

MURALISM AND THE STATE IN POST-REVOLUTION MEXICO, 1920–1970

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I begin with a problem: throughout much of the twentieth century, the Mexican muralists—especially *los tres grandes* (José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros)—claimed to occupy the role of the “voice and vote” of the Mexican national consciousness.¹ Purportedly acting as mediators between “the people” and the state,² as the “voice of the voiceless,”³ the muralists elaborated a legendary visual program remembered for lauding the worker, the Indian, and the peasant as active agents of national formation. In so doing, *los tres grandes* positioned themselves as visionaries and moral leaders of the new post-Revolution Mexico, acting as political leaders at the national level during the tumultuous period of national consolidation and beyond. And they provided this leadership more than any other visual art movement in Mexico or in the Americas, to such an extent that Siqueiros could famously claim of muralism “there is no other way but ours.”⁴

Countering this view is another arguing that the muralists’ self-appointed role as guardians of the national soul played a reactionary role in Mexico’s formation as a modern nation-state. This alternative view asserts that they did not act as mediators between the state and the masses to the benefit of those peoples, but instead assisted in perpetuating a state-sponsored social order that continually marginalized popular demands. In his 1958 manifesto “The Cactus Curtain,” José Luis Cuevas compared muralism’s stranglehold on Mexican national culture to Stalinist totalitarianism, echoing earlier criticisms from *los Contemporáneos*.⁵ Anthropologist Roger Bartra has repeatedly detailed the procedures by which “government bureaucracy gives the seal of

approval to artistic and literary creation, so as to restructure [that creation] in accordance with established canons" of national cultural identity. Thus generated primarily from state mandates rather than from any real attention to popular culture, the "myth" of a Mexican "revolutionary nationalism" "carries out an enormously important function in regulating the [national] consensus on which the state is based."⁶ In Bartra's view, muralism and other officially sponsored arts served not as a conduit of popular opinion upward from the masses to their political leaders, but rather as a means of channeling and neutralizing popular power.

What are we to make of such divergent views? How might we evaluate the implicit claim of *los tres grandes* that the mural movement functioned, in the absence of a fully formed civil society, as a surrogate to safeguard the rights of downtrodden peoples? What can an interrogation of muralism's trajectory vis-à-vis the state tell us about the remarkably intimate relationship in Mexico between culture and political power? My argument will be that the reality of muralism's role in Mexico's state formation lies somewhere in between these two views I have just sketched. It has to do in part with the conditions under which the muralists worked. Mexican artists of the 1920s and 1930s, in constant interchange with an international avant-garde, radically reconceptualized European avant-garde precepts in terms of Mexico's specific historical conditions, and in doing so, began a vibrant exchange regarding the formulation of modernity in nations beyond Europe. Muralism's utopian vision of a shared cultural patrimony that interwove the avant-garde with the popular opened up unprecedented space for public debate on the character of Mexican national identity. Yet because there was no strong civil society, the muralists depended heavily upon the state not only economically (no thriving art market existed until well after World War II), but also politically and ideologically. The shortage of alternative outlets meant that artists—even the politically and aesthetically renegade Siqueiros—relied on the state to elaborate their utopian aspirations. Muralism's development thus had much to do with the coincidence of those aspirations with the needs of state consolidation as well as the state's management of the Mexican intellectual community—including the artistic avant-garde, and especially the muralists—in the service of its long-range plans for modernization.⁷ The Mexican state sponsored muralism, I argue, not as a focused project with a clear goal, but as an *ad hoc* response to diverse social and political situations. Reciprocally, muralism developed during a period when the state, in the early unstable stages of consolidation, was forced to accede to some of the muralists' aspirations and to the essential indeterminacy of art's formal procedures.

An investigation of the process by which muralism became the standard-bearer for the official state ideology of "revolutionary nationalism" can explain why the muralists and their artistic production were caught up in the uneven development of modernity in post-Revolution Mexico.⁸ Individuals, movements, and regimes all responded to the overwhelming urge toward state-sponsored modernization that marked Mexico indelibly in the twentieth century; this is the case whether the regimes were populist or

authoritarian, socialist or developmental capitalist. Examination of such circumstances, in turn, can tell us a great deal about the disjunctive nature of modernization in what Beatriz Sarlo has qualified as the "peripheral modernity" experienced by Latin America.⁹

This essay looks at four periods in the development of muralism, beginning with the immediate aftermath of the Revolution (1920-24) and moving on to nationalist authoritarianism under President Plutarco Elías Calles and the Maximato (1924-34), then to socialism under President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40), and finally to the reversal of Cárdenas' socialist programs and the institutionalization of capitalism under Presidents Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-46), Miguel Alemán (1946-52), and beyond.

General Alvaro Obregón came to power in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution—a revolution that launched the country's transition from what Laurence Whitehead has termed an "oligarchic" state to a "modernizing" one.¹⁰ The modernizing state, in this paradigm, favored the urban bourgeoisie (rather than oligarchic landed colonial families based on a semi-feudal agrarian economy); import-substitution industrialization that sought to diminish Mexico's dependence on foreign investment; state economic interventionism (instead of laissez-faire economic policies controlled by an elite few with no government regulation); and nationalism based on inclusion of the masses, at least symbolically (over the Eurocentrism of nineteenth-century nationalisms, which excluded those masses). Obregón astutely realized that reconstruction after the Revolution depended not simply on economic recovery from the devastating effects of civil war. Nor did it depend solely on building a strong, centralized state. It also required the comprehensive manipulation of symbols of Mexican identity on both cultural and political levels.

The Revolution ruptured entrenched oligarchic circuits of power to open new political opportunities for the middle class, but there was no art market to speak of in its aftermath—a sign of the weakness of the urban bourgeoisie during this period.¹¹ Indeed, the state was the primary source of artistic patronage, and Obregón took advantage of this situation to set up a state-run culture. One of his first moves in 1920 was to appoint the liberal lawyer-philosopher, José Vasconcelos, as Minister of Public Education. Vasconcelos proposed a cultural program in which the artist-intellectual was a "redeemer" and "prophet" for "the oppressed." "Art and knowledge must serve to improve the condition of the people," Vasconcelos exhorted, urging all Mexican intellectuals to "leave their ivory towers and seal a pact of alliance with the Revolution."¹² The cultural messianism of Vasconcelos' program was based on a concept of *mestizaje*, in which European culture would rescue the Indian from his "underdeveloped" ways.¹³ Vasconcelos hired the muralists to paint this ideology, and his project for Mexico's spiritual renewal through high culture affected mural production through 1923. Indeed, Vasconcelos toed the obregonista line in that he avoided any direct reference to the violence of the previous decade, and he made sure that his muralists did likewise. Thus, Orozco's *Maternity* at the National Preparatory School (the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, or Prepa) in Mexico





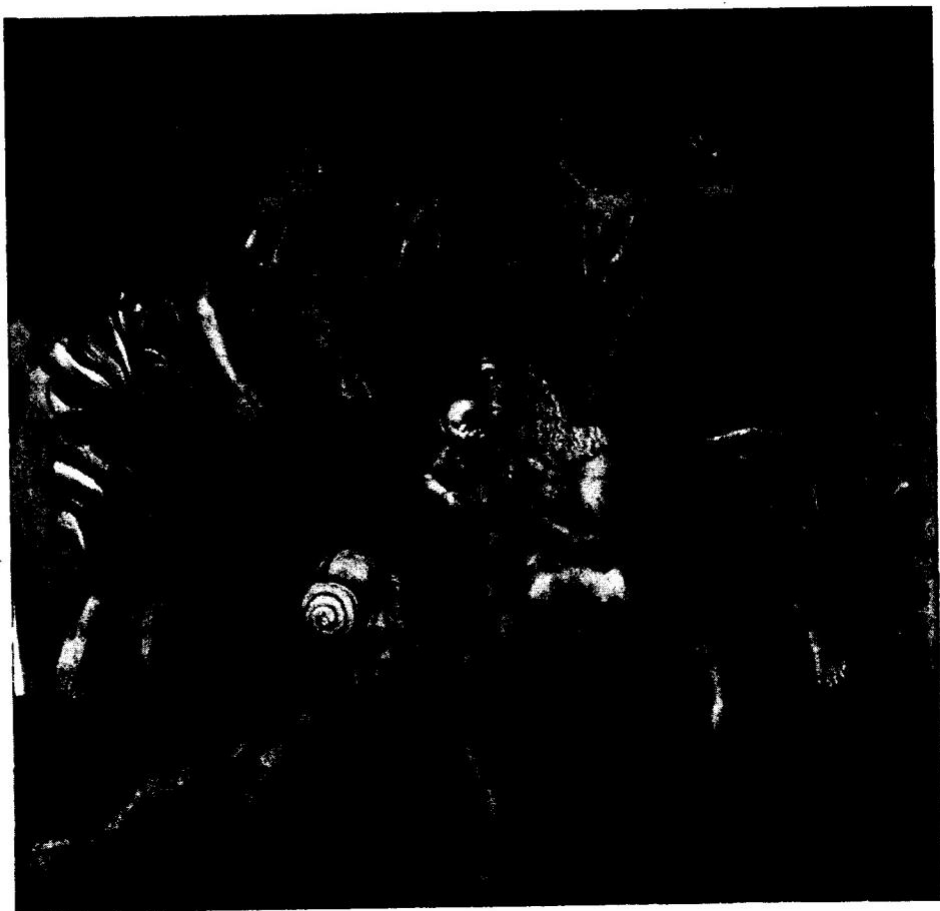


FIGURE 1.1

José Clemente Orozco. *Maternity*, National Preparatory School (1923). © 2010 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SOMAAP, Mexico City. Photograph: Bob Schalkwijk

