Beyond the "Bloody Race War": How Print Media Shaped the Cananea Strike and Pre-Revolutionary Mexico

Anthony Sales-Hernandez

As reports from Cananea emerged on June 1, 1906, *The Mexican Herald* boldly claimed, "News has been received here from Cananea, Mexico of a bloody race war."[1] This sensationalist report from the Mexican government's English-language newspaper exemplified a broader trend in early twentieth-century journalism: state-supported Mexican and American outlets employed yellow journalism to captivate and shock their audience. But what was the true nature of the events that unfolded in Cananea? Was it a "race war," or a labor conflict driven by Mexican workers' demands for equality amidst racial tensions and the dominance of American capital? The media's power to shape public perception underscored the crucial role of print in pre-revolutionary Mexico, amplifying political tensions and setting the stage for broader social upheaval.

The Cananea mine strike of 1906 resulted in the deaths of both American and Mexican workers, eliciting a swift and forceful response from the Mexican government.[2] Occurring on the eve of one of the first uprisings against American capital, the strike underscored the power of print journalism in shaping public perception. Through an analysis of newspapers from the United States and Mexico, this paper argues that control over print media shaped and influenced political support, protected US investments, and strengthened Porfirio Díaz's authoritarian grip. As dissent grew, independent outlets outside the regime's control highlighted the immense political power of print. These independent and powerful outlets swayed public opinion and laid the groundwork for revolution against Díaz and American interests.

Cananea, as a case study, allows me to highlight the power of print as an indicator of the labor conflict between Mexican and American capital. *The New York Times* showcases the sensationalized

1 "Strike, Race Riot and Fire Are Reported at Cananea," *Mexican Herald*, June 2, 1906, Latin American Newspapers.

2 This mining strike highlighted the growing discontent among Mexican laborers, shaped by the racial tensions and inequalities of the Porfiriato period.

reporting of US-based outlets. This research covers the media coverage from pro-capital Mexican outlets such as *El Imparcial* and *The Mexican Herald*. This paper also includes coverage from *El Clarín del Norte*, a newspaper based in Texas aimed at providing more accurate news to Mexican nationals in the borderlands.[3] Its front-page tagline, "Defender of Border Interests," underscored its intention to provide accurate news on Mexican affairs. By comparing these varied sources, this paper analyzes how each outlet framed the Cananea strike, focusing on the differences in tone and audience.

Print media influenced intellectual and working-class culture, helping to propel Mexico into the social uprising that began by 1910.[4] By the end of the nineteenth century, Mexico's national literacy rate was seventeen percent, with print media shaping public opinion and fostering political and social movements.[5] In the era of the Porfiriato, print played a significant role, serving as the primary method of information dissemination in a society where reading was often communal.[6] While Corinna Zeltsman's work focuses primarily on domestic print culture, my research expands on her scope by including transnational networks of information. *The Mexican Herald* and *El Imparcial* influenced public opinion in and outside Mexico. The Díaz regime used both newspapers to influence public opinion. Foreign outlets, like El Paso's *El Clarín del Norte*, operated beyond the regime's censorship and transported copies into towns like Cananea. Both played a crucial role in fostering solidarity and resistance in the borderlands and Mexico.

During the early twentieth century, individuals subscribed to very few newspapers. Nevertheless, newspapers were often translated and shared among communities. This allowed information to spread, regardless of language or literacy. Weber highlights the various groups that supported workers' rights, like the International Workers of the World (IWW) and the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM). Both organizations operated smaller outlets that efficiently distributed their periodicals, such as *La Regeneración* and *Industrial Workers*. These publications underscored the transnational

3 *El Clarín del Norte* was a working class-oriented outlet and held strong opinions about the Díaz regime.

4 Corinna Zeltsman, *Ink under the Fingernails: Printing Politics in Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (University of California Press, 2021), 5.

5 Zeltsman, *Ink under the Fingernails*, 17.

6 The Porfiriato is a term commonly used to describe Mexican President Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship.

nature of information dissemination.[7] For example, Weber cites a miner in Arizona who subscribed to both of the aforementioned papers and spread translated copies in Chihuahua.[8] Through this, workers in Mexico and abroad had access to information not controlled by the state, which frequently used local papers to spread propaganda. Independent outlets educated workers and facilitated discussions within working-class communities, leading to increased political activity. *El Clarín del Norte* reported the perspective of a longtime subscriber who witnessed the Cananea Strike, recording its peaceful origin and the violence that later ensued. These information networks swayed the perception of the working class and helped mobilize communities.[9] This research offers a broader understanding of the role of print in pre-revolutionary Mexico's labor movements.

