mexico: A Challenge,” 96. W. Carsen Ryan was originally a professor of education at Swathmore College. He was appointed Director of Indian Education by Herbert Hoover’s Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur. Prior to Collier’s appointment Ryan introduced progressive education that emphasized practical education and vocational programs to Indian schools. He also formed a guidance and placement division designed to help Indian graduates to find jobs and help talented students get placement at colleges and universities. Ryan also worked at converting boarding schools to day schools and reducing harsh discipline.

<sup>58</sup> John Collier, “The Importance of the Mexican Experiment to Our Indians” *Indians at Work* December 1, 1933, 13

done there, but rather for the purpose of understanding and applying certain fundamental principles that need urgently to be applied to Indian work in the United States.” With this in mind, Collier frequently sent missions of educators and educational officials, as well as other federal officials and personages tied to the Indian Office, to Mexico with the assignment to “observe and report, evaluate and recommend.” These missions were common and viewed with distrust by Collier’s enemies in Washington. In 1939’s appropriations bill these enemies attached a rider preventing the Indian Office from spending money for travel to other countries with the intent of investigating education systems for Indians.<sup>59</sup>

Collier’s relationship with Sáenz was vital in arranging these missions. His personality, his background, and his expertise made him a perfect intermediary. As Subsecretary of Education, Sáenz’s style of management included travels across the length and breadth of Mexico, inspecting schools, and visiting rural communities where his charismatic personality endeared him with many of the locals. He had many friends in rural Mexico and Collier benefited from these connections. While these benefits were diminished by the mid to late thirties when Sáenz was removed from the SEP to assume a new career as a diplomat, the Commissioner benefited from working with associates of the former Subsecretary. One of these was Sáenz’s secretary, Mary Louis Doherty. Collier, who couldn’t speak Spanish, relied on people like Sáenz and Manuel Gamio as intermediaries between him and other Latin American figures. Doherty, who spoke

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<sup>59</sup> John Collier, “The Importance of the Mexican Experiment to Our Indians,” 15.; John Collier, letter to Mary Doherty, February 4, 1939, Box 4, Folder 73, Reel 12, John Collier Papers, Yale University.

Spanish and English was someone that Collier felt he could trust since she shared his political viewpoints and was involved in New York progressive activities.<sup>60</sup>

While Sáenz was with the SEP Collier learned to rely on Doherty. He was interested in maintaining contact with Sáenz but this was hampered by the fact that the Mexican educator was often awash in projects. Always busy, and frequently over-extended, Sáenz was difficult to reach and usually tardy in completing tasks the Commissioner requested of him. He found Doherty helpful in keeping ties with the Subsecretary and benefited from her knowledge of official Mexico. In her correspondence with Collier, Doherty displayed personal concern for Sáenz's well-being, something she shared with Collier. Along with her concerns with her boss's health and well-being, she kept Collier informed about Sáenz's personal and political activities.

Doherty, along with her boss Sáenz, helped Collier in arranging connections to the SEP

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<sup>60</sup> William Spratling in "Figures in a Mexican Renaissance" *Scribner's Magazine*, vol. LXXXV (85), no. 1, (January 1929): 15-16.; Mary Louis Doherty Papers, University of Maryland. University Libraries Digital Collections, assessed, November 21, 2013, Introduction: "Mary Louis Doherty (1896-1995) is at present best known as a friend of Katherine Anne Porter and as one of the models for the character of Laura in Porter's short story "Flowering Judas." Because of her relationships with the photographers Edward Weston and Tina Modotti and her connections with important twentieth-century Mexican artists and politicians Mary Louis Doherty is an important figure in her own right." Mary Louis Doherty was born on October 30, 1896, in Williamsburg, Iowa, where she received her primary and secondary education. In June 1918, she graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Madison with a B.A. in economics and journalism. She was one of seven college graduates selected in competition and trained to work out a special sales promotion experiment for watch manufacturer William H. Ingersoll's dollar-watch business which was based in New York, New York. After one year, Doherty resigned to take a position as a community organizer on Staten Island with the New York Community Councils of the City Parliament of the City of New York; during this time she took courses at Columbia University. When the New York City Parliament was disbanded, Doherty went to Mexico City in January 1921 and took a position with the National University of Mexico. Working under José Vasconcelos, at that time Rector of the University (he became Minister of Education in October 1921), Doherty undertook work in English in connection with the first summer school of the University for students from the U.S., taught English at a Federal school in Xochimilco, performed secretarial work in English for Dr. Vasconcelos, and wrote feature articles for newspapers in the U.S. Taken from: Mary Doherty Papers, <http://digital.lib.umd.edu/archivesum/actions.DisplayEADDoc.do?source=MdU.ead.litms.0015.xml&style=ead>, assessed December 10, 2014; Information concerning John Collier's linguistic deficiencies, courtesy of his grandson Malcolm Collier, from e-mail correspondence, April 15, 2013.

and with other Mexican offices and officials. These connections were helpful in arranging inspections by personages like the Secretary of Interior's wife Mrs. Anna Ickes. Because of her association with Sáenz, and his successors at the SEP, Collier relied on her to help American visitors embarking on fact finding trips seeking to investigate Mexico's social, cultural and political programs. Often these were tours of rural Mexican schools and educational programs. One example of this was the tour she arranged for the Americans, A.C. Cooley, the Indian Offices's Director of Agricultural Extension, and Dr. W. Carson Ryan, along with two American Women, a Miss Groves and a Miss Brandt, whose interest in Mexican rural schools seemed tempered by a desire to see more of the work going on within these said schools.<sup>61</sup>

Inspired by his observations of Mexican education, Collier intended that U.S. Indian schools would become the focal point of local administration and community activities. To help him in this task he secured \$3,613,000 dollars in Progressive Works Administration funds to replace older boarding schools with day schools. Seeking a more active program of experimentation, Collier eventually replaced Ryan with Willard W. Beatty. A progressive educator, Beatty, like Moisés Sáenz, felt that Indian curriculums should concentrate on efforts to solve rural problems faced by reservation residents.

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<sup>61</sup> Letters from Mary Louis Doherty to John Collier, February 28, 1934 and May 7, 1934, John Collier to Mary Louis Doherty October 8, 1935 and Mary Louis Doherty to Dr. Ryan January 20, 1935, Box 4, Folder 72-73, Reel 12, The John Collier Papers, Yale University,.; In February of 1934 Saenz contracted some sort of amebic illness that require treatments at John Hopkins. By May of that year she informed Collier that Saenz was ready to go on his diplomatic mission to Ecuador. Rather than rest as doctors at Johns Hopkins advised Saenz had busied himself on family business and helping visiting persons interested in Mexico's indigenous programs. A.C. Cooley was the director of extension work for the U.S. Indian service and also worked with the transfer of Indian Subsistence Homesteads from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior in 1937. In the correspondence Doherty was often asked to shepherd visiting personages at the behest of Collier. For example, she helped a young teacher and writer from Ecuador.

Students were taught to plant community gardens, care for livestock, and learn modern conservation methods.<sup>62</sup>

Hoping to carry out an education program similar to Mexico's, U.S. reservation day schools became centers for various community activities, where both children and adults learned homemaking skills, attended health clinics, and worked to preserve native crafts and culture. Beatty attempted to improve professional standards, setting up summer classes where teachers were instructed on anthropology, home economics, rural sociology, arts and crafts, health education, and native languages. Following an agenda popular with Sáenz and other Mexican pluralists, Beatty hoped to offer courses taught in native languages with bilingual textbooks, dictionaries and motion pictures.<sup>63</sup>

In these developments we see similarities in U.S. Indian education conducted by Beatty and programs engaged in rural Mexico. In fact there is evidence that Beatty was in touch with people sent to Mexico for that purpose. In an October 1936 memorandum to John Collier he states that U.S. officials used Mary Doherty to contact educational leaders in Mexico. He stated that the Progressive Education Association, that Beatty had once been president of, used her as a contact with Mexican officials. Hubert Herring, involved with the cultural seminar in Mexico City, and Samuel Guy Inman, considered by Beatty to be the leading authority on Latin American affairs, considered Doherty to be the first person they would "endeavor to contact in order to secure understanding, cooperation, and leadership." With contacts like Doherty, U.S. officials, like Beatty, seemed confident that they could get a full access to Mexican programs. In fact, when the

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<sup>62</sup> Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 128.

<sup>63</sup> Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 129.; John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 196.; Willard Beatty, "Uncle Sam Develops a New Kind of Rural School," *Elementary School Journal* 41 (November 1940): 192-93.

Progressive Education Association was planning the North American Regional Conference of the New Educational Fellowship to be held in Mexico City in 1935 one of its agents, a Mr. Redefeer, found that the very mention of Doherty's name proved of inestimable value.<sup>64</sup>

The Indian Office's progressive education program was inspired by Mexico's educational program and, as a result, it suffered similar problems. All too often the Indian Office, like the SEP, found properly trained teachers to be in short supply. Added to this problem many teachers couldn't adjust to the Dewey method of education. Ben Reifel, a Brule Sioux, commented that these "poor teachers were just going around because they had never been taught to handle the situation." He concluded that while Indian children benefited from learning how to raise rabbits and chickens, they often failed to learn how to read or write. All too often it was *peor es nada*.<sup>65</sup>

Having found Doherty's expertise beneficial in Mexico Collier later used her expertise, observational qualities, and writing abilities in a more ambitious manner. After briefly working at the Department of the Interior in Washington, D. C., in early 1939, Doherty was sent on a mission to investigate Indian policies and meet with indigenista advocates in Central and South America.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> John Collier Papers, memorandum from Willard W. Beatty to John Collier, October 2, 1936, Box 4, Folder 23, Reel 11, John Collier Papers, Yale University. Note that Beatty misspelled her name "Mary Daugherty." Both Ryan and Beatty shared a strong affection for the PEA and its principles. Beatty was president of the Progressive Education Association when he was appointed, and Ryan became president of the association after he left government service.

<sup>65</sup> Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 129.; Joseph Cash and Herbert T. Hoover *To Be An Indian: An Oral History* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1971), 126.

<sup>66</sup> Mary Louis Doherty Papers, University of Maryland. University Libraries Digital Collections, assessed November, 21, 2013 <http://digital.lib.umd.edu/archivesum/actions.DisplayEADDoc.do?source=MdU.ead.litms.0015.xml&style=ead> ; Letter from Collier to Mary Doherty, February 1, 1939, Letter from John Collier to Dr. Stacey



While doing this she was enlisted by Collier to provide reports on Indigenous culture and Indigenista programs in these countries. In a report compiled after her field expedition, Doherty reported that during her travels she was often asked to give council on rural education problems faced by these countries. Though not claiming to be an expert Doherty found that her experience working with rural education in Mexico had provided her with a varied and rich experience in the matter providing her with the confidence to tell these officials “which systems Mexico has tried and has had to discard as failures, or inadequate, which methods and programs had given results, and what were the newest theories being worked on etc.” She reported that Bolivian educational authorities later informed her that they had reorganized their system according to the council she had given. It seems remarkable that an American, while working for the U.S. Indian Office, was imparting knowledge gained from her experience in Mexico and then transplanting that knowledge to interested officials in South America.<sup>67</sup>

To enhance and improve the implementation of reforms in land, economics and educational policy Collier relied on the use of anthropology. His use of anthropology was part of Collier’s belief in the use of social sciences as a means for the improvement of Native Americans. In this application Collier and his Indian Office were influenced by Mexico. This is seen in the fact that the Commissioner shared with Manuel Gamio a

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May of the Rockefeller Foundation, February 4, 1939, Box 4, Folder 73, Reel 12. John Collier Papers Yale University. Collier writes an impassioned letter to Doherty dismayed by her hesitancy in filling out the required paperwork. He flatters her and browbeats her, while reminding her of the importance of her participation in a project greater than her, Sáenz, and himself. In September 1940, Doherty returned to Mexican government service, once again under Ramón Beteta, who was now Under Secretary of Finance and Public Credit in the Ministry of the Treasury; her duties were virtually identical to those she formerly performed for Beteta at Foreign Relations.

<sup>67</sup> Mary Louis Doherty “Proposed Recommendations and Projects for Furthering Cultural Relations with Latin America” (D.F. Mexico, 1941), Travel Chronology: Panama, Equator, Peru, Bolivia, Chile: October 10, 1939-May 18, 1940, Correspondence with Bureau of Indian Affairs during this time. Box 4, Folder 73, Reel 12, John Collier Papers, Yale University.

confidence in all inclusive surveys and comprehensive personality studies of indigenous peoples in the belief that such information would be of great use in establishing public policy. This was a view held by many social scientists of his day: a faith in the ability of social scientists to uncover the composition of the social organism and, through an understanding of its composition, find, through the use of social science, solutions to social problems. It was felt that scientific methods could be applied to the “deficiencies” held by the nation’s indigenous population; providing the prospect of indigenous renewal through the use of social science.<sup>68</sup>

Manuel Gamio favored the science of anthropology for indigenous renewal. Collier shared this view, making extensive use of anthropologists. He stated that American anthropology took form through the study of American Indian life and since it was dependent on the good will of the Indian Office, anthropologists often became apologists for the Office’s view of Indian culture as inferior and dying. In the 1920s Collier, who held the opposite view, proposed to anthropologist Franz Boas the end of the allotment of Indian lands in severalty and, with that end, the restoration of tribal authority over Indian lands. By the end of the 1920s Collier and associates at American Indian Defense Association formulated the beginning of what Collier referred to as the Indian New Deal. One of the board members for the AIDA was the anthropologist Alfred L. Kroeber.<sup>69</sup>

Collier shared Gamio’s interest in retaining those parts of Native culture that were deemed useful to society and helpful for modernization while discarding anything that

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<sup>68</sup> Stephen J. Kunitz and John Collier jr. “The Social Philosophy of John Collier” *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Summer, 1971, 225; John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 443.; Jennifer McLerran *A New Deal for Native Art*, 238.

<sup>69</sup> John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 216.

was not. To do this, Collier enlisted the aid of anthropologists in his calculations and in the operation of his office. Collier later sited two “district epochs” in this use. During the first “epoch” anthropologists worked largely in isolation in the field seeking answers to district questions. Collier stated that the experiences from this first “epoch” determined what to do and what not to do.<sup>70</sup>

An example of what not to attempt, and a poor use of anthropology as a tool, can be seen in the Navajo livestock reduction program. Collier, who regarded the Navajo as a vibrant and adaptive people, had hoped to use them as a model for his policies. But he first felt it necessary to deal with a perceived environmental disaster brought to the reservation by drought and overgrazing. Employing the Soil Conservation Service the government embarked on a scientific over view of the situation and concluded that this crisis needed to be quickly and “practically” solved. The solution was to “eliminate” (slaughter) half the Navaho’s livestock herd. Collier and the soil conservationists considered every variable solution except the one that would ensure the successful salvation of the Navajo rangeland: the support of the Navajo people.<sup>71</sup>

This seems odd since Collier recognized that the conservation program’s success depended on the knowledge of Navajo culture and society. He stated that “soil conservation is not merely a business of mechanical or botanical operations...it is a business of finding out how the land owners...can be enabled and persuaded to conserve their soil.” But Collier couldn’t get the funds to hire anthropologists until 1935, well into the process of livestock reduction and when he did initiate a study he placed his friend

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<sup>70</sup> John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 216.

<sup>71</sup> Marsha Weisiger *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009) 24, 49.

Eshref Shevky in charge of it. While previously working in the field of sociology Shevky, at the time, was a specialist in experimental medicine with little knowledge of the customs, beliefs, myths, and kinship of the Navajo people. Instead he relied on human dependency surveys; a cold, impersonal device that resembled a census form. Among the many things lost on Shevky was an understanding of the female social network that determined Navajo land use. While Shevky did hire a pair of actual anthropologists, Solon Kimball and John Provine, to head research projects their efforts to understand indigenous land use failed due to their inability to understand Navajo culture. This ignorance was exacerbated by their failure to employ Indian Office employees, Benard Haile and Gladys Reichard, experienced “amateurs” who were skilled linguists equipped with a thorough knowledge of Navajo religion, kinship, and social organization. Well versed in hubris, if not in Native culture, Shevky and his “professionals,” disdainful of “amateurs,” chose to ignore this knowledge.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Marsha Weisiger *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*, 50-51. Weisiger dismisses Shevky’s qualifications, an unfortunate simplification of the man. Eshref Shevky was born in February of 1893 in Istanbul to a Turkish family with a long and distinguished history of public service. A great uncle was an official of the Ministry of Finance. His father, Mehmet Shevky, was Treasurer of the Navy and later an official of the Cadastral Survey. An uncle was Governor of Syria. One of his brothers was an early member of the Committee of Union and Progress and another as an educator, social historian, and publicist. They were members of the Decentralist Movement led by Prince Sabaheddin, which initiated the reform of the alphabet, the New Language Movement, and which reflected certain formulations of the French sociological school of LaPlay. It was in his context that Professor Shevky’s early intellectual development occurred. His brother, Mahmet Ali Shevky, organized the application of the LaPlay method of monographic studies to Turkish society and was instrumental in the establishment of a program of experimental sociology at the University of Istanbul. It was in connection with early phases of this work in Asia Minor that Professor Shevky began his apprenticeship in area studies. Upon coming to the United States this feature of his intellectual life was temporarily put in the background when for several years he worked at Stanford University in the field of experimental medicine. He was awarded the Ph.D. in this field at Stanford University in 1922. Subsequently, his earlier interest in the theory and practice of area studies was renewed, and he became the director of the Tewa Basin study in New Mexico. From 1935 to 1941 he was Chief of the Division of Economic Surveys for the Southwest Region, U. S. Soil Conservation Service, and for part of that time he was a member of the Inter-departmental Rio Grande Committee. In 1940 Professor Shevky served as Technical Advisor to the Official American Delegation at the First Inter-American Conference on Indian Life, Patzcuaro, Mexico. In 1945 he was the only non-University member

This disdain was costly to Collier's ambition of including the Navajo among those tribes that voted for the IRA. The IRA legislation contained a provision that empowered the Secretary of the Interior to restrict the number of livestock within the government's perceived carrying capacity of the range. Since many of the Navajo people had a deep bond with their livestock they resisted any threat to their existence. They viewed with alarm the reduced numbers advocated by the federal government. They believed rejecting the IRA would ensure the survival of their herds. During the referendum, when many of the voters were confused or unsure of how the referendum was being conducted, the majority voted against the IRA.<sup>73</sup>

They thought that their livestock were saved. They were sadly mistaken. Earlier Collier had gone to speak to the Diné (Navajo people) telling them that their lands were overgrazed causing the land to be eroded, worn out, unproductive and a danger to their future. His words were met with indignation and he was called a liar by those who remembered that a few years ago the grass was as high as a horse's belly. They believed

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of the Pacific Coast Committee on Community Studies of the Social Science Research Council. From 1944 to 1949 Professor Shevky served as Sociologist at the Haynes Foundation where his work on the social areas of Los Angeles was prepared. His classic formulation of social area analysis, first published in *The Social Areas of Los Angeles*, co-authored with Marilyn Williams, has had a profound effect on scholarship in the field of urban sociology. That work, which was extended and refined in subsequent publications, has most recently been acknowledged in a detailed study of the Dimensions of Urban Social Structure, an analysis of Melbourne, Australia, by F. Lancaster Jones, published in 1969. As the theory and methodology of Professor Shevky's work has been subjected to replication in diverse cultural settings throughout the world, the seminal significance of his creative scholarship has become increasingly apparent. With his appointment to the faculty in 1950, Professor Shevky embarked upon the difficult task of assisting in the organization and development of a Middle Eastern Area Studies Program at UCLA. At that time he was recognized as the pre-eminent sociologist in the Western Hemisphere, capable of combining a profound native knowledge of the Middle East with the contemporary techniques and research tactics of American sociology. While at UCLA, he initiated and taught an excellent and unusual series of courses on the Middle East under the aegis of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology. Professor Shevky was active in the affairs of the University until the year of his death in 1969. His most recent research was part of a major study of the Mexican-American population of the Southwest, carried out under the direction of Professor Leo Grebler.

<sup>73</sup> Ruth Roessel, *Navajo Livestock Reduction: A National Disgrace* (Tsaile Lake: Navajo Community College Press, 1974), 17-22, 26, 29, 30, 35-37 195.

that the land was in a temporary drought and that soon the rains would come and the land would be restored. Despite their protests Collier, pressured the tribal government to relent and claimed he had tribal acquiescence for livestock reduction. He employed agents who shot horses, sheep, and goats. Those who resisted by force or by oration were jailed.<sup>74</sup>

Thus two groups, Indian Office social scientists, who saw nature through the lens of science, and the Diné people, who saw nature with a metaphysical vision, failed to reach an accord. Both the Diné and the Washington New Dealers believed in a balance of nature and that men could shape the natural world. It might have been possible for the two groups to have reached an understanding but instead Collier's "professionals" insisted on a form of top down crisis management that was devoid of any collaborative approach. Like many Mexican "experts" of the time they acted with patronizing elitist arrogance, seeking to change the indigenous people without considering the input of those they sought to change. Unintentionally this breakdown in communications rent the fabric of Diné society resulting in a legacy of distrust and a failure to halt the erosion of Navajo range land. Many people were reduced to poverty. Some blamed the continued eroded, distressed condition of the land on Collier's livestock reduction. They claimed that before that time the rains came and the land blossomed but that the wasteful killing of so many animals cursed the land and the people.<sup>75</sup>

Failures like this resulted in a second "epoch" occurring from 1941-1947. During this time Collier, seeking a better consensus with tribes, established the Indian Personality and Administration Research project. In this project ones sees the influence

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<sup>74</sup> Ruth Roessel, *Navajo Livestock Reduction*, 17-22, 26, 29, 30, 35-37 195.