City makes no reference to Mexico's tumultuous history, instead addressing Italian Renaissance painting traditions with a blonde Madonna—beautiful, but strategically distant from any indigenous culture (figure 1.1). Rivera's mural *Creation* centers not on a European but on the allegorical mestizo figure "Primal Energy,"¹⁴ meant to symbolize the uplifting blend of indigenous and European races, while Man and Woman, sitting at the right and left bases of the mural, rearticulate the mestizo body through a monumentalizing post-cubist stylistics. Yet the surrounding allegorical figures still derive primarily from Italian Byzantine and Renaissance models, while Man and Woman reference the biblical Adam and Eve before the Fall (figure 1.2). *Creation*, in fact, emerged as the principal symbol of Vasconcelos' mystical nationalism—deliberately omitting



FIGURE 1.2
Diego Rivera. *Creation*, National Preparatory School (1922–23). © 2010 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./Artists Rights Society (ARS). Photograph: Bob Schalkwijk/Art Resource

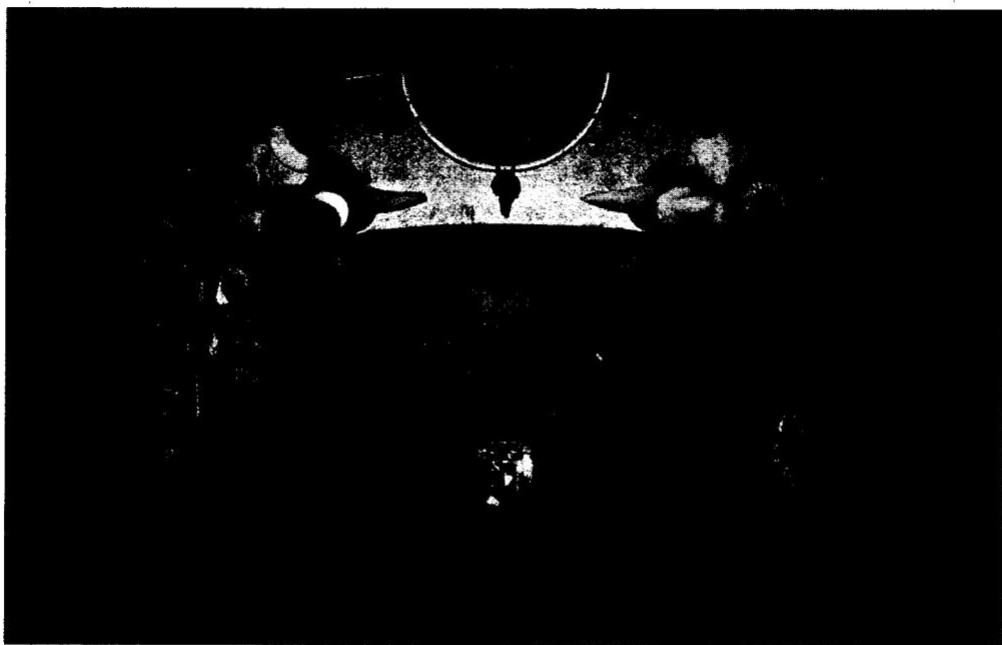


FIGURE 1.2

Diego Rivera. *Creation*, National Preparatory School (1922–23). © 2010 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./Artists Rights Society (ARS). Photograph: Bob Schalkwijk/Art Resource

any reference to the class violence of the Revolution, in order to give art a redemptive, regenerative role in post-Revolutionary Mexico.

How did such early murals function ideologically? How did they fulfill state needs? In what ways were they responsive to popular or avant-garde concerns? Early muralism was certainly a heterogeneous affair, caught up in tensions between artistic imaginings and the often improvisational nature of Mexico's pre-World War II state formation. Vasconcelos, for example, clearly knew that public arts such as muralism could help consolidate a vision of the nation. But he never conceived of muralism as a stand-alone project, nor was he (or anyone) able to explain what precise form that vision should take. Yet in the immediate aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, Vasconcelos, Obregón, and other state officials sought to use government patronage of muralism to navigate between the need to legitimate the state's national base and the need to calm international fears. Foreign trade deteriorated in the years after the civil war, largely as a result of clauses in the 1917 Constitution restricting foreign property ownership. Relations with the United States were especially tense, although in the Bucareli Accords of 1923 Mexico resolved some grievances of US corporations in exchange for official US recogni-

tion of Obregón's government. On the domestic front, Obregón faced armed challenges to his authority from regional *caudillos* and peasant groups. He turned to muralism for three purposes. The first was to signal to the international community Mexico's transformation from semi-feudal agrarianism to a modern, industrialized nation-state on par with Europe and the United States. Muralism was the grandest cultural attempt at countering the international perception of Mexico as barbarous and primitive. The movement's European-trained avant-garde artists helped raise international awareness of Mexico's cultural sophistication, and by avoiding controversial themes, the murals presented an image of Mexico as civilized, modern, and safe for financial investment.

Obregón's second purpose was to use muralism internally to construct an ideology of cross-class national consensus. The Revolution had broken apart the narrow, self-reinforcing political and economic monopolies that characterized the nineteenth-century Porfiriato, and sent the oligarchic hacienda system of land tenure into decline. Obregón sought to capitalize on this, not to institute liberal parliamentary democracy (as President Madero had envisioned before his assassination in 1913) but rather to incorporate Mexico's incipient national bourgeoisie and proletariat, along with the rural sectors, into an increasingly centralized government.¹⁵ It was hoped that muralism would translate this new situation into a visual ideology palatable to all concerned. The movement's early experimentation reconfigured the national patrimony, inspired by an extensive amalgam of pre-Conquest sculpture, painting, and monumental architecture; colonial churches and baroque painting; popular cantina murals; motifs from traditional pottery, lacquer ware, and weaving; European avant-gardisms from cubism, futurism, constructivism, and beyond. All of these arts afforded source material for utopian visions of a unified, modern nation. Muralists helped demarcate this nascent cultural field—transformed by new connections between artists, government officials, unions, and popular movements—as a space of populist nationalism. In so doing, they opened up new avenues for cross-class dialogue, but also simultaneously provided a means for the state to channel mass demand for social justice away from the political and economic spheres.

And third, Obregón turned to muralism to resolve the monumental problem of the rebellious peasantry. Although Zapatista agrarianism had largely been defeated, the rural masses had stepped firmly onto the stage of history. Local and regional interests crucially affected the efficacy of federal policy in the countryside, and regional rebellions continued throughout the century.¹⁶ Campesinos, who could no longer be ignored, had to be made to believe that Obregón's government represented their best interests (especially on the land question) and, at the same time, had to be prevented from interfering with efforts to turn Mexico into a modern, profit-making nation. Obregón and his successors thus sought—with varying degrees of success—to incorporate the masses as symbol into the new nationalist rhetoric while at the same time undermining their real political effectiveness and subordinating them to the centralized state. Muralism was crucial to visualizing this strategy.

The structure of the state thus turned from the Porfirian exclusionary model toward an inclusive ideology in which the state incorporated and modernized all levels of society. This model of the state in part resembles its European bourgeois counterpart. But whereas European modernization was generated through a close collaboration between European states and a developed bourgeoisie, the post-Revolution Mexican state had no strong middle class upon which to rely. The state was thus vulnerable to internal pressures—from latifundio oligarchies and regional strongmen, the rural and urban masses, the military, and the Catholic Church. It was also vulnerable to external pressures, particularly from the United States.¹⁷ As a result, in late 1923, as the condition for recognizing the Mexican government, the United States forced Mexico to guarantee that it would not nationalize United States-owned industries (the Bucareli Accords). Obregón, unwilling to risk the continuity of government by holding truly democratic elections, named Plutarco Elías Calles as his successor. The military revolted against this decree—an event with immediate and harsh consequences for the muralists. Vasconcelos sided with Adolfo de la Huerta's attempted coup d'état, voicing disapproval of Obregón's authoritarian tactics and kowtowing to US business interests. But the power of the Mexican state itself remained precarious until after World War II, and it could tolerate no dissent from artists and intellectuals. Vasconcelos was forced into exile in July 1924 and Obregón put a halt to virtually all mural projects.¹⁸ In December 1924 Calles took power as *El Jefe Máximo* (Supreme Leader).

