I CAN BEAT YOU

WITH ONE ARM

Alvaro Obregón
Background

• Came from a huge family; faced tragedy at 27
• Successful chickpea farmer by 1910
• Lighthearted, genial, romantic, likeable, creative, alert; amazing memory
• Dark side: Obsessed with death (376)
Reluctant Revolutionary

- Initially supported Diaz & didn’t join Madero → regret
- 1912 – Broke into military for Madero; amazing tactician (379)
- 1913 – Chief of the War Department in Sonora → Carranza named him Army Chief in NW
- Not flashy like Villa; Got Yaqui to follow him (380) → First to use air attacks EVER in 1914
- 8/11/14 – Entered MC w/ 18K troops; Revenge!
Mexico City under Obregon

- Punished Church & clergy (382)
- Punished rich Huertistas (382-83)
- Punished foreigners (383)
Villa

• After Carranza/Villa falling out, Obregon became Villa’s enemy
  – Visited him alone twice & left with his life b/c of his brilliant manipulation
  – 3rd time, he escaped death by switching trains
Brilliance

• 1914 – Attended Aguascalientes & made many friends from Convention, Villistas & Zapatistas

• Master in manipulating minorities
  – Recruited Red Battalions for Carranza → KRAUZE: “Halo of legitimacy from the proletariat” (384)

• 1915 – Easily defeated Zapatistas & crushed Villa at Celaya (200 casualties to 10,000)
“8000km Campaign” (387)

• June 1915 – Obregon lost his arm → attempted suicide, but was unsuccessful → decides to move on
• Trek against Orozco, Huerta, Zapata, Villa & Convention
  – Famous. Believes he won the Revolution, not Carranza
  – Goal to create a professional army
  – At Queretaro, est. himself as “most radical caudillo”; opportunist who supports what will win wins him accolades
Once a Chickpea Farmer…

- After 1917, he settled, remarried got fat, and rich
- Didn’t take himself seriously & told a lot of jokes
- Always looked toward Presidential Chair…
Et Tu? (389)

• …But Carranza wanted to end militarism, so he didn’t choose Obregon
• CROM – Umbrella labor union; allied w/ Obregon
• When Carranza supported Bonillas & plotted against Obregon ➔ Obregon staged coup
• 4/23/1920 – Carranza flees Mexico City; dies ➔ Adolfo de la Huerta becomes interim president
Obregon for Presidente!

- 6/1/19 – Manifesto for candidacy made no mention of Constitution; practicality > ideology (391)
  - Revolutionaries had become reactionaries w/ power
  - Need valid voting; peace at risk b/c the country couldn’t “liberate itself from the Liberators”
- National plebiscite to support his presidency
  - No social platform; econ – just encourage foreign inv.
  - Role of gov in econ: worker rights, but preserve capital
End of the Revolution

- De la Huerta brings peace, gets all revolutionaries to lay down guns; exiles return (Jose Vasconcellos)
- Dec. 1920 – Obregon becomes President
  – Socially liberal, economically conservative; more Porfirian than radical
Presidente Obregon

1. Department of Public Education – led by Vasconcellos & impacts remain today
2. Growth of fine arts & celebration of MEX identity – Diego Rivera, Frieda Kahlo, Jose Orozco, etc.
3. Lost favor with CROM (which was beyond Obregon’s control in the end) b/c he didn’t fully honor 1919 agreement
   – Respected strikes, Sundays off, etc.
4. Followed Constitution more than Carranza
   – Redistributed 5x more land than predecessors
5. Tense relations with Church, but wasn’t as bad as Calles
6. Conceded to foreign economic pressure & didn’t enforce Article 27 → sell-out (396)

7. Centralized power & suppressed opposition parties
   – Probably murdered his nephew, Benjamin Hill (PLC)
   – Hypocrite: Handpicked Calles to succeed him (397)
   – 1923 – More than half the army fought against him for de la Huerta
   – Essentially hunted his friends in Rebellion (398)
End of Obregon

- Went back to the farm when his term ended
- Allowed to run again in 1926 (for ’28) when Senate gives way to his ambitious maneuverings
- Essentially assassinated his opposition (401)
- 1928 – Re-elected & prepared for death (402)
- 7/17/1928 – Assassinated by radical Catholic