Chapter One: The Origins of Radical Unionism in Hidalgo Mining District and Ciudad Juárez

The radicalism workers showed throughout the 1930s in Ciudad Juárez and in the mining district illuminates the radical legacy of the Revolution on the labor movement. The foundation for this radicalism goes back to the pre-revolutionary era (1900-1910). Radical activists seeking to transform the existing Mexican economic and political system took refuge on the border. Its sister city in the United States, El Paso, served as shelter for ~~the~~ many political exiles, including Ricardo Flores Magón, founder of the *Partido Liberal Mexicano* (PLM), of the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship (1876-1911). These exiles utilized the increasing discontent on the border stemming from declines in agricultural output caused by water shortages precipitated by the US. The PLM also used the abolition of the tax-free zone on the border by the dictator after intense pressure from American merchants to garner support for Revolution. Finally, Juárez's strategic location as a border port for immigrants headed to the US, alongside access to guns and ammunition, made Juárez the natural place to launch ~~a couple of~~ armed revolutionary attempts in 1906 and 1908 to overthrow the Díaz regime.[1]

In the mining district, the spirit of Flores Magón also goes back to the pre-revolutionary era. Miguel Felix, an original founder of Local 11 in Santa Barbara of the Miners' Union in 1934, reflected on the continuing PLM significance in radicalizing workers into the 1930s: "I never met the Flores Magón brothers, they were around, I read their newspaper-- that is where we got the idea of unions." The PLM's ideas in the form of reading material "were all over," even into the 1930s. Felix explained that the impetus to organize into unions was the result of,

Commented [KC1]: Maybe be more specific here to define to labor movement.

Commented [KC2]: Define which city so that readers clearly understand.

Commented [KC3]: This examples come off abruptly and seem too specific for the intro. See how the highlighted portion could be removed while still retaining the sentence as well.

Commented [KC4]: This topic sentence may be troublesome since the following sentences are about Felix's testimony. Consider revising to the topic sentence, or rearrange the Felix's testimony.

Commented [KC5]: Are you saying the forms the idea's took in the reading material? Consider revising to make more clear.

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[1] Richard Medina Estrada, "Border Revolution: The Mexican Revolution in the Ciudad Juárez/El Paso area, 1906-1915" (master's thesis, University of Texas at El Paso, 1975), ii, 88.

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"workers' wishes to put a stop to the abuse (*pisoteados*) by the company."[2] Felix's testimony is a direct link between the PLM and the subsequent union movement, which~~that~~ experienced its climax during the 1930s in the mining district. Felix obviously considered himself, and the unions in the area, the heir to the rebellious spirit of the Magón brothers. Historians have shown the PLM's influence among workers in the mining district before the start of the Revolution of 1910. According to h~~H~~istorian John Mason Hart, "beginning in 1904, the Magonistas, from their American sanctuary began to send emissaries - revolutionary culture brokers - into the mining camps of the Mexican north."[3] On June 30, 1906, Elfego Lugo founded the first PLM section in Parral, and Albino Perez did the same in Santa Barbara that same year.[4] The presence of PLM political clubs, organizers, and printed material in the mining camps of Parral and Santa Barbara provided workers with the necessary language and overall strategy to increase their power.

Immigration from and to the US also assisted in the pre-revolutionary process. The railroad linked the two regions with transnational capital in this period, which made both regions susceptible to the massive influx, or return, of immigrant labor. This transformed Ciudad Juárez and Parral-Santa-Barbara into attractive destinations for thousands of pre-industrial landless immigrants? seeking to improve their rapidly declining ways of life after legislative changes in 1867 modified land tenure from communal to private.[5] It also served as the endpoint of

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[2] Don Miguel Felix, one of the original founders of Section 11 (Santa Barbara) of the Sindicato Industrial de Trabajadores Mineros, Metalurgicos y Similares de la Republica Mexicana, interviewed in Santa Barbara, Chihuahua, at Mr. Felix's house by the author, Andres Hijar, July 16, 2010. The tape is under my possession.

[3] John Mason Hart, *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 84.

[4] Jesus Vargas, *El Heraldo de Chihuahua*, January 31, 1989, ~~article written by Historian Jesus Vargas,~~. Also see~~see also~~ Jacinto Huitrón, *Origenes e Historia del Movimiento Obrero en Mexico* (Mexico D~~.~~F~~.~~: Editores Mexicanos Unidos, 1978), 109.

[5] Richard Medina Estrada, *Border Revolution*, 2, 33, 70, 33.~~,~~ Also see~~See also,~~ William French, *A Peaceful and Working People: Manners, Morals and Class Formation in Northern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 15, and Francisco Almada, *La Revolución en el Estado de Chihuahua, tomo 1* (Chihuahua: Biblioteca del Instituto Nacional de Estudios Historicos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1964-1965).

immigrant labor returning to Mexico after years working in the US, which introduced them to radical labor ideologies. I~~O~~n both regions, the dictator's economic policies ~~privileged~~ favored foreign interests, which allowed transnational capital to control the most profitable economic activities, including commerce and mining respectively, generating significant discontent. To add insult to injury ~~injury to insult~~, only a handful of local notables~~,~~ (supported by the dictator)~~,~~ enjoyed extraordinary political and economic privileges ~~in terms of political and economic access~~. These state elites, led by General Luis Terrazas and his son-in law Enrique Creel, used ~~through~~ legislative changes to eliminate~~ing~~ local and state-wide elections, and imposed themselves and their cronies at the municipal and state levels. ~~This~~ L~~l~~ack of democratic processes impeded border and Hidalgo district residents from determining their political futures.[6] These processes made these communities ripe for the influence of the anarchist, Socialist, and agrarian pre-revolutionary rebellions, and played a role in making labor activism a strong influence in the 1930s.

Commented [KC8]: Consider making this into a new sentence and expanding a bit for more context. Did this upset landless workers, or unions?

An examination of the forces shaping workers' lives prior to the Revolution, including foreign capital, transnational migration, radicalism, local elites, government officials, and workers themselves will illustrate why workers on the border embraced radicalism to a greater extent than their counterparts in the mining district. To explain workers' radicalism, or lack thereof in the pre-revolutionary movement, some scholars have highlighted the role foreign capital played in generating conflict in places like~~s~~ mining towns, while others have given greater emphasis to local political conditions as detonators for the Revolution, especially at the municipal level. The latter interpretation does not see workers as the main engine fueling the pre-

[6] Francisco Almada, *La Revolución en el Estado de Chihuahua, tomo 1* (Chihuahua: Biblioteca del Instituto Nacional de Estudios Historicos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1964-1965), 19.

revolutionary process.[7] This chapter combines these two interpretations by demonstrating that the privilege foreign capital enjoyed in Ciudad Juárez and in the Hidalgo district generated significant discontent, while at the same time, showing the influence radical political leaders had in agitating ~~for Revolution among~~ the unprivileged masses of workers and peasants. Although the PLM agreed that the dominion foreign interests had in the Mexican economy needed to change, their vision for Mexico consisted of a total transformation of the economic and political system. The radical phase (1906-1908) of the PLM lost strength after the imprisonment, or killing, of most of its leaders. Once the Revolution started in 1911 under the banner of Maderismo (as those following Francisco I. Madero, the apostle of the Revolution and a wealthy industrialist from Coahuila, were called) former PLM sympathizers and active members joined the Maderista movement, which initially favored ~~some kind of~~ land and labor reform.

The examination of the historical development of the national labor movement and its influence at the local level will illustrate why some workers in both regions under study embraced radicalism, while others rejected it in favor of collaboration. Finally, it sets forth the argument that the Lázaro Cárdenas presidency reopened a smoldering radicalism. This had withered through the former regimes' co-optation of the Revolution, starting with Francisco I. Madero's in 1911, and ending with Plutarco Elias Calles in 1934 failure to enact radical labor and agrarian reforms.

Commented [KC9]: This sentence seems out of place sense the paragraph discusses forces influencing workers

Commented [KC10]: Referencing what?

Commented [KC11]: This sentence is confusing.

Commented [KC12]: Consider revision. This paragraph seems to hit multiple points and brings up a lot. Your advisor might have issues with it.

