at the Hacienda of Dolores tried to save themselves through a back door that opened
upon the log bridge over the Cata River, but they found that the assailants had already
taken that bridge. They then retired to the well, where—since it was a high,
strong spot—they defended themselves until the last of their ammunition ran out,
causing much carnage among the insurgents. . . . The few Europeans who remained
alive at the end fell or were thrown into the well, and they drowned.

Central Themes
Indigenous people, state formation, land and labor, religion, race and ethnicity

Suggested Reading

Fowler, Will. "Dreams of Stability: Mexican Political Thought During the 'Forgotten Years':
An Analysis of the Beliefs of the Creole Intelligentsia (1821–1853)." Bulletin of Latin


Van Young, Eric. The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for

Related Sources

27. The 1692 Mexico City Revolt (1692)
33. José María Morelos’s National Vision (1813)
35. Address to the New Nation (1824)
41. Mexico in Postwar Social Turmoil (1852)

33. José María Morelos’s National Vision (1813)*

After the death of Miguel Hidalgo, a second major revolutionary movement developed in southern Mexico under the leadership of José María Morelos, also a priest. Morelos was a mestizo (person of Indian and Spanish parentage), although he was sometimes described as a mulato (person of African-Spanish parentage) of relatively humble origins who had at one time worked as a muleteer. He proved to have greater military skill than Hidalgo, and he also articulated a more cohesive political

*José María Morelos, "Sentimientos de la Nación o Puntos Dudos por Morelos para la Constitución" (1813), in Miguel León Portilla et al., eds., Historia documental de México, vol. 2 (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1965), pp. 110–112. Excerpt translated by the editors.

program than Hidalgo had ever advanced. Both factors allowed him to recruit supporters from all classes in the region of the Pacific lowlands. In 1813 he organized a governmental congress to convene in Chipalcingo (in present-day Guerrero State). In November 1815, the royalist forces captured Morelos, and he was defrocked and executed.

Morelos presented the following points before the Chipalcingo Congress on September 14, 1813. He had generated the ideas in dialogue with Hidalgo and other revolutionary leaders, including Ignacio López Rayón, one of Hidalgo’s lieutenants. Many of Morelos’s ideas served as a foundation for the development of Mexico’s first comprehensive legal code. Although Morelos’s ideology was obviously inspired by the ideology of the European Enlightenment, can you detect other aspects that are clearly rooted in the local context? Compare Morelos’s twenty-three points to the preamble of Mexico’s first Republican Constitution of 1824. What forces might explain the differences in the two documents?

Sentiments of the Nation or Points Outlined by Morelos for the Constitution

1. That America is free and independent from Spain and from all other nations, governments, or monarchies, and hereby sanctions this by giving the world the following reasons.
2. That the Catholic religion should be the only one, without tolerance for any other.
3. That all the church’s ministers shall support themselves exclusively from tithes and the people should not have to make any other contributions than those of their devotions and offerings.
4. That dogma should be upheld by the hierarchy of the Church, which is composed of the Pope, the bishops, and the priests, because all plants not sown by God must be uprooted: ominis plantis quam nom plantabir Pater meus Celestis Craditiabitur. Mat. Cap. XV.
5. That sovereignty springs directly from the people, who wish only to invest their representatives with it. Their powers shall be divided into the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches. The Provinces will each elect their own representatives and these will elect all others. All those elected must be wise and honest.
6. [In all reproductions, this article is missing. Ed.]
7. That the representatives will be chosen for four years, after which time, the older ones will be exchanged for the newly elected.
8. The salary of the representatives will be a sufficient but not excessive sum, and at present will not surpass eight thousand pesos.
9. That public office shall be occupied only by Americans.
10. That no foreigners will be admitted to the country unless they are artisans capable of teaching others their crafts and are free of all suspicion.

11. That the fatherland will not be fully free and our own as long as the government is not reformed by fighting tyranny, establishing liberalism in its place, and expelling from our soil the Spanish enemy that has declared itself so forcibly against our nation.

12. That since good law is superior to all men, those that our congress dictates must compel constancy and patriotism, and must moderate opulence and indigence, and in these ways, improve the income of the poor, better their customs, and dispel ignorance, rapine, and robbery.

13. That the general laws apply to everyone without the exception of privileged organizations and that these shall only exist in accordance with the usefulness of their ministry.

14. That for a law to be dictated, it must be debated in Congress and decided by a plurality of votes.

15. That slavery and the distinction of castes are both abolished forever, and everyone shall be equal, and that only vice or virtue will distinguish one American from another.

16. That our ports will be open to all friendly foreign nations, but that no foreign ships, no matter how friendly, shall be based in our kingdom. There will be particular ports selected for this purpose, but in all the rest, disembarkation will be prohibited, and 10% or some other tax levied on their merchandise.

17. That everyone should maintain propriety and respect in their homes as these are sacred asylums, and penalties shall be levied against infractions.

18. That with the new legislation torture will not be permitted.

19. That the new legislation will establish as Constitutional law the celebration of December 12, in all towns, as a day dedicated to the patroness of our freedom, Most Holy Mary of Guadalupe, and all the towns are required to pay her a monthly devotion.

20. That foreign troops or those of another kingdom may not tread upon our land, unless to assist us, and in this case they shall not be part of the Supreme Junta [Assembly].

21. That no [religious] expeditions shall be undertaken beyond the limits of the kingdom, especially overseas. Expeditions aimed at propagating the faith to our brothers within our own lands shall be permitted.

22. That the infinite number of tributes, taxes, and assessments that must be paid shall cease, and each individual shall pay five per cent of his earnings or another equally light charge, which will not be so oppressive as the alcobala [sales tax] or the crown monopoly, the tribute, and others. These small contributions and the wise administration of those goods confiscated from the enemy shall suffice to cover the costs of the war and the salaries of state employees.

23. That the 16th of September shall be solemnly observed every year, as the anniversary of the day on which the voice of independence was raised and our holy liberty began. Because it was on this day that the lips of the nation parted and the people reclaimed their rights and grasped the sword to be heard, and the merits of the great hero, señor [sir] Don Miguel Hidalgo and his companion señor Don Ignacio Allende will be always remembered.

Chilpancingo, September 14, 1813.
José María Morelos.

Central Themes

- State formation, land and labor, religion

Suggested Reading


Related Sources

32. Hidalgo’s Uprising (1849)
35. Address to the New Nation (1824)
54. Land, Labor, and the Church in the Mexican Constitution (1917)

34. A Satirical View of Colonial Society (1816)*

In 1816, in the midst of the upheaval of Mexico’s independence revolution, José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi published *El Periquillo Sarniento (The Itching Parrot)*, Spanish America’s first novel. Lizardi came from a modest criollo (American-born Spaniard) background and began his literary career by writing satirical poems that he sold for a few cents; others were published in the Diario de México, a news periodical