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The Political and Economic Thought of Lucas Alaman and Its Impact on Mexican Development, 1820-1852

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THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC THOUGHT OF LUCÁS ALAMÁN AND
ITS IMPACT ON MEXICAN DEVELOPMENT, 1820-1852

by

Alan F. Kovac

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Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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PREFACE

History is a continuous process. The writing of the historical record has also become a constant effort. One reason has been the tendency to re-interpret, re-evaluate, to find "new" viewpoints.

Regarding Lucás Alamán, the re-interpretation has taken the form of answers to passing references rather than responses to extensive studies. Hubert Howe Bancroft, whose interest in the Borderlands led him to emphasize Alamán's stand on Texas, set the anti-alamanista image which has continued to persist. This achievement of prominence also gained for the Mexican statesman the unsolicited position as representative of the conservative stereotype which had been created to explain one facet of the Mexican political scene.

Ironically, the resurrection of the reputation of Alamán by Mexican scholars was also due to his anti-American feelings. A polemical work by George Creel in the 1920's appeared in response to the nationalism exhibited by the leaders of the Revolution of 1910. Alamán was accused of providing the historical precedent for this xenophobia. Mexican writers promptly rose to the defense of President Álvaro Obregón, and indirectly of Alamán. José Elguero replied to Creel in an article which appeared in the newspaper Excelsior, praising "the idea of Alamán," which was a warning to beware of the encroachments and interference of the United States. He felt that it was unfortunate

that this "idea" had been neglected for so long.

The economic policies of the Revolution of 1910 brought about the most intensive re-examination of the career of Lucás Alamán and of his role in nineteenth century Mexico. In seeking to reduce her dependence upon the Western nations, Mexico, like other developing nations, sought to develop her own industrial plant. This change in the economic structure, and especially in the pattern of ownership, was to be induced and supported by the Federal Government, as were the other changes calculated to bring the benefits of progress to the masses of the Mexican people. This program was institutionalized in the Nacional Financiera.

Accompanying this reorientation of national policy has been a renewal of interest in the ideas and projects of Lucás Alamán. His proposals for industrialization have been studied, and a thirteen volume set of his writings was published in the 1940's. Until recently, however, much of the vindication accorded Alamán has been for political usage. His industrial projects were extracted from their historical context to provide a national historical precedent for the policies of the Governments of the Revolution and to provide critical evidence against the Liberal economics that was rejected by the Revolution of 1910.

Of greater consequence was the fact that this new stereotype of Alamán-the-industrial-pioneer tended to obscure the changing nature of his ideas, changes which were indicative of

the instability within the Mexican political scene.

Recent studies by Moisés González Navarro, Robert Potash, and Charles Hale have attempted to place the role of Alamán in its own historical perspective. The three articles by Hale uncover a fertile field for study and have caused a re-assessment of the conventional "Liberal" and "Conservative" stereotypes. Both the definitions of the terms and the constancy of their meanings throughout the middle decades of the nineteenth century have been brought into question.

There is a tendency when researching a topic to become too involved in the issues and the personages under study, and to magnify the significance of incidents simply because of the increased detailed knowledge that one may have acquired about the topic. This may aid in sustaining the enthusiasm of the student, but can also diminish the critical value of the study. In the case of Lucas Alamán, the natural tendency would be to become highly defensive in response to the near unanimous criticism leveled by his contemporaries. While I have attempted to show that for too long these statements have been taken at face value without an adequate testing of their validity, it is my hope that I have not fallen victim to this scholarly pitfall. Failures within the career of Lucas Alamán attest to the fact that he was unable to meet the needs of the Mexican people in some way, and thus preclude an overglorification of his accomplishments. The role of the student of the period should not be to vindicate

the position of Alamán, but to discover the content of this position, its antecedents, and its impact.

I first became acquainted with this historical problem through a casual reference in a lecture by Dr. Paul S. Lietz, Chairman of the Department of History, that the role of Lucás Alamán was a subject deserving more intensive study. His interest and encouragement inspired me to examine this topic in a seminar, under the direction of Dr. Joseph Gagliano, who encouraged me to expand that cursory, disjointed study into a thesis. His knowledge and experience has been felt in a chapter by chapter, and at time line by line, criticism of the subject matter, and in his suggestions in the gathering of material and the techniques of preparation.

Once the Obras completas of Alamán had been examined at the Cudahy Memorial Library, Miss Christina Saletta of the Loyola University Library staff saved me invaluable time with her knowledge of the intricacies of the Inter-Library loan system.

My own trip to Mexico provided the opportunity to examine many otherwise inaccessible sources, although the enchantment of the country led to an excess of tourism which reduced the time available for research. This I rationalized by convincing myself that by getting a "feel" of the historical setting I was improving my perspective for the writing of the paper.

This lack of willpower made me all the more dependent upon the assistance that I received in Mexico City. Miss Josephine

Schulte of the Loyola History Department was kind enough to explain the location and uses of the various libraries in Mexico City that she had accumulated during her year of study on an OAS grant. Her introductions to the directors facilitated my access to these institutions. Lic. Ernesto de la Torre Villar of the Biblioteca Nacional graciously took leave of his valuable time to make sure that I was able to locate the Sala Lafragua, and the staff of this collection was most patient with one who was not always sure what he was looking for.

At the Colegio de Mexico, I was fortunate to meet Moisés González Navarro, whose study of Alamán had provided my first introduction to a critical analysis of Lucas Alamán. Dr. González Navarro interrupted his busy schedule the week before his vacation to suggest additional references and to introduce me to Jan Bazant. Mr. Bazant provided copies of letters between Alamán and Estevan de Antuñano that he had accumulated during his own researches in Puebla, as well as original pamphlets published by the Puebla industrialist. His assistance helped to reduce the void which then existed in my knowledge of Mexican economic history, and especially the intricacies of the textile industry. It was Mr. Bazant who directed me to the Library of the Banco de Mexico, which proved to be an unexpected windfall of information.

In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to the administrators and staff of the Archivo Nacional de Mexico, the

Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, and the Hemeroteca, whose efficiency, diligence, and speed allowed me to make the most profitable use of an already tight time schedule.

Students generally plead for additional time in the preparation of a paper. I doubt that more time would have inspired any more conclusive statements from my pen, but certainly many points could have been given more nearly the consideration which they deserved. Most of all, many of the Mexican sources produced leads which looked most interesting, but which had to be abandoned until a later date. As it is, only through the continuous efforts of Dr. Gagliano was I able to meet my various deadlines and finally produce a finished paper.

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH TO 1823

Early Education and Travel in Europe

Lucás Alamán was the son of an immigrant, but in colonial New Spain this constituted more of an economic and social advantage than a liability. When Juan Vicente Alamán arrived in Guanajuato in 1770, he carried an illustrious Spanish lineage to match his own initiative. This gachupine reflected the economic stimulus instilled by the reforms of the Bourbon King of Spain, Charles III.

Juan Vicente became active and prosperous in the mining industry of Guanajuato. He revealed the Bourbon emphasis on the functional through his response to the construction of the new alhóndiga in 1786. Having been active in overcoming the ill effects of the famine of the previous year, he was as anxious as anyone to see the new granary completed; yet he criticized the building as a "palace of Maize" because of its elaborate construction.¹

His marriage to Doña Ignacia Escalada in 1780 was fortuitous for her family was prominent among the creole upper class of Guanajuato. Her first husband, Gabriel de Arrechederreta, who had died four years earlier, had also been influential in the

¹José C. Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador (México: Antigua Librería Robredo, José Porrúa e Hijos, 1938), p. 16.

commercial and social community of Guanajuato.

The couple had two daughters before being blessed with a son on October 18, 1792, who was christened Lucás Ignacio José Joaquín Pedro de Alcántara Juan Bautista Francisco de Paula Alamán. The Escalada family had founded the Jesuit colegio in Guanajuato, and it was a family tradition that male members be given the name of the founder of the society. This affinity to the Compañía de Jesus would be a part of his educational training and would reappear in his own ideas on education.² The Alamáns were typical of creole praise for the Jesuits, and Lucás later sought to re-establish the expelled order while at the Spanish Cortes in 1821.

The schooling of the young Lucás was selective and somewhat tutorial. Doña Josefa Camacho, his first teacher, prepared him for entrance to the school of Belen, where he studied under Fr. José de San Jerónimo and Don Francisco Cornelio Diosdado. After a brief trip to Mexico City in 1804, he was enrolled in the

²Even though the order had been expelled in 1767, the educational effects and influence apparently continued. The influence on Alamán is noticed by María Elena Ota Mishima, but the details are obscure. See Alamán Ilustrado (Tesis, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1963), p. 10. Alamán later expressed a favorable opinion of the Jesuits' Ratio Studiorum (1590) as the proper basis for general learning, contrasting it to the plan adopted by the government of the French Convention, which he criticized for its secularism. He regretted the fact that the Spanish Cortes had used this plan as the basis for its own educational system rather than the Jesuit Ratio Studiorum. See Historia de México, V; in his Obras completas, ed. Rafael Aguayo Spencer (13 vols., México: Editorial Jus, 1942-1948), V pp. 839-840.

Colegio de la Purísima Concepción to study under Rafael Dávalos, who was later executed by the Royalist General Calleja for casting cannon for the forces of Padre Hidalgo.³ At the age of twelve, Lucás Alamán was being directed toward a scientific career. Formal schooling constituted only a part of his education, perhaps the lesser part, in terms of lasting influences.

Juan Antonio de Riaño y Barrera enhanced the scientific atmosphere that conditioned his early development. As the enlightened Intendant of Guanajuato, he is generally mentioned as the prime example of the Bourbon reform spirit in administration. A former navy captain, this suave Castilian gentleman spoke French, and had married a relative of the famous visitador José Gálvez. Victoria Riaño, wife of the Intendant, was a native of New Orleans, and brought to Guanajuato the elegance and social influence of the court of Louis XV, quite dominating the social life of the city. In recognition of the economic stimulation that he provided, Carlos María de Bustamante characterized the work of Intendant Riaño as "making effective the theories of Jovellanos."⁴

The home of the Intendant served as sort of an academy, and young Lucás was fortunate enough to be one of those selected for

³José Juan Tablada, "Noticias Biográficas de los Ministros de Relaciones de la Nación Mexicana: Don Lucás Alamán," Boletín Oficial de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, XXXII (México, 31 de agosto de 1911), 221.

⁴Cited in Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 21.

instruction and guidance. Here he developed an interest in mathematics, foreign languages, the Latin classics, and architecture. He was not introduced to a decadent colonial administrative system, and his later ideal of the proper servant of the state was based, to a large extent, upon his recollection of the Intendancy of Riaño. In his own words, Alamán praised Riano as being "distinguished not only for his integrity, but also for his enlightened thought and the perseverance that he showed for the propagation of all useful knowledge."⁵

He was able to increase his knowledge by independent reading since there were four families in Guanajuato with libraries in excess of one thousand volumes. Among the titles were works prohibited by the Inquisition, but the impact of these ideas was not extensive, since Alamán relates that this reading public was not really very large.⁶

By the time of the death of Juan Vicente Alamán on April 29, 1808, the mining industry had suffered a general decline. The

⁵Lucás Alamán, Necrologia de la Señora Doña Victoria de Saint Maixent, Viuda de Riaño, n.d.; in Obras, XI, p. 356. Speaking of colonial administrators in 1849, he wrote: "This consolidated and respected authority, exercised by skillful and enlightened ministers, became the origin of immense benefits to the nation, and the promotion, in great measure, of the well-being of individuals." Historia de Mexico; in Obras, I, p. 90.

⁶Valadés, Alamán, p. 31. One of these libraries was undoubtedly that of José Pérez Becerra, who had 394 titles, totaling more than 900 volumes. He had books on various topics, reflecting the influence of science and the Spanish Enlightenment. See Harry Bernstein, "A Provincial Library in Colonial Mexico, 1802: José Pérez Becerra of Guanajuato," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXVI (1946), 162-183.

Bourbon reforms had served as only a temporary stimulus. Although his fortune had been reduced, this gachupine was still able to leave his son an inheritance of seventy thousand pesos. The business continued to deteriorate, a decline which antedated the physical destruction wrought by the Hidalgo phase of the independence movement. These deprivations served to make the task of recovery a herculean effort.

These business difficulties interrupted the new residence in Mexico City, forcing a return to guanajuato in 1809. It was thus by chance that they were present in the Intendancy capital at the time of the Hidalgo Revolt, and were subject to the subsequent battle of the Alhóndiga in 1810, where Riaño and most of the other Spaniards of the city met their death. This event was bound to leave its mark on the impressionable young man, and Alamán carried memories which colored his political thoughts for the remainder of his life.

At the time, however, Lucás was content to continue his studies in mathematics and science upon returning to Mexico City in 1811. Entering the Real Seminario de Minería founded by one of the famous Elhuyar brothers, he studied under his equally illustrious successor, Don Andrés del Río, and received his degree on September 11, 1813. Del Río had been educated in Germany at the Freiberg School of Mines, where he formed a close friendship with classmates Fausto Elhuyar and the young Alexander von Humboldt. Baron von Humboldt counted these two Spanish scientists

among his favorite companions during his visit to Mexico in 1802-1803.⁷ As the culmination of his formal education and in response to an attack upon the Copernican system by one Fermín Raigadas, Alamán published his first work in the periodical Diario de Mexico, defending the system.⁸

Two events during this time produced a contrasting influence on his religious formation. On February 11, 1811, he entered a brotherhood of Catholic society, the Third Order of the Penitence of San Francisco, an honor which he accepted with great sincerity. Little more than one year later, on September 26, 1812, he was called before the Holy Office of the Inquisition to explain his possession of the History of America by William Robertson,⁹ a prohibited work. His copies of the Vicar of Wakefield and a work entitled Emilie by Surville were also called in for inspection. The charges were discreetly dropped, however,

⁷ Arthur P. Whitaker, "The Elhuyar Mining Missions and the Enlightenment," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXII (1951) 557-585. Alamán discusses this topic in his Disertaciones sobre la historia de México; in Obras, VIII, p. 296. In addition, one can consult Helmut de Terra, The Life and Times of Alexander von Humboldt, 1769-1859 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 156. For a more extensive treatment of the life of Del Río, see Arturo Arnaiz y Freg, Andrés Manuel del Río (México, 1936).

⁸ Moisés González Navarro, El Pensamiento Político de Lucas Alamán (México: El Colegio de México, 1952), p. 13.

⁹ Robertson was a Doctor of Divinity, College of Edinburgh. The work was published in London during 1788, in two volumes. The influence of Robertson on Latin America is discussed by Frederick S. Stimson, "William Robertson's Influence on Early American Literature," The Americas, XIV (1957-1958), 37-44.

perhaps due to the influence of his half-brother, Juan Bautista Arrechederreta, who had now become an influential cleric.¹⁰ Nevertheless, this shocking incident left a lasting impression, and he sought the abolition of the Holy Office while attending the Spanish Cortes in 1821. This experience also influenced his almost paranoic disapproval of the secret masonic lodges. The issue penetrated deeper than the ideology of the free-masons. In 1830 he exclaimed vehemently: "Secret societies in a free country cannot be considered as anything but a permanent conspiracy against the tranquility of the state."¹¹

His political attitudes developed under the influence of other events during this period. In 1812 he witnessed the campaign and election of delegates to the ayuntamiento of Mexico City, which he later claimed was characterized by fraud meant to insure the defeat of all Europeans (ie., gachupines and Spanish sympathizers), followed by a riotous victory celebration.¹² With this unfavorable introduction to the electoral process, he was

¹⁰Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 51. On his half-brother, see Ibid., p. 17.

¹¹Lucás Alamán, Memoria de la Secretaria de Estado y del Despacho, 1830; in Obras, IX, p. 183.

¹²Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 57. Alamán also made a comparison between the election of 1812 and that of 1820. See Roger L. Cunniff, "Mexican Municipal Electoral Reform, 1810-1822," in Mexico and the Spanish Cortes, 1810-1822: Eight Essays, ed. Nettie Lee Benson (Austin: University of Texas Press, for the Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas, 1966), pp. 59-86.

unable to overcome his disdain for this feature of representative government. He personally avoided electoral offices, preferring appointive positions, which seemed to better exemplify his concept of a public servant. This perhaps explains his own lack of involvement in the momentous events of the Independence period. Yet, even when his character is taken into account, the lack of interest is hard to understand, especially in one who had lived through the seige of Guanajuato.¹³ This was not the only incident of this type. Throughout his life, Alamán chose his political arenas most carefully, even when his struggles were being waged against formidable opposition or in support of minority causes. Retaining this detached view of government service, he was always unable to understand the change which had taken place in the nature of politics during the nineteenth century.

Rather than defending one patria or the other by participating in the bloodletting, Alamán prepared for a trip to Europe by reading the seventeen volume Viaje por España of Antonio Ponz, a Spanish historian with a flair for depicting the artistic wonders of Spain vividly.¹⁴ Alamán arrived in Cádiz aboard the

¹³ Alamán had seen Hidalgo with Riaño in Guanajuato. Hidalgo had actually been responsible for providing protection for the Alamán family, by posting guards in front of his home. He did this because of his friendship with Alamán's mother. See Moisés González Navarro, "Alamán e Hidalgo," Historia Mexicana, III (Octubre-Diciembre, 1953), 220.

¹⁴ Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 56.

brigantine General Perignon on May 30, 1814, and remained in Europe for five years. His time was spent in serious study and tourism, which included all of Western Europe except Scandinavia. Once again he avoided the major historical dramas of the age, taking no interest in the restoration of Ferdinand VII nor in his nullification of the Constitution of 1812. When Napoleon returned from St. Helena, Alamán left Paris in order to visit England.

While in London, he met José Mariano Fagoaga and his brother Francisco, leaders of the mining industry in New Spain, who would later provide valuable business contacts in England. Both were former administrators of the Tribunal de Minería that had been instituted as part of the Bourbon economic reforms in 1777. José Mariano had been elected Administrator-General, the highest administrative post, on January 4, 1800.¹⁵ Alamán also became acquainted with the colorful José María Blanco of Seville, former editor of El Espanol, supporter of Latin American independence, and a converted Protestant minister, then in exile in England.

During frequent visits to Paris, Alamán managed to continue his formal education, studying under such men as Benjamin Constant, the Duke of Montmorency, and the Viscomte Francois Rene de Chateaubriand. After having visited the mines of Freiberg

¹⁵Walter Howe, The Mining Guild of New Spain and Its Tribunal General, 1770-1821 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), pp. 221-222.

and schools near the mines and in Berlin, in 1818 he concentrated on the study of minerology. Baron von Humboldt and Casimoro Gómez Ortega recommended him to many of the leading men of science,¹⁶ and it was at this time that he became acquainted with the process for refining silver ore with sulfuric rather than nitric acid. He also formed a lasting friendship with Augustus-Pyramus de Candolle, the Swiss naturalist. They corresponded for many years and exchanged specimens of the flora and fauna of their respective continents.¹⁷ Candolle used much of the information in his *Regni vegetalis systema naturale*.¹⁸ Alamán, in

¹⁶M. Broz (physics), M. Henard (chemistry), M. Hauy (minerology), Leopold von Buch (naturalist), M. Colombelle, M. Delametaire (Professor of Minerology at the College of France). Von Buch was also educated at the Freiberg School of Mines. He was a friend of von Humboldt, who called him "the greatest geologist of our century." See Nouveau Larousse Illustre (Paris, 1897-1907), II, p. 322; cited in Hensley C. Woodbridge, Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain by Alexander von Humboldt: Book One (Lexington: University of Kentucky Library, 1957), p. 66. Alfonso López Aparicio tells his readers that this influence combined to make Alamán "El Discípulo de Humboldt," which is the title of one section of his work, Alamán, Primer Economista de México (Mexico: Editorial Campeador, 1956). This author places too great an emphasis upon the role of mercantilism in the mining activities of Alamán. The influence of von Humboldt must have been considerable, nevertheless. The house that the famous German scientist used during his stay in Guanajuato in 1803 is located right across the street from the house where Alamán was born.

¹⁷Lucás Alamán, Documentos Diversos, IV; in Obras, XII, p. 18.

¹⁸Tablada, "Noticias Biográficas: Don Lucas Alamán," 223.

turn, used the plants he received for agricultural experimentation on his hacienda, Los Trojes.

This Continental education, in its total perspective, certainly affected the intellectual formation of Lucas Alamán, but the degree of influence and the specifics remain unclear. His acquaintances spanned the entire political spectrum, providing such contrasts as French ultras like the Prince de Polignac and the Count de Montmorency Nicolai, and the French Revolutionary figures whom he met at the home of the regicide Bishop Gregoire. The Spanish exile Blanco, Pius VII's aid, Cardinal Consalvi, and New World figures such as Fray Servando Teresa y Mier and Bernardino Rivadavia, present an interesting diversity of talent and opinion from which Alamán could draw in an eclectic manner.¹⁹ María del Carmen Velásquez does not find this eclecticism disturbing, or even surprising:

Educated in a society which gave great honor to the 'century of enlightenment' and later moving in a society that fought to be modern, it is not strange that the thought of Alamán was eclectic, the quantity of each component varying according to his political experiences.²⁰

¹⁹Rivadavia offered Alamán the position of director of the mines and the mint in Potosi, claiming that Upper Peru was under the control of The United Provinces of the Rio de La Plata. See Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 81. The eclecticism is offered as a defense of Alamán by López Aparicio in an attempt to dispell the impression that he was a reactionary conservative. See Alamán, Primer Economista, pp. 24-26.

²⁰María del Carmen Velásquez, "Lucas Alamán, historiador de México," in Estudios de Historiografía América, ed. Silvio Zavala (México: El Colegio de México, 1948), p. 396.

The Fagoaga brothers had just returned from Russia, where Joseph de Maistre was the representative of the King of Sardinia at St. Petersburg, and it is not improbable that they transmitted some of the ideas of this illustrious Continental conservative to Alamán. Benjamin Constant introduced him to positivism, which is reflected, though without acknowledgement, in his writings. Alamán is at times credited with establishing the philosophical basis for the política integral of Porfirio Díaz, which was later rationalized by the científicos in unabashed positivist doctrines.²¹ The time spent at the College of Paris also gave him an ample opportunity to acquire the rudiments of the teachings of Claude Henri de Saint-Simon, to whom historians have attributed some of his ideas.²² Alamán does little to solve the

²¹ Andrés Molina Enríquez indicated that General Díaz did nothing more than follow the politics of Alamán. Reference by González Navarro, El Pensamiento Político de Lucas Alamán, p. 27. Alamán made positivist statements at various times: "La tranquilidad y el orden are the elements most necessary for the prosperity of nations." In Alamán, Memoria sobre el estado de la Agricultura e Industria de la República en el año de 1844; in Obras X, p. 348. Or, "Without security of person and property there is no society; without a national representation formed by the free but ordered election of the citizens, there is no liberty; without an organized public force that can assure order without risking the union, there is no nation." In Alamán, Memoria de la Secretaria de Estado, 1830; in Obras, IX, p. 230.

²² Moisés González Navarro compares the plutocratic government of Saint-Simon in France with Alamán's desire to organize the industrial forces into a class and to make them aware of their social and economic function. El Pensamiento Político de Lucas Alamán, p. 84. It is not without significance that Saint-Simon had as his secretary the Father of Positivism, Auguste Comte. Charles Hale has related the similarity of this opinion of Alamán to that expressed by Miguel Quintana with respect to the Puebla industrialist, Estevan de Antuñano. See Hale, "Alamán

mystery of the origins of his ideas or to bridge the gaps in his intellectual formation, either in his autobiography or in his other writings.²³

Study in Europe no doubt deepened his knowledge of the sciences, but this inclination had been well-developed even before the European excursion. The effect would have been more significant had Paris or Berlin awakened a previously dormant interest in science. To learn the influence of his travels and acquaintances on his political and social thought would be most helpful. One writer has commented upon this unfortunate deficiency, warning of the dangers involved in an uncritical use of Alaman's writings to support judgements: "That which we know about his early life he wrote three decades later, under the influence of an unfavorable situation, so that we must view it with much reservation."²⁴

Antunano y la Continuidad del Liberalismo," Historia Mexicana, XI (Octubre-Diciembre, 1961), 244-45 (note 56).

²³He supplies few names, and even these are given without comment as to their possible influence upon his development, or his personal opinion of them. See above, note 16. In addition, see Alamán, Apuntes Biograficas; in Obras, XI, pp. 507-08; and Alamán, Autobiografía de Lucas Alamán; in Obras, XII, pp. 15-19, 21.

²⁴Jesús Rodríguez Frausto, Lucás Alamán: político, estadista, periodista e Historiador (Guanajuato: Universidad de Guanajuato, Archivo Histórico, 1955), p. 3. He is speaking primarily of events of the years 1810-1820, but this stricture could apply to the European influences as well, for they also would have been tempered by the passage of time and the events of Mexican national history.

lamentable that there is no record of the extent to which he was able to obtain a personal awareness of the Industrial Revolution, most notably in England and Scotland, but also in France and Germany.²⁵ He later indicated an acquaintance with Continental industrialism, but one is never sure whether this was the result of first-hand experience, correspondence, or readings.

Delegate to the Cortes in Spain

When informed of another misfortune in the family business, Alamán was forced to plan for his return to New Spain in 1819. He had been considering implementing his new-found knowledge of the sulfuric acid separation process in the mining industry of New Spain. Necessity now quickened the pace of his planning, as he anticipated reviving the family fortune. Such a plan required prior approval by the Council of the Indies, and the trip to Madrid added a further delay to his departure. On February 20, 1820, he arrived at last in Veracruz aboard a French ship.

Viceroy Apodaca, the Conde de Venedito, appointed Alamán as the newly-created Junta Superior de Sanidad, a position which introduced him to the field of public works. Since this Junta

²⁵The schools which Alamán and his friend Antuñano established for the children of their factory workers bear a striking resemblance in theory to the workers' schools in New Lanark of Robert Owen. Antuñano was educated in England, and Owen visited Mexico himself in 1828. Robert Heilbroner, The Wordly Philosophers, Rev. ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), p. 93. Significantly, Alamán and Antuñano were the only Mexican industrialists to found such schools. See Robert Potash, El Banco de Avío; El Fomento de la Industria, 1821-1846 (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959), p. 236 note.

existed primarily on paper, it required little attention, so that he was able to accept the post of mining inspector as well. In this capacity, he gathered material on the mining industry, publishing an article on the causes of the decadent state of the mining industry in New Spain.²⁶

The Riego Revolt in 1820 was followed by the formation of a Cortes in Spain, and Alaman returned to the Mother Country to enter political life as a delegate elected to represent Guana-juato. An atmosphere of liberalism enveloped the Cortes, a condition which Alamán later cited in an attempt to rationalize some of his own behavior during the sessions.²⁷ Reform in Spain was the primary concern of the Spanish delegates who had instigated the revolt, but the contingent from New Spain worked diligently to give New World affairs a prominent place on the agenda. Speaking on behalf of the mining interests, Alamán followed the group which was in favor of liberalizing commercial regulations. He was also a member of the commission that reported on the state of affairs in the New World.

