J. Lat. Amer. Stud. 0, 1–31 © Cambridge University Press 2017
doi:10.1017/S0022216X17000773

'Civilising the Savage': State-Building, Education and Huichol Autonomy in Revolutionary Mexico, 1920–40

Q1 NATHANIEL MORRIS*

Abstract. Attempts to use schools to assimilate the Huichols into the Revolutionary nation-state prompted the development of divergent partnerships and conflicts in their *patria chica*, involving rival Huichol communities and factions, local mestizos, government officials and Cristero rebels. The provocations of teachers, the cupidity of mestizo caciques, rebel violence and Huichol commitment to preserving communal autonomy undermined alliances between Huichol leaders and federal officials, and led to the ultimate failure of the government's project. If anything, the short-lived Revolutionary education programme equipped a new generation of Huichol leaders with the tools to better resist external assimilatory pressures into the 1940s and beyond.

Keywords: Huichols, Mexican Revolution, state-building, education, Cristero rebellion, assimilation

Between the accession of Álvaro Obregón to Mexico's presidency in 1920, and the end of Lázaro Cárdenas' presidency in 1940, the federal government sought to politically, culturally and economically 'incorporate' the country's Indian peoples into the nation-state, predominantly via the efforts of the *maestros rurales* (rural schoolteachers) of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (Secretariat of Public Education, SEP). The case of the Huichols of northern Jalisco (see Map 1) – described in the early 1920s by government officials as 'an almost savage tribe',[1] whose members 'go around naked and subsist on

Nathaniel Morris, Research Fellow, University of Warwick. Email: nathanielmorris86@gmail.com

* While all errors of fact or interpretation in this article remain my own, I owe a great debt of thanks to Alan Knight, for his patient and perceptive help in putting together the thesis upon which this article is based; to Johannes Neurath, for sharing his time and insights with me as I struggled to write up the article itself; and, most of all, to the Huichols of Santa Catarina Cuexcomatitlán, San Andrés Cohamiata, San Sebastián Teponahuaxtla and Tuxpan de Bolaños, who offered me information, shelter, food and friendship throughout my research into the history of their communities. *¡Pamparios!*

[1] Diego Hernández to Departamento de Educación y Cultura Indígena (Department of Indigenous Education and Culture, DECI), 26 June 1922, Archivo Histórico de la

Map 1. *The Huichol Communities of Jalisco*

Fig. 1 - Colour online, B/W in print

Source: Author's elaboration from Plan Lerma Asistencia Técnica, *Operación Huicot* (Guadalajara: Poder Ejecutivo Federal, 1966).

hunting and fishing like prehistoric man'[2] – provides a particularly dramatic example of the failures of this assimilatory programme. However, despite the popularity of the Huichols with anthropologists, and of Revolutionary state-building with historians, the SEP's failures in the Sierra Huichola in the period have been mentioned only by Beatriz Rojas and Alexander Dawson, and then only briefly, and without reference to the 1920s.[3] Nor do most Huichols themselves remember the SEP's early 'civilising' mission in the Sierra Huichola, testament to its ultimate failure.[4]

Although government officials tended to blame this failure on what they saw as the extraordinarily low 'cultural level' of the Huichols, I contend that Huichol resistance was the primary obstacle to their 'incorporation', and that it was both the nature of the federal education system itself, and, more importantly, the behaviour of its local representatives, that galvanised this opposition. Through an analysis of how Huichol participation in the Cristero rebellions and the Cardenista agrarian reform was conditioned by their relationships with federal schoolteachers, this article sheds light on the nature and outcomes of the Revolution in the Sierra Huichola, and also provides insights into the sometimes disastrous consequences of the discrepancies between official government policies and their local-level implementation, as well as the more radical effects of Revolutionary state-building on rural, and particularly indigenous, Mexican communities.[5]

Some scholars have taken a relatively sympathetic view of Revolutionary efforts to assimilate Mexico's Indians. For example, Andrae Marak writes that while 'the oppression that the Tarahumara suffered at the hands of local

---

Secretaría de Educación Pública (Historical Archive of the SEP, AHSEP), Mexico City, 42/C/35980/E/27.

[2] J. G. González to José Vasconcelos, 12 Apr. 1922, AHSEP-42/C/35984/E/9.15.

[3] Beatriz Rojas, *Los huicholes en la historia* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional Indigenista (National Indigenist Institute, INI), 1993), pp. 171–3; Alexander Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2004), pp. 25–6, p. 48.

[4] Interviews with Salvador Sánchez, elder in Tuxpan de Bolaños, 21 Mar. 2015; Mauricio Montellano, middle-aged member of *gobierno tradicional* in San Andrés Cohamiata, 25 Mar. 2015; Antonio Candelario, community leader in Las Latas (Santa Catarina Cuexcomatitlán), 14 Apr. 2015; and Jesús Mercado González, elder in Tuxpan de Bolaños, 20 Feb. 2014, who, having studied at the Bolaños *internado* (boarding school), was the only one to remember anything about schools prior to the 1950s, while asserting that the *internado* was the first school ever established for Huichols.

[5] Cf. Mary K. Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1910–1940* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1997); Adrian Bantjes, *As if Jesus Walked the Earth: Cardenismo, Sonora, and the Mexican Revolution* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1998); Stephen Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution: Forging State and Nation in Chiapas, 1910–1945* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); Dawson, *Indian and Nation.*

mestizos was self-interested and calculated … that which they suffered at the hands of the SEP, for whatever it was worth, was meant to improve their lives'.[6] However, such interpretations often reflect an overreliance on the discourse of SEP ideologues, and on the frequently exaggerated reports of rural teachers (whose jobs, after all, depended on their success in 'civilising' their charges). These views also frequently ignore the Indians' own, more critical voices, and overemphasise the federal education system's attempts to socially and culturally 'rehabilitate' the nation's most marginalised groups, while underplaying the abuses of rural teachers,[7] the conflicts created by their attempts to open up Indian lands and resources to outsiders in the name of 'progress',[8] and the fundamental ethnocentrism of the SEP curriculum, which, especially in the 1920s, sought the destruction of Indian identity, language and culture in order to create a homogenous, Spanish-speaking Mexican nation.[9]

Under Cárdenas, national-level SEP policy-makers did increasingly promote the material improvement of the conditions in which Mexico's Indian population lived,[10] and became more tolerant (or even, on occasion, admiring) of Indian cultural 'difference'.[11] However, throughout the 1930s most of the SEP officials active in the Sierra Huichola continued to view Huichol language, autonomous power structures, subsistence-based economy and politico-religious customary practices – which for the Huichols were all inseparable parts of a complex known as *el costumbre*[12] – as obstacles to their assimilation. They therefore sought to destroy such 'primitive' beliefs and customs, or transform them into picturesque 'folklore' drained of all meaning.[13] Throughout the period, many Huichols therefore saw schools as directly challenging their political autonomy, ethnic identity and *costumbre* – the destruction of which, according to Huichol belief, would cause the world as a whole to disappear, or never to have *been* in the first place.[14] Even those more

[6] Andrae Marak, 'The Failed Assimilation of the Tarahumara in Postrevolutionary Mexico', *Journal of the Southwest*, 45: 3 (2003), p. 428.
[7] Dawson, *Indian and Nation*, pp. 49–50.
[8] Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *Teoría y práctica de la educación indígena* (Mexico City: INI, 1973), pp. 121–6.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 97; Dawson, *Indian and Nation*, pp. 8–24; Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 27–9, p. 46.
[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20, pp. 35–6; Dawson, *Indian and Nation*, pp. 86–7, pp. 104–5.
[11] Alexander Dawson, 'From Models for the Nation to Model Citizens: *Indigenismo* and the "Revindication" of the Mexican Indian, 1920–40', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 30: 2 (1998), pp. 284–7.
[12] Note the Huichols' idiosyncratic masculine version of the word *costumbre* to refer specifically to their political-ceremonial complex, so as to distinguish it from *las costumbres* in general.
[13] Aguirre Beltrán, *Teoría y práctica*, p. 121–2; cf. Dawson, *Indian and Nation*, pp. 12–14 and especially p. 90.
[14] Cf. Jesús Jáuregui and Johannes Neurath (eds.), *Fiesta, literatura y magia en el Nayarit: Ensayos sobre coras, huicholes y mexicaneros de Konrad Theodor Preuss* (Mexico City: Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos, 1998).

cosmopolitan Huichols who had had positive contacts with mestizos in the past, and were therefore less worried about such metaphysical threats, felt that the activities of several rural teachers directly threatened the physical integrity of their communities. I would therefore position the SEP's official programme in the Sierra Huichola between 1920 and 1933, and, more importantly, the actions of many SEP teachers and inspectors into the 1940s, as an example not only of Revolutionary efforts towards 'forjando patria',[15] but *also* within the educational paradigm that Mary Vaughan, drawing on the work of Marjorie Becker and Brian Street, describes as

> [that] undertaken for the purposes of promoting state control and market penetration … [and] conceptualized and carried out within cultural constructs oblivious to the logic of local practices of productive, reproductive, and ritual labor. [Such programmes] are disruptive of the delicate ecological and social balances that sustain life upon a precarious resource base. The discourse between community and teachers is likely to be antagonistic, characterized by resistance, or absent.[16]

Just as in the Indian communities of Sonora and Puebla that Vaughan uses as examples of this flipside to rural education's 'empowering' potential,[17] the nature and intensity of Huichol opposition to SEP programmes varied greatly from community to community, and depended heavily on the behaviour of its local representatives. Huichol resistance to their activities often involved the use of Scottian 'weapons of the weak' such as foot-dragging, non-compliance, evasiveness, obfuscation and the use of native language to confuse outsiders.[18] However, on occasions the meddling of SEP officials in local politics, their perceived facilitation of mestizo land-grabs, or their 'forced recruitment' (some would say kidnapping) of children became too much for local people to bear, which prompted their use of more violent forms of resistance. Sometimes this meant threats against teachers or even the selective assassination of these and other government officials; but as Adrian Bantjes found in Sonora, where a SEP-led anti-clerical campaign provoked a short-lived

[15] Dawson, *Indian and Nation*, pp. 7–8. *Forjando patria* ('Forging a nation', published in 1916), by the 'father' of Mexican anthropology Manuel Gamio, was a manifesto for the cultural assimilation of Mexican Indians.

[16] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 15–16; cf. Marjorie Becker, 'Black and White and Color: *Cardenismo* and the Search for a *Campesino* Ideology', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 29: 3 (1987), pp. 163–79, and Brian Street, *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1984), pp. 95–128, pp. 183–212.