The interplay between grassroots information networks and independent outlets displays the broader struggle against Díaz's regime, as transnational workers used print to create resistance networks. In pre-revolutionary Mexico, Porfirio Díaz wielded the power to shape public opinion through his manipulation of the press. This, in turn, was used to maintain political support for his regime and prioritize American capital's interests. Ricardo Flores Magón and his brother Jesús began the *La Regeneración* newspaper in 1900. It advocated for a return to clean elections, a free press, and term limits, all of which Díaz opposed.[10] Their public stance against Díaz resulted in their imprisonment. By 1904, they ended up in Texas, becoming print revolutionaries. The Magón brothers continued their fight against Díaz by printing in the United States, allowing for a transnational network of information that reached the borderlands and eventually spread to places like Cananea.

7 Devra Anne Weber, "Wobblies of the Partido Liberal Mexicano: Reenvisioning Internationalist and Transnational Movements through Mexican Lenses," *Pacific Historical Review* 85, no. 2 (2016). Weber demonstrates how print media transcended borders, linking information dissemination between the United States and Mexico.
8 Weber, "Wobblies of the Partido Liberal Mexicano," 192.
9 This transnational flow of information challenged Díaz's regime, a dimension overlooked in Zeltsman's analysis.
10 Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Bad Mexicans: Race, Empire, and Revolution in theBorderlands*, (WW Norton & Co, 2023), 69. Hernandez emphasizes the strength of the Porfiriato and its careful efforts to suppress media against his regime.

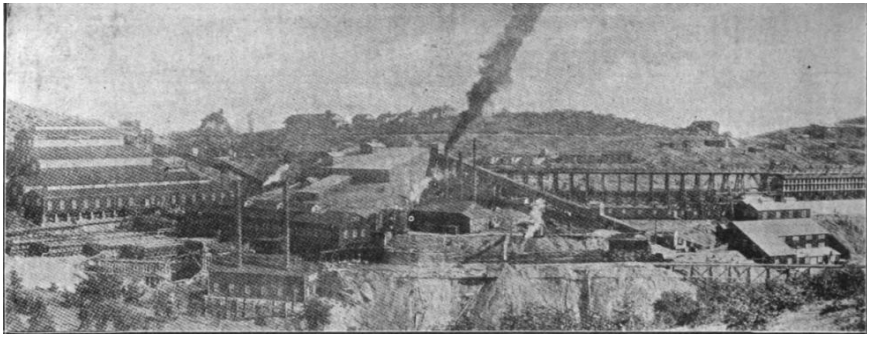

Figure 1: Concentrating Plant, Cananea Consolidated Copper Company. From Francisco Trentini, The Prosperity of Mexico (Mexico City: Bouligny & Schmidt Sucs., Printers and Engravers, 1906), 238.

Mexican immigrants and those exiled by the Díaz regime helped establish an information network not penetrable by Díaz's government.

To understand the miners' motivations, it is important to consider the larger context of the Mexican Revolution.[11] On June 1, 1906, the Mexican laborers at Cananea went on strike, which paralyzed the mines (Figure 1) and challenged some of the most powerful capitalists in the world.[12] Lives were lost, and the response was swift and brutal. This was the first major Mexican strike since the 1900 strike in Puebla, and was quickly followed by more strikes in places such as Rio Blanco and San Luis Potosí. This chain reaction of strikes was caused by the public's distrust of the regime's ability to protect its citizens, border, and resources. By 1910, Cananea and the battleground within print had catapulted Mexico into revolution.[13]

11 For a more in-depth understanding of scholarship on the Mexican Revolution, see Rodney Anderson, *Outcasts in Their Own Land: Mexican Industrial Workers, 1906–1911*, (Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), x x; Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato, Industry and Revolution: *Social and Economic Change in the Orizaba Valley, Mexico*, (Harvard University Press, 2013), 269–70; John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*, (University of California Press, 2002), 148; John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution*, (University of California Press, 1988), 66; W. Dirk Raat, *Revoltosos: Mexico's Rebels in the United States, 1903-1923*, (Texas A&M University Press, 1981), 91.

12 Francisco Trentini, "Concentrating Plant, Cananea Consolidated Copper Company, 1906," in *The Prosperity of Mexico*, (Bouligny & Schmidt Sucs., Printers and Engravers, 1906), 238.