<sup>75</sup> Marsha Weisiger *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*, 11.; Ruth Roessel, *Navajo Livestock Reduction: A National Disgrace*, 131, 159, 152

of Franz Boas, Manuel Gamio's mentor. Collier was influenced by Boas's concepts of "cultural relativity" the idea that, "...civilization is not something absolute, but ... is relative, and ... our ideas and conceptions are true only so far as our civilization goes." Boas advocated the idea that a person's ideas or beliefs should be understood in terms and values of their own culture and not someone else's. Cultural Relativism highlighted the problem of Ethnocentrism; the belief that one's own culture was more valuable or better than others. In the past, such biases caused people to make rash, premature judgments about other cultures.<sup>76</sup>

Prior to his appointment as U.S. Indian Commissioner, Collier solicited Boas's views on Indian reform. Throughout his career Boas was concerned about the plight of Native Americans. In 1905 the anthropologists proposed a massive comparative study focusing on American Indians and Negro populations. The multifaceted study would have had five main components. The first three were oriented towards specific historical and theoretical issues and the fourth and fifth components would have addressed social and economic problems. Interested in alleviating Native American poverty Boas, in a move later attempted by Gamio and Collier, suggested exploring the economic and

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<sup>76</sup> Markus A Carpenter "Separate by Choice, or Degrees of Separation" from *Diversity, Intercultural Encounters and Education* Susana Goncalves, Markus A. Carpenter, ed, (New York: Routledge, Taylor, and Francis Group, 2012), 176.; Graham D. Taylor "Anthropologists, Reformers, and the Indian New Deal" *Prologue* 7 (Fall 1975) 152.; Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology: Appreciating Cultural Diversity*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011), 62; Boas, Franz. [1887] "The Principles of Ethnological Classification," in A Franz Boas reader ed. by George W. Stocking Jr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1974), 61-67. Franz Boas with William H. Dall "Museums of ethnology and their classification" *Science* vol. 9. No 228 (June 17, 1887), 589

cultural role of Indian arts like pottery making, basketry and wood carving as ways to lift Indians out of poverty.<sup>77</sup>

Manuel Gamio, in his epic project *La Población del Valle de Teotihuacán* (*The Population of the Valley of Teotihuacán*) shows the influence of his mentor, Boas. The work started with an extensive historical, biological, and geographical study. Flores states that Gamio used Boas's premise in *Mind of Primitive Man* "That man was symbiotically linked to the environment in which he lived, though neither man nor the environment was absolutely causative of the cultural system that resulted from the interaction." Gamio stated that it was the duty of "our government administrators (to) use science to learn the characteristics of our diverse peoples and individuals." His study, intended to be one of 11 nationwide, incorporated the use of statistics, environmental analysis, ethnography, geology, labor studies, mythology, religion, and education working with the concept that, "In sum the term culture signifies the totality of material and intellectual qualities that distinguish human groups from another," with the caveat, "but it never connotes the quality of that totality."<sup>78</sup>

The distinguishment of different groups figured in the U.S. Indian Personality and Administration Research project. Collier's goal was "to attempt to evaluate scientifically if possible, policy and practice in the United States Indian Bureau." The anthropologist Clyde Kluchhorn observed, "In no field of administration has anthropology's master

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<sup>77</sup> Markus A Carpenter "Separate by Choice, or Degrees of Separation" from *Diversity, Intercultural Encounters and Education* Susana Goncalves, Markus A. Carpenter, ed, (New York: Routledge, Taylor, and Francis Group, 2012), 176.; Graham D. Taylor "Anthropologists, Reformers, and the Indian New Deal" *Prologue* 7 (Fall 1975) 152.; Herbert S. Lewis "The Passion of Franz Boas" *American Anthropologist* vol. 103, no. 2 (June 2001), 454.; Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology: Appreciating Cultural Diversity*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011), 62

<sup>78</sup> Ruben Flores, "State of Culture," 87,88,89.



concept, culture, been so basic to planning and action.” Within this “master plan” was an immediate problem that needed to be addressed; education. Collier wanted “a realistic and radical reexamination both of the processes and of the method in Indian schooling and Indian administration.”<sup>79</sup>

The stated goal of the study was, “...to investigate and compare in a number of selected Indian tribes whose sociological structures differ regarding their systems of authority, the development of the individual’s attitudes and values in relation to the interactive system of social relations within the group.” The purpose of such a study was to seek the individual’s attitude toward his self and his attitude towards society including his morality, his attitude toward nature, and his general world view. Individual development was to be evaluated in relation to an understanding of the social organization of the tribe including the authority system and interpersonal relationships based on a full range of sociological, economic, and technical variables similar to those used by Gamio over twenty years earlier along with consideration of the geographic and historical perspective, something considered vital by him. Much like Gamio’s earlier work, the U.S. Personality Study was interested in ethnographic description using the concepts of cultural relativism to aid in the use of government intervention in the social development of cultural populations.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> James Burgess Waldram *Revenge of the Windigo: The Construction of the Mind and Mental Health of North American Aboriginal Peoples* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 31.

<sup>80</sup> University of Chicago “Research on the Development of Indian Personality: Outline for the Use in the Pilot Study” pages 1, and 27, February 1942, Reel 11, *Native Americans and the New Deal: The Office Files of John Collier*, Richard Lester, ed. (Washington DC: United States National Archives and Records Administration, 1993).; Ruben Flores, “State of Culture,” 87-93. In the pilot study guidelines set up socio-economic and cultural parameters to study.

The Personality project was the result of an interest in acculturation emerging in anthropology as seen in the “Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation” published in 1936 by the anthropologists Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton and Melville Herscovits. The content of the memorandum was based on an awareness of how cultures changed as a result of continuous first hand contact. While deviating, to some extent, from Boasian preoccupations with reconstruction of cultural history, something avidly approached by Gamio, it continued other Boasian stresses on detailing traits and searching for patterns of diffusion. In emphasizing this new approach Collier’s teams were engaging in the use of ethnology: the comparative and analytical study of the characteristics of various cultures in regards to their historical development as well as the differences and relationships between them. Using ethnographic data such work required researchers to go into “the field” traveling to where their subjects lived in order to experience their culture. Data coming from ethnological studies was intended to help form an understanding of how cultures were similar and different.<sup>81</sup>

Coordinating the research was Dr. Laura Thompson, an anthropologist who had recently studied the culture of the Island of Fiji. Thompson acknowledged that much was known about Native American’s “economic status of living, (and) general health and schooling.” But, she questioned, “What was happening to their personalities under the impact of modern American civilization?” She later postulated that, “If we could discover by means of the methods of science how recent changes were affecting the Indian psychologically in social and national context, we would, it was hoped, be able to define his real needs and resources more precisely and help him more effectively to make a

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<sup>81</sup> Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology: Appreciating Cultural Diversity*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011), 62; James Burgess Waldram *Revenge of the Windigo*, 29-30.

creative adjustment to the ‘modern world.’” Adopting a neo-Freudian view that personality and values were formed in early childhood, the work proceeded in two phases. The first, the Indian Educational Research project, also referred to as the Indian Personality Research Project, focused on educational issues and was based on an extensive gathering of data from various communities. The second phase, the Indian Administration Project involved the interpretation of the results of the earlier research for use by administrators.<sup>82</sup>

According to Dr. Thompson the aim of the research was to “study the Indians both as individual personalities and as tribal societies in order to discover by scientific inquiry, how the effectiveness of Indian Service long-range policy and programs might be increased from the standpoint of improving Indian welfare and developing responsible local autonomy.” The study was to coordinate the research efforts of field workers with Indian Office staff while maintaining close relations with local tribal members. Though they maintained a connection to the Indian Service, the research program sought to work independently of the Service. Enlisting economic, ecological, and psychological input these studies were meant to examine the Office of Indian Affairs free of Office influence. To do this, they relied on assistance from the University of Chicago and its Committee of Human Development, and its later successor, the Society for Applied Anthropology. In 1941 the committee proposed to Collier a study of the development of children in several tribes for the “purpose of determining what kinds of education are most likely to adjust the growing individual to his own culture and to the larger American society.” The study

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<sup>82</sup> John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 217-221. Laura Thompson *Culture in Crisis: A Study of the Hopi Indians* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), xvi. James Burgess Waldram *Revenge of the Windigo*, 30-31

was intended to find out how “Indian youth of different age level in different societies develop moral codes, social attitudes, and ways of viewing the world.”<sup>83</sup>

Dr. Thompson was a proponent of the theories postulated by Dr. Bronislaw Malinowski. Collier described these theories as “functional anthropology” which used “holistic anthropology, seeking to discover, and to relate to each other, all the factors- from earth through society and mind-which swayed the functionally-interdependent parts, or ‘organs’ of any human group.” Functionalists used an organic analogy to describe the different parts of society and their relationships. Different parts of society were compared to the organs of a living organism. Society, a living organism, was able to live, reproduce and function through the organized system of its various parts and organs. Like a biological organism, a society’s function depended on the way that its different parts interacted with each other. According to this analogy institutions like religion, kinship, and the economy were the organs of the social organism and individuals were its cells. Through functionalist analysis one examined the social significance of phenomena, like institutions and individuals, considering the function that they served to a society in maintaining the whole. Malinowski believed that all “primitive cultures” were gradually being transformed, that they were evolving, into something which approximated western civilization and that this transformation revealed a common measure within all human cultures.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 217-221. Laura Thompson, *Culture in Crisis*, xvi.; “A Proposal for Co-Operative Research Between the United States Indian Bureau and the Committee on Human Development of the University of Chicago,” September 6, 1941, Reel 11, *Native Americans and the New Deal: The Office Files of John Collier*, Richard Lester, ed. (Washington DC: United States National Archives and Records Administration, 1993).

<sup>84</sup> John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 221.; I.C. Jarvie *Functionalism* (Minneapolis: Burgess Pub. Co., 1973), 33.

In his introduction to her study on Fiji Malinowski commented that the aim of Thompson's study was to understand the emerging culture of the Fiji people studied in order to scientifically understand the practical problems of colonial administration, primarily indirect rule. Noting Thompson's observation that indirect rule depends on adaptation, creative change, and transition through the participation of natives, Malinowski stated that indirect rule: "...is in reality a system which, while utilizing the old forces of loyalty and tradition, is yet fully adaptable to prospective needs of a culture in transition." Collier was also an exponent of indirect rule and viewed Thompson's Fiji experience as a valuable resource that would be helpful in implementing the Indian Personality and Administration Research project.<sup>85</sup>

Several criteria were used. The tribes studied had to be representative of Indian Service problems; have a government staff sympathetic to the project; they had to represent culturally different and distinctive American Indian societies; and they had to have an extensive pre-existing body of ethnographic information. Six tribal groups were eventually selected for study: Hopi, Navajo, Zuni, Papago (Tohono O'odham), Sioux, and Zia. Over six years eleven communities and over a thousand children were studied. As part of the work the study used the services of fifty people organized into interdisciplinary teams composed of anthropologists, M.D.s, and ecologists who met in extended seminars with Indian Service personal and tribal members.<sup>86</sup>

Initially the Personality study was carried out in the southwest because it was believed that this locality would make it easier for the transfer of methodology between

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<sup>85</sup> John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 221; Bronislaw Malinowski, Introduction for Laura Thompson, *Fijian Frontier* (San Francisco, New York, Honolulu: American Council Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), xvii-xxiii

<sup>86</sup> John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 221.; James Burgess Waldram *Revenge of the Windigo*, 32.

the United States, Mexico, Central America, and South America. In fact Mexico soon expressed interest in the Indian Personality project. The Mexican project followed a similar formula being, “an analysis of the personality development of the Indian child with reference to sociological, biological, and ecological influences.” It considered, “the degree to which the personality of the Indian child is able to develop fully as well as physical and social environmental factors including government influence.”<sup>87</sup>

In their proposal for the Mexican project the authors pointed out that “since a similar program was being carried out in the United States, it would be eminently desirable to have a record of personality in communities with a wholly distinct historical experience of contact with occidental culture, as well as a different legal status with respect to their relationships to federal and local governments.” The authors of the proposal stated that it was hoped that realizations coming from this study would throw light on adaptations that should be made in government programs and policies especially in the field of education. The hope was that this would result in culture contacts that were more controllable and allowed the “releasing of individual capacities and the growth of creative personalities free from anxieties, pressures, and psychological disturbances”<sup>88</sup>

This study came in the midst of World War II. In the description of the study the authors felt that it was an “important objective, urgent and vital,” to apply social sciences to the service of democracy. They pointed out that totalitarian powers understood and

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<sup>87</sup> Letter to Dr. Redfield from Louisa J. Eskridge, November 25, 1941.; Letter by Dr Laura Thompson to Dr. Llyod Warner, November 19, 1942, Reel 11, *Native Americans and the New Deal: The Office Files of John Collier*, Richard Lester, ed. (Washington DC: United States National Archives and Records Administration, 1993).

<sup>88</sup> Letter to Dr Redfield from Louisa J. Eskridge, November 25, 1941.; Project for Research on Indian Personality in Mexico., February 13, 1943, Reel 11, *Native Americans and the New Deal: The Office Files of John Collier*, Richard Lester, ed. (Washington DC: United States National Archives and Records Administration, 1993).

used such tools to create fervent subjects of the state. Therefore, the authors insisted, it was important to study the interpersonal relations and social forces creating them in order to “teach us how democracy, in its local manifestations in the individual and community, may function creatively for its own ends(sic).”<sup>89</sup>

Funding for the project and its parameters were established in February of 1943. Collier intended that the two studies, in the U.S. and in Mexico, would provide an “interchange of experience and of data” that would provide discoveries of methodology that would lay the groundwork for further international development of the project. With this in mind, Collier enlisted the help of Dr. Alexander Leighton’s Sociological Research Bureau to study the intellectual and creative abilities of Japanese-American children detained at the Poston relocation center in Arizona. The Japanese-American study, like those conducted in Indian communities in the United States and Mexico, employed similar methods like the Rorschach test. Leighton’s team, including the anthropologist Edward Holland “Ned” Spicer and his wife Rosamond, sought to determine, like the Mexican and U.S. studies the subjects “...general level of adjustment and something about their personal structures that can be correlated with patterns of child training.” Collier, in an earlier letter to Dr. J.L. Moreno, touted the international potentials of the study with its use of the newly created International Institute of the Indian to conduct the work while mentioning that the projects coordinator, Dr. Laura Thompson, had worked on problems of interpersonal relations in Oceania and Germany.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Project for Research on Indian Personality in Mexico, February 13, 1943. Page one, Reel 11, *Native Americans and the New Deal: The Office Files of John Collier*, Richard Lester, ed. (Washington DC: United States National Archives and Records Administration, 1993).

<sup>90</sup> Project for Research on Indian Personality in Mexico, February 13, 1943.; Letter by Laura Thompson to Dr. Bruno Klopfer of the Rorschach Institute Inc. February 2, 1943; Letter from John Collier to Dr. J.L.

Collier described this work as “social action research” He said “It commences by feeling its way into small-scale pilot projects and demonstrates its advances through enriching the applications of those who are already conducting research, analysis, record and administration, and through drawing the laity, and the whole community, into the pursuit of discovering alongside the technicians.” He described it as “not quantitative addition but qualitative redirection, and increase of intellectual maturity is the aim of this kind of research, and such is its outcome.”<sup>91</sup>

He stated that it was an error in method to make a detailed plan in advance of consultation with those on the ground. Those on the ground needed to make the plan with the consultant help of a small team experienced in integrative action research and in the training of individuals and groups for such research. This team needed to consist of those who were strongly commanded by the challenges and opportunities that this research presented. He recommended that the team needed a psychologist, a sociologist-anthropologist, and a specialist in administration. One of these people needed to be a specialist in training or a trainer needed to be added to the team. This team would work in the field for a month. During this time it should “grow itself into an understanding and

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Moneno, April 7, 1942; John Collier, Letter to Ernest Maes of the U.S. embassy in Mexico, July 6, 1942, Reel 11, *Native Americans and the New Deal: The Office Files of John Collier*, Richard Lester, ed. (Washington DC: United States National Archives and Records Administration, 1993). Jacob Levy Moreno (born Iacob Levy, May 18, 1889 – May 14, 1974) was an Austrian American leading psychiatrist and psychosociologist, thinker and educator, the founder of psychodrama, and the foremost pioneer of group psychotherapy. During his lifetime, he was recognized as one of the leading social scientists. In his letter to Moreno Collier states that his researchers frequently used his methods.

<sup>91</sup> John Collier, June 24, 1947 memorandum to Eliahu Epstein on the way social action research works, MS 146, Series I, Box 6 Part III, John Collier Papers, Yale University. Epstein was the head of the Jewish Agency’s Political Office in Washington D.C. In this capacity he was hoping to use Collier’s theories on social action research to devise a strategy for greater cooperation between Jews and Muslims in Palestine. Collier’s memorandums to Epstein present an interesting description of social action research. It was Epstein, who later changed his name to Eliahu Eilat, who sought and received President Truman’s recognition of Israel’s establishment as a state. Eilat served as Israel’s first Ambassador to the United States until 1950.



awareness of directions which nothing but face to face contact can bring.” In time it would unite with factors within the area determining exactly what area of investigation would give “increased dynamism to areas of research already finished or under way.” And it would take part in integrating and guiding one or more pilot demonstration projects.<sup>92</sup>

Collier felt that it was probable that such a project would include psychiatric and psychological components aimed at the discovery of basic character and personality structures, unconscious attitudes, trends, and tensions. He felt that “Such findings illuminate many areas of social life and give new meaning to data” that was “historical, anthropological and ecological.” As a by-product of this work the “team would make a provocative and suggestive statement(s) of value to the subject studied.” But he felt that the decisive and great value of this integrative action research would be the process of integrative action research itself and that “its findings which would come out of it cumulatively and would pass progressively into living action. Its documentation would be in more forms than one.”<sup>93</sup>

Collier argued that the use of integrated social sciences cooperatively with the involvement of the administrator and the “lay man” provided critical information and understanding. The integrative use of anthropology, psychology, sociology, economics, and ecology with the attention of practical administrative imperatives was more decisive than the use of one of these fields in abstraction of the others. He stated that the integrated use of social sciences “reveals a dynamic wholeness.” Facts which in their

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<sup>92</sup> John Collier, June 24, 1947 memorandum to Eliahu Epstein on the way social action research works, MS 146, Series I, Box 6 Part III, John Collier Papers, Yale University.

<sup>93</sup> John Collier June 24, 1947 memorandum to Eliahu Epstein on the way social action research works, MS 146, Series I, Box 6 Part III, John Collier Papers, Yale University.

unrelatedness seemed inert are “brought to life; much motive, value, resistance, implicit ideology, which previously was latent, taken-for-granted-and not-utilized, and even unconscious, is moved into illumination and energetic productiveness.”<sup>94</sup>

He added that:

Much that is important-sometimes, most important—rest unconsidered because it rests outside the lines of direct attention. Social discovery never forces itself coercively on the mind....” Ever-renewed search for wholeness of awareness and understanding is called for as almost the first and last consideration of wisdom, and the tools for such research now exist, proven in action many times-in government, in industry, in war relocation camps, in pre-literate societies undergoing transition, and in social applied sociology<sup>95</sup>

The mission of these social scientists was to study the diverse populations with the goal of incorporating these people into national life while increasing their affinity for the nation. In this sense the Indian office was employed much like business and industry. Where business and industry were interested in ways to produce more productive and efficient workers the Indian Service was interested in turning communities of Indians into individuals who would fit smoothly into specific segments of America’s political and economic structure. This was part of a mission to employ scientific methodologies in order to produce a better society and ease the lot of minorities.<sup>96</sup>

Collier, along with Malinowski and Thompson, believed that they could achieve some sort of universality in social sciences that could be applied not just in the Indian

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<sup>94</sup> John Collier Memorandum number two to Eliahu Epstein, June 24, 1947. MS 146 Series I, Box 6, Part III, John Collier Papers, Yale University.

<sup>95</sup> John Collier Memorandum number two to Eliahu Epstein, June 24, 1947. MS 146 Series I, Box 6, Part III, John Collier Papers, Yale University

<sup>96</sup> Alexander S. Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 8.; Elizabeth Guerrier, “Applied Anthropology in the Interest of the State: John Collier, the Indian, Office, and the Bureau of Sociological Research” *Histories of Anthropology Annual*, volume 3, 2007, 200; Stephen J. Kunitz and John Collier jr. “The Social Philosophy of John Collier” *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Summer, 1971) 225.