[7] John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The C~~c~~oming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), highlights the transformations caused by US massive investment in Mexico.~~;~~ Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), examined the role US high-ranking officials had in toppling Madero and putting Victoriano Huerta in power from 1913 to 1915. For the role of the locale in the Revolution, see Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution,* 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), ~~in~~ which he also emphasized the lack of a~~A~~nti-American sentiment in the Mexican Revolution.

Political Economy Before the Revolution

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Foreign interests have dominated the Hidalgo~~’s~~ district’s most profitable activities from its inception. The Spanish crown founded Santa Barbara (1567) and Parral (1631) for the sole purpose of exploiting the area’s productive silver deposits, and to a lesser degree gold deposits. The crown turned Parral into the largest silver producer in the Americas throughout most of the seventeenth century, and despite its decline in productivity over time, it remained an important mining center up until the modern period.[8] The cities of Parral, Santa Barbara, and San Francisco del Oro are located within twenty miles of each other, and together they comprise the Hidalgo Mining District.

The crown introduced wage labor early to ensure a large and reliable labor force after failed attempts to coerce the isolated local indigenous communities to work in the mines. The introduction of wage labor in an effort to attract workers began a narrative of competing messages, one forged by centuries of independent mining, and the other aimed at directing workers in the district to keep them locating, excavating, and smelting ore for the crown.[9] The coexistence of different ways of organizing the labor force in the mines continued until the start of the modern period, which meant three hundred years of contested labor identities. The crown’s inability to influence workers’ behavior was compounded by workers’ agricultural ties, which compelled them to return to their communities. Another element preventing a more efficient control of the labor force and the mine’s resources was the spatial layout of the district,

Commented [KC14]: A large time frame is given earlier. Better to be specific.

Commented [KC15]: The sentence after seems like a more appropriate topic sentence since you discuss the two competing types of labor.

Commented [KC16]: Ties to their own land?

[8] Robert West, *The Mining Community in Northern New Spain: The Parral Mining District* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949).

[9] Robert West, *The Mining Community in Northern New Spain: The Parral Mining District* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949), William French, *A Peaceful and Working People: Manners, Morals and Class Formation in Northern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), and Chantal Cramaussel, *Poblar la frontera: La provincia de Santa Barbara en la Nueva Vizcaya en los siglos XVI y XVII* (Zamora: Colegio de Michoacán, 2007).

which allowed individuals to reject wage labor, and instead work independently. Anyone in the community had access to the mines since many entrances to the mine existed. In fact, the entire underground area is one big mine, which explains the ubiquitous presence of independent miners in the area throughout the colonial era.[10]

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Because of the relatively easy access to the mines, independent mining, or *gambusinaje*, developed alongside wage and coercive non-wage labor in the region. The widespread presence during the colonial era of independent mining emphasizing independence, control of work rate, and a modest challenge to private property among certain community members meant that once the language of industrial unionism arrived in the 1930s emphasizing similar characteristics, these messages resonated among the community. The ability to work independently and smelt ore through artisanal methods ended when transnational capital entered the district. They had the necessary capital to invest in the technologies needed to profitably smelt the low grade ore left in the district's mines, and the managerial innovations to prevent~~ing~~ workers from returning home.[11]

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Commented [KC19]: Like what?

U.S.-based capitalist influence in the area was conditioned on relationships with the political dictatorship, and set labor terms learned in multiple sites of operation. The Guggenheim family developed the largest smelting conglomerate in the continent, the America Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO), and entered the Hidalgo district in 1899 in large part because of their close connections with high-ranking government officials, including Diaz, Terrazas, and Creel, which gave them "special concessions, low taxes, and political influence," the kind of

Commented [KC20]: Consider rewriting. What are set labor terms? What sites of operations were involved? The issue here is that readers may get lost because the terms are unfamiliar. Also, the topic sentence should be changed since the paragraph deals with ASARCO.

[10] Don Miguel Felix, one of the original founders of Section 11 (Santa Barbara) of the Sindicato Industrial de Trabajadores Mineros, Metalurgicos y Similares de la Republica Mexicana, interviewed in Santa Barbara, Chihuahua, at Mr. Felix's house by the author, Andres Hijar, July 16, 2010. The tape is under my possession.
[11] William French, *A Peaceful and Working People*, 54-58, 79.

access unavailable to Mexicans.[12] Founded in Pueblo, Colorado, in 1889, ASARCO spread across the continent and the globe as one of the world's largest trusts; it was located in dozens of areas across the western hemisphere by the 1920s, including El Paso, Texas.[13] Immediately after its formation in 1899, ASARCO started operations in the Hidalgo district with the acquisition of mines in Santa Barbara, including the largest and most productive mine in Santa Barbara, Tecolotes, using its different subsidiaries, including American Smelters Securities Company.[14] By 1905, ASARCO already had a significant presence in northern Chihuahua as well, including a smelting plant in Avalos, Chihuahua.[15] On September 9, 1915, Montezuma Lead Company transferred their holdings, which included the mines, La Veta Rica y La Favorita in Santa Barbara, which were established in 1896, to ASARCO.[16]

ASARCO also acquired smaller mines in an effort to control most of the registered mines in the area. The company expanded its monopoly over smelting in Mexico when it started processing other metals including copper, silver, zinc, and lead, which allowed?~~required~~ the US firm to spread its dominion over the area. Taking advantage of the new laws privatizing land previously held by communities, ASARCO expanded into adjacent land to fuel their local smelters, which displaced local communities and forced them to work in the mines, or migrate. In an effort to inconspicuously keep their intentions to monopolize mining activities in the district, ASARCO entered into partnerships with Mexican citizens who already had licenses to

Commented [KC21]: Perhaps break this clause into its own sentence and get more detailed.

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[12] Michael J. Gonzales, "U.S. Copper Companies, the Mine Workers' Movement, and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920," *HAHR* ~~vol.~~ 76, no. 3 (1996).
[13] Isaac F. Marcosson, *Metal Magic: The S~~s~~tory of the American Smelting and Refining Company* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1949), 57.
[14] Mark Wasserman, "Metal Magic Only Went So Far: The American Refinement and Smelting Company in Mexico, 1890-1940" (unpublished draft, Rutgers University), 11.
[15] William French, *A Peaceful and W~~w~~orking P~~p~~eople*, 16.
[16] Need to be specific on who the letter is to and from. Also include the date if possible after the recipients. Organization or publisher goes last.Letter from the Registro Publico de la Propiedad (land tenure) detailing ownership of the following mines: El Agua, La Gomena, La Novedad, Las Cruz, Los Remedios, Veta Rica, Los Angeles, la Favorita, found in Archivo Historico Municipal de Parral, folder 127, book 8, mineria.

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mines. The advantages of partnerships and indirect ownership had to do~~, among other things,~~ with legal concerns. For one, having various mines consolidated into one partnership, as it was often the case, owners only needed to provide overall production as evidence to confirm that the mines were worked on, which allowed them to use the mines for different purposes besides extracting ore. But if they registered each mine as separate, the law required operators to provide production numbers for each venture ~~in an effort~~ to avoid abandoned or unproductive mines. In addition, this massive acquisition of mines took away competition.[17]

The company exacted some of the most onerous labor conditions in order to extract and process the metals, thereby critically altering the social space of these areas. Managers were notorious for setting up company towns and policing systems for their mines. Former miner and union leader, Miguel Felix, confirms that "the Americans and other foreigners had their own private (*colonia*) neighborhood, with a hospital, a school, and private guards."[18] They were also notorious across their operations for holding control through a systemized racial and ethnic structure in which workers were pitted against each other for the best jobs and dual-wage structures based on these categories were operative. ~~Asarco~~ ASARCO was a huge wealth-extracting conglomerate, the largest mining interest in Mexico. This was a source of complaint about US imperialism, and had important implications. US firms owned most of the Mexican mining industry, and their blatant disregard for Mexican laws and their labor generated discontent.

Scholars, like Francois-Xavier Guerra, have examined the significant violence taking place around mining towns, and have set forth the thesis that mining towns precipitated the

Commented [KC23]: Keep if you want, but I think this phrase only distracts the reader since no additional info is given.

Commented [KC24]: Are you going to go into the other purposes? If not, consider omitting. One of the things your advisor seems to pick is sentences like this that have a dead end,

Commented [KC25]: Run-on sentence.

Commented [KC26]: Consider using a new word to avoid double readings. Was the violence important in staging revolution? Or was the violence extreme?

