

MAXIMILIAN

THE RISE & TRAGIC FALL OF A CHRISTIAN MONARCH AND THE END OF WHITE RULE IN MEXICO

WAS MAXIMILIAN OF MEXICO a patsy for the globalists? Just a puppet of the French? Undoubtedly he meant well and was a compassionate ruler. But history has yet to render a final judgment on the character and reign of Maximilian, the second emperor of White Mexico. One thing is for sure: he was not the power-crazed madman that the mainstream has portrayed in television shows and books for over 150 years.

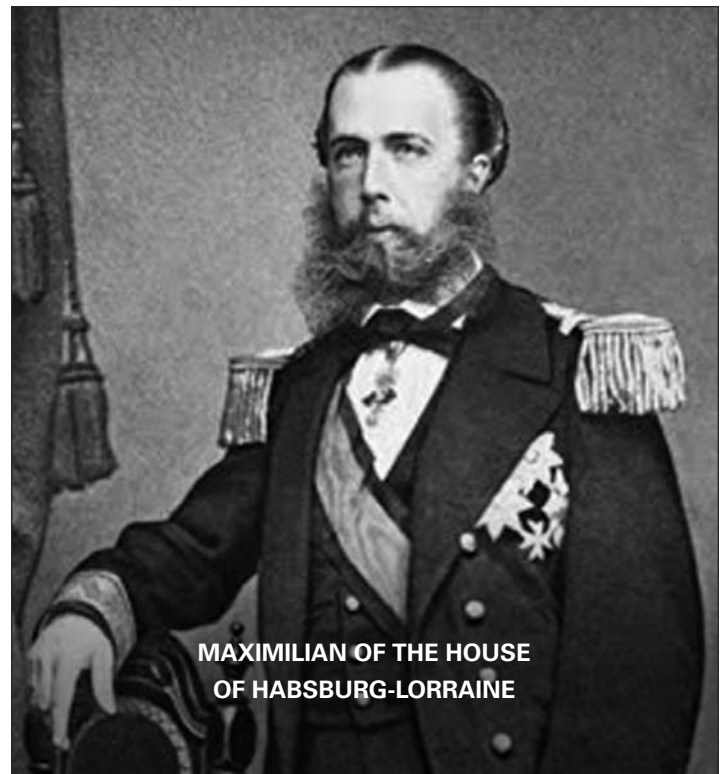
By John Tiffany

Most Americans have probably never heard of the second Mexican empire. If you go by Wikipedia, it never existed. The entry in *History of Mexico* says: “After a protracted struggle (1810-1821) Mexico declared its independence from Spain in 1821 via the Treaty of Cordoba. A brief period of monarchy (1821-23), called the first Mexican empire, was followed by the founding of the Republic of Mexico, established under a federal constitution in 1824. Mexico continues to be constituted as a federated republic.”

A tragic man was his imperial majesty Don Maximiliano I (Maximilian I although there was no second), by the grace of God and the will of the people, emperor of Mexico. And indeed the fate of his wife Charlotte of Belgium, known in Mexico as Empress Carlota, was almost as tragic.

Yet the ill-starred couple’s story is romantic and colorful as well as sad.

Americans tend to forget our southern neighbor once had emperors in the post-Aztec era. The first Mexican empire was ruled by Don Augustin de Iturbide, a sort of Mexican Napoleon if you will, but that’s a story for an-



MAXIMILIAN OF THE HOUSE
OF HABSBURG-LORRAINE

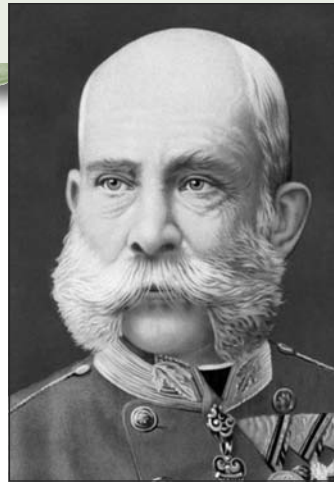
other time. We should mention that Augustin, who was of Basque blood, was declared a traitor and executed by a firing squad in 1824—a fact Maximilian should have taken careful note of.