Coming to the Cortes as a member of the group later described as moderate because of their preference for a wait-and-see

²⁶González Navarro, El Pensamiento Político de Lucas Alamán, p. 14.

²⁷Alamán, Historia de México (México: J.M. Lara, 1849-52), V, p. 553.

position, Alamán was not yet firmly committed on the question of independence.²⁸ When news of the Iturbide rising reached the delegates on June 4, 1821, he was forced to make a choice. After analyzing the circumstances, he first decided to follow the group which favored the more cautious proposal of autonomy for the New World kingdoms.²⁹ Later he supported independence as the inevitable alternative, and urged that Spain recognize separation. This ready adaptation gives an indication that Alamán attached little real significance to political independence in itself. He preferred to view it as a matter of mere convenience. Consequently, he was quite mystified by the emotion that it aroused

²⁸In New Spain there were three political groupings on the issue of independence in 1820: one favoring complete independence (Radicals), another wishing to retain the present situation (Conservatives), and a third group which straddled the fence (Moderates). Alamán was a member of this third group. See Ota Mishima, Alamán Ilustrado, p. 30.

²⁹Meeting in an extra-legal session, the colonial delegates gathered among themselves and called for a share in the legislative power for New Spain. They asked that executive power be placed in the hands of one of the brothers of the King. The commission of the Cortes had voiced a similar opinion previously, only to have it struck down by Ferdinand VII, who viewed such ideas as underhanded forms of independence. This appears to be an attempt to offer an alternative to the ideas then circulating in New Spain, and is similar to the eventual Plan de Iguala. The Cortes, however, remained divided on the subject. Alamán always connected Mexican independence to Iturbide rather than El Hidalgo. In view of these developments at the Cortes, such a relationship is not hard to understand. See Lucás Alamán, Borrador de un Artículo que salió como editorial de un periódico en 1835, con motivo del aniversario de la Independencia; in Obras, XI, p. 349.

among the other delegates, and by the vehemence of the debates. Alamán's stand has been described by one historian as a "liberal position; that is, for Spain,"³⁰ taking into account the mental block of the otherwise liberal Spaniards when changes in the status of the New World came into the discussion.

José María Michelena, Miguel Ramírez, and Lucas Alamán drafted a "final statement" of the colonial delegation, calling for an appeal to reason and logic. Complete pacification of so large an area was deemed impossible, and the statement reminded Spaniards that Spain itself presented an example of the ineffectiveness of a forced restoration. In addition, the Constitution of 1812 must be modified to fit the New World conditions, especially the articles concerning the direct responsibility of officials to Spain, and the requirement that America send delegates to a legislature in Spain.³¹

The question remained unsettled, necessitating a special session of the Cortes, at which Alamán was elected a secretary. He attempted to calm the debate over the treaty of Córdoba, signed by Iturbide and Viceroy Juan O'Donoju, by urging the Spanish government to make a realistic appraisal of the situation. They rejected a proposal to send a commission without any preconditions, on the grounds that it would constitute a recognition of Mexican independence. Alamán replied that a treaty would be

³⁰Ota Mishima, Alamán Ilustrado, p. 30.

³¹Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 116.

necessary for any such recognition, and that the stalemate could only be resolved by opening discussions, even if it meant a disregard of protocol.³² He recognized that the insurrection had created an abnormal situation which made recourse to established diplomatic convention meaningless.

Establishment of the National Government

Returning to Mexico in 1823, Alamán found that the empire of Agustín Iturbide had already come and gone. He immediately accepted a position under the Poder Ejecutivo. In the Cortes, he had established to his own satisfaction that an independent Mexico was an accomplished fact that had to be accepted for the sake of Hispanic unity. Although a firm believer in this community of common interest, he saw clearly that it would be futile to resurrect the old colonial political system; that any form of Hispanic unity must henceforth be arranged by tacit agreement. He had tried to impress this fact upon the Spanish delegates at the Cortes, but without success. Obstinacy, he felt, could only serve to inhibit the natural affinity existing among Spanish-speaking peoples. He obviously considered the Spanish society of peninsulares and creoles to be the only politically significant sector of the population. His ideas were constructed accordingly.

³²Ibid., pp. 130-134.

Expressing through his actions the belief, or hope, that antagonisms would not prove irrevocable, and that the wounds could be healed, Alamán would later attempt to renew relations with Spain when he served as Foreign Minister. In the so-called Family Pact movement, an enlargement of Bolivar's panamericanism, Alamán tried to establish commercial and diplomatic harmony among the new republics and, hopefully, to include Spain. When he concluded a Treaty with Colombia in 1831, he expressed the wish that it would be "the basis for a true family pact which would give a unity to all Americans, united in defense of their independence and liberty, and promoting commerce and mutual interests."³³ By this time he had been forced to abandon any belief that Spain could be included in these proposals.

Lucás Alamán was a nationalist, but in a limited sense, because of his peculiar and perhaps naive interpretations of the customary ideals of national sovereignty. For example, as Secretary of State in 1823, he was willing not only to forego any Mexican claims to Guatemala by recognizing her independence, but also to arrange a boundary settlement with the United States in order to ward off any potential Yankee advances, which were becoming more imminent with each passing day.³⁴ In 1830, he was

³³Rodríguez Frausto, Lucás Alamán, p. 6; and Berndt L. Wistedt, Lucás Alamán and His Family Pact (Thesis, Mexico City College, 1958), pp. 39, 76.

³⁴On May 31, 1823, he sent a Bill to Congress that restricted the entrance of colonists into Texas. On July 1, he asked

ready to relinquish Texas, if it could not be adequately secured and defended, so that the total sovereignty of the Mexican nation might be preserved.³⁵ This does much to explain the feeling of despair which conditioned his writing of the Historia de Mexico in 1849.

Controversy arises with regard to the patriotism of Alamán due to an improper emotionalism that is attached to the term, improper at least when applied to the early nineteenth century. Alamán possessed a cosmopolitan outlook, similar to the liberal doctrines of internationalism, but this attitude can be more readily ascribed to the belief in the cultural, if not racial heritage which united Hispanic peoples. In his feelings toward the United States he exhibited an extreme concern for national identity and security. Encroachment by this Anglo-Saxon nation had entirely different connotations for Alamán, who felt no inherent contradiction between these xenophobic fears and the dream of a harmonious nationalism in which Spain would participate without dominating.

that the forces in Guatemala under Vicente Filisola be recalled. It took until October 18 to overcome opposition to this request, since many deputies realized that this would be the first step in the direction of an independent Guatemala. See Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 152.

³⁵Rodríguez Frausto, Lucás Alamán, p. 10. For details of the Texas Law of 1830, see J. Fred Rippy, Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain Over Latin America, 1808-1820 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1928), p. 104.

His sentiments of nationalism were reserved for those sectors of Mexican society which participated in the Hispanic cultural heritage. Rather than discerning a common experience between colonial areas of the New World which had subsequently separated from the Mother Country and founded new nations, his "nationalism" resulted in the view that the United States was basically opposed to the interests of Mexico. In 1898 this theory took on a new force in Latin American culture, emerging as the Hispanidad movement, whose most famous expression is to be found in the writings of the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó. Thus, while intellectuals in the United States liked to believe that their country had broken with the past and with the Old World, or "stepped out of History" as David Noble has said,³⁶ Latin American intellectuals, both Liberal and Conservative, continued to identify consciously with Europe until well into the twentieth century.

The theory of Hispanic cultural continuity was not really a racial attitude, for the subject was never considered on those terms. Anyone could become a member of the Spanish cultural tradition, and this assimilation was to be the mark of any true progress. In this respect, he was continuing the tradition of the original conquistadores, who felt that in order to progress

³⁶David Noble, Historians Against History (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1965). This thesis is also exemplified in Daniel Boorstin's The Genius of American Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 8-35.

the Indians had to become "Spanish". When this interpretation went unheeded for many years, Alamán wrote his Disertaciones with the hope of explaining this heritage more completely. Historical proofs were then current in Europe, and one could almost say that Alamán was trying to trace the volksgeist of the Mexican people. In a much criticized statement, he admitted this objective, when he reminded his readers: all 'Mexicans' must remember that "all in existence in Mexico owes its origins to this prodigious Conquest."³⁷

Arturo Arnaíz y Freg attacks this statement for its neglect of the contributions of the Indian civilizations.³⁸ Like most of the nineteenth century historical proofs of a national spirit, Alamán's theory singled out the aspects that were considered most worthy and most indicative of the idea of a 'Mexican', while ignoring or deprecating the rest. Few liberal or conservative leaders in the early nineteenth century acknowledged the Indian contributions.³⁹ Attempts to improve the status of the Indians

³⁷ Alamán, Historia de Mexico, I; in Obras, I, p. 1.

³⁸ Prólogo y selección a Semblanzas e Ideario (2. ed. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1963), p. XXIV. This author is not very sympathetic to Alamán, and uses a semi-psychological approach in an attempt to analyze the ideas of Alamán, attributing all sorts of fixations and neuroses to the man, based on rather tenuous evidence.

³⁹ Alamán, in fact, paid compliments to the Indians in his own way. One of his criticisms of Prescott's History was that it exhibited a poor attitude toward the Indians. See Anotaciones a la Historia de la Conquista de Méjico de Guillermo H. Prescott (2 vols. Méjico: Vicente Torres, 1844), I, p. 15. He especially admired the Tlaxcalans, who had been allied with the Spanish.

primarily took the form of plans to assimilate them into the mainstream of Hispanic society. Alamán, who never tried to conceal his aristocratic temperament, could be expected to state this attitude most bluntly. It remained for the writers of the Revolution of 1910 to reveal the deficiencies of Liberals and Conservatives, and to create in the indigenismo movement a more inclusive, but also more emotional reconstruction of the true "Mexican".

During the formative years following independence, and throughout his life, Lucas Alamán was primarily concerned with the development of Mexico. Any criticism must take into account his view of Mexico and the limited nature that he placed on this term. Given his assessment of the essence of mexicanidad, however, the logical alternative to the Family Pact would have been the creation of a government embodying as much of the Spanish heritage as possible, and working within the framework of Bourbonism.

Roman Catholicism and the monarchical form of government deserve to be considered under this same frame of reference. A clearer perspective occurs when they are seen as means rather than ends. Alamán did not separate means and ends in his analysis, but this fact makes it even more important to consider the minor and major points of his arguments individually, in order to gain a proper understanding. Religion was felt to be so ingrained in the society of man that to ignore its presence was to

doom any scheme for advancement. For Alamán, institutions had to be developed from within the framework of existing society. Society could not be transformed to fir a priori conceptions of what the best institutional structure of a country ought to be, which appeared to be the intent of the Liberals. Alamán incorporated this thesis into his definition of a constitution: "A nation has a constitution when it consists, not in being written, but in being rooted in the customs and opinions of all."⁴⁰

He failed to differentiate between the religious impact of Catholicism and its political, social, and economic influence. Likewise, his failure to recognize the volatile impact which the term "monarchy" had upon the Mexican political scene, was politically inept. To gain an insight into the mind of Lucas Alamán, it is necessary to consider why he wanted a centralist government and why he believed that religion could not be excluded from the foundations of society. To do this we must first see what type of society he envisioned, and more important, the role which he saw for the government in the formation and preservation of this society.

⁴⁰ Alamán, Disertaciones, I; in Obras, VI, p. 144.

CHAPTER II

ALAMÁN, MINING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: 1821-1829

Motivated by patriotism and a spirit of public service rather than by political ambition, Alamán joined the Poder Ejecutivo in 1823. He was seeking a means of transforming Mexico into a solid and stable independent nation. His negotiations for Hispanic unity in the Family Pact are examined in greater detail elsewhere.¹ More important was the way in which these early years affected his thoughts on the most suitable pattern of economic development.

Alamán always held a flexible position with regard to the form of government, which might be federalist or centralist, and often dictatorial in practice. Although ideologically uncommitted on the issue of representative institutions, he was anti-democratic in practice. His fear of the masses was also common among Liberals of Mexico, those of Europe, and even among the Founding Fathers of the United States. The difference lies in the Liberal predication that a representative government, usually a federal republic, was an a priori necessity. Alamán was more concerned

¹See above, page 19. This topic is also explored in Wistedt, Lucás Alamán and His Family Pact, and to a lesser extent in Melvin Bloom, The Rise of Nationalism in Mexico Between the Years 1810-1824 as Interpreted by Lucás Alamán (Thesis, Mexico City College, 1950).

with what the government did and the type of society that it produced. This is not to say that Liberals were unconcerned with the results of government, but they felt that the form of government would determine the type of society that would develop and their concern for individual liberty led them to require few tangible fruits from the government. Alamán, however, placed the essentials outside the governmental structure and made a far greater use of its authority.

For this reason, economics plays a crucial role in any assessment of Alamán's plans for Mexican development. Mexico in 1823 was in a shambles financially and economically. Guanajuato, the birthplace of Alamán, had suffered a population decline which, though not as severe as it is often pictured, was nonetheless significant.² Particularly affected were the villages

²Alexander von Humboldt, Essai Politique sur le royaume de la Nouvelle-Espagne (Paris: Chez Antoine-Agustin Renouard, 1825), I, p. 302, gives a figure of 32,098 for the year 1793. By 1803 the population of the city had risen to 41,000 (Ibid., II, pp. 162-163). But he also gives a figure of 29,600 for the nearby villages which served the mines such as Valenciana. López Aparicio combines these to get a figure of 70,600 (in "Lucás Alamán, precursor della industria moderna mexicana y autor de su Primera Planificación," El Universal, 24 de Mayo de 1953, in the Sunday supplement entitled 'Revista de la Semana', pp. 8, 19). When contrasted with the figure which he attributed to Minister of the United States, Joel Poinsett, of 35,733 for the year 1822, the difference is striking. In all likelihood, however, the later figure included only the city proper. The decline would therefore have been slight, although the surrounding villages would have been particularly affected by the mine closings. The paralysis was significant and to some extent permanent, as the population today remains under 30,000. Its attraction as a tourist stop rests on its attributes of colonial splendor, relatively untouched by modern industrialism.

that surrounded the city, which were supported by the mining industry, and suffered virtual paralysis. The Bourbon reforms of the 1770's had apparently provided only a temporary stimulus and the industry was in decline prior to 1810.³ The Hidalgo phase of the Independence Movement and the warfare of the succeeding decade halted nearly all activity. With his background and training, it was natural for Alamán to turn to mining as the most obvious road to recovery.

On May 4, 1821, he made a series of proposals to the Cortes on behalf of the mining concerns. Of particular interest, in the light of his later activities, was his suggestion that law twelve of the Laws of the Indies, prohibiting foreigners from acquiring and working their own mines, be suspended for ten years. In addition, he requested that foreigners be allowed the privilege of naturalization by express government license.⁴ These proposals took the form of a Bill, submitted by Alamán in conjunction with Andrés del Río, his fellow delegate and former teacher, and contained twenty-nine articles. Most of them represented efforts to reduce tax restrictions and promote local control over the industry; one urged that vacancies in the administration of the mints in New Spain be filled with graduates of the mining schools, including the new ones proposed for Guanajuato and Zacatecas.⁵

³See above, page 5.

⁴Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 172.

⁵Ibid. For a complete text of the Bill, see John H. Hann,

These efforts clearly reflect the personal interest of Alamán and Del Río, but also contain incipient ideas which would mature as Alamán moved into public and private affairs.

As was mentioned previously, following the conclusion of the sessions of the Cortes, Alamán attempted to gain assistance in France and England in the formation of a mining company, before finally reaching an agreement with the Hullet Brothers of London.⁶ The objective was to drain the mines that had been flooded during the wars and due to years of inactivity, using modern machinery. In Mexico, he directed the operations of the Compañía Unida de Minas de Mexico until 1830, when he severed connections with the company in a managerial dispute. Even in private business, Alamán was not known for his ability to work well with others.

Despite a capital outlay of substantial proportions, the business was not very profitable. Baron von Humboldt is often considered influential in the extensive capital investments by Europeans to overhaul the mining industry, eventually totaling

"The Role of the Mexican Deputies in the Proposal and Enactment of Measures of Economic Reform Applicable to Mexico," Mexico and the Spanish Cortes, 1810-1822: Eight Essays, ed. Benson, pp. 153-184.

To help drain the mines, the Cortes conceded to the North American James W. Smith the privilege of bringing in machinery. This privilege was never used because of the opposition of the Mexican Junta Gubernativa. In addition, a Mexican law of February 20, 1824, adopted a 3% tax on metals, which the Cortes had substituted for the quinto real at the request of Alamán in 1821. See Agustín Cué Cánovas, Historia Social y Económica de México, 1521-1854 (México: Editorial F. Trillas, S.A., 1963), p. 291.

⁶Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 139.

twenty-four million pesos.⁷ Humboldt's Ensayo político was published in France in 1811-1812. In 1824, interested groups in London published the Selecciones de los trabajos del baron de Humboldt, relativos al clima, habitantes, producciones y minas de México, along with an English edition, through the publishing house of Longman, which was among the groups interested in the mining developments. They offered him the directorship of English negotiations with Mexico, but von Humboldt politely refused. Nevertheless, Alamán sent him a letter in 1824, acknowledging his assistance in spreading the knowledge of the resources and riches of Mexico.⁸ Alfonso López Aparicio contends that the circulation of von Humboldt's book in Europe was responsible for renewing the image of Eldorado awaiting investors in New Spain. As a result, capital penetration between 1826 and 1830 was constant.⁹

Substantial foreign investment in the mining industry has led many critics to question Alamán's patriotism.¹⁰ The com-

⁷López Aparicio, Alamán, Primer Economista, p. 31. See also J. Fred Rippy, Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain Over Latin America, p. 108; and Rippy, "Latin America and the British Investment 'Boom' of the 1820's," Journal of Modern History, XIX (June, 1947), 122-129.

⁸Cué Cañovas, Historia Social y Económica, pp. 293-294.

⁹López Aparicio, "Lucás Alamán," El Universal, p. 89. See also Rippy, "Latin America and the British Investment 'Boom'," 122-29.

¹⁰For a Marxist analysis of this so-called subversion, see Pedro María Anaya Ibarra, "Alamán y el capital extranjero," Editorial in El Nacional, 25 de Septiembre de 1943, pp. 3, 4.

plaint is that the encouragement of foreign investment fostered the exploitation and subordination of the Mexican economy. However, Alamán was well aware of the dangers involved; perhaps to a greater extent than were the proponents of free trade and the advocates of foreign loans to the Mexican government. López Aparicio notes that the Pastry War and the Intervention of 1861 demonstrated that the prophecies of Lucás Alamán were not in error.¹¹

Invitations to foreign capital represented a calculated risk, but one which Alamán believed necessary, since Mexico lacked adequate capital resources of its own, if the controversial issue of Church wealth is excluded. He believed that eventually Mexican industry (referring to mining activities as industry at this point) would provide an adequate capital base and free the country from its dependence upon foreign capital. Alamán sought the aid of Europe because it had surplus investment capital and an advanced technological development. His intention was not, as Pedro Anaya Ibarra has insinuated, to create a political base of foreign capitalists and Mexican feudalists.¹² Such a conclusion interjects the reality of the era of Porfirio Díaz into the mind of Lucás Alamán.

Like most Mexicans, Alamán viewed the United States as a greater threat to Mexican sovereignty than a distant France or

¹¹López Aparicio, "Lucás Alamán," El Universal, p. 19.

¹²Anaya Ibarra, "Alamán y el capital," El Nacional, pp. 3-4.

England, the events of 1838 and 1861 notwithstanding. He even found it expedient to court the sentiments of the Holy Alliance in order to forestall any intentions of the Colossus of the North. In 1825 he emphasized that foreign capital "considered under its political aspect", was an advantage to Mexico.¹³ Since the European nations had recognized the independence of Mexico, their commercial interests could not be indifferent to the prosperous development of the country.¹⁴ Foreign capital investments gave Europe a further stake in maintaining Mexican independence, and thus gave assurance that any attempts at a reconquest by Spain would be thwarted, as was demonstrated by the role of George Canning in the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine.

One venture of the Compañía Unida deserves particular mention, because of its relevance to later industrial planning. In 1826 the company founded the first ferrería, or iron works, in independent Mexico. Called "Piedras Azules", it was located near the city of Durango. The venture failed despite an investment of 250,000 pesos, expended in the search for a workable method. An anonymous critic in 1831 blamed the failure of the company upon a lack of foresight and insufficient trained personnel.¹⁵

¹³Lucás Alamán, Memoria por el Secretario de Estado y del Despacho, 1825; in Obras, IX, p. 151.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Modesto Bargalló, Las Ferrerías, de los primeros veinticinco años del México independiente (Mexico: Compañía Fundidora de Fierro y Acero de Monterrey, S.A., 1965), p. 18.

Don Lucas gave the same reasons for the failure, placing much of the blame upon himself.¹⁶ Even so, by 1831 he reported that the foundry was producing iron that was "superior to English iron and capable of a variety of uses,"¹⁷ which was perhaps chauvinistic exaggeration, but did indicate that the iron industry had potential. In his Memoria of 1843 Alamán was able to report that the new owner, Julio Lehmann, was making a profit and was producing between 3000 and 4000 quintales (300,000 to 400,000 pounds) per year, including various metal products as well as bar iron.¹⁸

Alamán resigned his directorship in 1831, claiming an inability to get along with the English management.¹⁹ This constituted a bitter defeat, in view of his own family background and his training in France and Germany. Modesto Bargallo, historian of the Mexican iron industry, assesses the 1820's as not propitious for exploitation by mining companies because of the physical and political effects of the independence movement. He criticizes Alamán, however, for a lack of attention to the technical aspects of his business. Better administration, he feels,

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁷ Lucas Alamán, Memoria de la Secretaria de Estado, 1831; in Obras, IX, pp. 283-284.

¹⁸ Lucas Alamán, Memoria sobre el Estado de la Agricultura e Industria de la República en 1843; in Obras, X, pp. 62-63.

¹⁹ Alamán, Historia de México, V; in Obras, V, Appendix, Documento numero 25, p. 973.

might have given Alamán the "grand alto horno and machinery with which to fabricate steam engines" that he had desired.²⁰ Such criticism could well be directed to most aspects of his career. Never a bureaucrat in thought or in temperament, he did not relish administrative detail, which perhaps explains his uniform lack of business success. One recent writer has established the difference between Alamán and most of the major figures of his day in the fact that he was "born rich and died poor," which was a fitting epitaph to his business career.²¹

Although most of this activity had been accomplished outside his official public capacity, it merely represented attempts to implement personally what he was advocating publicly. As Secretaria de Estado y Despacho de Relaciones Exteriores e Interiores, he placed mining at the heart of the economic recovery of Mexico. This has led his biographer, José C. Valadés, to declare that Alamán was a mercantilist.²² For a more accurate analysis of this "mercantilism," Robert Potash has ably referred readers, instead, to the nineteenth century appraisal made by Jared Sparks, who pointedly commented:

In Mexico precious metals ought to be considered under the same aspect as the great commercial properties of

²⁰Bargalló, Las Ferrerías, p. 17.

²¹George P. Taylor, Lucás Alamán: His Place in Mexican History (Thesis. Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 1963), p. 153.

²²Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 280.



other countries And this is how Alamañ and the enlightened statesmen of Mexico saw them, after having conquered their old prejudices We have related these observations about the work of Alamañ because we believe that he has been the principle instrument in establishing a liberal and sane policy among his citizens.²³

For Alamañ, it was not the minerals in the ground that held the ultimate wealth, but "wealth" lay in the stimulation that the extraction and processing gave to the economy. He urged those interested to make note of "the number of men that they employ, and the animals involved in moving the machinery and minerals."²⁴ The men and mules were consumers of agricultural products, and the mining industry also consumed large quantities of paper, iron, and tallow. Here was the true "wealth" of the Mexican mining resources. Alamañ was to some extent taken in by the arguments of British Minister Henry Ward in this respect, for Ward was attempting to gain an economic hegemony for Great Britain in Mexico. Thus Alamañ told the Congress:

Ward tells us that although the true wealth consists in the products of the soil and of the industry of men; after that, in the entire world there is no treasure equal to that of the mines of our country.²⁵

The thrust of the speech was propagandistic, however; intended to gain support for the entrance of British capital in the mining

²³Jared Sparks, "Gold and Silver in Mexico," North America, XXI (1825), 434-435; cited in Potash, El Banco de Avio, p. 72.

²⁴Lucas Alamañ, Memoria por el Secretario de Estado y del Despacho de Relaciones Exteriores e Interiores, 1823; in Obras, IX, p. 92.

²⁵Valadeś, Alamañ, Estadista e Historiador, pp. 164-165.

industry. In the hope of gaining Liberal adherents, he cited Adam Smith freely on the subject of investors' preference for high-risk enterprises. José C. Valadés makes the most of the comparison to Smith in order to depict Alamán as a liberalizing champion of a free economy, and the removal of colonial shackles: "Guided by Adam Smith," Valadés remarks, "one would give first impulse to separating mining from dependence on the State." In trying to remove mining from the control of the Tribunal General, he felt that Alamán would be acting in accordance with this principle.²⁶ It is doubtful, however, that this was his intention. Foreign investors simply could not be expected to conduct their business through such an agency. If such investment were solicited, the Tribunal General had to be liquidated. Smith was used for the expected propaganda value of such an authority upon the deputies.

The Memoria of 1825 related the activities of the foreign companies (three English and one German) in the revival of the mines, the use of new steam engines, and the depletion of combustibles, urging some sort of program of conservation and reforestation to remedy the latter weakness.²⁷ Such progress justified, to his satisfaction, the repetition of the confidence he had expressed two years earlier: "The mines are the fountain of

²⁶Ibid., p. 162.

²⁷Alamán, Memoria (1825); in Obras, IX, p. 150.

the true wealth of this nation, and all that some speculative economists have said against this principle has been victoriously refuted by experience."²⁸ These phrases reflected his own enthusiasm more than the actual conditions, and Alamán would oust mining from its central position in his economic framework within four years.

In addition to a progress report on the mining industry, the Memoria of 1825 also presented a program of internal improvements.²⁹ Road construction revived the nemesis of foreign capital, for Alamán found the resources and technical ability of Mexico deficient in this area as well. Mexico would have to adopt what he called the "European method", that of private construction under public license. Two Englishmen, Manning and Marshall, had already been contacted for the Veracruz highway. Any possible objections were dismissed with the observation that the short-term payments (a toll road?) would be more than balanced by the benefits accruing to the nation in the form of access to the ports, which would increase internal commerce, agriculture, and industry.³⁰

²⁸Ibid., p. 149.

²⁹This was one of many points where Alamán's centralist economic and political tendencies bear a resemblance to the Federalism of Alexander Hamilton in the United States. This is especially evident in the latter's Report on Manufactures, given December 5, 1791; in Papers on Public Credit, Commerce, and Finance of Alexander Hamilton, ed. Samuel McKee, Jr. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1957), pp. 175-276.

