

Calles—The Teacher and Statesman

By HOWARD A. LAMB

WHEN I first met Calles in the crude little border village of Agua Prieta I was surprised as well as puzzled to find a man in a Mexican colonel's uniform talking like a Rand School professor. There was none of the military claptrap about him, he granted interviews to newspaper reporters in his shirt-sleeves, smoking a cigarette, but as a soldier he seemed to be wholly effective. I saw him under siege at Naco, Sonora, feeding apples imported from this country to his ragged mob of soldiers to cure them of scurvy, and finally triumphing over the fat and drink-loving governor, Maytorena, who, in league with Villa, had turned against the Carranza government with the Yaqui Indians enlisted in his support.

Then I saw Calles, a general now, beat off the indomitable Villa at Agua Prieta and later march into the Sonora mountains to subdue the rebellious Yaquis. But it was not primarily as a soldier, brilliant as his friends regard him in that capacity, that Calles shone. On the field of slaughter that glorified bandit, Pancho Villa, had more genius, so far as I could judge, than Calles and Obregon combined. At a time of strained relations on the international border, when liquor was inciting disturbances that might have brought on intervention by the United States, I saw Calles, as military governor, issue the famous decree making liquor-trafficking in Sonora punishable by death. No boot-legger was ever stood up against an adobe wall, but Sonora became tolerably dry until a legislature was elected and restored the old conditions.

The American border was still aflame when Calles demonstrated his ability as a man of action. Three or four Mexicans crossed the international line into Arizona and committed a robbery that aroused the American population. In a few days, assisted by American peace officers, Calles had the guilty men in jail in Agua Prieta. In still less time they were tried, convicted, and hanging from telephone poles in the plaza as a lesson to all.

In the days when Mexico seethed in anarchy under Carranza it was Calles who settled workers' strikes in the southern part of the republic without resort to arms. He could handle American employers as well. The trouble at Cananea, Sonora, when he was governor was a case in point. As his friends tell the story, the American owners

of the big copper mines at Cananea, displeased because several thousand Mexican workmen organized a union, peremptorily closed up the works and returned to Arizona. Calles advised the miners to operate the mines themselves. They did, and even more efficiently than he expected. At the end of twenty days the owners put in a heavy claim for damages against the state of Sonora. "All right," agreed Calles, "but perhaps you have forgotten that under the new constitution whenever a corporation locks out its men without submitting the point at issue to the board of arbitration it must pay the workmen three months' wages. You may be entitled to some damages, but if we pay you will have to advance three months' wages to every man."

The mine manager relinquished all claims, paid the men for the twenty days they had operated the mine, and resumed operation. Then to prove that he felt no ill will the American built a \$25,000 school for the miners' children and also provided them with a swimming pool.

But it was in founding the Cruz Galves vocational school for war orphans at Hermosillo that Calles showed the best that's in him. It was at a time when years of revolution, with bandits in epaulets roaming the country, had ravished it bare. The last steer on the range had been fed into the stomachs of "soldiers" in one army or another; all loose copper or silver ore at the mines had been appropriated by force; there did not remain even one American mine manager worth capturing to obtain a ransom; many women and children were gaunt from hunger.

Yet Calles was able by public subscription to raise enough money to start the school. It was a strange sight

The Public Career of Mexico's New President

1910. Joined the Madero revolution and on its triumph was elected mayor of Agua Prieta, Sonora, on the international line opposite Douglas, Arizona.

1912. Helped Obregon fight the federal forces in Sonora.

1913. During the Huerta dictatorship fought at Naco, Nogales, and Cananea as commander of the Constitutionalist forces, Carranza giving him the rank of colonel for meritorious service.

1914. Took the field against Governor Maytorena, who had deserted Carranza to go over to Villa, and drove him from the state.

1915-1916. With help of Obregon drove Villa and his army out of Sonora and became military governor of the state.

1917. Conducted a campaign in the mountains against the Yaquis, who were making raids on the surrounding country.

1918. Elected constitutional governor of Sonora. During his administration new agrarian and labor laws were enacted and many new schools established.

1919. Called to Mexico City by Carranza as Secretary of Industry, Commerce, and Labor.

1920. Resigned to return to Sonora to direct Obregon's presidential campaign. Fought for Obregon when the latter broke with Carranza and helped to establish Adolfo de la Huerta as Provisional President. Appointed Secretary of War.

1921-1922. Secretary of the Interior and Chief of the Cabinet under President Obregon.

1923. Resigned to become candidate for the Socialist-Labor-Agrarian parties for President, but was obliged to take the field against De la Huerta, who, supported by a large part of the army and property interests, started a revolt.