13 By 1910, American real estate holdings totaled over one hundred million, containing some of the nation's most valuable, resource-rich

In 1876, Porfirio Díaz became the president of Mexico, a position he would hold until the Mexican Revolution in November 1910. When he became president, Mexico suffered from widespread banditry and lack of infrastructure. Díaz's goal was to change this by making Mexico a nation of order and progress. To do this, he ruled with an iron fist, suppressing the bandit economy and inviting large amounts of foreign investment. The latter led to a massive increase of American influence within the nation as Americans were allowed to finance railroads, extract resources, and exploit laborers, resulting in something known as an "enclave economy." The labor provided to these US elites planted seeds of discontent among Mexico's citizens, which was exacerbated by an existing history of exploitation rooted in the Spanish colonial era.[14]

Porfirio Díaz commissioned *The Prosperity of Mexico*, glamorizing his efforts to increase foreign investment. The paper itself showcases official Mexican print media's bias towards the Díaz regime, and its language provides insight into the situation at Cananea. *The Prosperity of Mexico* described the mine as having the cleanest and healthiest hospital in Mexico. The Greene company was said to have looked after the health and happiness of its employees, providing them with a ballroom, reception room, billiard room, cardrooms, and library. The November 10 issue states, "The workers of Cananea produce the material which adds to the activity, comfort and happiness of millions of people, while they themselves are able to enjoy notonly freedom but many comforts and luxuries unknown to the ordinary class of workmen."[15] In reality, the miners

---

land. The Mexican Revolution occurred for a number of reasons, as it took a constructive collaboration from the working class, provincial and local elites, urban and industrial workers, and peasant forces to overthrow the Porfiriato. The Cananea Strike of 1906 fought for an eight-hour workday, the end of racial discrimination, job advancements, and higher pay. Initially, the blame shifted onto PLM for initiating the strike, but scholarship has established that workers acted independently, driven by their grievances and inspirations influenced by print media. The culture of the working class developed, leading to the transformation of different political discourses throughout Porfiriato, and also influenced by the economic structures in place over workers.

14 Hart, *Empire and Revolution*, 507. Hart highlights how elite influence from the US negatively affected Mexico and argues that Americans have decisively affected the history of Mexico from the early nineteenth century to the present.

15 Francisco Trentini, *The Prosperity of Mexico*, (Bouligny & Schmidt Sucs.,

and inhabitants of Cananea were forced to work in poor and unfair conditions. Nevertheless, the author hints at the lack of "freedoms and comforts" that other Mexican workers were deprived of. *The Prosperity of Mexico* also describes Sonora as the richest mineral-producing area in Mexico, which it had been since colonial times. The language within the text served as propaganda and reveals efforts to attract foreign capital and portray Díaz's regime positively.

As a result of Porfirio Díaz's desires to obtain foreign capital and modernize Mexico, Greene was given incentives to speed up the mine's development. This included concessions such as the sole right of exploration; all the water the mine needed; exemption from taxation and import duties; and the construction of supporting infrastructure such as railroad, telegraph, and telephone lines.[16] These incentives were the greatest ever granted to a company in Mexico during the period and exemplified the kind of support Díaz's regime gave to foreign companies.

Colonel William C. Greene has often been referred to as the "Father of Cananea." However, the business was only a small part of a larger multinational company known as the Anaconda Company. Anaconda was the first American copper mining company to achieve international success, eventually becoming a giant in the field of resource extraction. Its official history, written with the support of the company, portrays Greene as a prospector and sole founder.[17] However, Greene was not alone in creating Cananea, but rather had the support of America's wealthiest elites.[18] Nevertheless, his mismanagement and irresponsible lifestyle eventually led to the loss of the mine to the Anaconda Company. After the 1907 strike, he and his board resigned from their management roles. Newspapers depicted Greene as playing a key role in the strike. However, the protection of American interests and capital through the media was not intended for small businessmen like himself, but instead for multinational companies like Anaconda. The Cananea mines and the surrounding community of the same name had

---

Printers and Engravers, 1906), 224.

16 Trentini, *Prosperity of Mexico*, 233.

17 Isaac Marcosson, *Anaconda*, (Dodd, Mead & Company, 1957), 251.

18 Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico*, 65. Hart argues that when Cananea was boughtout from Greene by Anaconda which at the time was owned by William Rockefeller, Anaconda bought shares originally owned by Gates, Hawley, Huntington, and Harriman. For more on America's wealthiest elites during this period, see Hart.

rapidly expanded since 1899.[19] In 1906, the mines employed 5,360 Mexicans and 2,220 foreign employees.[20] While the majority of foreign workers were American, there were more than a few Chinese laborers as well.