³⁰Alamán, Memoria (1823); in Obras, IX, p. 151. See also

Other internal improvements suggested included a rivers-and-harbors project and a canal across the isthmus of Tehuántepec, a project which Alamán had suggested to the Cortes in 1821.³¹ Army engineers had submitted a report on the feasibility of a canal, and diplomatic representatives in London and Washington had been instructed to solicit bids by placing advertisements in the major newspapers. The canal was to be complimented by a colonization project in the southern regions, using demobilized soldiers and giving them land.³² Colonization was also advocated for the northern expanses of Mexico, to secure the frontiers against the United States and to aid in civilizing the barbarous Indians, as well as providing as obvious increment in agriculture from the increased acreage under cultivation.³³ What was needed, he felt, was a land law "such as had been drawn up in the United States," to distribute the territory.³⁴

David Fletcher, "Building the Mexican Railroad," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXX (1950), 26-62, which shows how railroads developed along the lines of the major roads and as supplements to them.

³¹Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 118. Saint-Simon had suggested such a canal to the Viceroy of New Spain when he was in America, but was received coldly. See Elliot H. Polinger, "Saint-Simon, Precursor of the League of Nations," Journal of the History of Ideas, IV (1943), 476.

³²Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 159. See also Alamán, Memoria (1823); in Obras, IX, pp. 98-99.

³³Alamán may have overestimated the fertility of these lands. Although he had visited a presidio in Coahuila as a boy, his knowledge of the northwestern areas was obviously sparse.

³⁴Alamán, Memoria (1825); in Obras, IX, p. 153. The exact

Before any policy of development could be effected, there was a need for statistical information. In 1825, however, Alamán was able to report little progress on the part of the states in complying with the Government's requests of 1823 to supply the necessary information.³⁵ This was evidence of the regionalism and lack of concern for national problems which Alamán came to regard as endemic to the federalist system. His role in public affairs during these unstable times perhaps furthered his abnormal view of the relations between the states and the central government. Historians, however, have always listed localism as a major factor obstructing the achievement of nationhood and national cohesion in the Latin American republics, Mexico included.

These early writings of Alamán also indicate the important position given to education. In a letter to a friend in Querétaro, he wrote on April 23, 1823:

Among the many means which ought to be put in motion for the attainment of our political regeneration . . . one of the most important, the first and basis or cement for all the others, is that of the education of youth, and public enlightenment (ilustración pública): the history of all the ancient and modern nations shows us that their decadence or prosperity has always been in light of this principle.³⁶

reference is unclear, but probably refers to either the Harrison Land Act of 1800 or the Land Act of 1820. Cf., Encyclopedia of American History, ed. Richard B. Morris (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 461-462.

³⁵Alamán, Memoria (1825); in Obras, IX, p. 132.

³⁶Lucás Alamán, Documentos del Archivo del Señor Ingeniero Don Gonzalo Méndez Cosío en Querétaro; in Obras, X, p. 584.

enumerating the benefits of education on the various aspects of society, he incisively explains the role of the government in this process:

In a frank and liberal government, worthy of the nineteenth century, rather than inventing shackles to obstruct the march of the nation, they [the Supremo Poder Ejecutivo] ought to dissolve the barriers to the torrents of lights, and arm the People, giving them the true egide [sic?] against arbitrariness and despotism.³⁷

Curiously, while the government was not to invent new obstructions; it was supposed to take positive action to "dissolve the barriers." The type of action, rather than government intervention per se, was the determining factor for Lucás Alamán. This was a different type of laissez-faire, but one which was nonetheless liberal.³⁸

Here one can detect the influence of the Spanish Enlightenment. He stated, as an introduction to the topic "Instrucción Pública" in the 1823 Memoria: "without instruction there is no liberty, and the more diffuse the former, the more solidly cemented will be the latter."³⁹ In a letter of April 23, 1823, he

³⁷Ibid., p. 585.

³⁸Perhaps this view of the term laissez-faire is more accurate historically than the conventional definition. G.N. Clark explains that the term really expressed the desire of merchants to have the government play a role in releasing them from the mercantile restrictions and monopolies on trade. Clark, The Ideas of the Industrial Revolution (Glasgow: Jackson Son and Co. Ltd., 1953); in The Industrial Revolution in Britain, ed. Philip A.M. Taylor (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1958), pp. 86-87.

³⁹Alamán, Memoria (1825); in Obras, IX, p. 86.

called education "the fertile source from which all happiness can be anticipated."⁴⁰ This last statement approximates in spirit and phraseology a maxim of Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, a leading figure in the Spanish Enlightenment, who affirmed that "to enlighten the people is to make them happy."⁴¹ Just as the eighteenth century reformers made the spread of a uniform system of learning the obligation of the Government, Alamán made it the province of the Mexican government to co-ordinate all possible resources to secure this important objective.

Conscious of the lack of teachers and educational facilities yet desirous of a system which would reach all social levels, he offered various suggestions and alternatives. He was a member of a Lancastrian Society in Mexico City, and described the Society School of sixteen hundred students in the Memoria of 1823, noting the rapid success of the system in England, Europe, and the United States. It could function as a normal school, and he urged that this Society "serve as a model, and that others may be established in imitation and under similar regulations."⁴²

⁴⁰ Archivo del G.M. Cosío; in Obras, X, p. 584.

⁴¹ María Elena Ota Mishima, Alamán Ilustrado, p. 38. This idea was expressed in the Spanish Constitution of 1812, as Article 131, Section 22 listed as one of the powers of the Cortes "To Establish a general plan of public instruction in the whole monarchy," so that by 1830 literacy could be a requirement for citizenship, as stated in Article 25, Section 6. For an English text of this constitution, see The Pamphleteer, XXII (1822), pp. 62-87.

⁴² Memoria (1823); in Obras, IX, pp. 86-87.

The Constitution confided care of primary education to the Ayuntamientos, and in 1825 Alamán reported that local inertia was hampering success quite as much as the shortage of teachers and funds.⁴³

Diversity was not a virtue of strength in the field of education. Like the Spanish reformers, Alamán desired a uniform educational system, and his criticism of Mexican higher education including secondary education, was that it was "proceeding along isolated plans and regulations without a common or uniform system. More important, they lacked "the progress in science which would have produced all the reforms which follow from it."⁴⁴ In conjunction with a board of regents, the Government was preparing a general plan to remedy this situation. As one writer has said:

This preoccupation from the educational aspect is distinctly that of an enlightened man, because it had as its objective a utilitarian education, a national education; in sum, a scientific education.⁴⁵

Alamán felt that the Ayuntamientos could also dispense knowledge by organizing Gabinetes de Lectura, to serve as examples. These organs could sponsor public lectures, encourage

⁴³ Memoria (1825); in Obras, IX, pp. 142-143.

⁴⁴ Memoria (1823); in Obras, IX, p. 88.

⁴⁵ Ota Mishima, Alamán Ilustrado, p. 63. He meant education to be more functional, but not really 'utilitarian' in the philosophical sense.

subscriptions to newspapers and "works of general interest", and generally diffuse "las luces y adelantar" of intellectual culture. The report asked that they set aside an annual amount for stocking libraries with "obras mas modernas".⁴⁶ Very little concrete results materialized in response to these suggestions.

María Elena Ota Mishima has summarized this early period of development in the life of Alamán:

Thus we discover the young Alamán, the talented Alamán, the Alamán of new ideas for a new Mexico. Apart from being enlightened, one may note that Alamán had capitalist ideas, to a certain extent liberal, since it served to unite the republic.⁴⁷

In over-all direction he may have presented new perspectives, but the reliance upon mining was clearly based more on his background and training than on sound reasoning. Alamán came to realize this himself sometime during the 1820's. His personal business ventures certainly helped to alter and reshape his thoughts. Without apology, he gradually abandoned mining, and the break with the Compañía Unida was rather symbolic. Indications of the approaching change can be noticed in the same Memorias of 1823 and 1825 in which the "mining thesis" is enunciated, but the new plan did not assume prominence or clarity until Alamán returned to national life. His new synthesis was exhibited in the creation of the Banco de Avío in 1830, under the first Busta-

⁴⁶ Alamán, Memoria (1823); in Obras, IX, pp. 89-91.

⁴⁷ Ota Mishima, Alamán Ilustrado, p. 39.

mante government.⁴⁸

Mining declined in importance to such an extent that by 1843 Alamán was using this branch of the economy as the antithesis for his more mature theory of development. Mining, he now asserted, benefits only the immediate area surrounding the mines. Of what value, he asked rhetorically, were the riches of Zacatecas to the people of Puebla; and how was it that Querétaro languished economically while Guanajuato boomed?⁴⁹ The rewards of mining were spotty and undependable, subject to sharp and frequent fluctuations, in comparison with an industrial economy that were properly integrated with an efficient agricultural system.

Such an analysis had taken twenty years to mature, and, as will be shown, suffered further alterations and setbacks. In the early years of the new nation Lucás Alamán had been experimenting. Significantly, he learned from these early miscalculations and failures, and in 1830 emerged from personal and public failure with a new theory, one which did more than tinker with the old colonial economic pattern.

In his theories and plans of development, he showed himself amenable to new ideas and innovations. Unfortunately, this same flexibility did not extend to all areas of his life, and did not characterize his political activities.

⁴⁸ See below, Chapter III.

⁴⁹ Lucás Alamán y otros, Representación dirigida al exmo. Sr. Presidente Provisional de la República, 1843; in La Industria Nacional y el Comercio Exterior (1842-1851), Banco Nacional de Comercio Exterior (México: BNCE, 1962), p. 117.

CHAPTER III

THE BANCO DE AVIÓ: GOVERNMENT FINANCED MANUFACTURING

Mexican politics during the late 1820's have proven to be a gordian knot for modern historians, defying disentanglement while retaining fascination because the period contains most of the "classic" factors of early nineteenth century Latin American politics. Masonry in two forms, an Anglo-American rivalry, and a liberal-conservative struggle were all entwined to a degree which renders the identification of ideological attachment and influence in an individual or group a herculean task. Added to this was the military strongman, in the person of Antonio López de Santa Anna, who performed the remarkable feat of seating and unseating two governments in four years, without smudging his image.

Alamán participated in, and some contend led, the second of these governments, nominally headed by General Anastasio Bustamante, who had been the vice-president of the previous government! From January, 1830 to June, 1832 Alamán occupied the position of greatest political influence and power of his public career. This fact has importance because it allowed him a greater degree of freedom to implement his theories than was true of any time in his public life.

From a position of power, he was able to institute a revised plan for the development of Mexico, one which reflected much of the ambivalence in Mexican thought at this time, and pointed par-

ticularly to the imprecise nature of any division between liberals and conservatives. Influence of the Enlightenment was strong, especially in its Spanish variant. As such, it drew upon French enlightened thought, but a case has also been made for an analogy to the France of Jean Baptiste Colbert, by emphasizing the similarity to mercantilism found in the thought of Alamán.¹

A deeper analysis of the Banco de Avío and the thought behind it reveals the influence of Spanish Bourbon reform and the precedents in Mexican colonial history, but also uncovers non-mercantile features and even ideas taken from Adam Smith. These seeming incongruities give evidence of an eclecticism in Alamán that calls for a closer and more intensive analysis. The historical context of the formation, enactment, and implementation of the Banco de Avío provides the concrete expression through which

¹Ota Mishima, Alamán Ilustrado, pp. 66-67. She compares the way in which each statesman assessed the resources of his country and then sought to use the power of the state to achieve the necessary balance:

'Mercantilism reached its apogee with the industrial resolutions of Colbert, who not only did not forget agriculture, but permitted its monopoly [Farmers' Bureau]. In order to balance the decadence of mining in the public wealth, which he considered inevitable, Alamán, in the manner of Colbert, made efforts to create productive branches, giving special impulse to the processing industries and agriculture. In this respect Alamán, contrary to Colbert, incorporated agriculture with industry in an integral plan, and in order to develop this, erected the Banco de Avío.

to interpret his ideas. While this presents the advantage of removing theory from the realm of speculation, the attempt to manifest thought in action can also obscure the "pure" theory. Alemán, however, was never a pensador in the sense of being a philosopher. He thought in terms of policies for action, despite the lack of detail at times. His ideas thus contain inconsistency and contradiction when dissected and taken in isolation; but the times in which he was acting were unstable, requiring abrupt shifts and improvisation to effect programs. Nothing illustrates this point better than the events which led to the Banco itself.

The Need Arises For Government Action

The Banco de Avío matured in response to the attempt by the Guerrero government to relieve the plight of the Mexican textile artisans in 1829. When the gremio, of guild privileges, were removed in 1812, these artisans found themselves in open competition with foreign producers, notably the British. The disruption of trade brought about by the Napoleonic wars provided an initial stimulus to the Mexicans. In peacetime, however, they found their semi-manufacturing status to be a hopeless disadvantage.

In a curious but not really contradictory circumstance, these artisans later provided the primary opposition to proposals that aimed at expanding the textile industry into a more competitive factory system. Modern industrial methods would enable Mexico to meet foreign competition, but would also lead

to the demise, or at least the amalgamation, of the artisan industry.

Robert Potash, who has made the most intensive study of the effect of the Banco on the textile industry, tells his readers that the artisan industry depended upon two conditions: (1) The existence of a market permanently free from foreign competition, and (2) The capital of Spanish merchants, who dominated the industry and gave it a capitalist character.² Both were undermined between the years 1810 and 1820, and the expulsion of the Spaniards in 1828 spelled the death of this source of investment capital. Significantly, it was only one year later that the Guerrero administration was forced into action by the artisans' demands.

The decision to interpose the government as a protector of local industry was made over the strong objection of Lorenzo de Zavala, Minister of the Treasury, who resigned in protest. Guerrero's so-called liberal government was abandoning the free-trade policy of liberal economics, and was exhibiting conservatism in its strictest sense by reverting to the guild policy of the colonial period. While this decision aroused the ire of the puros in the liberal camp, and may have been instrumental in the downfall of the government, industrialists and certain agricultural interests were excited by the move, for they realized the possibilities of expanding the policy.

²Robert Potash, El Banco de Avío de México: El fomento de la industria, 1821-1846 (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959), p. 23.

Although foreign cotton goods had been denied free entry into Mexico by a law passed in January, 1829, dissent among liberals was so strong that administrative procrastination was able to delay official promulgation until the following November. One factor in the debate was the inflexible parochialism of Puebla, the center of the artisan textile industry and jealous of its position. Federalism arose to haunt the liberals on this occasion, for it worked against their best interests. The Puebla delegation wanted the prohibitive law, but blocked all attempts to extend the local industry to other states. Puebla presented her argument in the following fashion: "One state produces one thing that it can exchange with its neighbors for another, and thus an equilibrium is preserved."³ Not only was this an expression of federalism in the extreme, it was paradoxically mercantilist as well, with the desire to distribute roles to limited areas. Potash wryly comments: "It appeared that nature had decreed that Puebla was to clothe the nation."⁴

Delineating the position of free-trade advocates, who were federalists as well, Zavala argued:

The spirit of regulating everything and the desire to do immediately that which can only be the result of time, of

³Ibid., p. 61.

⁴Ibid. It was not a simple case of artisans versus machines, for local merchants and muleteers also had a great stake in preserving the predominance of Puebla.

civilization, and of the advancement of the social system, has led many good patriots [liberals] to believe that the manufacturing industry can progress among us, avoiding the competition of foreign articles Industry should always owe its progress to liberty and the stimulation of individual interest Restrictions on the foreign trade of certain articles will augment only the nakedness of the working classes.⁵

He had found a glaring weakness not only in the artisans' position, but that of the factory industrialists as well. In her desire to preserve industrial supremacy, Puebla feared true industrialism. Commercial restrictions, however, could never overcome the technological inferiority of the artisan, and the textile industry would remain unable to provide the articles needed by the nation. Zavala opposed the law both as a liberal, and as the Minister of the Treasury. A purely prohibitive law, such as that enacted on May 22, 1829, could do little beyond reducing the revenue of the government, which came primarily from customs duties.

Ildefonso Maniau, the Minister of the Treasury in the Bustamante government, introduced a proposal to remedy this defect. He asked that an additional ten percent tax be placed on imported textiles, with the revenue going to the development of industry, while the Guerrero law was suspended. The primary interest of the Guerrero administration had been the protection of the artisans, but the new government was anxious to encourage technological change, especially in the introduction of factory methods.⁶

⁵Ibid., pp. 63-64.

⁶Ibid., p. 69.

Guerrero's Solution is Transformed

It was at this point that Alamán entered the picture. Engaged in the textile industry his Compañía Industrial de Celaya since 1826, he was aware of the difficulties afflicting the struggling industry. With this factory, he had hoped to show how the obraje system of the colonial period, guided by technology, could be transformed into a modern factory. Although he was encouraged by the report of the opening of a factory producing woven cloth in Querétaro, he soon realized that his example would be insufficient to effect any large-scale change. He was further aware of the lack of capital; for local funds were invested in agriculture, while foreign investment was flowing into mining, under the encouragement of Alamán himself. His own negotiations with foreign investors led him to conclude that such arrangements were not in the best interests of Mexico, and he sought a policy that would put Mexican development into the hands of indigenous entrepreneurs. In the sphere of commerce, the expelled Spaniards had merely been replaced by English, French, and United States merchants.⁷

Another potential source of wealth, was, of course, the Catholic Church, and Alamán has suffered castigation from many

⁷Luis Chávez Orozco, "Prólogo" a Los industriales mexicanos y el comercio exterior, 1848-1852, BNCE (México: BNCE, 1959), p. 7.

points of view on this topic. Some object to the inclusion of the clergy in plans for industrialism, while others point to the wealth of the Church as a neglected source of revenue and the starting point for any attempt to dislodge colonial economic patterns.⁸ This seeming contradiction is not as enigmatic as it may first appear. The role of individual clerics constituted the least offensive type of criticism and could even prove advantageous to clerical adherents, for it provided evidence that the clergy was not obstructing development.

One of the earliest indications of a desire for factories came from the apostle of the Spanish Enlightenment among the clergy of New Spain, Bishop Manuel Abad y Queipo, whose meetings with Padre Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla at the home of Intendant Riaño had been witnessed by Alamán.⁹ One of the suggestions con-

⁸ Alfonso López Aparicio gives one side of this argument:

"Chávez Orozco, along with many others, affirms that Alamán departed on a false premise for the industrialization of Mexico by his desire to establish a capitalist system of production without first breaking the economic power of the clergy, a typical semi-feudal structure."

See Lucás Alamán, Primer Economista, p. 51. For these individual viewpoints, see Chávez Orozco, "Lucás Alamán, una faceta," Cuadernos Americanos, X (Julio-Agosto, 1943), 176; Cué Cánovas, Historia Social y Económica de México, p. 304; and Hale, "Alamán, Antuñano y Liberalismo," 231.

⁹ Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, pp. 31f.

tained in the Representación that the Bishop sent to the King argued that if His Majesty would "agree to the free permission of fábricas ordinarias of cotton and wool, it would stimulate the implementation of other measures which ought to give the people the first step toward their happiness."¹⁰

Alamán's own factory in Celaya was financed on credit from the local clergy, but the danger was felt to lie in the fact that involvement of clerics would lessen the business aspect of the industries. Such participation, it was assumed, would lead to the view of the companies as semi-public patriotic and philanthropic enterprises rather than as businesses.¹¹

A more vulnerable field of attack was the wealth held by the Church as an institution, which undeniably was sufficient to negate the need for an agency such as the Banco. Not so obvious was the method by which this capital could be channelled into industrial development while at the same time avoiding the political implications that accompanied either investment, loans, or, on the other hand, disamortization. Nor was it clear to anyone whether any method other than outright expropriation was even feasible.

One could hardly expect a man with the background and religious sentiments of Alamán to favor the disamortization of Church wealth, and his attempts to involve individual clerics in indus-

¹⁰ Manuel Abad y Quiépo, Estudios (México: Secretario de Educación Pública, 1947), p. 11.

¹¹ Potesh, El Banco de Avío, p. 98.

trial projects seems to have aroused more fears and recriminations than they dispelled. Liberal critics felt that the Church was already too involved in the economic life of the nation. Leading this attack on the entrenched position of the Church was José María Luís Mora, who recognized all too well that the wealth of the Church obviated the need for a governmental financial agency.¹²

Modern historians have continued this line of reasoning. The late Luís Chávez Orozco, Mexican economic historian, felt that Alamán was avoiding a critical step toward industrial development by refusing to transfer the wealth of the Church, pointing to the precedents in English and French history that established, to his satisfaction, the relationship between the transfer to secular hands and capital formation for industrial use:

Alamán knew that the economic development of Europe and the upsurge of industry had their origins as the economic properties of the Church had passed from the power of the aristocracy to that of the middle class. But Alamán could not conceive that the Mexican economy ought to take the same course as that which followed the epoch of the Reformation in England and the Revolution in France.¹³

While the historical analogies can be seriously questioned, the role of the aristocracy was important. In Mexico this connection was through land, and this was the link that Chávez Orozco and the earlier liberal critics of the 1830's felt had to be

¹²Luís Chávez Orozco, "Introducción," to La Industria nacional y el comercio exterior, 1842-1851, Banco Nacional de Comercio Exterior (México: BNCE, 1962), p. 19.

¹³Chávez Orozco, "Lucás Alamán, una faceta," 176.

eradicated. This hegemony constituted a lack of freedom and circumscribed the economy. The hacienda system, or more precisely its "banker" the Church, by its corporate structure, was the target of the liberal assault, despite the fact that the eventual outcome served to increase the dominance of the hacienda system. Charles Hale, the most recent historian to examine the problem, concurs in this judgement, asserting that "a fundamental of economic development had to be the disamortization of ecclesiastical property," in recognition of the predominance of agriculture in the Mexican economy and the role of the Church in perpetuating this situation.¹⁴

If Alamán truly wished to use industrialism to forge a modern economy, the feudal aspects had to be replaced. He was not ignorant of the backward nature of the economic structure, and his own methods were intended to rectify the situation. The evidence is not extensive, however, so that when Alfonso López Aparicio defends Alamán on this point, he is forced to stretch the evidence. He contends that Alamán was showing consistency by including the clergy in his efforts to put ownership into native hands. This is undoubtably true, for the clerics were also Mexicans. Rather than an institution in "dead hands", he presented the Church as a benevolent bank with interest rates far below those of the agiotistas, or loan-sharks.¹⁵ To support this judgement, he

¹⁴Hale, "Alamán, Antuñano y Liberalismo," 231.

¹⁵"The influence of the Clergy was great because of these

directs his readers to Alamán's Historia: "The pious funds were a bank always open to agriculture and the crafts, from which the necessary funds for business were obtained at low interest."¹⁶

Consequently, López Aparicio feels that "new centers of wealth would have been created of a type that, in the long run, would have relegated the preponderance of the clergy to a secondary position, without the necessity of the pillage of La Reforma."¹⁷

Perhaps such a gradual and peaceful transition could have occurred, but there is little evidence that Alamán ever stated the problem in this form. The quotation given as proof was written in 1849, at a time when Church wealth was under far more imminent threat of confiscation and in need of arguments in its behalf. The simple fact is that he never considered the influence of the Church as a categorical evil, gave little thought to ecclesiastical influence himself, and thus did not recognize such an argument as a justifiable criticism of his programs. On the contrary, in a statement refuting the assumption of the patronato by the national government, he indicated his support for clerical freedom in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs, claiming that benefits accrue from this freedom:

In the midst of such a complete overturning of all elements of society, the one thing that has endured immutable is the Church, and this is because neither the Congress nor the

¹⁶Historia de México, I; in Obras, I, p. 136.

¹⁷López Aparicio, Lucás Alamán, Primer Economista, p. 54.

Government has been able to lay a hand on its administration or the elections of its ministers, the bishops having resisted with admirable energy the exercise of the Patronato.¹⁸

A few pages later, he rhapsodized upon the permanence of religion in view of the debased social state, which was the aftermath of the war with the United States:

This profound religious sentiment not only has not declined, but rather has illustriously fortified itself; it is the bond of the union that remained to the Mexicans, one that has preserved us from all the calamities which have been precipitated by those who wished to weaken it [ie., Liberals] wishing to limit the power and influence of the Church.¹⁹

In condemning the intrusions against the Church, Alamán was also issuing a warning against future tampering with ecclesiastical administration. These comments came in the face of imminent threats and thus do not really indicate his feelings in the 1830's.

The formation of the Banco de Avío was also influenced by the subtle shift that had taken place in the thinking of Alamán, one which accompanied the substitution of manufacturing for mining. As has been shown, there were residues of mercantilism in his fascination with the potentialities of mineral wealth. In the 1830's, however, he revealed a spirit of capitalism as he stated that "the wealth of nations consists in the formation of capitales."²⁰ These sentiments placed him closer to the ideas

¹⁸ Alamán, Historia de México, V; in Obras, V, p. 836.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 856.

²⁰ Alamán, Documentos Diversos, II; in Obras, X, p. 105.

expressed by Jovellanos, who told Spaniards of the change taking place in the standard of judging nations:

We may not delude ourselves: the greatness of nations will not be furthered now, as it was in other times, in the magnificence of its triumphs, in the martial spirit of its sons, in the extension of its boundaries, nor the reputation of its glories, or its honesty, or its wisdom. All of this is now different in the actual state of things in Europe. Commerce, industry, and opulence both of them are, and probably will continue to be for some time, the only supports of the preponderance of a state.²¹

Writers in the liberal Mexican journal Siglo XIX later expressed this philosophy even more succinctly:

There was a time in which the power of nations was calculated by the size of its armies, by the extensiveness of its conquests, by the enlightened despotism of its rulers. Today it is measured only by the greatness of its material production; not because material production is the primary object of the human race, but because in them rest the highest destinies. Today it is not asked if a people occupy a large and wealthy territory, what is the form of government, nor the history. It is asked, instead, what are its annual production figures²²

Nationalism crept into the presentation made by Alamán in 1830, for he asserted that "a people should have the vision not to depend on others for anything that is indispensable for sub-

²¹ Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, Informe sobre el libre ejercicio de las artes, in volume I of the Biblioteca de Autores Españoles (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1952), p. 38b. See also Jean Sarrailh, La España Ilustrada de la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XVIII, Traducción de Antonio Alatorre (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1957), p. 544.

²² Luis Chávez Crozco, Introducción a "Colección de Artículos del Siglo XIX", in Los industriales nacionales, 1848-1852, p. 16, citing from one of the articles.

sistence."²³ Fear of foreign domination by means of loans and investments is included with this reference to dependence upon European manufactured goods.

In Mexico development of a manufacturing industry could not mature unaided. Alamán neither denied nor underestimated the magnitude of the task:

To create a manufacturing industry from the beginning, or in a country where it has either never existed or is nearly in total ruins, is the greatest and most trying enterprise that can be undertaken.²⁴

The State would play a dual role in this development, first by financing the basic industries, and then by providing a protective tariff system. Alamán recognized this need when he first contemplated industrialism in the 1823 Memoria:

Our manufacturers cannot enter into competition with the productions of the perfected crafts of Europe; they need a well-conceived tariff which will put them on an equal level, and the introduction of machines and engineers such as those which have given superiority to Europe.²⁵

He repeated these requirements in 1830, in response to the Guerrero Law: "A purely prohibitive system in itself cannot make industry flourish; other elements are needed, such as abundant population, capital, and adequate machinery."²⁶

²³ Alamán, Memoria (1830); in Obras, IX, p. 206.