[17] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 15–16, cf. Ben Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 115–30.

[18] James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1986), p. xvi, pp. 29–35; cf. Elsie Rockwell, 'Schools of the Revolution: Enacting and Contesting State Forms in Tlaxcala, 1910–1930', in Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent (eds.), *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 195–6.

Mayo uprising in the 1930s,[19] the resistance of some Huichols to the cultural, political and, in particular, the territorial pressures exerted upon them by the actions of SEP teachers and their Huichol or mestizo allies extended to their open rebellion against the Mexican state.

Indigenismo, Caciquismo *and Factional Conflict in the Sierra Huichola*

While both 'New Age' anthropologists and the Mexican public at large have tended to see the Huichols as eternally resisting the intrusions of the outside world in order to preserve their 'ancestral' way of life, recent research has done much to locate Huichol political identities, territoriality and *costumbre* within wider Mesoamerican or Mexican contexts[20] (although their participation in the Revolution remains little studied).[21] In line with this newer scholarship, I argue that the story of Huichol interactions with the SEP in the Revolutionary period is not exclusively one of resistance. For although the Mexican state failed to directly impose control on the Sierra Huichola by means of schools, my research again coincides with that of Vaughan in showing that the state *did* manage to exert some influence on particular Huichol communities when, rather than employing force, it tried to negotiate with local people.[22]

That such negotiations could be carried out in the first place, however, was largely due to the fact that different Huichol communities, factions, and individuals – particularly the caciques – attempted to use the federal schools, and, more to the point, the teachers in charge of them, to their own ends. As in much of Mexico, those Huichols most willing to negotiate with the state were ambitious young men with vested interests in promoting Revolutionary political and economic change, which they hoped would open up to them avenues to power and wealth previously inaccessible in their traditionally gerontocratic and subsistence-based societies.[23] As further

[19] Bantjes, *As If Jesus*, pp. 13–15, pp. 33–5.

[20] Cf. Johannes Neurath, *Las fiestas de la casa grande* (Mexico City: CONACULTA-INAH, 2002); Paul Liffman, *Huichol Territoriality and the Mexican Nation* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2011).

[21] With the exception of Rojas, *Los huicholes*, pp. 160–76; Víctor Tellez Lozano, 'Lozadistas, revolucionarios y cristeros', in Víctor Rojo Leyva, José Reyes Utrera and Adrián Rangel Aguilar (eds.), *Participación indígena en los procesos de independencia y revolución mexicana* (Mexico City: CDI, 2011), pp. 225–48; Phil Weigand, 'El papel de los indios huicholes en las revoluciones del occidente de México', in Phil Weigand, *Ensayos sobre el Gran Nayar* (Mexico, CEMC-INI, 1992), pp. 121–30; Nathaniel Morris, '"The World Created Anew": Land, Religion and Revolution in the Gran Nayar Region of Mexico', Unpubl. PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2015.

[22] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 8–20, pp. 158–9.

[23] Cf. Rockwell, 'Schools', p. 188, p. 203, and Jan Rus, 'The "Comunidad Revolucionaria Institucional": The Subversion of Native Government in Highland Chiapas, 1936–1968', in Joseph and Nugent (eds.), *Everyday Forms*, pp. 272–6.

reward for their cooperation, they also sought the government's support for their communities' agrarian or territorial claims,[24] taking advantage of the links that the teachers provided with a government that officially promoted the idea of agrarian reform to shore up its legitimacy.[25]

However, my conclusions as to the success of such negotiations for either party do not always coincide with Vaughan's findings that 'factions of villagers who welcomed and allied with teachers pushed SEP policy in specific directions and not in others'.[26] Despite the evolution of SEP policies in the 1930s, the only teacher to really advocate for Huichol rights in this period (Inocencio Ramos; see below) quickly lost his job. Meanwhile many of his colleagues' activities continued to provoke Huichol opposition, which by 1938 had forced the suspension of SEP efforts to 'incorporate' them. In fact, if anything the SEP's programme in the Sierra Huichola provided a generation of future Huichol leaders with new ways to *avoid* assimilation in all but its most superficial aspects. Contact between mestizo teachers and a small group of young Huichol men enabled the latter to become literate in the national language, form connections with government officials and learn about the culture and politics of the mestizo-ruled nation-state then being constructed on the edges of their homeland.[27] As Johannes Neurath points out,

> [f]or the Huichols, knowing how mestizos think, and knowing how to be a mestizo, is strategically beneficial. They practice accumulation of contradictory identities in shamanism, but also in everyday life. For them the alternative is not to be Indian or Mestizo, but Indian or Indian *and* Mestizo.[28]

In many other parts of Mexico, literate Indian 'scribes' and bilingual teachers used their positions as 'link-men' between their communities and state officials to increase their wealth and power, and by the late 1930s constituted a new class of communal-level cacique,[29] often just as corrupt, violent and

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 276–7.
[25] Eyler N. Simpson, *The Ejido: Mexico's Way Out* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1937); cf. Daniel Nugent, *Spent Cartridges of Revolution: An Anthropological History of Namiquipa, Chihuahua* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 129–30.
[26] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 13–14.
[27] Weigand, 'El papel'; José Torres Contreras, *Relaciones de frontera entre los huicholes y sus vecinos mestizos* (Zapopan: Colegio de Jalisco, 2009), pp. 309–10; Fernando Benítez, *Los indios de México*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1970), pp. 28–40, pp. 55–7.
[28] Johannes Neurath, 'Contrasting Ontologies in the Struggle against Roads and Mining Companies: Wixarika Cosmopolitics and Ecology', paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association (Denver, CO, 2015), p. 15.
[29] Alan Knight, 'Caciquismo in Twentieth-Century Mexico', in Knight and Wil Pansters (eds.), *Caciquismo in Twentieth-Century Mexico* (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2005), pp. 37–41; cf. Paul Friedrich, *Agrarian Revolt in a Mexican Village* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 70–4.

exploitative as their predecessors.[30] In contrast, many of their Huichol equivalents refrained from advancing overly individualistic or factional agendas, and, while representing the state within their communities, simultaneously opposed those government programmes – such as mining, logging and road-building projects – that they saw as threatening communal integrity and autonomy. State weakness, the superficial nature of federal schooling efforts in the region, the traditionally extreme decentralisation of power within Huichol communities, the continued, ritually-legitimised moral authority of elders over the population, and a strong sense of collective identity and widespread belief in magical sanctions for transgressive leaders[31] limited the extent to which younger, 'cosmopolitan' Huichols abandoned older patterns of thought and behaviour in the 1930s and beyond.[32] Instead, they used what they had learned from the SEP in the Revolutionary period to manipulate official discourses of 'patriotism' and 'nationhood', not only to win state concessions for themselves and their followers, but also to facilitate and legitimise their defence of communal territory and identity from external pressures.[33] Thus throughout the twentieth century, and both *despite* and *because* of the SEP's efforts, the Huichols were able to hold on to a higher level of cultural, territorial and political autonomy than either their mestizo neighbours, or other Indian peoples such as the Yaquis, Mayos, Purépechas or the highlanders of Chiapas.[34]

The Sierra Huichola, from Conquest to Revolution

At the turn of the twentieth century, the vast majority of the Huichol population – then conservatively estimated at around 4,000 individuals[35] – were dependent on subsistence agriculture and lived in small settlements scattered across the mountains of northern Jalisco.[36] These settlements, or *rancherías*, were inhabited by extended families whose lives were governed by politico-religious leaders based at the nearest *tuki*, or Huichol temple (pl. *tukite*). These leaders, called *kawiterusixi*, officiated over rituals involving all the inhabitants of the surrounding *rancherías*, which reaffirmed the politico-religious and kinship links between participants, and guaranteed both their own and the

[30] Rus, 'Comunidad Revolucionaria Institucional'; Paul Friedrich, *The Princes of Naranja* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986).
[31] Cf. Scott, *Weapons*, p. 168.
[32] Johannes Neurath, 'Ambivalencias del poder y del don en el sistema politico ritual *wixarika*', in Berenice Alcántara and Federico Navarrete (eds.), *Los pueblos amerindios más allá del estado* (Mexico City: UNAM), pp. 117–44.
[33] For similar tactical use of education in Tlaxcala, cf. Rockwell, 'Schools', p. 205.
[34] Bantjes, *As If Jesus*; Friedrich, *The Princes*; Rus, 'Comunidad Revolucionaria Institucional'.
[35] *Censo General de la República Mexicana* (Mexico City: Gobierno de la República, 1900).
[36] Carl Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1902), vol. 2, p. 53.

annual maize crop's health.[37] At a higher level, the different *tukite* and their dependent *rancherías* came together to form four distinct Huichol *comunidades*: Santa Catarina Cuexcomatitlán, San Sebastián Teponahuaxtlán, Tuxpan de Bolaños (which was partially politico-religiously dependent on San Sebastián),[38] and San Andrés Cohamiata (whose *tuki* district of Guadalupe Ocotán was by this point semi-independent) (see Map 1). Each *comunidad* was ruled by a *gobierno tradicional* – made up of cargo-system officials and the leaders of each community's constituent *tukite* – based at a ceremonial centre, or *gobernancia*, named after the *comunidad* itself, and which housed little more than a Catholic church, a *tuki*, a jail, and the houses and headquarters of the *gobierno tradicional*. Communal festivals, celebrated at both the church and the *tuki*, regulated and legitimised the power of the *gobierno tradicional*, and emphasised the overall unity of the community, regardless of the frequent rivalries between different *tuki* districts.[39]

These politico-religious structures developed during the Colonial and Independence periods, during which the Huichols enjoyed a high level of cultural, political and territorial independence *vis-à-vis* both Church and state, comparable to that of the Yaqui or perhaps the 'pagan' Tarahumara.[40] However, from the mid-nineteenth century, the Mexican state encouraged mestizo ranchers and *hacendados* to 'colonise' Huichol landholdings in the name of 'productivity'. Especially after 1873, when the government finally defeated and killed regional bandit chieftain-turned-agrarian revolutionary Manuel Lozada and began to reassert itself over his former strongholds, the physical integrity of the Huichol communities was threatened by settlers from nearby mestizo towns and haciendas.[41]

Both Church and state also attempted to culturally and politically assimilate the Huichols into mainstream Mexican society. Catholic schools were established in San Andrés and San Sebastián as part of new missions run by the Zacatecan 'Josefino' order,[42] and the Bishop of Zacatecas took several Huichol children to be educated in a seminary in that city.[43] The missionaries also encouraged mestizo settlement in San Andrés and San Sebastián, to help