On June 2, *The New York Times* printed one of the first reports on the Cananea event. It was provocatively titled "45 Americans Dead at Greene's Mines" and painted the Mexican miners as "defying all authority." The average American reading this might have been concerned about the strike at Cananea. Even so, the actual number of Americans killed during the event has been debated. Further, the article neglects to mention the reason for the strike, which was the massive pay disparity between American and Mexican workers. Colonel Greene sent a telegraph to Arizona, asking for Americans to help the Mexican police restore order at the mine leading to approximately three hundred Arizonan men volunteering for the job.[21]

The news circulating from Cananea caused an outcry in Mexico and the United States. On June 5, *The New York Times* printed an article titled "Charges of Americans Saved Town of Cananea." According to the article, the crossing of armed American volunteers into Mexico created a huge controversy. The article attempted to address inaccuracies stemming from the June 2 article, stating, "James Douglas denies reports circulated here today that Gov. Ysabel had been placed under arrest by order of President Díaz for calling in American assistance to suppress the riots at Cananea."[22] Sonora's governor, Rafael Izabal, allegedly allowed Arizona Rangers and other volunteers to enter Mexico under the pretense of helping the Mexican police. According to historian C. L. Sonnichsen, "Once across they swore an oath of allegiance to Mexico and subjected to Izabal's orders."[23] Still, the admission of armed Americans into

19 Anthropologist Josiah Heyman provides important insight into the population of Cananea during this period in *Life and Labor on the Border: Working People of Northeastern Sonora, Mexico 1886–1986*.

20 Josiah McHeyman, *Life and Labor on the Border: Working People of Northeastern Sonora, Mexico, 1886–1986*, (University of Arizona Press, 1991), 29.

21 "45 Americans Dead at Greene's Mines," *The New York Times*, June 2, 1906.

22 "Charges of Americans Saved Town of Cananea; Greene Held Mob Off by Talking Till Volunteers Arrived. Many Executions Reported Mexican Troops Maintain Strict Order -- Reported Arrest of Gov. Ysabel Denied," *The New York Times*, June 5, 1906.

23 C. L. Sonnichsen, "Colonel William C. Greene and the Strike at

Mexico highlighted the lengths Izabal was willing to go to prioritize US interests in Cananea.

To combat any fears that American investors might have had, Díaz likely influenced Greene to respond and forestall fears of revolution in Mexico. *The New York Times* tried to address the inaccuracy of reports surrounding the strike by publishing excerpts from a letter by Greene. It also attempted to soothe American perceptions of Mexico as unsafe for American enterprise and capital, reporting that "The accounts of disturbances at Cananea are very much exaggerated."[24] The goal was to portray Mexico as a safe place for investment by American capital. The article further shows how Díaz accused anti-regime papers like *La Regeneración* of provoking the strike. As previously mentioned, Díaz used his influence to suppress Mexico's independent press, which tried to counter his regime's propaganda.

On June 10, *The New York Times* published an article about the consequences of the strike titled "84 Arrests at Cananea." Greene wrote another letter to the Times editor to convey that strikes in Mexico would not be tolerated during the Porfiriato. According to Greene,

> Absolute quiet prevails in Cananea. No change has been or will be made in wages being paid. The government has acted promptly and effectively. Eighty-four of the ringleaders are now in jail. These arrests, together with the killing of the principal leaders of the mob have restored quiet.[25]

By reinforcing the consequences of the strike, this highlights Díaz's prioritization of American business interests over the welfare of his people.

In order to sway public opinion, Greene blamed the strike on exiled revolutionaries from Mexico. He had been warned about plans for a strike before the June 1 strike broke out in Cananea. On June 18, *The New York Times* published an article titled "Mine Owner Was Warned of a Revolutionary Rising in Cananea," which discusses the events of the day before the strike. In it, Greene states, "I was informed by a Mexican working that there was going to be

---

Cananea, Sonora, 1906," *Arizona and the West* 13, no. 4 (1971): 273.

24 "Cananea Riot Stories Exaggerated---Greene," *The New York Times*, June 6, 1906.

25 "84 Arrests at Cananea," *The New York Times*, June 10, 1906.

trouble on June 1… He also gave us a couple of copies of a revolutionary circular that had been widely distributed."[26] These distributed circulars showed plans for dynamiting the bank and stealing weapons in the hopes of starting a revolution against Díaz. The paper blamed these plans on exiled revolutionaries in the US. Ultimately, the Cananea strike did not spark the Mexican Revolution, but it did lead to a series of other strikes in Mexico's rural regions.