One would think a king or emperor, by definition, could not be deemed a traitor; but this had happened to English King Charles I (Jan. 30, 1649).

Maximilian of Hapsburg is described as trusting, even gullible. Evidently he was not brought up right. He was idealistic. Some would call him a starry-eyed liberal. In other words, he was entirely the wrong man for ruling an unruly empire of discontented mestizos. Mexico needed



ARCHDUKE FRANZ KARL
Sired two emperors.



EMPEROR FRANZ JOSEPH
Maximilian's older brother.



EMPRESS CHARLOTTE
Maximilian's wife.



EMPEROR NAPOLEON III
French globalist.

a Mussolini, not a Little Lord Fauntleroy. On the plus side Maximilian was brave, personable and handsome, with a beard distinctively parted in the middle, at least when he was emperor, and stood 6 feet 2 inches tall. He spoke passable English and several other languages, including German, Hungarian, Spanish and some kind of Slavic. However, he was not as skilled with tongues as Carlota.

Maximilian was a complex man, whose early critics were often unable to understand his poetic sensibilities and artistic enthusiasms; they imagined he was effeminate possibly impotent. Later, in Mexico, ironically his enemies would denounce him as a libertine, a skirt chaser, a corrupter of public morals. You can't have it both ways, and neither view was accurate. In reality he was a mixture of vanity and idealism, bravery and weakness, pride and modesty.

Maximilian was born at beautiful Schoenbrunn Palace, a short distance outside Vienna, on July 6, 1832, the second son of Archduke Francis Charles, which made him the brother of the Austrian emperor, Franz Joseph. Although he grew up in splendid wealth, he received a liberal, cosmopolitan education. By an early age he had already traveled widely.

When old enough (22), he served his country well as commander of the imperial fleet and later as ambassador to Paris.

He took his duties seriously as admiral and established the port of Trieste. He also greatly reformed and expanded the fleet, undertaking several scientific expeditions (he was a great botanizer and lepidopterist) and circumnavigated the globe.

While ambassador to Paris he met and married the beautiful Princess Charlotte, the only daughter of Belgium's King Leopold I, on July 27, 1857. Seventeen years

old, she was a radiant bride that morning, and the attractive groom looked wonderful in the full dress uniform of an Austrian admiral, with the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece around his neck. The couple were utterly devoted to each other.

She wrote in a letter: "I could not be happier than I am. Max is perfection in every way."

This puts paid to the lying rumors of his political enemies about his adequacy as a husband. Charlotte was very much her father's daughter, with the strong appetites of the Coburgs, and for all her inexperience, Maximilian must have been a satisfactory husband to rank as "perfection" in her eyes. (Haslip, 101)

Also in 1857, Maximilian was sent as viceroy to the Italian province of Lombardy-Venetia, where he sought for two years to bring about liberal reforms and a conciliatory policy, unlike the harsh approach adopted by the Austrians after the 1848 revolution in Italy. But this

He was idealistic; some would call him a starry-eyed liberal. In other words, he was the wrong man for ruling an unruly empire of discontented mestizos. Mexico needed Mussolini, not Little Lord Fauntleroy.

aroused the ire of the court, which then assigned him to the Adriatic fleet.

Soon, however, he retired from public life (not forever, as it turned out). He visited the empire of Brazil, which he found enchanting, although he hated the institution of slavery that existed there, and returned to Austria, where he built the palatial castle of Miramar on his estates.

Meanwhile the liberals had taken over Mexico, and

many Mexican conservatives were in exile, attracted to the French court of Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III) and Empress Eugénie. Bankers hoping to milk Mexico's wealth allied themselves with these exiles and pressured Louis to help them take Mexico back. The liberals had canceled Mexico's debt, which Louis took as a pretext to invade, in 1862.