[37] Cf. Neurath, *Las fiestas*.
[38] Rojas, *Los huicholes*, p. 148.
[39] Liffman, *Huichol Territoriality*, p. 42.
[40] Rojas, *Los huicholes*, pp. 16–160; cf. Evelyn Hu-Dehart, *Yaqui Resistance and Survival: the Struggle for Land and Autonomy, 1821–1910* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); Roberto Salmón, 'Tarahumara Resistance to Mission Congregation in Northern New Spain, 1580–1710', *Ethnohistory*, 24: 4 (1977), pp. 379–80; Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, vol. 1, pp. 118–55.
[41] Rojas, *Los huicholes*, pp. 146–7, pp. 150–1, p. 160.
[42] Sebastián Herrera Guevara, 'Memorias de la misión de San Andrés Cohamiata en el Nayarit, circa 1853–1872', *Relaciones. Estudios de historia y sociedad*, 34: 135 (2013), pp. 127–54.
[43] Archivo General de los Misioneros Josefinos (General Archive of the Josephine Missionaries, AGMJ), Zacatecas, FUN-01-MJ, Calixto Guerrero, 'Informe', 22 Oct. 1917.

them 'civilise' the 'savage' Huichols.[44] Furthermore, government-run schools were also opened in San Sebastián in 1888,[45] and a decade later in Guadalupe Ocotán and San Andrés, where, according to official propaganda, 'only a few years ago … Huichol fire worshippers sacrificed human victims'.[46] However, the inhabitants of Guadalupe Ocotán soon caught their teacher stealing mules and forced him to leave,[47] while San Andrés' teacher 'coerced and extorted them', and was also expelled.[48] But although the Huichols thus resisted the abuses of those charged with 'civilising' them, they struggled to defend their communal landholdings against the incursions of mestizo ranchers, which exacerbated territorial conflicts between the different Huichol communities themselves.[49]

However, just as missionaries, government officials and foreign explorers and anthropologists began to forecast the imminent demise of the Huichols as a people,[50] the outbreak of the Revolution in 1911 gave them an opportunity to reclaim their political and territorial autonomy.[51] By 1916, many Huichols had organised themselves into 'Defensas Rurales': these were militias armed by the Carrancista Revolutionary faction and played a key role in defeating the Villista remnants then roaming northern Jalisco.[52] The leaders of the Huichol militias also violently expelled almost all of the mestizo settlers and missionaries from their communities,[53] and at the same time increasingly contested political control of their communities with the traditionally paramount cargo-holders and elders.[54]

After 1920, however, the Huichol Defensas and *gobiernos tradicionales* began working together to try and stall renewed mestizo land-grabs, which were encouraged by municipal authorities who coveted access to the forests,

[44] *Ibid.*
[45] Michele Stephens, '"… As Long as They Have Their Land": The Huichol of Western Mexico, 1850–1895', *Ethnohistory*, 62: 1 (2015), p. 47.
[46] 'Fragmento de un estudio sobre la raza indígena', *Revista de la Enseñanza Primaria*, 15 Aug. 1909.
[47] Rojas, *Los huicholes*, p. 154.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 161–2.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 145; Stephens, 'As Long as They Have Their Land', pp. 42–54.
[50] Joaquín Pérez González, *Ensayo estadístico y geográfico de territorio de Tepic* (Tepic: Imprimadores de Retes, 1894), p. 10; Aleš Hrdlička, *Physiological and Medical Observations among the Indians of Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico* (Washington, DC.: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 35; Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, vol. 1, p. xvi.
[51] Ivor Thord-Gray, *Gringo Rebel: Mexico 1913–1914* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1960), p. 282.
[52] Interview with Pedro Landa, in Manuel Caldera and Luis de la Torre (eds.), *Pueblos del viento norte* (Guadalajara: Secretaría de Cultura de Jalisco, 1994), pp. 55–6.
[53] Guerrero, 'Informe', 22 Oct. 1917; in Chiapas, the Chamulas similarly fought to regain autonomy and expel mestizos from their lands in this period: cf. Rus, 'Comunidad Institucional Revolucionaria', p. 271.
[54] Morris, 'The World Created Anew', pp. 55–64; cf. Nugent, *Spent Cartridges*, pp. 83–5.

pastures, watering holes and mineral riches of the Sierra Huichola.[55] In response, many Huichols – particularly those of San Andrés and Santa Catarina – looked to the state and federal governments for support. Much like their Porfirian forebears, however, Mexico's Revolutionary politicians and ideologues saw the Huichol communities as isolated bastions of savagery that needed to be 'incorporated' into Mexican civilisation for their own good.[56] Given the conflicted relationship between the Huichols and the municipal authorities, and the weakness of the federal army's presence in the Sierra Huichola, the state's main instrument in its attempts to assimilate the Huichols was the SEP, founded by José Vasconcelos in October 1921.[57]

Before the Revolution, Carl Lumholtz reported that the Huichols '[did] not want schools', because of the abuses committed by the teachers, and because they believed that literacy and contact with outsiders would lead their children to 'lose their native tongue and their ancient beliefs'. Lumholtz thus recommended that 'the white teacher's aim should be to incite the desire for instruction rather than to force his pupils to listen to his teachings; not to destroy the Indian's mental world, but to clear it and raise it into the sphere of civilisation'.[58] However, Vasconcelos and other early SEP policy-makers saw the destruction of 'primitive' Indian political structures, languages and 'superstitions' as essential to liberating them from poverty, 'improving' them racially, uniting them around a Revolutionary and nationalist ideal, and opening up for the nation's benefit the previously untapped human and natural resources of the countryside.[59] Many Huichols therefore saw this project as a threat to their culture, language, and family-unit agricultural production.[60] 'Our parents wouldn't let us go [to school]; they told us, "You'll come out of school and never want to help [in the fields], you'll sell out your community."'[61] Some also saw the presence of mestizo teachers in their communities, and especially their involvement in questions of agrarian reform, as compromising their own continued control of communal political life, lands and resources.[62] Just as Vaughan

[55] Robert Shadow and María Rodríguez Shadow, 'Religión, economía y política en la rebelión cristera: El caso de los gobernistas de Villa Guerrero', *Historia Mexicana*, 43: 4 (1994), pp. 681–9; Jean Meyer, *La cristiada*, vol. 3 (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1974), pp. 19–20, pp. 33–4.

[56] Aguirre Beltrán, *Teoría y práctica*, pp. 88–94.

[57] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, p. 44.

[58] Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, vol. 1, p. 458.

[59] Aguirre Beltrán, *Teoría y práctica*, p. 97, pp. 114–16; p. 125; Dawson, *Indian and Nation*, pp. 8–20; Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 27–9, p. 46.

[60] Cristóbal Magallanes to Archbishop of Guadalajara, 23 June 1921, Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado Guadalajara, Gobierno, Parroquias: Totatiche, C/3 Exp. 13.

[61] Author's interview with Julio Robles, Las Latas (*anexo* of Santa Catarina Cuexcomatitlán), Jalisco, 14 April 2015.

[62] Cf. Nugent, *Spent Cartridges*, pp. 87–91.

and Dawson observed in other indigenous regions,[63] the SEP's early activities therefore provoked concerted Huichol opposition.

However, some of the Huichol Defensa leaders who had come to power during the Revolution – and were more accustomed to dealing with mestizos – saw cooperation with the SEP, and thus with the state itself, as a route to amassing further power and wealth, and winning government protection of their lands and a measure of autonomy within the new Revolutionary Mexico. This version of autonomy would, however, be safely overseen by themselves and a few other members of the emerging elite of young, ambitious Huichols who, even if they had yet to be incorporated into the national political system, had at least been exposed to the cultural and economic influence of mestizo society. As in much of Mexico, the SEP therefore became caught up in factional and generational conflicts then emerging within the Huichol communities.[64]

The SEP's Early Efforts in the Sierra Huichola, 1922–6

In June 1922, Diego Hernández became the first of the SEP's *maestros misioneros* (missionary schoolteachers) charged with 'civilising' the Huichols. However, Hernández was reluctant to give up the comforts of the regional mestizo hub of Colotlán, and claimed that heavy rains, the Huichols' concern for their crops, and their dispersed settlement patterns, would make heading directly for the Sierra a waste of time and effort.[65] Thus the communities of the Sierra Huichola were largely ignored until late 1923, when a new SEP budget allotted 200,000 pesos for the founding of 'indigenous cultural centres' across the country,[66] and 690 rural 'missionaries' and teachers were sent out into the countryside.[67] In September 1923 Hernández suggested founding schools in San Sebastián and Santa Catarina, as their inhabitants, 'usually so opposed to education, are interested in having schools'.[68] However, the teachers Hernández nominated to run these schools refused to transfer to either community, and in November a school was instead opened in Tuxpan.[69]

[63] Vaughan, C*ultural Politics*, pp. 15–16; Dawson, *Indian and Nation*, p. 29.
[64] Cf. Rockwell, 'Schools', pp. 200–2; Rus, 'Comunidad Revolucionaria Institucional', p. 278.
[65] Hernández to DECI, 26 June 1922, AHSEP-42/C/35980/E/27.
[66] 'SEP Presupuesto 1923–24', 10 July 1923, AHSEP-45/C/36322/E.24; in addition to the Huichols, schools were also planned for the Tarahumaras, the Chamulas, the Yaquis, the Mayos, the Tarascans, the Zapotecs, the Mixtecs, the 'indios' of the Sierra Norte de Puebla, and the Tepehuanos of Durango.
[67] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, p. 12.
[68] Hernández to DECI, 25 Oct. 1923, AHSEP-42/C/36013/E/38.71.
[69] Hernández to DECI, 25 Sept. 1923, AHSEP-42/C/36013/E/38.71.

According to the reports of Tuxpan's teacher, the school was an extraordinary success. Forty-nine children and 40 adults were initially enrolled,[70] and in December not a single student dropped out and attendance averaged at only one below the maximum possible; while in January 25 *new* students enrolled, with average attendance now standing at 95.[71] These figures were almost certainly grossly inflated, but the school, surrounded by test-plantings of modern commercial crops such as coffee, oranges, avocados and bananas,[72] did at least exist, and Hernández and his subordinates were thus by now actively engaged in trying to transform the Huichols into 'true industrialists who would know how to exploit the natural resources they possess'.[73]

The Delahuertista rebellion of late 1923 put a temporary stop to these efforts. However, after the rebels' defeat, Tuxpan's school was reopened, and another was established in San Sebastián.[74] A rather outlandish and completely inaccurate total of '45 Huichols' ('21 children and 18 adults'), all of them male, were apparently enrolled at the latter.[75] It is interesting that Tuxpan and San Sebastián – which had still not demanded agrarian reform – were chosen as sites for the Sierra Huichola's first schools, rather than San Andrés and Santa Catarina, which were in much closer contact with the Revolutionary state. Perhaps, precisely *because* they lacked contact with the state, it was regarded as more important to bring the former communities into the national fold. However, it is also possible that the local municipal authorities, motivated by their interest in San Sebastián and Tuxpan's landholdings, influenced the SEP's decision.