²⁴ Alamán, Memoria (1832); in Obras, IX, p. 336.

²⁵ Alamán, Memoria (1823); in Obras, IX, p. 100.

²⁶ Alamán, Memoria (1830); in Obras, IX, pp. 205f.

Hint of a change came in his proposed law for the colonization of Texas (April 6, 1830), calling for the costs of settlement and military protection to be covered by customs duties collected from the suspension of the Guerrero Law.²⁷ Alamán not only favored the "colonization", which actually involved encouraging Mexicans to move north, but also envisioned additional possibilities in this measure. The increased Mexican population would provide protection from incursions by the United States, while the revenue could finance a much wider program. The law mentioned small loans and followed the Guerrero policy by indicating that the funds be distributed among artisans in states with existing industry. Alamán's influence in the draft of this policy was not yet complete.

With the same disregard for the protocol of law and jurisdiction that had led to his political skirmishes in the early 1820's, Alamán proceeded as if he had been handed far greater resources and a mandate to carry out the ideas expressed in his Memoria of 1830. Shortly thereafter, he asked Congress to legalize this embellishment as the Banco de Avío para Fomento de la Industria Nacional. Financed with one million pesos, to be taken from customs duties resulting from the suspension of the Guerrero law, this agency was to disperse the funds in the form of construction loans and machinery purchases made by the Banco. Loans at five

²⁷ Material on this law is taken from Potash, El Banco de Avío pp. 74-76.

percent interest would be made to individuals or groups presenting feasible production projects, with textiles receiving primary, though not exclusive, consideration.²⁸

In addition to the Texas law and the ideas of Maniau, Alamán had two colonial precedents for sections of the Banco. he was certainly familiar with the Tribunal de Minas, created in 1777 to revive the mining industry, as a result of his association with Intendant Riaño and the Elhuyar brothers and Del Río at the Real Seminario de Minas. Low-interest loans were secured by miners from bancos de avío, administered through the Tribunal.²⁹ Subject to even greater suspicion from his critics was the relation that the Banco de Avío bore to certain agencies of the Church. Alamán noted that "each judge of capellanías, each cofradía, was a type of bank."³⁰ His arrangement with the clergy of Celaya in the financing of his Compañía Industrial in that city of the Bajío made him personally aware of these similarities. The security of Church-based loans was a feature that he hoped would be transferrable to government credit. For this reason, he felt it essential that the Banco be financed by a specific revenue source, in order to assure confidence in the loans and purchases.³¹ The

²⁸Hale, "Alamán, Antuñano y Liberalismo," 226.

²⁹Clarence Haring, The Spanish Empire in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 247f. For a more complete treatment of the Tribunal, see Howe, The Mining Guild of New Spain. Chávez Orozco makes the direct connection between Alamán and the Tribunal, La industria nacional 1842-1851, p. 10.

³⁰Alamán, Historia de México, I; in Obras, I, p. 70.

³¹This gave it the aspect of a "sinking fund", such as that

character and function of the Banco also indicated a change in Alamán's feeling toward foreign capital. His mining activities in the 1820's had virtually destroyed the Tribunal de Minería after 1825, and placed a major reliance upon foreign investment capital. By 1830 he came to doubt not only the validity of the primacy of mining, but also, apparently, the wisdom of placing a total reliance upon foreign capital. According to Luís Chávez Orozco:

It was don Lucás who, in effect, opened the door for the entrance of foreign capital in 1825; in 1830, scarcely five years later, he was already convinced³² of the damage that such investments made in the country.

The major change from the Texas Law of 1830 came in the method of dispersal of the funds. Although projects to use customs revenue had occurred frequently, the most recent being that of Maniau, Robert Potash states that the Banco "was the first to stipulate that the industrial companies would receive loans and machinery; that is, for the first time the creation of a factory system was indicated as the objective."³³ Consequently, the dif-

established by William Pitt in England and Alexander Hamilton in the United States. Edmund Burke was an admirer of Pitt, and Alamán drew political ideas from the writings of Burke. See Hale, "Alamán, Antuñano y Liberalismo," 228f, with reference to Jesús Reyes Heróles, El Liberalismo Mexicano (3 vols. México, 1957-58).

³²Chávez Orozco, "Introducción" to La industrial nacional, 1842-1851, p. 10.

³³Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 78. For a complete text of the law creating the Banco, see Appendix A, pp. 243f. of this work, or Miguel Leon-Portilla, et. al., Historia Documental de México (2 vols. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1964).

ference between this and the Guerrero Law, and even the Texas Law, was a significant substitution of ends, rather than a mere disagreement over means. Whereas the latter bowed to the interests of colonialism in industry and agriculture, the Banco was a deliberate attempt to change the existing economic structure. Since an idea never evolves in isolation, resemblances to colonial precedents should not be surprising. Continuity was provided by such similarities, a feature lacking in many of the European influences which were brought to Latin America and instituted without sufficient adaptation. The use of the funds, rather than the agency through which they were administered, constituted the real advance in Mexican economic thought.

Critics of Alaman's political beliefs unfairly lump the economic aspects of his thought in the same conservative mold. The "conserving" element in social and political institutions cannot be unhesitatingly applied to the sector of economic development. A liberalism based upon free-trade policies would have continued and expanded the existing pattern of the Mexican economy; that is, agriculture and mining, exhibiting through such thinking a far greater adherence to colonial establishments than did the theory which lay behind the Banco de Avío. Liberal "reforms" in the colonial economy resulted in the entrenchment of latifundio and the expansion of mining, albeit under foreign auspices, reaching their peak under the Díaz regime. Mexico in 1910 found herself still tied to these tow economic foundations,

a situation that was reversed only by the policies of the Revolution, exemplified in the industrial development corporation, the Nacional Financiera, S.A., which had as its prototype the Banco de Avío.

In 1830 Alamán wrote in his Memoria that "the manufacturing industry is reduced to nil because the means which have been employed in its development have not been the most convenient."³⁴ The magnitude of the task eliminated both a purely protective system and a total reliance upon private initiative. López Aparicio seeks a middle position with the suggestion that while Alamán "was far from economic liberalism, and approached a prudent state intervention", he was not the state-worshipper that his biographer José Valadés implies,³⁵ at least in the field of economics. That he was not an advocate of a monopoly of capital by the State is clearly indicated by the structure of the Banco itself, yet he cannot be completely exonerated of the charge of "state-worship". In 1831 he again asked Congress to approve an expansion of the functions of the Banco de Avío. Potash concludes that had these proposals been approved, the institution

³⁵Lucás Alamán, Primer Economista, p. 36. Estadolatria represents a play on words. Though its meaning here is "state-worshipper", latria is also used to refer to the forced Hellenization of other peoples by the Greeks. Here the implication is that of the State being used to force industrialization.

would have approached the present-day development agency:

From an institution limited to encouraging private initiative by means of low-interest loans, it would have passed on to become a combination State investment and credit company and a Bank of Industrial Credit. With the power of choosing the type of aid most adequate to the circumstances, the Banco de Avío would have had the attributes of the flexible institution of development of the twentieth century.³⁶

At this time, however, initiative remained with the industrialists, although these entrepreneurs were admittedly a select group with close ties to the government. The Junta Directiva of the Banco was first headed by Alamán and was empowered to choose from among the applicants with near complete discretion. Interest in industrialization was sparse, so that the choice was in fact limited to those who had been influential in establishing the Banco!³⁷ Later in the 1830's, the initiative came from army generals raiding the funds to support revolutions and meet payrolls.

In the Memoria of 1830, Alamán justified governmental support to private investors by reflecting upon both the nature of business and the nature of man, especially Mexican man:

Because this type of industry [i.e., manufacturing] requires greater diligence, men do not dedicate themselves to it unless they cannot find an adequate living elsewhere. Thus it

³⁶ Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 94. He is not alone in comparing the Banco to the Nacional Financiera, S.A. Much of the recent interest in the economic thought of Lucas Alamán has been stimulated by the theories of State control growing out of the Revolution of 1910 and symbolized in the Financiera in 1934. The powers of this agency were amplified in a law of December 30, 1940.

³⁷ Potash, El Banco de Avío, passim.

is that agriculture and mining receive preference, and certainly anyone who can extract silver directly is not going to occupy himself in trying to obtain it in another manner.³⁸

He had personally found the lure of silver to be illusory, and concluded that these "easy" forms of wealth were not the true indicators of national development, so that this statement was also a type of confession for his own prodigality. Despite the attention given to mining, the industry had never occupied more than a small minority of the population of New Spain, and later Mexico. Even when silver production reached its peak in the late eighteenth century, the value of agricultural products surpassed mineral output each year.³⁹

José Mora presented many of the same arguments when he explained why Mexicans favored agriculture and mining, but his intent was the reverse. Potash remarks about this contrast:

While the latter [ie., Mora] insisted that nature had wished that Mexico be essentially agricultural and mineral, and that it was upon these that her prosperity depended, Alamán adopted the theory that national independence required the development of a manufacturing industry.⁴⁰

Seeing no apparent difference between Alamán's plan and that adopted by Guerrero, Mora lumped the Banco with all other rem-

³⁸ Ibid., p. 73.

³⁹ Donald E. Worcester and Wendell G. Schaeffer, The Growth and Culture of Latin America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 310; and J.H. Farry, The Spanish Seaborne Empire (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 314.

⁴⁰ Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 73.

nants of colonial economic thinking, which he set out to eliminate. Together with Lorenzo de Zavala, he led attacks upon the Banco during the Liberal reform era (1830-34). They fell into the intellectual trap of comparing Mexico's seeming lack of progress with that of the United States del Norte, emphasizing the western expansion and agricultural development of the latter. Mexico was urged to emulate this pattern, but they neglected to point out that the United States had been developing industry under a protective tariff at least since 1816, and to some extent since 1789. The industrialists were quick to notice this omission in the liberal argument.

Alamán chose textiles as the area of concentrated effort because it seemed the easiest to install and had the widest market. As he explained it in 1830:

Textiles of cotton, linen, and wool, necessary for clothing the most numerous class of our population, are the things that ought to be fostered . . . with the necessary machinery for articles at moderate prices, something that is never going to be attained without aid Factories which produce articles of fine luxury should wait; we should not try to rival nations that have the industrial means which we need.

In order to accomplish this expansion, the textile industry could not be restricted to Puebla; therefore, unlike the Texas Law of 1830, there was no clause limiting the use of the funds to States in which industries presently existed. Preference was not given to the artisans, nor were government officials excluded.

⁴¹ Alamán, Memoria (1830); in Obras, IX, p. 206.

for as has been indicated, they constituted the principal enthusiasts of the Banco and industrialization.

The artisan industry of Puebla had about six thousand looms in 1830, each employing about five people in the processing of raw cotton into finished goods.⁴² A scarcity of mechanical de-seeding equipment causes an inflated vision of such figures, and of the industry as a whole. This tended to triple transportation costs, since only one third of the bulk cotton could be used, and vastly increased the number of people earning a living from these inefficient production methods. Even when such equipment was available, workers willing to brave the torrid eastern coastal regions could not be secured in sufficient quantity.⁴³

Loans from the Banco went primarily to the cotton industry. In 1837, Mexico had four factories in operation, producing cotton thread, and four more in various stages of construction. The first four "owed their existence to the money and machinery that the Banco de Avío had provided."⁴⁴ The government contribution amounted to 650,000 pesos out of a total investment of ten to twelve million, with private foreign and domestic capital sup-

⁴² Cué Cánovas, Historia Social y Económica, p. 300.

⁴³ Potash, El Banco de Avío, pp. 21f.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 219. The four factories were: La Constancia of Antuñano, the Factory of Tlalpán, and the two enterprises owned by Señor Aldazaro y Roa. Of the other four, one had received a large loan from the Banco (Alamán's at Cocolapan), and two others had received assistance from Antuñano; all of which indicates the tight-knit group that was involved.

plying the remainder.⁴⁵ Although the exact amounts are not as readily available for these two sources, Potash concludes that "it is obvious that the majority of the invested capital for the cotton industry came from private sources."⁴⁶ Both the foreign and domestic capital seems to have come from the commercial interests in Mexico.⁴⁷ The program was anti-foreign only to the extent that the goal was to replace foreign producers as suppliers of the Mexican market.

Over half of the amount loaned by the Banco during its existence went to industries that were still in operation in 1845. Of this total, the cotton industry accounted for 577,264 pesos, including a loan of 60,000 to Alamán for his factory at Cocolapán near Orizaba. Other major recipients were Esteban de Antuñano, who received over 180,000 pesos, and the Compañía Industrial de Mexico, which received twice as much as Alamán.⁴⁸

These loans were not all, nor primarily, in terms of money. One of the objectives had been the introduction of machinery. Purchase and distribution was handled by the Junta Directiva of

⁴⁵The total amount loaned by the Banco was 1,018,966 pesos, with the money going to a variety of industries. See Potash, El Banco de Avio, p. 184.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 225.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 227.

⁴⁸Ibid. See the table on page 184 of this work. The table also shows the loans to factories which never became functionally operative, and to those that ran for a time, but which had closed before 1845. It also gives a breakdown in terms of the various types of industries receiving assistance.

the Banco, under the theory that costs would be reduced by bulk purchases. Central control would also give assurance that the money would not merely be used to perpetuate the obraje system. Machinery was purchased in the United States, France, and to some extent in England.⁴⁹ Agricultural machinery formed a part of these purchases, and the Banco did not eliminate the possibility of producing the machinery in Mexico at some future date. Alamán had dabbled in the iron industry, realized its importance, and was optimistic about the future of this industry, as was Antuñano, who had great faith in the machine tool industry.⁵⁰ For the time being, the problem was given to two English mechanics for study.⁵¹

Foreign operatives were encouraged to immigrate by the Junta Directiva, in the hope that they would spread the knowledge of modern methods of production among Mexicans, as well as contributing in their own right. Alamán was later able to report that this transfer of knowledge was indeed occurring in some instances.⁵²

⁴⁹ Cué Cánovas, Historia Social y Económica, P. 302.

⁵⁰ Esteban de Antuñano, Pensamientos para la Regeneración Industrial de México (Puebla: Hospital de San Pedro, Septiembre, 1837), pp. 15, 17. This pamphlet is bound in a volume entitled Folleto sobre la industria de México, in the Sala Lafregua of the Biblioteca Nacional de México.

⁵¹ Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 92.

⁵² Alamán, Memoria (1832), Documento Numero 2; in Obras, IX, pp. 417-18..

The first shipment of machinery went to the Compañía de Tlalpán, while Alamán's Compañía Industrial de Celaya received the second. But in the second year of operation (1832), the revolutionaries seized the customs houses and port facilities at Veracruz and Tampico, delaying the flow of revenue and the reception of the foreign equipment--some machinery was left to rust on the docks! With this action there began a recurring theme that was to plague the entire history of industrialism, as all rebellious groups sought to control the government's source of revenue. Construction was halted at Antuñano's factories in Puebla, and at enterprises in Tlalpán and San Miguel Allende. Alamán suffered a personal loss when his factories in the state of Guanajuato, including the mill in Celaya, were forced to close their doors. Never one to abandon difficult causes, he soon founded another textile mill at Cocolapán in 1836.

Conditions such as these did much to negate accomplishments of the Banco during the mid-1830's. Some interest was revived by the second Bustamante government after 1836, and the agency itself lingered on until 1842. In a letter to Alamán in 1837, Antuñano reported the shipwreck of a load of equipment off the coast of Florida, and lamented the loss of time that this unfortunate incident would occasion.⁵³ The loan function of the Banco had been fulfilled in the years 1830-1832, and deliveries resumed following

⁵³ Esteban de Antuñano to Lucas Alamán, Marzo 22 de 1837.

the Texas War, barring shipwrecks, so that this aspect of the agency was no longer needed by 1842. Alamán, who had assumed a prominent position in government circles, did not object to the demise of the institution he had founded. Nor did he attempt to revive it when he returned to office the following year; rather, he saw the need for a different type of agency, and adjusted his policy to fit the need.⁵⁴

Tariff policy, stated originally as a necessary complement to industrial credit, suffered to an even greater extent from the numerous government changes and the unending raids on the customs revenues. Mora notes that army payrolls often exceeded the entire government income!⁵⁵

Proponents of the Banco erred in the initial phase of their campaign by a reliance upon prohibition rather than protection. This decision was due in part to a need to secure the support of the agriculturalists growing the raw materials. This eventually worked to the disadvantage not only of the Treasury, but the industrialists themselves, for industrial expansion soon outdistanced local sources of supply. An additional reason, according to Potash, was the mistaken impression that "it was easier to gain compliance to an absolute prohibition than to a system of import duties; but experience did not justify the theory,"⁵⁶ as

⁵⁴He organized the Dirección to fulfill many of the other functions of the Banco, but loans were not included in the program

⁵⁵José María Luís Mora, Obras Sueltas (2. ed. México: Editorial Porrúa, S.A., 1963), p. 108.

contraband continued to be a seemingly insoluble problem.

A more equitable solution would have been to allow raw cotton to enter according to some type of sliding scale that would guarantee the sale of the local crop while also assuring manufactures access to the cotton they needed. The consumer would have been a subsidiary beneficiary under such a plan, for the scarcity of cotton increased production costs. Textile goods produced by the factories sold for one-third less than comparable products made by the artisans as it was,⁵⁷ making the industrial experiment a success from this standpoint. While imported goods undoubtedly could have sold for even less (and did as contraband material), the introduction of the factory system involved only a relative handicap to the consumer. Potash concluded his analysis by asking critics:

But what alternative was left? The mines could not absorb the surplus of workers in the cities; nor was there the possibility of a mass migration to the tropical regions to cultivate articles for export.

Prohibition introduced a further handicap to industrialism, in the form of a psychological barrier,[?] which led to a dependence upon protection. Relying on tariff prohibitions as a crutch, initiative was stifled as industrialists came to exhibit the characteristics of an aristocratic, selfish pressure group, thus

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 240f.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 242. Attempts to increase cotton production for the textile industry were hampered by this inability to get workers for the eastern regions on the coast.

living up to the accusations made by liberal critics. When a rumor appeared to forecast the abandonment of prohibition, the owners rose to protest, asserting that they needed more time.⁵⁹

A government bureaucracy unable to administer a simple prohibition would hardly appear competent to handle a more complicated system; but there additional factors for consideration. Fewer groups would be injured by the latter system, and it was the antipathy of various interest groups that was the major impediment to effective enforcement of the existing laws. In view of the admitted inability of the fledgling industry to meet the textile needs of the nation, a situation existed which was comparable to the colonial era of the Hapsburgs, with the inefficiencies of the fleet system making contraband virtually mandatory.

Industrialists might argue that it was contraband that was preventing their development, and hence creating a deficiency in supplying the local market. Prohibition, however, clearly constituted an unrealistic policy, and, though perhaps unconsciously, was also a selfish policy, one which demanded that the entire sacrifice be borne by the consumer and the government Treasury while the industry was building.

⁵⁹Ibid. This referred to textile goods. With regard to raw cotton, the industrial owners were leading the movement to lift the ban. See below, Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

INDUSTRY AND AN INTEGRATED THEORY OF DEVELOPMENT, 1830-32

While not immune to the fascination that machinery often gave to entrepreneurs, Lucás Alamán refrained from an overenthusiastic attachment to material progress. "Each advance in machinery," he lamented in 1844, "has provoked a revolution, and has contributed more and more to concentrate industry in fewer hands, establishing a greater inequality at the same time that it proclaimed equality before the law."¹ No one has ever accused him of being a philistine, and his economic society was always subordinate to loftier ends. The Memorias of 1823 and 1825 show how important mining was in his early economic thought. Manufacturing assumed this role in the Memorias of 1830-1832. By the amount of space devoted to economics, one can plainly see that it occupied but a portion of his attention. A majority of the report of 1830 is devoted to the civil and political disruptions that had plagued the country. Numerous references to the effects of political instability are injected throughout its pages. Stability was a prime requisite for social, political, and economic development.

In the previous chapter we saw that political instability hampered the effectiveness of the Banco de Avío. Although Alamán believed that industry and commerce prosper best under tranquil

¹Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 509.

conditions, agriculture needed this stability even more. Perhaps he was attempting to arouse the interest of the influential hacendados when he told the Congress in 1830 that:

Agriculture, more than anything else, needs tranquil and safe times in order to prosper, because all of its operations, being gradual, can only be undertaken when there is the confidence necessary to risk capital in them; the lack of this is a powerful deterrent to its progress.²

At the conclusion of the report, he systematically stated his political priorities. Indicating clearly that order superseded personal liberty, he responded to the thrust of the Liberal argument:

Without security of person and property, there is no society; without a national representation formed by a free but ordered election of citizens, there is no liberty; without a public force organized in a manner which guarantees order while not jeopardizing the union, there is no Nation. These principles are not peculiar to the systems we have adopted; they are the elements of all systems whatever they may be, and without them no regular form of government can exist.³

He reiterated this belief two years later, when he told the Congress that "Tranquility and Order are the two elements most necessary for the prosperity of Nations; without them political institutions can not be consolidated, nor can crafts, commerce, or industry flourish."⁴ Introducing this Memoria, he had stated the apparent success of this philosophy in glowing terms.⁵

²Lucás Alamán, Memoria (1830), in Obras, IX, p. 203.

³Ibid., p. 230.

⁴Lucás Alamán, Memoria (1832), in Obras, IX, p. 347.

⁵Ibid., p. 341.

Appearances are often deceptive, and the successes which were enumerated in 1832 were soon forgotten as the government of Bustamante toppled before the year was ended. The philosophy enunciated by Alamán as spokesman for the administration retained its relevance nevertheless. The positivistic emphasis is reflected in the doctrine as presented by Alamán, and the maxim of "ordered progress" was later adopted by the Díaz regime. Positivist analogies may be more apparent than real, however, for the Díaz government was far more secular in tone, amalgamating positivistic strains in both the Liberal and Conservative parties. This represents a vital difference in any comparison with Alamán. A desire for stability, in the face of the events of 1828-1830, is to be expected from one who was, after all, a member of the privileged class in Mexican society. Moreover, it mirrors the response of conservatives generally to the doctrines of the eighteenth century and the concrete expression of these ideas in the French Revolutionary Era. Edmund Burke, from whom Alamán drew heavily for political ideas,⁶ and Joseph de Maistre, the Continental conservative, reacted with similar, if not greater, expressions of dismay at the lack of order in the so-called advancement of society. But Alamán was also reacting to the separation which afflicted the Mexican federal system, most noticeable in the Western rebellion of 1824 in the state of Jalisco.⁷

⁶Hale, "Alamán, Antuñano y Liberalismo," 229f.

⁷For his viewpoints, see Lucás Alamán, Discursos pronun-

His concern for order more closely resembled that expressed by Count Claude Henri de Saint-Simon. In a recent article, Walter Simon refers to the Frenchman as a transitional figure, one who was able to see beyond the Enlightenment, but was not able to construct a coherent alternative to the ancien regime.⁸ Lacking a convincing substitute, Saint-Simon made an advancement over the liberal philosophes, who merely destroyed the old regime without giving adequate consideration to a replacement.⁹ Alamán leveled the same charge at his liberal adversaries:

This has been the evil, not only in our Republic, but in all those which have been formed in the Spanish American countries: in all these the ancient system that ruled them has been disorganized and a new one established, but without regularizing these changes in the various branches of the administration so that they conform to the overall fundamental law Constitution that they have adopted, and, lacking this, it is impossible to form a substantive government.¹⁰

⁸Walter M. Simon, "History for Utopia: Saint-Simon and the Idea of Progress," Journal of the History of Ideas, XVII (June, 1956), 311-331.

⁹Worcester and Schaeffer, Growth and Culture of Latin America, p. 283; and Simon, "History for Utopia," 312.

¹⁰Lucás Alamán, Examen de la Organización General de la Administración Pública (February 8, 1838); in Obras, XI, pp. 373f. New revolutions, he added, "have always found it more convenient to write new constitutions than to organize effective Governments." (p. 374). In his definition of a constitution he incorporated these thoughts: "a nation has a constitution when it consists, not in being written, but in being rooted in the customs and opinions of all." Disertaciones, I; in Obras, VI, p. 144. De Maistre expressed a similar disregard for the sanctity of a written constitution, preferring an institutional expression of the general will. "Perhaps the greatest folly of a century of follies the eighteenth century was to believe that fundamental laws could be written a priori, whereas they are obviously the work of a power above men, and the very act of writing them down

As an historian, Saint-Simon receives rebuke for his use of generalization in his construction of a "scientific history".¹¹

María del Carmen Velásquez hurls a similar charge against Alamán's Historia de Mexico.¹² Both "historians" are accused of using their histories as vehicles for philosophical expression.

"Positive philosophy as presented by Saint-Simon, moreover, was programmatic in its own behalf," according to Walter Simon.

"Positivism was bound up with a specific type of social organization which he called industrial."¹³ Emphasis upon manufacturing in the philosophy of Saint-Simon makes the parallel all the more enticing, but also more deceptive. The French Utopian was a determinist, who viewed the industrial society as an inevitable progression, and wished to intervene to increase the tempo of the process, which he termed "'following the general tendency of a society and directing it'".¹⁴ This statement has had definite appeal to modern Marxists.

later, is the surest sign that their real force has gone." Joseph de Maistre, "Essay on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions," in The Works of Joseph de Maistre, ed. Jack Lively (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 152.

¹¹ Simon, "History for Utopia," 316.

¹² María del Carmen Velásquez, "Lucás Alamán, historiador de México," in Estudios, ed. Zavala, p. 394.

¹³ Simon, "History for Utopia," 316.

¹⁴ Ibid., 322; from Saint-Simon, Oeuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin (Paris, 1865-78), vol. XXII, p. 224.

Alamán never read an inevitability into the industrial process. On the contrary, he felt that Mexico could remain agriculturally oriented indefinitely unless something were done to alter the trend, and was completely cognizant of the magnitude of the task. Industry was necessary for economic independence, and inevitable if that were the goal, but such self-sufficiency did not seem possible to many Mexicans, or even desirable, and hardly inevitable. For Alamán, the task of industrialization involved more than the mere direction of a general tendency; it required a re-evaluation of national purpose.¹⁵

When Alamán assessed the state of the nation in 1830, he listed as the branches constituting the essential "prosperidad general" as "population, agriculture, ilustración, manufacturing industry, and commerce."¹⁶ Mining is conspicuously absent. Its importance was not neglected, but it was relegated to earning foreign exchange along with agriculture,¹⁷ and he later stated that this branch was the most solid at the time.

Stability was essential for the implementation of his immigration policies. Alamán wrote an editorial for the periodical

¹⁵Alamán, Memoria (1823); in Obras, IX, p. 100. Our manufactured products, he remarked, "cannot enter into competition with the products of the perfected crafts of Europe;" in addition, see Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 208.

