Localized Voices within the Mexican Oil Industry

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Thesis

- Oil’s role in shaping Mexico-US relations
- Multiplicity of perspectives towards US oil imperialism in Mexican oil industry
  - Conducive versus detrimental
  - No single narrative
- Brought to light processes different actors engaged in to exploit or preserve oil wealth
Mexican Political Voices

- Mexican political voices viewed US imperialism within the oil industry with disdain
  - Venustiano Carranza’s message to the National Congress in 1919
  - referenced US imposed double standard on Mexico
  - US willing to apply pressure on Mexico in order to achieve its goals if Mexico did not comply
US Journalist’s Position

- US journalist Stephen Bonsal portrayed how US imperialism in Mexico benefited the United States
- Bonsal hinted at US imperialism through migrations of US citizens to Mexican soil
  - Mexico could be exploited by US for purpose of oil wealth
- Discussion is framed to distance readership from the notion of the detrimental aspects of US imperialism and painted it as beneficial for the US economy
David Thomas, a professor of history at the University of Arkansas, highlighted the inequality in regards to the United States’ relationship with Mexico and its oil industry.
- exposed Woodrow Wilson’s administration’s hypocrisy
- demonstrated the contradictions that existed between the United States’ claims and their vested interests
Indigenous Voices

- Teenek are the Indigenous people of the Huasteca region in northern Veracruz
  - tricked out of their land by United States oil land agents, who used vague language to give the impression that the Indigenous peoples retained control over land
- Not until the halt of the Mexican oil boom in 1921 that the Teenek were able to express their distress to a wide audience, particularly via newspapers
  - Teenek received temporary recognition but their voices were seldom recorded
Mexican Women Voices

- Mexican women demonstrated their viewpoint through engagement within and outside their traditional roles
  - began employing themselves so that they may earn enough money for their families
  - protested their husband’s unfair wages
    - illuminated Mexican women’s discontent with how US oil companies treated their husbands
    - However, protested so that they could maintain their traditional gendered roles within the household
  - Engagement in activism changed Mexican women’s outlook on their roles permanently
“Mexico has been compared to an ignorant beggar sitting on a bag of gold. The figure should now be extended so as to include the men fetching the gold from the bag”
(Thomas 224)
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