Inspector Hernández enjoyed a cordial relationship with the cacique (and then municipal president) of Villa Guerrero, Adolfo Valdés y Llanos,[76] to whom Hernández presented himself on 5 October 1923 as a prelude to his first major expedition to the Sierra,[77] and who approved the seemingly unreliable reports submitted by the teachers of San Sebastián and Tuxpan (in place of the presidents of Mezquitic and Bolaños, the municipalities to which these communities respectively belonged).[78] The Valdés family, who together with the Sánchez controlled the economic and political life of Villa Guerrero,[79]

[70] J. Rodríguez, 'Informe', Nov. 1923, AHSEP-42/C/36013/E/38.71.
[71] Rodríguez, 'Informe', Dec. 1923, AHSEP-45/C/36292/E/75; Rodríguez, 'Informe', Jan. 1924, AHSEP-45/C/36292/E/75.
[72] Rodríguez, 'Informe', May. 1924, AHSEP-45/C/36292/E/75.
[73] Hernández to DECI, 4 June 1924, AHSEP-45/C/36292/E/37.
[74] F. Antuna, 'Informe', Mar. 1924, AHSEP-45/C/36292/E/37.
[75] *Ibid.*
[76] Valdés y Llanos to DECI, 9 Apr. 1924, AHSEP-45/C/36342/E/1.
[77] Hernández to DECI, 30 Oct. 1923, AHSEP-42/C/36013/E/38.71.
[78] Hernández to DECI, 15 June 1924, AHSEP-45/C/36292/E/37.
[79] Shadow and Rodríguez Shadow, 'Religión, economía', p. 673; Valdés y Llanos to DECI, 9 Apr. 1924, AHSEP-45/C/36342/E/1; PM Sta María to DECI, 11 Oct. 1923, AHSEP-42/C/36013/E/38.71.

were united by close commercial, familial and political ties with the Guzmán family of Bolaños and the Muñoz family of Huajimic (across the state border with Nayarit).[80] These families had, during the nineteenth century, seized almost all of the formerly communal lands on the southern edges of the Sierra Huichola,[81] and were now actively working to take over the lands of Tuxpan and San Sebastián.[82]

Hernández, on his first visit to San Sebastián's new school, dedicated his time to what he called the 'bringing together of mestizos and Indians'. This involved bringing Luis Huerta, Petronilo Muñoz and Leandro and J. Guadalupe Sánchez to visit the school and meet with the community's governor.[83] Together, these men represented the main cacical clans of the region; Leandro Sánchez, for example, was a rich landowner and rancher whose family led the takeover of the lands of the nearby Tepecano community of Azqueltán during the Porfiriato;[84] while Petronilo Muñoz (son of Nieves Muñoz, cacique of Huajimic) had only the year before seized lands belonging to Guadalupe Ocotán,[85] and in 1928, under cover of the Cristero Rebellion – or 'Cristiada' – stole more than 2,000 hectares of San Sebastián's communal territory.[86]

Seen in the light of Hernández's plans for the community's school and for the community itself, and in the context of San Sebastián's future agrarian conflicts with these same men and their families, it is difficult to believe the meetings that Hernández organised and facilitated did not, at least in part, concern the potential mestizo settlement of Huichol lands. Typical of the *indigenista* rhetoric espoused by SEP policy-makers in this period,[87] Hernández saw the Huichols as 'poor Indians, living monuments to our glorious people',[88] who failed to understand that 'man needs to work, and he who

[80] Meyer, *La cristiada*, vol. 1, p. 215.
[81] Robert Shadow, 'Production, Social Identity and Agrarian struggle among the Tepecano Indians of Northern Jalisco', in Ross Crumrine and Phil Weigand (eds.), *Ejidos and Regions of Refuge in Northwestern Mexico* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1987), pp. 40–2.
[82] Indeed, the mestizo inhabitants of these towns are today still locked into an often-violent territorial conflict with Tuxpan and San Sebastián. Members of the latter communities recently occupied 184 hectares of lands that an agrarian court ruled had been illegally seized by ranchers from Huajimic 'in the first half of the twentieth century'. Juan Partida, 'Recuperan huicholes de Jalisco tierras en Nayarit', *La Jornada*, 24 Sept. 2016.
[83] Antuna, 'Informe', Apr. 1924, AHSEP-45/C/36292/E/37.
[84] Shadow and Rodríguez Shadow, 'Religión, economía', p. 689.
[85] Auts. Trads. to J. Martínez, 22 Oct. 1923, AGA-D/23/242/leg.1/CCA/Dotación/San Andrés.
[86] Unnamed agronomist's report, 5 June 1939, AGA-D/276.1/79/leg.4/CCA/RTBC/San Sebastián.
[87] Dawson, 'From Models', p. 280, pp. 284–8; Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution*, p. 25.
[88] Hernández to DECI, 17 May 1923, AHSEP-42/C/36013/E/38.71.

works hardest will live most comfortably'.[89] To that end he actively advocated that 'the lands of the Sierra in which the "Huichol" lives, be populated by honest and hardworking [mestizo] families, whose resolve, honour and work will infect, forgive me the word, the semi-savage "Huichol"', which he believed would bring about 'the miracle of civilisation in these lands abandoned to indifference and selfishness'.[90]

Hernández's view of the commercial potential of Huichol communal lands – which he claimed possessed 'natural riches which have never been exploited to anyone's benefit; sites for bountiful timber, cattle, mineral and agricultural production'[91] – was similar to those of the region's mestizo caciques who, using almost identical arguments, had long been trying to seize them.[92] Hernández, together with his patron, Valdés y Llanos, and the scions of the cacical clans who came with him to San Sebastián's school, were therefore natural allies. And it was perhaps because of their combined influence, motivated by both ideology and economic self-interest, that Tuxpan and San Sebastián were chosen as the first Huichol communities to receive federal schools, which Hernández himself openly envisaged as springboards from which to launch the colonisation – or recolonisation – of indigenous lands by 'hardworking' mestizos. Although there is no documentary 'smoking gun' that proves beyond doubt that this was indeed the case, Huichol opposition to such plans on the part of Hernández and his mestizo allies would also help to explain the closure of the schools in San Sebastián and Tuxpan shortly afterwards,[93] as well as the subsequent complaints of San Sebastián's authorities that 'the municipal authorities and private individuals have long abused our ignorance in order to rob us of our lands'.[94]

Hernández petitioned hard for the reestablishment of San Sebastián's school, and the establishment of new schools in Santa Catarina and San Andrés.[95] In response, in April 1925 a school was approved for San Andrés for the first time since 1912, where the scale of Huichol resistance to the meddling of Hernández and his colleagues in communal agrarian problems was soon brought into clearer relief. As mentioned above, the new school's antecedents were far from positive, and, in choosing Antonio Reza to run the

[89] Hernández to DECI, 14 Apr. 1924, AHSEP-45/C/36293/E/12.
[90] Hernández to the DECI's successor, the Departamento de Escuelas Rurales e Incorporación Cultural Indígena (Department for Rural Schools and Indigenous Cultural Incorporation, DERICI), 8 Sept. 1925, AHSEP-45/C/36291/E/2.
[91] *Ibid.*
[92] Cf. Rojas, *Los huicholes*, pp. 129–48.
[93] Hernández to DECI, 13 Jan. 1925, AHSEP-45/C/36291/E/2.
[94] Inocencio Ramos to Governor of Jalisco (hereafter Gob.Jal.), 27 Dec. 1931, Archivo General Agrario (General Agrarian Archive, AGA), Mexico City, D/24/1680/leg.1/CCA/Restitución/San Sebastián.
[95] Hernández to DECI, 13 Jan. 1925, AHSEP-45/C/36291/E/2.

school,[96] Hernández repeated the same mistakes as his predecessors, for Reza was already an unpopular figure in San Andrés. Reza had been one of several 'huicholitos' taken from San Andrés to Zacatecas before the Revolution to receive the 'great benefit' of a religious education. In 1917, Calixto Guerrero, former head of San Sebastián's Josefino mission, described these Huichol students as having been 'corrupted by the vices' they were exposed to in the city, and notes that on returning to their homes, they became 'real monsters of dishonesty and sin, forcing the Huichols, in view of the evils these learned men caused them, to join together in taking their lives or driving them into exile'. The people of San Andrés killed one of them during the Revolution, but two others, including Reza, had 'miraculously' escaped this fate in spite of the 'continuous torment' they had inflicted on their community.[97]

Reza had returned to San Andrés by March 1925, when he reappears in the documentary record as the author of a request for agrarian reform for the community – in spite of the fact that 'restitution' proceedings had already been initiated by the community's leaders in 1921.[98] Such a unilateral action, taken by an already unpopular figure and without the approval of the community as a whole, would have met with local opprobrium, which we can assume was compounded by the activities of unnamed SEP officials who, in 1925, recruited Huichol children for the recently established Casa del Estudiante Indígena (House of the Indigenous Student) in Mexico City 'using unconstitutional measures'[99] – that is, by forcibly 'seizing them from their lairs'.[100] Whether or not Reza was directly involved, local people would naturally have associated him, as a representative of the SEP, with such abuses. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that in September 1925 Reza was 'assassinated by the tribe'.[101] It was furthermore alleged that they 'they lynched [Reza] in the community's *TUKT*',[102] suggesting that the community's *kawiterusixi* at least approved Reza's murder, and indicating that the opposition of conservative elders towards the work of the SEP, and its 'cosmopolitan' Huichol representative, had become a matter of life or death.

