

# POLITICS AND LITERARY CREATION IN CHIAPAS PRESS (1910-1912)S

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— Abstract—

In base to a journalistic research on newspapers from Chiapas, epigrams and different kind of verses are commented in order to demonstrate how the social and political events of the *Maderista* revolution (1910-1911) influenced the field of literary creation. As long as it identifies authors, the journals where these ones were published and their political networking, this article contributes to the study of the relationship between literature and politics during the first half of the twentieth century.

**Keywords**

*Literature; Chiapas; revolution; press; political power.*

The influence of political and social events on literary creation in Chiapas is demonstrated by the review of local newspapers housed in the Hemeroteca Fernando Castañón Gamboa (HFCG) of the Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas and by the work of various scholars on the subject. The period between 1901 and 1913 accounts for a change in the quantity and quality of literary texts during the last years of national political stability, under the mandate of General Porfirio Díaz, and the rise and fall of the *Maderista* regime.

The assumptions of the above statement are three. First, the link established between the press<sup>1</sup> and power groups; second, the use of local newspapers to disseminate creative literary texts that denigrate or applaud public figures during political conflicts; and third, the relations between Chiapas' intellectuals living in the center of the country and writers based in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, San Cristóbal de Las Casas and Comitán, who used the newspapers of the entity to promote interests that went beyond those of the strictly literary field.

Below is information on the political context of Chiapas, then examples of literary texts published before, during and after the most relevant events of the period under study, in order to compare them and visualize their changes in quantity and quality.

#### POLITICAL CONTEXT (1900-1915)

Upon arriving in Chiapas, the visitor is amazed by the diversity and contrast of its territory. In addition to its variety of ecosystems, its cultural richness is overshadowed by the misery in which most of its inhabitants survive.

This federal entity was incorporated into the country in 1824, three years after the independence of the Kingdoms of New Spain and the Captaincy General of Guatemala from European rule in 1821. One of the arguments for this federalization was the absence of actions in favor of the economic and social development of the entity during the Colony.

By its geographical location, and specifically by its orography, Chiapas was isolated from other regions, whether from New Spain, the Captaincy General of Guatemala or Mexico, a situation that affected the economic misery of the bulk of its population and that also explains the unique impact of national events in local daily life. The relationship with the Mexican government was one of apparent and superficial subjugation,

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1 The existence of books is limited, either because they were lost over the years or because they were never written.

later denied in the relative autonomy with which the Chiapas elites would settle the political and economic decisions of the state.

With the arrival of Porfirio's regime and the turn of the century, Chiapas lived under the mandate of General Díaz and the local group headed by Emilio Rabasa, a politician close to the president's collaborators. Angel Pola (2012, pp. 28-29)<sup>2</sup> tells in his "Autobiography" how, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he and Rabasa met periodically in Mexico City together with Manuel Lacroix, Víctor Manuel Castillo, José María Pascacio, Juan María Esponda, Marín Llaven and José Antonio Rivera G. Several of those named became important figures in the politics of Chiapas after building, expanding and maintaining networks in the country's capital with influential figures in national politics and the economy.

In the following list of governors and presidents of the State Congress from 1901 to 1915 (table 1), the influence of former governor Rabasa is evident in his support, first, of Rafael Pimentel (a fellow student), and later in his brother's push for state governorships.

**Table 1**

*List of governors and presidents of the local congress 1901-1915*

| Year | Governor                                       | President of the State Congress |
|------|--|---------------------------------|
| 1901 | Rafael Pimentel                                | Daniel A. Zepeda                |
| 1902 | Rafael Pimentel                                | Ciro Farrera                    |
| 1903 | Rafael Pimentel                                | Eleuterio Aguilar               |
| 1904 | Rafael Pimentel                                | Sin identificar                 |
| 1905 | Rafael Pimentel                                | Miguel A. Castillo              |
| 1906 | Ramón Rabasa                                   | Eliseo López                    |
| 1907 | Ramón Rabasa                                   | Enoch Paniagua                  |
| 1908 | Ramón Rabasa                                   | Andrés Contreras                |
| 1909 | Ramón Rabasa                                   | Bernardo Martínez Baca          |
| 1910 | Ramón Rabasa                                   | Prudencio Pastrana              |
|      | Manuel Trejo                                   |                                 |
|      | Reinaldo Gordillo León (Interim)               |                                 |
|      | Policarpo Rueda                                |                                 |
| 1911 | Manuel Rovelo Argüello                         | Unidentified                    |
|      | Querido Moheno (Who could not take possession) |                                 |
|      | Reinaldo Gordillo León (Elected)               |                                 |
| 1912 | Reinaldo Gordillo León                         | Unidentified                    |
|      | Flavio A. Guillén                              |                                 |

