

# Palafox and His Critics: Reappraising a Controversy

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THERE HAS BEEN all too little written in this country about seventeenth-century Spanish colonial history.

For some observers that period does not have the color or the excitement of the sixteenth century or the stirring enthusiasm of the eighteenth; yet, it is inaccurate to characterize it as the "long noonday nap." To allow the seventeenth century to remain neglected is to deny to students in colonial history valuable insight into social and institutional developments. Indeed the seventeenth century was a period of desperate travail for the Spanish empire. The great *tumultos* of 1624 and 1692 in Mexico City, whatever their cause, produced color and excitement along with a new self-consciousness which perhaps foreshadowed the independence movements of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Colonial Mexico must not be regarded as a somnolent giant awaiting the cry of Hidalgo. Rather, the events of the seventeenth century in Mexico and in particular the role of the Church deserve deeper study.

Fractious battles between religious and secular clergy which strained the internal mechanism of Church and state make fascinating reading. Despite the popular impression of a monolithic Spanish Church, the regular clergy fought for privileges against the secular clergy. These in turn, aided and abetted by the crown, advanced on the missions, hitherto the exclusive bailiwick of the orders.<sup>2</sup> The religious orders and the secular clergy wrangled over tithes, benefices, and jurisdiction, among other things, and many of the quarrels continued from the early seventeenth century into the eighteenth.

One of the most famous of these disputes was the controversy between the Jesuits and the Bishop of Puebla de los Angeles, Juan

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<sup>1</sup> Lesley Byrd Simpson, "Thirty Years of the *Hispanic American Historical Review*," *HAHR*, XXIX (May 1949), 190.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Charles Padden, "The Ordenanza del Patronazgo, 1574: An Interpretive Essay," *The Americas*, XII (April 1956), 338.

de Palafox y Mendoza.<sup>3</sup> It involved jurisdiction and the right of benefice, and it lasted from 1641 until 1649. But the clerical struggle became a conflict of historians. Partisans for both sides, in particular the Jesuits, have aired their respective positions, but the case remains clouded, no doubt because of the complex and enigmatic character of Bishop Palafox. Most unfortunately Jesuit historians since that time have exhibited a lack of balance concerning the relative merits of the protagonists, and no effort has been made by disinterested historians to resolve the complicated difficulties.

Arriving to take up his duties as Bishop of Puebla in 1640, Palafox soon became embroiled in the civil and religious intrigues of New Spain.<sup>4</sup> For nine years he was a gadfly to the vested interests, both civil and religious, and his attempted reforms were stymied. Special circumstances of the seventeenth century and the general feeling of cynicism and fatalism, coupled with the monarchy that was a far cry from the glories of Charles V or Philip II, made attempts at religious reform virtually impossible. The Spanish crown was in a state of prostration, and the reformers were helpless to cope with the hierarchy of privileges that bound together the magistracy and the clergy. Those reformers in the New World such as the Marquise de Geleves and Bishop Palafox were broken by the combination of religious and governmental bureaucracy.<sup>5</sup> Colonial Church and state, slumbering and complacent, rejected any effort to change the status quo.<sup>6</sup> Although he sought primarily to rejuvenate the religious life of the diocese of Puebla, Palafox hoped that his efforts would create a general renewal of the religious life in New Spain. For his guides he utilized the decrees of the Council of Trent and the Third Mexican Council.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Among the recent works on Palafox and his role in New Spain are: Pablo González Casanova, "Aspectos Políticos de Palafox y Mendoza," *Revista de historia de América*, No. 17 (June 1944), 27-67; James S. Cummins, "Palafox, China, and the Chinese Rites Controversy," *Revista de historia de América*, No. 52 (December 1961), 295-418; Harvey L. Johnson, "El primer siglo del teatro en Puebla de los Ángeles y la posición del Obispo Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza," *Revista iberoamericana* (1946), 27-47. A full discussion of Francisco Alegre and his views on the controversy is found in Víctor Rico González, *Historiadores mexicanos del siglo XVIII* (México, 1949). The latest historian to discuss the problems of Palafox is Francisco Sánchez-Castaner, *Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza: Virrey de Nueva España* (Zaragoza, 1964).

<sup>4</sup> Mariano Picón-Salas, *A Cultural History of Spanish America* (Berkeley, 1962), 75.

<sup>5</sup> Lesley Byrd Simpson, *Many Mexicos* (New York, 1946), 75.

<sup>6</sup> Picón-Salas, *Cultural History*, 74.