Reza's killing left the Sierra Huichola once again bereft of schools, and was a 'clear demonstration of the feebleness of our strength, given the scale of this

[96] Hernández to DERICI, 29 Apr. 1925, AHSEP-45/C/36322/E/11.
[97] Guerrero, 'Informe', 22 Oct. 1917.
[98] Reza to Comité Nacional Agrario (National Agrarian Committee, CNA), 4 Mar. 1925, AGA-D/276.1/103/leg.1/SRA/RTBC/San Andrés.
[99] V. Poirett to R. Durand, 16 Jan. 1930, AHSEP-78-79/C/38283/E/28.
[100] G. Rodríguez to R. Durand, n.d., quoted in R. Durand to DERICI, 22 Jan. 1930, AHSEP-78-79/C/38283/E/28.
[101] DERICI, Jalisco, 'Informe', Nov. 1925, AHSEP-45/C/36321/E.1.
[102] *Ibid.* (capitals in original).

work'.[103] It is also a clear indication of the depth of the resistance of many Huichols to the practical application of the Revolutionary nation-building project. This resistance was by now matched by that of the region's mestizos, who were affronted by the increasingly anti-clerical policies of both the Jalisco state and federal governments.[104] Faced with growing opposition in both the Huichol communities and the surrounding mestizo-inhabited regions, the SEP's activities in northern Jalisco were paralysed from late 1925, and definitively cancelled from August 1926 after the outbreak of the Cristiada.

The majority of the inhabitants of San Sebastián, under the leadership of Juan Bautista, enthusiastically joined the 'Cristero' rebels. Although the rebels saw the Huichols as 'heathens', they shared common enemies in the form of the government schools and *maestros rurales*,[105] as well as the mestizo caciques of Mezquitic, Bolaños, Villa Guerrero and Huajimic, who sided with the government.[106] However, the leaders of San Sebastián's semi-autonomous *anexo* of Tuxpan refused to declare allegiance to the Cristeros due to long-standing political tensions with their 'mother' community.[107] Santa Catarina's leaders also remained loyal to the federal government, due to a similar long-running feud with San Sebastián, their continued faith in the state for a solution to their agrarian problems, and furthermore – as no government rural school had been established in Santa Catarina between 1920 and 1296 – their lack of contact with abusive or exploitative teachers who might otherwise have turned them against the government. However, a dissenting minority faction took the opposing, pro-Cristero side, and many more of those who wanted to stay neutral fled their homes to escape the fighting. San Andrés was also split by the rebellion, as the community's leaders remained hopeful that the state would help them resolve their agrarian conflicts, but local hostility toward the SEP, made explicit with the murder of Antonio Reza, seems to have tempered local enthusiasm for the federal government and its representatives, and even led some *comuneros* to side with the rebels.[108]

[103] Hernández to DERICI, 8 Sept. 1925, AHSEP-45/C/36291/E/2.
[104] Robert Curley, 'Anticlericalism and Public Space in Revolutionary Jalisco', *The Americas*, 65: 4 (2009), pp. 527–32.
[105] *Maestro* in Purificación, Jalisco, to DECI, 12 Jan. 1922, AHSEP-42/C/35980/E/5.28.
[106] Interview with Simón Martínez, in Caldera and de la Torre (eds.), *Pueblos*, pp. 122–3.
[107] Weigand, 'El papel', p. 126; cf. Jennie Purnell, *Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 134–62; Philip Dennis, *Intervillage Conflict in Oaxaca* (New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Rutgers University Press, 1987), pp. 49–94.
[108] Morris, 'The World Created Anew', pp. 176–217; pp. 229–47.

The SEP's Return to the Sierra Huichola, 1930–4

In June 1929, a treaty – 'Los Arreglos' – between the government and the rebels officially brought the Cristiada to an end. The fighting had devastated northern Jalisco, and, regardless of which side they had taken, all the Huichol communities had suffered famine, depopulation and the destruction of their *gobernancias* and *tukipa* (temple complexes), which had weakened their control over communal landholdings.[109] In fact, San Sebastián was still being attacked more than a year after the conflict officially came to an end, when it was reported that 'the Chief of Mezquitic's Defensa Social … is stealing the few cattle they still have left'.[110] However, despite the ongoing violence, in 1930 the federal government renewed its efforts to incorporate the Huichols into the fabric of the Revolutionary Mexican nation-state. The SEP was once again the main vehicle for these efforts; this would have been impossible without the support of pro-government Huichol leaders, who continued to act as mediators between the SEP's regional representatives and their home communities.

As in previous years, however, conservative cargo-system officers and *kawiterusixi*, and anxious Huichol parents, contested the influence of mestizo schoolteachers and their Huichol allies, especially as new SEP campaigns against 'superstition' increasingly targeted the *costumbre* that regulated Huichol religious, social, political and economic life.[111] In the name of increasing rural 'productivity', or with a view to personal gain, certain SEP officials also again encouraged mestizo attempts to 'colonise' Huichol lands.[112] Huichol resistance to both the cultural and territorial threats posed them by the SEP, mestizo ranchers and regional municipal authorities thus continued to obstruct their 'incorporation', and also exacerbated inter-communal and inter-factional conflicts rooted in the recent violence.

In early 1930, Inspector Ramón Durand was sent to the Sierra Huichola and instructed, in line with national-level policy, to recruit more Huichol students for the Casa del Estudiante Indígena in Mexico City, rather than set up schools in the shattered Huichol communities.[113] Victorio Poirett, a teacher working near Colotlán, warned Durand that 'we will not manage to recruit them through persuasion', and instead suggested sending 'some armed men to surprise the Indians in their huts and grab their kids', just as had been

[109] Robert Zingg, *Los huicholes: Una tribu de artistas*, vol. 1 (Mexico City: INI, 1982), p. 157; Ezequiel Haro to Puig Casauranc, 25 Aug. 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38288/E/25; unnamed agronomist's report, 24 Sept. 1954, AGA-D/276.1/79/leg.4/CCA/RTBC/San Sebastián.

[110] Ramos to Director de Educación Federal, Jalisco (Director of Federal Education, DEFJ), n.d. [late 1930], AHSEP-78-79/C/38267/E/35.

[111] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 31–5.

[112] Simpson, *The Ejido*, pp. 112–27.

[113] Durand to DERICI, 9 Jan. 1930, AHSEP-78-79/C/38283/E/28.

done in 1925. Poirett added that the mestizos of Mezquitic, Bolaños or Chimaltitán, the towns closest to the Sierra Huichola, could be counted on to help them in this endeavour – reflecting the violence that typified the relations between the Huichols and their mestizo neighbours. Alternatively, Poirett suggested that 'a very pro-government Huichol friend of mine' could assist them, as long as they did not try to recruit children in San Sebastián, because 'this Huichol cannot meet those Indians, as they are Cristeros' – demonstrating the extent to which tensions between pro- and anti-government groups continued to dominate life in the Sierra Huichola.[114] Durand forwarded Poirett's advice to his superiors, who recognised that arming local mestizos to forcibly recruit Huichol children for the SEP would only create new tensions between the Huichols and the state, and replied that 'if it is impossible to get the Indians to come of their own free will, it would be preferable not to bring them at all'.[115] Shortly after, however, another local teacher, Genaro Rodríguez, delivered five Huichol children to the Casa.[116] He did not explain how he had recruited them, but given that they ran away within a month, it appears they were unenthusiastic about leaving their homes and their families, perhaps forever, for an education in Mexico City.[117]

In the wake of this failure, and with national indigenous education policies once again promoting the establishment of schools for Indian children within their own communities,[118] Inocencio Ramos replaced Durand as inspector in the Sierra Huichola in late 1930. In line with the increasingly radical *indigenista* discourses emanating from the SEP's national offices,[119] and in sharp contrast to the actions and attitudes of the officials previously sent to the region, Ramos was determined to defend 'the interests of the Indian … with a prudent attitude and within Constitutional norms', [120] and quickly won the cooperation of Huichol leaders by bringing their problems to the attention of the federal government.[121]

In San Sebastián, for instance, Ramos drafted a complaint on behalf of the communal authorities, informing his superiors that local pro-government Defensas were stealing their cattle, and asked that they 'give [them] guarantees. Because otherwise [they] are in danger, and you have said we have to open our

[114] Poirett to Durand, 22 Jan. 1930, AHSEP-78-79/C/38283/E/28.
[115] DERICI to Durand, 4 Feb. 1930, AHSEP-78-79/C/38283/E/28.
[116] DERICI to Rodríguez, 20 Feb. 1930, AHSEP-78-79/C/38283/E/28.
[117] DERICI to Rodríguez, 26 Mar. 1930, AHSEP-78-79/C/38283/E/28.
[118] Alexander Dawson, '"Wild Indians," "Mexican Gentlemen," and the Lessons Learned in the Casa del Estudiante Indígena, 1926–1932', *The Americas*, 57: 3 (2001), pp. 352–3.
[119] Dawson, 'From Models', pp. 299–300.
[120] DEFJ to DERICI, 11 July 1931, AHSEP-78-79/C/38267/E/35.
[121] Cf. Rockwell, 'Schools', pp. 202–3.

eyes to the Indian.'[122] Ramos also began to help the Huichol communities with their various agrarian claims, which had been frozen since 1926 as a consequence of the Cristiada,[123] and which the municipal authorities, who supported the mestizo settlement of Huichol lands, were trying to block.

In return for his help, San Sebastián's elders gave Ramos permission to establish a school 'under the roof of their courthouse' until new classrooms could be built,[124] while Tuxpan's communal assembly also approved a new school.[125] A few months later, San Andrés' authorities similarly sought to demonstrate their loyalty to the government by not only approving a school, but also promising to set aside 50,000 square metres of land on which teachers could demonstrate new crops and improved agricultural techniques, the products of which would support the school and its pupils.[126]

Ramos must have felt buoyed by these successes, and by the increased importance that Narciso Bassols, appointed Education Secretary in October 1931, accorded to indigenous education.[127] Bassols was a Marxist, an anti-clerical and a prominent supporter of agrarian reform, and immediately set about reforming the curriculum, 'supplement[ing] existing policy emphasising peasant behaviour reform with an intensified attack on superstition [and] religious practice',[128] which he sought to repackage as 'folklore',[129] or, when this was incompatible with social and economic 'progress', to replace with civic celebrations.[130] He also ordered SEP officials across the nation to introduce anti-alcohol and sanitation programmes into the communities in which they worked,[131] set up local postal services, encourage sporting events[132] and establish boarding schools – *internados indígenas* – which he viewed as the best means of transforming Indians into productive members of Mexican society.[133] All of the federal schools would teach Indian children Spanish, basic literacy and numeracy, and introduce improved agricultural techniques, logging, tanning, and other small-scale industries into their communities.[134] Just as in the schools set up for Indian and Aboriginal children in the

[122] Ramos to DEFJ, n.d. [late 1930], AHSEP-78-79/C/38267/E/35.
[123] Comisión Local Agraria (Local Agrarian Commission, CLA) of Mezquitic, to Gob.Jal., 12 June 1929, AGA-D/276.1/103/leg.1/SRA/RTBC/San Sebastián.
[124] Ramos, 'Informe', 17 Nov. 1930, AHSEP-78-79/C/38283/E/22.
[125] *Ibid.*
[126] DEFJ to DERICI, 1 Mar. 1931, AHSEP-78-79/C/38260/E/5.
[127] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, p. 31.
[128] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[129] *Ibid.*, p. 46, p. 125.
[130] Narciso Bassols, *Obras*, cited in Aguirre Beltrán, *Teoría y práctica*, pp. 121–2.
[131] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, p. 5.
[132] *Ibid.*, p. 42, pp. 31–5; Gilbert Joseph, 'Rethinking Mexican Revolutionary Mobilization: Yucatan's Seasons of Upheaval, 1909–1915', in Joseph and Nugent (eds.), *Everyday Forms*, p. 147.
[133] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 155–7.
[134] DEFJ to DERICI, 1 Mar. 1931, AHSEP-78-79/C/38260/E/5.