2 Valente Molina presents this information as a quote from the magazine *Chiapas y México* (s/d) in his book *La colonia chiapaneca en el Distrito Federal. 1888-1950*.

|      |  |                        |
|------|--|------------------------|
| 1913 | Flavio A. Guillén<br>Reinaldo Gordillo León<br>Bernardo Z. Palafox | Teófilo Castillo Corzo |
| 1914 | Bernardo Z. Palafox<br>Jesús Agustín Castro<br>Blas Corral         | Unidentified           |
| 1915 | Blas Corral  | Unidentified           |

Source: elaborated from the respective government reports, consulted in the Historical Archive of Chiapas, in the UNICACH and from the book *Chiapas: Notas para una historia reciente* (1994), by Luis Enrique Pérez Mota.

Raúl Serrano Aranda (2010, pp. 86-87) considers that Rafael Pimentel, a military man like General Porfirio Díaz, was overthrown from the government due to conflicts<sup>3</sup> with Rabasa: "Rabasa finally won the battle. Pimentel resigned when he was two years away from the end of his term, which should have been until 1907". Luis Enrique Pérez Mota shares the opinion: "At the center of the discussion was former governor Emilio Rabasa and his political school: *rabasismo*. The recurrent challenges were concentrated on ruining his figure and his work at the head of the entity" (1994, pp. 15-16).

With the fall of General Díaz' administration, the problems for *rabasismo* are linked to the following factors:

1. Isolation of the entity from the federation and other states, a situation that allowed the consolidation of Rabasa as the moral political leader of Chiapas by virtue of his proximity to General Díaz' close collaborators, his relations with Chiapas' political groups - with the exception of the elites of San Cristóbal de Las Casas - and his recognized career as a jurist and politician.
2. The Maderista revolution, taken advantage of by a group linked to San Cristóbal to achieve the removal of Ramón Rabasa and promote the return of the powers and political control of the state to his locality. The main argument was the link between Emilio Rabasa and the General's regime. The group was linked to the church and used as pressure the support of the Catholic Party to Francisco I. Madero.
3. The revolutionary conflict following Madero's assassination. The armed conflict provided political groups with the opportunity to ascend to local power based on their demonstration of control over social groups and their relations with the central authority (federal government).

3 The discrepancies have their origin in the exercise of power. Pimentel made decisions contrary to Rabasa's interests.

In this national context, the struggle between the groups became more acute and triggered armed conflicts as the local executive power changed, as happened during the San Cristobal rebellion, under the argument that it was part of the *maderista* movement and placing the state government - as well as Rabasa and his friends - on the Porfirian side. Chiapas' press records this conflict in a timely manner.

Chiapas' newspapers were linked to three influential sectors among the population: the political, the academic-intellectual and the economic. Less importantly, with the church, represented by the bishopric. The role played by this institution was overshadowed by the course of national events.

### NEWSPAPERS, AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER

In *La prensa maniatada. El periodismo en Chiapas de 1827 a 1958*, Sareilly Martínez reports on the use of newspapers as instruments of political and ideological propaganda:

Of the 90 newspapers published in Chiapas, 67 were of a political nature; six specialized in jurisprudence, agriculture and education; five in literature; five in the organs of trade associations; four in schools; and four in the religious sphere. Of the 67 political newspapers, at least 20 were created to support candidates for elected office, because in those years the press performed the functions of a political party, promoting candidates and organizing its supporters. Some of those were: *El Iris*, *La Conciliación*, *El Chichicaste*, *El Eco Liberal*, *El Heraldo del Porvenir*, *El Demócrata*, *El Zurriago*, *El Voto Público*, *El Trueno*, *El Sentimiento Nacional*, *El Eco de la Frontera*, *El Dos de Abril*, *La Voz del Sur*, *La Voz del Pueblo*, *El Voto de Chiapas*, *El Eco de Comitán*, *El Club Popular*, *El 5 de Mayo*, *El Porvenir* and *La Idea Democrática*. It is not unusual, therefore, to observe that the period of greatest emergence of newspapers was during the years of electoral activity, and that it diminished after the political effervescence had passed. (2004, 109-110).