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[17] For a discussion of ASASRCO's expansion, see~~,~~ William French, *A Peaceful and Working People*, 164-166.

[18] Don Miguel Felix, one of the original founders of Section 11 (Santa Barbara) of the Sindicato Industrial de Trabajadores Mineros, Metalurgicos y Similares de la Republica Mexicana, interviewed in Santa Barbara, Chihuahua, at Mr. Felix's house by the author, Andres Hijar, July 16, 2010. The tape is under my possession.

Revolution of 1910.[19] In 1906, when workers struck against Cananea copper mine, demanding an eight~~8-~~ -hour day and equal pay with U~~.~~S~~.~~ foreign workers.~~,~~ However, Arizona Phelps-Dodge vigilantes and Arizona Rangers supported by Diaz and Sonoran governor, Rafael Izabal, crossed the border to put it down. Combined Mexican and North American expeditionary forces confronted miners and~~eventually~~ killed~~ing~~ at least fifty~~50~~ people.~~, and~~ T~~t~~his created one of the outrages that sparked the Mexican Revolution, despite the fact that it took place four years earlier.[20]

The 1906 conflict in Cananea combined with the discontent generated by the transnational racial and condescending attitudes towards the Mexican labor force with the presence of political operatives from the PLM, the Western Federation of Miners (WFM), and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), agitated~~ing~~ workers.[21] US trade unions also assisted miners in the Hidalgo district in the 1920s, but not prior to 1910. Local organizations with ties to the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)—a radical union using direct action, industrial unionism, and a break with politics to advance workers' power—surfaced during the 1920s following the IWW's principles. However, the migration from other mining centers in the US to the district, including ~~from~~ the ASARCO unit in El Paso, Texas, makes the plausible ~~the~~ argument that many individuals had familiarity with radical labor ideologies.[22]

Roberto Calderon demonstrates the transnational migration of coal mining workers to the state of Coahuila. He also argues that their experience with unions in America transformed Mexican workers. Furthermore, the coal mining region of Coahuila is located very close the

[19] Francois-Xavier Guerra, "La Revolution Mexicaine: d'abord une revolution miniere?" *Annales* E.S.C. 36 (1981).
[20] Juan Luis Sariego, *Enclaves y Minerales en el Norte de Mex*ico (Mexico City, 1988), 131-137.
[21] Michael J. Gonzales, "U.S. Copper Companies, the Mine Workers' Movement, and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920," *HAHR* ~~vol.~~ 76, no. 3 (1996): 104.
[22] Don Miguel Felix, one of the original founders of Section 11 (Santa Barbara) of the Sindicato Industrial de Trabajadores Mineros, Metalurgicos y Similares de la Republica Mexicana, interviewed in Santa Barbara, Chihuahua, at Mr. Felix's house by the author, Andres Hijar, July 16, 2010. The tape is under my possession.

Commented [KC27]: Full title?

Commented [KC28]: You make the point that these factors agitated workers, but then go into union organization. Consider revising the content, or topic sentence.

Commented [KC29]: How does he do this? With this topic sentence, I had the thought that this paragraph would be about Roberto's research, but then delves into the backdrop of the Revolution. Consider removing the sentences on Roberto, or place them elsewhere.

Hidalgo Mining District, which makes it highly plausible that some of these individuals ended ~~it~~ up at the Hidalgo camp. Economic crisis, transportation links, and general social discontent assisted ~~in the success of~~ radical political leaders in the district. A year after Cananea, ASARCO laid off more than one thousand workers in Santa Barbara, and closed most mining operations in Parral that same year due to the financial panic and plummeting in the price of minerals in the US.[23] This was the backdrop for Revolution in the mining district.

On October 5, 1910, from San Antonio, Texas, Madero circulated his manifesto calling for armed rebellion to topple the dictator.[24] In Parral, Guillermo Baca, under the flagship of Maderismo, surrounded the hills around the city with more than a thousand men from all over the area, including Parral and Santa Barbara. The district quickly fell into the control of the liberals whose main interest centered on the political arena; they had no interest in transforming existing socioeconomic conditions. Thus, Maderos' regime left existing structures of power untouched at the national level, including the military, large landowners, and the church, and failed to recognize and reward the popular wing of his movement in the state.~~, and~~Additionally, foreign interests in the area still enjoyed the same privileges it did with the dictator. Despite his trepidation for economic and social transformation, the opposition?~~reaction;~~ —composed of conservatives and economic elites~~,~~— had other plans for him.

Commented [KC30]: I felt like this could have broken off and still retained its meaning.

After Madero was murdered in Mexico City in 1913, Victoriano Huerta, representing the church, oligarchs, foreign interests, and the military, rose to power. Immediately those elements that had supported Madero against Díaz, including Francisco Villa in Chihuahua, declared war against Huerta. Francisco Villa's prominence increased in the state due to his merits on the

[23] Mark Wasserman, "The Social Origins of the 1910 Revolution in Chihuahua," *Latin American Research Review* 15, no. 1 (1980): 23-24.
[24] Francisco Almada, *La Revolución en el Estado de Chihuahua, tomo 1* (Chihuahua: Biblioteca del Instituto Nacional de Estudios Historicos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1964-1965), 161.

battlefield, which included helping Madero take Ciudad Juárez. Villa joined the Constitutionalist Movement, headed by former Coahuilan governor, Venustiano Carranza, against the “traitor” as he is known in Mexican popular memory, Victoriano Huerta. The Constitutionalist was a movement composed of various ideologies, from radical and reformist to conservative, with individuals from different economic, social, and racial backgrounds. This formidable coalition quickly defeated Huerta. Villa soundly defeated the armies of Huerta in Chihuahua and most of the North, but Carranza bypassed him in favor of Alvaro Obregón when it came time to distribute the spoils of war, which forced Villa to declare war against his former ally. This campaign against his former boss lasted two years. During this period, Villa controlled the state of Chihuahua from 1913 to 1915, but remained in power~~a force~~ throughout the state until his assassination in 1923. During the height of his power (1913-1915), Villa made the decision to, “give top priority to the revitalization of mining.”[25] Thus, Villa allowed ASARCO to operate and even provided protection to the company’s smelter in exchange for coal. In fact, in 1915 at the behest of ASARCO, Villa deported IWW’s organizers out of Chihuahua.[26]

> **Commented [KC31]:** Perhaps rearrange this after the name with parenthesis so that it doesn’t take away too much from sentence.

> **Commented [KC32]:** Northern Mexico? Or in the district?

> **Commented [KC33]:** Make this a new paragraph?

Historian Frederick Katz has demonstrated that Villa did have a social agenda including the relatively extensive land distribution he and his troops engaged in, although he fails to highlight that most of his trusted generals became large land owners themselves. Furthermore, Villa allowed ASARCO to continue production during his brief regime, an indication of his distance from the radical labor demands of the Magonistas. He did not make significant efforts to transform the economic and social order in the mining district. Albeit, Villa’s continuous need for resources forced him to let ASARCO continue operations as it provided him and his troops

[25] William K. Meyers, “Pancho Villa and the Multinationals: United States Mining Interests in Villista Mexico,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*~~, vol.~~ 23, no. 2 (1991): 341.
[26] William K. Meyers, “Pancho Villa and the Multinationals: United States Mining Interests in Villista Mexico,” 355.

with continuous "loans." Villa was assassinated in Parral in 1923, twelve years after taking Ciudad Juárez.[27]However, he was inconsequential at the national level after Obregon crushed Villa's army in Leon and Celaya, Guanajuato, located in Central Mexico. After Villa's defeat in 1915, the Constitutionalists controlled the mining areas and put in place pro-labor laws, which provided them with a political base of industrial workers that assisted them in cementing their tenuous hold on power.

Commented [KC34]: Did he really get loans, or are you implying lucrative business with Asarco?

The chaos of the Revolution did not affect ASARCO significantly from 1910 to 1915. In fact, it benefited it. For example, in 1915, while the armies of Villa and Obregon devastated the north, ASARCO invested ~~US $~~2,700,000 US dollars in Mexican mines owned by those affected by the disruption in smelting and transportation network, which lead to heir bankrupt.[28] ASARCO's large pockets allowed them to buy these mines and absorb losses because of~~due to~~ production stoppages and transportation network disruptions during the Revolutionary period. After the defeat of Villa, ASARCO simply negotiated with the authority at hand, in this case the Constitutionalists, although this proved a bit more difficult than dealing with Villa.