United States and Australia at around the same time, in the Sierra Huichola 'the manual labor of young children [was seen as] critical for the efficient conduct of the schools'.[135]

Knowing that winning government support for Huichol land claims was key to keeping them on his side, and encouraged by Bassols' *agrarista* tendencies,[136] in late 1931 Ramos travelled to Guadalajara to secure a land registry certificate for San Sebastián.[137] This secured him the friendship of former Cristero leader Juan Bautista, who – contrary to Phil Weigand's assertion that, after the collapse of the rebellion in 1929, he continued fighting a 'defensive war' in the mountains[138] – had instead returned peacefully to his community, where Ramos described him as 'President of the Indians'.[139] Bautista probably saw supporting the government school as a way of reconciling with the state and saving the lives of himself and his followers, and he agreed to become head of the local 'education committee'.[140] On 12 July he helped organise a meeting between Ramos, a federal military commander and San Sebastián's traditional authorities. With Bautista translating, Ramos explained to them

> the mission that the teachers, on behalf of Jalisco's Federal Education Department, in its grand desire for learning, would develop among the Huichol tribe, so as to bring them closer to the Civilised Peoples … [The Huichols] understand they must send their children to the school that, from the 1st of this month, has been opened for their instruction, and they are satisfied with the benefits that the government gives them.[141]

In return, the communal authorities demanded 'the government's frank and effective protection, as this tribe has long been harassed by elements at the service of the neighbouring municipal authorities'.[142] Ramos' advocacy of these claims seems to have surprised and perhaps even worried Jalisco's Director of Federal Education, who responded by warning his own superior, Rafael Ramírez, that 'I am about to bring the complaints of [Ramos] and the Indians to the appropriate authorities … but I am letting you know in advance in case this will provoke any difficulties'[143] – probably a reference to potential conflicts between government agencies sympathetic to the Huichols' plight, and the municipal authorities accused of persecuting them.

[135] James Carroll, 'The Smell of the White Man Is Killing Us: Education and Assimilation among Indigenous Peoples', *U.S. Catholic Historian*, 27: 1 (2009), p. 35.
[136] Simpson, *The Ejido*, pp. 27–9, pp. 81–97; Aguirre Beltrán, *Teoría y práctica*, pp. 120–6.
[137] Ing. Balderas, 'Informe', 7 Nov. 1936, AGA-D/24/1680/leg.2/CCA/Restitución/San Sebastián.
[138] Weigand, 'El papel', p. 127.
[139] Ramos to DEFJ, n.d. [late 1930], AHSEP-78-79/C/38267/E/35.
[140] Ramos, 'Informe', 21 Nov. 1931, AHSEP-78-79/C/38267/E/35.
[141] Ramos, 'Informe', 12 July 1931, AHSEP-78-79/C/38267/E/35.
[142] *Ibid.*
[143] DEFJ to DERICI, 11 July 1931, AHSEP-78-79/C/38267/E/35.

Ramírez did not obstruct Ramos' activities, which now included petitioning for the 'restitution' of Huichol lands on behalf of San Sebastián and Tuxpan.[144] The traditional governors of both communities, as well as local caciques Cenobio de la Cruz, Zenón Romero, Santos de la Cruz, Pascual González and Juan Bautista, all signed Ramos' petition. These men had fought one another during the Cristiada, and would soon be divided again by the so-called 'Segunda' Cristiada. For the moment, however, their collective anxiety over the security of both communities' landholdings triumphed over the long-standing tensions between them.

In January 1932, the process of 'restitution' for San Sebastián and Tuxpan officially began. The authorities in Mezquitic attempted to block the communities' joint claim, arguing that 'titles or documents mentioning the theft of lands about which the indigenous complain are inexistent … Furthermore … this authority is not responsible for these imaginary dispossessions.'[145] However, in February the communities' claim was published in the *Diario Oficial*,[146] and in July 1932 Ramos and a commission of Huichols again travelled to Guadalajara, where they received a provisional title to San Sebastián and Tuxpan's lands. Shortly after, three agronomists arrived in San Sebastián to survey the community's territory, which they judged to be larger than needed, and tried to surreptitiously reduce by around 30,000 hectares.[147] However, the agronomists' activities aroused Huichol suspicions and, as 'experience has taught these people that such pretexts are used to seize their lands', Ramos accompanied the community's authorities to Mexico City 'to prove their case with titles in hand at the National Land Registry'. There they managed to have the agronomists' decision overturned and file a new claim for the restitution of all their traditional territory.[148]

While Ramos provided invaluable assistance to various Huichol communities, few Huichols reciprocated by sending their children to the new schools. In San Sebastián, despite Ramos' attempts to organise farming and logging cooperatives, build separate classrooms for boys and girls, and sow five hectares of communal land to supply grain for the school and its pupils,[149] attendance remained low. As in many other parts of Mexico,[150] the community refused to allow girls to attend until a female teacher could be found for them,[151]

[144] Ramos to Gob.Jal., 27 Dec. 1931, AGA-D/24/1680/leg.1/CCA/Restitución/San Sebastián.
[145] José Egurvido to CLA Mezquitic, 1 Feb. 1932, AGA-D/24/1680/leg.1/CCA/Restitución/San Sebastián.
[146] *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, 15 Feb. 1932.
[147] Ing. Balderas, 'Informe', 7 Nov. 1936, AGA-D/24/1680/leg.2/CCA/Restitución/San Sebastián.
[148] Ramos to DEFJ, 18 Aug. 1932, AHSEP-78-79/C/38284/E/17.
[149] Ramos, 'Informe', 21 Nov. 1931, AHSEP-78-79/C/38267/E/35.
[150] Cf. Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, p. 90–1, pp. 96–7, pp. 152–3.
[151] Ramos to DEFJ, 8 May 1932, AHSEP-78-79/C/38267/E/35.

while the majority of the boys who attended were orphans or fatherless children who lacked clothes and food.[152] When supplies of maize – the only food available – were exhausted, such pupils returned home until Ramos could secure enough grain to feed them again.[153] In the run-up to the rainy season, even the few Huichol children who were sent to the school to learn Spanish and other skills, rather than just to get free meals, were withdrawn by their parents to help with family-unit agricultural labour, often at *rancherías* several days' walk from the school.[154]

Meanwhile, schools in San Andrés, Tuxpan and Santa Catarina had ceased to function due to the 'lamentable failures of the teachers charged with establishing them'.[155] However, as Ramos' superiors refused to dismiss these indifferent and inefficient teachers, preferring instead to transfer them to mestizo villages in less remote areas,[156] the Huichol schools remained unstaffed.[157] Conflicts within Jalisco's SEP administration,[158] together with the brief rebellion of a group of former Cristeros in the Jalisco–Zacatecas borderlands, soon forced even San Sebastián's school to close,[159] and further delayed any new SEP initiatives in the Sierra Huichola.

The defeat of the rebels, and appointment of Erasto Valle as Jalisco's Director of Federal Education, which put an end to internal SEP conflicts,[160] allowed Ramos to reopen San Sebastián's school in February 1933, and establish another in Santa Catarina in March.[161] Luis Carrillo, one of the few Huichol alumni of the Casa del Estudiante Indígena not to have returned to 'the customs of his race, with tendencies to continue the nomadic life of their ancestors',[162] was put in charge in Santa Catarina.[163] Meanwhile Valle himself announced a project to establish boarding schools for the Huichols on state-owned land. Referencing the colonial policy of 'congregation',[164] and Vasconcelos' more recent ideas of teachers as 'missionaries', Valle envisaged the *dotación* (concession) of state lands to Huichol families as a way of concentrating the population, 'as in the remote past they congregated

[152] *Ibid.*
[153] *Ibid.*
[154] Sevilla to DEFJ, 14 May 1932, AHSEP-78-79/C/38286/E/21.
[155] DEFJ to DERICI, 15 July 1932, AHSEP78-79: C/38280/E/10; Sevilla to DEFJ, 25 May 1932, AHSEP-78-79/C/38280/E/10.
[156] Sevilla, 'Informe', 15 July 1932, AHSEP-78-79/C/38280/E/10.
[157] DEFJ to Sevilla, 28 July 1932, AHSEP-78-79/C/38280/E/10.
[158] Zenaido Pimienta, *Episodios históricos de la educación en Jalisco* (Guadalajara: Talleres Vera, 1960), p. 96.
[159] Ramos, 'Informe', 17 Apr. 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38280/E/10.
[160] Pimienta, *Episodios históricos*, p. 96; cf. Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, p. 33.
[161] Sevilla to DEFJ, 18 Apr. 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38280/E/10.
[162] 'Las Noticias', 25 Mar. 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38282/E/5.
[163] Sevilla, 'Informe', 19 Apr. 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38280/E/10.
[164] Lino Gómez Canedo, 'Huicot: Antecedentes Misionales', *Estudios de Historia Novohispana*, 9: 9 (1987), pp. 94–145.

around churches'. In turn, this would solve the problems that dispersed Huichol settlement patterns had long presented the SEP.[165]

In March, Valle set off on a tour of the Sierra to find potential sites for the planned *internados*. On his return, he reported that the Huichols numbered around 5,000, were 'greatly attached to their customs and reluctant to assimilate themselves to the customs of the whites and mestizos', and lived 'miserable' lives due to their 'ancestral laziness … preferring to hunt rather than raise animals and [being] resistant to farming, except in a small-scale and rudimentary manner'.[166] However, despite having suffered 'the worst disillusion on realising that from this tribe one can expect neither material nor moral aid',[167] Valle suggested establishing *internados* in San Sebastián, San Andrés and Las Latas (one of Santa Catarina's most important *tukipa*). Foreshadowing the emphasis that the SEP under Cárdenas would put on improving material conditions in Mexico's indigenous communities,[168] each of Valle's planned Huichol *internados* would be staffed by a male director and a female assistant, who would together teach 50 pupils to speak, read and write Spanish, raise crops and animals more efficiently, build 'better' houses, eat 'better' food, and wear 'better' clothes.[169] Once they had been trained, the Huichol graduates would receive agricultural equipment and plots of land near the school, while local teachers would try to ensure that the graduates 'do not disconnect themselves morally and intellectually from [either] the school or their families'.[170]