Monroe Doctrine or no Monroe Doctrine, the United States could not stop the Europeans (and the Europeans knew it), because U.S. armed forces had their hands full fighting the Confederate States of America at the time. And the Confederacy saw no reason to worry about the situation in Mexico as long as it did not pose a threat.

After securing the important coastal city of Veracruz, the French sent a 6,000-man army toward Mexico City in the interior. But on May 5, 1862, the liberal Mexicans defeated the French force at Puebla with a loss of almost 1,000 French troops. No one really knows how many fought on the Mexican side, with guesses ranging from 4,500 to 12,000. Mexico lost a mere 230 killed or wounded in the battle.¹

France next sent an army of 40,000, under Gen. Frédéric Forey, who reorganized his forces and took Puebla in May 1863. He entered Mexico City on June 10 to the cheers of the clergy and remaining conservatives.

To the conservatives and the French, Maximilian was just the man to cement their victory. A junta of conservatives in Mexico City declared a monarchy and offered him the crown of Mexico.

Maximilian wavered a bit. Some advisers thought it better to decline; but Charlotte was more ambitious than Maximilian and pressured him to accept the offer. He was more inclined that way anyhow, and so he did accept, on April 10, 1864.

Before leaving Austria, Maximilian renounced any claim to the Austrian crown and made a pact with the French, the Treaty of Miramar, in which Louis promised to keep troops in Mexico until the end of 1867; Maximilian in return promised to pay all costs of the intervention, and all prior debts due England, France and Spain, or the bankers thereof, including the exorbitant Jecker loan—bonds extorted by a greedy Swiss banker from the Mexican conservatives in the 1850s.

Jecker was partners with the duc de Morny. French bankers then floated Mexican loans. By his first actions, Maximilian had already tripled Mexico's already exorbitant external debt.

Maximilian then visited the pope but did not promise to return church lands that had been confiscated by the liberals. The pope was not pleased.

The royal couple set sail in May 1864, expecting to be welcomed by their new subjects. Maximilian passed his time on the trip composing a 600-page book on court etiquette.

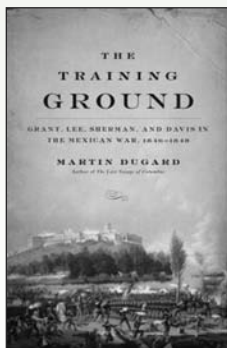
They reached Veracruz, a liberal hotbed, on May 28 and were greeted with such coldness that they had to dine aboard the ship. There was no reception committee.

Benito Juarez, a liberal leader who was a full-

RECOMMENDED READING ON THE MEXICAN WAR

The Training Ground

*Grant, Lee, Sherman & Davis
in the Mexican War, 1846-1848*



For four years during the Civil War, Gen. Grant and Gen. Lee clashed as bitter enemies in a war that bloodied and scorched the American landscape. Yet in an earlier time, they had worn the same uniform and fought together.

In *The Training Ground: Grant, Lee, Sherman & Davis in the Mexican War, 1846-1848*, acclaimed historian Martin Dugard presents the saga of how, two decades before the Civil War, a group of West Point graduates—including Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, Jefferson Davis, Stonewall Jackson and William Tecumseh Sherman—fought together as brothers. Drawing on a range of primary sources and original research, Dugard paints a gripping narrative of the Mexican War, which

eventually almost doubled the size of the U.S.

The Training Ground vividly takes us into the thick brush of Palo Alto, where a musket ball narrowly misses Grant but kills a soldier standing near him; through the mountains and ravines of Cerro Gordo, as Lee searches frantically for a secret route into the Mexican army's seemingly invincible position; to Monterrey, as future enemies Davis and Grant ride together into battle; down the California coast, where war-hungry Sherman seeks blood and vengeance. And we are there as the young troops mount the final heroic—and deadly—assault on Mexico City. With narrative verve and brilliant research, *The Training Ground* brings to light a story of brotherhood, sacrifice, and initiation by fire.