Service. They claimed that their research insights could be used in other enterprises of colonial administration, trusteeships, dependencies, and minorities all over the world. Collier claimed that the research offered understandings that offered great usefulness “throughout the world as regards white contact with non-white peoples...” One of these researchers seeking administrative insights was Alexander Leighton, head of the Bureau of Sociological Research. This bureau studied the Japanese American Internment Camp at Poston, Arizona, where the “disloyal” were to be separated from the “loyal” and classes in “Americanization” were promoted as a means for the internees’ successful reintegration into American society. Leighton stated that their goals were to ascertain the attitudes and sentiments of the people, gain experience, and knowledge of universalities that could be used in the governing of post war occupied areas along with the training of research staff that would be capable of working in these areas.<sup>97</sup>

In a report written by Collier and sent to W. Wade Head, the Director of the Poston War Relocation Center, a facility then administered by the Office of Indian Affairs on land belonging to the Colorado River Indian Reservation, Collier equated Japanese internees with Native Americans. In both cases he viewed them as members of “colonies” administered by the United States. In this report, apparently intended for the Japanese internees at Poston, Collier commended the spirit of Head who was carrying on, as Director of Poston, the same policy used, “among the Indians we are serving,” intended to “help you (the Japanese internees) to “organize your own life, your industry, or your own government.” He stated that Head’s “spirit” was honed by his six years as superintendent of the Papago (Tohono O’odham) Reservation at Sells Arizona. Collier

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<sup>97</sup> John Collier *From Every Zenith*, 224. 442. Elizabeth Guerrier “Applying Anthropology in the Interest of the State: John Collier, the Indian Office, and the Bureau of Sociological Research,” 201.

indicated that it was his desire for this “colony” (Poston) and other “colonies” to have a “genuine fundamental democracy” practiced with the hope of showing “the people of the United States how life can be organized in this country definitely as it is now.” He concluded that “It is my belief that if this enterprise is given a good two or three years to bloom that you are going to show the United States a very important social achievement.” And “If you are going to keep the social enterprise long enough you are going to give a permanent contribution to the United States and your own life.”<sup>98</sup>

While universality was a concept adopted by Collier it was a conception that figured in the careers of Franz Boas and Manuel Gamio. In their approach to universality there were similarities and differences. Boas had an imperial interest in the exoticism of human diversity while Gamio worked in the national interest of accelerating modernization. Boas traveled to the remote corners of the Pacific Northwest seeking anthropological truths. Gamio traveled to the remote suburbs of Mexico City to identify national obstacles. In their determination of local conditions came distinct notions of universality. Boas considered the universal human family and its infinite diversity of forms. Gamio considered the national family and the need to forge its diversity of forms

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<sup>98</sup> From “Report of Mr. Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of Interior,” Addressed to W.W. Head. No date, probably 1942, Reel 14, Box 7 Folder 139. John Collier Papers Yale University.; “Refuge on the Colorado” *Desert Magazine* (September 1942) From Poston Arizona Concentration Camp Blog [http://postoncamp.blogspot.com/2014\\_06\\_18\\_archive.html#4875810748424340297](http://postoncamp.blogspot.com/2014_06_18_archive.html#4875810748424340297) assessed November 25, 2014. Poston was built on the Colorado River Indian Reservation, over the objections of the Tribal Council, who refused to be a part of doing to others what had been done to their tribe. However, Army commanders and officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs overruled the Council, seeing the opportunity to improve infrastructure and agricultural development (which would remain after the war and aid the Reservation's permanent population) using the War Department budget and the help of thousands of Japanese-American "volunteers."

into a unified, identifiable pueblo. For these men universality was both a means of collective identification and collective unity.<sup>99</sup>

Collier's vision of universality in the use of the social sciences was based on his belief in the capacity of humans to improve themselves. Mexican neo-Lamarckian eugenic theories, that were popular in Mexican Indigenismo, contained elements readily identifiable and appealing to Collier. These theories offered a recipe for human improvement, both mentally and physically that are in agreement with Collier's beliefs. Collier's interest in human adaptation was indicated by his enthusiasm for the writings and theories of Lester Frank Ward. Ward considered himself a neo-Lamarckian and believed that there had to be a mechanism that could allow environmental factors to influence evolution faster than Darwin's slow evolutionary process. Collier was inspired by Ward's idea that social advancement could be enhanced through education and scientific method. He shared Ward's confidence that the psychic force of the mind could be used to direct social activity towards a desired end: controlling and directing society and its people through an evolutionary process. In this he shared Ward's belief in Telesis, the concept that through the power of the mind man could take control of the situation and direct the evolution of human society; that one could purposely utilize the process of nature and society to obtain particular social goals.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Joshua Lund, *The Mestizo State: Reading Race in Modern Mexico* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 89.

<sup>100</sup> Kenneth R. Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 8.; Jonah Goldberg *Liberal Fascism: The Secret History of the American Left* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 243-283 Among the leading progressive advocating the use of eugenics were: Oliver Wendell Homes, Woodrow Wilson, W.E.B. DubBois, and Margaret Sanger. Telesis: (from the Greek τέλεσις /telesis/) or "planned progress" was a concept and neologism coined by the American sociologist Lester Frank Ward (often referred to as the "father of American sociology"), in the late 19th century to describe directed social advancement via education and the scientific method. The term has since been adopted as the name of numerous groups, schools, and businesses.

Like many progressives Ward favored the science of eugenics as a way to purge society's gene pool of undesirable traits. In 1913 he endorsed eugenics as a way to fight "that modern scientific fatalism known as *laissez-faire*" with the goal of "the betterment of the human race." He argued that "the end and aim of eugenics cannot be reproached." He lamented the present state of humanity stating that, "the (human) race is far from perfect. Its condition is deplorable." But, he maintained "Its improvement is entirely feasible, and in the highest degree desirable."<sup>101</sup>

Collier, never a fan of *laissez-faire*, expressed his admiration for Ward's concept of *social telesis*, believing that it "would make the human future," enhancing "invention, deliberate innovation, and individual creativity" and when, "delivered into society, would transform society." He noted that Ward believed that "emotion and sentiment are not abstract concepts, and would always be the main movers of mankind." Collier would later develop the concept that human life lived in two worlds: organic and mental. He maintained that these two worlds were so deeply linked that philosophers suggested that they were in fact one. He suggested that the link in these two was instinct with its accompanying emotions. He believed that "in social man instinct was bound up with and was usually naked behind, the idea, in psycho-physical organization which as a whole is known as sentiment."<sup>102</sup>

He was impressed by Ward's contention that the potential of the human mind was infinite. Collier, who later referred to Ward as "an Aristotle in the range and sweep of his thinking," fondly remembered attending Ward's last lecture, in New York, on the subject

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<sup>101</sup> Lester Frank Ward, "Eugenics, Euthenics, and Eudemics," *The American Journal of Sociology* volume XVIII, no. 6 (May 1913) 746-47.

<sup>102</sup> John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 40.

“Eugenics, Eudemics and Euthenics.” At the lecture Collier, who considered Ward’s thinking “cosmographic,” asked Ward to extend his statement to the point where he admitted that “human potential has no limits.” Collier called the lecture “a great speech, deeply moving, full of feeling, revealing a good deal of the poet in Ward.”<sup>103</sup>

In Ward’s lecture one notices two other terms Eudemics and Euthenics, components of Eugenics. Eudemics is the applied science of improving the nation, both politically and socially. Euthenics is the study of the improvement of human functioning and well-being by the improvement of living conditions, effecting the "improvement" through altering external factors such as education and the controllable environment, including the prevention and removal of contagious diseases and parasites, environmentalism, education, employment, home economics, sanitation, and housing. Ward was particularly interested in Euthenics. This was because he considered heredity and the hopes of utilizing it in the interest of race improvement to be hampered by its fixed quality. He argued “that while the environment is not easily modified it is the only thing that is modified in the process of artificial selection, which is the essential principle of eugenics itself.” Therefore, “All the improvement that can be brought about through any of the applications of that art must be the result of nurture, and cannot be due to any change in nature since nature is incapable of change.” He argued that, “In the human field the mind-force is added to the life-force, and both vital and psychic powers press forward together toward some exalted goal. The environment lies across the path of both and

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<sup>103</sup> John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 40. This lecture was in 1913 and is the source of the quotes in *The American Journal of Sociology*. Ward delivered the lecture before the Federation for Child Study in New York on January 30, 1913. Ward died that year.

obstructs their rise.” He concluded that, “The problem every-where is how to unlock these prison doors and set free the innate forces of nature.” Ward suggested that humanity could be Euthenically advanced to a higher state through social improvements, through better education, health, diet and other socially related improvements allowing mankind and society to evolve to a higher plain.<sup>104</sup>

Collier agreed with Ward’s belief concerning self-improvement. He argued that it was supported by the concept of self-generation held by the philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. He noted Nietzsche’s contention that man used “will” to maximize self-improvement and self-transcendence. In this way through intergrowth and personality development the “present man” moves towards the “beyond man” transferring instinctual possession into “virtue,” a “will and fate” that moves towards a greater self-transcendence that enhances human endowment. He felt that this process of improvement enfranchises a never ending process of self-creation.<sup>105</sup>

In Mexico many intellectuals shared a similar viewpoint, stating that the concept of social evolution created an evolutionary hierarchy from primitive to the modern and maintaining that these social stages were not racially determined. Late nineteenth century intellectuals including Alfredo Chavero and Justo Sierra developed elaborate evolutionary models for pre-Columbian and contemporary Mexican people that made social evolution integral to Mexico’s past and future.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>Lester Frank Ward, “Eugenics, Euthenics, and Eudemics, 753-754, 749-750.

<sup>105</sup> John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 39.

<sup>106</sup> Alexander Dawson *Indian and Nation In Revolutionary Mexico*, 5, 11, 17.; Patience A. Schell “Eugenics Policy and Practice in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Mexico” from *The Oxford Hand Book of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alan Bashford, Philip Levin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 487-488.



Manuel Gamio suggested that this social evolution could happen quickly under the right circumstances. He noted that improvements in the living conditions of Indians could unleash their evolutionary potential. Though he considered many Indians, in their present state, to be degenerate he believed that they were capable of regeneration if conditions were improved. He observed that Indians, who had moved to the city and became members of the proletariat, received better wages resulting in improvements of “their food, dress, habitation, and in their amusements and in their savings.” He stated that when the urban Indian had access to education and “joins to a certain extent the social phases of the white race and the mestizos and becomes acquainted with modern civilization,” the result was a transformation in the urban Indian towards the mestizo. Gamio considered culture not biology the determinate for indigenous people and believed that environmental changes could alter their physiological makeup and advance them culturally.<sup>107</sup>

Gamio linked ideas of acculturation that were strong among anthropologists at the time with neo-Lamarckian social evolutionism and a hierarchical model of civilization. Neo-Lamarckism was popular in Mexico because it implied that human beings were capable of gradually improving through environmental intervention. This intervention resulted in a gradual transformation of the populace towards a healthier, more vibrant state. Characteristic of this belief was Gamio’s assertion that Mexican *repatriates*, workers forced by the United States into returning to Mexico, benefited from a better environment in the United States, resulting in physical and mental superiority to their

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<sup>107</sup> Alexander Dawson *Indian and Nation In Revolutionary Mexico*, 5, 11, 17.; Patience A. Schell “Eugenics Policy and Practice in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Mexico,” 487-488. Mexican scientists were especially interested in *puréiculture*: the rearing or hygienic care of children and *homiculture*: the scientific physical improvement of mankind

counterparts who had remained in Mexico. It is understandable that Gamio would support such ideas as an advocate of eugenics, he was involved in the eugenics movement, being president of the Mexican delegation at the 1921 New York Eugenics Congress, and a vice president of that event. After this conference he continued to be a regular contributor to the Eugenics Society journal, *Eugenesia*.<sup>108</sup>

Latin American scientists' support for neo-Lamarckian ideas made them receptive to the cultural anthropological theories of Franz Boas who was a leading critic of biological determinism and an early skeptic of the notion that race mixing was a bad idea for the development of national populations. Boas viewed miscegenation as having the potential to positively enhance humanity. At the Second Pan American Scientific Conference, held in Washington D.C. in 1915, Boas presented a paper in support of the idea that racial mixture could improve the traits of a population, an idea supported by many Latin American scientists at the time.<sup>109</sup>

The neo-Lamarckian concept of biosocial change was intended to confront the paradox of creating a homogeneous body politic out of hybrids through the process of *mestizaje*; the mestizoification of Mexico. Proponents, like Gamio and José Vasconcelos, proclaimed Mexican eugenic homogenization fundamental to the nation's future health. Their assertion was supported by Dr. Alfredo Correa, cofounder of the Mexican Eugenics

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<sup>108</sup> Casey Walsh *Building the Borderlands, A Transnational History of Irrigated Cotton Along the Mexico-Texas Border* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M Press, 2008), 61; Alexandra Minna Stern "From Mestizohilia to Biotype: Racialization and Science in Mexico 1920-1960" from *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* Nancy P Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 190-191.

<sup>109</sup>Mara Loveman, "Explaining the Removal of Race Questions from Latin American Censuses; 1930s-1950s" Draft chapter for forthcoming book, *National Colors: Racial Classification and the State in Latin America*, University of California Berkeley, page 14, assessed December 18, 2014 [http://www.ssha.org/pdfs/DiscussionPapers2013/SSHA\\_2013\\_Loveman.pdf](http://www.ssha.org/pdfs/DiscussionPapers2013/SSHA_2013_Loveman.pdf) Biological determinism" is a term used in some literature to describe the belief that human behavior is controlled solely by an individual's genes or some component of physiology.

Society, who, in the mid-1930s, argued that eugenic homogenization “is the problem and at the same time the solution. It is the problem because we are investigating the methods to achieve it and to some extent accelerate it. It is the answer because once realized, the national race will be one, a model that we have seen in other countries whose result is growth and progress in addition to collective well-being.”<sup>110</sup>

Many eugenicists agreed with Correa’s vision. His vision held within it an unspoken desire that homogenization would result in the overall disappearance of mestizos and the ascendancy of whites or creoles. This envisioned result was usually hid behind illusions of a homogenous mestizo nation reinforced by the 1930 census with its refusal to classify inhabitants by race. Generally this desired outcome remained under the surface, masked in exultations of utopian inclusions that extolled the Indian. But once in a while racial preferences surfaced. One example was Dr. Rafael Carrillo’s pronouncement to the Mexican Eugenics Society in 1932: “it is certain that if *mestizaje* continues indefinitely, it will disappear over time, given that the white race, being superior, will prevail over the inferior black and Indian.” Generally such sentiments remained buried and could only be inferred while those believing in the saving grace of the mestizo sought state-sponsored anthropological censuses of every inhabitant of the republic hoping to gather data that would ease the process of racial mixing.<sup>111</sup>

This bio-eugenic process figured in Gamio’s thinking. Alan Knight points out “that it was with the Revolution that the mestizo cult blossomed,” with its ideal, *la raza cósmica*, the mestizo race, the superior hybrid. “In the great forge of America” Gamio

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<sup>110</sup> Alexandra Minna Stern “From Mestizohilia to Biotype, 192.

<sup>111</sup> Alexandra Minna Stern “From Mestizohilia to Biotype, 192-193.

wrote, “on the giant anvil of the Andes virile races of bronze and iron have struggled for centuries.” He argued that from this struggle came the mestizo, the carrier of the national culture of the future. This was a hearty biological hybrid predicated on European dominance, with Indianess consigned to a backward past.<sup>112</sup>

European dominance as a component in Gamio’s equation was evident in his viewpoints concerning Uruguay and Venezuela. In the subject of national formation Gamio considered Uruguay to be a nation with a proper altitude, latitude, and white population to achieve modernization. In contrast, he considered Venezuela, with its high black and indigenous racial composition, to be a nation in which it was almost impossible to form a stable democratic government. Gamio considered it difficult for nations like Venezuela or Mexico to have democratic and modern futures without state led eugenic policies leading to mestizaje. He believed that indigenous and black populations hampered modernization projects and that it was imperative that the governments of these two countries racially homogenize their nations through cultural and biological mestizaje.<sup>113</sup>

There is a sense of social human reconstruction in indigenista texts. Moisés Sáenz described the goal of harmonizing Mexico as the goal of building a "grand symphony [from the] discordant notes that is the life of Mexico." In *Forjando Patria* Manuel Gamio praised the artistic sensibilities and moral strength of the Tarahumara, Teotihuacán, and Tlaxcalan Indians. He advocated an experimental effort to fuse elements of their perceived cultural strengths into the ideal Mexican subject thus forging the new

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<sup>112</sup> Peter Wade *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Columbia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 12.; Alan Knight “Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910-1940” from *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, ed. R. Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 85

<sup>113</sup> Sandra Angeleri, “Women Weaving the Dream of Revolution in the American Continent” PhD Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2006, 305

fatherland. "I implore you to mix, my countrymen!" he memorably wrote in his most famous text.<sup>114</sup>

In a like-minded fashion Americans connected to John Collier advocated the transformational power of Native Americans. In 1932 W. Carson Ryan, Collier's chief of Indian education, addressed the Third International Congress of Eugenics arguing that American Indians had specific inborn capacities useful to the greater society. He stated that, "Not even the most ardent hereditarian questions today the profound influence of modification upon the native processes. The problem for us is to exert this modification and at the same time accept fully the possibilities of Indian peoples as they are."<sup>115</sup>

Ryan indicated that these modifications offered great benefits. He stated that, "A still further Indian contribution to civilization, closely associated with the esthetic and spiritual, is the social organization of the small community." He added that "It is not merely that Indian social organization may be interesting historically to students of western democracy; it is rather that in its survivals of community arts, village industry, and wholesome rural life, there may be a way out for American industrialism with its mass production and mass living." Ryan stated that Tannenbaum and "other students of Modern Mexico" noted the "deliberate effort there (in Mexico) to build on native culture---on what Moises Saenz(sic) calls "the cultural integration of the Indian." Quoting John

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<sup>114</sup> Ruban Flores, "States of Culture," 360. Flores says, "See Moisés Sáenz, "El genio de la vida en México," in México integro (Lima, Peru: Imprenta Torres Aguirre, 1939), 18. Compare his metaphors to that of Horace Kallen's 1915 "Democracy versus the Melting Pot," *The Nation* (100). Saenz's use of symphonic metaphors was not written until 1929, but he was in New York City only a few years after Kallen and Bourne had famously debated the presence of immigrant stock in American life." Manuel Gamio text was from *Forjando patria* (Porrúa: Mexico City, 1916), Chapters I and IV. The original is at Chapter 1: "Batid hermanos!" See also Chapter XXIV "Urgente Obra Nacional," in which Gamio urges the "ethnic, cultural, and linguistic fusion" of the Mayas of Quintana Roo to the revolutionary state.

<sup>115</sup> W Carson Ryan "Special Capacities of American Indians" *From a Decade of Progress in Eugenics: Scientific Papers of the Third International Congress of Eugenics Held at the American Museum of National History, New York, August 21-23, 1932* (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1934), 162.

Collier, Ryan said, "As a member of a commune or corporation he (the Native American) is, relatively speaking, satisfied, laborious, and ambitious, and his social frictions tend to disappear. His whole nature, not merely his desire for property, adjusts into a corporate embodiment." Ryan finished this address by saying, "There are possibilities in Mexico's effort to build on Indian community living, therefore, that are important not only for Indians in the American Southwest, but for American rural life and civilization generally"<sup>116</sup>

American and Mexican practitioners of Native American reform talked a similar language. These practitioners of reform recognized a uniqueness amongst the Native peoples that called out for an exceptional approach. Mexico's discourse of ethn racial mixture mirrored a similar conversation in the United States, where discussants of America's cultural spectrum were less interested in the unique contents of Europe's immigrant cultures than in consolidating America's various foreign stocks into a self-sustaining whole.<sup>117</sup>

If we consider Collier's enthusiasm for Ward's ideas and, in this case, his interests in Ward's belief in eugenics and Telesis, some of Collier's statements take on a new meaning. For example, his statement in the 1923 edition of *Survey* magazine when

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<sup>116</sup> W Carson Ryan "Special Capacities of American Indians," 162. The 1932 International Eugenics Congress was the last of three global venues where scientists, politicians, and social leaders meet to plan and discuss the application of programs to improve human heredity. Inspired by the work of Charles Darwin and weighing the work of animal breeders and horticulturalists, Francis Galton wondered if the genetic make-up of humans could be improved. He commented: "The question was then forced upon me--Could not the race of men be similarly improved? Could not the undesirables be got rid of and the desirables multiplied?" Galton introduced the concept of eugenics and soon won many adherents notably in North America and England. Theodore Roosevelt was so impressed by the concept that he created a national Heredity Commission charged with investigating the genetic heritage of the country. During the 1932 Congress delegates discussed birth selection over birth control as a mean to better the offspring, a Cuban delegate discussed screening immigrants for inadmissible traits and the deportation of those children of offspring who possessed undesirable traits. Major Leonard Darwin, the son of Charles Darwin, now 88 years old, was unable to attend but sent a report presented by Ronald Fisher predicting the doom of civilization unless eugenic measures were implemented.

<sup>117</sup> Ruben Flores, "States of Culture," 360-361.

he comments that, “The winning of a future for a whole race—whole civilization must be the work of social experimentation and of creation or it will fail.” In the January 1924 issue of *Sunset* he considered the development of an “adaptable” Navajo people. Seeing Indian communities as laboratories for sociological experimentation Collier saw the use of culture as a tool to regenerate a community.<sup>118</sup>

As U.S. Indian Commissioner he continued on this path. In 1934 he stated Indian schools could be used to synthesize an “Indian life” beyond the experience of Indian students. In 1940 Collier remarked that the Indian spirit has always contained change within itself. In a 1945 article in *Social Research* Collier described the “United States Indian Administration as a laboratory of ethnic relations.” He said that “the principles that became dominant in 1933” began with the idea that “Indian societies must and can be discovered in their continuing existence, regenerated, or set into being *de novo* (from the beginning) and made use of.” In a 1947 article Collier stated that Indian societies would benefit from advances in education that would enhance Indian “mental potential and social energy” and increase “biological vigor.” Invigorated Indians would become a scientifically acculturated version of the Red Atlantis that “would pass out into the general life of nations” reaching “into higher and higher social levels” still holding to their identity as they proceeded to “diffuse Indian influence throughout the nations.”<sup>119</sup>

This belief was in coordination with Collier’s observation that all great innovations originated locally in primary social groups. He felt that small numbers of

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<sup>118</sup>E.A. Swartz “Red Atlantis Revisited: Community and Culture in the Writings of John Collier,” 515,516, 517, 523.; John Collier “The Fate of the Navajos” *Sunset* 52 (January 1924), 11-12.; John Collier “The American Congo,” *Survey* 50 (August 1923), 476.