Newspapers allow the reconstruction of social networks and events in their temporal sequence because they register punctually certain events and characters. For example, in *El plan de San Luis*, in its edition of June 1, 1911 (pp. 1-2), an open letter is published that gives an account of the political group supporting Madero's candidacy for the presidency. In it, it is said that the delegation received by Don Francisco I. Madero was composed of "Juan Felix Zepeda, Jesus Martinez Rojas, Alfredo Aguilar, Justo M. Mijangos and Dr. Arturo Aguilar Ruiz".

The review in the HFCG of the press corresponding to the period 1901-1912 informs us about the mobility of those who led the newspapers, as can be seen in table 2. It can be seen that, for example, Juan F. (Félix) Zepeda,

the same person who was at the meeting with Madero, ran three newspapers at different times; another example is given by the director of *30-30*, Enrique (E.) Barroso, who had run *El Eco*, a printing house in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, and was also at the head of at least two other publications.

**Tabla 2**

*List of newspapers consulted from 1901 to 1912*

| Publish                         | Director                                      | City             |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------|
| <i>30-30</i>                    | E. Barroso                                    | Tuxtla Gutiérrez |
| <i>¡Adelante!</i>               | Juan Félix Zepeda                             | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>Chamula G</i>                | Isidro Torres                                 | México           |
| <i>Diario de Chiapas</i>        | E. Barroso                                    | Tuxtla Gutiérrez |
| <i>El Chiquitín</i>             | Jesús María Figueroa                          | Comitán          |
| <i>El Clavel Rojo</i>           | Porfirio Gordillo                             |                  |
|                                 | L. Flavio Avendaño                            | Comitán          |
|                                 | Gustavo Culebro                               |                  |
| <i>El cometa</i>                | Luis Espinosa                                 | México           |
| <i>El Eco</i>                   | Enrique Barroso                               | Tuxtla Gutiérrez |
| <i>El Estado</i>                | Juan F. Zepeda                                | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>Elevación</i>                | Delfino Coll                                  | Cintalapa        |
| <i>El gavián</i>                | Neftalí R. Soto                               | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>El gladiador</i>             | Neftalí R. Soto                               | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>El Heraldo de Chiapas</i>    | Bernardo L. Ríos                              |                  |
|                                 | Enrique Barroso                               | Tuxtla Gutiérrez |
|                                 | Lisandro Calderón                             |                  |
| <i>El hijo del pueblo</i>       | Hermilo López Sánchez y Genaro Ruiz de Chávez | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>El partido liberal</i>       | Raquel Cal y Mayor                            | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>El plan de San Luis</i>      | G. Coello Lara                                | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>El progreso</i>              | Juan J. Conde                                 | Tapachula        |
| <i>El pueblo obrero</i>         | Mariano Morales R.                            | Sin identificar  |
| <i>El voluntario</i>            | Cauhtémoc Maldonado                           | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>Francisco Cuscate</i>        | Ángel B. Coutiño                              | Tuxtla Gutiérrez |
| <i>¡Justicia!</i>               | Palemón Molina                                | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>La joven Chiapas</i>         | Aarón L. García                               | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>La libertad del sufragio</i> | Jesús Alfaro Mijangos                         |                  |
|                                 | César Martínez Rojas                          | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>La Opinión Pública</i>       | Federico Serrano                              | Not readable     |
| <i>La paz</i>                   | Alfonso María Martínez                        | Tuxtla Gutiérrez |
| <i>La Revista Chiapaneca</i>    | Manuel Suárez                                 | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>La unión liberal</i>         | Alfredo G. Cancino                            | Comitán          |

|                          |                   |                  |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <i>La voz de Chiapas</i> | Ramón E. Zepeda   | San Cristóbal    |
|                          | José Ma. Zepeda   |                  |
| <i>La verdad</i>         | J. W. Albores     | Comitán          |
| <i>Más allá</i>          | Juan F. Zepeda    | San Cristóbal    |
| <i>Verdad y justicia</i> | Lisandro Calderón | Tuxtla Gutiérrez |

Source: Elaborate from the information present in the printed included in the table