¹⁶Alamán, Memoria (1830); in Obras, IX, p. 200.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 204, 207.

El Sol in October, 1830, relating the debilitating effect of the recent civil war. In another article, a writer, who may have been Alamán himself,¹⁸ expressing similar ideas, told of the effects of an efficient immigration policy:

The public will see honest occupations born that will form the well-being of men at the same time that they banish idleness; this will stimulate marriages and these will increase the population.¹⁹

Alamán desired alterations in the strict Spanish Imperial policies which had surrounded admittance into her kingdoms with sharp legal restrictions. He stressed the need for foreign operatives and the role of colonization in the protection of the northern frontiers, but he did not approach the degree of enthusiasm attributed to the Argentine statesman Juan Bautista Alberdi. Concerning the colonization of the northern territories, he lamented in 1830 that "it has advanced little, if at all, as the few proposals made up to this time have had no effect."²⁰ To correct this deficiency, he had proposed the Texas Law of 1830.

For industrial development, Alamán viewed population more in terms of quality than quantity, realizing that Mexico had an adequate supply of unskilled labor. In a speech to Congress in 1825, he told the deputies: "The celebrated Smith says that there is no

¹⁸Luís Islas García simply relates the quotation to "un periodista", without identifying his source. García, "Don Lucas Alamán en la vida económica de México," Comercio Mexicana, No. 15 (Junio de 1953), 31.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Alamán, Memoria (1830); in Obras, IX, pp. 201f.

merchandise more difficult to obtain and more costly to transfer than one man from his native country to another." "Like the classical authors," he concluded, "I feel that only the promise of comfort can attract foreigners."²¹ Urging that restrictions be lifted to allow foreign investment, he added: "Smith says that when the majority of men are confident of good-fortune rather than finding little probability of future earnings, then they will invest without the necessity of coaxing."²²

By 1830, he placed greater emphasis upon the men themselves than their investments, and to promote this end the legislature had to do more than lift investment restrictions. Congressional action could create the proper atmosphere for immigrants:

The object of the legislator should be to incline the prospective immigrants to settle in the country by means of well-calculated measures, in order that they may form other Mexican families.²³

There are many ideas contained in this statement. In this context it was a rebuke to the peninsulares of the colonial period, who, unlike his father, had not considered themselves a part of their adopted land. But more important, it reflected a hope that future immigrants would mix with the native population and thus diffuse their knowledge, ability, and ambition. Although he failed to amplify this statement with an explanation of just what

²¹Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 167.

²²Ibid., p. 164.

²³Alamán, Memoria (1830); in Obras, IX, p. 202.

these "well-calculated measures" would entail, stability in government can be taken as a prime requisite.

Technicians were needed to install the equipment. In 1832 he listed the six Frenchmen who had installed the machinery that had been purchased by the textile factory in Querétaro. He carefully explained that these technicians trained Mexican apprentices to carry-on the operations after their contracts had expired.²⁴ Examples such as this had to be duplicated if industrialization were to become a successful entity. "In vain have the Directors accelerated the introduction of machines into the Republic," he cautioned, "if the artisans necessary to teach their work and the various operations that each one demands, are not disposed to come along with them."²⁵ They could not be expected to immigrate if the stability of the country were constantly in doubt. His statement also exhibits an intention to develop a class of skilled artisans among the Mexican people, in order to reduce the dependence upon foreigners for the ownership and operation of Mexico's industrial plant. The lack of such a commitment by foreign interlopers of the later nineteenth century laid the grounds for a major criticism of the economic nationalists of the twentieth century.

²⁴Alamán, Memoria (1832); Documento 2; in Obras, IX, p. 417.

²⁵Ibid.

Further evidence of progress in this area was the arrival of Thomas McCormick of Philadelphia and eight associates, who accompanied a shipment of cotton machinery. The men were contracted for three years "with the same objectives as the Directors have presented with respect to those from France." McCormick was busy surveying the cotton factories in the states of Guanajuato, Michoacán, Puebla, and Tlaxcala as an advisor.²⁶ The extent to which these early successes were repeated is a matter of speculation, especially after the fall of the Bustamante government. The attempt is significant nevertheless, especially the recognition that assistance would be needed to transform the obraje workers into factory hands.

One of the results which Alamán hoped would be passed on by the foreign operatives was the institution of bancos de ahorro, or savings-banks, which, he said, "have had such good effects in other nations."²⁷ Such banks were characteristic of the early trade-union movement in England, especially when they were disguised as Friendly Societies, and savings-banks were also common among the working groups in France. It was from the latter that the introduction into Mexico was expected. Alamán's enthusiasm for this institution is seen in his revival of the project with renewed vigor in the 1840's. For the moment, however, he adhered

²⁶Ibid., pp. 417f.

²⁷Alamán, Memoria (1830); in Obras, IX, p. 201.

to the liberal doctrine of work and thrift when he wrote of the Banks in 1830:

This will be the principle to inspire in them [the workers] an inclination for work, making them perceive the advantages that result from having something to count on for their old age, their sicknesses, and other misfortunes of life.²⁸

The results of the banks themselves will be considered in another context, but for the present one should bear in mind the encouragement to private enterprise and individual initiative contained in such a project. Alamán is at times accused of a hostility toward methods of self-help, but these banks could hardly be classified as social welfare.

Estevan de Antuñano, in a pamphlet supporting protectionism in 1835, indicated how this policy would also provide an inducement to population increase. Local capital would have more areas in which to invest under a prohibitive system, since the variety of products would increase. Internal migration would take place as workers moved to the industrial centers, and, as these areas prospered, the population would multiply even more rapidly.²⁹

He was no doubt interpreting trends that he had observed in the Midlands of England, while receiving his education in Great Britain.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Puebla, Observaciones contra la libertad de Comercio Exterior, ó sea Contestación al Diario del Gobierno Federal (Puebla, 25 de Marzo de 1835), p. 11. This is a crude form of the modern econometric theory which posits built-in factors of development to be found within an established industrial economy.

The Compañía Patriótica Mexicana para el Fomento de la Industria Nacional was also founded in 1830. It was one of the fourteen companies that he listed in 1832, accompanied by his views of the role which these companies would perform in the development of the Mexican nation.³⁰ While Alamán was not a member of the Compañía Patriótica Mexicana, the comment of Luís Islas García that the name of this organization "reveals the romantic mixture of nationalism and economics that animated its founders" could apply as readily to Alamán's whole conception of industrialization.³¹

Societies such as these were envisioned by Alamán from the inception of his industrial dreams. He took a broad view of the term "company". Besides regular business functions and financial transactions, he wanted them to serve as places "where each individual can combine his information with that of others, and his own resources with those of others, that they might be able to form a compact and vigorous body to overcome the difficulties that regularly touch upon them in the beginnings of each enterprise."³² Similarities to the Spanish Economic Societies of the Enlightenment, and to salon societies in general are unmistakable, thus it is not surprising that he used the terms "company" and "society" interchangeably.³³

³⁰ Alamán, Memoria (1832), Documento 2; in Obras, IX, pp. 412f.

³¹ Islas García, "Alamán en la vida económica," 30.

³² Alamán, Memoria (1832), Documento 2; in Obras, IX, p. 411.

Private enterprise was viewed in a different light than the tradition of business commonly held. One can see that industry would be more beneficent than competitive under such a system, as information would be exchanged gratuitously, and added to the fears of those who objected to the involvement of the clergy. Companies would help each other to overcome the dearth of individual capital resources, which was then his primary concern. Alamán later expanded the idea to include industry-wide manufacturing associations as well as municipal and regional groupings. This intention is clear even in the skeleton outlined in the 1832 report.

The paternalistic attitude toward industry that such "companies" would impose upon Mexican economic society was a marked departure from the liberal spirit of individual initiative that Alamán was known to favor in the abstract. It also reveals the paternalism characteristic of much of his thinking, a fact probably influenced by Spanish Bourbonism and his own aristocratic background. The lack of sufficient capital precluded effective entrepreneurial competition. Finally, since Alamán was interested in the industrial development of the nation, he was not immune to combining the resources and talents of the individuals concerned. This does not mean that he deliberately intended to subordinate the personal gain of individuals to the progress of the nation. He realized that Mexico's inferior industrial position not only necessitated co-ordinated effort, but would actually

be hindered by an excess of individual competition. Without such a unified effort, no one would reap any financial reward.

Despite the logical explanations in the background of Hispanic economics and in Alamán himself, or perhaps because of such similarities, such a "society" could not breed suspicion among his antagonists. The similarities to colonial institutions were all too familiar to Mexicans intent upon destroying corporate privilege and entrenched vested interest. Rather than viewing this type of "company" as an extension of the economic societies of Spain, and to some extent the New World,³³ critics preferred to see in them a revival of the Consulado principle, with the protective system that accompanied it forming a new fuero. Thus Alamán was accused of erecting a "colonialism with industry", and a new hierarchical framework in which a new group had been added.³⁴

Although such criticism was not unfounded, it was misdirected. The implication is always that a hierarchical system was inherently sinister, rigid, and parasitical. Some of this vituperation, by recent critics, is an outgrowth of the fervor of the Revolution of 1910, in which any interest of the Díaz oligarchy is suspect, especially one which looks with favor upon the Church.³⁵

³³See Robert J. Shafer, The Economic Societies in the Spanish World, 1763-1821 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1958).

³⁴Reyes Heróles, El Liberalismo Mexicano, II, p. 168.

³⁵E.G., Agustín Cúe Cánovas, Historia Social y Económica, p. 304; and Luis Chavez Orozco, "Lucas Alamán, una faceta," 161-162, 176.

Predecessors of these modern opponents of privilege, that is, the liberal critics of Alamán, were aroused more by anti-colonial than anti-aristocratic sentiments; but in this case the two groups were seen as one and the same. In addition, they had a personal vendetta against corporate institutions, which modern Mexican writers cannot consistently uphold.

Religious beliefs preconditioned an acceptance of hierarchical authority in society, and contrarily, inspired the antipathy toward religion among opponents of a structured society. Alamán, in this sense, paralleled the European conservatism of De Maistre, who propounded a type of historical utilitarianism:

The best government for each nation is that which, in the territory occupied by that nation, is capable of producing the greatest possible amount of happiness and strength for the greatest possible number of men, during the longest possible time.³⁶

Saint-Simon also had elite views of society. He wanted a society dominated by all productive elements of society: scientists, artists, and intellectuals, as well as businessmen and industrialists per se.³⁷ Alamán reflected this vein of thinking to a greater extent than that of De Maistre, for he too was opposed to the non-productive elements in society, as demonstrated by the derogatory remarks that he directed at Mexican creoles in the Disertaciones and the Historis de Mexico.³⁸ Moreover, his

³⁶De Maistre, "Study on Sovereignty," in Works, p. 126.

³⁷Simon, "History for Utopia," 320.

³⁸Creoles, he said, were "generally lazy and negligent"

leadership group offered a theoretical flexibility uncommon in most conservative theories.

This flexibility can be seen in his attitude toward education. The scientific and empirical stress offers an imposing contrast to the classical orientation of most conservative educational systems. Because Alamán had graduated from a technical institute rather than from the University of Mexico, the difference in emphasis can be attributed to his own training and interests. In the Cortes he had favored extending the technical schools to include mining institutes in Guanajuato and Zacatecas, and called for a school of commerce in Mexico City. He was clearly an adherent of curriculum modernization, but was not thorough in his program.

The discrepancies appear in his proposals for university reform and the resultant criticism of the plan by José Mora. Alamán wanted to re-organize the university into definite schools of instruction. He had broached this subject at the sessions of the Cortes, but here his concern was primarily directed at the establishment of separate institutes. University reform first appeared in the Memoria of 1825. During the Bustamante government,

quick to begin and rarely prepared with the means to execute the task ... prodigal in times of good fortune, while suffering in times of adversity." Historia de México (5 vols., México: J.M. Lara, 1849-52), I, p. 11. See also Ibid., V, p. 921, where he criticized the wealthy class that only wished to reap the benefits of society without earning them, and who now looked to revolution as the means of attaining them; and Historia de México, in Obras, V, p. 843. He felt there was a greater loyalty exhibited to the state under Spanish rule. See Ibid., I, p. 90.

he was given the opportunity to realize his plans. The goal, as stated in the report, was to "eliminate the superfluous and establish the necessary,"³⁹ by forming colegios within the university. Theology was categorized as ecclesiastical science, and the Seminario Conciliar was to be devoted to its study; the Colegio de San Ildefonso to law, political science, economics, classical literature; the Colegio de Minería to physical science and mathematics; San Juan de Letrán to medicine; and a new college to train students in the skilled trades, which he felt would serve as an inherent stimulus to change.⁴⁰ Re-organization along these lines did not approach the departmentalization of modern universities, but was an impressive advancement for its time.

The Liberals instituted a similar reform during the administration of Valentín Gómez Farías, but then the university structure was abandoned and closed as the only means of eliminating clerical influence. The University of Mexico had nearly three hundred years of traditional clericalism which would be hard to erase. Yet the new educational plans were similar; so similar in fact that Moisés González Navarro finds students of the topic unable to agree as to whether Alamán or Mora originated the plan.⁴¹

³⁹Alamán, Documentos Diversos; in Obras, IX, p. 233.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 380.

⁴¹González Navarro, El Pensamiento Político de Lucas Alamán, p. 36.

Mora wryly commented that Alamán should approve of his plan:

"He can do no less than approve it, since in his Defensa he does not conceal his pretensions to be the author of its bases."⁴² The critical differences, however, emerged over the role of the clergy in education. Mora praised Alamán for his "suppression of the exorbitant multitude of theology courses."⁴³ Alamán's attempt to classify theology as "ecclesiastical science" was a bit pretentious and perhaps anticipated the expected criticism. Liberals felt that it had no place in the curriculum at all. Here we can see that Alamán's empirical enthusiasm had limitations and that his scientific interests were tempered by other factors.

One of these factors was certainly religious. Conservatives and Liberals both found themselves inevitably drawn to this issue. Charles Hale, attempting to define Liberalism in its Mexican context and to establish a basis of difference between it and Conservatism, finds that he must turn to the Church for the critical point of division.⁴⁴ Mexican liberalism drew heavily upon utilitarianism, and one of the major tenets of this philosophy was its search for a secular ethics. Besides the obvious fact that Mexican Liberals found the Church obstructing many of their proposals in economic, social, and political life, there was also a basic

⁴²Mora, Obras Sueltas, I, p. CCXXIV.

⁴³Ibid., I, p. CXCIV.

⁴⁴Charles A. Hale, "José María Luis Mora and the Structure of Mexican Liberalism" Hispanic American Historical Review, XLV (1965), 215.

clash of ideology. Extending education was a major goal of Liberalism, so it is natural that the clerical issue would arise early and often, for the Mexican educational system, in its formal and informal aspects, was dominated by the Catholic Church. No less surprising is the fact that Alamán would include in his proposals for the proper training of worthy citizens the religious principles that he valued so highly.

When Alamán spoke of the "ilustración general", it had a moral overtone. When he called it "one of the most powerful means of prosperity for a nation", he was speaking with a vision that looked beyond the economic connotations that generally flow from such a statement.⁴⁵ The deeper meaning of such a suggestion is sometimes lost because of the context in which it was presented. As government minister relating the state of the nation, his statements are necessarily surrounded by concrete economic examples. Perhaps moral education defies accurate explanation, or he may have felt it politically expedient to refrain from elaborating on such a delicate topic; but the other possibility is that the meaning of "moral education" was so obvious to a Catholic Mexico as to require no further explanation from Lucas Alamán.

Because Alamán was raising a new issue in his proposals for scientific education, his argument naturally assumed a slanted emphasis. Absent from the curriculum, scientific education required greater stress than did the already familiar religious

⁴⁵Alamán, Memoria (1830); in Obras, IX, p. 202.

training. The Memoria of 1830 reports the purchase of "a precious collection of books", and chemistry and physics equipment from France, by the government of the State of Guanajuato, for its colegio. "It is hoped," the report continued, "that this example will be imitated elsewhere, and that by this means the knowledge indispensable for the advancement of our industry will be propagated, following completely a plan of instruction most consistent with the state of progress in which the sciences find themselves."⁴⁶

In this statement, Alamán revealed another tendency which aroused suspicion among his contemporaries. He worked with a federal system at times, but was never comfortable with it. In education perhaps more than in other segments of his thought, he felt that a "plan" was necessary. After reading all of the Memorias, one is struck by the dissatisfaction expressed throughout their pages with the results of a decentralized system. Promoting education by exhortation and by the recital of promising examples was a frustrating experience, and Alamán was disenchanted over the results.

As Director of the Banco, he tried to implant a national influence on education, but in an informal way. In the early 1820's he had given the suggestion of cultural dissemination by the city governments,⁴⁷ and the "companies" represent another informal attempt at educational influence. The Banco contributed to this ef-

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 202-03.

⁴⁷See above, pages 41-42.

sort through the publication of pamphlets, numbering eighty-eight titles in 1832, and collectively entitled the Colección de Memorias instructivas de agricultura, artes y manufacturas. These included translations of "some elementary works about these subjects and other unedited productions of the various correspondents of the Banco, whose publication appeared useful."⁴⁸ Alamán probably authored some of these pamphlets or at least served as one of the translators.

The distribution of technical information became explicit in the 1840's when its centralist features were more pronounced. In the 1830's, however, the proclivity for central control and direction was already evident. The theory of the Banco de Avío virtually demanded it in order to function at maximum efficiency. All areas of policy had to respond in unison, and only central direction could assure this unity of purpose. Financial aid and protective legislation were intended to boost industrial development, and industrialization itself was only a part of the plan to raise Mexico to a competitive level among the family of nations. Opponents were therefore quite correct in assuming that the Banco

⁴⁸ Alamán, Memoria (1832), Documento 2; in Obras, IX, p. 423. Some of the titles included the following: "Memoria sobre el insecto conocido como grana o cochinilla", "Tratado de la cría de gusanos de seda", "Cartilla para colmeneros", "Multiplicación de abejas", "Descripción del árbol de la cera", "Tratado sobre el ganado lanar", and "Colección de artículos sobre agricultura y artes".

de Avío was not as limited in scope as it first appeared. Alamán and his backers were probably not aware of the total implications of directed industrial growth at this stage either.

The debate over the benefits of the Banco and the direction upon which it rested continued to rage even after the fall of the Bustamante government. In fact, the arguments of each side are presented in a far more coherent fashion in various pamphlets issued during the 1830's than during Alamán's term of office. The Memorias failed to give a structured analysis of the problem. In 1835 two pamphlets appeared, one in Mexico City by the Editors of the Diario de Gobierno, and in reply, another in Puebla probably written by Esteban de Antuñano.⁴⁹

The Reflecciones of the Liberal journal Diario de Gobierno responded to the protective argument by "combating the apparent reasons upon which it is founded, making evident the inconveniences that will result to the nation."⁵⁰ Referring venerably to the "mas celebres economistas modernos", they correctly interpret free-trade as a world-wide system, and therefore deny the validity of any argument purporting to show that local circumstances can diminish its veracity:

What are these circumstances so particular that the irresistible doctrines and demonstrations of the economists are true

⁴⁹Mexico, Editores del "Diario de Gobierno", Reflecciones sobre la prohibición de hilazas y mantas extranjeras de algodón (México: Abril 6 de 1835); Puebla, Observaciones (1835). The ideas expressed in this work reflect his other writings.

⁵⁰Mexico, Reflecciones, p. 1.

only in Europe or in the United States del Norte, while upon arriving on our shores and entering freely, they nevertheless have lost their force! . . . To say that the particular circumstances of a country destroy the politico-economic truths of a country is the same as saying that what is the truth in Paris can be a lie in Peking, and that what is true in London is not so in Puebla or Mexico. . . .⁵¹

Pointing to a more vulnerable issue, the authors ask why the nation should deny itself the enjoyment of foreign manufactures for the benefits of a small number of "artisans" that seem to be, and in effect are injured.⁵²

Antuñano, in his Observaciones, presented the position of the protectionists. He begins by admitting many of the claims of free-trade adherents:

It is true that free-trade lowers the cost of imported goods, and by diversifying the means of enjoyment augments the factitious necessities of the people; and also gives a major extension to consumers, to whom it yields the benefits of industry. . . .⁵³

He adds, however, that this extension is neither stable nor uniform, and that native industry does not enjoy the benefits of this development. In the long run, mass circulation is diminished and the change becomes merely that of money between two groups of merchants. Meanwhile, the balance of payments, "the only capacity for maintaining the vigor and free-flow of commerce, comes, at last, to disappear."⁵⁴ The result of the lack of development

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 1-2.

⁵²Ibid., p. 3.

⁵³Puebla, Observaciones, p. 7.

⁵⁴Ibid.

in the local economy and the declining value of local capital, is a lack of purchasing power, regardless of how low foreign goods come to be priced.

While Liberals resort to an abstract theory of world-wide free-trade, something that has never been tested practice, Antuñano contends that his proposals are "not purely a theory or vain conjecture". Quite the contrary:

It has already happened among us, when, because of the interruptions of commerce from the peninsula as a result of the war with England [Napoleonic Wars], commerce was momentarily obstructed. It was then that the factories of Puebla received such an impulse that exquisite silk products came to be perfected . . . and those of cotton were diversified and perfected to an astonishing degree.⁵⁵

Reaching the central point of his thesis, he asked: if such development came from a momentary paralysis of imports, notwithstanding the zeal of the authorities to extinguish such activities as injurious to peninsular commerce, what would be the result if the government were actually to support industry? "One does not have to bow to brilliant theories when experience has passed a judgement against it which is beyond appeal."⁵⁶

Mexico became politically independent but has remained economically subservient, he argued. Antuñana even goes so far as to invest free-trade and the countries propounding this doctrine with sinister motives, making it into a deliberate plot to hold nations subordinate.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Ibid., pp 10-11.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 11.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 3. The actions and words of British Minister Henry Ward tend to support this insinuation.

This is the concern for economic independence that we find throughout the writings of Alamán, Antuñano, and the other proponents of a national industry. Antuñano, in fact, was a political liberal, who accepted the political implications of Liberalism while rejecting classical economics. Industrialism was thus not the preserve of conservatives, nor was the doctrine itself conservative essentially; but the resemblances of protection to colonial policies clothed industrial ideas in an unholy dress.

It is beneficial to return to the examination of Mexican Liberalism made by Charles Hale. The affinity between liberalism and utilitarianism created a problem which Hale interprets as the focal point of the internal struggle within Mexican liberalism: the role of the State versus individual liberty. The use of the authority of the State was supported in order to destroy the barriers to liberty existent in society, and to protect individual freedom in a society lacking strong institutional safeguards. Continental liberalism valued the role of the state to a greater degree than did English liberals, because the ancien regime seemed a more formidable structure. Spain followed this tendency (in Europe this era was expressed by the Enlightened Despots, of which Charles III was a representative), and it was transmitted to Mexico by the later viceroys and most especially by intendants such as Riaño in Guanajuato. This tradition was adopted not only by conservatives, but by liberals as well; indeed, liberalism came to New Spain under this guise. "Have we not found," Hale asks,

"that the liberals of 1833, led by Dr. Mora, also turned to Bourbon traditions in their reform policies?"⁵⁸

In Europe this emphasis on the State was modified in positivism, partly in conjunction with rising nationalist fervor, until the State became identified with "society" in the organic hierarchy. Mexicans, when trying to preserve the doctrines of individual liberty and while attempting to break with the absolutist tradition, were forced to accept the Spencerian form of positivism. Because their liberalism was theoretical for such a long time without opportunity for practical application, Mexicans perhaps had an undue attachment to individual liberties. This dilemma lingered and made implementation difficult. Hale shows how this condition affected the transition to positivism, as a strong State emphasis remained present in the centralization of the Constitution of 1857 and its even more stringent application by the regime of Porfirio Díaz, in his político integral.⁵⁹

Alamán could be depicted as adhering to the Continental synthesis of liberalism and utilitarianism. The additional factor or religious conservatism must be included, however, to properly distinguish his programs from its European parallels. In such a

⁵⁸Hale, "Mora and Mexican Liberalism," 208.

⁵⁹Ibid., 218. See also the various writings of Leopoldo Zea on positivism in Mexico, its antecedents and applications; e.g., El positivismo en México (México: Ediciones Studium, 1953), and Apogeo y decadencia del positivismo en México (México: El Colegio de México, 1944).

structure the theories of Alaman and the other Mexican industrialists becomes highly plausible in their own right, and within the context of the evolution of liberalism they can claim a place. Liberal philosophy, it seems, took many divergent paths in Europe, leading, some would claim, in a direct line to the totalitarian states of the twentieth century. In Mexico it provided the ideological foundation for the power struggles of the creole upper class, and was at last converted into the bulwark for a thorough dictatorship.

CHAPTER V

THE DIRECCIÓN DE INDUSTRIA: ORGANIZATION AND PROTECTION

A Pamphlet War Over a Protective Tariff

As the Junta Directiva of the Banco de Avío lost its control over the development of manufacturing, Mexico's entrepreneurs continued the work on their own. They did not abandon their efforts to persuade the Government to re-enter the field of industrial activity. Pleas for protection constituted the major portion of their requests, but the growth of the industry, despite the obstacles, had already brought about a realization of the deficiency in the local supply of raw materials.

Estevan de Antuñano continued to produce pamphlets as well as textiles. In July, 1835, he wrote the Memoria Breve de la industria manufactura de México, in which he repeated the arguments favoring protection. He carefully explained that this would be only a temporary measure, and that Mexican industry would eventually stand on a competitive basis. In support of his position, he claimed that European countries had originally developed their industrial plants under similar protective shields, and pointed with special reference to England, which he knew best. The British, he felt, had favored certain branches of the economy in governmental policy, and then removed the supports when they felt that they could make due on their own.¹

¹Estevan de Antuñano, Memoria Breve de la industria manufac-

Comparing this situation with Mexico, he reveals the Spanish influence on Mexican thought of the early nineteenth century. He cites a translation of a work by Condorcet, in which the translator believed that if it were not for the Banco de Avío, Mexico would not have cotton machinery for at least another century. He further felt that such direction was also necessary in order to stimulate investment in countries where people did not "know the most advantageous use that can be made of their money."² In an "enlightened country" this occurred naturally; but in Mexico the emphasis had remained on land. This is why Antuñano disagreed with the arguments against protection raised by Condorcet. Freedom of investment was a good principle, but Antuñano blamed the lack of practical business experience for the inability of these "economists" with well-intentioned theories to realize the weakness of their arguments.³

Without action on behalf of industry, Mexico would remain economically dependent. A non-industrial country was viewed as economically stagnant, because an agricultural economy neglected innovation and technical improvement. Antuñano saw this as the basis of Mexico's social, economic, and even political ills. "Ignorance, Poverty, Revolution!": these are caused by a lack of honest and useful labor, and this is the result of the abandonment

tura de Mexico, 30 de Julio de 1835, pp. 10-11; in the Sala Lafra-
gura, Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico.

²Ibid., p. 10.