<sup>119</sup> E.A. Swartz “Red Atlantis Revisited,” 515,516, 517, 523.; John Collier, “New Principles of Education” *New Mexico Quarterly* November 1933, 204-205.; John Collier, “United States Indian Administration as a Laboratory of Ethnic Relations,” 266, 274.; John Collier “America’s Aboriginal Societies Come into their Own” Reprinted from *Common Ground*, Summer 1947, 41-42, Box 48, Folder 6, Reel 52, John Collier Papers, Yale University.

people usually achieved innovative results that were later incorporated into mass movements. For example: Christianity, the French Revolution which originated with the Encyclopedists, the Lake Movement, with Coleridge and Wordsworth, and the Gaelic Renaissance, with Sorley MacLean, George Campbell, Derick Thomson, and Iain Crichton Smith. He stated that in each of these movements individuals knew each other and “fertilized each other within a consciousness and purpose.”<sup>120</sup>

Collier viewed human society in a biological evolutionary sense. In this viewpoint evolutionary biology was not merely a struggle for existence but was also a struggle for structure, for type. He noted a process of mutation that started with individuals. If and only if the individual lived by the mutation and transmitted it to others would there develop an organic evolutionary change. Collier attributed this theory to Friedrich Nietzsche, who noted that all mutations in human society were applied by that quality that was referred to as genius. Nietzsche’s definition of genius was based on Arthur Schopenhauer, mainly, “coherent and lively recollection of what the individual has experienced as opposed to spontaneous, innate, “natural” or “naïve ability.” Nietzsche’s definition was a finite conception of genius based on the individual’s capacity to organize, render coherent, and recollect experience. According to him this genius was

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<sup>120</sup> John Collier, Memorandum, June 24, 1942, MS 146, Accession 1978-M-005, Box 4, John Collier Papers, Yale University. The Lake Movement refers to The Lake Poets, a group of English poets who all lived in the Lake District of England at the turn of the nineteenth century. Inspired by the natural beauty of the region they are considered part of the Romantic Movement. In Gaelic Renaissance Collier refers to the Scottish Gaelic Renaissance (Scottish Gaelic: *Ath-Bheòthachadh na Gaidhlig*) a continuing movement concerning the revival of the Scottish Gaelic language. Although the Scottish Gaelic language had been facing gradual decline in the number of speakers since the late 19th century, the number of young fluent Gaelic speakers is quickly rising.



applied by individuals throughout the whole race. According to his theory, genius could be either maleficent or beneficent and used as instruments, institutions, and language.<sup>121</sup>

Collier observed that science was often in the dark about the impetus and mechanisms of mutation. He noted Henri Bergson's concept of *élan vital* mentioned in Bergson's, *Creative Evolution* as a possible aspect of mutation. *Élan vital*, as defined by Bergson, was the vital force or impulse of life; especially: a creative principle held by Bergson to be immanent in all organisms and responsible for evolution. It was a "vital impetus" that could be understood as humanities' natural creative impulse. Bergson offered his theories as an alternative to Darwinian evolution. His theory postulated that the, "real facts of evolution were to be found, not in a mechanical elimination of the unfit, but in the creative surge of life, in an *élan vital*." Bergson developed the concept of *élan vital* as he attempted to address the question of self-organization and spontaneous morphogenesis, the biological process that causes an organism to develop its shape. This was a process that occurred in an increasingly complex manner suggesting some sort of consciousness. Bergson's *élan vital* was a hypothetical explanation for evolution and the development of organisms which Bergson linked closely with consciousness and the with the intuitive perception of experience and the flow of inner time<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> John Collier, Memorandum, June 24, 1942, MS 146, Accession 1978-M-005 Box 4, John Collier Papers, Yale University. Adrian Del Caro *Grounding the Nietzsche Rhetoric of Earth* (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 2004), 236.

<sup>122</sup> John Collier, Memorandum, June 24, 1942, MS 146, Accession 1978-M-005 Box 4, John Collier Papers, Yale University.; Irwin Edman, forward to Henri Bergson *Creative Evolution*, by Henri Bergson, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: The Creative Library, 1944), xii. *Creative Evolution* also developed concepts of time (offered in Bergson's earlier work) which significantly influenced modernist writers and thinkers such as Marcel Proust. For example, Bergson's term "duration" refers to a more individual, subjective experience of time, as opposed to mathematical, objectively measurable "clock time." In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson suggests that the experience of time as "duration" can best be understood through creative intuition, not through intellect.

Kelly Swarthout states that, in essence Bergson believed that the Universe began with a vital impulse (*élan vital*), “a free creative, cosmic explosion that was ‘merged....in growth.’” Bergson was a vitalist who believed that consciousness was not synonymous with the mere physical activity of the brain. He believed that science could never provide a complete explanation of life because science was an imperfect instrument that failed to grasp a total knowledge of time. Science was stuck with a static, mathematical linear concept of time but Bergson was convinced that there was an abstract form of time, pure time, which endured beyond scientific time. Pure time was possible only in memory where one was allowed knowledge of an abstract time that retained knowledge of the past even as one experienced the present providing one with total knowledge. Pure time was circular and could only be understood by means of intuition and not by scientific methods. For him time was real only if we seized it through our experience. Bergson’s “creative evolution” saw evolution as a mental process that stressed “the importance of human volition in this process. Inasmuch as we exercise our pursuit of knowledge, we create and, consequently, evolve.”<sup>123</sup>

In Collier’s view, this evolution required a form of mutation that resulted in personality development. He noted that these mutations, brought about by humans in social institutions, must be speculative and held to with consistent ardor. He stated that they must persist, often going on in time before they can raise or effect the quality of social structures. Collier noted that Nietzsche hated contemporary institutions because they had ceased to be personality building. He believed that they needed to be rejected to make “possible the creation and reformation of personality building institutions, in order

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<sup>123</sup> Kelley R. Swarthout “*Assimilating the Primitive*,” 17,18.; Henri Bergson *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Henry Holt, 1911), 241, 343.

that genius could survive and reproduce.” Collier states that Nietzsche believed that man must first break down death dealing institutions bereft of personality development and “revive the will of the individual by his own initiative determination of life affirming values and adequate human social goals.” Individuals learning to do this would learn to know others of like mind forming a small group capable of making a realization of a better life for all and eventually bringing the rest of society within its knowledge. To Nietzsche, as understood by Collier, this was a transvaluation involving a reanalysis and reappraisal of personality development.<sup>124</sup>

Collier viewed personality development as a vital factor in the process of producing world making innovations; something that was first developed locally. At the local level innovations were demonstrated, and if found superior and proven successful, they were widely adopted. He stated that “if one holds to the picture of a struggle for structure, one sees a world of countless millions of local innovations, not species wide, which become formative destiny or doom for countless millions of species on which they are visited.” He added that, “They are useless for good or ill unless they battle within a local ecological environment. The mutation has to conquer the organism to survive.” In his opinion the whole organism must change.<sup>125</sup>

In relation to this process of change Collier recognized that the nurture of personality was vital. He was influenced in this idea by the founder of the People’s Institute, Charles Sprague Smith, who believed that one must concentrate on the nurturance and development of individual personality as the supreme social task. To Smith all social efforts relied on this process. He believed that all civilization should be

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<sup>124</sup> John Collier, Memorandum, June 24, 1942.

<sup>125</sup> John Collier, Memorandum, June 24, 1942.

drawn from the local community and that this community needed to be acted on by individuals in social institutions. Smith felt that institutions should be built specifically for the building of personality.<sup>126</sup>

The building of personality was a reason for the 1940s personality research studies. In a 1942 letter, Collier told the coordinator of these studies, Dr. Laura Thompson, about the critical importance of the individual. He pointed out to her Dr. A.A. Brill's critical question about personality development: "whether the individual had in himself or could instill in himself the will and capacity to do whatever he had to do," whether he could react to challenges in an affirmative manner or collapse before such trials. Collier believed that ancient tribal "disciplines or institutions" were probably very efficient at producing the attributes or institutions necessary to face challenges. But modern U.S. Indian programs had tended to "knockout or prevent the birth of such factors." Collier believed that recent Indian policies that he referred to as "the new order" were providing a cure to this problem, at least among some groups. He believed that Indians were provided with intergroup opportunities for using what he referred to as the "Brill Factor."<sup>127</sup>

Genetic factors, whether neo-Lamarckian or some aspect of social evolutionary mutation of small groups, were considered in the personality studies. In 1941 Dr. Thompson wrote to Collier concerning a memo written by Ward Sheppard in regards to genetic problems among Native Americans. Thompson informed Collier that while genetic problems were not listed in the outline for study. "We are, however, (and Mr.

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<sup>126</sup> John Collier Essay on Charles Sprague Smith, date, 1921-1942, John Collier Papers, MS 146 Accession 1978-M-005, Box 4 Yale University.

<sup>127</sup> John Collier, Letter to Dr. Laura Thompson, December 17, 1941, Reel 11, *The Office Files of John Collier, 1933-1945.*

Warner concurs on this) very aware of them and feel they are implicit in the whole study.” She added that they were concerned, not with acculturation, but with the development of personality.<sup>128</sup>

With Native Americans Collier believed that indirect administration was the instrument that would achieve the goal of personality development and help effect transvaluation. To him the success or failure of this development depended on the utility of success based on a struggle in the pursuance of collective aims and the recognition of those things that were useful and necessary for the conquest of physical and social environments. These would be the basis of the sustained application of self-stimulus, self-criticism, and the greater valuation of the individual. For him the object of social action was personality development. Collier noted that for the emergence of genius, as advocated by Nietzsche, one needed, as advocated by Ward, institutional interpersonal development. Collier added to this the need for mechanisms, standards, and values that could be incorporated into the development of personality.<sup>129</sup>

Collier, concluded that social and biological evolution were interrelated. Social-organic evolution figures prominently in his 1949 article for the *Mansa Journal* where Collier discussed a cure for the process of social dissolution; something he viewed as the number one plague of the modern world. He noted a directiveness present in organic nature and the man-nature relationship. He believed that it was necessary for this ecologically conceived relationship to more fully penetrate the social sciences. To do this

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<sup>128</sup> Laura Thompson, Letter to John Collier, December 20, 1941, Reel 11, *The Office Files of John Collier, 1933-1945*. “Mr Warner” refers to W. Lloyd Warner Chairman of the University of Chicago’s Committee on Human Development.

<sup>129</sup> John Collier, Essay on Charles Sprague Smith, 1921-1942, MS 146 Accession 1978-M-005, Box 4 John Collier Papers, Yale University.

he proposed a meld of the social sciences with philosophy. Through this joining social scientists would be more than spectators watching “the changing configurations of atoms within the void.” By combining philosophy with the life sciences: biology, anthropology, and sociology, world meaning would be revised and an organic valuing process using emotional, moral, and valuing capacities implemented.<sup>130</sup>

This was in accordance with his idea that, “The directiveness of organic nature is no mechanical ‘feed-back’ mechanism or process; *it made and makes* (author italics) the feed-back mechanisms and processes and all the rest.” He felt that it was the same directiveness that “is seated deep in the laboring human breast. It plied controlling in ancient man. It plies in the myriad wonders of the ecological process, in the self-making, self-healing, climax-trending web of life.” And, he adds, “it would ply If only we knew how to unimprison its genius, in local and world society now.” The merger of philosophy with social science would, in his view, help “seek and find and proclaim world meaning there in the directiveness of organic existence from protoplasm to society-world meaning, and world dynamic hope and goal.”<sup>131</sup>

This quest would require the transposition of philosophy into biology, anthropology, the psychological, social, and ecological sciences. This transposition would require the sciences to subject themselves to all the apperceptions and disciplines of the philosopher and require the philosopher to accept the disciplines and apperceptions of the sciences. Science would benefit from the philosophical genius to see “life and world steadily and whole” while “orienting discovery and creating value and purpose.” Collier suggested that this would reorient man to the ancient organic directiveness at the

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<sup>130</sup> John Collier, “Philosopher and Social Scientist” *Manas Journal* Vol. II, No. 19, (May 11, 1949) 1-3.

<sup>131</sup> John Collier, “Philosopher and Social Scientist,” 1-3.

heart of his soul; a process where man, in touch with his inner being and the natural feedback process has the organic capacity to change himself and the world. Through such a marriage and reinvigoration of the awareness of his potentiality man would have “a swifter race to run.” Its little wonder that functional anthropology with its emphasis on society as an organic entity would hold such appeal to Collier.<sup>132</sup>

Collier seemed to envision both a transformation of Native Americans with the prospect of an endless possibility in psychological and physiological growth. But he didn't have in mind that this be limited to those people within the jurisdiction of his agency. He had in mind for this regeneration to take place among the indigenous people of the Americas and ultimately all the peoples of the nations. With this in mind he sought a world forum.

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<sup>132</sup> John Collier, “Philosopher and Social Scientist,” 1-3. Apperception is the process of understanding by which newly observed qualities of an object are related to past experience

## CONCLUSION

### BETRAYAL AND AN ASSESSMENT

Viewing his work as important to the world's future Collier felt frustrated that others didn't seem to understand. In a 1936 letter to Anne Mumford he protested "that outside of the comparatively immune sphere of exact science, the 'still small voice' has, for the time being, little power." He opined that "Mexico's present struggle is of incalculable importance to the whole Western Hemisphere except, possibly the United States." He believed that the United States was, seemingly, "determined to pay serious attention to nothing outside its borders." Collier felt that there would be great value in placing an international clearing house in Mexico City where it could deal with the "problems of the Indian," and added that Mexican president Cárdenas was in support of such a plan. Collier believed that a clearing house could help a world "thinking only in terms of crises, emergencies, mythical hopes, fears, hates, (and) crowd conflicts" to understand, "the fundamental struggle now going on in Mexico," a struggle to achieve a new and "better life at the agrarian level," and maintain a society victorious against the forces of "industrial fascism" and "industrial syndicalism." Helping in the preparation of this "clearing house" was Moisés Sáenz, the "Mexican minister to Peru," who was in the United States seeking funds from a "large foundation," the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>1</sup>

Discussion of forming an international organization to work on the needs of North and South America's indigenous populations first took place at the home of Moisés Sáenz, in Taxco, Mexico in 1931. Here Collier, Sáenz, Mary Louis Doherty, and a small

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<sup>1</sup> John Collier, Letter to Anne M. Mumford April 19, 1936, Box 7, Folder 137, Reel 13 "John Collier Papers" Yale University Library,.; John Collier letter to Mary Louis Doherty, October 26, 1936, Box 4, Folder 72-73, Reel 12 "John Collier Papers,.; Discusses with Doherty Moisés Sáenz's meeting with officials from the Rockefeller Foundation.



team of people Collier labeled as “Indian defense workers” laid the initial plans. After years of lobbying the issue was first proposed at the 1933 Conference of American states at Montevideo, Uruguay. But it was not until 1938 at the eighth Pan-American International Conference in Lima, Peru that the issue got international consideration.<sup>2</sup>

The Lima conference convened to discuss topics like solidarity against foreign intervention; the settling of international differences by peaceful means; the observance of treaties; and international and cultural cooperation. The U.S. delegation was primarily interested in inter-American solidarity in the face of possible axis subversion. Latin American nations were concerned that such solidarity came at the risk of a misuse of U.S. power. They sought a procedure for consultation among sovereign equals in a time of crisis. To ensure Latin American cooperation, the United States agreed to a series of resolutions suggested by the Mexican delegation in behalf of the hemisphere’s indigenous population.<sup>3</sup>

The first resolution expressed the desire of the American nations to improve the status of their indigenous people, “as reparation for the lack of understanding with which they were treated in earlier periods.” Calling for complete assimilation of indigenous people, the resolution stipulated consideration of Indian dignity and values. Resolution two considered the problems of indigenous women and requested special attention to their concerns at the upcoming Conference on Exports. The final resolution called for a

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<sup>2</sup> John Collier, “Patzcuaro and Dr. Ernst Huber” *Indians at Work* Volume 8, No. 7 (March 1940), 2.; Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution, 370-371.

<sup>3</sup> Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution, 370-371. Collier in the 1940 *Indians at Work* article states that “While stating that The United States should not and will not assume too important a role in the enterprise.” Earlier states that “It was due to the active interest of Secretary Ickes, Secretary Wallace and President Roosevelt, as well as of the State Department, that the United States collaborated with Mexico, Peru and Bolivia in insuring the action taken at Lima.” Giving the U.S. the air of facilitator.

conference of experts on Indian life in order “to study the desirability of creating an Inter-American Institute, and if established, determine the bases of its organization and the necessary measures for its immediate establishment and operation.” The purpose of such a center would be “for the study, compilation, and exchange of data and information on the status of the indigenous population and the process of their complete integration in the corresponding national life.”<sup>4</sup>

This conference was originally scheduled to be held on August 2-12 1939 in La Paz, Bolivia. But, following the invitation of the Mexican government it was decided to hold the conference in Mexico. It was also agreed to give the delegates more time for preparation by scheduling the conference on April 14-24, 1940. The Mexican organizers chose Pátzcuaro in Michoacán, Mexico, the state where President Cardenas was once governor.<sup>5</sup>

Among the Mexicans attending the conference Moisés Sáenz and his allies possessed considerable influence. Due to political events Sáenz found himself removed from educational matters and sent to work as a diplomat holding posts at different countries. Still he remained committed to changes in Indigenous policies in Mexico and, as a diplomat, became active in International Indian polices. The evolution of his views in regard to Indigenous affairs can be seen in the creation of the *Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas*(Department of Indigenous Affairs, DAI).

In 1934 Lázaro Cárdenas traveled the Mexican countryside campaigning for the presidency. He noted a lack of progress in previous Indigenous programs. On February

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<sup>4</sup> Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution, 371-372.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 372.

25, 1934 he announced to the people of Chiapas his intention to create a new department that would devote the expertise of the social and natural sciences to the problems plaguing the nation's indigenous peoples. After considering many proposals he expressed preference for the suggestions offered by Sáenz. Though his social experiment at Carapan failed and he had been removed from his former position and was now working in the diplomatic service, Cárdenas was impressed by the man's experience in rural education, his professional credentials, and the ideas he had accumulated while conducting ethnographic studies of the Andes. He felt that Sáenz was best suited to be the architect of the newly created DAI; an agency that would utilize the most modern scientific approaches to solve the Indian problem.<sup>6</sup>

Sáenz used this opportunity to call for a new approach to the Indian question. He argued that the old programs were too apostolic, too inconsistent, and always poorly designed resulting in "*fracaso trágico*" (tragic failure). He suggested that the new agency must adopt a comprehensive program embracing social and cultural elevation. In his viewpoint, the problems faced by indigenous Mexicans were different than the problems faced by other rural people. Sáenz believed that: "There exists in Mexico an Indian problem with its own characteristic nature, different from the campesino problem in its social and economic aspects, in its requirements, its urgency, and the methods needed to attack it," He noted that there were two million Indigenous people who did not speak Spanish. Many lived remote existences nearly independent from Mexico. He

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<sup>6</sup> Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 67-68. Taken from "Proyecto de reforma a la ley de Secretos de Estado, para fundar un organismo Nuevo en favor de los indios de México," September 10, 1935, AGN-LCR 525.2/45.

considered them to be an “extra class” needing a unique approach that went beyond the earlier simple ideas of assimilation.<sup>7</sup>

For the purpose of clarity Sáenz divided the Indian population into two groups. The first lived in regions where the process of acculturation made it “more difficult every day to find ‘pure’ Indians,” making the “separation of the Indian and the mestizo often impossible.” In these regions he suggested that a reasonable program would be one where all were treated similarly. But in “genuinely Indian regions,” those with vast linguistic and cultural differences from the national mainstream, Sáenz believed that the residents should not be considered fully Mexican. While he rejected the concept of reservations, he envisioned an agency that would intensify its efforts among residents who he didn’t consider to be in the “category of full citizenship.” He suggested that the DAI be given exclusive jurisdiction in these places so that economic, social, educational, cultural, and legal issues would be addressed in a way unique to the needs of the people living in that region.<sup>8</sup>

He observed that these communities were profoundly poor, illiterate, and sadly ignorant of many of the factors and benefits of modern life. But his past experience led him to conclude that more was required to elevate these people than simple introductions to modern practices. He felt that it was important to remember that these people lived a religious and spiritual life that was distinctly non-western. These deeply spiritual, pantheistic people identified with the soil. He argued that the Indian is an oriental,

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 68.; Taken from Moisés Sáenz, “Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena,” 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.; Sáenz, 1936 313-322.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* 68.; Taken from Moisés Sáenz, “Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena,” 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.; *Carapan*, 189, 201.; Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution,” 316-317.

opposed (in his view of the world) to the European. These “oriental” Indians could not be helped through traditional programs of incorporation and socioeconomic assistance because poverty and exploitation had caused these people to turn inwards. He advocated that “full stomachs” were of the highest priority in the quest to solve these people’s problems and gain their trust. Then they needed a gradual program of social, spiritual, and economic “emancipation.”<sup>9</sup>