**Table 3**  
*List of politicians and local press*

| Name                      | Political activity   | Year           | Journalistic activity | Journal  | Year  |
|---------------------------|--|----------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| Juan Félix Zepeda         | Delegation of Chiapas endorsing the candidacy of Francisco I. Madero | 1911           | Director              | <i>¡Adelante!</i>  | 1910  |
|                           | Member of the Management Center of La Libertad de Sufragio           | 1911           | Director              | <i>El Estado</i>   | 1912-1913   |
|                           |  |                | Director              | <i>Más allá</i>  | 1910  |
| Jesús Martínez Rojas      | Delegation of Chiapas endorsing the candidacy of Francisco I. Madero | 1911           | Collaborator          | 1. <i>El hijo del pueblo</i> ,<br>2. <i>La voz de Chiapas</i> ,<br>3. <i>Más allá</i> , 4. <i>La libertad del sufragio</i> | 1. 1911-1912, 2. 1911.1912, 3. 1910, 4. 1911-1912 |
|                           | Federal Deputy for Chiapas   | 1911           | Collaborator          | 1. <i>El tribuno</i> , 2. <i>El boletín del centenario</i>   | 1. 1917, 1921                                     |
| Rafael Pimentel           | Governor of Chiapas  | 1899-1905      |                       |  |   |
|                           | Judge President of the Superior Court of Justice of Distrito Federal | 1888           | Collaborator          | <i>La revista chiapaneca</i>   | 1908  |
| Emilio Rabasa             | Governor of Chiapas  | 1891-1894      | Collaborator          | <i>Excélsior</i> , <i>El universal</i>   |   |
|                           | Senator  | 1894-1898-1910 |                       |  |   |
| Ramón Rabasa              | Governor of Chiapas  | 1905-1911      |                       |  |   |
| Querido Moheno            | Acting Governor  | 1911           | Collaborator          | 1. <i>El demócrata</i> , 2. <i>El porvenir de la Chontalpa</i> , 3. <i>Nuevo día</i>                                       | 1. 1880, 2. ¿?, 3. ¿?                             |
|                           | Secretary of Foreign Affairs   | 1913           | Director              | <i>Nueva era</i>   | 1911  |
|                           | Acting Governor  | 1911           |                       |  |   |
| Reinaldo Gordillo de León | Governor of Chiapas  | 1911-1912      |                       |  |   |
|                           | Municipal President of Comitán                                       | ¿?             |                       |  |   |
|                           | Ambassador to Guatemala  | 1913           |                       |  |   |



|                              |   |           |              |  |                       |
|------------------------------|---|-----------|--------------|--|-----------------------|
| Flavio A. Guillén            | Acting Governor                                     | 1912-1913 | Collaborator | <i>El imparcial</i>                                    | 1877-1878             |
|                              | President of the State Congress                     | 1901      |              |  |                       |
| Daniel A. Zepeda             | General Secretary of Government                     | 1902      |              |  |                       |
|                              | Local substitute deputy                             | 1896-1898 |              |  |                       |
|                              | Constituent representative of Querétaro             | 1917      |              |  |                       |
| José Antonio Rivera Gordillo | Alternate Federal Deputy for Chiapas                | 1900-1902 | Collaborator | 1. <i>El democrata</i> , 2. <i>El diario del hogar</i> | 1. 1880, 2. Siglo XIX |
|                              | Secretary of Government of the DF                   | 1911-¿?   | Director     | 1. <i>Chiapas y México</i> , 2. <i>La clase media</i>  | 1. 1908-1911, 2. ¿?   |
|                              | President of the Colonia Chiapaneca en el DF        | 1908      | Director     | <i>El mensajero chiapaneco</i>                         | 1911                  |
|                              | Under-Secretary of Public Instruction and Fine Arts | 1912      | Collaborator | <i>El heraldo de Chiapas</i>                           | 1908                  |
| Rubén Valenti                | Minister of Justice                                 | 1914      | Collaborator | <i>Savia moderna</i>                                   | 1906                  |
|                              |   |           | Redactor     | <i>El debate</i>                                       | ¿?                    |

Source: Elaborated from the consultation of the mentioned newspapers, government reports of the time (1901-1911) from the Historical Archives of Chiapas and from the book by Enrique Pérez Mota already mentioned.