³Ibid., p. 11.

of the study and practice of the sciences and useful arts.⁴ In another pamphlet two years later, he attributed the higher prices of Mexican products to the lack of technical skills, rather than to the abundance of silver, as some had suggested.⁵

In the dialogue of the Pensamientos of 1837, Antuñano's fictitious adversary asked if men and machines were sufficient for industrial growth. This allowed Antuñano to present a detailed list of the needs in reply. Speaking like a liberal, he listed various obstacles that must be removed, including some which corresponded to the goals of political liberalism; but included some others of a quite different nature. They deserve special attention, since many reappear in the functions of the Dirección General de la Industria, a government agency headed by Alamán from 1842 to 1845:

1. The creation of juntas directivas de la industria.
2. Colonization of the coasts, in order to augment the number of consumers and to multiply tropical agriculture (especially cotton production-ed.).
3. Some sort of appreciation and remuneration for inventors.
4. Roads and canals, because without them it is impossible to have an economical and useful communications system.
5. The formation of statistics for population, production, and consumption, in order to know the origin of our neces-

⁴Ibid., p. 1.

⁵Antuñano, Pensamientos para la regeneración Industrial de Mexico (1837). This pamphlet has an added interest, since the arguments are developed by the use of Socratic dialogue. Agustín Cué Cánovas examines the silver export restrictions and their effect on the bi-metallic system, concluding that the currency became silver-dominated, and that the money depreciated, forcing prices up as well. See Historia Social y Económica, p. 282.

- sities and resources, and to apply opportune remedies.
6. To eliminate agiotistas [high-interest loan-sharks].
 7. Close some ports and regulate contraband severely.
 8. Reduce the number of feast days, in order to avoid losing time from the pursuits of honest and productive labor.⁶
 9. Form treaties of commerce with Spain for the importation of rural products--principally flour--from the Island of Cuba and the other Antilles.
 10. Eliminate the use of aguardiente.
 11. Establish factories for constructing instruments and for exploiting iron; because this ought to be considered the base material for all industry.
 12. Allow no textile mills closer than twenty-five leagues from the coast [to reduce the temptation to use contraband materials].
 13. The absolute prohibition of all foreign manufactures is the basis of all economic reform in Mexico.⁷

Protection was merely a means of providing technical with a field of application. It was in this area that government could play a direct role. Knowledge and study had to result from the initiative of the people, but legislation could provide inducement and protection.

The benefits to the nation and the government were far from being subsidiary. At the time, Mexico had an empty treasury, insecure credit, and a lack of prestige and potency that inhibited her in securing obedience within the country. According to Antuñano, unless Mexico made a change, "we must resign ourselves to being as colonial as those in India."⁸ Such a comparison was intended to arouse the patriotism of his readers.

⁶This was also a program of the Chilean independence leader Bernardo O'Higgins, and was relatively unsuccessful.

⁷Antuñano, Pensamientos (1837), pp. 11-13.

⁸Antuñano, Memoria Breve (1835), p. 13.

Agitation such as this, coming from cultivators as well as industrialists, brought changes in 1836 and 1837. The new government of Anastasio Bustamante established a system of comprehensive protectionism, which created a monopoly for local cotton goods in the national market. However, the cultivators received their inducement to accept the new legislation, in the form of a new law prohibiting the importation of raw cotton, passed with only one dissenting vote on August 9, 1836.⁹

These changes corresponded to the new centralist constitution of December, 1836, and marked the re-emergence of Lucas Alamán in public life, becoming a member of the Consejo de Gobierno that had been created in January, 1837. The policies of the new government reversed the trend that had been evident in the Gómez Farías administration. Alamán had few kind words to express toward this latter government. In his Defensa, written in 1833 to vindicate himself and the part he played in the first Bustamante government, he lashed out at this new "system" of the liberals; that is, "if one can call the destruction of all that exists a system."¹⁰ Its origins in the principles of the Enlightenment disturbed him most, especially its "god-less" character. To his mind, this government was

Formed from the teachings of the madness of Diderot and the sophistry that is called philosophy in the past century,

⁹Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 192. This measure was contrary to the Law of February 1, 1828, which had freed raw cotton, wool, and silk from such restrictions.

¹⁰Alamán, Defensa; in Obras, XI, p. 50.

whose works are read by no sane man except to admire and pity the excesses which the deviation of human reason conduces when leaving the path that revealed truth teaches.¹¹

In June, 1838, Alamán was asked by Minister Gorostiza to aid in the preparation of new tariff laws, in an attempt to solve the current economic crisis. This allowed him to include provisions beneficial to Mexican industry, as well as those calculated to solve the problem of foreign and domestic debt.¹²

Despite the successes of industrial interests in reversing the liberal trend with the protectionist laws of 1836 and 1837, efforts were primarily concentrated outside government circles. Hopes were high that existing protectionist legislation could be vindicated by a growth in the textile industry sufficient to meet the needs of the country. The only event that aroused concerted opinion and action in the area of influencing government policies, was the Arista Incident of 1840.

Efforts to raise production levels, while increasing steadily, continued to lag behind national industrial needs. In addition, Treasury deficiencies were creating alarm among the military officers. To solve both problems, on September 30, 1840, Minister of War, Juan Almonte, issued a permit to General Mariano Arista, commandant at Matamoros and later President, for the importation

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 50-51.

¹² He returned to the subject of the debt in 1841, in Lucas Alamán, Liquidación General de la deuda exterior de la República Mexicana hasta Diciembre de 1841; in Obras, X, pp. 321-472.

of foreign yarn and thread at that northern port. Lobbies from the Mexican industrialists and the French government sought to revoke this grant by appealing to the Poder Conservador to rule on the constitutionality. It was a violation of the March 11, 1837 law which prohibited such importations, and clearly smacked of favoritism and military arrogance. The French plenipotentiary protested because of the heavy investments by French nationals in the Mexican textile industries.¹³

Two pamphlets appeared in January, 1841, condemning the grant to Arista.¹⁴ The Representacion of the Puebla Junta Departmental was probably written by Antuñano, and noted that these "illegal" textile imports "not only renew the attack on our nascent manufacturing industry, but also constitute an attack on our agriculture," in an attempt to rally this group to the fight also.¹⁵ They were soon aroused by this call and produced a pamphlet of their own in Mexico City on February 7, 1841.¹⁶ Meanwhile, Alamán appeared as a signatory to the Exposicion, a pamphlet appearing on February 4, 1841. Contraband had already dealt a calamity to the

¹³Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 199.

¹⁴Observaciones sobre la Cuestion Suscitada con motivo de la Autorización Ccedida al General Arista (México: I. Cumplido, 1841); in Folletos sobre la Industria; and Puebla, Representación que dirigió al Exmo. Presidente de la República por el motivo que en ella se espresa (Puebla, 1841); also in Folletos.

¹⁵Puebla, Representacion (1841).

¹⁶Representacion que hace el Ayuntamiento de esta Capital . . . en defensa de la Industria Agrícola y Fabril de la República, atacada por la Orden suprema sobre introducción de efectos prohibidos; in the Sala Lafragua, Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico.

cotton industry, the authors explained; what, then, would be the result of the introduction of yarn and thread at Matamoros: "The imagination gets lost in the abyss of the evils that would follow."¹⁷

Mexican interests in favor of keeping the prohibitive law extended across the known political divisions. The pro-federalist newspaper, El Cosmopolita, which had previously published caustic remarks against Alamán and his associates, now printed columns in support of their arguments.¹⁸ Liberal federalists were no doubt more concerned with this addition to the power of the military and to their resources, than in the industrial implications of the Arista grant.

The furor raised by these objections was sufficient to persuade the Poder Conservador to rule Almonte's action a violation of the constitution and thus null. This incident set Arista and his followers, the "aristarcos", against Alamán, and the animosity of the aristarcos continued when the General later became the head of the government. They wrote polemics against Alamán, and Arista never forgave him for revoking his yarn monopoly.¹⁹

The dilemma of obtaining sufficient raw cotton while maintaining the alliance with the agriculturalists remained unsolved.

¹⁷Alamán y otros, Exposición dirigida al Congreso de la Nación por los fabricantes y cultivadores de Algodón; in Obras, X, p. 486.

¹⁸Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 200.

¹⁹Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 389.

Antuñano wrote to Alamán in 1837 that Mexico produced abundant cotton of superior quality, and that "cotton will one day by a branch of our exports, of equal or greater quantity than the silver and gold of our mines."²⁰ It was this dream that had led Antuñano to the belief that Mexico could surpass England in the production of textiles. For if England could do so well while importing the raw materials, then Mexico could not help but do better.²¹ His biographer, Miguel Quintana, tells us that Antuñano naively believed that once industry was founded, the Mexican cultivator would easily come to produce what was needed. He forgot to take into account "the indolence of the workers on the coasts where the fiber was produced, and that the growing areas were spread about many States of the Republic, isolated for lack of communications, from the region of Puebla."²²

Nevertheless, Alamán was impressed by the theories and predictions of this successful industrialist. He felt that the day when cotton production would match the full potential of the industry was farther in the future than Antuñano anticipated. Because he viewed the situation more as a political statesman and theoretician than as a businessman, he did not mind waiting for

²⁰Quoted in Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 375.

²¹Hector Hernandez, "Prólogo" a Miguel Quintana, Estevan de Antuñano, fundador de industria textile de Puebla (2 vols. México: El Boletín Bibliográfico de la Secretaria de Hacienda, 1957), I, p. XV.

²²Quintana, Antuñano, II, p. 40.

the expected developments, for when they came "the country [would] have two powerful sources of wealth: one in agriculture and the other in industry."²³

This led Alamán to misread the cries raised against the inadequacies of the Mexican textile industry. With his speculative mind, he preferred to view the problem thus: foreign goods should be introduced in order that the quality of the Mexican product may not degenerate, an argument which he could easily refute.²⁴ The improvement of quality by means of competition is certainly one of the objectives of the free enterprise system, but Alamán was refusing to recognize a glaring deficiency in Mexican supply. This blind spot also caused him to misunderstand the implications of the continued existence of contraband. An inability to assess basic production and consumption statistics detracts from the position of Alamán as an "economist". Economics, however, was not an empirical science then, so that he cannot be criticized too severely for failing to understand factors that were more obvious to a businessman such as Antuñano. Alamán's genius lay in the fact that he went beyond economics in his attempt to integrate economic and political theory, while the Puebla industrialist remained tied to contradictory political and economic positions.²⁵

²³Quoted in Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 375.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵For an explanation of the conditions, see Quintana, Antuñano, II, p. 104. Antuñano remained a political Liberal, and in 1846 tried to work his theories into the federal structure by

Alamán Begins Organizing the Industrialists

Efforts to obtain and secure governmental aid for industrialization were weakened in August, 1839, when Alamán resigned from the Consejo de Gobierno because of personal incompatibility with Nicolás Bravo. Valadés states that Santa Anna had wanted Alamán to be president in 1839, as a reward for his work on the French armistice and Peace Treaty the year before. When he refused, the post was given to Bravo, and Alamán wrote a letter to the new President denying that he had tried to undermine his position.²⁶ The intervention of Santa Anna bridged the difficulties temporarily, and the General was able to persuade Alamán to withdraw his resignation. In a letter to Alamán, Santa Anna stated that "the Consejo de Gobierno needs your enlightenment and accredited prudence."²⁷

Valadés regards the final resignation of Alamán in early 1840 as the termination of his days as a statesman, "to which he would not return until the last months of his life."²⁸ He apparently is referring to the fact that Alamán was out of high governmental circles, and no longer commanded the attention of the leaders in office. Events would soon show that he could do as much, or more, from a lesser position in the government. It was perhaps a mistake

creating bancos de avío on the state level, at the same time that Alamán was advocating a rigid hierarchical centralism.

²⁶Lucás Alamán to Nicolás Bravo, July 6, 1839; quoted in Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, pp. 378-79.

²⁷Antonio López de Santa Anna to Alamán; in Ibid., p. 380.

²⁸Ibid.

to attempt to influence policy before the substructure was organized. On the other hand, it can be doubted whether the industrialists could have organized unofficially and sustained an industrial expansion without the assistance and protection of the government. The Banco de Avío had been instituted with this factor in mind, as is shown by the secondary functions of this "financial agency". Industry needed more from the government than credit.

By 1840 the foundation of industry was at least superficially secure, and independent organization was now feasible. Alamán assumed his new position on December 2, 1842, when President Bravo, perhaps at the insistence of Santa Anna, appointed him to head the newly-created Dirección General de la Industria Nacional. In effect, this amounted to an incorporation of an organization that had been formed among private interests into the government.

At the end of 1840, Alamán had formed the Junta de Fomento de la Industria in Mexico City. Its intent was not only to promote co-operation among the industrialists, but also to fulfill the functions of the old Banco de Avío. Their organ of information was the Semenario de la Industria Nacional, in which Alamán related many of the difficulties faced by industrialism. Some of them are dull repetitions of the arguments of the early 1830's, with little modification and few new insights.²⁹ His primary concern was to avoid economic dependence, and he parrots many of the phrases in

²⁹For excerpts, see Islas García, "Lucás Alamán en la vida económica," 40.

Antuñano's Pensamientos (1837), regarding the value of scientific knowledge and the mechanical arts. He had always admired these areas of learning, but in this case his thematic construction closely parallels that of the Poblano, who was probably a part of this new junta. In his glorification of production as the index of national greatness, Alamán introduces a new reference as the source of these statements. He claims to be in agreement with Adolphe Thiers, when he said that "in our century the power of production forms the greatness of nations."³⁰

Like Thiers, Alamán grew more conservative with each political adversity that struck his country. Rather than compromise with the liberals, and effect some sort of rapprochement on the political level, Alamán turned increasingly to the formulas of the colonial Bourbon era, while Thiers sought strength and stability in republicanism. In the economic sphere, Alamán's reliance on the Spanish organizational pattern was even more disturbing. The producers and factory owners banded together in 1842 to form what Robert Potash calls a gremio industrial. He feels that it was such a gremio that President Bravo formalized as the Dirección de la Industria Nacional. More important than just the name was Potash's judgement that "the structure of the new organization followed in great measure the model of the gremio

³⁰Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, pp. 383-84. The reference to Thiers is interesting, since he represents the same ambivalence in the politics of France that Alamán exhibited in Mexico.

mineral of the colonial era."³¹

If the structure was similar, the objective was different. This was not an attempt to monopolize an industry or to restrict production. The actions of the Dirección General during its three years of existence indicated that Alamán was once again using a familiar organizational structure as a means to achieve far-sighted goals.

The Dirección and the Textile Industry

The Dirección General de Industria was operated through a junta general, of which Alamán was the president. Its listed functions bear a close resemblance to the items listed by Antuñano in his 1837 pamphlet, and should be studied with this comparison in mind. Among the functions of the Dirección were the following:

- To promote the establishment of local juntas de industria in each part of the country.
- To keep itself informed of industrial and agricultural progress in other countries, and to make proposals to the Government regarding investments in new machinery, plants, and animals from abroad.
- To promote the diffusion of technical knowledge.
- To suggest means of eliminating contraband.
- To organize industrial expositions.
- To present an annual statistical summary of industrial development.³²

These functions were intended to co-ordinate the efforts of the industrialists. To be successful, the individual entrepreneurs had to continue to show progress in their business endea-

³¹Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 205.

³²Cué Cánovas, Historia Social y Económica, p. 359.

vors. An agency such as the Direccion General could aid the companies in their development, but in order to be really effective, and especially for the theory of industrialism to become dominant, it had to work from a position of strength. In the 1840's its strength continued to reside in the textile industry, and this meant that it rested upon the shoulders of the cotton manufacturers.

Between June, 1837 and December, 1842, the Mexican cotton industry had produced 1,200,000 pieces of cloth (mantas), with an estimated value of nine and one-half million pesos. In 1842 alone the figures were one-half million pieces and three and one-half million pesos. Cotton harvests had been poor in the years just prior to 1842, totaling no more than 60, 000 to 70,000 quintales, and were serving as a brake on the industry, since the active factories already required 100,000 quintales annually. Scarcity had driven prices from sixteen or seventeen pesos per quintal in 1838, to nearly forty pesos in 1842.³³ Rising prices were resulting in a situation which Alamán feared even more: a lack of consumers.

Nevertheless, the industry struggled on. One can get an indication of the proportion of private investment by looking at a few additional statistics. By 1843 there were forty-seven textile mills in Mexico, an increase of thirty since 1840 alone.³⁴ In 1845 the number had grown to seventy-five mills, with an estimated value

³³ Figures are from Ibid., pp. 356-57.

³⁴ Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 220.

of sixteen million pesos,³⁵ while the value of the mills in 1843 had been fourteen million.³⁶ Potash lists only nine cotton factories and three woolen millas as recipients of loans from the Banco de Avío. Even these did not receive their entire capital resources from the Banco. For example, Alamán's Cocolapan had been granted a loan of 60,000 pesos by the Banco, but in 1841 its total invested capital had reached 300,000 pesos.³⁷

The progressive increases in the textile industry is shown by the rapidity of growth between 1837 and 1845, when compared to 1830-1837. By 1845 there were 113,813 spindles in operation in Mexico, compared to 8,000 just eight years earlier. Thirty-seven percent of these were located in the State of Puebla, which also had thirty percent of the mechanical looms.³⁸ This phase of mechanization did not proceed at as rapid a pace as the spindles, and in 1845 hand looms continued to outnumber mechanical ones.

Some of the individual factories were rather large enterprises. Jan Bazant has made a detailed statistical study of the textile industry, and especially of Alamán's Cocolapan and the "La Constanza of Antuñano. There were over one thousand workers at Alamán's factory, 500 tejedores (weavers), and 575 hilanderos (spinners). Antuñano had 272 and 384 respectively.³⁹ Bazant

³⁵Cué Cánovas, Historia Social y Económica, pp. 361-62.

³⁶Alamán, Exposición (1841); in Obras, X, p. 484.

³⁷Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 184; and Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 393.

³⁸Cué Cánovas, Historia Social y Económica, pp. 361-62.

³⁹Jan Bazant, "Estudio sobre la productividad de la industria

asserts that the failure of Alamán's business operations in Orizaba arose because the project was too grandiose in its objectives and too large in size.

Regarding the condition of the workers, Bazant found the salaries to be adequate, while the profits still provided a sufficient return to the investor. Goods were provided at reasonable prices, and all in all the industry "was not antiquated, but was modern enough for those times."⁴⁰

A more interesting set of figures are those which indicate the stimulation that the plant in Orizaba provided to the entire economic community. Potash shows how the Cocolapán factory had a cumulative effect on the economy, increasing the number of jobs in seemingly unrelated occupations, and most notably in the service industries. Alamán and the other industrial enthusiasts had hinted at such a development, although they had never calculated the specific effects. Their theories have been substantiated, and Potash assured his readers that the experience of Orizaba was not a quirk: "There is no reason to believe that the effects of the factory of Cocolapán upon the economy of Orizaba would not

Algodonera Mexicana en 1843-45 (Lucas Alamán y la Revolución Industrial en México)," in La Industria Nacional, 1842-1851, p. 74. Bazant bases these statistics upon the number of spindles and looms, since the actual number of workers are not available. He made estimates based on the comparable number of workers needed to run a spindle and loom in Europe. If anything, Bazant's figures would understate the number of workers in Mexico's cotton industry.

⁴⁰Ibid., 76-77.

have been repeated by other factories in other regions."⁴¹

Mechanization had brought with it a significant price reduction in cotton goods. When Potash compares the price of a manta hand-made in the colonial era and in 1835, with the price of the same article produced by machine, he finds that while the hand-made one did not vary in price, but the machine-produced cloth represented a 33% reduction for the consumer of 1843.⁴² Undoubtedly, the free importation of foreign textiles would have allowed the consumer to pay an even lower price, but it also shows that industrialization was not a complete financial burden for the consumer. In 1830 Bustamante had to make a decision: to continue the artisan system like his predecessor, Guerrero, or to modernize the industry. The third alternative of allowing foreigners to supply the market did not really exist, according to Potash, for it would have required the abandonment of thousands of persons then earning a living through the cultivation and processing of cotton:

Given the circumstances, the government elected the road of using public funds in order to stimulate the transformation of the artisan cotton industry into an industrial one, and although still needing protection, they could already offer the consumer articles as cheap as those made by artisans' methods. From this point of view, and taking into consideration the positive effects that the industry had on the increase of employees, the decision taken in the year 1830 was the correct one.⁴³

⁴¹Potash, El Banco de Avila, p. 234.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 240-41.

⁴³Ibid., p. 241.

The Continued Struggle for Protection

. . . And a Belated Victory

Events of the late 1830's and the early 1840's were also proving the soundness of the decision to seek industrialization. Unfortunately, the success or failure of the attempt depended upon more than mere economic statistics. In the political arena, the methods required to secure a firm footing for industry conflicted with liberal principles that admitted no compromise. In his desire to insure the political stability that was needed, Alamán became increasingly willing to use the "talents" and dictatorial methods of Santa Anna. Each revolt and change in government served to weaken an already shaky belief in republican and representative government. Yet it was not until 1846, following the failure of his latest attempt to implement his policies through one of Santa Anna's "republican" governments, that Alamán actually formed an opposition party and gave serious consideration to the re-institution of a monarchy.⁴⁴ The actual organization of the Conservative Party followed only in the aftermath of the horren-

⁴⁴His early flirtations with monarchy had been predicated on nationalist sentiments. In March, 1830, Alamán had considered the possibility of a monarchy under a foreign prince, if this were to be necessary to insure the support of the European powers against the imminent threats of the United States. British Minister Pakerham placed too great an importance upon this diplomatic maneuver, as he assured his government that "the monarchical party has not lost ground," and that it could be expected to grow, in view of the fears aroused by the agitation of 1828. See Rodriguez Frausto, Lucás Alamán, p. 10.

dous experience of the American invasion and the Mexican defeat. This relatively easy capitulation, which is often attributed to the political disunity of the Mexican nation, caused a reassessment among Mexican political and social thinkers. One recent writer has found in this basic philosophical re-evaluation the seeds that eventually led to the political movement known in Mexican history as La Reforma.⁴⁵

For the duration of the life of the Direccion General de Industria, the policy of protection continued to evoke conflict among the pre-1849 Liberals and Conservatives. Industrialists considered it essential to their interests, while Liberals associated it with the remnants of colonialism present in the tariffs of 1821 and 1827. The cotton manufacturers lobbied in favor of the continuation of protection and for tighter enforcement on existing legislation, and achieved some success between 1842 and 1846.

Alamán, along with other industrialists, published an Exposicion in 1841. The stress laid upon enforcement indicated that the cotton industry felt a degree of strength. Attempting to strike a responsive chord among Liberals, who held a great respect for the power of law, Alamán approached the issue of contraband as representing a lack of respect for the Mexican nation and her

⁴⁵Charles A. Hale, "The War With the United States and the Crisis in Mexican Thought," The Americas, XIV (July, 1957-April, 1958), 153-174.

laws.⁴⁶ He also removed another bulwark of the arguments of free-trade adherents by again questioning the examples of England and France. In these countries, the authors of the Exposicion claim to have observed that:

The protection and development of their own industries produced not only by the internal legislation of each country, but fortified and strengthened by stipulations in the international law: the first of these was to take care that in the treaties each nation made with another, the products of these latter nations did not coincide so as to enable them to prejudice the indigenous industry.⁴⁷

In a later pamphlet, these authors cited the specific example of France under Louis XIV, when government aid helped to end her dependence upon Holland and England for textiles.⁴⁸

At the time of the Exposicion, these industrial interests were outside government circles. When they repeated their requests two years later, the political climate had been altered and the industrialists were able to present specific proposals.

Alamán and his associates now showed a greater sophistication with the operation of tariff policy. The law that they proposed included the provision that the tariff be constantly revised and reformed to correspond to the needs of industry. Local manufacturers were to have access to all cotton produced in Mexico, and

⁴⁶ Alamán, Exposicion (1841); in Obras, X, pp. 384-85.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 483.

⁴⁸ Alamán y Junta General Directiva, Representación (1843), in La Industria Nacional, 1842-1851, p. 132.

the importation of raw cotton was to be allowed only after the price rose above eighteen pesos in Veracruz.⁴⁹ Such a policy corresponded more readily to that employed by the Spanish government to promote the cotton industry in Cataluña during the 1770's, but also resembles the regulations of the English Corn Laws.

The immediate effects of these proposals included the passage of laws which tightened import regulations,⁵⁰ but also resulted in a tariff revision on September 26, 1843. The restrictions were strengthened two years later in a decree by the Interim President José Joaquín de Herrera. Apparently importers had been evading the prohibitions on cotton thread by mixing it with linen, importing this hybrid and separating it later. General Herrera's decree made it clear that this tactic was to be given the same classification as pure cotton thread, and to be judged by the tariff of September, 1843.⁵¹

The industrialists were not satisfied with Herrera's action. Trying to enforce the prohibitions, the government was neglecting

⁴⁹ Alamán y Junta General Directiva, Representación (1843); in La industria Nacional, 1842-1851, pp. 130-31.

⁵⁰ México, Ministerio de Hacienda, Pauta de Comisos para El Comercio Exterior (México: J.M.M. Lara, 1843). This document sets up regulations for vouchers on certain types of commodities transported in internal commerce; and México, Ministerio de Hacienda, Decreto Sobre Responsabilidad de Los Empleados de Aduanas Marítimas (México: J.M. Lara, 1843). Both documents are in the Archivo General de Hacienda, Archivo General de la Nación.

⁵¹ México, Ministerio de Hacienda, Decreto, Abril 7 de 1845. Archivo de Hacienda, Archivo General de la Nación. Effective enforcement was to be yet another matter.

the principle of flexibility desired by the manufacturers, and thus failing to provide the necessary raw materials. In November, 1845, Alamán submitted another Exposición, as part of a report by a commission named to reform the tariff. He stressed the fact that the local market could not be increased so long as the price could not be reduced, and this was due to the high cost of raw cotton. In the United States, he said by way of comparison, cotton was six or seven pesos per quintal, while in Mexico it had been selling for thirty to forty: "This difference, that has been established solely by the laws, at this time present a powerful and almost irresistible stimulus to contraband."⁵²

To suppress the contraband, Alamán suggested that ships be built to patrol the coasts, and he recognized the necessity for an honest and efficient civil service. He exhibited a lack of familiarity with the role of the military in this illegal activity, however, for one of his suggestions was that military chiefs be appointed to head the frontier and coastal departments.⁵³ There was a degree of validity to this suggestion, nevertheless, since the military dependence upon tariff receipts would demand an interest in making collections as large as large as possible. Alamán was thinking of the army as a single institution, with an

⁵²Lucás Alamán, Exposición con que la Comision nombrada para la reforma del Arancel (México: Vicente Garcia Torres, 1845), p. 7; in the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada.

⁵³Ibid., p. 16.

internal discipline and loyalty which in fact it lacked.