This gradual approach would respect many aspects of indigenous communities including a recognition of the traditional power structures of these societies. He recognized that “we should give preference to *naturales* (the natural) in the education process (which is in many cases very refined and effective, notwithstanding its empirical characteristics.)” He believed that efforts should be made to preserve religion, legends, arts, and music and the many facets of local spiritual life stating that “the religious problem will better be resolved through positive methods based on substitution of the orientation, than through suppression and persecution.” He thought that “the priests should be removed but the temples left open.” Unlike others, he believed that the Indians should not be impeded from celebrating fiestas but he recommended an approach that minimized excesses and promoted cultural programs, propaganda, and state sponsored expositions. He felt that some sort of western commonality could be established between Indians and their would-be benefactors since he believed that socialism was a type of religion and that Indian religion contained vestiges of communism.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-69.; Taken from Moisés Sáenz, “Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena,” 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-70.; Taken from Moisés Sáenz, “Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena,” 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.; Sáenz, 1936, 335-336.; *Carapan* 198, 200,201,201,

In his proposal Sáenz rejected what he believed to be an Indigenista tradition of regarding Indians as children, infantilizing them under the premise that citizenship was a privilege conferred on those who could demonstrate a “mature” capacity for modernity. He stated that Indians should be treated as, “The potential citizens of Mexico, as that is what they already are, that, “We should make them capable of exercising the functions of free men,” allowing them to be “participants (in the nation) with the responsibilities and privileges of all full Mexicans.” Thus, the DAI must treat them as potential even “incipient citizens.” He maintained that “The Indian may be maladapted, but he is neither a minor nor much less an imbecile. Any program rooted in a belief in the inferiority of the Indian (and paternalism is one of these) will have poor results.” Instead of paternalism he advocated a program that respected local traditions and practices while treating indigenous people with dignity.<sup>11</sup>

His program, as he saw it, seems reminiscent of John Collier’s later ideas for “action research.” He intended that it would be sparse in bureaucracy and richly endowed with teachers, agronomists, doctors, and investigators who worked not in offices but in indigenous communities. Economic matters would be of the highest importance. This program would give high priority to resolving land and water claims, and establishing small-scale credit. Schooling would place an emphasis on upgrading living standards by improving farm practices and artisanal production. This new Department would concentrate on “the protection of the Indian and his values, the elevation and improvement of his standard of living, and the assimilation of Indian groups into the Mexican family.” The DAI would promote, “a reinterpretation of their sensibilities and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 68.; Taken from Moisés Sáenz, “Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena,” 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.; Sáenz, 1936, 343.

culture,” in order to encourage social harmony between Mexico’s indigenous peoples and the rest of the nation.<sup>12</sup>

He insisted on a combined focus on “biological, economic, cultural, and emotive life.” Agents would be concerned not only with economic and social issues but also on “aspects of interior life and the development of the personality.” There would be a scientific mandate to develop “Indian sociology;” the “social anthropology of Mexico’s Indian groups.” Even as agents implemented federal policy they would gather information about indigenous economics, communal use of the land and forests, the economics and technics of their industry, and produce statistics about indigenous health and hygiene. The agents would collect their scientific data and use it to design more effective programs. He argued that in the past the indigenous person was treated as “an anthropological curiosity, but not as an element in the national population.” Under this new program the person would be treated “as a man of today, an incipient citizen.” He believed that this new approach would help create a rapid blossoming of the Indigenous people as they “flowered” into full citizens bringing to a quick conclusion, the Indian question.<sup>13</sup>

Once indigenous Mexicans “blossomed” into full citizens, Mexico would become a unified nation; the ultimate goal of the DAI. Sáenz wrote that, “The logical end for the Indian is to make him a Mexican. To imprison him theoretically or practically on “reservations,” is to condemn him to a sterile life, and ultimately extinction.” He added

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<sup>12</sup> Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* 68. Taken from Moisés Sáenz, “Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena,” 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.; Sáenz, 1936, 325-335.; Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution,” 316.

<sup>13</sup> Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 68.; Taken from Moisés Sáenz, “Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena,” 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1.; Harry Edwin Rosser “Beyond Revolution,” 316-317.

that, “Like a few others, I hold Indian values in high esteem, but precisely because I hold them so high, I want to give them a more concrete place in Mexican life.” He asked, “Should this be considered a conquest of the Indian? Perhaps, but it is a life-giving conquest, not a conquest of death.” He suggested that “Winning over the Indians will give us the possibility of permanently insinuating them into Mexico’s idiosyncrasies; steeped in the pulse of emotions and sensibility, illuminated by their illusion, and the dark blood that will forever run through the veins of the mestizos.” He concluded that, “Their contributions will enrich the Mexican. If we appreciate the Indians, we will make them both more Indian and naturally, more Mexican (for “Mexican” is by definition, in part Indian).”<sup>14</sup>

Sáenz stated that his idea was not a plan to bring back the past. Four centuries of churches, viceroys, and general history prevented that. One could not turn back the clock or “disregard the rhythm of evolution, the cycles of progress.” No, he said, with a little functionalistic organic sentiment, “In order to be fair to the Indian it was not necessary to stick a feather in our hair or wield a war club! What we must do simply, is to place the Indian upon our nations as part of our national reality, as cells full of human possibilities within the socio-political framework, without any impediments to retard development”<sup>15</sup>

His plans for the DAI mark the evolution of Sáenz’s thoughts concerning Indigenous peoples. Though he considered the term “indigenista” to be a “grammatical barbarity” he proposed that it be a term used to identify the “promotion of a policy related

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<sup>14</sup> Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* 68.; Taken from Moisés Sáenz, “Sobre la creación de un Departamento de Población Indígena,” 6 November 1935, AGN-LCR 533.4/1. ; Sáenz , 1936 335-336

<sup>15</sup> Moisés Sáenz, *The Indian Citizen of America* (Washington DC: Division of Intellectual Cooperation, Pan American Union, Points of View no. 9, September 1946) 1.



to the Indian or the implementers of programs that seek their ‘redemption’ with an essential degree of ‘emotion.’” Seemingly supportive of his optimistic viewpoint was the product of the Pátzcuaro conference: the creation of the Inter-American Indian Institute (III), the *Instituto Indigenista Interamericano*. The III was intended to take on a wide range of activities: gathering and disseminating information, scientific work, and determining and applying indigenista policy. It was planned to be used as an office of consultation for the promotion of other III branches in other countries providing an institutional and administrative environment that would be favorable in both an international and national context.<sup>16</sup>

Between April 14 and 24 of 1940 250 people, including delegates from nineteen American countries, a delegate from the Pan-American Union, special guests, advisors, and indigenous delegates, including representatives of nine U.S. Native American communities, met in the town of Pátzcuaro, Mexico to discuss the “Indian question” at the first Inter-American Conference on Indian Life. This seemed to be a moment when a change in the debate over Indian policy had arrived. Despite national differences “Indianness” seemed a common experience that had transnational potential with the possibility of transforming Indigenismo into an international movement with an overall program of special coordinated action.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Laura Giraudó, “Neither ‘Scientific’ nor ‘Colonialist’ The Ambiguous Course of Inter-American Indigenismo in the 1940s,” trans. Victoria J. Furio *Latin American Perspectives*, 3-4. <http://lap.sagepub.com/> accessed October 19, 2013. Online version can be found at <http://lap.sagepub.com/content/early2012/0608/0094582X12447275> 3-4.

<sup>17</sup> Paul C. Rosier, *Serving Their Country: American Indian Politics and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009), 82. U.S. Native delegates representing Papago, Jicarilla and San Carlos Apaches, Hopi and three Pueblo groups attended. Laura Giraudó, trans.

Coming into Pátzcuaro Collier was impressed with Mexico's work concerning its indigenous people but he was also aware of and greatly impressed with the achievements coming from Canada, Denmark, and Brazil and believed their policies had future merit. Canada didn't attend the conference nor did it join the resulting Indian Institute but he was impressed with its history of integrity in dealing with its Natives. While seeking, like the United States, to shift its First People from a tribal to an individual general life it never sought to use forceful means of "bludgeoning and confiscation" nor did it try to force land allotment or the appropriation of communal lands, as did the United States. Another aspect of Canada's policy that impressed Collier was something he noticed in regard to the Hudson's Bay Company. Long before any such concerns were raised in the United States, Canada, through this company, was the sight of the earliest efforts to conserve national resources, in this case the fur bearing animals. This, according to Collier, allowed the process of perpetual regeneration.<sup>18</sup>

Collier considered Denmark to have a long and innovative policy in regards to its indigenous people living in Greenland. Two hundred years earlier the Danes recognized the native Inuit people as a unique permanent culture. In recognition of the value of the Inuit people, scholars worked to render the Inuit language into written form. Rather than leaving their native people isolated and forgotten, the Danish government encouraged them to be united with the rest of the nation by virtue of a heightened sense of their cultural sophistication and a sense of pride in their tribal ethos.<sup>19</sup>

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Victoria J. Furio 'Neither "Scientific" nor "Colonialist," The Ambiguous Course of Inter-American Indigenismo in the 1940s,' 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 296.

<sup>19</sup> John Collier, *The Indians of the Americas*, 297-298. Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, or Marechal Rondon (5 May 1865 – 19 January 1958) was born on 5 May 1865 in Mimoso, a small village in Mato

But it was in Brazil that Collier found the Indian Service that he believed was best equipped and most committed to its nation's indigenous people. He believed that Brazil's Service was the most inspired and down to earth of any services. In his opinion, this dedication was the product of one man, a man he considered an intellectual, emotional, and moral giant; Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon known as General Rondon: soldier, civil engineer, geographer, and ethnographer.<sup>20</sup>

General Rondon first encountered the Indians of Brazil's interior when he was a colonel in charge of constructing a telegraph line through the nation's interior. In earlier times Brazil's Indians were considered to be beyond understanding and suitable only for exploitation. But Rondon, while working on his project, sought to avoid animosity and instead befriend the indigenous people, becoming interested in their plight and general welfare. In 1910 his interest in the native's welfare resulted in the creation of a Brazilian Service for the Protection of the Indian (*Serviço de Proteção ao Índio*, SPI) with Rondon as its Director.

As Director of the Indian Service, Rondon established a number of Posts situated near Indian populations. Collier was particularly impressed by Service's use of research and experimentation as a means to provide practical solutions to pressing problems. He noted that each Post was a center for "action research" and "research action." Results of

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Grosso state. His father, also name, Cândido Mariano da Silva, was of Portuguese ancestry, and his mother was a Native American from the Terena and Borôro people. The younger Cândido's father had died of smallpox before Cândido was born, and his mother died when he was just two years old. He was raised by his grandparents until they too died while he was still a boy. After this, he lived with his mother's brother, who adopted Cândido and gave him his family name, Rondon. His uncle raised him until he reached sixteen. After finishing high school at the age of 16, he taught elementary school for two years, and then joined the Brazilian army. On joining the military, he entered officer's school and graduated in 1888 as a second lieutenant. He was also involved with the Republican coup that overthrew Pedro II, the last Emperor of Brazil.

<sup>20</sup> John Collier *The Indians of the Americas*, 298, 301.

this work was “recorded, interchanged, and delivered to the people of Brazil in written and pictorial form.” He saw this as a “trial ground” for work that needed to be expanded, continued and directed “at the salvation of a whole race.”<sup>21</sup>

In Collier’s estimation Rondon did his work without dogma: no “segregation” and “assimilation,” no “individualization” or “collectivization.” Rondon recognized the meaning and value of native societies and believed that they could comprehend what they needed to know and make the necessary adjustments to meet a changing world. Collier felt that the Brazilian general recognized the need for empathy, “the power to identify one’s own thinking and feeling with the thinking and feeling of others,” and the necessary component for this process; love and understanding of others. Rondon, according to Collier, believed that “humans most move into change from where they are, carrying with them what they are.”<sup>22</sup>

Collier was impressed by the work of the 106 Posts established by Rondon. He noted that those employed in running these Posts were of the highest caliber; people who he considered dedicated and able to work within a decentralized framework in which each post sought its own answers to its own unique problems. He noted, favorably, that these workers were expected to interact with the natives establishing schools, clinical services, and providing training in the use of implements, seeds, and animal husbandry. At each Post natives worked communal fields: clearing and improving them for the cultivation of wheat, flax, millet, and corn. Collier saw this program as a model of indirect administration where subtlety in adjustment was emphasized. Nothing was

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<sup>21</sup> John Collier *The Indians of the Americas*, 299.

<sup>22</sup> John Collier *The Indians of the Americas*, 299.

expected to be absolute. No “high pressure” tactics were allowed and all methods and practices were devised through a democratic process designed to win maximum permanent results with minimum official control or expense.<sup>23</sup>

Influenced by these programs, he felt that the time for an international Indian accord was particular ripe in 1940. The policy of cooperation between “good neighbors” and the prospect of another world war created favorable conditions for inter-American projects. Delegates at the Pan American conferences of the 1930s emphasized the need for continental cooperation in regards to the “indigenous problem.” But this cooperation was not between equals, the preeminent role of the United States was represented at the conference by the attendance of the United States Indian Commissioner of Indian affairs. While the holding of the conference at Pátzcuaro represented a success for Mexican diplomacy and for President Lázaro Cárdenas the presence of Collier standing beside the Mexican President at the inaugural ceremonies represented the sanction of the United States. This was enhanced by the presence of Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Oscar Chapman (heading the U.S. delegation), and Josephus Daniels, ambassador to Mexico. U.S. involvement in the Conference was reflective of fears of Nazi involvement in Latin America.<sup>24</sup>

Collier and the U.S. role in the Conference can be seen in the important preliminary meetings concerning Indigenous land policies. Prior to the conference advance meetings were held with U.S and Mexican representatives to formulate a series

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<sup>23</sup> John Collier *The Indians of the Americas*, 300-301.

<sup>24</sup> Laura Giraud, trans. Victoria J. Furio “Neither “Scientific” nor “Colonialist” The Ambiguous Course of Inter-American Indigenismo in the 1940s” *Latin American Perspectives* published online June 11, 2012, 2-3; John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 359.; Paul C. Rosier, *Serving Their Country*, 83.

of proposals that would be considered at the conference. Collier believed that the most important and most difficult of these proposals concerned the distribution of land to Indians. Seeking to form a resolution to this plan were three men: Father Cooper, an American anthropologist, Collier, and the Mexican labor leader Vincente Lombardo Toledano. Collier feared that Toledano's real purpose in attending the meetings as to break up the Conference, but it turned out that Toledano, described by Collier as forceful and intelligent, seemed interested in working out a solution to the problem. The committee was able to work out proposal that incorporated the Mexican ejidal system with the land system of the Indian Reorganization Act. The basis of this accommodation was the fact that both systems established land holdings that were held by a corporate body and were inalienable.<sup>25</sup>

One example of U.S. influence in indigenous land reform can be seen in resolution were the delegates resolved "to recommend that those countries that have not yet taken steps to protect the small individual holdings and collective holdings of the Indians should take steps to render them hereafter inalienable." In this resolution the delegates stated that governments should take into account those Indians who had no land and made a living through labor. In the Final Report the authors asked American governments to assign to these Indians small parcels of land for the establishment of their own industries and their own homes in urban and semi urban colonies. This seemed remarkably similar to the mission the U.S. Resettlement programs of the 1930s. Further

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<sup>25</sup> John Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 359.

“Indian New Deal” influences were seen in the delegate’s support of “Indian local self-government.”<sup>26</sup>

If Collier’s hand seems prominent in land reform proposals in must be considered that at the time of the Conference he seemed to have invested much of his professional and personal interest in Mexico. Following the establishment of the International Indian Institute, Collier expected to play an active role. This interest in the III coincided with his increasing interest in in government studies of ethnic affairs and the creation of an international ethnic institute. While attending the Pátzcuaro conference Collier became quite enamored with the locality and started working with his legal attorney, William Brophy, to purchase a hacienda in the Pátzcuaro area. In the last years of his time as Commissioner of Indian Affairs Collier visited Mexico each year, with 1942 being the time when, with the help of the III, he, along with Laura Thompson, worked with Mexico to commission an Indian personality study.<sup>27</sup>

At the end of the conference, Moisés Sáenz, a principal organizer of the conference, heralded it a complete success. He noted the almost unanimously favorable response of the American countries present. He also observed, with a sense of satisfaction, that the nations had adopted a meaning and goal of Indigenismo that seemed to offer a plan for a program of intervention and joint action throughout the Americas.

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<sup>26</sup> The Final Act of the First Inter-American Conference on Indian Life Held at Pátzcuaro, State of Michoacán, Mexico April 14-24, 1940 (Washington DC: U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, 1940), 13, 22.; Paul C. Rosier *Serving Their Country*, 82.

<sup>27</sup> William A. Brophy, letter to John Collier, May 21, 1940.; John Collier, letter to William A. Brophy, May 24, 1940; Memorandum to William A. Brophy, May 28, 1945; Box 2, Folder 31, Reel 12, John Collier Papers, Yale University. Following Collier’s resignation as Indian Commissioner Brophy replaced him as Commissioner. Brophy, who due to ill health worked with acting Commissioner William Zimmerman succumbed to Congressional pressure, to “cut waste” and initiated the termination policy that Native Americans faced in the 1950s and 60s.

Sáenz had, by this time, finalized his belief in the defense of cultural pluralism where indigenous groups would maintain their unique cultural identities, values and practices within the wider society provided they were consistent with the laws and values of that society. He felt that this was necessary for a just and effective policy of national integration.<sup>28</sup>

Sáenz' influence is seen in the language of the official statements coming from Conference which determined that Indians had the same aptitudes as mestizos and whites "to achieve the modalities of modern progress." Based on a presentation of the Mexican delegation of the nature and results of its educational program the conference affirmed that the Indians of the Americas had a vigorous personality as defined through their "typical cultural manifestations" along with positive customs and social organizations and a "lofty sense of personal and collective dignity." The conference deemed that native languages were "the genuine instrument of Indian mentality" and thus the most suitable medium for learning, reading, and writing.<sup>29</sup>

But while Sáenz and others present might have seen Pátzcuaro as a triumphal moment for pluralism a more prevalent view was advocated by Mexico's President. In his opening address Cárdenas stated that the Indian was neither a child nor a race apart but "a member of a social class taking part in the collective task of production." He added that "More than through skin color, particular forms of political organization, or artistic

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<sup>28</sup>Laura Giraudó, trans. Victoria J. Furio "Neither "Scientific" nor "Colonialist" The Ambiguous Course of Inter-American Indigenismo in the 1940s," 3-4. Cultural pluralism is often confused with Multiculturalism. Multiculturalism lacks the requirement of a dominant culture

<sup>29</sup> *Final Act of the First Inter-American Conference on Indian Life Held at Pátzcuaro, State of Michoacán Mexico April 14-24, 1940*, (Washington D.C., U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, 1940), 23



manifestations” the Indian was defined by “his position as an oppressed class.” To him the Indian was part of the national narrative, needful of a program of emancipation much like the proletariat of any country with an added consideration of unique local needs.<sup>30</sup>

He evoked the national sentiment for incorporation as opposed to the perception of integration when he said: “Our Indian problem is not that of making the Indian “stay Indian,” nor of Indianizing Mexico, but in Mexicanizing the Indian himself. If we respect his blood, and turn his emotional powers, his love of the soil, and his unmistakable tenacity to account, we shall root the national feeling more firmly in all, and enrich it with moral qualities that will strengthen the spirit of patriotism, thus assuring Mexico’s personality.”<sup>31</sup>

It is interesting to note that at the conference the delegates approved a resolution calling for a “process of complete integration” for indigenous people. The Conference’s Final Resolution stated: “(T)he old theory of incorporation of the Indian to civilization- a pretext used to better exploit and oppress the aboriginal peoples had been discarded.” In its place the Congress endorsed bilingual, bicultural education and integral development. As you may recall, Moisés Sáenz advocated “integration” as opposed to earlier assimilation goals that called for “incorporation.” Integration called for the bringing of people of different racial or ethnic groups into unrestricted and equal association, a form of cultural pluralism. But incorporation’s purpose, as viewed by Cárdenas, was for diverse groups to unite within the culture of central preexisting dominate group; to

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<sup>30</sup>Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 85

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-86 From Cárdenas, address to the PCII.

become united or combined into an organized body. This needs to be considered in light of upcoming developments.<sup>32</sup>

Marc Becker states that while “the conference represented a turning away from evolutionist and colonialist patterns in indigenist thought,” it must be noted that “...the final proclamations called for the acculturation and assimilation of Indians into the national population.” Cárdenas was a strong Mexican nationalist, and his goal was to incorporate the rural Indigenous masses into the mainstream of Mexican culture. While Sáenz viewed indigenista in an increasingly pluralistic manner others present at the conference viewed indigenous people in a different light. Becker states that in many participants viewpoints “... this was not a meeting of Indigenous peoples or Indigenous organizations, but of non-Indians who were often motivated by a paternalistic interest in improving the lives of their countries' Indigenous populations.”<sup>33</sup>

Interestingly, the strongest allies of the agenda presented by Cárdenas were the Indian delegates invited by Cárdenas. Otomi and Mixtec leaders expressed sympathy for the President's statements. They wanted schools, land, roads, health programs; all the trappings of modernity. Indigenous delegates attending were participants in Cárdenas's agenda for the rural areas. He viewed much of the talk at the Conference as the championing of cultural heterogeneity; something that threatened to divide and unravel the rural coalition he needed for political survival. With this in mind, he was willing to

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<sup>32</sup> Stephen E. Lewis *The Ambivalent Revolution*, 191.