By late 1923, the muralists had radicalized their politics in an effort to distance themselves from Vasconcelos.¹⁹ Their paintings now described contemporary political events rather than allegories, past histories, or scenes from folklore. Their work developed sophisticated ideas about class and race that privileged the peasantry and proletariat but nevertheless advocated populist cross-class alliances with certain sectors of the bourgeoisie, particularly intellectuals. Through an iconography of workers, peasants, and Indians, the muralists shifted their rhetoric, taking a position to the left of Vasconcelos but remaining within the limits of state-sponsored populism. Rivera's *Distribution of the Land* (1923–24), for instance, celebrates a utopian fiction in which the state implements the Plan de Ayala's mandated restitutions of land, while Emiliano Zapata and Otilio Montaña look on (see plate 2).²⁰ Siqueiros painted the powerfully somber *Burial of a Worker* (1923–24), one of the earliest murals to portray a Mexicanized proletariat (see figure 8.6). Orozco began his series of drawings, *Horrors of the Revolution*, translating their raw pessimism into the sublime tragedy of the 1926 Prepa murals (see figure 2.3).

With Calles in power, however, the muralists were tainted by their earlier affiliation with Vasconcelos and their increasing connections to the Mexican Communist Party (PCM).²¹ The state, not yet stable enough to control potential threats, tended toward coercion and outright repression. Calles banned the PCM in 1929 and brought organized labor unions to heel, subordinating labor to the centralized state apparatus—a configuration of state-labor relations that would remain a hallmark of the Mexican state throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Many muralists were prominently involved



FIGURE 1.3

Ramón Alva de la Canal. *Cultural Mission* (1930). © 2011 Museo Nacional de Arte/Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura. Photograph: Robin Greeley

in PCM leadership as well as in the Party's paper *El Machete*.²² Once the Party was banned, they were fired, demoted, or exiled. Some, such as Fermín Revueltas, were reduced to painting shop signs or other menial jobs.²³ Siqueiros and Roberto Reyes Pérez gave up mural painting to engage in political activism and repeated confrontation with the state.²⁴ Orozco had already gone into self-imposed exile in the United States. Mistrusting both institutionalized politics and blind faith in the "revolutionary masses," Orozco increasingly felt that, with the Maximato's turn toward authoritarianism, monumental public painting provided the sole possible redemptive stance against human degradation.²⁵ Other muralists suffered internal exile in the form of government-sponsored

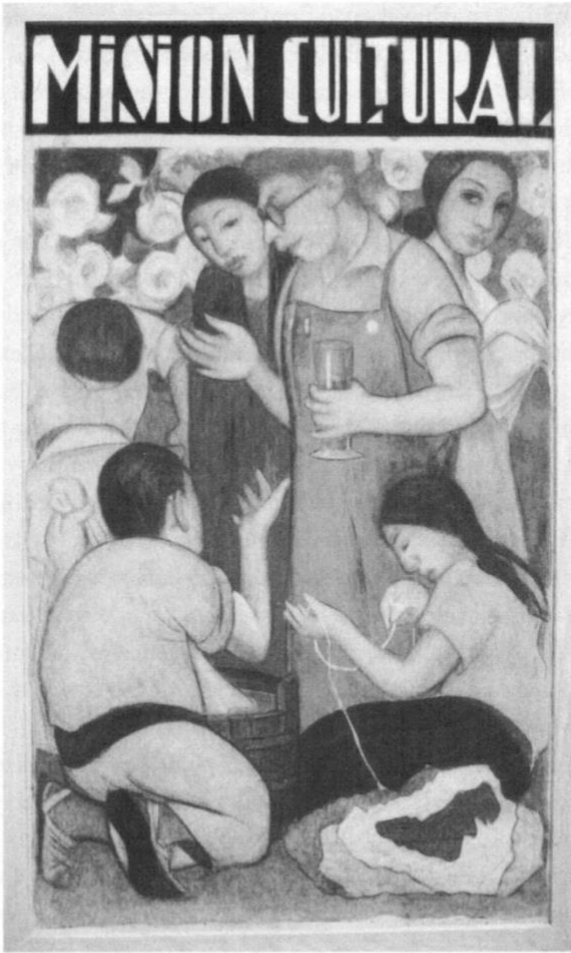


FIGURE 1.3

Ramón Alva de la Canal. *Cultural Mission* (1930). © 2011
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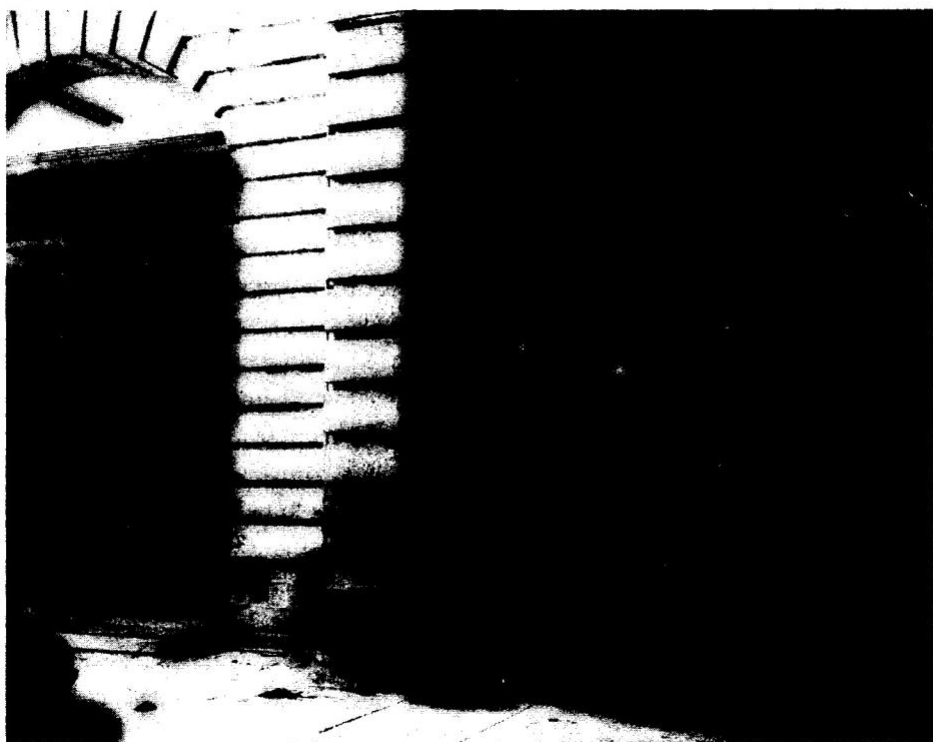


FIGURE 1.4

Lola Alvarez Bravo. Untitled (Rivera Murals at the Ministry of Education). Posthumous digital reproduction from original negative, Lola Alvarez Bravo Archive, Center for Creative Photography. © 1995 The University of Arizona Foundation.

“cultural missions” to the countryside.²⁶ In 1930, Ramón Alva de la Canal imaged the cultural missions as a positive opportunity that allowed intellectuals to put their utopian ideals into practice among the peasantry (figure 1.3). Yet as Alva de la Canal himself had lamented the year before, those cultural missions were often isolated from the urban centers of power and thus made culturally and politically marginal.²⁷

Even Rivera, although he had been allowed to continue working on his mural cycle for the Secretaría de Educación Pública (the Ministry of Public Education, or SEP), did so without pay. He produced murals such as the politically vague allegory *Mechanization of the Countryside* (1926) (see figure 3.6), which idealizes for an urban middle-class audience the modernization projects of the Maximato and imagines the nation as a brotherhood of peasant, worker, and soldier—with “soldier” a code word for the state, which was led consistently by military generals. The “enemies of the nation” are not the bourgeoisie, but *hacendados* and the Catholic Church, struck by a lightning bolt thrown by the Proletariat as a red-swathed allegory.²⁸ The courtyards with the murals, however, once Rivera had finished them, were used for storage and deliberately neglected because