Training Ground: Softcover, 464 pages, #562, \$23 minus 10% for TBR subscribers plus \$5 S&H in the U.S. Order from TBR, P.O. Box 15877, Washington, D.C. 20003 or call 1-877-773-9077 toll free to charge, Mon.-Thu. 9-5. You may also purchase the book online at www.barnesreview.com.

blooded Zapotec Indian from the mountains above Oaxaca, had earlier been elected president of Mexico (March 1861) and fancied himself as a dictator, modeled after Abraham Lincoln. Juarez and his allies, such as Gen. Juan Alvarez, immediately declared they would do battle with the invaders, which they considered Maximilian and his entourage to be.

When at length they got to Mexico City, at last the royals received a convincing show of support. And most foreign governments, with the conspicuous exception of the United States, immediately recognized Maximilian's government. At any rate, Maximilian and Carlota had high hopes for success.

Maximilian adopted Mexican garb and customs. This would be his great opportunity, he believed. He would be the savior of Mexico and open a new era of enlightened monarchy in the New World. He would be grand without being remote, dignified without being snobby; he would stand apart and unite the feuding factions, bring unity out of division, order out of chaos, advancement from stagnation, prosperity from penury. His dreams for Mexican greatness were boundless. He would establish peaceful relations with the United States and the empire of Brazil. Imperial Mexico would expand into Central America on his vision and he would build a powerful navy that would rule the Gulf of Mexico. As the U.S.A. dominated North America and the Brazilian empire dominated South America, his Mexican empire would balance the two by dominating the middle. He would make Mexico City the most magnificent city in the world.

Such were his dreams, and they seemed reasonable at the time. But in reality he had no chance.

Instead, his impartiality and fair mindedness often succeeded in making enemies of both sides. The gulf between conservatives and liberals was too wide, and Mexicans were not inclined to compromise.

Furthermore, in the view of the liberals, he was too much a puppet of the French.

The French army dominated the Mexican empire. Gen. Francois Achille Bazaine, Louis's proconsul, took his orders directly from Paris and spent imperial Mexican funds recklessly. Mexican officials, even if of pure Spanish blood, were treated with contempt, like the redcoats had treated American officers and privates in America. Frenchmen took over the treasury and customs revenues.

Almost immediately, Maximilian angered his church allies by officially refusing to restore confiscated church lands and the clerical courts. He alienated conservatives by trying to win the support of the liberals; he even spoke of far-reaching religious reforms, which concerned the Roman church. Clerical support dropped off.

Maximilian dreamed of expanding the new Mexico, to take in Central America, which had been part of the former emperor's realm. He believed the advance of the French army into Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas fore-



Early Mexican History

After the Spaniards conquered the Aztecs in 1521, their new colony, which we would call Mexico but they preferred to call New Spain or Nueva España, grew to include Guatemala, most of Central America and the future Southwest United States. Spain would rule this colony for almost 300 years, extracting vast amounts of gold and some silver from the conquered people.

The precious metal proved as much of a curse as a blessing, as unwise Spanish leaders quickly squandered it and then turned to the bankers for interest-bearing loans to fight needless wars, taking Spain from wealth to debt servitude.

In 1810, Mexico revolted under Jose Maria Morelos and a priest named Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla. Estimates say the native population shrank from 10 or 12 million in 1521 to about 1 million by 1650, thanks mainly to measles and smallpox, to which the native Indians had no immunity.

Spain alienated not only the Indians but also the native-born White people, favoring Spanish-born men for plum government positions in Mexico. Also, taxes were ruinously high. Still, Mexicans remained loyal until Napoleon conquered Spain and put the king in prison. Mexicans concluded the only thing to do was to declare a limited independence so as not to be ruled by France, hoping that the Spanish royals would be restored someday, and then things could go back to what Mexican monarchists considered normal. ♦

shadowed the final defeat of Juarez.