<sup>7</sup> Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent* (St. Louis, 1958), II, 7. He pointed out that the goal of the bishops was to regain their authority which hitherto had devolved upon the Pope. See full discussion, 330 ff. The Mexican Councils of 1555 and 1565 were not approved by Rome. But the Third

Once the bishop attempted his reforms, conflict with the entrenched religious orders was inevitable. At the time of the conquest these orders were granted a position of independence from ecclesiastical and royal control for greater efficiency in converting the Indians.<sup>8</sup> Through the years the orders fought all attempts by the crown to supplant them on the doctrinas or in the missions by secular clergy, of whom Palafox was the particular agent, or to limit their freedom.<sup>9</sup> Independent enclaves such as the orders were antithetical to a national church as conceived by the Spanish crown, which from 1559 had sought ways to secularize them and place them under the bishops.<sup>10</sup> Palafox was armed with cédulas from the crown to rid New Spain of those "pock marks" of power, but, as with many reformers, he failed to judge the spirit against him and his ideals.<sup>11</sup>

Like the other orders the Jesuits opposed any idea of episcopal jurisdiction and especially any jurisdiction of the bishops over themselves. Much more was involved than who was to be supreme in a diocese, however, and economics played a far greater role in the dispute than Jesuit historians have admitted.<sup>12</sup> Their silence on this aspect of the struggle has opened up an area of debate. Were the

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Mexican Council, 1585, proposed the basic ideas of reform that were in the previous councils. Francisco Antonio Lorenzana, *Concilios provinciales primero y segundo . . . en los años de 1555 y 1565* (México, 1769), 188: "recebimos todo lo ordenado, y mandado guardar por el Santo Concilio Tridentino, . . ." The Third Mexican Council spelled out the duties of a bishop, especially the visitation throughout the diocese, advising in case of neglect and correcting in case of error. This admonition of correcting included religious as well as secular clergy. Lorenzana, *Concilium Mexicanum Provinciale III* (Madrid, 1769), 140 ff., under the title *De Visitatione Provincias*.

<sup>8</sup> Padden, "The Ordenanza," 333-354. See also W. Eugene Shiels, *King and Church: The Rise and Fall of the Patronato Real* (Chicago, 1961). Especially the chapter on the "Religious Orders and the Patronato," 195 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Simpson, *Many Mexicos*, 80.

<sup>10</sup> Philip IV to Juan de Palafox y Mendoza (dated México, February 9, 1641), 2-2 vuelta. The crown also tried to regulate the doctrinas held by the mendicants in accord with population. France V. Scholes and Eleanor B. Adams (eds.), *Moderación de doctrinas de las Real Corona administradas por las Órdenes Mendicantes, 1623* (México, 1959).

<sup>11</sup> The vast duplication of authority and the inertia of the bureaucracy and the Church, coupled with the Spanish feeling of "I obey, but I do not comply" was alien to Palafox's thought. It was this type of thinking which contributed to his defeat.

<sup>12</sup> The story of the dispute over the will of Fernando de la Serna Valdés and the subsequent dispute with the Jesuits has been examined at length and need not be retold here. The pro-Palafox works are: Genaro García, *Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza* (México, 1918); Florencio Jardiel, *El venerable Palafox* (Madrid, 1892); José María Eguren, *Palafox y los Jesuitas* (Madrid, 1878). In English the best resumé is Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Mexico* (San Francisco, 1886-88), III, 98 ff.

Jesuits as rich as Palafox claimed? And was Palafox correct in insisting that their vast haciendas, which they considered tax-exempt, were liable to the tenth?<sup>13</sup>

Though they have provided many worthwhile contributions in the field of colonial history, Jesuit historians have remained essentially negative in their approach to the Palafox-Jesuit debates, their attitude toward the bishop ranging from relatively mild criticism to out-and-out hostility. Unfortunately most have taken the second position. They echo the opinions originally expressed by the eighteenth-century Jesuit humanist, Francisco Javier Alegre<sup>14</sup> in a work which has been re-issued recently with a trenchant discussion of the controversy by the editors.<sup>15</sup> The editors consider Alegre impartial in judging the events that took place in Puebla,<sup>16</sup> but they have made no effort to reconcile various conflicting aspects of the famed dispute. Their discussion, while useful, is still highly partisan. Alegre neglected the economic implications of the controversy, and the new edition makes no effort to rectify this shortcoming.<sup>17</sup>

Recent scholarship takes a position more closely approximating the views of Palafox, which were communicated by him to Pope Innocent X.<sup>18</sup> Palafox saw the bishop's situation in Puebla as untenable. He found that the Jesuits possessed a great deal of landed wealth which was exempt from taxation. Two of the colleges had 300,000 sheep, he claimed, not counting some of the smaller flocks. He noted that although all the cathedral churches and all other religious orders taken together had no more than three sugar refineries, the society had six of the largest in the diocese. One of those, he said, was worth half a million thalers. Further, the income from these refineries gained for the Jesuits an income of 300,000 pesos a year. He was concerned that the wealth of the order, which was invested not only

<sup>13</sup> Jesuits do mention the tenth but dismiss it with only a few minor comments.

<sup>14</sup> Picón-Salas, *Cultural History*, 133 ff. Rico González, *Historiadores mexicanos*, 131 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Francisco Javier Alegre, *Historia de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España* (Rome, 1959), III.