After the strike, media coverage of Cananea intensified tensions between American and Mexican laborers in Cananea as racial divisions reshaped the local labor dynamics. Due to the heightened tensions, a fearful Greene shipped weapons to Cananea. American laborers felt reluctant to return to the camp and hesitant to work with their Mexican counterparts.[27] This contributed to the alienation Mexican laborers felt towards their American counterparts. By August, Anaconda would purchase the Cananea Mine from Greene. As *The New York Times* reported, the mine needed significant capital to remain in business, which the Anaconda Company provided.[28]

The media played a large role in sparking outrage and, by October, the backlash against Governor Izabal led to formal charges. A report titled "Mexicans Resent Invasion" describes accusations against Izabal for violating Mexico's territorial rights during the strike.[29] Although Izabal was brought to Mexico City to address these accusations in Congress, he was later acquitted of the charges. This angered Mexican laborers.

The purpose of American media coverage of the mine strike was to captivate the American public's attention. To do this, it employed a sensationalist tone that often led to conflated casualty reports. Further, their coverage often degraded Mexican laborers and their motivations for striking. Cananea was not the beginning of the Mexican Revolution, but it publicly highlighted the growing tensions between the Díaz's regime, American businesses, and Mexican laborers.

The Mexican Herald, a Mexican paper which promulgated pro-American voices, also favored American sentiments during the

---

26 "Mine Owner Was Warned of a Revolutionary Rising in Cananea," *The New York Times*, June 18, 1906.
27 "Trouble Feared at Cananea," *The New York Times*, July 15, 1906.
28 "Cananea Mine Chartered," *The New York Times*, August 2, 1906.
29 "Mexicans Resent Invasion," *The New York Times*, October 22, 1906.

incident at Cananea.[30] The owner of the newspaper, Paul Hudson, maintained a favorable relationship with President Díaz himself. This allowed *The Mexican Herald* to become the dominant English-language newspaper in Mexico City from 1895 to 1915, where it often served as an intermediary between the Porfiriato and the United States government.[31] While it noted the regime's censorship, *The Mexican Herald* still generally aligned with Díaz's stances on international events like the Spanish-American War. Nevertheless, the paper provided insight into Díaz's reign and eventual downfall.

The Mexican Herald consistently downplayed labor disputes in Mexico, emphasizing its alignment with American business interests. Historian Jerry Hudson argues that throughout 1906, *The Herald* routinely glossed over the strikes in Cananea, Rio Blanco, and San Luis Potosi. This was because the outlet's intended audience was American businessmen in Mexico City, who wanted to hear that Mexico was a safe, viable, and lucrative place for US capital.[32]

The Mexican Herald's first report on the Cananea strike was titled "Strike, Race Riot and Fire are Reported At Cananea," and it sensationalized the events to align with earlier conflated accounts, thus marking a shift in its role as a Díaz-supported outlet. No other American-based newspaper used the term "Race Riot." The article announced, "News has been received from Cananea, Mexico of a bloody race war."[33] With this highly sensationalized report, *The Mexican Herald* was attempting to generate profit through the commodification of information.[34]

Initial sensationalized reporting fueled Mexican outrage, which *The Mexican Herald* attempted to address by emphasizing the strikes' peaceful nature. This is apparent in the article titled "Mexican Government Rushes Troops to the Scene of Trouble in Sonora," which provided further information on the incident to the paper's readers. This included the list of casualties on both sides. It also

30 Joshua Salyers, "A Community of Modern Nations: *The Mexican Herald* at the Height of the Porfiriato, 1895–1910" (master's thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2011), ProQuest (1496121). Salyers argues that the newspaper influenced how Mexicans conceptualized their national identity and exemplified ideals of modernity to Mexican readers.

31 Salyers, "A Community of Modern Nations," 9.

32 Jerry W. Knudson, "The Mexican Herald: Outpost of Empire, 1895–1915," *Gazette* 63, no. 5 (2001): 389.

33 "Strike, Race Riot and Fire Are Reported at Cananea," *The Mexican Herald*, June 2, 1906.

34 See Zeltsman, *Ink Under the Fingernails*, 230.

attempted to calm American businessmen, stating, "This strike was wholly pacific, and none of the strikers were armed and Greene's statements that the trouble was promoted by a socialist group is misleading and ludicrous."[35]