As the year of 1864 wound down to an end, Maximilian remained full of optimism. He felt Mexico was free of the decadence of old Europe. But Louis was realizing he had made a bad bargain in establishing Maximilian on the throne of Mexico. In areas apparently pacified, war would spring up again as guerrilla war.

Many guerrilla leaders were legendary, even proud, bandits. The French struck at these bands with counter-guerrilla measures of their own, and terrorism was the rule of the day for both sides. Col. Jean-Charles Dupin, infamous for his conduct of the Mexican civil war, was recalled to France on that account but insisted he had been quite merciful to his adversaries whom he had hanged by the neck until dead. The enemy *bandoleros*, he explained, were uncivilized and strung up their cap-

tives upside down and facing the Sun to die of thirst. (Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley, *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, 2000, 387)

In April 1865, Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox; the War for Dixie Independence was drawing to a close, except for a few isolated events like the stunning exploits of the *CSS Shenandoah*. Now the Yankees would feel free to move against the French in Mexico.

Napoleon was disillusioned by the bad financial news from Mexico, and began to consider some degree of withdrawal from this adventure (Krauze, Enrique, *Mexico: Biography of Power*, HarperCollins Publishers, 1997, 182). With naive optimism, Maximilian was unconcerned, feeling his regime could win the support of the United States.

Oddly, Maximilian understood his military situation was deteriorating rapidly. Juarista troops and assorted guerrillas were fighting in the states of Michoacan, Jalisco, Sinaloa and Nuevo Leon. None of his victories seemed to endure.

Maximilian was not stupid or ignorant. He had reliable information on the strategic situation but saw it from the wrong perspective and failed to draw the logical conclusions. Perhaps we can attribute this to the fact that he was at heart a liberal himself.

He came up with what seemed to him a bright idea: He would adopt a young grandson of Agustin de Iturbide as successor to the throne (seemingly Maximilian was sterile). Clearly he expected his dynasty to be around for a good long while.

Sept. 16, 1865 rolled around, the anniversary of Mexican independence, and what mattered most was still in place: Maximilian continued to have the support of Napoleon. But the French leader kept sending a stream of advice, criticism, reprimands and veiled warnings. Maximilian gave a patriotic speech at one of the Independence Day celebrations, stealing the thunder of Benito Juarez and other liberals.

Maximilian sincerely wished to make the Mexican people happy; he had adopted them like he had the child Agustin. Maximilian and Carlota desired to be considered as much Mexican as anyone else.

But in October came a harsh decree (inspired by Bazaine), called the Black Decree. Anyone suspected of belonging to an armed band could be executed by order of a military court. Essentially when Maximilian signed this decree, he signed his own death warrant, as his enemies could never forgive him for granting Bazaine discretionary power over the life or death of the civilian population.

Maximilian thought Juarez was practically finished, holed up on the American border and controlling only a

small bit of territory. He sought to neutralize him once and for all by offering him the plum job of chief justice of the supreme court. But Juarez wouldn't go for it. He wanted all of Mexico, and he expected to get it.

Maximilian boasted that by now "the empress and I were completely Mexicanized."

Then bad news arrived. On January 15, 1866, Napoleon had decided to withdraw his troops from Mexico; within 12 months they would all be gone. Napoleon was faced with pressure from the United States and threatened by Prussia (Prussia would defeat Austria at the Battle of Sadowa, July 3, 1866); public opinion in France was against continuing the intervention; and there was the problem of gross mismanagement of funds in Maximilian's empire and the parasitical bankers.

It was the beginning of the end, although Maximilian could not see it. Without French troops his government could not sustain itself against Juarez and his Yankee allies. Not entirely deluded, he did start to waver: Should he seek support from Britain? Should he abdicate?

Carlota was furiously against abdication, viewing it as a defeat and dishonor to her lineage. She acted decisively.