In their attempts to secure raw cotton, Alamán and his industrial associates found their efforts far from fruitful. Their allies in the industrial endeavor, the agriculturalists, were apparently very parochial in their interests. Each department wished to grow at least enough cotton for its own factories, if it had any. Lacking adequate internal transportation facilities, this solution seemed suitable. The growth of the textile industry soon made such an arrangement totally inadequate, for it was natural that the industry would be concentrated in certain areas, such as Puebla. In 1843 Alamán reported that the cotton harvest in Coahuila had been excellent and that they were a high quality fiber: "It is very probable that this article may progress in that department, and will come to be the most productive in the republic."⁵⁴ This success had a limited value if the crop could not be moved profitably from Coahuila down to Querétaro and Guanajuato, or by sea to Veracruz and Puebla.

On February 4, 1846, Alamán wrote to Antuñano that an administration order of January 22 would allow the introduction of raw cotton under restricted terms. Unfortunately, these terms included a duty of ten pesos, so that it would sell for "no less than thirty pesos" in Mexico.⁵⁵ Three days later he informed the

⁵⁴Alamán, Memoria (1843); in Obras, X, pp. 30-31.

⁵⁵Quoted in Quintana, Antuñano, II, pp. 290-92.

Puebla industrialist that he was renewing the requests for a more equitable importation policy.⁵⁶

The additions to the policy of prohibition effected between 1842 and 1846 converted "the prohibitory tariff laws that existed into a true national policy, over the traditional political differences."⁵⁷ It is nonetheless clear that the industrialists did not attain a primary influence in the formation of tariff policy, and that the interests of the agriculturalists still maintained sufficient force to keep any reforms within the framework of their own interests. The premature supposition that agriculture and industry would develop side-by-side had been contradicted by the ensuing events. By the time that a ban on imported cotton was finally lifted by General Paredes in 1846, even this qualified victory came too late to benefit the cotton manufacturers, for Mexico was at war four months later.⁵⁸

Antuñano had been aware of this conflict of interest between the agriculturalists and industrialists only after the failure of a compatible development. It was probably a result of his deeper involvement in the political life of the nation that Alamán realized these shortcomings at a later date. But as head of the Dirección General, Alamán tried to effect a compromise between the two interests; but by the time that the ban was lifted in 1846,

⁵⁶Ibid., II, p. 290.

⁵⁷Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 299.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 216.

he expressed himself in full accord with the viewpoints of Antuñaño.⁵⁹

Other Industrial Development

While the emphasis had been concentrated on the cotton industry, other areas also received attention. A silk industry had begun under the Compañía Michoacana in 1841, led by Estevan Guenot. By 1843, it had over two thousand shareholders, representing an investment of 200,000 pesos, and had more than 1,500,000 mulberry trees, most of which were obtained from China.⁶⁰ The company had purchased machinery in France, and Guenot had gone there to learn about weaving, bringing back French artisans as well. There were additional silk companies in Veracruz, Puebla, Jalapa, and Mexico City, Querétaro, Jalisco, Aguascalientes, San Luis Potosí, and Sonora, which together formed thirty-five juntas de fomento.⁶¹

Attempts to begin industries in chinaware and glass met with mixed success. While the former got off to a good start, Alamán regrettably reported that the glass factories in Puebla, Jalapa, and Mexico City had ceased operations due to a lack of customers, which was probably the result of high prices.⁶²

⁵⁹Alamán to Antuñaño, 7 de Febrero de 1846; quoted in Quintana, Antuñaño, II, p. 290.

⁶⁰Cué Cánovas, Historia Social y Económica, p. 358.

⁶¹Alamán, Memoria (1843); in Obras, X, pp. 64-65.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 63-64.

The Banco de Avío had been instrumental in promoting a mechanized woolen industry in Querétaro, Celaya, and Tlaxcala. In 1843 the mill of Don Cayetano Rubio and Don Agustín Dasgue at Tlaxcala had 440 spindles and 12 looms, with plans for 20 additional looms.⁶³ Alamán cautioned, however, that the future of the industry was directly related to the success of the local market, since costs prohibited its exportation.⁶⁴

The paper industry was hampered by a lack of timber for pulp. Rags were used, but they were also becoming scarce, so that they were experimenting with maguey fibers. Manuel Zazaya Bermudez had returned from the United States with machinery, artisans, and information for his mill in Tisapán, near San Angel, and the Banco had financed another paper mill in Puebla.⁶⁵ The table given by Potash indicates that Alamán's own paper mill, as well as another financed by the Banco, never opened their doors.⁶⁶

In the 1843 Memoria, Alamán used the example of the paper industry to demonstrate the effects of industrial on an interdependent economy.⁶⁷ But the industry to which Alamán gave most concern after textiles was the iron industry. In 1826 his Compañía Unida de Minas had made an abortive venture into the iron business

⁶³Ibid., p. 52.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 33.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 54.

⁶⁶Potash, El Banco de Avío, p. 184.

⁶⁷Alamán, Memoria (1843); in Obras, X, p. 56.

in Durango. He had maintained a passing interest in this field but it was Antuñano who revived his concern. In 1837 the Puebla industrialist had warned:

The exploitation of iron is so necessary for the formation of national wealth, that it is impossible that any country could make great progress in its mechanical arts and in its agriculture without dedicating itself to this original wealth.⁶⁸

He called the effective development of the iron industry the "origin of the wealth of England". Although exhibiting doubts that Mexico could ever be self-sufficient in this field, he felt that an industry of some type was essential for other reasons.⁶⁹

Alamán virtually echoed his sentiments in the 1843 Memoria: "The ferrerías ought to be considered not only as a branch of industry, but as an element necessary for all others; for this branch is the one that produces the machines used by all the others."⁷⁰ Prices of the finished goods in the Mexican iron industry were still high in 1843, and Alamán feared that the businesses would fail for this reason. He felt that they needed an association to help them. The following year he was forced to report that one of the largest foundries, that of Jonacatepec, had closed due to a lack of funds necessary for the completion of its building program. This branch, he concluded, "needs a more direct protection if it is to progress."⁷¹

⁶⁸ Antuñano, Pensamientos (1837), p. 18.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

⁷⁰ Alamán, Memoria (1843); in Obras, X, p. 58.

⁷¹ Alamán, Informe presentado a la Junta General de la Industria Mexicana en la sesion de 1844; in Obras, X, p. 215.

Antuñano had warned in 1837 that war of changing foreign relations could produce further hazards, by affecting Mexico's supply of machinery from Europe and the United States.⁷² One year later he had the example of the Pastry War to support his arguments. This war also revealed the vulnerability of a Treasury dependent solely upon customs duties for its revenue. A financial system built around domestic production in agriculture and industry, admonished Antuñano, "can not be diminished by a blockade."⁷³

One stimulant proposed by Alamán was that the Government give all munitions contracts to local iron foundries. He felt that the initial costs might be high, but would be more than compensated by putting Mexico in a better defensive position, being relieved of a dependence upon imported munitions. An additional reason, implicit in such a suggestion, was that local production would encourage the army to lend its support to a nationally-fostered iron industry, and, indirectly, to industrialization in general.⁷⁴

In his report of 1845, Alamán was able to present a more promising picture of the iron industry. More foundries had been opened, although a shortage of skilled workers was hampering full

⁷²Antuñano, Pensamientos (1837), p. 18.

⁷³Estevan de Antuñano, Economía Política en México: Ideas Vagas para un nuevo plan de Hacienda pública (Puebla: Antigua en el Portal de Flores, 1838), pp. 11-12.

⁷⁴Alamán, Memoria (1843); in Obras, X, p. 63; Alamán, Informe 1844; in Obras, X, p. 215.

operation in some plants. Finished iron was selling at twelve pesos per quintal, and Alamán proudly boasted that its quality was preferable to European.⁷⁵ One problem was the amount of timber that the industry consumed. Earlier, in 1843, he had touched upon this problem, warning that if Mexico were to develop an iron industry, "the care of the forests is absolutely required, for otherwise we will soon be left without the carbon that is needed."⁷⁶ He never seems to have taken any additional action on the subject of conservation however.

In order to advertise the iron industry, and the manufacturing output of Mexico in general, Alamán acted upon another of the suggestions contained in Antuñano's Pensamientos of 1837.

In 1843, Don Lucas said:

So that the nation will know and appreciate with its own eyes the state of tis industries, and interest itself in rivalry may be established among manufacturers in the same region; there is no means more effective than public exhibitions of all the products of the mechanical arts and crafts, and manufacture.⁷⁷

Such industrial expositions could beheld annually, and the 1843 Memoria contains a draft law to govern such an institution. In 1844 he reported that the idea had been progressing well, and that the representatives of the various local juntas had brought

⁷⁵Alamán, Memoria sobre el estado de la Agricultura e Industria de la República en el año de 1845; in Obras, X, pp. 295-96.

⁷⁶Alamán, Memoria (1843); in Obras, X, p. 62.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 71-72.

displays of their products to the meeting of the Junta General. This project was continued by Alamán's successor, Mariano Gálvez, who had been Secretary during Alamán's term of office. Galvez made arrangements to send a Mexican exhibit to the London Exhibition of 1851, the great "Crystal Palace" fair. He was originally planning to select the representative goods to be sent by means of a preliminary event in Mexico City. Lacking the funds for such an exhibition, the Dirección General decided to make the choices itself, from among the products submitted to it by the manufacturers.⁷⁸

These fairs were examples of the co-ordination that Alamán desired for Mexican society as a whole. They were not to be resurrections of the medieval fairs of their Spanish descendants at Porto Bello and Veracruz, for their main purpose was not the sale of goods. Rather, they were to serve as advertisements to the populace and to other manufactures, much as modern conventions do today.

On the industrial level, he was making use of the Spanish-Mexican proclivity for associations. This cultural relationship was fought more strenuously on the political level; yet it was at this point that success would ultimately be required if the industrial juntas, or gremios, were to survive. They could not stand without political support, and it was in the political arena that Alamán was unsuccessful in the end.

⁷⁸ Invitación . . . a la espoción de los objetos de Industria que debe verificarse in Londres el 1º de Mayo de 1851.

CHAPTER VI

THE THEORY OF GRADUAL PROGRESS IN PRACTICE AND IN IDEOLOGY

The plan that the Dirección de Industria tried to implement, like its predecessor in the 1830's, was not merely fiscal in nature. Lucás Alamán applied the same broad definition of "Wealth" that had described Mexico's mineral resources, in expounding a theory of prosperity based on manufacturing. The area of governmental participation was expanded to include the stimulus to distribution as well as to the creation of the national wealth. Alamán was not content to follow the American example of government protection and stimulation to production while leaving distribution to take its "natural" course according to the laws of economic liberalism. Instead, he had specific goals that were to be advanced by the economic sector of society, guided and aided by the political sector.

Alamán found himself unable to accept the unbridled freedom of economic activity encouraged by the liberal economists. This was not the total explanation of his occasional attempts to abandon the political embodiment of the liberal philosophy, the republican form of government. He often praised this governmental system, and in 1841 described the benefits that a representative government could bring to industry:

As the representative system is none other than the intervention of the people in public affairs; as there is no better way of exercising this intervention than through an organ of their delegates, having in it no privileged classes nor other interests than that of the community at large; all

citizens being equal, all doors to public office open to all, and recognizing no other superior than the law, is it not undeniable that in all republics (and especially in ours, where the habits of a colonial education are just beginning to disappear), this is where the love of work should be developed at all costs, proportioning to all citizens the means of exercising this initiative on an equal basis among themselves, and in order to be of the most value to the nation?¹

This statement contains more than the mere perfunctory acknowledgement of the existing government. It expresses a firm commitment to the principle of representative government and equality before the law. An inherent weakness is created, of course, in the position of an ideal government, especially its perfect non-partisanship. Yet it was upon the supposition of such an ideal congress that Alamán based the operation of the Dirección and his other plans for development. This lack of awareness of the true function of the political process--to compromise differences --gave to his programs an air of political unfeasibility, making Alamán unable to listen to justifiable criticism. In his search for a non-partisan force, Alamán was following in the tradition of the Spanish monarchy, which held that the king was the final arbiter of conflicting interests. If sovereignty were to pass to the people joined together in a nation, their organ of representation must assume the role of arbiter.

¹Lucás Alamán y otros, Exposición dirigida al Congreso de la Nación por los fabricantes y cultivadores de Algodón (1841); in Obras, X, pp. 489f.

In actual practice, Alamán did not always adhere to the idea of the sovereignty of the people as far as the previous quotation might suggest. He often preferred to rely upon bodies separated from the will of the people, such as a poder conservador, to fulfill the role of arbiter. The Direccion was supposed to act in this capacity in the economic sphere.

The omniscience of the Direccion was to lie in its ability to comprehend the entire Mexican economy--the role of each sector and the effect of each branch upon the others and upon the nation as a whole. Alamán saw no invisible hand ready to guide the various sectors of the economy. Nor did the interdependence of the economy produce harmonious results automatically. Rather all the branches "have very immediate interrelations," he remarked in 1845, "and their general development in unison cannot be the work of isolated measures, but of a system well established and consistently followed in all its parts."² Governmental guidance must conform to pre-determined objectives.

This attitude expressed his rejection of natural economic laws. The organization of the national economy would be the result of empirical analysis rather than the blind functioning of any "law". Alamán neither ignored the benefits of trade, nor rejected the possibility of commerce attaining a primary role in the economy of a nation, and examined the various alternatives available in a Representacion directed to the government in 1843. Some

²Alamán, Memoria (1845); in Obras, X, p. 308.

countries, such as France and Germany, found foreign trade advantageous to their national development, but not really essential, since they could maintain sufficient internal consumption. England, however, found herself with a greater dependence upon foreign trade, which formed "the cause of its internal wealth, or at least contributed greatly to it," and must therefore seek to develop its trade as much as possible. But, he continued:

if foreign commerce impedes prosperity rather than contributing to it . . . and is beneficial only to those who sustain their industry at the expense of another countries' misery, which is the general lot of colonies as they are sacrificed to the privileged interests of the mother country³

then foreign trade becomes a villain in disguise. He was referring to the experience of New Spain under Spanish rule, but the statement was also intended to be a warning to free-trade adherents.

Mexico was seen as occupying a position more nearly resembling France or Germany, dependent upon internal resources for the germ of its development, with trade constituting a hindrance instead of being an auxiliary aid to this development. Why did Mexican imports decrease under free trade? Alamán virtually repeated the answer voiced by Antuñano in the 1830's:

The explanation is very simple. The public misery is great, and although the prices of foreign goods are lower than any that have been seen in our markets, the common people do not have the means to purchase them.⁴

³Lucas Alamán y otros, Representación (1843); in La industria nacional y el comercio exterior, 1842-1851, pp. 121-22.

⁴Ibid., p. 120. For Antuñano's statement, see above, Chapter IV, page 96.

Industrialism, however, was a "unique fountain of universal prosperity."⁵

Comparing industrial prosperity to that produced by mining, Alamán noted that this new prosperity was subject to control by men, rather than being governed by the chance discovery of precious metals, as well as being more uniform in its effects.⁶ Control could be exercised by a body such as the Dirección, and protection was one aspect of this control. Alamán continued to promote the cause of protection in private life after 1845, while his policies were championed publicly by his successor, Mariano Gálvez.⁷

A more important measure of control that the Dirección de Industria could exercise would be a lessening of the social impact of industrialism, and by preparing the Mexican people to make the necessary changes in their way of life. In 1845 Alamán predicted that industry "should be considered not only as producing public wealth, but also as a powerful means of bettering the customs of the mass of the population, promoting their well-being and dividing among them all the enjoyments of civilization."⁸ He was no

⁵Ibid., p. 119.

⁶Ibid., p. 130.

⁷See Alamán's reply to Guillermo Prieto in 1850, in Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 508. For the protectionist statements of Gálvez, see Macedo y Gálvez, Memoria de la Dirección de Colonización e Industria, 1851; in BNCE, La industria nacional y el comercio exterior, 1842-51, p. 505.

⁸Alamán, Memoria (1845); in Obras, X, p. 308.

egalitarian and certainly not socialist by inclination; yet he was acquainted with the conditions created by capitalism that had given rise to these doctrines in Europe.⁹ His own attempts to temper the harshness of the industrial process pre-empted some of these radical social doctrines, and Alamán showed as great a concern for the social impact of industrialization as he did for the statistics of economic production.

Alfonso López Aparicio attributes to Alamán the titles of economist and sociologist, approves his "clear vision" of the social problems of industrialism, and finds in his ideas germs of Catholic social policy later enunciated in Rerum Novarum.¹⁰ In addition, he asserts that many of the "alamanista social ideas" were later adopted by the beginnings of the Mexican workers' movement, "which began in the form of small mutual organizations and co-operatives."¹¹ Connections of this type were by no means direct and the similarity to Catholic social action is not surprising; nevertheless, it gives evidence that the social ideas of Alamán struck a responsive chord among the Mexican workers, a group that the liberals neglected. His own inability to present these pro-

⁹See Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 508, which gives Alamán's comments on the conditions that had provoked the social aspects of the Revolutions of 1848 in Europe. Alamán wrote this in 1851.

¹⁰López Aparicio, Alamán, Primer Economista, pp. 45f.

¹¹Ibid., p. 46.

grams within a political context that would render them acceptable to the major interests did not prevent their continued existence along the periphery of Mexican economic thought during the era of dominance of economic liberalism.

Paradoxically, Alamán's ideas for lessening the social disruptions of industrialism were pursued in accordance with, not in opposition to, his plans for economic development. Because he based his hopes for Mexican industrial development upon the expansion of the internal markets, it was not antithetical to believe that this path would lead to the uplifting of the lower classes, who must constitute the major portion of consumer growth. Alamán reported the operation of the process to Congress in 1845. Raising the living standards would improve personal dignity, he explained, while reducing disease and infant mortality, which, together with the initiative that would follow an increased sense of personal worth, would bring increases in population. He referred them to the example of Puebla, and then cited a letter from the head of the local junta de industria of Dolores Hidalgo.¹²

One means by which the workers would be able to participate in this new sense of dignidad was through personal savings. Alamán exhibited the same adherence to the spirit of thrift that motivated the self-help theories of mid-Victorians such as Samuel Smiles and Americans like Benjamin Franklin. Alamán revealed a greater

¹²Alamán, Memoria (1845); in Obras, X, pp. 232-234.

awareness of the frailty of human nature and the peculiar plight of the Mexican laborer, and sought to aid potential savers with institutional assistance as well as literary exhortation. Savings banks, variously called cajas de ahorro and bancos de ahorro, were promoted for this purpose. These banks, as mentioned previously, had French and English derivatives, but were frowned upon in England by those favorable to the philosophy of Smiles because of the affiliation with the trade unions and class consciousness.¹³

Alamán did not deliberately appropriate a weapon of any potential labor movement in Mexico. He felt that class solidarity could be harnessed as an ally and controlled for the national welfare. Although saving by individual effort would have had a minimal effect in Mexico, it was not because of this that Alamán chose a co-operative venture. Don Lucas, as we have seen, was a firm believer in the Spanish tradition of progress through group effort. Moreover, if the owners and prospective entrepreneurs of the factories were unable to secure their fortunes individually, the workers would need institutional assistance to an even greater extent.

¹³Elie Halévy, England in 1815 (A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, I), Trans. E.I. Watkin and D.A. Barker (Orig. publ. 1913, New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1961), pp. 328-30. Halévy states that the aristocratic committees of patronage formed Savings Banks to compete with the friendly societies, and refers his readers to an 1816 pamphlet and an article in the Edinburgh Review of 1815 relative to the topic. For a brilliant essay on the influence of Smiles, see the chapter "Samuel Smiles and the Gospel of Work," in Asa Briggs, Victorian People. Harper Colophon Book (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 116-139.

Social harmony would be increased by group affiliation, so that the juntas, the "companies", and even the Direccion itself, would have a moral impact on their members. The bancos de ahorro were also intended to produce moral fruits along with financial benefits, and Alamán placed greater emphasis upon this aspect than upon the strictly monetary rewards. He tended to carry the implicit moral prerogatives of the government to extremes however. Referring to a Spanish colonial law that required proper dress for people out walking, he remarked:

Whether this was to improve the morals of the people or to provide business for foreign commerce, I don't know; but the results were worthy of our attention, for the two are worthwhile ends.¹⁴

Saving was considered a means of increasing the numerical shareholders in the welfare of the nation, at the same time that it built the nation's capital base and its consumer market. As Alamán predicted in 1845:

The cajas de ahorro are certainly not a general antidote or an infallible cure for all miseries that occur; but through them the poorer classes form small capital which, distributed generally, gives an adequate basis for cementing the republican system, by the MULTIPLICATION, not the mere division, of property.¹⁵

Opponents felt that his programs would undermine the republican system instead, and that this was Alamán's intent all along. Could it be that Alamán saw more clearly than his Liberal oppo-

¹⁴ Alamán, Memoria (1845); in Obras, X, p. 234.

¹⁵ Alamán, Memoria (1843); in Obras, X, p. 69.

nents that division of a fixed quantity of wealth, such as land, could never create a base capable of indefinite progression? Don Lucás spoke instead of a system which would be able to increase the amount of wealth and insure a continual multiplication by its own inner dynamics--what modern economists such as W.W.Rostow call self-sustained economic growth.

In a similar fashion, Alamán made light of the Liberal attempt to achieve civil equality by the passage of law:

The laws have pretended to cause the disappearance of these distinctions [Spanish, Indian, and castes], but the laws of man can do little against those of nature, and against these influence of customs and inveterate preoccupation.¹⁶

We already know that Alamán was not advocating a rigid caste society, so that his intent must lie elsewhere. It would appear that he is trying to show the irrelevance of legal equality if a man or class is unable to advance himself and achieve a higher status. The problem must be approached on this level before political equality could be secured. From here it became a question of whose answer to the social and economic problem was superior, and Alamán obviously felt that industry was far superior to free-trade and individual competition.

In his proposals, Alamán was more concerned with achieving self-sustained social growth, which would solidify the political and economic framework. As petty capitalists, the participants in the plan for the bancos de ahorro would be able to identify

¹⁶ Alamán, Historia de Mexico; in Obras, V, p. 812.

with the objectives and aspirations of the government, to understand the merits of its policies, and be in a better position to share in the formulation, ratification, and implementation of such policies.¹⁷ An informed and interested citizenry would then have a financial stake that would release them from their parochialism as it increased their living standards.

In summarizing the various effects that Alamán saw flowing from a simple institution such as the bancos de ahorro, we can see the interlocking nature of his thought. It also reveals the weakness of the plan, its grandiose nature and the overestimation of the resources and capabilities of the Mexican nation in 1845. There were four general effects expected from the bancos: (1) To increase the capital base of the nation. Some small savers might well become investors or even entrepreneurs; (2) To assist the business community, as the increased standard of living brought about by saving would increase the consumer potential of the workers; (3) To provide a sense of security and personal dignity for the worker through a program of self-insurance; (4) To alter the attitude of the worker toward the society of which he would then be a part, and make him more responsive to the system, by allowing him to play an active and informed role that the representative system demanded.

We do not find evidence of the actual establishment of bancos de ahorro until 1849, when Mariano Gálvez saw the project through

¹⁷Ibid.

to its final enactment into law. Gálvez had written the draft for the banks, which appeared as an appendix to the 1845 Memoria. Then in July, 1849, the Sacro y Nacional Monte de Piedad was established "according to the idea proposed by this Dirección de Industria." Gálvez then repeated the arguments in favor of the project presented by Alamán four years earlier.¹⁸ A further report on the plan appeared in the Memoria of 1851. Although there were 100,000-130,000 pesos on deposit after only one and one-half years of operation, "almost all of it belongs to well-situated persons." The poor had deposited little, if anything, and in explanation Gálvez concluded sorrowfully that they apparently "do not yet know the value of this means of conserving and augmenting their savings."¹⁹

Results such as this may not surprise modern readers, but they must have been most disconcerting and baffling to the originators of the plan. Alamán had failed to realize that saving was not adopted automatically by the poor; it had to be cultivated, advertised, and "sold" to the people. In addition, it can not be accurately determined from the evidence whether conditions were such as to allow the common worker a surplus to save even had he the desire to do so. These points were neglected in Alamán's ori-

¹⁸ Antonio Garay y Mariano Gálvez, Memoria de la Dirección de Colonización e Industria (1849); in BNCE, La industria nacional y el comercio exterior, 1842-1851, p. 413.

¹⁹ Macedo y Gálvez, Memoria de la Dirección de Colonización e Industria (1851); in BNCE, La industria nacional y el comercio exterior, 1842-1851, p. 480.

ginal presentation, as he relied upon the effect of moral preachings. One could almost compare his faith in the efficacy of the mere statement of a plan with the belief of the Spanish Hapsburgs that the mere decree of law assured its implementation. Historical study has shown a great discrepancy between the statement of law by officials in Spain and the existing conditions in the New World kingdoms. In a similar fashion, the reading of Alamán's proposals as they appeared on paper present an incomplete picture of their impact on the society for which they were intended.

The bancos de ahorro present another tragic example of the sketchy content and lack of devotion to detail found in many of Alamán's projects. His "system" was uniform and integrated only in its broadest outlines, while remaining weak or even barren in its explanatory clauses, and usually hopelessly deficient in the means of assuring its political implementation.

An agency such as the banco de ahorro would serve on the individual level to specify the benefits promised by the industrial system as a whole. Alamán listed the benefits of industrialization in the same terms that he used to describe the goals of the bancos.²⁰ It is curious to see a project of Alamán, the so-called conservative, fail because he took for granted a liberal spirit of initiative among the people that was yet to be created.

Education would provide, in Alamán's scheme, an additional means of raising the standard of living and enhancing the chances

²⁰Alamán, Memoria (1845); in Obras, X, p. 308.

to participate in republican government and industrial society. All political and social thinkers of the nineteenth century were impressed with the value of an enlightened education, though they may have disagreed over the content and direction that it should take. As we have seen, Alamán pursued the objective of scientific education at every turn. He was conscious of the fact that a republican form of government and an industrial society needed more than an elite corps of technicians and engineers. In 1834 he had stated his position:

I have always believed that popular education is neglecting an essential part, that of the materia de artes, which is practical learning well suited for artisans, without which we try in vain to promote a rivalry with foreigners.²¹

In his statements on education, Alamán hinted at the idea of creating a trained, mobile population. Education, especially of the technical and practical variety, could prepare the Mexican populace for life in an industrial society at the same time that such workers were increasing the possibility of economic success by providing a trained and receptive population. Alamán was also aware of the fact that such education had a propaganda value, by attaching its students to a given set of values and policies, and wished to make sure that the commitment to industrialism was the principle that would be inculcated. A program of education that was uniform throughout the republic would also strengthen national

²¹ Alamán, Defensa; in Obras, XI, p. 178. See also Alamán, Memoria (1845); in Obras, X, p. 307.

loyalties. Alamán noted both these effects in his remarks concerning the isolated industrial advances that had taken place to 1843:

But these advantages are not yet general throughout the expanses of the republic, nor are they perceived equally in all the branches [of the economy]. This must be the effect of the schools of arts and agriculture, to which pupils from all the departments will come; and who, on their return, will spread the means of instruction that they have acquired and the advantages and comforts of life.²²

Such a diffusion of knowledge was expected to whet the appetites of those back home, and would weaken the provincialism of the average Mexican. Alamán urged that this program be enhanced by scholarships provided by departmental governments and local juntas de industrias. He received favorable replies on this subject from Guadalajara, Jalapa, Puebla, and Sayula.²³ Developing nations, including Mexico, have often been unable to insure that such "advance messengers of modernism" will return to their native towns upon the completion of their education. The relative diffusion of the existing industry in Mexico at the time would have lessened the importance of this problem, but, nevertheless, was neglected by Alamán.