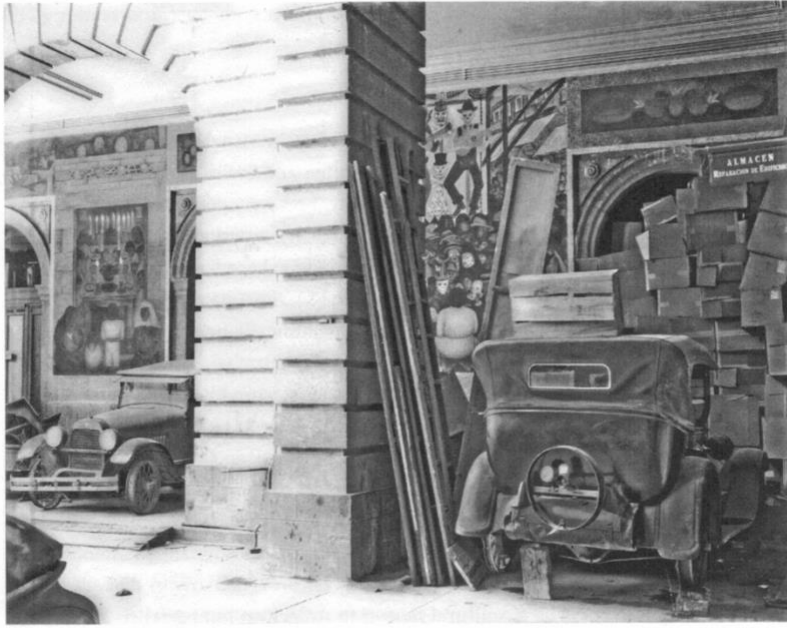


FIGURE 1.4
Lola Alvarez Bravo. Untitled (Rivera Murals at the Ministry of Education). Posthumous digital reproduction from original negative, Lola Alvarez Bravo Archive, Center for Creative Photography. © 1995 The University of Arizona Foundation.

the irrepressible Rivera had included explicitly communist rhetoric and scathing critiques of the bourgeoisie in other panels (figure 1.4).

At this point, muralism seems far from being lauded as the visual arbiter of official revolutionary nationalism. Without Vasconcelos as unifier and Calles as supporter, "Muralism" fragmented into "muralisms." Paradoxically, however, political disenfranchisement fostered vibrant ideological and aesthetic diversity, a period of visual innovation unrivaled in modern Latin America. Aesthetic production became a site of public debate about the character of *mexicanidad*, the nature of the Mexican state, and the relationship between modernity and modernization. Artists dynamically intervened in the public sphere—writing, engaging in political organizing, teaching (rural and urban), debating, and producing graphic works (illustrations, posters, pamphlets, etc.)—in ways that complemented muralism while expanding the limits and complexity of civic discourse.

Another set of national crises, however, forced the Mexican state to reassess its cultural policies. Mexico desperately needed the support of the United States, especially during the Great Depression. But the country's relations with *el Norte* remained uneasy. Muralism was again called on to present Mexico internally as defiantly nationalist, yet externally as open to foreign interests—especially oil.²⁹ Particularly in Rivera's hands, muralism began to serve as a "cultural liaison to American industrialists" and bankers.³⁰ One such banker, US Ambassador Dwight Morrow, commissioned Rivera in 1930 to paint murals in the historic city of Cuernavaca as a means of cementing ties between the two nations. Other industrialists soon followed suit: both Henry Ford and Nelson Rockefeller commissioned Rivera to paint murals in Detroit and New York City. Muralism's populism helped the Mexican state present itself at home as independent of *el Norte* while continuing efforts abroad to court foreign capital. The state also tried to use muralism to control opposition within Mexico, marginalizing those intellectuals and artists who did not accept the movement's social realism and nationalist commitments.³¹ Even artists in the mural movement—Siqueiros being the most notorious—could be persecuted for defying state political mandates or rewarded for complying.³²

Muralism also helped resolve another major threat to the stability of the state: the Cristero rebellion (1926–29), one of the bloodiest episodes between 1910 and 1950, occurred when state-sponsored modernization of the nation's predominantly rural population was most rapid. In response to increased antagonism between the Catholic Church and the anticlericalism and enforced agrarian policies of the state, many rural communities rose in revolt, demanding, at gunpoint, restitution of lands and an end to the state-enforced limits on the Church.³³ To combat the Cristero revolt, the state again sought to use muralism to contain the peasantry—with mixed results, which depended largely on local circumstances. Whereas urban murals were largely oriented toward city inhabitants and an international audience, murals painted under the auspices of the SEP's rural education program were aimed directly at the peasantry. Roberto Monte-



FIGURE 1.5

Roberto Montenegro. *Busca en la Tierra Tu Alimento y en el Libro Tu Libertad* (Search in the Earth for Your Nourishment and in the Book for Your Freedom). Mural for Ministry of Education rural education program in Tepecuacuilca, Guerrero. Reproduced in *El Sembrador* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, June 5, 1929).

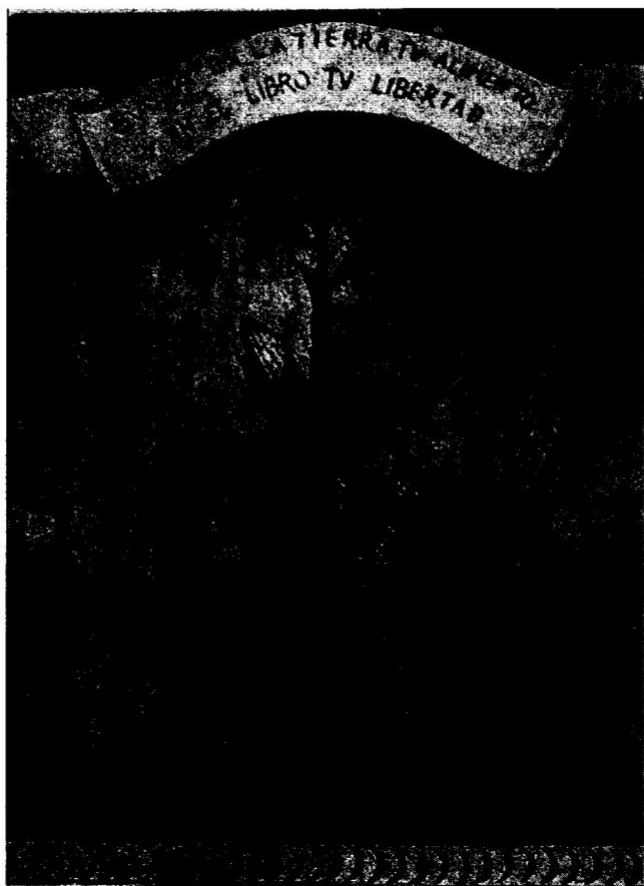


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Roberto Montenegro. *Busca en la Tierra Tu Alimento y en el Libro Tu Libertad* (Search in the Earth for Your Nourishment and in the Book for Your Freedom). Mural for Ministry of Education rural education program in Tepecuacuilca, Guerrero. Reproduced in *El Sembrador* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, June 5, 1929).

negro's school mural painted in 1929 for the town of Tepecuacuilca, for example, has a stylized cornstalk at the center, emphasizing pre-Conquest maize symbolism over Christian iconography (figure 1.5). The mural links ancient indigenous ties to the land with state agrarian and educational policies, admonishing its *campesino* viewers to find freedom in books rather than in religion.

It is also no accident that Rivera's Cuernavaca mural cycle, painted in 1930 in the immediate aftermath of the Cristero rebellion, highlighted the oppressive role Catholicism played in the conquest of Mexico and in the country's subsequent colonial history. Against this history of subjugation, Rivera paints Emiliano Zapata, the mustachioed



FIGURE 1.6
Diego Rivera. *Emiliano Zapata*, Palacio de Cortés, Cuernavaca (1930). © 2010 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./Artists Rights Society (ARS). Photograph: Bob Schalkwijk