Commented [KC35]: Revise to avoid vagueness

Commented [KC36]: Unsure if its an issue, but how were the mines affected by the war? Also I am unsure what "which lead to heir bankrupt" means.

In an effort to cement their power at the local and state level, Constitutionalists mayors' and governors' set forth pro-labor codes, which provided workers with the ability to bargain collectively, strike, and use the courts to solve labor conflicts. Even after the nationalization of the mines in 1917, ASARCO waited six years to change its name to Compania Minera ASARCO to comply with the new law aimed at dismantling the dominion foreign industries had over

Commented [KC37]: Consider revision since most of the paragraph is about ASARCO

[27] Friedrich Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), Ruben Osorio, "Villismo: Nationalism and Popular Mobilization in Northern Mexico," found in Daniel Nugent, *Rural Revolt in Mexico: US Intervention and the Domain of Subaltern Politics* (Duke University Press, 1998), and Alejandro Quintana, *Pancho Villa: A Biography* (Santa Barbara California: Greenwood Press, 2012). For information of elites sympathizing with the popular front, see William Beezley, *Insurgent Governor: Abraham Gonzales and the Mexican Revolution in Chihuahua* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973).

[28] William K. Meyers, "Pancho Villa and the Multinationals: United States Mining Interests in Villista Mexico," 346.

certain industries, including mining. To sidestep the new law, ASARCO associated with Mexican elites, who did not have any interests in transforming the way ASACO conducted business.[29] This allowed ASARCO to remain a monopoly in the Mexican silver, lead, copper, and zinc smelting industry. The new legislation did not prevent ASARCO from consolidating its dominion over smelting operations in northern Mexico, and in fact, ASARCO expanded during the 1920s. For example, in 1924, the company announced a ~~$US~~ ten~~10~~ million dollar investment in construction projects.[30]

ASARCO faced difficulties in certain locales where local radical unions, emboldened by constitutional provisions and radical labor state laws, had gained ground in crucial aspects of the labor capital relation, including control of the workplace. These difficult times prepared them for the following decade, which proved even more difficult in terms of labor increasing radicalism, and the Lázaro Cárdenas nationalistic position against the control of foreign interest in certain crucial sectors of the Mexican economy.

Throughout this period (1896-1920), workers struggled against a company whose global power seemed to remain in place even across the course of Revolution. ASARCO and its subsidiaries faced significant obstacles in their efforts to influence workers. This was due to the district's pre-industrial labor traditions that highlighting independence. The~~at~~ desire ~~quest~~ for independence was assisted by the spatial layout of the mines, which exalted and facilitated bootleg mining. These obstacles to control workers increased with the constant migration of workers to the US, facilitated by the railroad, which connected the district to Ciudad Juárez and exposed workers to radical unionism. From the onset, ASARCO sought to direct the labor force

Commented [KC38]: Careful here. The paragraph seems to be split between Asarco's adaptation to the new laws, and Asarco's economic position after the Revolution.

Commented [KC39]: In general, I think the jump to ASARCO after the Revolution happens quite quickly. Maybe go into detail about the aftermath of the Revolution so that it's a more gradual reading progression.

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[29] Marvin Bernstein, *The Mexican Mining Industry, 1890-1850: A S~~s~~tudy in the Interactions of Politics, Economics, and Technology* (Albany: ~~State of~~ University of New York, 1964).
[30] Mark Wasserman, "Metal Magic Only Went So Far: The American Refinement and Smelting Company in Mexico, 1890-1940" (unpublished draft, Rutgers University), 8-9.

towards a path of efficiency and reliability through technological and managerial innovations, "as *barreterros* became *perforistas*, the importance of drilling and blasting skills diminished and mine workers lost control over the workplace, outside the *contratista* system, they also lost control over the hiring of unskilled mine workers."[31] ASARCO's introduction of technology forced skilled workers to accept automated jobs, which required little expertise. This allowed ASARCO to hire unskilled workers to perform the jobs skilled workers used to perform. These individuals were, "Members of a *población flotante*, comprised of unemployed and marginalized artisans, campesinos deprived from their lands, rural and urban laborers drawn by the prospect of higher wages, and others, roamed northern Mexico. They provided the labor force for a Mexico bent on progress." Most of these individuals came from the surrounding agricultural communities in the district and from other mining centers throughout the state and the nation, including Batopilas, Santa Eulallia, Nacozari, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas. [32]

Prior to mechanization, district miners' skills in drilling and locating productive veins allowed them to set working conditions. In addition to the deskilling of the workforce, managerial innovations made sure skilled workers no longer hired unskilled workers, which allowed transnational capital to control the hiring process, thus further breaking the potential for class unity. William French has argued that ASARCO shrewdly exploited workers' disunity by taking advantage of the fact that "a substantial number of workers retained their ties to the land and maintained their loyalties to rural communities. Members of the *población flotante*, they were sharply divided from those - often those with skill - who came to depend completely on wage labor."[33] Thus French argues that the division among skilled and unskilled workers

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[31] William French, *A Peaceful and Working Ppeople*, 33.
[32] William French, *A Peaceful and Wworking Ppeople,* 3, 5, 6.
[33] Ibid, 6. Would Ibid be used for the previous note as well?

prevented them from uniting along class lines. Morover, French, and highlights the company's use of moral imperatives to shape workers' identities and consequent behavior. But we can see other influences, including the long standing tradition of bootleg mining in the area, which generated a sense of solidarity among members of the mining district and more importantly, a challenge to private property.

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The district's middle class also participated in the efforts to influence workers, while supporting the ASARCO's goal of creating docility. A growing segment of the Hidalgo's district's middle class sought to address moral concerns centered on workers alleged alcohol abuse and widespread gambling; this social project directed them away from class conflict. William French argues that "waging this struggle over work habits and values in northern Mexico were members of a growing and vocal middle class – the self-proclaimed *gente decente* - on the one hand, and, on the other, a young, mobile, and overwhelmingly male workforce of diverse origins."[34] The district's middle class promoted these messages in an effort to separate themselvesdistance themselves from workers, shame them, and ultimately direct them towards acceptable behaviors distancing them from class conflict.[35]

This radicalism coincided with a long tradition of bootleg mining, and it was in a direct collision course towards the elite's messages promoting docility and collaboration. Historian William French himself acknowledges that workers in the mining region, despite their concern for morality and manners, had a type of moral economy with underlying class concerns serving as the basis for their identities long before the armed conflict. French states, "Rather than serving as a catalyst for creating new demands, the revolution provided an opportunity for the full expression of what might be called the hidden transcript that had remained unspoken, or at least,

Commented [KC42]: Was the previous paragraph about radicalism or did I miss it? Also is the topic sentence suitable since the paragraph discusses worker's moral economy.

[34] Ibid, 4. Since it's a new page, I would recommend writing the note so that readers don't have to go back.
[35] Ibid, 84-87.

unheard of, before 1910."[36] Once the Revolution's pro-labor rhetoric made its way into the mining camp, this moral economy was effectively framed by organized labor leadership's into community-wide concerns exclusive forof the working class. As a result, workers' demands for power increased in places like the mining region of Parral-Santa Barbara throughout the 1930s.

Ciudad Juárez was connected by railroad to the Hidalgo region, and through that embodiment of advanced transnational capital, it exchanged radical ideas along the lines. Ciudad Juárez was originally founded as Paso del Norte in 1659, and was renamed Ciudad Juárez in 1888 in honor of Benito Juárez, the first indigenous president of Mexico.[37] But if the name Juárez represented independence, the city's workers experience was increasingly less so. –The expansion of the railroad in 1884, (financed by US capital), from Mexico City to Ciudad Juárez, turned the border into a hub of transportation, uniting resources and people from all over Mexico into one location situated steps away from the United States. In addition, on the United States side of the border, El Paso became an important transportation center and smelting center——the only major city in the American Southwest connected by railroad tracks with the rest of the nation.[38] These developments turned the border into a transportation hub for thousands of landless workers.

Historian Joseph Barton illustrates these dynamics when he examined the different waves of circular migration between Mexico and the US workers' experienced early in the twentieth century. Barton explains that "peasants and miners streamed northward after the wrenching fall of the northern Mexican economy of 1907 and 1908, then rushed back to Mexico following the sudden downturn in the United States of 1908 and 1909. -A larger, more sustained movement

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[36] French, *A Peaceful and Working People*, 182. Same issue as before with concistency

[37] Oscar Martinez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juarez since 1848 (*Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 19.