The schools were curious institutions in their own right. The Dirección convinced the government to purchase the hacienda "La Ascension" and the adjoining convent of San Jacinto. Together these properties just outside Mexico City were to serve as an agricultural and mechanical school, with the convent functioning

²²Alamán, Memoria (1843); in Obras, X, p. 69.

²³Ibid.

as a dormitory for students and a craft school, while the hacienda served as an experimental farm. One objective of the school was to train clerks for the haciendas, who would be able to employ the new methods for their absentee owners.²⁴

As director of the school, Alamán was able to secure the services of Melchor Ocampo, later an important theoretician of the Juárez era. Placing the agricultural and mechanical schools side-by-side was a deliberate action, for then an exchange of ideas between the branches of the economy would be encouraged, and students would be conscious of the interdependence of the economy from the beginning of their training.²⁵ Their faith in the efficacy of such a cause-and-effect relationship was characteristic of the thought of Lucas Alamán.

The dependent status of New Spain during the colonial era was seen as the result of the lack of scientific emphasis in Crown policy as much as anything. The Spanish Bourbons realized this deficiency too late to create any lasting reforms. Alamán wished to rectify the situation. He felt that education without a modernized curriculum was an assurance that the nation would remain a static, dependent society:

We can no doubt live and provide the necessities through the agricultural and technical means we now possess; but we can not vary our products, multiply them, or accommodate them to the actual needs and uses of society, much less compete with other peoples whose agriculture and mechanical

²⁴ Alamán, Informe (1844); in Obras, X, p. 219.

²⁵ Alamán, Memoria (1845); in Obras, X, pp. 304-05.

arts have as their basis the scientific knowledge necessary for true advancement and solid progress.²⁶

This quotation presents many of the desires and anxieties that flowed through most of the writings of Lucás Alamán. His desire to achieve dynamic progress, his desire for national greatness, and his fear that the failure to achieve these goals rapidly would result in Mexico being subject to another, greater power. Success in building national development became a matter of survival, almost in a Spencerian sense.

The program for agricultural improvement indicates that Alamán was not an opponent of the large estates per se. The reforms that he suggested bear a resemblance to the improvements made in English agriculture during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which made farming big business, rather than to the Jeffersonian ideal of the small holder that inspired Liberal measures such as the Ley Lerdo. In the long run, Alamán felt that the common man had more to gain by being included in an industrial society and by disassociating himself from his ties to the land. Efficient use of the haciendas would result in a parallel of the

²⁶Ibid., p. 303. A report on the degree of success achieved by the program can be found in the Memoria de la Dirección de Colonización e Industria (1851). Here it is stated that the Colegio de San Gregorio was giving theoretical and practical courses in agricultural science. Hints of the meager results of this attempt to diffuse knowledge is indicated by the inability to secure funds for the distribution of agricultural books. Gálvez had hoped that such materials would enable agricultores to learn new methods, which they could employ in improving the efficiency of the large estates.

enclosure movement that occurred in England, freeing many peons for industrial pursuits. Not only would a mobile labor force be created, but the necessary increases in agricultural products would be gained with a minimum of institutional dislocation on the land. Later events were to show that neither the Liberal solution nor Alamán's suggestions were without their weaknesses. The Ley Lerdo had a reverse effect upon the problem of peonage, while the one instance of enclosure, that of the sugar plantations in Morelos, produced the horrible social and economic conditions that led to the Zapatista movement in the early twentieth century.²⁷

It would be imprecise to conclude that Alamán foresaw the probable outcome of a measure such as the Ley Lerdo. His reasons for rejecting this agricultural solution were based on other criteria. Seeing the future of Mexico in industrial terms, he was quite unwilling to make use of an alternative which would increase the ties of the lower classes to the land. His explanation neglected the problem of motivation, the same as we encountered in the discussion of the bancos de ahorro. The lower classes failed to respond to the promptings to improve their condition through saving; and the hacendados would not immediately understand the wisdom of abandoning a system that provided a comfortable living

²⁷John H. McNeely, "Origins of the Zapata Revolt in Morelos," Hispanic American Historical Review, XLVI (May, 1966), 153-169. Since this was not part of a concentrated movement to transfer peons from the land according to a planned program, it is not a fair example by which to judge the feasibility of Alamán's agricultural project.

while the fruits of the peonage system were not in obvious jeopardy.

Both social and economic objectives lay beneath the desire to retain as much of the social fabric of Mexican society as possible while attitudes and directions were altered. His own aristocratic background cannot be overlooked in this regard. Alamán explained his position in a political and philosophical context in two newspapers for which he wrote following the downfall of the government of Nicolas Bravo. All attempts to achieve a rapprochement with the Liberals were abandoned, and he turned instead to the formation of a definite Conservative Party. Attention has often been paid to the preoccupations with monarchy held by the party, finding in it a predeliction of the Maximillian episode. But monarchism was not at the heart of Alamán's view of conservatism. He was attempting to give political articulation to the program of gradual progress that he had been seeking to implement as a government for over twenty years. Defeat and dissatisfaction had forced the conclusion that a system relying heavily upon the role of the government required a secure political foundation. Liberalism could not be expected to play the role of ally to industrialism that it had played in Europe.

In El Tiempo (1846) and El Universal (1850) the political philosophy of conservatism was articulated. "Gradual Progress" was the basic theme of the theme of the first editorial of El Tiempo, January 24, 1846:

But if our principles are essentially conservative, we do not pretend by this to close the door to the progressive advancement that is the son of TIME and of the continuous advances of the human spirit. The title that we have given to our newspaper is the emblem of our ideas: we search in TIME past for lessons and experience in order to direct us in the present, and we solicit that the present TIME will contain and develop the germ of the advances of TIME to come; but as Nature employs TIME as a necessary means for the development of all physical beings, so we believe that the moral development of all political societies also requires TIME in order to build in a solid and gainful manner.²⁸

It would be easy to conclude that this statement merely cloaks a defense of the status quo if there were no additional evidence to use in forming a judgement. Unfortunately, many reactionaries did hide behind this thesis. Lucas Alamán revealed through his many other activities the sincerity of his statement of conservatism, although he may have desired to conserve more than his belief in progress could justify, or was politically judicious. The explanation of the difference between reactionism and conservatism was more than a literary disguise.

His opponents naturally read hypocritical intentions into every statement of the conservative philosophy, and Alamán's personality served to enflame emotions. He also invited criticism with his own sharp pen, as his literary talents made his works interesting to read but precluded a dispassionate analysis of his ideas. In one instance he cleverly used the word "conservative" and turned it upon his critics in his own defense.²⁹ Alamán often

²⁸ El Tiempo, January 24, 1846; in Mario Mariscal, "Alamán Periodista," Excelsior, 11 enero y 3 febrero de 1943.

²⁹ El Universal, 9 enero de 1850. "We are called CONSERVATIVES

succumbed to the temptation to strike back with an emotional phrase rather than probing the problem and presenting a detailed explanation of his own position.

José Valadés vigorously denied that the Conservative Party was a species of monarchism, attributing the royalist sentiment in El Tiempo to the book by José Hidalgo.³⁰ In the opinion of Valadés, what Alamán desired was:

'that the Government have stability and the force to protect society . . . that of regulating commerce, protecting industry, and developing the intellectual activity of the nation, and in whose ordered hierarchy has in its place all eminent men.'³¹

The Constitutional plan of 1846 reflected these positivist features in a system of representation based on group interest that seemed in format almost a precursor of the fascist corporate state, and came dangerously close to the rigidity of a monarchy.³² We can see Alamán leaning more and more in the direction

because we do not wish to continue the spoliation that you have made: despoiling the patria of its nationality, of its virtues, of its riches, of its valor, of its power, of its hopes We wish to restore all this; and for this reason they call us-- and we are--CONSERVATIVES."

³⁰Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, pp. 418f. Jose M. Hidalgo, Proyecto de Monarquía en México (Mexico: Editorial Jus, 1962). Valadés' position is countered by Jorge Gurria Lacroix, Las Ideas Monárquicas de don Lucas Alamán (Mexico: Instituto de Historia, 1951), but the methodology can be questioned for bias.

³¹Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 419.

³²This "Congreso Nacional Extraordinario" was called by General Paredes, who is suspected of monarchist leanings himself. For information concerning Alamán's plan, as submitted to the Congress, see José Bravo Ugarte, Compendio de Historia de México (Mexico: Editorial Jus, 1946), p. 177, and Justo Sierra, Evolucion Política

of control and less toward individual freedom and initiative.

In El Tiempo he explained why a reliance upon freedom of action could not produce the desired harmony. Neglect of the past and present, in favor of an idealistic future had brought Mexico to the brink of disintegration:

The remedy for these evils requires nothing more than to accommodate the political institutions to the actual state of things, and not to pretend that things will adjust themselves to the institution. As the constitution ought to be for the present generation, it is best that it conform to present necessities, leaving to future generations the right, and the care, of modifying these institutions according to the circumstances that they may work under.³³

When Alamán stated that "We do not believe absolutely in a monarchy nor in a republic; we believe only in independence and liberty,"³⁴ this was cast aside as another conservative deception. In actuality, however, this was a succinct presentation of the conservative principle, and uncovers a basic difference between Liberals and Conservatives. Alamán's own disregard for the format of the political structure had been expressed back in 1821, at the Cortes in Spain. The essentials were found outside the political structure, while Liberals insisted that the political framework was the key to the unfolding of the "natural" laws. Between 1821 and 1846 the imminent threat of Mexico's northern neighbor had

del Pueblo Mexicano (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1940, orig. pub., 1910), pp. 265-f.

³³El Tiempo, January 24, 1846.

³⁴El Tiempo, January 26, 1846.

been added to their philosophical premise. We can see such sentiments present between the lines of the following quotation from

El Tiempo:

We are very capable of believing that liberty can exist the same in a monarchy as in a republic. We are very capable of preferring the monarchical institutions of England or France [free and powerful nations] to the republican institutions of Venice [then under the domination of the Austrians].³⁵

Elsewhere he stated the situation even more bluntly:

We want a representative monarchy that can protect the departments [states of the nation] . . . that will be a stable government, inspiring the confidence of Europe, that will give us foreign alliances in order to fight the United States, if they are obstinate in destroying our nationality.³⁶

The expression of such fears reminds us of the Alamán of the early 1820's, the young statesman who felt that a monarchy might be necessary in order to secure the support of the Holy Alliance against the encroachments of the United States. Both cases constituted very pragmatic views of the benefits of a monarchy.

María Elena Ota Mishima noticed a deeper tradition behind Alamán's monarchical sentiments. Personalist rule was inherited from the Spanish tradition of government, and implanted in Alamán the belief that "power concentrated in one person [was] the magic formula for giving a solution to the political problems of his country." Acceptance of this belief, she feels, can be used to explain his support of the Plan de Iguala, the naming of Iturbide

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶El Tiempo; cited by Rodríguez Frausto, Lucás Alamán, p. 13.

as Emperor, his alliance with the caudillo Santa Anna, and finally his monarchism.³⁷ We can find further evidence for the presence of this tradition in the mind of Alamán when we recall his opinion of Intendant Riaño.

This issue goes beyond the matter of the degree of power held by the chief executive, for even the Liberals were intent upon using executive power to achieve their goals, something which they often found hard to harmonize with the doctrine of federalism. Executive power became a matter of mere practical politics between the party in power and the "loyal" opposition. For example, in 1850, following the election of Mariano Arista, Deputy Alamán and the Conservatives lost a motion to limit the powers of the executive to Guillermo Prieto and the Liberals by the narrow margin of 44-41.³⁸ But when Lucás Alamán considered the role of the chief of state, he thought in terms of a majesty of office that could be transmitted down through the entire political system and foster national loyalties.

The vote on the limitation of executive power in 1850 indicated the strength of the Conservative movement. Another view of this vote would be to emphasize the imprecise nature of the Mexican political scene following the War with the United States, which certainly was in great part responsible for the surge of Conservative strength. Charles Hale refers to this period as a "Crisis in

³⁷Ota Mishima, Alamán Ilustrado, p. 113.

³⁸Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 481.

Mexican Thought."³⁹ during which a cynicism and political skepticism set in with regard to the period 1832-1845. The disillusionment bred by the disintegration of the Mexican political and social structure, culminating in the military defeat at the hands of a relatively weak United States Army, lent indirect support--or at least attention--to the warnings and contentions of Lucas Alamán. His two most famous writings were certainly topical, and the context of their composition accounts for their popularity at the time and the controversy that they aroused. The modern reader can note the mission hidden between the lines of his Disertaciones and the Historia de Mejico.

Ignacio Ramírez had expressed the first sign of the abandonment of ideology for pragmatism among Liberal theorists. This change was later expressed more concretely in the Juárez Era, which was itself but a bulwark for the política integral of Porfirio Díaz. In 1846 Ramírez had written: "We have arrived at the point of no longer investigating which government is best, but which can be maintained in our country."⁴⁰

As this new group of "pragmatic" liberals centered their attack on the Church, Conservatives were forced to become more vocal in their defenses, and a definite political cleavage was decreed.

³⁹Hale, "War with the U.S. and the Crisis in Mexican Thought," 153-174.

⁴⁰This statement appeared in the periodical Don Simplicio, January 14, 1846; cited by Hale, "War with the U.S. and the Crisis in Mexican Thought," 156.

This turn of events was especially disappointing to Alamán, who had always felt that he could secure near unanimous support for his ideas, and had often acted as if this support had existed. Forging policy in a Congress of definite political divisions would not place the talents of Lucas Alamán in a position of greatest advantage.

For the moment, however, the lines of division in the "crisis" had not yet been clearly drawn, and this gave a temporary advantage to the Conservatives. A pamphlet appearing in 1848, and attributed to Mexican liberal authors by Charles Hale, declared that "'we need, at least for some years, the support or the armed intervention of some foreign power'".⁴¹ Evidence for the existence of sentiment in favor of an intervention, culminating in Maximilian's Empire, could be taken from this statement as readily as from the editorials of the Conservative periodicals. Hale cautions with regard to Alamán's monarchism: "Remember that his basic appeal to Mexico was to conserve its Spanish heritage and not to accept a foreign prince."⁴²

The role of the Spanish heritage continued to loom large in his plans for economic and political development. It reflected upon his whole theory of "gradual progress", as the method invol-

⁴¹Various Mexicanos, Consideraciones sobre la situación política y social de la república mexicana; cited by Hale, "War with the U.S. and the Crisis in Mexican Thought," 157-59.

⁴²Hale, "War-Crisis", 170-171.

ving the least social evil and the maximum assurance of economic success. Proceeding through established institutions seemed to provide a greater margin of security than to act as if this heritage were nonexistent and import alien institutions and theories whose economic and social effects were uncertain. Alamán also doubted the validity of the premises upon which liberalism rested.

By 1850 many of his warnings seemed to have been vindicated, and Alamán's conservative pronouncements assumed a more arrogant, doctrinaire attitude. Mexican politics remained a power struggle, as his opponents held to a similar inflexible position. The newspaper El Monitor Republicano, which had backed Arista's candidacy in 1850, accused Alamán of a lack of patriotism, of Bourbonism and absolutism, of being an enemy of Independence, and of writing the Historia as a prelude to the re-establishment of an Empire. Alamán defended his position in a letter to Jose M. Tornel on November 22, 1849, drawing an historical analogy. Tacitus, he remarked, was no less a good Roman because he told the truth about the reigns of Claudius and Nero.⁴³

His public defense appeared in the form of an editorial in El Universal. "Conservative" was a complimentary term to their ears, for it contrasted favorably with the title of their adversaries: Destructors. To the destruction of the virtues of society and the vices that were produced, Alamán contrasted the Conserva-

⁴³Valadés, Alamán, Estadista e Historiador, p. 467.

tive attempt to preserve the essential qualities of society and to strengthen them:

They CONSERVE the good of centuries past--justice, morality, honor--beliefs that we have made our greatest and most illustrious; but they march ahead by the paths of progress, borrowing upon the versatility of the epoch of solidarity of the past, moderating the impetuous danger of an ill-advised course with the salutary restraint of past ideas and assured by this mode of a march toward the durable and true conquests of modern civilization.⁴⁴

He compared the position of his party with the forces in Europe that had recently made a successful defense against socialism and "unbridled demagoguery".⁴⁵ Although Alaman sympathized with the grievances of the European workers, he could not support change by social revolution. Liberal politicians seemed to be using the discontent of the masses in order to gain their own political advantage, without offering solutions to the demands of the lower classes.

Mexico had social problems of her own, so that Alaman was not dealing with mere hypothetical speculation. In the state of Mexico a plan had been circulated calling for free lands and water for the sons of the país (Article 3), the distribution of hacienda properties to the sons of the país (Article 4), and issuing a call to arms under the leadership of twelve "generals" supposedly descended from Moctezuma, who had been called by Providence to install a new Emperor of pure Indian ancestry.⁴⁶ Both the hac-

⁴⁴ El Universal, 9 de enero de 1850, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Cited by Valadés, Alaman, Estadista e Historiador, p. 475.

dados and the national Government were alarmed by this call to insurrection, and the governor of distant Nuevo Leon was forced to decree that no peon could be held responsible for the debts of his ancestors.⁴⁷

Evidence of this type impressed upon Alaman the urgency of the task of industrialism, which was needed to bring about the necessary social and economic reform that could forestall revolutionary change. Meanwhile, he felt that the one factor most responsible for preventing social war in Mexico was the deep religious nature of the People:

and this profound religious sentiment that not only has not declined, but on the contrary, has been illustriously fortified, is the bond of union that remains to the Mexican people when all others have been broken.⁴⁸

Conservatives thus rose to the defense of religion in the face of a renewal of political attacks on this last bond of union by those who viewed this institution as the main hindrance to social and economic advancement rather than a bulwark against social chaos. Alaman, as we have seen, had a vague belief in the need for moral education; but he failed to realize that religious influence was inhibiting loyalty to the nation that his industrial society required, by supporting localism and ties to the land and objecting to secular attachments. Alaman's nationalism had a mystical quality that precluded the designation of "secular", but

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 476.

⁴⁸ Alaman, Historia de Mexico; in Obras, VI, p. 856.

it did involve a change in attitude that would be difficult to integrate into the Church's hierarchy of loyalties. Alamán never really faced this problem, nor did he offer a method by which the Church could be confined to the religious and moral sphere, the question which most concerned the anti-clericals.

Industrial society would certainly force new loyalties as it restructured social institutions and altered political perspectives. The need to secure the political support of the government in order to achieve their economic objectives prevented the industrialists from securing an adequate power base on the non-political level, which had been attempted for twenty years. In Mexico there existed the paradox of Liberals and industrialists fighting for control of the government, whereas in Europe they formed an alliance against the landed aristocracy. The expansion of the representative process was a goal of European liberals and industrialists alike. Mexican industrialists weakened their own cause when they solicited the support of cotton producers, for by implication they made an appeal to all large landholders. This move destroyed any natural affinity that might have existed between liberal politics and industrial economics. Lucas Alamán played a leading role in the development of this irreconcilable situation. The ambiguities of his own life and his inability to shed the reactionary tenets of his political philosophy undermined his economic foresight and alienated potential liberal allies. The religious factor loomed large over the gulf that separated

the opposing factions. The position of the Catholic Church in Mexico destroyed any possibility of a duplication of the liberal-industrial alliance that had brought success in France and England.

In the last analysis, however, the historical context played as great a role as the historical personages involved. The colonial status of Mexico provoked the reaction of Lucas Alamán at the same time that it conditioned the Liberal free-trade philosophy. In their attempt to promote a theory which would integrate Mexico into the world economic picture as a raw material producer, they unwittingly altered the objectives of the traditional liberal economic program. France was able to make the necessary shift in emphasis under positivism that would enable them to counteract the industrial supremacy of England. The solution of Lucas Alamán contained resemblances to the French adaptation of Saint-Simon, but remained an incomplete and inadequate presentation. Meanwhile, the historical context of Mexico between 1820 and 1850 presented insurmountable conditions of political fluidity which made any comparison to the European counterpart of dubious value. France may have presented an unstable political climate, but possessed an institutional tradition in key areas, such as the military, which Mexico lacked.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Looking at modern Mexico, with an industrial growth that now includes plans to produce a Mexican automobile in the near future, it would seem that the dreams of Lucas Alamán had been fulfilled. Studies which concentrate on his industrial projects tend to fortify such a judgement. To stop at this point, however, is to neglect a great part of his life and his writings.

Industrialization was always only a part of the dream he had for Mexico, a means to an end. The specific concentration upon textiles came, as this study has shown, only after a process of trial and error. In addition, the role of the government in all of the projects for economic development included aspects that transcended the economic sphere. Government supervision, protection, and even subsidization of industry was intended to assure that economic wealth would be used to strengthen the nation, and that the resultant prosperity would extend to as great a portion of the populace as was feasible. As such, the goals differed little from the stated objectives of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional.

But Alamán's confidence in direction by the state came from Spanish Bourbon precedents, which in turn had been derived from the French ancien regime. This necessitates an important qualification in the comparison to the twentieth-century counterpart of Alamán's state-directed economy. The issue of state ownership is

not really relevant, and is not incompatible with his system, although the spirit of the times called for a solution through the institution of private property, and this Alaman supported. The real difference lies in the origin of governmental authority. Despite his willingness to accept a republican form of government, the politico-economic structure created by Alaman remained paternalistic in nature. Modern governments function, in theory at least, under a mandate of popular sanction. It is not merely the factor of elections which characterizes this mandate, but the general acceptance that the government expresses the will of the people. Alaman exhibited the absence of this principle in his disdain for political compromise and a lack of appreciation of its function in the political process. The "Plan", constructed and imposed unilaterally by those in power, remains paternalistic in its orientation. Both the Banco de Avio and the Dirección de Industria fell into this category. The seeming dogmatism of such projects did not provoke a favorable reaction from his opponents, who saw no "freedom" contained in them. This factor tended to override the intrinsic merits of the plans themselves. Objections were rarely raised to Alaman's logic in advocating protection and aid for industry to put it on a competitive footing. The two sides in the debate began from different preconceptions of the nature of man, the economic order, and the "inevitability" of progress.

Radical change may demand radical action and involve command decisions by those in power. Alamán, however, was living in a Mexico that was not, on the surface, as far behind the Western nations in 1810 as it came to be in 1910. Nor were the solutions he offered particularly designed to promote drastic change. On the contrary, his plans were structured so as to accomplish their ends with a minimum of political, economic, and social dislocation. He stressed order, not only as a prerequisite for industrial society, but as a natural consequence of harmonious society. The idea that a society of relatively unbridled individuals pursuing their own interests in disjunctive fashion could achieve a total effect which was miraculously beneficial to the society as a whole and to most individuals within it, was incomprehensible. This mental block was once again due to his assumption of paternalism. A political and economic arena in which compromise and bargaining would be the guiding principles is by definition unstable to a degree. The degree of instability is inversely proportional to the effectiveness of the system in reaching agreements between the competing interests. A paternalistic system achieves this result indirectly, by channeling interest through organizations and "corporate" groups. Alamán presented this feature in all of his proposals, and gave it final political articulation in the 1846 Constitutional Convention.

Lucas Alamán may have been visionary in his conviction that the road to future progress lay in the direction of industry

rather than in free trade, but was intellectually amiss in his failure to see the emergence of the secular state. Surely this secular state can become a perverted expression of the will of the people in modern totalitarianism and other extremes of nationalism which Arnold Toynbee and others have called the "aberration of the Western world". At first glance, Alamán's political and economic nationalism would tend to place him in this stream of development; but Toynbee places democracy in a crucial position in this trend, and this was lacking in Alamán's paternalistic system, because its authority did not rest upon a popular mandate, manipulated or otherwise.

Theoretical discussions often break down in practice, and this categorization of Alamán suffers a similar fate. Although he may be thus typified with much justification, there are events and ideas that do not conform consistently to the pattern I have established. One may first point to his efforts to break down parochialism and to instill in its place loyalty to the nation, which is the same objective as that of the secular state. Loyalty and a feeling of belonging was necessary for industrialism to take root and succeed, regardless of the political implications, and one should not infer that Alamán had more than the former in mind. In his educational thought especially, one cannot help but notice the intention to develop a political consciousness. His goal of an educated populace, with an economic stake in the social order was not radically different from Thomas Jefferson's. The latter,

however, had the distinct advantage of speaking to a people the majority of whom already met his conditions. As a word of caution we must remember that Alamán envisioned a multiplicity of organizations not only to promote this national consciousness but to absorb it once it had been developed.

Alamán never really made clear what the "moral "basis" that he desired in society would entail. His contemporaries, unable to learn where his state obtained its justification, concluded that it would be some variation of the divine right power of the Church. Alamán did not help matters with his enthusiasm for the Reyes Católicos, whose moral mission, as far as he was concerned, had given Mexico its birth in the Conquest that he glorified in the Disertaciones.

As we trace the development of the economic policies of Lucas Alamán, we also find a progressive rigidity in the means of implementation and a diminished freedom being superceded by a structure of organization. His mining ventures were conducted through private companies, with government aid only in the form of a relaxation of certain laws. When the mineral resources, Mexico's natural source of wealth, was abandoned in favor of industry, which had to be created, the method of implementation also changed. The Banco de Avío was expected to co-ordinate industrial activity, besides financing the ventures. Participation became virtually mandatory under the Dirección de Industria. Had the system developed completely, businessmen, workers, and corporations would

have had to join the respective junta or other designated agency in order to succeed. Order and efficiency were the stated reasons for this structure, but it also exhibited the paternalism that was a feature of the entire plan.

Liberal economics combined with conservative politics to form the positivism of the reign of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911). Although the economic policies of Alamán would have reduced the foreign element in economics and politics, and thus eliminated the extreme nationalism that has been so prominent in the Mexican Revolution, there is no assurance that the hacienda problem would have been solved effectively. The establishment of a diverse and stable economic base may have allowed change on the political and social level with far less violence; but the system as it stood at the time of the death of Alamán could only have been a temporary solution. The underlying paternalism limited its purpose to a purely transitory alternative, and Alamán hinted at the possibility of an expansion of the body politic in his educational thought. Despite the theory of impartiality built into a paternalistic system, however, certain interests generally dominate. As such it would offer no better solution than Díaz did, for it neglected too many of the intellectual currents of the time. Today Mexico is attempting to combine a variation of alamanista economics with political and philosophical tenets that grew out of the liberal movement. Hopefully they will succeed in achieving an equitable solution, which eluded both Alamán and his contemporaries.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Mr. Alan F. Kovac has been read and approved by the director of the thesis. Furthermore, the final copies have been examined by the director and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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