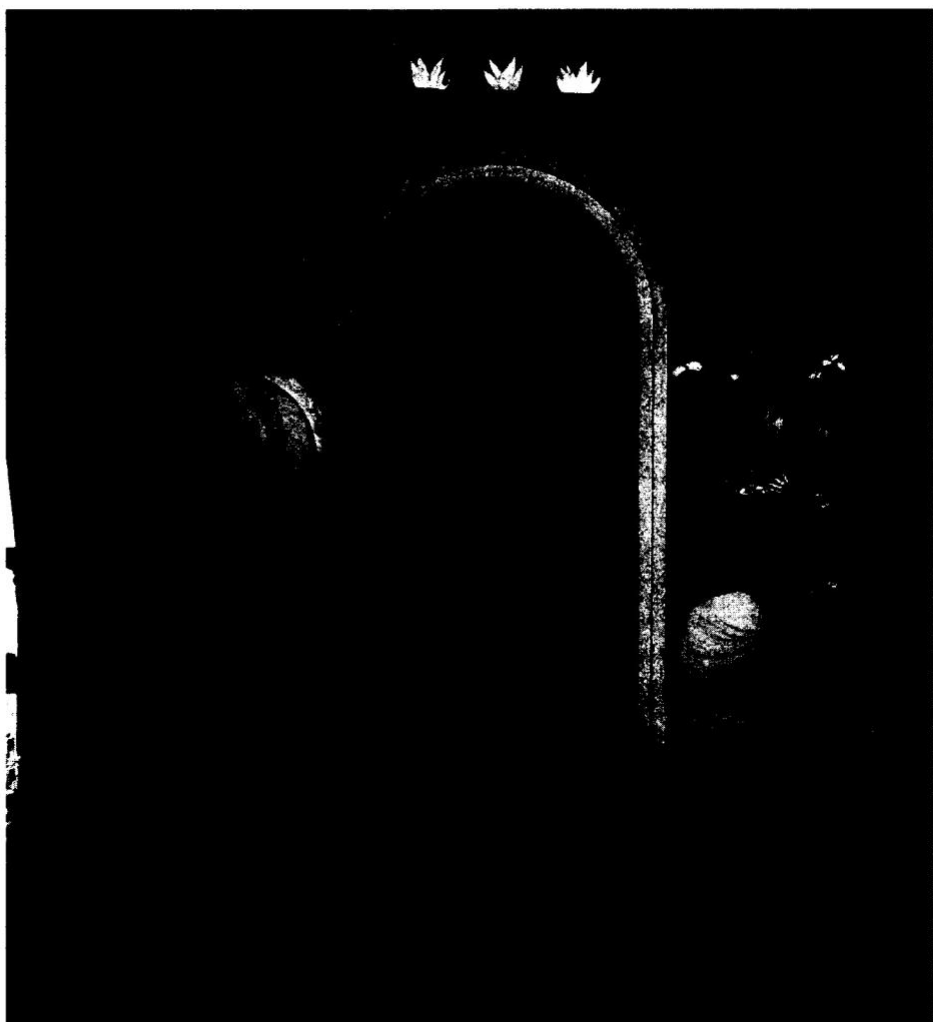


FIGURE 1.6

Diego Rivera. *Emiliano Zapata*, Palacio de Cortés, Cuernavaca (1930). © 2010 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./Artists Rights Society (ARS). Photograph: Bob Schalkwijk

hero of revolutionary peasant resistance (figure 1.6). Cuernavaca is the capital of Morelos, Zapata's home state. To paint Zapata there was to hail the Mexican government (and Rivera, its prize artist) as leaders of the oppressed.³⁴ Yet the reality differed considerably from this utopian ideal; in Morelos, Zapata's image was—and remains—a site of constant struggle between the state and the martyred peasant leader's rural followers. After Zapata's assassination in 1919, official histories at first portrayed him as a bandit and an outlaw.³⁵ The state, moreover, ran roughshod over local communities' modes of

political and moral organization, continually presenting agrarian reform as its "gift" to the *campesinos*, rarely presenting it as the realization of Zapatista demands for land restitution.³⁶

The Morelos peasantry, however, stubbornly refused to legitimate either this official view or Obregón's version of land reform, instead using their moral authority over Zapata's image to force the state to negotiate. Obregón soon realized that he "needed Zapata's name to reap the political benefits of his own appeal for land reform," both domestically and internationally.³⁷ Because Zapata, unlike Pancho Villa, had never fought the United States, he could be recuperated by post-Revolution administrations as a national figure without angering the United States. But in Mexico, Zapata's official image had to be shifted from that of class enemy of the bourgeoisie to that of national martyr.³⁸

Muralism was often caught up in this disagreement about historical interpretation between the state and rural peoples, and Rivera's Zapata was no exception. The artist claimed of his Zapata, "I took care to authenticate every detail by exact research, because I wanted to leave no opening for anyone to try to discredit the murals as a whole by the charge that any detail was a fabrication."³⁹ Such a claim—that "truth" is to be located in a realist, purely visual iconography outside political concerns—prompts questions about the appropriation of local heroes to legitimize state authority.⁴⁰ Rivera painted a highly ideological portrait of Zapata that supported efforts to harness the violent clashes of the Revolution and the Cristero rebellion for an ideology of national harmony. Rivera painted Zapata standing to one side of his horse, holding a farmer's sickle (rather than on horseback, gun in hand—the traditional warrior pose that Zapata readily adopted for photographers), placing the agrarian leader just above the viewer's eye level. Clothed in mythic *campesino* white, he seems almost conjoined with the equally mythic white horse, his legs superimposed over the horse's back hooves, as though man and animal were a single luminous being.⁴¹ Rivera places Zapata at the head of a line of peasant fighters, their faces echoing his. In this image, Zapata stands in unity with his people and with the natural world, unlike the *capataz* (foreman) and *conquistadores* on horseback elsewhere in the mural, who tower over the indigenous masses. More importantly, viewers see him just above eye level, so that an imagined camaraderie links us with Zapata's heroic struggle, eliding any cultural differences or class antagonisms. In front of this mural, we are all Zapatistas.⁴²

Here, as elsewhere, the Mexican state repeatedly used the iconic image of Zapata to fuse the rural masses and the self-proclaimed revolutionary state.⁴³ But the Cuernavaca mural effects that fusion subtly. Visually, Rivera's mural, by placing the revolutionary leader in the final panel, proclaims that history culminates in Zapata. He marks the defiant resolution to Mexico's long history of oppression—an oppression schematized as primarily colonial, rather than modern. The mural makes all viewers—whether peasant, elite, *indio*, or gringo tourist—not active historical actors but part of the undifferentiated mass who are merely implementing Zapata's vision. Thus, the modern state, although deliberately left out of the mural, is figured through its very absence, in the

empty physical space in front of the mural where spectators stand. In that space, viewers automatically do what the state commands; they stand passive, whatever their class position, before the mural that asserts the triumph of Zapata's land reform, which the caretaker state has purportedly implemented in the absence of Zapata himself. Rivera, in his mural, defines Mexico's modern state—not its rural peoples—as legitimate heir to Morelos' leader. He helps co-opt and disempower the revolutionary forces that Zapata represented and—much to the dismay of the Maximato—the Cristeros continued.⁴⁴

The Maximato and subsequent regimes stressed not Vasconcelos' model of *mestizaje*, but a model of *indigenismo* that mythologized the "authenticity" of indigenous and popular cultures as the basis for a national culture. This was a tactic, in part, for producing history. Official views on the nation's history coincided with the muralists' ideas of national cultural identity, resulting in the construction of a highly ideological version of Mexico's past under the rubric of *mexicanidad*. "Culture" and "history" became synonymous, and the muralists became the most flamboyant brokers of this relationship. They interpreted the past through the lens of a "revolutionary" present, selectively providing the grounds for an equally "revolutionary" future. In particular, the muralists conflated Mexico's pre-Conquest indigenous past with the state's modernization project, so that the past became the ideological referent for Mexico's industrialized future. Even the famously pessimistic Orozco would frame his great 1939 Cabañas murals according to this ideology, although he questions the standard presentation of that future as idyllic. His *Cortés*, an apocalyptic machine-man and a precursor of the Terminator, combines the horror of the Conquest with the distopia of modern technology (see figure 8.2).

This effort to implement a national culture of *indigenismo* and resolve the problem of unruly indigenous and rural peoples at the national level, which historian Laurence Whitehead has called the "federalization of the Indian question," further resulted in expansion of state powers at the expense of local *patrones*.⁴⁵ It was also a tactic to gain the support of resistant peasants for the state's modernization project, which sought to industrialize Mexico's agrarian production and subordinate the masses to the state's single-party regime. During the 1920s and 1930s, this tactic did not always succeed, because both muralists and the masses continually tested the limits of state ideology.⁴⁶ When the mural collective, Alianza de Trabajadores de las Artes Plásticas, painted an anticlerical mural in a working class school that infuriated parents, for instance, the collective sought (but failed to get) police protection.⁴⁷ In Oaxaca, by contrast, teachers complained to the governor about a Virgen del Perpetuo Socorro that local muralists in Tezoatlán had painted on the school wall.⁴⁸ Beyond such iconography wars over religion, however, the effect of muralism's focus on the indigenous, peasant, and working classes was at once to incorporate those sectors into official history and to acknowledge the power of the masses to challenge that history. In mediating between the state and civil society, muralism risked awakening the latent revolutionary power of campesinos and workers. But without that mediation, the state could have been accused of illegitimacy for ignoring popular versions of history.