Tables 2 and 3 show the relationships established between journalists, intellectuals and politicians, as well as the use that the latter made of the press to demonstrate influence in a society that was largely illiterate in those years.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the local press documents the dispute between citizens from Tuxtla Gutiérrez and those from San Cristobal over the seat of political power. The conflict also involved journalists and politicians from Comitán, as when the election of a new governor was called for in 1911 after the fall of the Porfirian regime and of Ramón Rabasa. The *Tuxlecos* supported the nomination of Reinaldo Gordillo de León, from Comitán. The people of San Cristóbal supported another important man of Comitán, José Antonio Rivera Gordillo. Other characters detected in this plot of relationships are the following:

- Emilio Rabasa
- Francisco Orozco y Jiménez (Bishop of San Cristóbal de Las Casas)
- Manuel Roveló Argüello
- Polycarp Wheel
- Juan Espinosa Torres
- Jacinto Pérez "Pajarito" (from San Juan Chamula)
- Víctor Manuel Castillo
- Flavio Guillén

Frictions are trying to be resolved in the center of the country, a practice inherited by political groups from the Díaz regime to the new public administration. As mentioned earlier, Chiapas politicians were coming to Mexico City to strengthen their positions and their networks with the groups in power at the federal level. The Chiapas colony was an institutional mechanism used for this purpose. Valente Molina (2014, p. 29)<sup>4</sup> gives a glimpse of how the figure of Emilio Rabasa became an obligatory reference during the Porfirio Díaz regime, confronted at the time by José Antonio Rivera Gordillo, also employed in Porfirio's administration and based in Mexico City, but ideologically opposed to the liberalism of Rabasa and the General:

That year Rivera published the magazine *Chiapas y México*, in whose first issue he vowed to keep the colony "united". He also announced that in his magazine he would speak "without detours or hesitations," and he did so, with constant criticism of the Rabasa brothers and other politicians, which caused several of his collaborators to abstain from writing for fear of reprisals.<sup>5</sup>

The evident confrontation in the press also impacts on literary creation. The local newspapers recorded the support or rejection of politicians. Since these sympathies and repudiations also appear in literary texts, it is understood that the authors of these texts did not fail to take sides either.

#### POETIC TEXTS IN THE LOCAL PRESS (1901-1912)

During the Colonial period, the inhabitants of Chiapas lived deprived of the benefits of the Guatemalan center of power, in addition to being mute observers of the wealth of their New Spanish neighbors. Their situation did not change in the 19th century, when the elites decided to incorporate the territory into the nascent Mexican nation. At the beginning of the 20th century, when the social conditions in the country changed due to the liberal interventionism of the centralist and authoritarian Porfirian government, most of the Chiapas population spoke an indigenous language and a very low percentage, almost non-existent, knew how to read and write.

In reviewing the local press, the participation of some prominent writers is noted, as well as the eminently political objective of the existing

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4 In the book *La colonia chiapaneca en el Distrito Federal. 1888-1950* tells the story of its establishment by Ángel Pola, from whom he rescues the names of the first members and friends who met to form it, among them Emilio Rabasa and José Antonio Rivera Gordillo.

5 Information located on page 77 of the book quoted, where Molina delves into two important facts: 1. The assumption of José Antonio Rivera Gordillo to the presidency of the group and 2. The first election made in the group. The result favors the person who becomes Rabasa's political rival.

publications in Comitán, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Tuxtla Gutiérrez and Tapachula, cities where more than two daily newspapers circulated.

Later in the 20th century, the appearance of writers of the stature of Rosario Castellanos, Jaime Sabines and Eraclio Zepeda, has not been explained taking into account the conditions of poverty and lack of education prevailing in the state. As a partial explanation of this phenomenon, it is necessary to consider that the press, at the end of the 19th century, was interested in demonstrating the existence of a social class educated to write poetry, essays, among other literary genres, and that it displayed a knowledge of local and international history, characteristics that help to understand the emergence of a group interested in literary creation.

Pressed by a centralist national policy, the press and the Chiapas elites modified their discourse to show strength and influence government decisions. The examples taken to illustrate how the social change generated by political events in the country affected the literary creation of those years cover the period from 1901 to 1912.

The following are some verses that show how the poetry changed from a late romanticism in 1901 to an ironic tone with a strong political and social criticism in 1911 and then, in 1913, to return to emotional or landscape themes.

The first example is offered by Comitán's newspaper *El clavel rojo*, of September 16, 1901, page 3, where a poem of epic tints is read, in rhymed verse, of two quartets and a quintet:

**Púrpura<sup>6</sup>**

*Para José Antonio Rivera G.<sup>7</sup>*

Enrique Torres Torija

En la arena del circo, rebosante  
de loca multitud que vocifera,  
el gladiador, cansado y anhelante,  
sucumbe entre las garras de la fiera.