However, the huge projected cost of the project – at 42,300 pesos per year – led Valle's superiors to reject his plans,[171] while the Huichols themselves also used mestizo ignorance of the Huichol language to undermine Valle's attempts to impose on them a 'foreign' culture.[172] In San Andrés, for example, one of Valle's subordinates managed to win local approval for the establishment of an *internado*. But just as a communal assembly was to officially confirm its support,

> An old Huichol … asked in his language that [the traditional governor] pause, and then bowing his head three times spoke a few words [in Huichol] to the others, which they discussed animatedly. Then the governor asked me: 'You will yourself direct the school and be responsible for the other teachers who come?' 'No', I said, 'I have no academic titles or diplomas and furthermore, the government will decide whom to send.' He [the governor] replied: 'The community doesn't want the school if you will not direct it, and so we will not [approve it].'[173]

[165] DEFJ to DERICI, 6 Feb. 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38282/E/15.
[166] 'Las Noticias', 25 Mar. 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38282/E/5.
[167] *Ibid.*
[168] Dawson, 'From Models', pp. 300–5.
[169] Cf. Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, pp. 26–9; pp. 151–4.
[170] Valle, 'Plan educativo', 25 May 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38282/E/4.
[171] Ramírez to Valle, 13 June 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38282/E/4.
[172] Cf. Scott, *Weapons*, pp. 19–21.
[173] Macías to newly-formed Departamento de Educación Indígena (Department for Indigenous Education, DEI), 12 Feb. 1932, AHSEP-78-79/C/38265/E/31.

Given their past experiences with mestizo teachers, it is not surprising that the elders of San Andrés would trust only those whom they had already met and who would take personal responsibility for any conflicts that their presence might cause. Thus the errors of Valle's predecessors in dealing with the Huichols now scuppered his own plan to establish new *internados* in their communities.

Meanwhile northern Jalisco's mestizo ex-Cristeros were again on the warpath.[174] Armed 'fanatics' now posed a growing threat to the region's SEP officials, one of whom was murdered near Colotlán in August,[175] and by December many local schools were unable to function because it was no longer safe to travel on local roads.[176] In January 1934 Bassols added sexual education classes to his controversial 'socialist' curriculum,[177] which further enraged both Catholic parents and ex-Cristeros, many of whom, a month later, declared war on the Revolutionary state.[178] Throughout the new rebellion, Santa Catarina's authorities remained as strongly pro-government as they had been during the first Cristiada. The leaders of Tuxpan's pro-government Defensa also continued to look to the federal government to protect them from mestizo land-grabs,[179] and with Ramos' recent support in their agrarian petitioning and their feud with San Sebastián's ex-Cristeros still fresh in their minds, they remained pro-government throughout the Second Cristiada. Meanwhile both Cristeros and pro-government militiamen threatened San Andrés' lands,[180] and the community tried again to remain neutral, while many in San Sebastián again sided with the rebels, at least in part as a reaction to the provocative actions of the teacher Apolonio González (see below).

The SEP and 'La Segunda Cristiada'*, 1934–40*

In August 1933, Inocencio Ramos was dismissed from his post on charges of 'exploiting the Huichols'. However, these accusations were never substantiated,[181] and seem unlikely given his well-documented advocacy on behalf of Tuxpan and San Sebastián, with which he persisted, first in a private capacity, and later as an employee of the Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas

[174] David Raby, 'Los maestros rurales y los conflictos sociales en México, 1931–1940', *Historia Mexicana*, 18: 2 (1968), pp. 194–7.
[175] Valle, 'Informe anual', 18 Aug. 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38282/E/6.
[176] Rubalcaba to DERICI, 31 Dec. 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38281/E/8.
[177] Braulio Rodríguez, 'Circular', 30 Jan. 1934, AHSEP-78-79/C/38280/E/5.
[178] *Ibid.*; DEFJ to DERICI, 29 June 1935, AHSEP-78-79/C/38280/E/7.
[179] C. de la Cruz, Z. Romero and P. Chino to CNA, 26 Mar. 1935, AGA-D/276.1/137/leg.1/SRA/RTBC/Tuxpan.
[180] Communal leaders to CNA, 19 May 1933, AGA-D/276.1/103/leg.1/SRA/RTBC/San Andrés; Balderas, 'Informe', 7 Nov. 1936, AGA-D/24/1680/leg.2/CCA/Restitución/San Sebastián.
[181] Valle to DERICI, 13 Mar. 1934, AHSEP-78-79/C/38267/E/35.

(Department for Indigenous Affairs, DAI). In fact, it was probably precisely this advocacy, and the ire it aroused amongst the region's mestizo caciques, which led an unknown but clearly influential claimant to level these accusations against him in the first place. After all, even Valle himself had noted that those who exploited Mexico's Indians often used the support of 'very influential persons' to evade charges brought against them by conscientious *indigenista* teachers; this 'sometimes leads to the punishment of the teacher himself, which makes the Indian lose his faith on seeing that [the teacher] is powerless to do anything in his favour'.[182] Reinforcing the hypothesis that powerful local interests orchestrated Ramos' dismissal is the fact that his successor, a mestizo from just outside Mezquitic named Apolonio González, was closely connected to the region's mestizo elite, and had in fact co-founded Mezquitic's Defensa force,[183] which his close friend Griseldo Salazar now commanded.

Soon after González took up his post in the community, he and Salazar, 'with wicked intentions and [taking] advantage of the ignorance of the Huichol Indians', together applied on behalf of San Sebastián for a government 'dotación de ejidos' (roughly speaking, 'communal land grant'), in an attempt to void the community's existing application for 'restitution' and so 'take control of these lands for themselves'.[184] González's flagrant abuse of his position to threaten the community's landholdings, in partnership with no less than the hated Griseldo Salazar, was compounded by his selling mezcal from inside his classroom,[185] and contributed to Juan Bautista drawing back from reconciliation with the Revolutionary government and realigning himself with the region's resurgent ex-Cristeros. However, San Sebastián's traditional authorities were reluctant to back Bautista's new rebellion, given their suffering during the first Cristiada, and the positive relationship they had enjoyed with Inocencio Ramos.[186] The community was left divided,[187] and many of San Sebastián's families fled to pro-government Tuxpan in an attempt to escape involvement in the conflict.[188]

Rebel violence reached the Huichol communities in December 1934, when two bodies were found near San Sebastián's contested boundary with Santa Catarina. Griseldo Salazar used this as an excuse to step up his Defensa's

[182] Valle to DERICI, 6 Feb. 1933, AHSEP-78-79/C/38282/E/15.
[183] Martínez, in Caldera and de la Torre (eds.), *Pueblos*, pp. 122–3.
[184] Enrique Cárdenas, 'Informe', 7 Nov. 1936, AGA-D/276.1/103/Leg.1/SRA/Restitución/San Andrés.
[185] Ramos to DEFJ, 7 Feb. 1934, AHSEP-78-79/C/38267/E/35.
[186] Tomás de la Rosa Estrada to Pres. Cárdenas, 30 Dec. 1934, Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo Lázaro Cárdenas (National General Archive, Lázaro Cárdenas Foundation, AGN-LC), 559.1/67.
[187] Julio Vindiola to Dept. Agrario, 30 Sept. 1937, AGA-D/24/1680/leg.2/CCA/Restitución/San Sebastián.
[188] Ramos (now working for the DAI), to DEI, 24 Oct. 1940, AHSEP-78-79/C/38260/E/2.

attacks on San Sebastián.[189] In the same month, Apolonio González was forced by Bautista's rebel fighters to flee back to his home near Mezquitic,[190] where he was killed soon afterwards by Cristeros led by Juan Bautista's mestizo *compadre*, Pepe Sánchez.[191] A few weeks later, Bautista and Sánchez joined forces and ambushed and killed Commander Salazar himself, somewhere in the Sierra near San Sebastián.[192]

Even as at national level the number of SEP teachers in the countryside reached a high of 16,079,[193] and Jalisco's school inspectors boasted that across the state 'the teacher … is [now] the soul of the community',[194] the renewed violence disrupted the SEP's mission in the Sierra Huichola, and the last school in the region, in Santa Catarina, was closed in April 1935, due to 'the tenacious resistance of the Huichols to the National Government's cultural work'.[195] Although no replacement schools could be set up in the Sierra Huichola itself,[196] plans were nonetheless made to establish an *internado* for Huichol children in Bolaños, where it would be guarded by the local Defensa. Once again, the SEP hoped to congregate the dispersed Huichol population around the *internado* in order to better 'attract them to culture', while, in line with the materialist bent of the SEP's programme under Cárdenas, its staff would promote 'the exploitation of the region's raw materials … taking into account that as the Huichols are hunters, they have the necessary components for the manufacture of shoes'.[197]

The *internado* in Bolaños opened its doors in late 1936, but few Huichol parents would send their children there. The building was windowless and in terrible condition, the students were neglected and mistreated, and one Huichol child died there as a result.[198] The school's director 'responded to these problems by acting [in an] increasingly authoritarian [manner]',[199] and asked President Cárdenas to send federal troops to 'visit the indigenous pueblos in order to convince them to contribute a contingent of students to the school'.[200] Such coercive tactics only increased the opposition of parents and children to the school,[201] while Bautista and Sánchez's rebels frequently

[189] Rosa Estrada to Pres., 30 Dec. 1934, AGN-LC/559.1/67.
[190] Samuel Pérez to DEFJ, 20 April 1935, AHSEP-78-79/C/38280/E/7.
[191] Federación de Maestros Feds. de Jal. to Gob.Jal., 15 Apr. 1935, AHSEP-78-79/C/38285/E/18; Jesús Sánchez Martínez, *A contra corriente* (Guadalajara: Palibrio, 2011), p. 38.
[192] Aurelio Muñiz Vargas to Pres., 16 June 1935, AGN-LC/E/555/21.
[193] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, p. 12.
[194] 'Meeting of Jalisco School Inspectors', 24 Sept. 1935, AHSEP-78-79/C/38285/E/9.
[195] DEFJ to Samuel Pérez, 4 Apr. 1935, AHSEP-78-79/C/38268/E/18.
[196] Montoya to DEFJ, 2 Oct. 1936, AHSEP-78-79/C/38260/E/5.
[197] 'Las Noticias', 18 Sept. 1935, AHSEP-78-79/C/38286/E/5.
[198] Dawson, *Indian and Nation*, p. 48.
[199] *Ibid.*
[200] Ávila Vázquez to Pres. Cárdenas, 29 Oct. 1935, AGN-LC/C/967/E/559.1/23.
[201] Interview with Jesús Mercado González (see note 4).