<sup>33</sup> Marc Becker “*Indigenismo* and Indian Movements in Twentieth-Century Ecuador” Address Prepared for Delivery at the 1995 meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, The Sheraton Washington, September 28-30, 1995, accessed October 30, 2011, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/lasa95/becker.html> .; Marie-Chantal Barre, *Ideologías indigenistas y movimientos indios*, 2d ed. (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1985), 93.

promise the Indigenous delegates the economic means for the improvement of their lives provided they came with certain patronal ties.<sup>34</sup>

Sáenz, who would seem, in many eyes, to be a heterogeneous champion advocating a pluralist position, insisted that the Conference's Final Resolutions would be committed to the defense of Indigenous rights. In the first issue of *América Indígena*, the official voice of the III, Sáenz defined the policy of integration as a means for the achievement of full citizenship for indigenous people. This would result in the "Indianization" of many countries, due to their large indigenous and mestizo populations, creating "a new political and social type." According to Sáenz, the III was a "political instrument" for the attainment of this objective as well as the creation of declarations and programs that would promote practical indigenista actions while possessing "circumstantial realism;" the consideration of the specifics of every case.<sup>35</sup>

Laura Giraudo states that "Sáenz advocated a political and social indigenista activism aimed at the full participation of indigenous citizens in the life of the nation and the transformation of the citizenry itself." He believed that this was in line with the Indigenismo promoted by the Cárdenas administration in Mexico. Sáenz believed that this would transform socioeconomic conditions for indigenous people. He felt that the III should act politically and participate in indigenista action in each country, its actions legitimized as a "political and social project." Holding his own country as an example, he

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<sup>34</sup> Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 86.; Stephen E. Lewis *The Ambivalent Revolution*, 191.

<sup>35</sup> Laura Giraudo, trans. Victoria J. Furio "Neither "Scientific" nor "Colonialist" The Ambiguous Course of Inter-American Indigenismo in the 1940s" 4-5.

believed that the ultimate result would be a gradual homogenization of all countries with large Indian populations into mestizo nations, with a unique “American” culture.<sup>36</sup>

But while believing that he had successfully advocated his pluralistic message at Pátzcuaro, Sáenz found that his was a minority position among the membership of the provisional executive board of the III. In December of 1940 John Collier suggested naming Manuel Gamio as the interim director of the III, despite the fact that Gamio hadn’t participated in the formation of this body. Collier supported his suggestion by pointing out that, as ambassador to Peru, Sáenz was not in Mexico, the seat of the III. Collier seemed to ignore the fact that distance hadn’t prevented Sáenz from being one of the organizers of the Pátzcuaro conference and the provisional director of the III. Sáenz, who considered Gamio to be “external” to the project, asked Collier “...What could Gamio(or anyone coming from the outside at this time) do that we are not doing?” He also added that if there was consideration of a replacement than “great care must be taken not to make changes of situations or people in the current provisional organization of the Institute that introduce opposition or allegiances.” Collier’s idea was not accepted.<sup>37</sup>

Correspondence between Sáenz, Collier, and Carlos Girón Cerna, Secretary of the III, indicate disagreements with Sáenz’s view of the mission of the III. Collier agreed with Gamio’s viewpoint that Indigenismo needed to be “apolitical and scientific.” Sáenz believed in a political and social indigenista activism that advocated the full participation

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<sup>36</sup> Moisés Sáenz *The Indian: Citizen of America* (Pan American Points of View, 1946), 1, 6-7.; Laura Giraudó, trans. Victoria J. Furio “Neither “Scientific” nor “Colonialist” The Ambiguous Course of Inter-American Indigenismo in the 1940s,” 6.

<sup>37</sup> Laura Giraudó, trans. Victoria J. Furio “Neither “Scientific” nor “Colonialist” The Ambiguous Course of Inter-American Indigenismo in the 1940s,” 5. Taken from Archivo Histórico del Instituto Indigenista Interamericano(AHIII), Mexico, Sáenz, Moisés correspondence with Collier, 1940 and Girón Cerna, Carlos correspondence with Sáenz, 1941. While Gamio hadn’t participated in the formulation of the III he had been a long-time advocate of an International Indian organization.

of indigenous people resulting in the transformation of socioeconomic conditions for indigenous people and the transformation of national citizenship. He felt that the III should act as a political instrument participating in indigenista activities in every country rather than being nonrepresentational and scholarly in its actions. He felt that it must be a “political and social project.”<sup>38</sup>

But John Collier supported a position that left “direct action” in the hands of governments. He supported a position that countered activism with detached scientific study attempting to present itself as apolitical. He felt that the III must, through the adoption of anthropology as a legitimate principal, present itself as scientific and devoid of politics. While representing itself as apolitical it would, in effect, be defending a political objective of gradual assimilation in opposition to the views held by Sáenz that were considered to be too radical. It would emphasize indigenous cultural conditions and their need for transformation rather than economic and social causes and the need for structural change. This was consistent with Collier’s advocacy of “applied anthropology” as it existed in his country: an apparatus that served the state while avoiding accusations of interference in national affairs. He favored “indirect action” allowing indigenistas to have greater influence as “experts” working within the state mechanism. As a representative of the most senior of partners in the “good neighbor” fellowship Collier’s personal viewpoint exerted considerable influence.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Laura Giraudó, trans. Victoria J. Furio “Neither “Scientific” nor “Colonialist” The Ambiguous Course of Inter-American Indigenismo in the 1940s”, 5-6

<sup>39</sup> Laura Giraudó, trans. Victoria J. Furio “Neither “Scientific” nor “Colonialist” The Ambiguous Course of Inter-American Indigenismo in the 1940s”, 5-6.; Elizabeth Guerrier “Applying Anthropology in the Interest of the State: John Collier, the Indian Office and the Bureau of Sociological Research” *Histories of Anthropology Annual*, vol. 3, (2007), 200.

As a result, Sáenz found himself increasingly marginalized within the organization that he founded. In a meeting of the provisional board of the III, in which Girón Cerra, Emil J. Sady (representing Collier), and Mexico's Anselmo Mena participated, it was decided, after reading Sáenz's text intended for the original issue of *América Indígena*, that the III should avoid tasks of a political nature and avoid "meddling" in the indigenista policies of governments. Instead, the III should merely provide for the coordination of the indigenista policies of governments functioning as a clearing house just as Collier intended it should. The board asked Sáenz to modify his essay removing political sentiments related to the III. Sáenz refused and his article was omitted from the maiden publication of the III's official journal. His death from a heart attack, following a bout of pneumonia, ended talk of political action. Gamio's appointment as the director of the Institute ensured that the organization would be "apolitical and scientific." His tenure, from 1942-1960, insured this.<sup>40</sup>

One might see this as an arbitrary betrayal of Sáenz on the part of Collier. But Collier's connections with the Indigenismo movement including his participation in The Pátzcuaro Congress of 1940 must be weighted in the light of the level of self-determination that Collier had in mind for indigenous people. Consider this statement by Les Field that while *indigenismo* "has characterized anti-hegemonic intellectual currents," it also "may have played a more significant role in serving as a means for political and economic elites to appropriate indigenous cultures for nation-building ideologies that end

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<sup>40</sup> Laura Giraudó, trans. Victoria J. Furio "Neither "Scientific" nor "Colonialist" The Ambiguous Course of Inter-American Indigenismo in the 1940s", 1-5. Text was later published in 1946 as *The Indian Citizen of America* also as "Indians are American" *Survey Graphic* vol XXX no. 3 March 1941 p 175-178.

up maintaining the subaltern status of indigenous peoples.” This statement is appropriate to John Collier and his mission. A review of his past supports this.<sup>41</sup>

John Collier was a longtime advocate of the saving graces of communal life. He formed these ideas during his years in New York City. He never abandoned them and used them in his efforts at reforming Indian policy. During his time in New York he had already formulated the concept of indirect rule; a notion of leading without the appearance of leadership, supposedly allowing self-government among those one supervises while actually being in charge. In the field of Indian relations he claimed to be a champion of democratic grassroots action but his vision of democracy used the tactics of coercion as a form of native administration. This was a form of indirect rule that he proudly acknowledged. Thomas Biolsi states: “Indirect rule and the Indian New Deal for Collier meant the BIA showing Indians the light and eventually, theoretically, at some unspecified and mysteriously receding point in the future, turning administration over to Indians. In the meantime professionals ruled.” Generally, these professionals were non-native.<sup>42</sup>

Collier’s advocacy of indirect rule as a form of Indian policy was based on his interest in Great Britain’s reconsideration of its colonial practices in Africa. As they had in the United States, earlier British colonial policies undermined and damaged traditional tribal social systems. Because of this, British colonial advocates were resistant to the idea of early independence for African colonies. Instead they supported what Laurence M.

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<sup>41</sup> Les W. Field, "Who are the Indians? Reconceptualizing Indigenous Identity, Resistance, and the Role of Social Sciences in Latin America," *Latin American Research Review* 29, no. 3 (1994): 243.

<sup>42</sup> E.A. Schwartz "Red Atlantis Revisited, 510-511.; Thomas Biolsi "'Indian Self-Government' as a Technique of Domination" *American Indian Quarterly*, vol, 15, no. 1 (Winter, 1991):, 25

Hauptmann maintains were a “variety of paternalistic policies, some of which involved native African participation in the political life of colonial administration.” Sir Frederick Lugard, considered an expert on African colonial government, believed that administrators should avoid interference with indigenous ways of life and modes of thought. But this did not mean a simple preservation of old forms of life. He advocated that old forms of life should be combined with an acculturated dualism that would gently introduce Africans to modern civilization.<sup>43</sup>

Collier was an avid believer in this idea and it shows in the goals of his Indian policy. In fact neither Collier nor his superior, Harold Ickes trusted Indians to regenerate themselves on their own. For many tribal entities they saw the cultural erosion of previous decades as too extensive and too pervasive resulting in a cultural corrosion that produced a deep gulf between modern Indians and their ancient native ways of life.

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<sup>43</sup> Laurence M. Hauptman, “Africa View: John Collier, The British Colonial Service and American Indian Policy, 1933-1945” *The Historian* 48 (1986) 363, 364. Frederick John Dealtry Lugard, 1st Baron Lugard GCMG, CB, DSO, PC (22 January 1858 – 11 April 1945), known as Sir Frederick Lugard, was a British soldier, mercenary, explorer of Africa and colonial administrator. He was Governor of Hong Kong (1907–1912) and Governor-General of Nigeria (1914–1919). Lugard's *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* was published in 1922. It discusses indirect rule in colonial Africa. In this work, Lugard outlined the reasons and methods that he recommended for the colonization of Africa by Britain. Some of his justifications included spreading Christianity and ending 'barbarism' (such as human sacrifice). Lugard pushed for native rule in African colonies but he reasoned that black Africans were very different from white Europeans. He considered that natives should act as a sort of middle manager in colonial governance. This would avoid revolt because, as Lugard believed, the people of Africa would be more likely to follow someone who looked like them, spoke their languages, and shared their customs. He once said: "the typical African ... is a happy, thrifless, excitable person, lacking in self-control, discipline and foresight, naturally courageous, and naturally courteous and polite, full of personal vanity, with little sense of veracity ...in brief, the virtues and defects of this race-type are those of attractive children."



Believing he understood the nature of purpose of these ancient ways Collier sought to provide a modern vehicle instilled with elements of traditional ways.<sup>44</sup>

Collier advocated that under indirect rule Indian societies would keep their “ancient democracies” and supplement “their ancient co-operative form with modern-cooperative forms.” Using this strategy, Collier believed that cooperation and the appearance of consensus were good for people, that social scientists could learn to create and regenerate communities and that these communities must be led by experts quietly working in the background. To him democracy was defined by indirect rule and scientific management and ministered by “enlightened” ruling professionals. In this he was a classic progressive.<sup>45</sup>

An example of Collier’s use of democracy can be seen in his dealing with Antonio Mirabel, leader of the Taos Pueblo Council. Earlier Mirabel had openly criticized Collier’s appointment of Dr. Sophie Aberle as Indian Office superintendent to the Pueblo people. The tribal government, all male, objected to being supervised by a woman and many opponents were claiming that Aberle was Collier’s mistress. Added to this problem, Collier sought to have her oversee three previously separate Pueblo jurisdictions ignoring the political differences between these groups. Collier overruled the

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<sup>44</sup> Lawrence M. Hauptman, *The Aggressions of Civilization: Federal Indian Policy Since the 1880s* ed. Sandra L. Caldwell and Vine Deloria jr. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 143

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Biolsi, “‘Indian Self-Government’ As a Technique of Domination,” 24.; E.A Schwartz, “Red Atlantis Revisited,” 523, 525.; Thomas James “Rhetoric and Resistance: Social Science and Community Schools for Navajos in the 1930’s” *History of Education Quarterly* 28 (4), 604-605.

Pueblos' objections because he thought they could function better economically as a united entity and, as the professional, his ruling was final.<sup>46</sup>

Mirabel further irritated Collier. As the Indian Office's deputy special officer for law enforcement he arrested members of the peyote church and confiscated several member's land claiming that they were smoking marijuana. Mirabel had done this as a move to restore the religious authority of traditional religious leaders. In response Collier fired him. Mirabel was indignant, informing Collier that he had acted according to the instructions of the Pueblo leadership. He told Collier that he had acted "purely on the instructions from my peoples not my own opinion." Collier responded by telling him "What you say and do as a member of the Pueblo is altogether your concern, but I do not see how an Agency employee can be continued if he is stubbornly opposed to the Superintendent and Washington's policies."<sup>47</sup>

Collier's old acquaintance and self-styled friend of the Taos Pueblos, Mabel Dodge Luhan entered the fray. In the *New Mexican* she asked how Collier's action could be justified when it was his stated goal to hire Natives in the Indian Office "so they could learn to administer their own affairs." Mirabel wrote to Collier challenging his boss's assignment of self-determination on Native Americans. "If we (are) supposed to manage our own affairs, how can we manage by keeping our mouth shut, for the sake of wages, and not do the duties of the peoples?" He asked adding, "My understanding was that we was to manage our own affairs through the Wheeler Howard Bill, but since the

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<sup>46</sup> Joel Pfister *Individuality Incorporated*, 202.; Graham D. Taylor *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism*, 47, 74.

<sup>47</sup> Joel Pfister *Individuality Incorporated*, 202.; Antonio Mirabel to Collier, April 18 and May 9, 1936, Box 12, Folder 244, Reel 16; Mabel Dodge Luhan, letter to the editor of *The New Mexican*, May 5, 1936, Box 10, Folder 216, Reel 15; John Collier papers, Yale University.

Govt.[sic.] employees[sic.] have no voice for their peoples.” Luhan, breaking ties with her former ally informed the *Albuquerque Tribune*: “Collier is enslaving (the Indians) to the wage system and is not carrying out his announced policy of making the Indians self-governing.”<sup>48</sup>

A telling admission of the failure of Native reservation democracy comes from a 1949 letter addressed to New Mexico Congressman Antonio M. Fernandez. The U.S. Representative had earlier criticized the U.S. government’s handling of Navajo affairs during Collier’s tenure as Commissioner including the Livestock Reduction Programs and the mismanagement of day schools. Collier took umbrage at these remarks claiming they were the product of misinformed Navaho informants. In this letter Collier stated that the problems Fernandez referred to were the product of Navajo tribal administration since 1933. He maintained that pressing exigencies have existed, or have been believed to exist and that white men have programed the meeting of these exigencies; (a) without genuinely consulting the Navajo native leadership and rank-and-file; (b) Without taking the Indigenous leadership and rank-and-file into partnership in the execution of progress; and (c) Without paying any earnest “attention to the facts, know to anthropology—the facts as to what Navajo Native society actually is, how it functions day by day and decade by decade, and what its motivations, inhibitions, values, and powers actually are.” Collier added that the “Administration has by-passed the native society of the Navajo—

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<sup>48</sup> Mabel Dodge Luhan, letter to the editor of *The New Mexican*, May 5, 1936, Box 10, Folder 216, Reel 15; Mirabel to Collier, May 9, 1936, Box 12, Folder 244, Reel 16; Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Albuquerque Tribune*, May 11, 1936, Box 10, Folder 216, Reel 15; John Collier Papers, Yale University.

the functionally predominate omnipresent, extremely vital native society. Navajo administration had by based the Navajo individual.”<sup>49</sup>

Collier listed two blunders. The first blunder was constant emergencies that had to be meet in a great hurry with money that was thrown about in response to “high-pressure do-or-die before tomorrow methods which have made the slow inconspicuous methods of self-help appear contemptible.” The second blunder was the reliance on a “political and sociological fiction.” This was the fiction that the Navajo were a politically integrated tribe and that dealings required nothing more than the manipulation of an elected tribal council while, “actually authority and responsibility in Navajo life are diffused amid thousands of local communities. Tribal councils are a recent unstable institution. Navajo live on in their banishment from government administration.”<sup>50</sup>

While Collier seems to imply a Navajo administrative failure that originated with the Navajo tribal council his list of blunders and failures can, in fact, be attributed to him and the Office of Indian Affairs. The need for “high-pressure do-or-die before tomorrow methods” is most prominently displayed in his administration of the Navajo Livestock Reduction Program where he and other white administrators imposed their will against the wishes of both the “rank-and-file” and the Navajo governing body. The “fiction” of the Navajo as a politically integrated tribe was encouraged by Collier and Indian Office strategies including his efforts to get the tribe to implement provisions of the IRA, a constitutional styled tribal council, and the construction of the Wind Rock tribal

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<sup>49</sup> John Collier, letter to U.S. Congressman Antonio M. Fernandez, August 7, 1949, MS 146 Series I Box 6 Part III, John Collier letters, Yale University.

<sup>50</sup> John Collier, letter to U.S. Congressman Antonio M. Fernandez, August 7, 1949 MS 146 Series I Box 6 Part III, John Collier letters, Yale University.

administration facilities, something imposed by Collier despite the protest of those, “thousands of local communities” that Collier stated had actual “authority and responsibility in Navajo life.”

While citing Navajo administrative failure and its failure to act in the democratic interest of the Diné people, Collier neglects to mention a cause for this democratic failure. While securing support of the tribal council for the implementation of livestock reduction this support was based on the shaky promise of securing more tribal land. The tribal council was also aware that if it didn't act in a way favorable to Collier's soil conservation agenda that it was likely that the government would carry out livestock reduction anyway. And while Collier claimed that livestock reduction was intended for the benefit of the Diné “rank and file” it is clear that the initiative was based on a U.S. Geological Survey that warned that silt coming from the Navajo Reservation would pile up behind the newly built Bolder Dam, making it ineffective. This survey, which misunderstood the erosion cycle and causes, blamed the Diné people and their practices. It became the catalyst for Navajo livestock reduction. While claiming to represent the democratic wishes and interest of the Diné the livestock reduction program seemed to more closely represent the economic interests of economic development in the southwest.<sup>51</sup>

As an advocate of democratic government for Native Americans Collier viewed democracy like a colonial governor, seeking to involve his colonial charges in the affairs

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<sup>51</sup>David E. Wilkins, *The Navajo Political Experience*, (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 21. In 1994, a proposal to change the official designation from "Navajo" to "Diné" was rejected by the council. They said the name *Diné* represented the time of suffering before the Long Walk, and that *Navajo* is the appropriate designation for the future.

of state. But this involvement was limited. In a 1942 talk to people connected to the Chicago Universities Human Development project Collier talked about Pueblo administration in the 1930s saying, “We were very consciously shifting our Pueblo administration onto the pattern of indirect administration. We were transferring to the tribal council a maximum of authority they could take and which we had the legal power to give them.” It was clear that Collier was insistent on determining how much power Native Americans would be allowed to have.<sup>52</sup>

Considering Collier’s desire to be the supervisor it isn’t surprising that he found the Mexican central state’s role in the social reconstruction of the nation appealing. The ministries of Mexico had embarked on a centralization project to build the nation’s physical infrastructure and construct what Ruben Flores describes as “a unitary cultural patrimony.” Alan Knight noted that the post-revolutionary Mexican state in an effort to distinguish itself from its Porfirian past possessed a “commitment to state interference in the realm of ethnic relations. A standard feature of the revolutionary ideology was the insistence on the state's role as a social arbiter.” As far back as his “Red Atlantis” article Collier was proposing that the federal government force adaptation onto Native American culture. He stated that only the federal government, “supreme by conquest, by enveloping, arbitrary power,” could promote “cooperative modern enterprise” needed to save the Pueblos. Having forced adaptation onto the Pueblos the result “would become educational in a direction not only important to the Pueblo but to mankind.” In achieving this he believed that the reformed Pueblo culture would give white society an example of the possibilities of what E.A Schwartz calls “government mandated cultural reformation.”

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<sup>52</sup> John Collier, address to Chicago University, November 17, 1942, Reel 11, *Native Americans and the New Deal: The Office Files of John Collier, 1933-1945*.

For Collier this was not a new development, while working in New York City he advocated the use of the power of the state to enforce the creation or recreation of communities. With Native Americans he recognized the utilization of the body with ultimate power over Native American affairs: the Federal government.<sup>53</sup>

This is not to say that Collier derived his use of government coercion in the name of community building completely from Mexico. This concept was an old one to him, deeply ingrained in his past. It was based on his belief that he understood and spoke for those under his direction. In his unique way Collier thought that he could enhance and reform democracy, something that he believed that primitive Native American culture was the epitome of, using undemocratic methods. It's hard to say how much he was influenced by Mexico in this but his ideals, shaped to his personal sentiments, seem remarkable similar.