Es grandiosa y solemne su agonía,  
como estética y grave su postura;  
sus músculos resultan con la fría  
desnudez de una trágica escultura.

6 In this as in the rest of the cited compositions, the typography is faithfully respected (italics or bold in the title) and original spelling mistakes are made.

7 José Antonio Rivera Gordillo is a central character in the conflict between the San Cristóbal de Las Casas group, with a Catholic background, and the group from Tuxtla Gutiérrez, with a rabasista lineup. The most visible dispute is the transfer of power, but there is little interest in the formation of a Catholic state and politics.

Y en tanto que la plebe palmotea  
 al Hercules [sic] muriente y taciturno  
 que fue vencido en desigual pelea,  
 la mirada del tigre centellea  
 como un ojo de cíclope nocturno.

The publication of poems dedicated to political figures and friends is frequent in the press of the time; other more sentimental and loving verses appear at the same time, like those in the following sonnet, with a musical touch in the rhyme and with Becquerian influences due to the charm of their images. Its author is Ranulfo Penagos and it was published in the newspaper *El heraldo de Chiapas* in its edition of June 4, 1908, page 3:

**Amor**

Deja que oprima con presión vehemente  
 tu airoso talle de palmera erguida,  
 y que mire en tus ojos encendida  
 la hoguera del amor más elocuente.

Deja que bese con mi labio ardiente  
 tu dulce boca, que a besar convida,  
 y que luego te vea conmovida  
 sintiendo el goce que mi pecho siente.

Yo quisiera, mi bien, entre tus brazos,  
 hayar [sic] la gloria de soñar cautivo  
 de tu acento el orgullo plañidero...

Ven! [sic] Que ya unidos con eternos lazos  
 sere [sic] inmortal, si para amarte vivo,  
 seré feliz, si por quererte muero! [sic]

The appearance of nature is perceptible in the following poem of a sentimental nature, a little out of date for its time, as Armando Duvalier (1969, p. 20)<sup>8</sup> says and which is, according to Jesús Morales Bermúdez (1997, p. 59), "A poetry that is resolved in meters and simple stanzas, in scarce images that are more descriptive than suggestive or audacious". Its author, José Emilio Grajales, a relative of the former governor of Chiapas from 1948 to 1952, is

8 In the presentation of the book *Flores Silvestres*, by José Emilio Grajales, Armando Duvalier says it as follows: "Although he lived when the modernist school was at its height, only some compositions, like *Cita* and *Las Ondinas*, should be catalogued within it, for he was a romantic in every sense of the word..."

also remembered among his countrymen for being the author of the lyrics of the Chiapas hymn. The verses were published in the newspaper *El Herald* *de Chiapas* on September 23, 1909, on page 3:

**En la montaña**

J. Emilio Grajales

*Al caer la tarde*

Las estrellas aparecen  
 Con sus fulgores de plata  
 En un cielo que embellecen  
 Nubecillas de escarlata.  
 En las hojas gime el viento,  
 Canta en su sonido el sinsonte  
 Ya soñado, y es su acento  
 Como un suspiro del monte.  
 Un carpintero en un roble  
 Haciendo de fuerza alarde,  
 Con un bélico redoble  
 Se despide de la tarde.  
 En pintoresca bandada,  
 Las guacamayas vistosas  
 Van cruzando la hondonada  
 De las lomas y zacatosas.  
 En la rama de un castaño  
 Corpulento y deshojado,  
 Con aire torvo y huraño  
 Un gavián se ha parado,  
 De un amate en la alta copa  
 Somnolienta y agrupada.  
 Ya la noche se avecina,

In view of the social events in Mexico, political changes are immediately perceived in Chiapas. Poems like the following one by Límbano Domínguez appear, of simple structure, with three stanzas in rhymed verses under the structure of quartets and also published in *El Eco*, on June 6, 1910, on page 2:

**Los tiranos**

Límbano Domínguez

Rara miseria que en la ley se escuda  
 Y perversa a los pueblos sacrifica:

Rara miseria cuya faz sañuda  
Con la sangre inocente se salpica.