Panicked telegrams from Consul Galbraith further influenced media narratives, initiated military action, and exacerbated fears of chaos in Cananea. An article from *The Mexican Herald* contains one such telegram, which states, "Send assistance immediately to Cananea… Americans are being murdered…we must have help."[36] Galbraith's telegrams were reprinted in various newspapers and created a sense of panic among American citizens, with news of the event even reaching the US Secretary of War. This panic in turn led to a large force of Americans preparing to enter Mexico. What followed was the aforementioned Izabal controversy that sparked outrage throughout Mexico. By June 4, *The Mexican Herald* reported on the imposition of martial law in Cananea. The report itself highlighted the growing tensions between the regime, American business interests, and the Mexican populace in Cananea. Two sections were published on the event, the first titled "Mexican Authorities Quell Disturbances." This section provided an update on the status of Cananea three days after initial reports of unrest. It focused on the implementation of martial law in Cananea with an updated casualty report, stating "The town is now under martial law… A conservative estimate of the number killed... thirty-five Mexicans and six Americans." The other section, titled "Cananea and the Governments," discussed the growing tensions between Americans and Mexicans in Mexico. The report understood the importance of not alienating Mexican laborers, suggesting that "Americans of high business positions here should cultivate good relations with the Mexican people."[37] In a pre-revolutionary Mexican society, it was in Díaz's best interest to minimize any mentions of discontent within Cananea or the other mining camps.

When reports surfaced that the Mexican Rurales executed Mexican citizens, *The Mexican Herald* denied the accusations, revealing the outlet's efforts to downplay state-sanctioned violence.[38] *The*

35 "Mexican Government Rushes Troops to the Scene of Trouble in Sonora," *The Mexican Herald*, June 3, 1906.
36 "Mexican Government Rushes Troops."
37 "Mexican Authorities Quell Disturbances," *The Mexican Herald*, June 4, 1906.
38 Rurales were Mexico's mounted police.

Los Angeles Herald, based in the United States, published a report titled "Cananea Rioters Executed," documenting the consequences of the strike. The paper states that the executed rioters were accused of inciting anarchy. In a quasi-public execution, the leaders uttered their final words: "To Hell with the government! Away with Mexico!"[39] Colonel Kosterlitsky, leader of the Rurales, lined these men up to show the working class why resisting Díaz's regime was unwise. A day later, *The Mexican Herald* published a report denying the execution ever happened. It quoted a telegram from Greene's office: "The office of Colonel Greene at Cananea denies the report that the ringleaders…were executed by Colonel Kosterlitzsky…only three Americans and sixteen Mexicans were killed."[40] President Díaz had a history of killing criminals to suppress the bandit economy.[41] The response from *The Mexican Herald* showcased how its editors prioritized American lives and business interests over honestly reporting on the regime's killing of workers. By June 5, reports from Cananea had all but ceased.

On June 25, Governor Izabal published a report to deflect any accusations of foreign intervention in the incident. The report caused a large outcry directed against the regime. *The Mexican Herald* published an article titled "Governor Izabal Reports on Cananea Occurrences," which contained the report. In it, Izabal states, "It is not true that American forces have invaded the national territory or that such invasion was perpetrated by the Arizona militia, or the so-called rangers or any volunteer organization much less true is it that my government permitted the passage of foreign troops across the border."[42] The report attempted to exonerate Izabal by denying any claims of invasion and US involvement. By June 29, another article from *The Mexican Herald* discussed Izabal's view of the strike and its motivations.In doing so, it attempted to justify the harsh repression that followed the strike. One argument made against Mexican laborers was that the company paid Mexican employees enough to cover their living expenses and save money. Other arguments focused on the laborers' "good" footwear and their homes being

39 "Cananea Rioters Executed," *The Los Angeles Herald*, June 4, 1906.
40 "Work Being Resumed in Mines And Plants," *The Mexican Herald*, June 5, 1906.
41 Hernández, *Bad Mexicans*, 31.
42 "Governor Izabal Reports on Cananea Occurrences," *The Mexican Herald*, June 25, 1906.

properly furnished.[43] To the laborers reading this in other Mexican regions, the report may have convinced them that the strike was associated with anarchist groups.

However untrue or controversial Izabal's views and reports were, the controversy became sensationalized enough to start a series of strikes that eventually led to revolution against the Díaz regime. The Cananea strike began a public discourse that asked how close Mexico was to a revolution. This was related to growing signs of discontent amongst Mexico's workers and elites over the influence of foreign governments within their nation. By July, *The Mexican Herald* had published several editorials discussing the meaning of the Cananea strike, which was abnormal for this regime-supported outlet. On July 31, *The Mexican Herald* published an anonymous letter, "Sane and Friendly Comment," which states:

> It is refreshing to find American journals confident in the ability of this government to preserve order and protect the lives and property of foreign residents. Cananea may have been a symptom but there is a strong man in the city of Mexico who would make short work of the disease if it were to develop.[44]

The anonymous writer believed in the Mexican government's ability to protect foreign interests from revolts and strikes. Just a day later, *The Herald* published an opinion piece titled "Malcontents and Slander," which compared the Cananea strike to similar American and French labor strikes. It stated that "All modern countries have their share of labor troubles. Yet no one said that France was on the brink of revolution. Almost coincident with the Cananea miners' strike there was a strike in Ohio. No sane person in the United States thought to anticipate a revolution."[45] The author also argued that anti-regime presses magnified the disturbances and fears of revolution.