She determined to go to Europe and speak personally to Napoleon's wife Eugénie, to Napoleon, and to the pope, Pius IX, who had blessed Maximilian and Carlota when they had set off for Mexico, but was very displeased when Maximilian failed to reverse the anti-clerical measures instituted by Juarez. Carlota failed to persuade Napoleon and his wife to keep French troops in Mexico, and failed in turn with the pope. While staying in the Vatican

(she and her assistant were the first women to stay the night there), she had a mental breakdown and became completely paranoid, convinced someone was trying to poison her. She would eat nothing but the foods prepared for the pope himself.

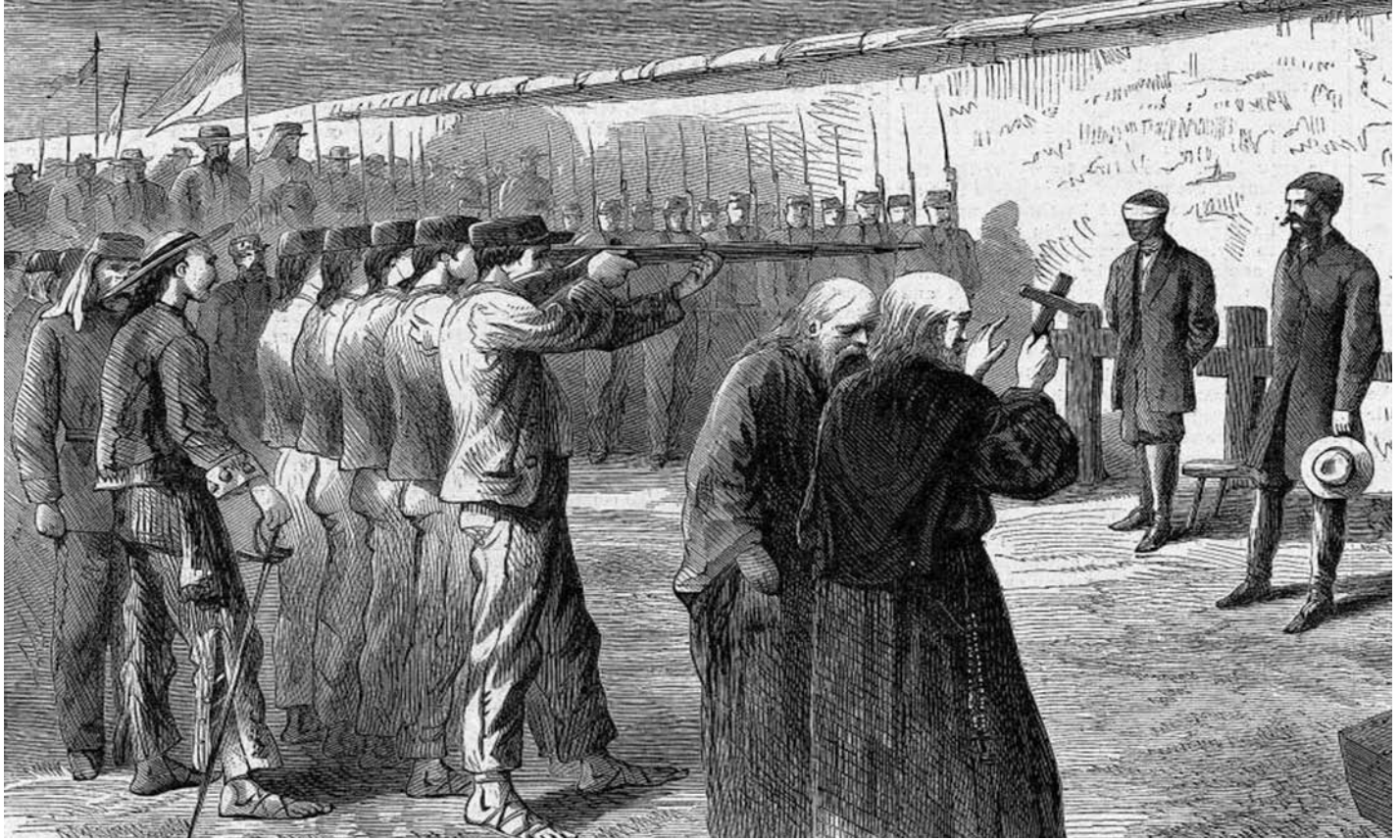
"I suppose," wrote Juarez ironically to a loyalist governor, "you will be very saddened by the departure of Mama Carlota. . . . This hurried departure of the so-called empress is a clear symptom of the disintegration of Maximilian's throne."