Pronto sucumbirá, pues ya el oleaje  
De la emancipación rugiente avanza.  
Cual fuego vengador que á tanto ultraje  
A guerra sin cuartel presto se lanza.

Podeis [sic] temblar, que ufanos ya cantamos  
El triunfo del derecho redentor  
A cuya causa todos consagramos  
Ardiente patriotismo y mucho amor.

Compositions like the one above are rare because national events are heard late by the local population. The writers continue to make verse an exercise in entertainment, playful in its intention, as can be seen in the following example, published in the same newspaper on 19 June 1910, on page 3:

### Un consejo

Chema

Si quieres, buen amigo, hacer un trato,  
O pensares, por ventura hacer el oso,  
Anda luego a la casa de Barroso,  
A sacar de tu persona, un buen retrato.  
Y después, al pasar por la hostería,  
Del buen Paco, sin decirle cacarizo,  
Es preciso que le pidas un buen guiso,  
Sin pensar, que beber, es tontería,  
No te extrañe, si en la calle, o en su puerta,  
O sentado, devanándose los sesos,  
Encontrares algún “Chema” haciendo versos,  
Es mi viejo, buen amigo, Lucas Huerta.

With the fall of General Díaz and the rise of Madero, daily newspapers became the spokespersons for the conflict between the elite of San Cristóbal de Las Casas and that of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, apparently motivated by the transfer of power. Because of the fear they arouse, national issues are touched on elliptically, if not ignored. Meanwhile, the local issue is the main one.

The most important printed matter takes sides, as can be seen below. From San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Neftalí R. Soto -an ally of the San Cristóbal

cause, opposed to the *rabasista* political group from Tuxtla Gutiérrez -directs *El gavilán* on November 7th 1911. In the following verses, published on page 4, reference is made to Reinaldo Gordillo de León, who was identified as the Rabás candidate for state government that same year.

Hay gordos que son gordillos,  
 Y leones que no son leones;  
 Pero también hay caudillos  
 Tan bajos como tacones.  
 En la bella Comitán  
 Hay Gordillos y hay Domínguez  
 Para fregar?... [sic] con loco afán  
 Grita el pueblo no la... ensucies.

In Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the aforementioned side responds with humor in the *Chamula G* newspaper of December 15, 1911, page 1. The poem uses the figure of the "lion" to identify Reinaldo Gordillo de León as a character superior to the opposing group, represented by the "*chamulita*" of the verses. Remember that the attempt of the indigenous invasion of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, at that time, was led by a *chamula*.

Este era un chamulita  
 Que á las montañas salió  
 A cazar gubernatura  
 Con su perro bulldog,  
 Y como se encontrara con un león,  
 Trepóse a un guayabo  
 Do la vida escapó,  
 Más como el león le esperara,  
 En la punta se quedó,  
 Y el infeliz perrito  
 Cuando solo se vio  
 Al frente del leoncito  
 Tan bravo y tan feroz,  
 Retrocedió quedito,  
 Ocultándose, ¡Oh dolor!  
 En el tronco del guayabo  
 Do león ya no lo vió  
 Quien como meneara el rabo  
 Aquel allá se quedó.

¿Dónde, manito?  
 ¡Pos no pusiste cuidado al cuento!

As we can see, the poetic construction changes in form and content; the news shows abundant examples, some more successful than others. For this work, these poems and the following ones give strength to the argument handled so far: political events affect literary creation.

Before presenting more evidence on the central theme, an epigram is reproduced that insists on Emilio Rabasa's participation in the post-*porfirian* era. Signed by "Periquillo", this quartet of humorous verses clearly shows his antipathy to what was considered "*rabasista*" and is published in *El gavilán* of January 2, 1912, page 2:

En Tuxtla sembré, otro día,  
Una enorme calabaza;  
Y otra vez salió una guía  
De la dinastía Rabasa.

On December 3, 1911, the newspaper from Tuxtla Gutiérrez 30-30, in its page 2, exposes the Bishop of San Cristobal, Don Francisco Orozco y Jimenez, by linking him to the events and the conflict between the two sides, as it is read in this poem:

### Inocencia

Anónimo

La santa Sor Rosalía  
á la novicia Asunción  
en dulce conversación  
la otra noche le decía:  
El obispo es bondadoso,  
la libertad es su anhelo  
y tiene ganado el cielo  
por lo santo y piadoso.  
Tal es, que nunca aprisiona  
á un ave, ni en jaula de oro,  
pues cáusele pena y lloro,  
cuando sus cantos entona.  
La novicia que escuchaba  
como si escuchara un cuento,  
Madre, le dijo, lo siento,  
también como vos pensaba;  
pero hoy me dijo Fray Rito:  
(y al recordarlo me crispo)  
que el santo señor Obispo  
ya tiene su pajarito.