In El Paso, Texas, the independent outlet *El Clarín del Norte* catered to Mexican working-class voices outside of Mexico and in

43 "Governor's Report on Cananea Riot," *The Mexican Herald*, June 29, 1906.
44 "The Outlook: Sane and Friendly Comment," *The Mexican Herald*, July 31, 1906.
45 "The Outlook: Malcontents and Slander," *The Mexican Herald*, August 1, 1906.

the borderlands. Mexico before the revolution, divided along class and regional lines, labored with its sovereignty and identity while also attempting to appeal to Western nations. Likewise, Mexicans who migrated to the United States or were born in the US in the years leading up to the revolution, often referred to collectively as *Mexico de Afuera*, struggled with their own identity.[46] Mexicans in the US often believed they would reside in the US only temporarily, and many did eventually return home to Mexico. *El Clarín del Norte* allowed Mexicans in the United States to maintain a sense of national pride by keeping them up to date with reports from Mexico before the Revolution. The outlet routinely addressed inequality and labor disputes in El Paso.[47] Intended for Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and *Mexico de Afuera* exiles, *El Clarín* helped these groups connect with Mexico despite the distance and frequent media repression.

Working-class Mexicans in Mexico also received copies of *El Clarín del Norte*, highlighting the importance of transnational information networks that challenged the one-sided narratives from Mexico City about the strike.[48] Reports in *El Clarín del Norte* offered firsthand accounts from Mexican workers' perspectives, emphasizing the strike's peaceful beginnings. Some published their articles only a few days later than their state-supported peers. By June 6, reports clashed, and a narrative had already been pushed onto the public. *El Clarín del Norte* provided a firsthand account from a subscriber of the newspaper. In a report titled "The Complete Truth about the Events in Cananea, Sonora. A Faithful Letter from a Subscriber," Mr. Jose Garcia Cuadra recounts that the strike started with conversations about obtaining equal pay for Mexicans and Americans. But when two thousand Mexicans chanted, "Viva el trabajo, Cinco Pesos," managers W. A. Metcalf and William Metcalf shot into the crowd, killing two unarmed, peaceful strikers."[49] As Mr. Garcia Cuadra recounts, the two managers were killed in self-defense, the news that Americans were coming to Cananea. According to

46 Aaron E. Sanchez, *Homeland: Ethnic Mexican Belonging Since 1900* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2021), 7, xvi.
47 Mario T. García, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880–1920* (Yale University Press, 1982), 53.
48 I have translated the titles and text from *El Clarín del Norte* for easier access.
49 "La Verdad Integra Sobre Los Sucesos de Cananea, Son. Carta Fidedigna de un Suscritor," *Clarín del Norte*, June 9, 1906.

the account, "Governor Izabal allowed Yankees armed to the teeth to come to Cananea to protect American interests." Mr. Garcia Cuadra asserts that this must break the law. One of the first accounts from the Mexican perspective comes from an El Paso-based outlet and highlighted the discontent that Mexicans might have felt upon hearing what happened at Cananea.

These critiques of the Mexican state press originated from the borderlands and questioned the governor's actions. Thus, the strike acted as a tool for national unity and sparked the foundation for ideas of Mexican sovereignty. A report titled "Izabal's Responsibilities in the Cananea Affairs" attempted to understand the lack of truthful information from the Mexican state-sponsored press. It also recounted a letter from a subscriber. The article raised several questions. Did the governor request help? Was this a territorial violation? If so, was Mexico and its government embarrassed? These questions led to a national crisis related to the slain Mexican laborers and those employees at the border who tried to bar American troops from entering the country. According to the *Clarín del Norte*, "Because of this they deserve a general applause of the Nation!"[50] The strike provided everyday Mexicans the motivation to publicly question the Díaz regime.

By the end of June, independent outlets attacked state supported outlets by highlighting the importance of media coverage in Mexico and the US. *El Clarín del Norte* published a short piece discussing what happened in Cananea, emphasizing the preference for American over Mexican workers. As time passed, more information from the strike surfaced, and trusted members of the outlet could attest to the accuracy of reports of Cananea violence. A report titled "The Trial of Izabal Will Set a Good Precedent. More on the Scandals of Cananea" discusses the importance of Mexico properly charging Governor Izabal for his crimes against Mexico in order to minimize the stain to the nation's honor. Mexican nationals were upset and humiliated about what happened at Cananea and particularly concerned with the responses of their leaders. Anti-regime papers like *El Clarín del Norte* criticized the coverage of state-supported media outlets such as *El Imparcial*. The article "*El Imparcial* Losing Credibility. Undeserved Praises for Izabal. The Scandals of Cananea" took a strong stance against *El Imparcial*, which had labelled Governor Izabal as a model governor who was

50 "Las Responsabilidades De Izabal En Los Asuntos De Cananea, Son," *Clarín del Norte*, June 16, 1906, Hispanic American Newspapers.

innocent of any crimes.[51] This propagandistic position by *El Imparcial* increased the outcry of Mexicans everywhere.