His imposition of his democratic ideas is evident in his Native American policy. Collier, in order to establish a base for economic growth and self-autonomy, moved for tribes to establish constitutions and tribal councils; all approved through popular referendums. But Collier's move for tribal councils overlooked actual working communities based on loose confederations. Instead, it overly relied on artificially compiling them into fabricated tribes; classifications based on common language and culture. In doing this Collier ignored factors like clan autonomy. Many were indignant over Collier's plans and his homogenized Puebloized image of Indians. Traditionalists, generally full bloods, were suspicious of voting as a form of self-government seeing it as

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<sup>53</sup> Flores 359, Alan Knight "Racism, Revolution, and *Indigenismo*," 83. John Collier "The Red Atlantis," 64.; E.A. Schwartz "Red Atlantis Revisited," 515.

a form of democratic imperialism with the imposition of an outside standard of American democratic government into tribal society.<sup>54</sup>

Added to this was Collier's vague, idealistic mission of the "primitive." Collier believed his romantic view of the ever changeless Indian was a curative for the ailments of modern western civilization but many Indians had little interest in tilling communal lands or "playing Indian" for white consumers and tourists. In fact, many were supporters of the earlier forms of assimilation. Others viewed Collier as an advocate of segregation, seeking to isolate them from whites and impose an emphasis on traditional culture forcing them to become "blanket Indians," insuring perpetual poverty.<sup>55</sup>

Collier, in his ethnoromanticism of native culture, failed to note the ambitions and desires for social power exhibited by many traditional and nontraditional Indians on and off the reservation. He seemed ill-at-ease when he became aware of professional-managerial-class Natives. They didn't seem like the kind of Indian that Collier relied on for therapeutic solace. Nor was he fully aware of the level of factional divisions within tribes with full-bloods vs mixed bloods, progressives vs conservatives, Catholics vs Protestants, Democrats vs Republicans, and Chiefs vs Council Indians. These were just some of the diverse problems Collier unexpectedly faced. Traditions and a sense of personal autonomy caused many to refuse to conform to federally imposed plans for their

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<sup>54</sup> Joel Pfister *Individuality Incorporated*, 203- 204.; Brian Dippie *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middleton Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 312.

<sup>55</sup> Brian Dippie *The Vanishing American*, 312.



“reorganization”. Joel Pfister says that the “Indians were in a sense, too diversely individual to be Indianized as Collier thought best.”<sup>56</sup>

Still he felt justified in his mission. Back to the time when he began his career in the City of New York John Collier identified with primitive rural social structures whose sense of communal configuration, as he envisioned it, was the everlasting ideal. He saw it as his mission to rescue and restructure the last remaining remnants of primitive communalism, present in Native American communities, and reconfigure and adapt it to exist in a modern world. It would, once regenerated and evolved into his ideal, be able to function within a western invasive culture that seemed so dissimilar and, once Native Americans adapted to live within this invasive culture, they would present an appealing amalgamation of primitive communalism and modernistic culture that would be too attractive for anyone to ignore. In its creation he emulated the actions of rural progressives operating in the American Southwest in the 1930s.

Ruben Flores states that U.S. rural progressives often reached out to the cultural tradition of Mexico’s postrevolutionary cultural rural renaissance charting the work of its architects: José Vasconcelos, Manuel Gamio, and Moisés Sáenz. The discourses of cultural unification in Mexico and the United States used similar terminologies: amalgamación, incorporación, and integración in Mexico and amalgamation, acculturation, and integration in the United States. Despite the national context rural progressives shared a common political concern with Mexican social scientists: “They were each concerned with creating a synthetic blend in the countryside from distinctive

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<sup>56</sup> Taylor, *The Indian New Deal and American Indian Tribalism*, 49. Joel Pfister *Individuality Incorporated*, 204

cultural communities that they interpreted to be in dynamic tension with one another.” As the alchemist of this transformation, and an admirer of rural agrarian culture, Collier hoped to produce a synthetic blend that would unit two cultures, white and Native American, that were in “dynamic tension” with each other.<sup>57</sup>

But he failed to properly note the “dynamic tensions” existing within the Native American community. While his actions successfully ended land allotments, sought the purchase of new lands, and restored tribal control of surplus lands it couldn’t restore seven million acres of land allotted before 1933. Indians, influenced by two generations of assimilation rhetoric, refused to voluntarily return their land to the tribe. They refused to consider the pooling of land holdings into tribal cooperatives as Collier envisioned. They were content to divide their land into ever smaller family inheritances. Many were content to lease their land to white interests; a practice so common that by 1941 40 percent of Great Plains Indian land was leased to whites.<sup>58</sup>

As a community advocate in New York City Collier believed that only scientists could resolve the problems of communities. He felt that even the metaphysical powers of the Red Atlantis could be reduced into formulas if one possessed the right insight and professional expertise. Collier saw in the Native Americans something that the community center movement of New York failed to offer: a way to use culture and community cohesion to organize reformation of society.

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<sup>57</sup> Ruben Flores, “States of Culture,” 360.

<sup>58</sup> Kenneth R Philp, *John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform*, 186; Leasing figures from *Indians at Work* January 1941, 1-3.

But communities, seeking their own vision of cohesion and reformation, demand agency and sovereignty. The question of sovereignty figures with John Collier, his viewpoint on agency, and the Indian Reorganization Act. Though the concept of self-government advocated in the IRA was truly radical in the 1930s it could be argued that the IRA was not designed to recognize tribal sovereignty. The Secretary of the Interior had the final voice in every major policy decision made by Indians. Many Indians believed that the IRA “set up puppet governments on reservations and somehow mysteriously governs all aspects of tribal life by remote control.” Indian leadership often felt subjected to unwarranted non-Indian manipulation of existing tribal political systems. Robert Burnette of the Rosebud Sioux said the IRA resulted in “a blueprint for elected tyranny.”<sup>59</sup>

Though progressive and radical in his time Colliers policies were paternalistic. In this viewpoint he shared the rationale of many within the indigenista movement. Manuel Gamio felt that, with careful research, one could determine what could and could not be retained in native culture. Even Moisés Sáenz, with his emphasis on pluralism, felt qualified to determine what indigenous people needed to retain and enhance in the name of national citizenship. For this was the stated goal of Collier and his Mexican counterparts: The final assimilation of native peoples into the greater society of their nation. To what degree and to what nature this assimilation involved depended on the person advocating it. Collier saw native people as an ancient remnant of primitive communalism

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<sup>59</sup>Lawrence M. Hauptman, *The Aggressions of Civilization: Federal Indian Policy Since the 1880s* ed. Sandra L. Caldwell and Vine Deloria jr. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 132, 143.; Robert Burnette(Rosebud Sioux) and John Koster, *The Road to Wounded Knee* (New York: Bantam Books, 1974) 309-310.; Vine Deloria Jr. *Custer Died For Your Sins; An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1969), 147.

that could, with his help and according to his personal vision, be regenerated and revived into a cohesive modern culture that would provide the catalyst for the reformation of all society. Gamio, for all of his talk about the regard and respect for native culture sought a mestizo vision of Mexican culture where European values predominated. Sáenz, especially in nations with a predominate indigenous population, wanted an amalgamation of culture that adapted to the most prevalent cultural base but, in the end, felt that this would culminate in a mestizo nation. If this meant Indianizing whites or mestizoizing Indians it was for the best.

In the end Native agency was likely to conflict with their European standards. Helen Delpar argues, quite correctly, that the “Indigenistas were members of an intellectual community that stretched from Mexico City to New York, Chicago, Berkeley, London, and Paris. Indigenistas were responsible for the dissemination of ideas that equated European and North American practices with modernity” Some accused them of being agents of imperialism. Often the accusers were the native people who indigenistas sought to help.<sup>60</sup>

In essence John Collier was an imperialist, the member of a more powerful society that sought to influence and change the way of life of a subaltern people. An aspect of imperialism is the effect that a powerful country or group of countries has in changing or influencing the way people live in other, poorer countries and it must be remembered that Collier was the member of a powerful nation and those “dependent nations,” as long ago ruled by the U.S. Supreme Court, were under his charge as dictated by the “powerful county” that he worked for. Considering this it must be remembered

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<sup>60</sup> Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*, 96-99.

that while writing glowingly of the spiritual significance of native culture Collier was not a preservationist. He wrote picturesque descriptions of Pueblo life but he took no action that would seem to promote Pueblo social techniques among non-Indians. Collier's writing of communal life and culture from his years in New York through his career as an Indian Commissioner were based on utilitarian aspects of culture. Culture described in radiant beautiful terms was good for attracting public support and may have reflected his personal viewpoints but he also saw culture as something to be used by social scientists in order to build or regenerate communities; as part of an experiment to rebuild communities and produce a properly engineered model of community cohesion. An ideal community was based on experimentation not tradition. And an ideal community was expected to conform to his standards.<sup>61</sup>

This engineering aspect was something he admired about Manuel Gamio. Like Collier, Gamio was a utilitarian willing to discard those aspects of ancient culture that he viewed as no longer relevant. They viewed traditional culture in a narrow field of religion, singing, dancing and, art, continued in the most appropriate way, according to their standards of what was appropriate. They believed that social scientists could create and generate communities and even enhance and regenerate people. It was their intention to gradually integrate Indians as a group instead of engaging in rapid forced assimilation of Indians as individuals.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> E.A Schwartz, "Red Atlantis Revisited, 517, 518, 524. An aspect of imperialism is the effect that a powerful country or group of countries has in changing or influencing the way people live in other, poorer countries.

<sup>62</sup> E.A Schwartz, "Red Atlantis Revisited, 517, 518, 524. Definition of Imperialism comes from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/imperialism> Notion of Native American tribes as dependent nations originated with U.S Supreme Court Ruling: *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) the Cherokee was a dependent nation, with a relationship to the United States like that of a ward to its guardian.

Collier's falling out with Sáenz and his desire to remove him as head of the IIII was a reflection of a fundamental split in their viewpoint concerning indigenous policy. Sáenz wanted an immediate establishment of Indigenous people as active participating citizens in their nation but Collier was more cautious, wanting a gradual incorporation of Indians into the ranks of citizenship. Added to this was his desire to approach Indian policy much like a colonial administration where political power for native people depended on standards set by central government administrators. He and Gamio were horrified by the prospect of advocating political participation by native peoples in indigenous reforms especially if they involved an immediate establishment of indigenous people as equal political participants. In the end, while he admired the intellectual power and vitality of Sáenz, what he most desired from the man was his utility, meaning that he was willing to discard him when he exceeded his usefulness.

Sáenz's sudden death spared him the fate of his allies. With the ascendancy of conservative, pro-urban capitalist Manuel Ávila Comacho many Cardenista stalwarts, especially those showing signs of pluralistic sentiments, were branded as leftists, and were either neutralized or eliminated. Vicente Lombardo Toladano survived but was forced to abandon his earlier priorities. Sáenz's other allies: Luis Chávez Orozco, Graciano Sánchez, Francisco Múgica, and Rojo Gómez, found themselves unwanted, accused of advocating "soviet doctrine." Some like Angel Corzo, tried to protect their position by attacking colleagues for their leftist sympathies and declaring themselves dedicated to eliminating "all exotic communist theories" and "soviet agents" from the DAI. Ramón Bonfil, who maintained Mexican Indians were nationalities that must be respected and holding the idea of a Union of Mexican Indian Republics, became a target

of attack. Sáenz's ideal of Mexico as a pluralistic nation fell from favor but was not forgotten. Even the avowed nonleftist, Manuel Gamio, found his career threatened by the label that he was participating in the "pernicious foreign influence of communism"<sup>63</sup>

But he survived these threats. Gamio maintained a low profile during the Cárdenas sexenio and was untouched by a leftist past allowing him to survive while others were left on the sidelines. He became the most prominent indigenista in Mexico offering a welcome alternative to the pluralist message of Sáenz. As the spokesmen of the regime, and president of the III, notions of empowerment for Indians vanished, replaced by concerns regarding the priorities of state modernity for Indians.<sup>64</sup>

Collier also suffered from a conservative backlash. During his tenure as Indian Commissioner he faced an ever increasingly hostile Congress that feared Collier as a divisive, socialist, antidemocratic radical, whose policies threatened national interests. His resourceful tactic of end-around funding, using other agencies to achieve goals that a misery obstructionist Congress seemed to prevent, infuriated many Congressmen causing them to cut his appropriations. His earlier tactic as an agitator for reform consisted of vilifying the Office of Indian Affairs. This had worked in gaining Congressional allies, one of them being Senator Wheeler, co-sponsor of the IRA, but now it worked against him. As the Indian Commissioner he was now the head of the Office of Indian Affairs becoming the enemy of those who saw his agency as counterproductive. In the end Collier's abrasive style along with disruptions to his agency caused by the war prove too much for him. He resigned in 1945. Some argue that Collier's policies and personality

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<sup>63</sup> Alexander S. Dawson *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 134-135.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 150-151.

resulted in the very thing he latter railed against, the implementation of the termination policy of the 1950s with its intended end of federal obligations to tribes, the special relationship between tribes and the federal government, tribal sovereignty, federal trusteeship of reservations, and tribal exclusion from state laws.<sup>65</sup>

Sáenz's death came at a critical cross road in his life. None one can tell if he would have suffered the same fate that so many of his like-minded colleagues faced. Manuel Gamio, as a survivor, had learned long ago how to manage the shifting sands of politics and fortune. He remained president of the International Indian Institute until his death in 1960. The institute slogged on following his death. Suffering from the loss of United States support in the early 1950s the Institute became increasingly forgotten and ineffectual. Its foci, the indigenous people of the Americas, viewed it with increasing disdain as the a product of white elite paternalism; a colonialist overlord imposing its self on people seeking their own answers to their problems and not the solutions advocated from elitists operating from above. All too often indigenous people saw the Institute as a laboratory and them as the guinea pigs. The institute slowly faded away, the product of good intentions lacking in useful goals.

John Collier also faded from sight. As he grew older John Collier was marginalized and finally abandoned by academia, his last refuge. Aged and increasingly ill he lived out his last years with his third wife, Grace, near Taos New Mexico showing an increasing disinterest in the affairs of the people he once championed. Grace complained to Joanna T. Steichen that they were nearly impoverished due to "various rip

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<sup>65</sup> Kenneth R Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 156., 172, 186, 197-198; Lawrence C. Kelly, "John Collier and the Indian New Deal: An Assessment" *Indian-White Relations: A Persistent Paradox* ed. Jane F. Smith Robert M Kvasnika (Washington DC.: Howard University Press, 1981), 240.



offs” Collier had experienced while “crushed by the weight of his own device, a forced retirement, and other factors of a genuinely tragic nature.” Suffering from heart problems, and needing digitalis and oxygen every day, Collier lived with his wife and her mother in a small four room house. In an abandoned nearby house was housed an immense collection of his papers, increasingly damaged by a leaking roof. Many letters, soaked in an nicotine odor remained unread and unanswered. On May 8, 1968 Collier died of pneumonia. His neighbor, the sculptor Ted Egri and his wife Kit helped the Widow Grace Collier by collecting Collier’s papers and selling them to Yale University for \$7000 dollars.<sup>66</sup>

Despite John Collier’s hopes of “decisively changing” the Indian affairs system his achievements were inconsistent. Several tribes did establish viable self-governments but the IRA and latter legislation was flawed because it imposed rigid political and economic ideas on tribes that varied in their cultural attitudes. Many tribes, like the Sioux who lacked tribal solidarity, suffered because the IRA enhanced factionalism and produced new grievances. More culturally conservative tribes, like the Hopi, found it hard to adopt white concepts like majority rule or white versions of cooperative economic development. Some tribes, like the Jicarilla and Mescalero Apaches, were successful in using the IRA to promote social and economic progress; reinforcing Collier’s concept that group life, if given a chance to develop, had the potential to enhance the evolution of

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<sup>66</sup> Letter From Grace Collier to Joanna T. Steichen, July 14, 1987, Letter to a Dr. Dutton December 15, 1973, Letter from Ted Egri to Walter Ols, area director of the BIA in Albuquerque, June 14, 1967, Letter from Ted Egri to Mrs. Harold Ickes, June 22, 1967, Accession 90-M-18, John Collier papers Yale University.;, Grace, who was crippled most of her life due to polio, moved, following her husband’s death, to Paterson New Jersey where she worked at a library while keeping much of Collier’s collection of Indian art and supplemented here income by doing bead work. Ted Egri and his wife Kit sought to help the Colliers financially, By 1967 the Colliers had spent all their savings. Egri helped raise money for the Colliers by making a bust of John Collier and selling it to people for \$600 dollars a bust. Among the buyers, Kenneth Philp, and the BIA. Egri sought to sell a bust to the actor Marlon Brando.

society. But generally contemporary critics sought to dismiss Collier as a visionary or a radical sentimentalist, while offering no alternative but the failed status quo.<sup>67</sup>

But Collier's tenure as Indian Commissioner was what Tom Holm refers to "as a watershed in the development of Indian policy." Assaults on the peoplehood of Native Americans ceased, allotment was finished, boarding schools declined, tribal quasi-states were on the rise, Indian art and culture patronized and protected, and tribes gained a sense of autonomy over their resources. Collier assumed that Native Americans would become more productive if they were allowed to renew and regain pride in their institutions and heritage. Collier believed that tribal reorganization would lead to economic uplift and provide the means for freeing Native Americans from federal control. He believed that if tribes could be incorporated with advisory boards in a manner similar to the National Recovery Act they could control their natural resources and industrial output in a manner beneficial to themselves.<sup>68</sup>

This form of reorganization was supposed to lead to decentralization of the Indian Bureau while removing it from further entanglements. Such plans show the influence of progressive era plans for collective management combined with a sense of personal liberty. This was the legacy of Collier's past. As a social worker among New York immigrants Collier became a proponent of cultural preservation while advocating personal liberty. He viewed this as important for the maintenance of cultural plurality.

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<sup>67</sup> Kenneth R Philp *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 186.

<sup>68</sup> Tom Holm *Great Confusion in Indian Affairs*, 189, 193.

With Native Americans he hoped to create personal liberty while removing some of the long standing control of Native American life.<sup>69</sup>

And in this hope one finds one of the many contradictions that mark the life and career of John Collier. Far from removing federal control Collier's policies may have in fact entrenched it. Collier, an admirer of British colonial policy, seems to have provided the beginnings of a new structural accommodation phase that established a new colonial relationship with Native Americans. The Indian Reorganization Act, the Indian New Deal, permanentized the discretionary authority of the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Thomas James argues that despite its rhetoric of liberation "the Indian New Deal strengthened indirect controls through administrative consolidation programs, and localized community education where none had existed before, thus reaching more deeply than ever into the social and family structure of tribes." The Indian Office, once thought of as something that would vanish with the Indian, was here to stay. In fact the discretionary authority of the BIA managed to survive the years of termination policy and the efforts to revive the vanishing policy that sought to dissolve federal relationships with its native people.<sup>70</sup>

Collier's conceptions of Indian policy set standards that live on today. Collier, whose administration marked an interlude in the ongoing Congressional misunderstanding of Indians, provided a philosophy of self-government that was more powerful than any alternative suggestion. He supported it with energetic and creative administrative support. Native Americans continue to assert their sovereign rights as they

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<sup>69</sup> Tom Holm *Great Confusion in Indian Affairs*, 189, 193.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 193-194, 196.

were reorganized under Collier's tenure. They have the ability to organize governments, determine membership, hold proprietorship over their land, and levy taxes. Collier and his Indian New Deal obliged the federal government to acknowledge the resiliency and permanency of Native Americans.<sup>71</sup>

But for many Native Americans this was but a taste, a tantalizing hint at what they really wanted. Collier, advocating indirect rule sought something more like a partnership with limited self-government. Those Native Americans who respected and admired their traditional way of life developed a taste for full independence. To this day they seek a decision process free from the approval of the Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. It is the legacy of Collier that his policies stirred such a hunger but, at the same time, established the machinery that blocks these Native Americans from the banquet they desire.<sup>72</sup>

### Summary

John Collier saw himself as a scientist, working in a human laboratory. His field of study was community engineering: reformation, recreation and regeneration. His goal: the return of an idealized past consisting of a society where people achieved as individuals within a community, where everyone looked out for everyone else, and where everyone was concerned about the health and welfare of each other. He feared that this ideal was dying under the oppressive weight of a modern industrialized, *laissez-faire*-commercialized, capitalistic, urban crucible; a maladjusted society where each individual

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>72</sup> Vine Deloria, jr. with Clifford M Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 189.

was isolated and adrift in a sea of modernity; living under a false illusion of personal freedom while feeling that something intangible and unexplainable was missing from their life.

He tried to experiment with preserving or recreating his communal ideal in New York City. But this was a failure. It was too difficult for him to recreate his idealized communal primitive society derived from a rural agrarian background in an urban environment. He heard about the revolution in Mexico, where rural agrarian people were seeking to regain an idealized past that they had lost under the press of those seeking a modernistic solution. He was curious and would have gone to Mexico but his acquaintance, Mabel Dodge, enticed him to go to Taos. He had earlier considered going to Taos, suspecting that he would discover something that would confirm his vision of an idealized past. Now, he decided to go. In Taos he found the ideal he was looking for. He later told of how the people of the Taos Pueblo had somehow retained the age-old ethos that he longed to recreate. But he also concluded that they needed some adjustments in order to live in the modern world. He was sure that with study, experimentation, and some remodeling they would become the society that would reintroduce that idealized past he knew the world needed for its salvation.