Maximilian was ready now to abdicate. He issued a decree repealing the Black Decree of Oct. 3, 1865, that permitted summary executions, but it was too late. (Several high-ranking liberal leaders had been executed under the Black Decree on Oct. 21.)

"Leave, leave that country," a loyal friend in Havana advised, "because in a few weeks time it will become a theater for the bloodiest of civil wars."

The Juaristas had Gen. Mariano Escobedo and other liberal commanders advancing from the north, Porfirio Diaz from the state of Oaxaca in the south, Ramon Co-

"Maximilian gave a patriotic speech at one of the Independence Day celebrations, stealing the thunder of Juarez and others."



Even though urged by many—including Napoleon III—to abdicate and flee Mexico, Catholic Emperor Maximilian refused to abandon his followers. He fought on but was captured and sentenced to death. Telegrams and letters poured into Mexico asking that his life be spared, but Benito Juarez, the full-blooded Zapotec leader of the liberals, would not bend. Maximilian's last words before the firing squad: "May my blood, which is about to be shed, be for the good of the country. Viva Mexico! Viva la independencia!"

rona in the west and Nicola Regules and Riva Palacio in the state of Michoacan. The republicans (liberals) had been winning victories since 1865.

Maximilian was unsure at this point; he decided he would not go until he could leave peace and order behind him in Mexico, which unfortunately was impossible under the circumstances.

He agreed with his mother, who had written him with tears in her eyes saying ". . . in spite of everything, I am obliged now to hope you will stay in Mexico as long as possible and that you can do it with honor."

Maximilian had fits of optimism. His State Council of the five M's—Miguel Miramon, Tomas Mejia, Ramon Mendez, Leonardo Marquez and Maximilian—decided to march their conservative army to Queretaro, under siege now for 70 days. But the reinforcements promised by Marquez never arrived thanks to a defeat handed them at Puebla by Gen. Porfirio Diaz and the cowardice of Marquez himself, whose fate was to die in bed in 1913, about 50 years after his comrades in arms.

Marquez's failure to act broke Maximilian's spirit; he began to seek an encounter with the redemptive bullet. Still he had hopes of survival. Perhaps he could make his way back to Miramar, and write his memoirs.

Taken prisoner, he surrendered his sword to Gen. Escobedo. As he sat in his prison quarters that night, he

could hear the liberal soldiers in their camps in the distance singing "Adios, Mama Carlota." Mendez having already been shot, Juarez ordered the courts-martial of Miramon, Mejia and Maximilian. All were assigned high-quality liberal lawyers. Maximilian refused to attend his trial, denying that the court had any jurisdiction over him.

Maximilian instead sent noble telegrams to Juarez, who, he thought, would show him mercy.

Even the U.S. representative would appeal to Juarez, and Garibaldi of Italy, the noted liberal, tried as well. A seductive European princess even threw herself at Juarez's feet. The wife of Miramon entreated Juarez to spare the prisoners' lives. But nothing would move that stony heart; nothing could soften that vindictive soul.

Even with death staring him in the face, Maximilian looked for the silver lining. He commented to the physician who attended him: "I am happy; Altamirano has told me that the liberal government will retain some of my laws."

So it was that on June 19, 1867, on a place called the Hill of the Bells outside of Queretaro, the emperor of Mexico, 35, together with Mejia and young Miramon, met the most Mexican of deaths: execution by the firing squad.