Cárdenas—aware that Calles' authoritarianism had masked, rather than resolved, Mexico's volatile social tensions—renewed state support for muralism, which had lapsed during the Maximato, as a means to garner social consensus. Despite his legendary reputation as friend of the *campesino*, however, Cárdenas continued the Maximato's interventionist modernizing policies in both the countryside and the cities, and, like the previous regimes, enlisted the muralists in the effort to industrialize agriculture and incorporate the peasantry into the national economy. As part of its corporate socialist plans to organize workers and farmers into federalized unions tied to the state, the Cárdenas regime sponsored a wealth of murals in proletarian and rural communities; plate 1 is an example of this abundance in stained glass. Debates on the role of the peasantry in post-Revolution Mexico centered on the image of the *campesino*. The state, in creating a coherent sense of *mexicanidad*, had to contend with the popular. In the murals, the visual, social, and political elements combined to encourage dialogue about the nature of citizenship for Mexico's rural peoples.

After 1940, the Mexican state intensified efforts to industrialize, adopting the developmentalist economic policy of import-substitution industrialization to reduce Mexico's dependence on foreign investment. The regimes of Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940–46) and Miguel Alemán (1946–52) kept Cardenismo's corporate state structure, but rejected its socialist rhetoric in favor of the full-out, state-sponsored consumer capitalism known as the "Mexican Miracle."⁴⁹ In contrast to Cárdenas' focus on the peasant and working classes, these regimes strove to consolidate an urban consumerist bourgeoisie on the US model, linking consumerism to the health of the national economy.⁵⁰ Essential to this shift was the use of old institutions, including muralism, for new purposes. As historian Alan Knight puts it, "the Alemán *sexenio* [six-year presidential term], imbued with a modernizing, Cold War ideology, and a get-rich-quick ethic, quarried the rubble of Cardenismo and utilized the material—the corporate party, the mass institutions, the powerful executive, the tamed army and subordinated peasantry—to build a new Mexico."⁵¹ Muralism was further institutionalized through a series of highly public official awards, exhibitions, and commissions, and mined for its ability to project a unified national ethos as representative of "the struggles and desires of the masses" even as the Mexican state programmatically turned its back on those masses.⁵²

Yet whereas Cárdenas and previous regimes had focused on controlling the actual murals, the politically pragmatic regimes of Ávila Camacho and Alemán concentrated on harnessing the *aura* of the mural painters for the Mexican state. Neither president was interested in the content of what the muralists had to say, but both wanted to manipulate the personas of the painters to serve the state. For this reason they systematically linked the mass media cult of personalities to the state, cultivating a few muralists and others as "national" figures. In 1943, for example, Ávila Camacho founded the prestigious Colegio Nacional de México, with Orozco and Rivera representing the visual arts. He permitted Siqueiros to return from his enforced exile over the Trotsky affair,⁵³ and in 1945, allowed Siqueiros his first state commission since the mid-1920s, on the third floor of the Palacio



FIGURE 1.7

David Alfaro Siqueiros. *New Democracy*, Palacio de Bellas Artes (1945). © 2010 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SOMAAP, Mexico City. Photograph: Bob Schalkwijk/Art Resource

de Bellas Artes. Ávila Camacho also used muralism to further Mexico's foreign relations with prominent capitalist nations, especially the United States. During World War II, the Mexican state actively improved its deteriorated ties to the United States, which had reached an all-time low in 1938 over Cárdenas' nationalization of the oil industry. Muralism formed part of this approach, and the state made sure that works by Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros held prominent positions in the major exhibition *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art*, held in 1940 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Alemán continued this public relations strategy of state patronage, calling upon *los tres grandes*, in 1947, to form a national Commission of Mural Painting. The government awarded the National Art Prize to Orozco in 1946 and to Rivera in 1950. In 1952, Rufino Tamayo became the fourth *grande* when he added a mural panel to those painted by the Big Three in the Palacio de Bellas Artes.

Thus only in the mid-1940s, when the government decided to embark on a developmentalist strategy of full industrialization, did relations between the state and its artists cease being contentious. For artists and intellectuals, the Mexican Miracle meant a reduction in direct repression that lasted until the 1960s, because the stability of the state encouraged its "nurturing" of the arts. But cooperation came at the cost of a genuine critical stance on the part of the muralists. Rivera, having long abandoned any true commitment to communism, adopted the anti-fascist rhetoric of hemispheric cooperation, painting *Pan-American Unity* (San Francisco, 1940) in response to the new wartime détente between Mexico and the United States and a series of Pan-American conferences the United States initiated to secure itself against Axis infiltration of the Americas.⁵⁴ Orozco's savage pessimism was now safely contained in the series of annual



FIGURE 1.8

Rufino Tamayo. *Nuestra Nacionalidad* (1952). © D.R. Rufino Tamayo/Herederos/México/2009/
Fundación Olga y Rufino Tamayo, A.C.



FIGURE 1.9

David Alfaro Siqueiros. *March of Humanity*. Siqueiros Cultural Polyforum (1965-71). © 2010 Artists
Rights Society (ARS), New York/SOMAAP, Mexico City. Photograph: Robin Greeley



FIGURE 1.8

Rufino Tamayo. *Nuestra Nacionalidad* (1952). © D.R. Rufino Tamayo/Herederos/México/2009/
Fundación Olga y Rufino Tamayo, A.C.

exhibitions at the Colegio Nacional.⁵⁵ With his mural *New Democracy* in the Palacio de Bellas Artes, Siqueiros surpassed Orozco and Rivera as Mexico's most highly regarded muralist (figure 1.7).⁵⁶ Siqueiros used the mural to display his technical innovations to full effect, but instead of his usual theme, class warfare, his mural took up the rhetoric of the government's cold war ideology, which pitted democracy against communism.⁵⁷ By 1952, Tamayo's mural *Nuestra Nacionalidad* signaled yet another shift, marking the ascendancy of abstraction over social realism (figure 1.8). Tamayo's abstraction could be characterized as profoundly Mexican but avoided the communist taint of muralism's social realism and conveniently coincided with the rise in the United States of abstract expressionism as the cultural embodiment of cold war anti-communism.⁵⁸

Not until the presidency of Alemán did the fine arts—including muralism—receive consistent state support, and then it was only at the cost of any earlier socialist commitments. In this period the productive debates about muralisms finally gave way to the officially sanctioned unity of Muralism. The historian Enrique Krauze, looking back on this period, accused the muralists of capitulating: "The relationship between the government and the intellectuals had returned to the old, palmy days of Don Porfirio. . . . Converted into national icons, the mural painters . . . continued to rely on generous state patronage while they painted the walls of public and private buildings, hotels, theaters, the homes of artists and high society."⁵⁹ Siqueiros' *March of Humanity*, produced from 1964 to 1971 under the violently repressive regimes of Presidents Díaz Ordaz and Echeverría, is perhaps the most famous example of the situation Krauze describes (figure 1.9).⁶⁰ The mural, housed in the Siqueiros Cultural Polyforum, a conference building on the grounds of the Hotel de México, aimed to signal both the end of Mexico's



FIGURE 1.9

David Alfaro Siqueiros. *March of Humanity*, Siqueiros Cultural Polyforum (1965–71). © 2010 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SOMAAP, Mexico City. Photograph: Robin Greeley

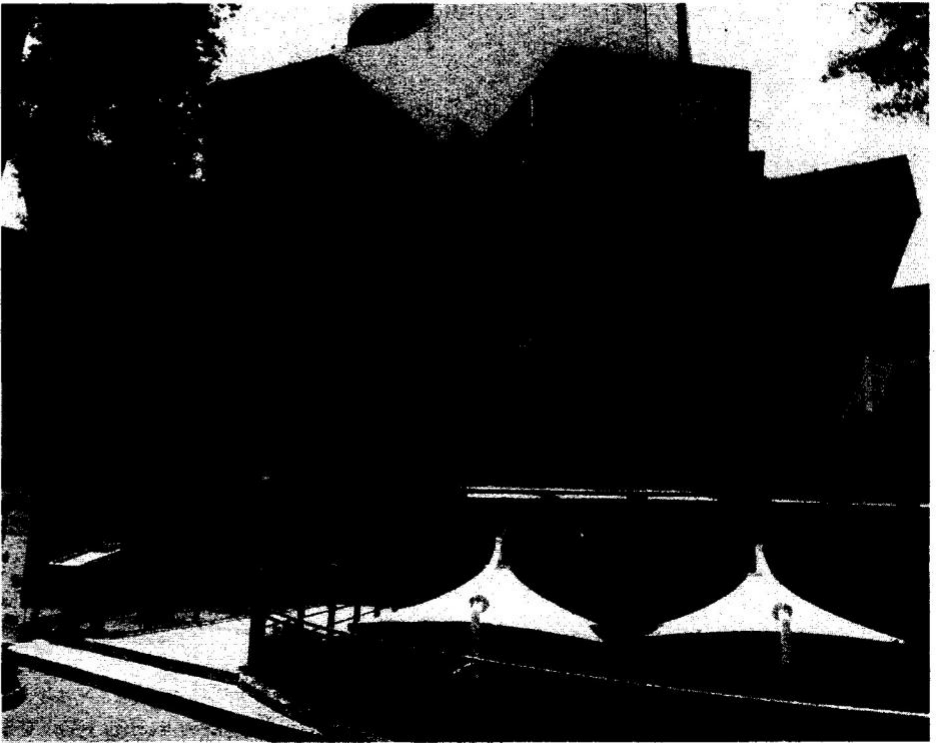


FIGURE 1.9

David Alfaro Siqueiros. *March of Humanity*, Siqueiros Cultural Polyforum (1965–71). © 2010 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SOMAAP, Mexico City. Photograph: Robin Greeley