This would require some experimentation. But in the United States such experiments were difficult, if not impossible to produce. But he observed a giant laboratory located south of the United States: Mexico. They had Indians, lots of Indians, Indians that had suffered a tortured past like those in the United States. There where scientists in Mexico, indigenistas, who advocated saving these Indians. Some of these scientists felt that the Indians had within their community a culture worth emulating, it

just needed a little(or a lot) of remodeling so that the Indians could live as citizens in a modern world contributing to the greater health and wellbeing of society.

Curious, John Collier visited this laboratory. There he found things he liked. He wanted to restore communal land holding among the Native Americans of his land. In Mexico they had ejidos where land was owned by the community and divided among needy families. He learned about the ideas of Manuel Gamio who shared Collier's advocacy of the study and restructure of indigenous people. The two men recognized that indigenous culture was no longer "pure," having been altered by European colonializers. Collier and Gamio believed that Indians needed to find a way to adapt to the modern world even if that meant discarding harmful ways probably introduced by colonial oppressors. Gamio felt that the Indigenous people needed to learn to conform to the mestizo way of life and that they needed to, in some sense, accept the dominance of white culture and, through accepting it, they would add to the nation's ethnic mix their own unique qualities. In his own way Collier believed the same, expecting Native Americans to recognize the beneficence of the dominant white culture as it prepared them for a new role and life as part of the American landscape.

He was aware that many in Mexico, including Gamio, believed in neo-Lamarckian eugenic theories maintaining that education, better health, and improved lifestyles would result in physical and intellectual improvements. They believed that these improved humans could genetically improve mankind through improved children who would beget improved offspring of their own. Collier believed that it was possible, through force of will, for people to change and for these changes to unlock the possibilities within them. He believed that individuals working within small groups were

the crucible of change. He believed in an evolutionary process in which societies could mutate and change. He argued that this process started with individuals working within small groups effecting changes that could ripple like the wave of a growing tsunami outward across the greater sea that was humanity. His faith in the power of an individual to change society was reflected in his faith in his own sense of individual power. He saw himself as an individual working to change society. He was working within his small group, the Office of Indian Affairs, to affect change on a larger group, the Native Americans of the United States, with the eventual objective of introducing a form of change that would ultimately alter all the world.

Collier was also interested in Mexico's education program, recognizing their method of education as a means for social reconstruction. Interested in Mexican education, he met a man he greatly admired, a man who seemed to share his vision, Moisés Sáenz. His association with Sáenz offered him a chance to observe schools where indigenous children learned by doing and, by learning, learned how to improve themselves. He saw the possibility of schools that didn't just teach children but worked to reform and remodel communities and people. He appreciated learning by doing because he and Sáenz both admired the same advocate of this approach, John Dewey.

It was easy for Collier to learn from Sáenz and Gamio because they spoke the same language. Not only were Gamio and Sáenz skilled bilingualists, well regarded in both Mexico and the United States, but they were also influenced by American mentors: John Dewey for Sáenz and Franz Boas for Gamio. These mentors were respected experts in the Fields of Education and Anthropology, well regarded in both Mexico and the United States, and well regarded by Collier. This background meant that

Collier, Sáenz, and Gamio had a common language that surpassed their cultural differences. Added to this, Gamio and Sáenz appeared to have reinterpreted and readapted their acquired knowledge to suit the people they sought to reconfigure: rural indigenous people. Since Collier was also seeking to reconfigure a group of rural indigenous people he was greatly interested and often impressed by the work of these Mexican interlocutors.

They were interested in each other's ideas. In the process of obtaining and using ideas, John Collier, Manuel Gamio, and Moisés Sáenz each had his own personal revelation in regards to Native Americans and, even after meeting each other, retained some of their preconceived notions. In the development of these notions they often stood on common ground. They all were educationally connected through Columbia University, obtained important insights through certain American intellectuals, and possessed a similar sense of social conscience. And yet each had his own unique ideas in regards to reform. They did appreciate the mutual influence, the fact that finding someone who shares your goals and objectives is a supportive influence that gives one's theories a sense of supportive commonality and legitimacy. The mutuality of ideas, for these men provided fuel for the fire: the development of theories and the means to test them. Each envisioned the need for reform and social improvement for their nation's native population and was willing to look to the other for support and ideas.

Collier found what he saw in Mexico to be fascinating and exciting, capable of unlocking the possibilities untapped in Native Americans and all humanity. When he became the United States Indian Commissioner he advocated and made use of many of the ideas he had learned from Mexico. He sought to imitate the ejido, with U.S.



modification. He advocated a credit system, like the ejido bank, in order to economically develop Indian reservations. He appreciated the programs of arts and crafts carried out in Mexico, seeing that such a program could enrich Native Americans and American culture. He sought to recreate it in the United States going as far as to hire someone experienced in Mexican arts and crafts. Manuel Gamio's use of anthropological studies influenced Collier to employ teams entrusted with the mission of studying Native peoples in order to find new ways to implement programs that would work more effectively. Recognizing the use of multiple government agencies in the effort to reform Mexico's rural countryside, Collier sought to use multiple government agencies in the reform of his portion of the rural countryside, the lands administered by the Indian Office and their environs.

Collier learned much from observing Mexico's human laboratories. And when he became Indian Commissioner he sent Indian Office employees to study Mexico's experiments. Throughout the 1930s and 40s scores of federal officials traveled to Mexico studying Mexican schools and examining Mexican land policies. He was helped in this task by his relationship with Sáenz. This relationship opened Mexican doors for him and gave him access to other contacts, most notably Mary Doherty, a talented, well connected American expatriate with a similar New York progressive background.

In his interest in this Mexican laboratory Collier was not blind to reality or a slavish follower. In a letter to another extraordinary woman who functioned as his eyes in Mexico, Alida Bowler, Collier wrote, "Yes I think you are going to discover enormous variations on the qualitative side of Ejido operations, and the plans scheduled far beyond attainability." He doubted "whether the personal operations of the government down

there are much more than political.” But he urged Miss Bowler not to pass “these doubts of mine along.” Collier was more concerned with the possibilities offered by Mexican programs than the realities that these programs often displayed. With this in mind he told her that, “...we here must always recognize that the big thing for us is to acclaim the philosophies and the purpose.”<sup>73</sup>

Collier was interested in Mexico’s efforts because he believed that land was the most important of resources for his nation’s Native Americans and that land reform was the most pressing issue for their future survival. He noticed that land reform was a great issue in Mexico as well. Seeking ways to implement land reform, he expressed interest in Mexico’s ejidos, ejido banks, and its education experiments. These programs offered him a vision of how Native Americans could become economically viable while strengthening, preserving, and regenerating their tribal, communal life style. He attempted to implement such programs, with modification, in the United States. Often this met with hostility and he was accused of consorting with socialistic Mexican revolutionaries. Some feared that Collier, who many considered a socialist, was imperiling America with extremist ideas.

Ultimately the results of his programs fell short of his goals and “the plans scheduled” were “far beyond attainability.” Collier found that the “personal operations of the government” in the United States were not “much more than political” and that many Native Americans did not appreciate his brand of politics. While championing Native Americans, they often found his ways to tyrannical and to alien. But in an

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<sup>73</sup> John Collier, letter to Alida Bowler, January 17, 1940, Reel 2, *Native Americans and the New Deal the Office Files of John Collier 1933-1945*.

unanticipated manner Collier gave an impetus to tribal self-government giving Native Americans a sense that they could stand up and make their voices heard even if it was in speaking out against their self-styled benefactor. In this the Collier years marked an important development in Native self-determination.

Alvin Josephy states that “If the history of Indian-White relations has been one of unending attempts to assimilate the Indians it has also been one of continued struggles for the Indians to preserve their religious and spiritual unity and strength.” Collier professed to end assimilation but sought a “modern” Native American who could live within the white world, function according to its rules, contributing to its needs, and following its rules. In effect, he really wanted another form of assimilation. He championed Native American religious and spiritual unity and the revival of these things, on his terms. While Collier championed Native Americans, they often found cause to resist him.<sup>74</sup>

Collier saw himself as a visionary. But idealized visions may be illusionary and nostalgia sometimes masks reality. Bronislaw Malinowski warned against establishing some cultural “zero point” from which to measure cultural change. He warned that the reconstruction of a past indigenous culture would depict an idealized culture and not a living reality, the reconstruction of “a savage who does not exist anymore.” He warned against a “highly emotional vision of the past as it lives in present-day mythology, a pre-European golden age or some “Paradise lost.” In a 1938 monograph the authors warned that focusing on the reconstruction of the past leads to bad policy based on the memories of old informants. Meyer Fortes described policy based on memories to be a “mesh of

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<sup>74</sup>Alvin M. Josephy, *Now the Buffalo's Gone: A Study of Today's American Indians* (New York: Knopf, Distributed by Random House, 1982) 91.

lies,” alternating from a Utopia to a bloody reign of terror. Malinowski urged that surviving earlier institutions needed to be considered in the context of adaptations to new strains derived from European influences.<sup>75</sup>

In a sense Mexico's Zapatistas chose to ignore this recommendation while the Revolutionary Mexican government chose to adopt the European adaptive model since it represented their best interests in the maintenance of private property holdings and a capitalistic economy. Collier while, too often afflicted with a utopic vision of a preindustrial past and expressing an idealistic fascination with Native American culture as an affirmation of his beliefs in group culture dynamics, possessed a progressive based desire to reform and adapt even that that he admired. As a progressive vitalist he did not wish to return to the past. He was more interested in an upward linear progression as necessary for man's future. He did not want to return to mud huts and farm villages but he wanted to take from those who lived long ago what he thought was admirable and plug it into the body electric of the body politic.

In the end Collier, in many ways, conforms to Mark Becker's concept of *Indigenismo*. Becker stated that “Historically, paternalistic impulses which saw Indigenous peoples as passive receivers of outsiders' actions have been the driving force behind *indigenismo*. At different points in history it has been the domain of various groups of people including archaeologists, anthropologists, theologians, novelists, philosophers, politicians, and political activists.” Historian Pedro Chamix criticized an academic *indigenismo* that “takes the Indians into a laboratory to study them in terms of their

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<sup>75</sup> Thomas Weaver, “Malinowski as Applied Anthropologist” *Society for Applied Anthropology* 2002, 21-22.; Alvin M. Josephy *Now the Buffalo's Gone*, 91.

physical appearance, family names, dress, language, (and) customs." Juan Bottasso noted in the introduction to *Del indigenismo a las organizaciones indígenas* that Indigenous peoples do not favorably view *indigenistas* who analyze their status from the perspective of a dominant class and seek to integrate them into a modern nation-state. He writes that these Indigenous peoples "reject the presence of intermediators and deny that people who do not belong to their cultural world have the right to speak in their names or, worse, represent them."<sup>76</sup>

Some might see the attention to Mexican peasant society and, in this particular case, Indigenous Mexican peasant society or, for that matter, Native American culture as a form of orientalism. Edward Said's definition of this term is applicable in a sense that nineteenth century elites in both the United States and Mexico viewed indigenous peasant culture as languid, sensual, static, and underdeveloped. These were all opposites of their view of themselves as representatives and aspiring applicants of a Western European ideal envisioned as developed, flexible, and superior. While viewing North American indigenous people as those mired in the past, they viewed themselves as dynamic innovative members of an expanding West. A Western romanticism of primitive societies accompanied by a Western idealism of the virtues of primitive communal societies modified this earlier viewpoint. Many of these idealists started to view indigenous people as a possible avenue for the social reform of a dehumanized western

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<sup>76</sup> Mark Becker "Indigenismo and Indian Movements in Twentieth-Century Ecuador," 5, 48, Includes quotes from Juan Bottasso, Juan Bottasso, "Presentación," in Various Authors, *Del indigenismo a las organizaciones indígenas*, 2d ed. (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1986), 5. And Pedro Chamix, "La importancia revolucionaria de conocer los movimientos indígenas," *Polémica* (San José) 3 (January-February 1982), 48. [http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/lasa95/becker\\_fn.html#fn0](http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/lasa95/becker_fn.html#fn0) cited December 12, 2013.

society. But primitive idealists like John Collier and his ilk viewed the virtues of primitive society through their western perspectives and aspirations.<sup>77</sup>

This rose colored perspective is seen in Robert Redfield's view of the indigenous community of Tepoztlán as an idyllic fusion of primitive and modern culture. But in 1943 the American anthropologist Oscar Lewis, working with the Inter-American institute on personality study, noted that Redfield had overlooked, "negative and disruptive aspects of village life, such as the fairly high incidence of stealing, quarrels and physical violence." He noted that Redfield's belief that folk cultures produced fewer frustrations and better personal relationships than was found in modernistic society was "sheer Rousseauan romanticism." Like Redfield, John Collier viewed the Pueblo community of Taos as a place retaining primitive virtues in a modern setting. But he also felt that the place needed outside Western help in order to survive. So while he viewed Taos as a preserved fragment of a primitive ideal that offered remedies to the evils of modern Western society he also felt that it required Western development and flexibility to break its static pattern that threatened it with extinction in the face of a changing world. His valuations of Pueblo society were based on his Western European values.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terrorism*, (New York: Pantheon, 2004), p. 32. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979, c1978), 2-3, 11, 205-9; Nicholas Tromans, ed. *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 6 In this work Stephen Duechar and Amy Meyers, referencing Edward W. Said, defined Orientalism as a term used by art historians and literary and cultural studies scholars for the imitation or depiction of aspects of Middle Eastern and East Asian cultures (Eastern Cultures) by writers, designers and artists from the West. In particular, Orientalist painting, depicting more specifically "the Middle East," was one of the many specialisms of 19th-century Academic art, and the literatures of Western countries took a similar interest in Oriental themes.

<sup>78</sup>Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlán Restudied* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951) 428-40.; Susan M. Rigdon *The Culture Façade: Art, Science and Politics in the Work of Oscar Lewis*

Edward Said defined orientalism as a colonialist rationalization where Western societies romanticized Arab culture according to stereotypical exotic characteristics that failed to consider the full richness and complexity of this culture. This was done to enhance Western attitudes of superiority and to justify colonialism. In a similar sense, U.S. and Mexican elites first justified their cultural, political, and economic dominance of indigenous people according to fixed stereotypes. When later seeing indigenous people in an appealing light, they continued to regard them as subjects lacking their own capacity for agency. Said stated that orientalism, as he defined it, was used to justify the Western European colonialism of East Asia. Many Americans and Mexicans, including John Collier, possessed a similar colonial spirit, Collier going as far as advocating the British colonial system of indirect rule. Even when viewed in the positive light as potential saviors of western civilization indigenous people needed the “guidance” of Western Europeans to be saved, to survive, and to become saviors.<sup>79</sup>

Still, despite his paternalistic tendencies, Collier was moved by the vitality of Native Americans. In an article written at the time of Collier’s death D’Arcy McNickle stated that that Native American society astonished John Collier. He was amazed that Indian society could survive in an environment so hostile to simple folk values. In spite of oppression, appropriation of their wealth, threats of extermination through wars and pestilence, they continued to remain visible: keeping their languages, their religion, their kinship systems, and world views. This tale of survival confirmed Collier’s belief that

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(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 28-36.; Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican*, 115-116 and 124.

<sup>79</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979, c1978), 2-3, 11, 205-9

societies “are living things, sources of power and values of their members; to be and to function in a consciously living, aspiring, striving society is to be a personality fulfilled.”<sup>80</sup>

John Collier wrote: “Let the Indians and the nations remember: to overcome Indian poverty at the cost of sundering the Indian from his grouphood and his own soul, is a pathway to doom—to the Indian’s doom and doom of the world’s access to the infinitudes.” Collier shared with some of his Mexican Indgenesta contemporaries a hope that his work would help led to an increasing Native American participation in areas of interest within general society. Along with this he hoped for a renewal of traditional tribalism. He felt that identity with an Indian community, even an urban community of relocated tribesmen, provided the base from which adaptive and assimilative processes could draw new growth. Without such a base, there could only be a withering of social impulses.<sup>81</sup>

As a product of the progressive era Collier had the reformer’s tendency of believing that he knew what was good for the masses, that he knew the path toward social liberation. But some maintain that Collier was a part of a culture of social control par excellence. Collier believed in a redemptive possibility in Native American society and was interested in “adapting” and saving those elements of it he and his “professionals” deemed worth saving. In the process those targeted for salvation often suffered

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<sup>80</sup> D’Arcy McNickle, “John Collier’s Vision,” *The Nation* June 3, 1968 From Accession 1990-M-18 of the John Collier Papers, Yale University.

<sup>81</sup> John Collier, “The Indian as Ancient Man: and the Ancient Man as the Primal Ecologist” 1964, Accession 1990-M-018, John Collier Papers Yale University.



unintended consequences. As D.H. Lawrence noted: “It is (Collier’s) savior’s will to set the claws of his own White egotistic benevolent volition into them.”<sup>82</sup>

The stated mission of John Collier, and the indigenistas that he was a part of, was the final assimilation of native indigenous peoples into the greater society of their nation. In light of today we must consider this goal to be a failure. In Mexico and in the United States there continue to exist indigenous peoples, who with varying degrees of success, continue to hold on to a unique culture and national identity. They continue to exist outside the greater society of their nation and in recent years seem to define a new vision of that greater society: a society more diverse and pluralistic than the “greater society” envisioned by Postrevolutionary Mexicans, or “Friends of the Indians” or any of the champions of cultural amalgamation that moved and shaped the concern for the future of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas.

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<sup>82</sup> Thomas James “Rhetoric and Resistance: Social Science and Community Schools for Navajos in the 1930’s” *History of Education Quarterly* 28 (4), 604-605.; William Willard, “The Plumed Serpent and the Red Atlantis” *Wicazo Sa Review*, Vol. 4. No. 2 (Autumn. 1988), 21.

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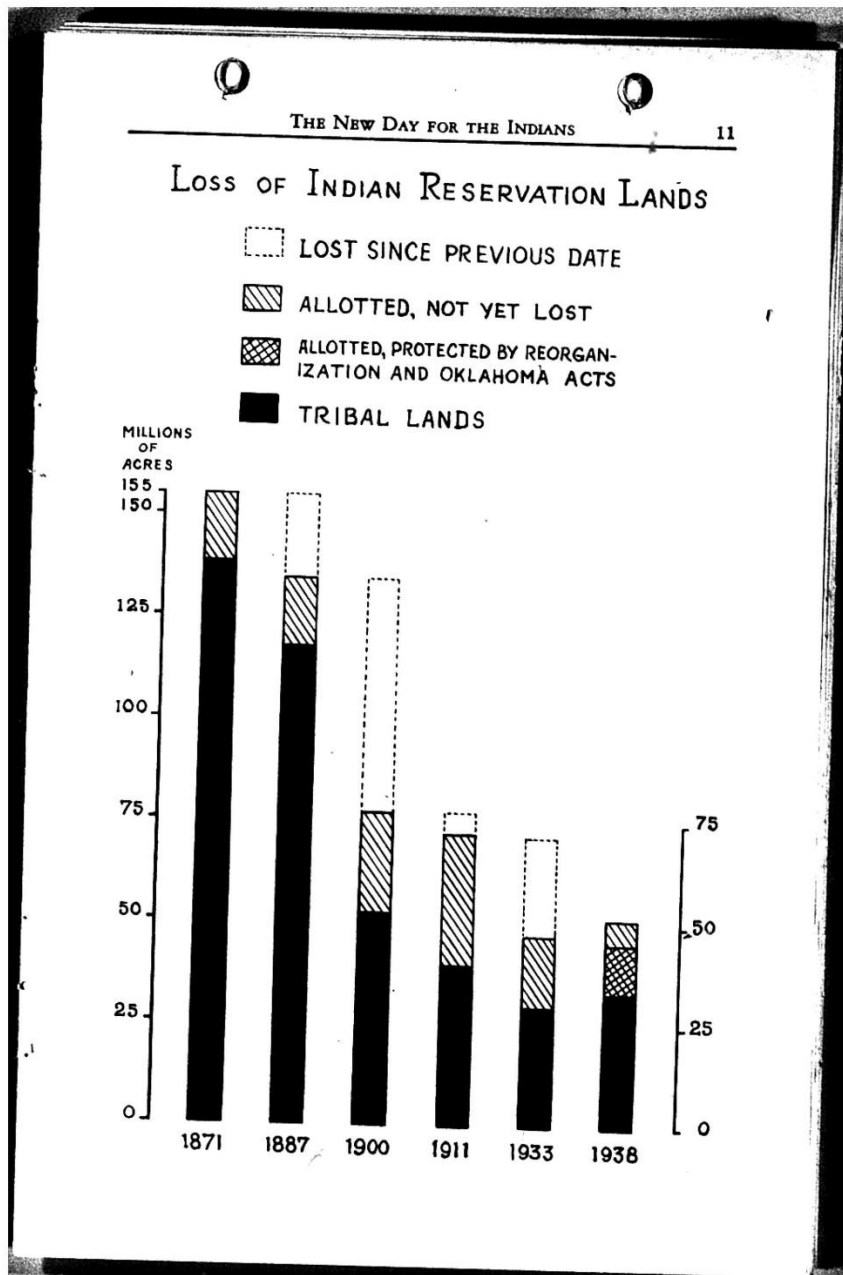
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#### E-Mail CORRESPONDENCE

Malcolm Collier, e-mail message to author, April 15, 2013

Appendix:



This graph compiled by

John Collier in the 1930s is another way of showing loss of Indian land. Note the slight increase in Tribal lands following Collier's appointment. Collier would have liked to have increased this but politics tended to restrict such efforts. Source: *The New Day for the Indians: A Survey of the Working of the Indian Reorganization Act*, Jay B. Nash ed. (New York: Academy Press, 1938),

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