The news events occurred in 1910, 1911 and 1912; all related to the fall of Diaz, then of Madero and in the short time of Huerta at the head of the national executive power. Local groups took advantage of this situation to take political control or to keep it. The sides used different arguments; sometimes, the writers yearned for a less agitated past, as in the epigram signed by Fray Candil and published in the newspaper *30-30*, January 7, 1912, page 2, which continues the controversy between *tuxtlecos rabasistas* and religious *sancristobalenses*:

Más [sic] ¡hay! Aquellos [sic] tiempos de tan feliz memoria  
 Cual ondas se empujan, pasaron y no son.  
 Mis ojos vierten lágrimas al recordar la historia  
 Y ver cuán prostituida está la religión...

In 1912 the struggle between the two sides continued. At the same time, the authors showed their academic training and their knowledge of discursive and poetic techniques, as they dealt with different genres and styles. This is demonstrated by the use of argument, the breadth of vocabulary, regionalisms and, of course, humor. In the following poem these characteristics can be observed. Signed by "GUSTAVO", it was published in the *Francisco Cuscate* newspaper on April 11, 1912, page 4:

“AL GAVILAN”<sup>9</sup> [sic]  
 Mi cabeza parece un horno  
 Cuando me pongo a pensar  
 Lo fácil que es provocar  
 Un gramatical trastorno.  
 Porque yo hablo sin adorno  
 Y á la opinión le doy vuelo;  
 “Gavilán” me cree repelo,  
 Deje que me lea el que guste,  
 Y al que no lo guste el fuste  
 Y mi parodia un cuadro,  
 Que tire parodia y fuste  
 Y vaya y monte en su... abuelo.

With the arrival of General Bernardo Z. Palafox as governor of the state, local power groups are subdued and newspapers limit their political participation

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9 El gavilán was a newspaper published in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, directed by Neftalí R. Soto (table 2), a journalist and romantic poet.

to their role as instruments of communication of the government in power. In the poetic texts the open political belligerence disappears as well.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

The struggle for political power in Chiapas, as well as the dispute between San Cristóbal de Las Casas and Tuxtla Gutiérrez for the official residence of the state powers, generated a journalistic discourse that represented the competing elites and evidenced the relations between the intellectuals and the authorities who held power, a practice inherited for previous decades and continued in later ones.<sup>10</sup>

This fact seems contradictory when compared to the statistics of education in the state, however, the fact is explained by the promotion of social elites whose instruction was fundamental to recover lost spaces of power, as it happened in San Cristóbal de Las Casas. It should be remembered that the former Ciudad Real was the capital of the province of Chiapas, attached to the Captaincy General of Guatemala, a status it lost for various reasons and subsequently attempted to regain. To its misfortune, the socio-political conditions developed during the nineteenth century made new groups of power consolidate a different political context through the links established with the central power of the country. This is demonstrated, for example, by the epigram of *El gavilán*, from January 2, 1912, cited above. There, Emilio Rabasa, a prominent politician during Porfirio Díaz' regime and who knew how to maintain his relations in the following administrations, is identified as the enemy.

The above-mentioned verses offer a testimony about the political, intellectual and social relations still to be studied in more detail. They offer forms of representation of historical events such as the political struggles of the time, images billed by elites who sought to build, maintain or destroy political profiles. They also show how social and political life motivated the use of the poetic function of language among the journalists and intellectuals of the time, promoting the artistic development of writing. A line of creation that, years later, generated personalities that transcended local borders such as Rosario Castellanos or Jaime Sabines. In both cases, the context and practices provided opportunities for the development of creative skills through the press.

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10 See my articles: 2015 " La ficción y la poesía en la revista *Chiapas* " in Márquez Espinosa, Esaú and María del Rocío Ortiz Herrera (Eds.) *Sociedades encauzadas: geografía, historia y realidad*. Tuxtla Gutiérrez: Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas; and 2013 " Chiapas. La construcción de una élite cultural a través de la prensa " in Anuario 2012. Tuxtla Gutiérrez: Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas.

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