[38] Monica Perales, *Smeltertown: Making and Remembering a Southwest Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), -21-23.

reached the United States in the revolutionary years between of 1910 and 1917, only to retreat south during the recession of 1920-1921. After 1923, migrants once again flooded northward, and then suddenly reversed flow between 1928 and 1933, when in the face of long-term depression and relentless expulsion half a million fled to Mexico."[39] Barton's research demonstrates the transnational status of Mexican workers extending back to the 1900s, and the significant waves of workers returning to Mexico during the 1930s, the same time period this study covers. Furthermore, his findings regarding their ability to reproduce their communities while in America in an effort to empower themselves, shows Mexican workers' proclivity to organize communally to improve their existing conditions.

Workers' migratory, transnational patterns placed them into direct contact with American workers who already had a long experience in unionizing.[40] Mexican workers organized and formed unions in the United States as they encountered a vibrant labor movement harboring radical tendencies during this time.[41] The Industrial Workers of the World and their syndicalist principles arguing for control of the workplace through direct action instead of waiting for politicians to act, and their anarchic vision promoting the eventual destruction of the current capitalist system, influenced many Mexican workers at the turn of the century according to historian Joseph Barton. Mexican workers "borrowed the organizational form of the Western Federation of Miners, seized upon the millennial expectations of the Industrial Workers of the World, and fused them with the nationalist symbolism of the Mexican Liberal Party, thereby transforming disparate local movements into a class mobilization."[42] This means that migrations

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[39] Joseph Barton, "Edge of Endurance," 67.
[40] Colin Maclachlan, *Anarchism and the Mexican Revolution: The Political Trials of Ricardo Flores Magón in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 5.
[41] Joseph Barton, "Edge of Endurance," 26-39.
[42] Joseph Barton, "Edge of Endurance," 73.

led significant number of Mexican workers to embrace class struggle as complement to their quasi-radical pre-existing identities, forged by years of agrarian struggle in Mexico and their status as transnational migrants. Many of these individuals stayed on the border, and eventually participated in the extraordinary class struggle that took place in the border city during the 1930s.[43]

The importance of the border as a transnational hub needs highlighting. Ciudad Juárez provided a rest stop for millions of individuals engaged in a perpetual agrarian struggle against political and economic elites looking to improve their lives in the United States, and for those returning from the American dream. These experiences prepared them to eventually adopt radical workers' ideology. Moreover, the border's strategic locations made it a favorable destination for radical exiles, who created a hidden transcript highlighting class concerns among border residents, which would resurfaced again in the 1930s. The railroad thus transformed Juárez into a continental crossroads utilized by migratory workers from the central and north central states of Jalisco, Michoacan, Guanajuato, Aguascalientes, and Zacatecas.~~;~~ M~~m~~ost of them ~~having~~ followed the Mexican Central Railway Route, and acted as the launching point back and forth across the border.[44] It also changed the social composition of the city. Thousands of people arrived to the border every day looking for wage work opportunities, but because of the power and control of transnational capital, which exacerbated the economic imbalance between the two sister cities, none of the Mexican ore mined in the Hidalgo region stayed in Chihuahua. Instead it was transported across the border to El Paso, Texas. Border historian Oscar Martínez, commented,~~:~~ "While Juárez went through its boom and bust period, El Paso made steady

[43] Roberto Calderón, *Mexico Coal Mining Labor in Texas and Coahuila, 1880-1930* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2000), 196.
[44] Richard Medina Estrada, *Border Revolution*, 2-3.

progress, evolving into a prominent international transportation center. El Paso received early impetus in becoming a supply, processing, smelting, and refining center."[45] The economic decline of Juárez vis-à-vis El Paso continued through the twentieth century, especially after 1905, when national authorities removed the "free zone" (tax free) status that Juárez enjoyed from 1888 to 1905. This created resentment from people of all classes, as it had allowed the border to grow evenly with its sister city across the border.[46] The PLM took advantage of this anger as the declining status grew to garner support on the border.[47]

This lack of sound economic planning resulted from federal and local authorities' decisions to inhibit the development of self-sustaining economic policies. They sought little input from local economic sectors, including the cotton producers' constant demands for more water in the Juárez Valley, which generated significant discontent on the border.[48] Local elites, deprived of the ability to address these issues, began to develop the border as a leisure and entertainment hub for Americans. Martínez summarizes,: "As the twentieth century began, Juárez changed its economic base. With its once prosperous commerce ruined by the abolition of the *Zona*, its agriculture seriously affected by water shortages, and its industry damaged by internal trade obstructions, the city turned to tourism."[49] The conflict for water rights on the border with the United States created a movement of resistance among the Juárez Valley's agricultural producers. The cotton producers of the Juárez Valley formed organizations to defend their interests against the constant encroachment of the United States regarding water rights, and

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[45] Oscar Martinez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juarez since 1848 (*Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 30.
[46] Oscar Martinez, *Border Boom Town*, 31.
[47] Richard Medina Estrada, *Border Revolution,* 32-33.
[48] Oscar Martinez, *Border Boom Town,* 4-17.
[49] Oscar Martinez, *Border Boom Town,* 30.

it remains one of the few pre-revolutionary precedents of class struggle in the area alongside the PLM exiles.[50]

Alcohol Prohibition, which began in 1923 in the United States, caused scores of restaurants, bars, whisky distilleries, ice factories, and other related business and patrons to move into Juárez. As a result, a large labor force suddenly emerged; workers ready to organize after decades of Revolutionary conflict. As a result, the Prohibition movement in the United States also assisted in catalyzing change among workers' identities. Prohibition brought thousands of jobs to the border, which transformed Juárez into a border city with a large~~numerous~~ labor force, and a mecca of American tourism.[51] This generated thousands of service-oriented jobs, whose workers quickly organized into unions after the Revolution.

Radical Labor Organizers and Ideas in the Mexican Revolution and its Aftermath

The radical labor movement of the 1930s in the areas under consideration certainly must be given context by the activism and militancy of the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), which left ~~specific~~ legacies and resonance in these areas. The PLM, headed by Ricardo Flores Magón, paved the way for radicalism in all of Mexico. Beginning with publication of *Regeneración* in 1900, Magón became based in St. Louis, Missouri by 1904, ~~an exile~~ and established ties to the Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World, and someone whose writings became well known in anarchist U~~.~~S~~.~~ circles. Magón's influence was carried by the newspaper, which passed ~~ose copies passed~~ to Mexico by travelling migrants and those who

[50] Letter from the Committee "Pro defensa de la autonomia de San Ignacio" to Mayor Baltazar Adame, July 25, 1931, box 1931, Archívo Municipal de Ciudad Juárez, hereafter referred to as AMCJ.~~, box 1931.~~

[51] Oscar Martinez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juarez since 1848* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 30-35.

Commented [KC51]: This paragraph throws off the reader. Until this point , you've been talking about the border region and then prohibition comes out of nowhere. Revise the topic sentence to flow.

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sought to further a radical revolution. The Magón brothers, exiled in Los Angeles, were partial inspiration for the 1910 uprisings of peasants in Yucatán. When Madero prevailed in the initial phase of the revolution, the PLM argued that its failure to expropriate land condemned it. In 1911, Magón issued a manifesto that indicated the degree of radical demands against the more moderate demands of these other revolutionaries. Magón was an anarchist~~,~~ who believed in radical agrarian reform and complete eradication of private property. Donald Hodges summarized its content, ~~as calling~~ "for a war to the death against private property, political authority, and the established church. Not only lands would be expropriated, but also agricultural implements and urban industries- even private houses."[52] The PLM was never successful on large scale political agenda, but provided millions of landless peasants, unemployed artisans, and exploited workers a vision of a way out of the widespread poverty they were experiencing. This discontent was articulated through political organizations, unions, guerrilla movements, and other radical forms of resistance in the pre-revolutionary period. The PLM's radicalism resonated across a poverty stricken nation, and across different elements of the working and middle class. While on a macro level, the Magonistas' (as those following Flores Magón were called) influence was seemingly marginal, for the labor movement, the dreams of a society organized around worker control influenced a range of labor organizing principles, from simple trade unions to central federations, and was a catalyst long after the Magón brothers were gone. The radical labor movements experienced on the border and in the mining district are a direct result of this resonance.