ambushed the teachers, pro-government Huichols and their armed escorts during their recruiting missions.[202] In early 1938, Cristero attacks and general Huichol resistance forced the *internado* to close.[203] The ongoing regional violence, the dispersal of the Huichol population in the face of the fighting, and, most of all, their by-now extreme distrust of schools, prevented the SEP from establishing replacements in the ruined Huichol *gobernancias*, even after local support for the rebels evaporated with Bautista's death at the hands of Tuxpan's Defensa in 1940.[204] Thus SEP policy-makers, already disillusioned by their previous failures and stretched for funding, abandoned any further attempts to 'incorporate' the Huichols until well into the 1940s,[205] and teachers would not return *en masse* to the Sierra until the launch of the regional 'Huicot' development plan in the late 1960s.[206]

Conclusions

Between 1920 and 1940, then, the Huichols managed to defy the attempts of the Revolutionary state to 'incorporate' them into the Mexican nation, confounding turn-of-the-century predictions that they would 'soon disappear by fusion with the great nation to whom they belong'.[207] In part, their survival as a distinct people was due to the willingness of some Huichol leaders to compromise with the state. By portraying themselves as eager for education, these individuals won (limited) federal government support for communal claims, which at the very least resulted in the launching of the restitution process for San Sebastián and Tuxpan in the early 1930s. However, examples of rural teachers and Huichol leaders working together for the good of the community – epitomised by Inocencio Ramos managing to bring together former Cristeros and pro-government Defensa leaders in order to work towards winning official recognition of their joint landholdings – are few and far between. And even Ramos' own efforts, in line with shifts in national-level SEP policy towards working with rural people to 'identify and defend communal interests',[208] were undermined by the provocative actions of other teachers and government agronomists, and by the cupidity and obstructionism of regional actors who coveted Huichol landholdings.

[202] G. Ceja Torres to DEFJ, 15 Nov. 1935, AHSEP-78-79/C/38281/E/5; Antonio López Mendoza to Pres. Cárdenas, 19 Feb. 1937, AGN-LC/C/760.
[203] Dawson, *Indian and Nation*, p. 48.
[204] 'Murió en un tiroteo el rebelde Bautista', *El Porvenir*, 12 Sept. 1940.
[205] Guillermo Liera to DAI, 28 Feb. 1944, AHSEP-78-79/C/38268/E/18.
[206] Plan Lerma Asistencia Técnica, *Operación Huicot* (Guadalajara: Poder Ejecutivo Federal, 1966).
[207] Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, vol. 1, p. xvi.
[208] Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, p. 20.

For despite evidence that, during Cárdenas' presidency, rural teachers across the country faced up to 'their own limitations and … vigorous community defence of cultural practices' and moderated their often iconoclastic zeal,[209] most SEP officials continued to see the Huichols as 'backward' and 'savage' throughout the Revolutionary period. They depended on coercion to recruit Huichol students for unpopular schools, and even, in some cases, used agrarian legislation and their ties to municipal authorities to machinate against their Huichol hosts. Ultimately, these officials caused as many problems for the Huichols as the Huichol leaders' demonstrations of loyalty to the Mexican state could solve.

The Huichol response to the threats posed by federal and municipal officials and their local mestizo allies to their political, cultural and territorial autonomy was thus also typified, throughout the Revolutionary period, by widespread resistance. Huichol use of 'weapons of the weak', and more violent tactics such as assassinations or even, in the case of San Sebastián and minority factions elsewhere, armed rebellion against the state, obstructed their assimilation into the Mexican mainstream. Even in pro-government Santa Catarina, local opposition and regional violence forced the community's school to close in the mid-1930s. Thus towards the end of the Revolutionary period, a single *internado* was left to serve the entire Huichol population of northern Jalisco, and, in the face of rebel attacks and the refusal of Huichol parents to allow their children to attend, even this was forced to close.

While the Huichols suffered greatly during the two decades of tumult that followed the end of the armed phase of the Revolution in 1920 – a period in which many *tukipa* and the communal *gobernancias* were destroyed and an unknown number of Huichols were killed and many more were forced to flee their homes as refugees – the Huichol population as a whole therefore emerged from the Revolutionary period still in possession of a distinct culture, a high level of political autonomy, and vast areas of communal land.[210]

This does not mean, however, that federal government agencies, regional caciques and local mestizo ranchers ceased to threaten them. Towards the very end of Cárdenas' presidency, the agronomists whom the Huichols had long been asking for finally arrived in the region. However, far from helping the Huichols to defend their territorial claims as might be expected of representatives of Cárdenas' *indigenista* regime, they reported, using language close to that of their Porfirian predecessors, that 'demarcation [of their lands] with not resolve the Indians' problems, as these are not agrarian, but rather

[209] *Ibid*., pp. 19–20.

[210] Phil Weigand, 'Differential Acculturation among the Huichol Indians', in Thomas Hinton and Phil Weigand (eds.), *Themes of Indigenous Acculturation in Northwest Mexico* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1981), pp. 9–21.

economic, racial and ambient'.[211] They then reiterated Inspector Hernández's earlier proposals: that, in order to 'improve this terrible situation, migrations in both directions must be brought about; that is, colonise Huichol lands, and attract large numbers of [Huichols] to the major population centres'.[212] This was already happening in practice, as mestizo ranchers from Nayarit, supported by that state's government, embarked on violent new incursions into the territories of Tuxpan, San Sebastián and San Andrés, while the federal government provisionally awarded an insultingly small title to its long-term allies in Santa Catarina.[213]

Many Huichol leaders – including some who had previously believed that supporting government schools would win them government support for their agrarian struggles – saw the agronomists' recommendations, the resumed mestizo land-grabs and the outcome of Santa Catarina's struggle for title to its lands as a betrayal. They accused all the federal government's representatives – including those they now described as the SEP's 'inept and unsympathetic teachers'[214] – of being as committed to destroying their communities as were the mestizo ranchers. Thus into the 1940s, even the 'cosmopolitan' Huichol elite became more combative in their dealings with the Mexican state,[215] as at the same time a new generation of Huichol leaders began to emerge, many of them former students of the short-lived federal schools.

However, in contrast to the situation in many other Indian regions,[216] and testament to the ultimate failure of the SEP's programme in the Sierra Huichola between 1920 and 1940, schooling had not transformed these men (and they were all men) into 'Mexicans' amenable to cooperation with regional elites and the federal government, but rather into resolutely 'Huichol' leaders who were now better equipped to negotiate communal demands with the emergent *PRIísta* regime.[217] By manipulating the official discourses of 'patriotism' and 'nationhood' that they had picked up from the *maestros rurales*, as well as their ability to speak, read and write the national language, leaders like the Huichol teacher Agustín Carrillo Sandoval were able

[211] The neo-Porfirian attitudes of these agronomists, and their lack of traditional Cardenista sympathy for 'oppressed Indians', reflect the growing power of conservative forces in Mexican (and especially provincial) politics in the late 1930s, culminating in Manuel Ávila Camacho's accession to the presidency in 1940; cf. Vaughan, *Cultural Politics*, p. 36; Bantjes, *As If Jesus*, p. 78.

[212] Alonso Guerrero to Dept. Agrario, 13 Apr. 1940, AGA-D/276.1/36/leg.1/CCA/RTBC/Tuxpan.

[213] Morris, 'The World Created Anew', pp. 362–5.

[214] Mijares Cossío to Pres. Cárdenas, 26 July 1938, AGN-LC/C/567/E/503.11/259.

[215] Community representatives to Dept. Agrario, 21 Feb. 1944, AGA-D/276.1/36/ leg.1/CCA/RTBC/San Sebastián.

[216] Rus, 'Comunidad Revolucionario Institucional', pp. 288–90.

[217] Benítez, *Los indios*, vol. 2, pp. 28–40, pp. 55–7, p. 274–5.

to facilitate and legitimise their continued use of subversion, accommodation, evasion, and active, sometimes violent resistance,[218] in defence of the cultural, political and territorial autonomy of their communities that the SEP, between 1920 and 1940, had tried so hard to destroy, and which, despite its subsequent efforts alongside other government agencies, the Huichols of northern Jalisco still enjoy today.

Spanish and Portuguese abstracts

Spanish abstract. Los intentos por utilizar la escuela para asimilar a los huicholes dentro del estado-nación revolucionario promovieron el desarrollo de diferentes alianzas y conflictos en su *patria chica*, involucrando a comunidades y facciones huicholes rivales, a mestizos locales, a funcionarios gubernamentales y a rebeldes cristeros. La provocación de los maestros, la avaricia de los caciques mestizos, la violencia rebelde y el compromiso huichol para preservar su autonomía comunal, minaron las alianzas entre los dirigentes huicholes y los funcionarios federales, lo que ultimadamente llevó al fracaso del proyecto gubernamental. Como ninguna otra situación, el programa educativo revolucionario de corta vida equipó a toda una nueva generación de líderes huicholes con herramientas para resistir mejor las presiones asimilacionistas externas de los años 1940 y después.

Spanish keywords: huicholes, revolución mexicana, construcción estatal, educación, rebelión cristera, asimilación

Portuguese abstract. Tentativas de utilizar escolas para assimilar Huichóis ao Estado-nação revolucionário levaram ao desenvolvimento de parcerias divergentes e conflitos em sua *patria chica*, envolvendo comunidades e facções Huichóis rivais, mestiços locais, funcionários do governo e rebeldes cristeros. As provocações de professores, a avareza de caciques mestiços, a violência de rebeldes, e o comprometimento Huichól em preservar a autonomia comunal minaram as alianças entre líderes Huichóis e funcionários federais, levando, ultimamente, ao fracasso do projeto governamental. Se de fato algum resultado foi alcançado pelo programa de educação revolucionário de curta existência, este foi, na verdade, equipar uma nova geração de líderes Huichóis com ferramentas para melhor resistir às pressões assimilacionistas externas durante a década de 1940 e décadas subsequentes.

Portuguese keywords: Huichóis, revolução Mexicana, construção de Estado, educação, guerra Cristera, assimilação

[218] Torres Contreras, *Relaciones de frontera*, pp. 309–10; interview with Antonio Candelario (see note 4).