In contrast to state-supported media, *El Clarín del Norte* was still reporting on events in Cananea long after the strike was over. This was due to the strike's prominent place in the national discourse at the time, which reflected the alienation many Mexicans already felt concerning their government. A report on the tensions within the camp states, "The manager of the Cananea mines has submitted his resignation as have other department heads. The press within the city reported unrest and dissatisfaction among Mexican Workers."[52] Tensions between American and Mexican laborers clearly reached a boiling point. Independent outlets in the borderlands were able to freely critique both Díaz and Mexican state-supported outlets. An article titled, "Patriotism and the Affairs of Cananea. A Newspaper Confirms the Opinions of El Clarín del Norte" discussed the controversy around Cananea and print in Mexico. Workers in Cananea were deemed "unpatriotic" by state-sponsored print media. Independent papers like *El Clarín del Norte* offered a strong response, giving statements like "Antipatriotic is certain governors disrespecting the republic, and not putting personal interests aside like the case of Governor Izabal and his defense by the Porfiriato when he required correcting his behavior; Antipatriotic is press that is destitute of all dignity and willing to deceive the Mexican people."[53] The Mexican people, regardless of their location, were now fully aware of the corruption within the Díaz regime and called for change, eventually leading to a year of turmoil and the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

During and after the Cananea strike, Mexican newspapers influenced by Porfirian censorship presented a one-sided narrative that prioritized economic stability and foreign capital while downplaying labor grievances. In contrast, US-based independent press outlets offered critical insight, challenging the major outlets based in Mexico City. The Cananea strike illustrated the nuanced interplay between labor unrest, media repression, and the broader sociopolitical forces that propelled Mexico toward a revolution by 1910. Borderlands media played a significant role in shaping political change during a transformative moment in Mexican history.

51 "'El Imparcial' Desbarrando. Inmerecidas Alabanzas a Izabais. Los Escandalos de Cananea," *Clarín del Norte*, June 30, 1906.
52 "Renuncia de Un Gerente," *Clarín del Norte*, July 7, 1906.
53 "El Patriotismo y Los Asuntos de Cananea. Un Periodico Confirma Las Opiniones de 'El Clarín del Norte,'" *Clarín del Norte*, July 21, 1906.

The Porfiriato attempted to maintain control of the media to prop up its political support, American enterprises, and capital. Yet Díaz contributed to his own demise, as his strong repression of dissent forced many of his opponents into exile in the US. These exiles played a significant role in shaping the kinds of information that made its way into the borderlands, including in towns like Cananea. Furthermore, *The New York Times* inadvertently undermined Díaz through its sensationalist reporting. Its exaggerated narratives fueled fear among American businessmen and simultaneously shaped the anti-capitalist sentiments held by Mexican laborers.

Mexican state media outlets like *El Imparcial* and *The Mexican Herald* influenced Mexican perceptions of national identity throughout the Porfiriato. Yet most Mexicans became disillusioned with the regime's inability to protect themselves from American interests. Even as American capital was attacked during the Mexican Revolution, *The Mexican Herald* endured similar attacks due to its clear connection to American ideals of progress and modernity. On the other hand, *La Regeneración* served as a direct example of *Mexico de Afuera* nationals who, despite their exile, continued to fight against Díaz.

Print media became a crucial yet neglected battleground in the labor and political struggles surrounding the Cananea strike before the revolution. The articles published in Mexican diaspora outlets such as *El Clarín del Norte* and *La Regeneración* provide a glimpse into the role these publications played in shaping public opinion and disseminating sentiments of Mexican laborers around the strike. Further research is needed on pre-revolutionary Mexican diaspora outlets within the borderlands to examine the role they played in documenting and creating discontent within Mexico. Communities were resourceful regardless of literacy rates, as transnational information networks transcended borders and repression. Globalization allowed information from the US and the borderlands to combat the one-sided media narratives put out by Mexico City. Print media served as an invaluable tool in understanding the political battlegrounds that unfolded before the Mexican Revolution of 1910.