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Commented [KC56]: Resonance of the PLM?

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[52] Donald C. Hodges, "The Political Heirs of Ricardo Flores Magón," *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 17, no. 3 (1992): 100.

The *Union de Canteros y Albañiles* (Construction Workers' Union), comprised of skilled and unskilled construction workers, drafted a constitution in 1922 based on the model of the radical IWW. That model called for organizing into industrial-based unions, and rejected craft unionism and political alliances, used direct action to control the workplace, and believed in general strikes as a mechanism to leverage workers power against capitalism.[53] The newspaper article does not specify the names of these individuals, but it does emphasize the participation of IWW operatives from the United States in the process of framing the union's constitution. Furthermore, the self-proclaimed, "*Organización Obrera Roja*" (Red Workers' Organization), composed of unemployed workers, and the local IWW representative in the state, the *Union de Trabajadores del Mundo de Chihuahua* (Industrial Workers of the World in Chihuahua) celebrated their meetings in Parral during the early 1920s.[54]

Radical ideology also existed beneath the surface in Ciudad Juárez. In 1906, Juarez's crucial location as a border town, harboring a significant number of intellectual exiles, and easy access to guns and ammunition from the United States, as well as a quick escape, allowed the PLM to launch an armed insurrection.[55] However, Captain Adolfo Jimemez and Lieutenant Zeferino Reyes , infiltrators from the military gained the Magonistas trust, thwarted the plan, and raided the PLM's headquarters in Juárez. The police arrested high-ranking PLM members including Juan Sarabia, Lauro Aguirre, and Rafael Valles, alongside dozens of other

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[53] Bruce Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longhshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 75-76, 87, 108-110, 145-147.
[54] *El Chihuahuense*, October 12, 1922.
[55] For more information of the Flores Magón initial armed uprising in Chihuahua, see Jesus Vargas, *Maximo Castillo and the Mexican Revolution* (Nueva Vizcaya Editores, 2003), 4-20, 44, and Jacinto Huitrón, *Origenes e Historia del Movimiento Obrero en Mexico* (Mexico D.F.: Editores Mexicanos Unidos, 1978), 141-151.

magonistas.[56] This setback did not stop radicalism on the border. In 1908, this time led by Praxedis G. Guerrero and José Ines Salazar, the PLM tried again to launch an offensive from Ciudad Juárez. As it happened in 1906, individuals connected with high-ranking state officials infiltrated the movement and eventually informed authorities of the planned invasion. The police again raided the PLM's headquarters and arrested thirty four~~34~~ PLM members;~~,~~ however, Guerrero and Salazar escaped.[57] The military actions failed, but armed rebellion did not stand alone in the PLM's arsenal of resistance.

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The PLM also had political clubs and printed media in Juárez, and evidently the influence outlived the political insurrection. Mason Hart has demonstrated the presence of two anarcho-syndicalists unions, *Acracia* and *Ni Dios Ni Amo*, agitating for direct action and the rejection of political alliances against the moderate revolutionary government on the border in 1918.[58] As in the mining district, the presence of PLM~~-~~-inspired organizations adopting the banner of anarcho-syndicalism in Juárez before the Revolution explains~~,~~ (alongside widespread poverty and lack of political openings) the success radicalism had on the border during the 1930s. Despite the fact that it lost out in the revolutionary ferment at the hands of Villa, the PLM's influence deserves credit for starting the labor movement at the national level. In addition, through the 1930s, ideas that animated the PLM, including industrial unionism, workers control, and general strikes influenced some national level unions, and in turn this inspired local activists in Hidalgo and Ciudad Juárez.

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[56] Jesus Vargas, *El Heraldo de Chihuahua*, January 31, 1989~~, article written by Historian Jesus Vargas~~. See also Colin MacLachlan, *Anarchism and the Mexican Revolution: The Political Trials of Ricardo Flores Magón in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 17.
[57] Francisco Almada, *La Revolución en el Estado de Chihuahua,* 115.
[58] John Mason Hart, *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 156.

The Labor Movement: From Radicalization to Co-optation

The modern labor movement in Mexico started with the foundation of the anarchist oriented, La Casa del Obréro Mundial on September 22, 1912.[59] Spaniard Juan Francisco Moncaleano alongside a handful of Mexican nationals, including Jacinto Huitrón, Praxedis G. Guerrero, Antonio Diaz Soto y Gama, Juan Villarreal, Juan Sarabia, Candido Aguilar, and others—most of them former members or sympathizers of the PLM—formed La Casa.[60] La Casa disseminated radical workers' ideology through classes, poetry, marches, and media (*La Luz*). La Casa served as the platform where most of the early unions, including those with anarchist and socialist tendencies started. One of the founders, Jacinto Huitrón, summarizes La Casa's ideological stance when first formed: "We frankly declared ourselves, with all our loyalty, followers of the Revolutionary syndicalism."[61] This syndicalism rejected political alliances, and instead agitated for the use of direct action at the point of production to pressure capital, and the eventual takeover of workers of the overall economy. Huitrón credits the PLM as the intellectual precursor of La Casa. As a result of this connection, the early phase of the national labor movement in Mexico had significant anarchist tendencies. Regional studies have shown these radical tendencies among La Casa sympathizers in the states of Jalisco, Oaxaca, Nayarit, Nuevo Leon, Veracruz, and in Mexico City.[62]

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[59] Huitrón, *Origenes*, 21-32, 213-214, Andrew Grant Wood, *Revolution in the Street: Women, Workers and, Urban Protest in Veracruz, 1870-1927* (Wilmington Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2001), 68.
[60] Huitrón, *Origenes*, 1-15, Hart, *Anarchism*, 100-120, 150-154, and Ruth Marjorie Clark, *La Organización Obrera en Mexico* (Ediciones Era, 1979), 27.
[61] Huitrón, *Origenes*, 214.
[62] John Mason Hart, "The Urban Working Class and the Mexican Revolution: The Case of the Casa del Obrero Mundial," *HAHR* 58, no. 1 (1978): 4.

Thus the legacy of magonism can be seen almost everywhere in Mexico as it provided subsequent groups and individuals with the necessary idiom to articulate their long standing demands for social justice. The PLM itself died out early in the conflict once Flores Magón was exiled and imprisoned in the United States, but his heirs and principles remained in those individuals and groups who found inspiration in the ideas and teachings disseminated by Flores Magón.

Finally, the PCM, or Mexican Communist Party, was also influenced by former PLM members, including Primo Tapia, who found the inspiration to become a IWW follower and a Communist because of Floresmagonismo (as those sympathizing with the PLM were called), and went on to form agrarian leagues in Michoacan. In Jalisco, Jose Romero Gomez also formed peasants leagues based on the doctrines of the PLM, and Roberto Campa, one of the original members of the Communist party, credits Flores Magón as, "an enormous influence that contributed to the decision to form the PCM."[63] Former PLM members started the Mexican Communist Party at the regional level in places like Veracruz, Monterrey, Tabasco, Puebla and Mexico City.

From 1914-1924, reformist regimes challenged and co-opted unions into their established governments. The Constitutionalists, liberal in nature, composed of coalitions of a wide array of ideologies including a radical wing, used labor and agrarian reforms to cement their power and curtail radicalism by convincing a large segment of workers and their leaders that the reforms would benefit them. This group made concerted effort to control the labor radicalism by co-opting its leaders through patronage and violence at the local, state, and national level. From 1917-1920, before his assassination in 1920, Venustiano Carranza led the Constitutionalists

[63] Donald C. Hodges, "The Political Heirs of Flores Magón," 106-107.

towards a path of co-optation of the labor movement. He was a conservative land owner and former governor of Coahuila. Carranza skillfully navigated the armed phase of the Revolution, and through military victories and popular support —the product of calculated agrarian and labor reforms— ascended as head of the movement. His trusted general, Alvaro Obregón, from Sonora, reached the presidency as well (1920-1924), until his assassination on July 17, 1928. Obregón Defeated Villa in 1915, which eventually catapulted the former into the presidency and left the latter's army decimated, which meant that the political future of Mexico was decided on the battlefield. Obregón and his successor, Plutarco Elias Calles, also known as the Sonorans because both came from this northern state, nurtured and directed a type of unionism that did not confront or question power structures.