internal social conflicts under the guidance of the revolutionary state and the openness of the nation to international tourism. The Mexican Miracle, however, obscured the growing disparity of income and increased political unrest among the nation's population. The government that sponsored Siqueiros' mural would also carry out a planned massacre during student protests in Mexico City in October 1968.⁶¹ Some three to four hundred unarmed students and bystanders, including children, were killed on the eve of the Olympic Games.⁶² The Tlatelolco Massacre remains a wound in the Mexican national psyche, signifying the abandonment of the Mexican people by their government. Siqueiros, however, not only continued to accept support from the state, but also condemned any disruption of the Olympic Games.⁶³ Although he did not specify the disruption to which he was referring, he did not mean the murderous police.

Four years later, in 1972, President Echeverría signed a law declaring Mexican muralism to be a part of the cultural patrimony of the nation.⁶⁴ The decree, although presented as a measure to preserve works from deterioration, vandalism, and neglect, was selectively implemented and thus for many it marked the death knell of the mural



FIGURE 1.8

Rufino Tamayo. *Nuestra Nacionalidad* (1952). © D.R. Rufino Tamayo/Herederos/México/2009/
Fundación Olga y Rufino Tamayo, A.C.

movement. Muralism, originally central to the rebuilding of the nation after the Revolution precisely because it provoked public debate, was now thoroughly institutionalized, its message of popular consciousness effectively neutralized. The adventure of the 1920s and 1930s had ended; it would be left to others outside the institutional reach of the state to express a popular national consciousness.⁶⁵

NOTES

1. Diego Rivera, "Manifiesto a los obreros y campesinos de México," (26 May 1930), reprinted in Rivera, *Arte y política*, ed. Raquel Tibol (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1979), p. 99. All translations in this chapter are by the author unless otherwise noted.

2. Two typical examples of the muralists' conception of "the people" might suffice: Siqueiros characterized muralism's relationship to "the people" thus: "The people follow us, they surround us, because our movement gets close to the people and lives from them, from them it extracts its juices and its essences." Siqueiros, "La corrupción en el arte" (1969) translated in Gilbert Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson, eds., *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 498. And, in the words of Rivera: "I tried always to be that which they call an artist, that is, a receiver of the struggles and desires of the masses and a transmitter that could offer the masses the synthesis of their desires, thus to serve them as their conscience and aid them in their social organization." Rivera, "La obra del pintor Diego Rivera," *Das Werk Des Malers Diego Rivera* (Berlin: Neuer Deutscher Verlag, 1928), reprinted in Diego Rivera, *Textos de arte*, ed. Xavier Moyssén (Mexico City: UNAM, 1986), p. 131.

3. Carlos Fuentes invokes this phrase with regard to twentieth-century Mexican intellectuals generally. Carlos Fuentes, interview, in Jorge Castañeda, *Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War* (New York: Knopf, 1993), p. 182.

4. David Alfaro Siqueiros, *No hay más ruta que la nuestra* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1945).

5. José Luis Cuevas, "La cortina de nopal," a 1957-59 series of articles published in *México en la cultura*, supplement to *Novedades*. The most important appeared in No. 468 (2 March 1958):1, 6; No. 473 (4 April 1958):7. Published in English in *Evergreen Review* No. 2 (1959):111-20. On the Contemporáneos, see my chapter "Nietzsche contra Marx in Mexico: The Contemporáneos, Muralism, and Debates over 'Revolutionary' Art in 1930s Mexico" in this volume.

6. Roger Bartra, *Oficio mexicano* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1993), pp. 32, 102.

7. On state management of intellectuals, see Nicola Miller, *In the Shadow of the State: Intellectuals and the Quest for National Identity in Twentieth-Century Spanish America* (London: Verso, 1999).

8. "Revolutionary nationalism," declared official policy under President Calles in 1930, expressed politically the idea that the nation-state embodied popular demands for social justice. See Francisco Valdés Ugalde, "Nationalism and the Polity in Mexico," unpublished paper, Brown University (1999), pp. 4-6, 17.

9. Beatriz Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 1930* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Visión, 1988).

10. Laurence Whitehead, "State Organization in Latin America since 1930," in Leslie Bethell, ed., *Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. VI, part 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 90-91.

11. See Christine Frérot, *El mercado de arte en México, 1950-1970* (Mexico City: INBA, 1990).

12. José Vasconcelos, "Discurso en la Universidad," in *Discursos 1920-1950* (Mexico City: Ediciones Botas, 1950), pp. 7-12.

13. José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica/The Cosmic Race*, [1925] trans. Didier T. Jaén (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 5.

14. Vasconcelos, quoted in Mari Carmen Ramírez, "The Ideology and Politics of the Mexican Mural Movement, 1920-1925" (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1989), p. 183. Ramírez analyzes the role of Vasconcelos' spiritual messianism in Rivera's *Creation*.

15. See Whitehead, "State Organization in Latin America since 1930."

16. The Cristero rebellion (1926-29) is the most important episode of post-Revolution rebellion, but resistance continued throughout the century, most recently and spectacularly embodied in the EZLN rebellion in Chiapas. See Jennie Purnell, *Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico: The Agraristas and Cristeros of Michoacán* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

17. See Gilbert Joseph, *Revolution from Without: Yucatán, Mexico, and the United States, 1880-1924* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988), especially Chapter 9; Arnaldo Córdova, *La ideología de la Revolución Mexicana: La formación del nuevo régimen* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1973), p. 280.

18. Presidential decree, issued August 1924. See SEP Archives, Colección: Personal Sobresaliente, Serie: Siqueiros, No. de expediente: S2/29

19. In September 1923, Siqueiros led the formation of the Syndicate of Technical Workers, Painters and Sculptors. In response to Huerta's attempted coup, Siqueiros and the Syndicate published a manifesto reiterating their support for Calles against Huerta's "counter-revolutionary" "bourgeois" movement. See the *Manifiesto of the Syndicate of Technical Workers, Painters and Sculptors*, this volume.

20. The Plan de Ayala, written by Montañó and mandated by Zapata, differed sharply from the agrarian reform envisioned by the 1917 Constitution; the former demanded land restitutions, while the latter decreed that land belonged not to the individual farmer but to "the nation," which would, in effect, lend it to the farmers. Despite Rivera's rosy picture, land distribution proceeded slowly under Obregón, and at an even slower pace under Calles. Cárdenas, by contrast, distributed more land in during his presidential term than all previous presidencies combined. See Alan Knight, "The Rise and Fall of Cardenismo," in Leslie Bethell, ed., *Mexico Since Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 256-64.

21. The Syndicate began an alliance with the PCM in late 1922; by early 1923, artists occupied several PCM leadership positions. The PCM at first supported Calles (thus the pro-government tone of the Syndicate's 1923 Manifesto) but then began to criticize him harshly when his presidency soon proved less than radical.

22. Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), pp. 35-37.

23. Ramírez, *The Ideology and Politics of the Mexican Mural Movement*, pp. 395-96; Leon-

ard Folgarait, *Mural Painting and Social Revolution in Mexico, 1920–1940. Art of the New Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 85.

24. Olivier Debroise, "Action Art: David Alfaro Siqueiros and the Artistic and Ideological Strategies of the 1930s," in *Portrait of a Decade: David Alfaro Siqueiros, 1930–1940* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1997), p. 29.

25. "Painting assails the mind. It persuades the heart." Orozco, quoted in Alma Reed, *Orozco* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 95.

26. On the cultural missions sponsored by the SEP from 1923 through 1938, see Secretaría de Educación Pública, *Las misiones culturales en 1927 (Las escuelas normales rurales)* (Mexico City: SEP, 1928); Secretaría de Educación Pública, *Las misiones culturales, 1932–33* (Mexico City: SEP, 1933); *Misiones culturales: los años utópicos, 1920–1938*, exhibition catalogue (Mexico City: CONACULTA/INBA/Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo, 1999); Mary Kay Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930–1940* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997).