1924. After the flight of De la Huerta resumed his presidential campaign and defeated his opponent, General Angel Flores, governor of Sinaloa, receiving 83 per cent of the votes.

to American visitors to see the poverty-stricken town of Agua Prieta "thrown open" for three days so that the profits from beer, whiskey, tequila, and gambling might be collected to educate orphans. The enthusiasm was intense. Education is the new religion of the Mexican people. The national budget for schools in 1923 was seven times larger than in the last year of the Diaz regime.

I remember the time when Calles, still governor, deserted the capital at Hermosillo to return to Agua Prieta and sell the handiwork of his little proteges to raise money for the school. It was fine work, for Mexican boys and girls excel American children in such craftsmanship, and as the Governor brought out for inspection of the visitors a little piece of needlework by a parentless girl or an example of cobblerly skill of an orphan boy he smiled as proudly as if he were the father of them all. No wonder the children of the school call him "Papa Calles." I believe it was that scene in the cramped adobe reception-room in the rear of a store at Agua Prieta that fixed Calles in my mind as a leader worth while.

The Mexican President-elect, now 46 years old, is a pioneer product. He has been compared to Lincoln, and in his love and understanding of the plain people there is a resemblance. His native state, Sonora, is in about the same phase of material development, one imagines, as was Illinois in Lincoln's day. It is still given over mostly to range cattle and mining. Agriculture in most sections is primitive. The roads are impassable except for the smallest and toughest automobiles.

Young Calles, son of a poor farmer, suffered all the hardships of the Illinois rail-splitter. As a small boy he peddled fresh water from a pushcart in the streets of Guaymas. In school he was bright and industrious in preparing himself for the future. He won a scholarship and was sent by the government of Sonora to Mexico City to finish his studies, after which he devoted his time to public instruction in his native state, finally becoming head of the state Department of Education.

The system Calles, cooperating with Obregon, devised to end the bandit problem was a shrewd stroke of statesmanship. When Obregon came into power he had 130,000 federal soldiers, while 50,000 bandits roamed the land. Calles knew that the difference between a bandit and a federal soldier in Mexico was about the same as between a Republican and Democratic politician in the United States. Under slightly different pretensions both lived off and robbed the country. The peon became a bandit or, better, a federal soldier, because it was the easiest way, almost the only way, to make a living. So Calles, at the head of the army, opened the ranks and took the bandits in. He accepted them at their own rating. He said: "If you say you are a general, you must be one." Numerous bandits became Calles's best friends. With an army swelled to 180,000, the problem was what to do with the army. It was put to work building roads and schoolhouses. When conditions permitted groups of soldiers were settled in colonies. They were given land, supplied with agricultural machinery, and where possible paid in advance so they could get along until they harvested their first crop. Calles was weeding out generals, colonels, and high privates by the hundred and the sword was being almost literally beaten into the plowshare when the Huerta insurrection forced him to quit.

In Mexico Calles is not regarded as an extreme radical.

He stands in about the same relation to the Mexican conservatives as La Follette does to those of this country. A nation just emerging from fourteen years of anarchy during which old institutions and traditions have been submerged in a welter of blood is receptive to new ideas. Calles represents them. The dream of martyred Madero will now begin to materialize under the more practical Calles. Americans who have had dealings with Calles in Sonora over a period of many years say he will raise no barrier against legitimate American enterprise in Mexico. He appreciates the genius of the American people and would like to utilize it, but is probably dubious about a government which throws his friend Eugene V. Debs into jail and puts Albert B. Fall in the Cabinet. Nobody more than Calles wants to develop his country, but, not forgetting a certain black satchel, he will take care that business adventurers from the United States do not carry out of Mexico what little the Mexican generals have left.

The Catholic clergy, rich and in part undeniably corrupt under Diaz, were routed by the revolution. In the late presidential campaign they fought Calles. When he spoke from a bandstand in San Miguel, Guanajuato, women in the crowd heckled him, crying, "Viva, Christ the King!"

"Viva, Christ the Revolutionist!" shouted Calles in reply. "Viva, Christ the carpenter but not the king. The days of kings have passed forever. Viva, Christ, but Christ, the friend of the poor and suffering, the friend of the hungry and homeless!"

To a Song of Sappho, Discovered in Egypt

By LEONORA SPEYER

Jonah wept within the whale;
But you have sung these centuries
Under the brown banks of the Nile
Within a dead dried crocodile:
So fares the learned tale.

When they embalmed the sacred beast
The Sapphic scroll was fair and strong
To wrap the spices that were needed—
Its song unheard, its word unheeded,
By crocodile or priest.

The song you sang on Lesbos when
Atthis was kind or Gorgo sad—
The startled whale spewed Jonah wide,
Out of the monster mummified
Your roses sing again.

Your roses! from the seven strands
Of the small harp whereon they grew—
The holy beast has had his pleasure,
His bellyful of Attic measure,
Under the desert sands.

Across pale seas your petals blew
In singing fragments, roses all!
The air is heavy on the Nile,
The drowsy gods drowse on the while,
As gods are wont to do.