Juarez arrived at Queretaro in his trademark black coach and viewed the body of the emperor. He callously

commented that he merely had short legs.

Maximilian could never face the obvious facts of his paradoxical position as a liberal in a country already ruled by liberals; nor how he had been misled by the Mexican monarchists and used by the French. For him it seemed better to continue deceiving himself, to accept the calls to honor from his family, from his mother, from Vienna. It was better to die. ♦

ENDNOTE:

1 Strange as it seems, the Mexicans have celebrated the “cinco de Mayo” ever since, more so than the actual Mexican Independence Day (Sept. 16, 1810 the day of the *Grito de Dolores* (“cry” or “shout” of Dolores, a small town near Guanajuato). A speech by the priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, who would pay with his life for it, was a Mexican declaration of independence from Spain, which started an 11-year war. Hidalgo, a respected priest, was also an unconventional one, with a love of gambling and a rejection of celibacy. Radically, his declaration not only called for the end of Spanish rule in Mexico but also the redistribution of land and racial equality. Not a nice guy, he called for the death of all Spaniards (except himself) and succeeded in killing many Spaniards in the central state of Guanajuato. Surprisingly his actions are ceremoniously repeated annually by the current Mexican government. He later abolished slavery in his liberated territory. Hidalgo died by execution—a common fate in Mexico, and well deserved in his case. His head was placed on display for 10 years as a warning to other insurgents.

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JOHN TIFFANY is an assistant editor of THE BARNES REVIEW. He has for decades been interested in diverse ethnic groups, ancient history, mathematics, science, real-life conspiracies and the problem of crime in our government. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from the University of Michigan and has studied comparative religions and mythologies.

The Anarchic Political Quagmire That Is Mexico Today

By John Tiffany

Back in 1938, U.S. journalist George Creel wrote: “Our southern neighbor, harried by debt and mismanagement, is plunging toward chaos. Only the United States can save her.” Actually this has been the history of Mexico since the fall of the benevolent Christian Emperor Maximilian and the rise of the often Red-leaning mestizo ruling class, and it has only gotten worse. With America following the same path to ruination, it is highly questionable whether we can or should continue to bail out our hostile neighbor.

Mexico has been taking advantage of America for decades by manipulating our pathological gullibility and generosity, sending millions of its own unwanted population across the border to leach off of our welfare system and vote Democratic. The “drug trade,” fueled by America’s insatiable demand for illegal drugs and marijuana, has led to the rise of ruthless crime cartels that have terrorized the good people of northern Mexico and the United States. Readers will recall the discovery of the burned bodies of 28 student protesters just outside the city center of Iguala, Mexico in 2014—kids who went missing after a protest over hiring practices at the Ayotzinapa Normal School turned violent and policemen opened fire on the demonstrators.

Corrupt cops arrested and took away a number of students, never too be seen alive again. At other times, Mexicans crossing the border have killed law-abiding U.S. citizens. In Mexico itself, law enforcement officers have been beheaded by the drug crime mobs. Ann Coulter in her book *Adios, America* reported how criminal Edgar Jimenez Lugo, a U.S. citizen and “anchor baby” originating in Mexico, beheaded four men and hung their bodies off a bridge south of Mexico City. U.S. officials were unable to stop him from re-entering America after serving less than three years in a Mexican prison, because he was born in San Diego to an illegal alien mother.

“[O]ur anchor baby policy is based on the mental delusions of one Supreme Court justice [Walter Brennan],” she wrote. Illegal immigration—mainly from anarchic Mexico—is crushing America. The mass media is helping the leftists cover up Mexico’s crimes, including beheadings. Coulter warns that the practice has been going on in Mexico for years, and has now crossed into the United States. Strangely the press focuses exclusively on Muslim beheadings. Coulter says supposed videos of beheadings in the Middle East in fact have taken place in Mexico.

Notorious murderer Lugo is now believed to be living in Texas.

One can only wonder what Mexico today would be like if it had remained under European rule. ♦