27. Ramón Alva de la Canal was convinced that the SEP deliberately sent the most radical artists of the 30-30! movement on cultural missions in order to break it up. He wrote to Fernando Leal that he was forced into taking the job of cultural missionary "in order to fill [my] belly with potatoes." Sofia Rosales, "El anónimo muralismo de las Misiones Culturales," in *Misiones culturales: los años utópicos*, pp. 46–7.

28. Rivera's demonization of the Catholic Church clearly aimed to please the notoriously anticlerical Calles.

29. See Lorenzo Meyer, *México y los Estados Unidos en el Conflicto Petrolero (1917–1942)* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1972) and Nora Hamilton, *The Limits of State Autonomy: Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 72.

30. Anthony Lee, *Painting on the Left: Diego Rivera, Radical Politics and San Francisco's Public Murals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 51.

31. On the Contemporáneos, see my chapter "Nietzsche contra Marx in Mexico," this volume. See also Miller, *In the Shadow of the State*, pp. 50–51.

32. See Anreus, Chapter 2, and Jolly, Chapter 4, this volume.

33. In addition to Purnell, *Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico*, see Alan Knight, "Popular Culture and the Revolutionary State in Mexico, 1910–1940," *Hispanic American Historical Review* Vol. 74, No. 3 (1994): 393–444; Jean Meyer, *La Cristiada*, 3 vols., (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1974); David C. Bailey, *¡Viva Cristo Rey! The Cristero Rebellion and the Church-State Conflict in Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974); and Matthew Butler, *Popular Piety and Political Identity in Mexico's Cristero Rebellion: Michoacán, 1927–29* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

34. See my essay, "Aesthetic Statism and Peasant Resistance: Calles, the Cristero War and Diego Rivera's Cuernavaca Mural" forthcoming.

35. JoAnn Martin, "Contesting Authenticity: Battles over the Representation of History in Morelos, Mexico," *Ethnohistory* Vol. 40, No. 3 (Summer, 1993): 438–65.

36. John Womack Jr., *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1970), p. 372; Arturo Warman, "We Come to Object": *The Peasants of Morelos and the National State*, trans. Stephen Ault (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

37. Martin, "Contesting Authenticity," p. 450.

38. Zapata's official image changed dramatically between 1919 and the 1930s. See Martin, "Contesting Authenticity."

39. Rivera, translated in Victor Sorell, "The Photography as a Source for Visual Artists: Images from the Archive Casasola in the Works of Mexican and Chicano Artists," in *The World of Agustín Víctor Casasola: Mexico, 1900–1938* (Washington D.C.: The Fondo del Sol Visual Arts and Media Center, 1984), p. 19, quoted in Jane Creighton, "Bierce, Fuentes, and the Critique of Reading: A Study of Carlos Fuentes's Old Gringo," *South Central Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer, 1992):73. This statement seems to relate to both images of Zapata that Rivera painted at Cuernavaca. The second portrait is painted on the central pier, opposite Independence hero José María Morelos, and copies the 1914 Brehme photograph of the revolutionary.

40. Martin, in "Contesting Authenticity," develops this interrogation of the hegemonizing uses of authenticity in detail. She argues that such discourses of authenticity paradoxically "enable subversive practices by inviting consideration of the unauthentic and by encouraging practices that expose the arbitrary limits of the authentic" (p. 441).

41. Rivera's insistence on white strategically combines Zapata's advocacy for the peasantry with the popular myth that the Revolutionary's spirit, after his assassination, left his body to reside in that of his white horse. By contrast, the historical Zapata adored the fancy, silver-studded outfit of the *charro*, rode a dark horse, and never donned the campesino whites.

42. My use of this phrase echoes, with deliberate irony, that chanted by 1990s EZLN supporters: "*todos somos Zapatistas*."

43. Roger Bartra, *The Cage of Melancholy: Identity and Metamorphosis in the Mexican Character*, trans. Christopher Hall (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 164.

44. Rivera's mural pits Zapata against Catholicism, despite the fact that the Zapatistas (like the Cristeros) fought under the banner of Mexico's most venerated Catholic image: the Guadalupe Virgin. Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution, vol.1: Porfirians, Liberals and Peasants* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), p. 311.

45. Laurence Whitehead, "State Organization in Latin American since 1930," p. 24.

46. See Alan Knight, "Cardenismo: Juggernaut or Jalopy," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 26 (1994):73–107 and Stephen Haber, *Industry and Underdevelopment: The Industrialization of Mexico, 1890–1940* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 172–73.

47. Máximo Pacheco, interview in Cristina Pacheco, *La luz de México: Entrevistas con pintores y fotógrafos* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988), p. 500.

48. Benjamin Thomas Smith, "Anticlericalism and Resistance: The Diocese of Huajuapam de León, 1930–1940," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37 (August 2005):469.

49. On developmentalism and import-substitution industrialization in Mexico, see Sarah Babb, *Managing Mexico: Economists from Nationalism to Neoliberalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 75–105.

50. See Julio Moreno, *Yankee Don't Go Home! Mexican Nationalism, American Business Culture, and the Shaping of Modern Mexico, 1920–1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); and Peter Smith, "Mexico Since 1946: Dynamics of an Authoritarian Regime," in Bethell, *Mexico Since Independence*.

51. Knight, "The Rise and Fall of Cardenismo," p. 320.
52. Rivera, see note 2 above.
53. In May 1940, Siqueiros was involved in an unsuccessful first assassination attempt against Soviet revolutionary Leon Trotsky, who had been given asylum in Mexico by Cárdenas.
54. The United States organized Pan-American conferences in Panama (1939) and in Havana (1940).
55. The exhibitions ran from 1943 through 1948. Raquel Tibol, *José Clemente Orozco: una vida para el arte* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1984), pp. 200–201.
56. Mary Coffey, *The State of Culture: Institutional Patrimony in Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (PhD dissertation, University of Illinois/Urbana-Champaign, 1999), p. 167. See also Karen Cordero Reiman, "Narraciones corpóreas e incorporaciones en los Murales del Palacio de Bellas Artes," *Curare*, No. 24 (July–December 2004).
57. Knight, "The Rise and Fall of Cardenismo," p. 316.
58. Coffey, *The State of Culture*, p. 167. See Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
59. Enrique Krauze, *Mexico: Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico, 1810–1996*, trans. Hank Heifetz (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1997), p. 589.
60. Díaz Ordaz and Echeverría are overwhelmingly considered responsible for the 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre, described below, and the 1970s Mexican Dirty War. See The National Security Archive, George Washington University, report on the Tlatelolco Massacre, www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB99/ and on the Dirty War, www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB180/index.htm (accessed 4 January 2010).
61. Not only was the Polyforum's patron, industrialist Manuel Suárez, a close confidant of all three presidents, but he also petitioned the government for monies when the project ran over budget. Leonard Folgarait, *So Far from Heaven: David Alfaro Siqueiros' The March of Humanity and Mexican Revolutionary Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 53. This section is heavily indebted to Folgarait's analysis.
62. The massacre took place in Tlatelolco Plaza in Mexico City. Under government orders, military and police trapped the peaceful student rally in the plaza and opened fire. The exact number of dead is a matter of controversy, but most accounts put it around three hundred, with many more arrested. The government claimed that its forces were provoked by student fire; not until 2001 was it proved that snipers from the Presidential Guard had instigated the shooting. See Elena Poniatowska, *La noche de Tlatelolco* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1971); Julio Scherer García and Carlos Monsiváis, *Parte de Guerra, Tlatelolco 1968: documentos del general Marcelino García Barragán* (Mexico: Nuevo Siglo/Aguilar, 1999); and Scherer García and Monsiváis, *Parte de Guerra II: los rostros del 68* (Mexico: Nuevo Siglo/Aguilar, 2002).
63. Siqueiros, *Me llamaban el coronelazo* (Mexico City: Biografías Ganesa, 1977), p. 592, quoted in Folgarait, p. 27. Siqueiros, who had been at Echeverría's home when the shooting was reported to the future president, firmly supported Echeverría when the latter claimed not to have been complicit in planning the massacre. Philip Stein, *Siqueiros. His Life and Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1994), p. 326. Enrique Krauze, however, sug-

gests that Siqueiros was deliberately invited to dinner that evening to witness Echeverría taking the phone call and acting surprised to hear of violence in Tlatelolco. Krauze, *Mexico: Biography of Power*, p. 726. Siqueiros, it seems, could be relied upon not to question too closely.

64. "Ley Federal sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicas, Artísticas e Históricas," *Diario Oficial de la Federación* (6 May 1972).

65. See Olivier Debrouse, ed., *La era de la discrepancia: arte y cultural visual en México 1968–1997/The Age of Discrepancies: Art and Visual Culture in Mexico 1968–1997* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2006), trans. James Oles.