The Sonorans had a political vision that included the co-optation of the labor movement for their own political gains. To achieve this endeavor, the Sonorans left an opening for organized labor to articulate their demands. The northerners' economic power (the Sonorans controlled the oil rich region of Tamaulipas, the Henequen (twine) area of Yucatan, key ports including Veracruz, and had amicable relations with the US, which allowed them to acquire guns and ammunition, and prevented others from doing the same) permitted them to finance the collaborationist sector of the labor movement, which discouraged direct action and radical dogma in favor of cooperation.[64] The emergent revolutionaries, or Sonorans, were political pragmatists who saw organized labor as a tool to serve their interests, and as such, they willingly allowed workers to articulate their demands as long as they had the upper hand.

Still, labor won specific concessions from these arrangements, including a de facto control of the workplace. But elites put in place mechanisms to limit this power. President Calles

[64] Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, vol. 2 (University of Nebraska Press), and Eric R. Wolf, *Peasants Wars of the Twentieth Century* (Harper and Row, 1969), 42.

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established the Junta Federal de Conciliación y Arbitraje (Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Court) in 1927 in an effort to standardize the enforcement of labor laws at the national level. These courts set clear rules regarding whether each individual state, or the federal government had jurisdiction over any particular labor conflict. This decision gave the federal government jurisdiction over the mining, railroad, plutonium, transportation, electric, and other crucial industries.[65] This newly acquired power gave the federal government the ability to control emerging radical labor movements in certain crucial industries by limiting their independence and ability to act directly. These political elites, which emerged after the Revolution, needed these provisions to cement their still tenuous power at the national level. As historian Kevin Middlebrook points out, President Calles created these courts in 1927 to undermine the radical railroad movement of the late 1920s, which threatened to destabilize his fragile government.[66] The majority of workers in Ciudad Juárez, except for those in the electric industry, came under the control of the local boards. As a result, most grievances documented in the Ciudad Juárez archives fell under the local and state boards, which gave municipal presidents and local officials more power, since they had the ability to appoint arbitrators.[67]

In the national narrative, scholars have examined the use of tribunals extensively.[68] Some historians argue that these courts truly assisted workers in transforming power structures.[69] Other scholars see these tribunals as a series of legalistic mechanisms aimed at curtailing labor's

[65] Marcos T., Aguila, "Mexican Miners Moral Economy: Quick Transformations, 1927-1940" (From the Great Depression to Cardenismo), pPaper delivered at the 1998 Meeting of the Latin American Studies Association a Chicago, Illinois, September 26-26, 1998), 5-7.
[66] Kevin Middlebrook, *Paradox of Revolution*, 58-62.
[67] Ibid, 10-13, 43-44, 51.
[68] Need dates for this article placed before the URL. For a regional study focusing on Chihuahua, see Kevin J. Middlebrook and Cirila Quintero Ramirez, "Conflict Resolution in the Mexican Llabor Ccourts: An Examination of Local Conciliation and Arbitration Boards in Chihuahua and Tamaulipas," United States Department of Labor report, found at http://www.dol.gov/ilab/media/reports/nao/conflictresolution.htm, and Joe. C. Ashby, *Organized Labor and the Mexican Revolution under Lázaro Cárdenas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967).
[69] Joe. C. Ashby, *Organized Llabor*, 24.

freedom of action and independence. Scholars also point out that these venues increased the power of the state by allowing it to act as a mediator.[70] In the mining region and on the border, workers utilized collective contracts and the labor courts to increase their power. Although in the short run, these courts helped those workers under the umbrella of a pro-labor federal government, as it was the case in the mining district., Tthose outside the national government's jurisdiction that fell into the hands of local officials did not fare as well.

The Federal Law of 1931 further expanded the power federal authorities had over workers. The law placed limits on organized labor's ability to act directly and remain independent from government interference by giving government officials the ability to call any strike illegal, or by refusing to officially recognize any union. Perhaps more importantly, this legislation directed the articulation of workers' demands through a government created agency. Moreover, the newly created laws placed unions within the framework and rules devised by the state precisely to curtail excessive labor militancy.[71]

These decrees decreased workers' ability to act directly without the interference of the federal government, and its ability to repress or direct a labor conflict with violence, sabotage, patronage, or co-optation. Moreover, in the mining district, high-ranking state-wide officials, despite their lack of jurisdiction, still placed themselves as conflict mediators in an effort to control the movement without the interference of federal authorities, which would have exposed their lack of control over their provinces. Political elites also provided workers with the necessary conditions to accept these legislative changes to begin with. Throughout the 1920s,

[70] Kevin J. Middlebrook, *Paradox of Revolution*. Ssee also, Alan Knight, "Cardenismo: Juggernaut or Jalopy, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 26, no. 1 1 (Jan 1994): 73-107, "The Rise and Fall of Cardenismo," in Leslie Bethall, *Mexico Since Independence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), This part is confusing. Is the following source with the same author, or in the same article? Clarify"Peasant and Caudillo in Revolutionary Mexico, 1910-1917," in David A. Brading, *On Caudillo and Peasant in the Mexican Revolution* (Cambridge:" Cambridge University Press, 1980).

[71] Kevin J. Middlebrook, *Paradox of Revolution,* 10-13.

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Carrancistas’ and Obregonistas’ generals throughout Mexico had already put in place state-wide labor codes and labor tribunals to solve labor conflicts, which allowed labor leaders to choose the reformist wing of the Revolution as the lesser evil.

The break on radical labor demands was sealed by the Sonorans, who did not favor sweeping social and economic changes; their revolution was political. Once they gained power through the office of p~~P~~resident, they did not engage in radical land reform, nor did they support the radical wing of organized labor against capital. Instead, they pitted unions against each other by recognizing only those favorable to them, and more importantly, by providing economic support to some over others. These “*sindicatos blancos,*” led by pseudo-leadership started to amass power at the national level by collaborating with conservative politicians. The Sonorans promoted a type of docile unionism, which went against the logic of the Revolution, and eventually failed. Obregón occupied the presidency from 1920 to 1924, before his assassination in 1924. Fellow Sonoran, Plutarco Elias Calles, also a former general and a close ally of Obregón, held the office from 1924 to 1928, and Calles’ cronies had national power from 1928 to 1934 in what is known as the Maximato. The Sonorans cemented their power ~~in large part~~ because of ~~due to~~ their ability to co-opt the labor movement and direct it towards collaboration, which gave their post-revolutionary tenuous hold on power some stability. However, it is important to recognize that they had to compromise, which provided organized labor with effective ways to articulate their demands. Nevertheless, the Sonorans effectively steered workers away from radicalism through the creation of collaborationist federations.

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The Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana (CROM) ~~creation~~ laid the foundation leading to the eventual co-optation of the labor movement. The formation of national labor federations with the financial and political support of the revolutionary state, starting in 1918

with the CROM, directed the labor movement towards collaboration. Luis Morones, an obscure labor leader from the Mexico City Electrician's Union, founded the CROM in 1918; Morones embodies the new labor-state dynamics of collaboration instead of confrontation, even if it meant sacrificing workers' gains in the name of labor peace. The CROM, from 1918 to the late 1920s, deradicalized the labor movement nationally through economic and political means by outspending rival organizations, and through the formation of alternative company-friendly unions, especially in those industries where radical unions were strong. When these material incentives did not work, CROM shock groups purged radicalism from independent labor federations through violence.[72] The CROM according to historian Alan Knight, "represented the culmination of a long, hesitant process of detente between labor and the state: one that had begun appreciably before the revolution (and which had been pioneered by Porfiristas) but which the revolution served to accelerate; one that required the workers' repudiation not only of anarcho-syndicalism (witness Morones, the ideologue and lyrical poet of yesterday, become the labor boss of today) but also of the pristine liberalism promised by Madero, to which many had eagerly responded in 1909-13."[73]

Knight argues that to access power, workers and their leaders had to renounce some of their principles, including the rejection of political alliances and direct action at the point of production, or risked losing the gains achieved in the 1920s. The CROM's distancing from radicalism forced the most radical unions to leave the CROM. Historian Joe C. Ashby explains that radical elements, consisting at the time of Communists, the IWW, revolutionary Socialists

[72] Jacinto Huitrón, *Origenes del Movimiento Obrero en Mexico* (Editores Mexicanos Unidos, 1978), John Lear, *Workers, Neighbors and Citizens: The Revolution in Mexico City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *Bolcheviques: historia narrativa de los origenes del comunismo en Mexico* (Mexico: Ediciones B, 2008).

