

EL OBSERVADOR

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The Battle of Puebla ~ May 5, 1862

Following the long and bloody struggle of the "Three Year War", with Benito Juárez as its new president for the 1861-1865 period, the Mexican government was left with no funds to cover expenses in public administration 91% of the country's income was destined to settle foreign debts and maintain the army.

Faced with this situation, on July 17 of 1861 the government had no choice but to suspend payment of all public debts, including those sustained with other countries, in order to balance the budget and cover the basic needs of its people.

However, the foreign debt problem was used by the country's conservatives who had lost the opportunity of gaining power as an excuse to seek foreign intervention at the European courts, who they hoped would provide them with a prince or emperor to rule on their behalf.

The Tri-partite Military Alliance

Under the London Convention, signed on October 31 of that year, Spain, England and France agreed to invade Mexico to ensure credit payments. The Tri-partite Military Alliance which they formed was to gain control of the borders but Mexico's national integrity and official government were to be respected.

While recovering the debt owed to them was a priority, it soon became clear that these countries had other interests:

- Spain was now left without colonies, a declining trade and the sole hope of boosting its dying economy with a conservative government that would help it regain part of its old wealth.

- Britain, at the height of industrial and financial success, had extended its empire through Asia and Africa and looked to expand further West.

- The French Empire, which had also gained considerable power, kept a close guard on American movements and sought to offer its bourgeois



The 15th annual Cinco de Mayo celebrating Hispanic culture will be held in Portland from May 5-9. The sponsor title for this year's event is Oregon Lottery and hosted by the Portland-Guadalajara Sister City Association.

class new markets by establishing rich mining colonies.

And so, under the same flag but each pursuing its own goals, the allied armies set out to invade Mexico. Spain's forces were the first to land in Veracruz (December, 1861) followed by the French and English in January, 1862.

On arrival, foreign representatives sent an ultimatum to Juárez's government in which they demanded full payment of debts and compensation for alleged damages suffered by their diplomatic envoys. Juárez proposed to settle the matter in a quiet and peaceful manner. For this, he invited the allied representatives to an official meeting with the Foreign Affairs Minister, Manuel Doblado, with whom the exact sum owed

was to be determined. Meanwhile, Juárez abolished the law which suspended foreign debt payments and declared all Mexicans who approved the intervention "traitors to the nation."

The Treaty of La Soledad

The allied nations accepted Juárez's proposal and in February of 1862, General Prim, representing the allies and Manuel Doblado, on behalf of Mexico, met for talks in the village of La Soledad, where they agreed on the following points:

1. Recognition of Juárez's government
2. Allied countries were to respect Mexico's national integrity and independence.
3. Final negotiations were to take place in Orizaba, for which the allied

forces were to establish headquarters in Córdoba, Orizaba and Tehuacán.

4. Allied troops were to return to the posts they originally held in Veracruz should relations cease.

French Intervention

Early of May, 1862 and a Count, Laurencez, arrives in Veracruz with reinforcements for the French. On the same ship is General Almonte, who immediately declares himself supreme head of State, reinstating in his new government conservatives who have been declared enemies of the liberalist regime.

The conservatives had assured the French that a large portion of the Mexican people would rise up in arms against Juárez upon foreign intervention. This did not occur.

When the British and Spanish delegations learned that the French intended to depose Juárez and install their own ruler they broke the alliance (April, 1862), settled their financial differences with Juárez's government and sailed home.

French troops, on the other hand, refused to return to their posts as had been convened and under the orders of Count Laurencez now made an advance toward the country's capital.

The Invading army, made up of 6,000 well disciplined and excellently equipped men who had won brilliant victories in Europe also relied on a vast supply of provisions and ammunition. They were joined by several conservative factions who, though poorly armed, were incorporated in the section led by Almonte under Leonardo Márquez's supervision.

Without as much as a war declaration, the French advanced from Orizaba to Puebla, surviving an attack by Aragoza's troops in the Acultzingo hills on their way (state of Veracruz, April, 1862). Having failed to stop the invaders, Zaragoza rushed to Puebla to prepare a new defense.

The Battle of May 5

At this point Laurencez thought that a total victory over the Mexican army would be easy, and so, without taking the necessary precautions, he ordered attacks on the forts of Loreto and Guadalupe which defended Puebla. (May 5, 1862).

The invading army was halted in its numerous intents on the forts and finally forced to retreat under pursuit of the Mexican cavalry.

News of the victory won by republican troops in Puebla filed the country with joy and hope and, although the battle fought on May 5 did not stop later attempts to overthrow the existing government, it was a moral victory which raised the Mexican people from the false concept of unrest and weakness in which its enemies had held them.

The unjust French intervention generated great sympathy for Mexico across the continent as well as among liberalist sectors in Europe; Spanish, English and French press now censured Napoleon, demanding the removal of invading troops.

Consulado de México

El Consulado de México tiene el honor de hacer un reconocimiento al "Licenciado en Negociación y Administración Agrónoma" Manuel Michel, quien presentó su tesis: "Los efectos del Tratado del Libre Comercio en los productores de manzana en Estados Unidos y México" en la Conferencia

Nacional de "Las Minorías en la Agricultura, Recursos Naturales y Ciencias Relacionadas" que fue llevada a cabo a principios del mes de Abril en Roanoke, Virginia, ganando el primer lugar en su categoría. Manuel ha hecho tres prácticas profesionales primeramente en Querétaro,

México, después en USDA Portland, Oregon. La tercera siendo la anteriormente mencionada investigación de su tesis en Chihuahua, México. Todo este trabajo ha conllevado a una excelente presentación. Muchas felicidades a Manuel y también a su asesora Cathy Durham.

Reportó Departamento de Estado que 13.9 Millones de Estadunidenses Consumieron Drogas en los Ultimos 30 Días

Según una encuesta reciente se calcula que alrededor de 13 millones 900 mil estadunidenses consumieron drogas en alguna ocasión en los últimos 30 días, informó el Departamento de Estado estadounidense, y señaló que el Presupuesto Nacional para el Control de Drogas de Estados Unidos, que no incluye desembolsos a nivel estatal y local, es de 17,100 millones de dólares para el año fiscal 1999; un aumento de más de mil millones respecto del año anterior.

De este total, 5.9 mil mdd (34%) serán pra reducir la demanda, lo que incluye programas de investigación,

tratamiento y prevención. Esto es más del triple que los 1,800 mdd (11%) que "vamos" a gastar en acciones policíacas.

Otros 548 mdd (3%) se dedicarán a la asistencia internacional y los restantes 8,800 mdd (52%) a apoyar actividades policíacas a nivel nacional relacionadas con el combate al narcotráfico.

En la Unión Americana se castiga severamente a los narcos. En las cárceles, refirió el Dpartamento de Estado, hay un mimero mayor al de cualquier país. En 1998 había casi 51 mil presos, nada más en el sistema penitenciario federal, convictos de crímenes relacionados con las drogas.

Empero, el número de drogadictos se redujo y esto resalta al comparar los 25 millones de personas que contestaron afirmativamente haber consumido drogas en 1979, con los actualmente 13 millones 900 mil que contestaron haberlo hecho.

Por ejemplo, el uso de la cocaína entre los estudiantes del último año de preparatoria disminuyó desde su máximo en 1985 y cayó hasta 2% en 1996.

El uso general de la cocaína en 1997 fue de 0.7% de la población estadounidense, o sea un millón y medio de personas, lo cual es una quita de los cinco millones 700 mil la consumieron en 1986.



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