[73] Alan Knight, "The Working Class and the Mexican Revolution, 1900-1920," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 16, no. 1 (May 1984): 78.

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and radical agrarian elements were well represented in the first two conventions in 1918 and 1919, but all left the CROM in 1920.[74]

In 1921, the radical wing of the labor movement who felt disenchanted with the CROM, formed the anarchist ~~leaning~~ Confederación General de Trabajadores (CGT).[75] The CGT's membership never exceeded 30,000 members;[76] however, it would be a mistake to measure the CGT's influence solely on their membership numbers. The CGT was ~~very~~ influential in certain areas, including Mexico City (tram workers, bakers), Veracruz (tenant movement), Jalisco (miners), Puebla (textile workers), and Tabasco (independent agrarian communities), where they organized strikes and ensured tangible benefits for its members, including higher wages, union hiring hall, and official recognition. They began to increase their power largely as a result of their continuous use of direct action and the concrete benefits it brought to workers.[77] This resulted in a concerted effort from government officials to control their rising influence and radicalism with violence. Additionally, the CROM's continuous attempts to undermine the CGT through sabotage and violent acts, plus their own internal divisions highlighted by the anarchists and Communist split, hastened its demise.

The CGT suffered from the same problems the entire Mexican labor movement experienced in its inception, in terms of disunity between the different wings of the labor movement. For example, well known anarchists in Mexico, like Jacinto Huitrón, questioned the CGT's credentials as stalwarts of anarchism, "by arguing that the latter's influence was minimal

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[74] Joe C. Ashby, *Organized Labor and the Mexican Revolution under Lazaro Cardenas*, 11.
[75] Guillermina Baena Paz, *La Confederación General de Trabajadores, 1921-1931* (Mexico D~~.F.~~: Centro de Estudios Historicos del Movimiento Obrero Mexicano, 1982), 35-39. Moreover, the statutes of the organization claimed anarchism as their flag, 61.
[76] Joe C. Ashby, *Organized L~~l~~abor*, 79.
[77] For the CGT's actions in Mexico City, see John Lear, *Workers, Neighbors and Citizens: The Revolution in Mexico City*. In Jalisco, see Joseph Howard Green, *Workers, Peasants, and State-Building During the Mexican Revolution: The Case of Jalisco* (1910-1940), 161, 166, 171, 177, 191, and Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *Bolcheviques: historia narrativa de los origenes del comunismo en Mexico~~)~~*, 187-195.

and weak, and in 1934-35, this organization fell into the hands of labor reformists."[78] Despite the relative low number of workers adhered to its ranks, the CGT effectively introduced radical ideology and tactics to the post-revolutionary labor movement, which at the time leaned towards collaboration. The successful actions of CGT's strikers in Mexico City, Tamaulipas, Tabasco, Jalisco, Veracruz, and Puebla from 1921 to 1925 demonstrate that a large segment of the working class in Mexico adopted radical labor tenets despite continuous harassment from politicians and the CROM. Moreover, on February, 1921, the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) and the CGT had a brief alliance during the first couple of years of the CGT's creation.[79] The PCM at this point had no influence in the Mexican labor movement. The party was the product of a handful of foreigners, who convinced Moscow that Revolution provided ample opportunities to spread the Revolution.[80]

In 1934, General Lazaro Cárdenas was elected president of Mexico, and quickly exiled former President Calles the same year, which ended the Sonoran's hold on national power after fifteen years.[81] Once Cárdenas assumed national power, the political, social, and economic environment for workers in Mexico changed. The CROM lost most of its power, and the *Confederación de Trabajadores de Mexico* (CTM), formed in 1936 by Vicente Lombardo Toledano, an organization much more radical in pronouncements, started to organized workers with the support to the federal government. Thus, the implementations of certain popular labor demands, including the right to strike, bargain collectively, and participate in elections by

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[78] Huitrón, *Origenes e Historia del Movimiento Obrero en Mexico*, 306.
[79] Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth Century Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 33-36.

[80] Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *Bolcheviques: hitsoria narrativa de los origenes del comunismo en Mexico. 1919-1925* (Mexico D.F.: Ediciones B, 2008), 9-10, See also, Barry Car, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth Century Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 14, 11.
[81] *El Continental*, April 5-10, 1934.

organized labor began in earnest. However, as it happened with the CGT, fractures within the CTM tamed its radicalism and eventually changed its path towards collaboration. The following radical organizations adhered to the CTM ranks immediately: *The Confederación General de Obreros y Campesinos de Mexico* (CGOCM), the *Confederación Sindical Unitaria de Mexico* (Communist), *Cámara Nacional del Trabajo*, *Sindicato de Trabajadores Ferrocarrileros* (Railroad Union), the SIMMMR (miners), SME (electrics), *Alianza de Uniones y Sindicatos de Arte Gráfica* (Printers Union, and one of the first unions in Mexico), and others, which meant that the CTM concentrated the radical wing of the labor force. The CROM, which was always collaborative at the national realm, and the CGT, which continued under the banner of anarcho-syndicalism, remained but would never regain their previous power.

The CTM's founder, Vicente Lombardo Toledano, was a college graduate turned labor organizer, who broke away from the CROM once its leadership prevented radicals from occupying any position of power. Toledano's principles changed throughout his tenure as labor leader. Joe Ashby explains that "Toledano supported orthodox Socialism, collective owning the means of production, and public ownership of all productive property."[82] However, he gradually modified his radical stance towards what he referred to as multiple action, including the entrance of organized labor into politics, something anarchists and Socialists frowned upon.

After 1935, the Communist Party agreed to work with government-level officials in the Popular Front era; the Popular Front suggested that the fight against fascism worldwide necessitated alliances with government officials. Cárdenas' overtures wooed the PCM in this alliance. This led the PCM to a membership of 30,000 nationally by 1939. Hampered by its association with the Soviet Union, it never rose to great influence across the country. Despite

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[82] Joe C. Ashby, *Organized Labor*, 46.

relatively low numbers, the influence of Communist organizers on the labor movement on the border was higher than expected. The influence was especially important, as we shall see, among the electric and textile workers, as well as unemployed workers in a city where radical workers' dogma never had a significant influence prior to the Revolution.[83]

In 1937, most of the radical unions split from the CTM, and the latter lost a quarter of its membership. Most of the Communist unions left once the CTM's leadership curtailed their ability to act independently by forcing them to accept a decision without a democratic process behind it. Although Communist-identified unions returned to the CTM that same year after directives from Moscow forced them to return to the CTM. The Mexican Communist Party also experienced a split in which a significant number of their most notorious and loyal organizers (railroad workers, miners, and etc.) left the party that same year. This break resulted from a disagreement concerning whether to obey the mandates from the Comintern (IC) calling for collaboration with other forces and the sympathetic state, or remain independent.[84] The eventual decision to remain an ally of the government forced CTM's most radical unions to leave. This left the CTM as the most important labor conglomerate in Mexico, but without any radical unions in it, which meant the beginning of the end of the CTM's radical ways.

Conclusion

[83] Daniela Spenser and Richard Stoller, "Radical Mexico: Limits to the Impact of Soviet Mexico" *Latin American Perspectives* 35, no. 2 (2008), Daniela Spenser, *Stumbling Its Way through Mexico: The Early Years of the Communist International* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011), Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth Century Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), Paco Ignacio Taibo, *Bolcheviques: historia narrativa de los origenes del comunismo en Mexico*.

[84] Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth Century Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 47-56.

This chapter examined the material that provided the foundations for radicalism during the 1930s. The PLM's connection to the radical labor movement on the border and in the mining district is a direct one. This radicalism increased with the transnational status of Mexican workers, the transcontinental railroad's crucial role (which allowed these migrations) and the pre-existing agrarian identity forged by the struggle against land encroachment by haciendas and other large land owners. This section has also shown the development of the national labor movement, and its effects on the border and in the mining district. It also examined the influence the US and Russia labor movements had on each region and at the national level. The following chapter will analyze the unions' efforts to unionize workers in the region to increase workers' power through independent organizations and labor federations with different degrees of success.