<sup>16</sup> Ernest J. Burrus, in Alegre, *Historia*, 434, “. . . como historiador imparcial y agudo canonista.” Rico González pointed out some of the limitations of Alegre as a historian: “Pero en Alegre hay una segunda limitación que, aunque muy humana, es de bajo índole y nos impide tener ese respeto por su obra que, aún sabiéndola parcial, nos proporcionaría la elevación del principio que obliga a la parcialidad.” *Historiadores mexicanos*, 133.

<sup>17</sup> The editors of Alegre make note in the “Introduction” of the trials the order was undergoing regarding the tenth, but nowhere do they develop the theme.

<sup>18</sup> Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, *Obras*, XI, *Carta segunda a Inocencio X, P.M., May 25, 1647* (Madrid, 1767), 31 ff. Henceforth cited as Palafox, volume, and particular letter, article, or book.

in land and cattle but also in silver mines, would eventually reduce the secular clergy to the same level as their sacristans and even force other religious to beg at Jesuit doors. He believed that their wealth was becoming a source of discord. All this property would have made a sovereign powerful, he thought, but under the circumstances this land served no purpose other than to maintain ten colleges, none of them very large either in student body or in faculty. Nevertheless, Palafox praised the order, in a backhanded way, conceding that the Jesuits made good use of their skill to increase what he felt was their superabundant wealth. In addition to the haciendas, he reported that they had public warehouses, shops, and granaries. Writing to the Jesuit Father Horacio Caroche at the height of the struggle,<sup>19</sup> he also praised the order and the good which it had accomplished for the faith. But he included yet another list which showed that the order was far too wealthy, and he argued that it ought to be required to pay the tenth. He pointed out to Father Caroche that the College of Saints Peter and Paul and the Novitiate at Tepozotlán had more than 70,000 head of cattle; at Tepaca, 17,000 head. At Tecomate they had 16,000 head of sheep. The college at Tepozotlán had 14,000 wethers and 12,000 lambs, he said. This was a vast base to support so few Jesuits, who in 1648 totaled only 401 priests and brothers. Palafox further warned Caroche that "the Mexican Council had forbidden the clergy to have grocery stores, slaughter-houses, and meat markets."<sup>20</sup>

In the new edition of *Alegre* the editors have maintained the traditional bias, citing François Chevalier in defense of their claims that the Jesuits were not as wealthy as Palafox purported and that their personal lives were frugal and highly moral. But they prudently omitted part of Chevalier's statement that "the figures that the Bishop Palafox quoted were not exaggerated, however; one sugar refinery was worth 700,000 pesos in the seventeenth century."<sup>21</sup> And the Jesuits did own six. Other Jesuits, while following *Alegre*, have added their own fillips to the controversy. Some, such as Antonio Astrain and Andrés Pérez de Rivas, were moderate, though they still presented the bishop in a highly colored manner.<sup>22</sup> Spokesmen of a

<sup>19</sup> Palafox, *Obras*, XI, *Carta al R.P. Horacio Caroche*, 1647, p. 131 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Palafox, *Obras*, XI, *Carta al R.P. Horacio Caroche*, 1647, p. 169. See also Lorenzana, *Concilium Mexicanum Provinciale III*, 261 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Burrus, in *Alegre*, *Historia*, 419. François Chevalier, *Land and Society in Colonial Mexico: The Great Hacienda* (Berkeley, 1963), 249.

<sup>22</sup> Antonio Astrain, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Asistencia de España* (Madrid, 1902-1925), V. Andrés Pérez de Rivas, *Crónica e historia religiosa de la provincia de la Compañía de Jesús en México en Nueva España* (México, 1896), II.

more extreme position were historians James Brodrick and Thomas J. Campbell.<sup>23</sup> Between them, and they follow Astrain, they have created a distorted view of the bishop and his actions while in New Spain. Their statements border on the hysterical—and unhistorical. Both questioned the bishop's sanity, calling him "patently unbalanced"<sup>24</sup> and "mentally deranged."<sup>25</sup> As for the wealth of the order, they kept company with their co-religionists and insisted that the claims of Palafox were "wildly exaggerated."<sup>26</sup> Campbell declared that Palafox had been refuted by the provincial of the order, Francisco Calderón.<sup>27</sup> Astrain, whom Brodrick considered the historian "sans peur et sans reproche,"<sup>28</sup> said concerning the claim of Palafox, "that in truth it approaches delirium in its exaggeration of Jesuit riches."<sup>29</sup> He added that the tabulation of the order's wealth made by Father Calderón in 1653 was complete, and that a comparison would show how Palafox had exaggerated.<sup>30</sup> Most of the Jesuit commentators cite that list. But the listing showed only the holdings of the colleges and the debts they owed, ignoring the haciendas and the holdings in livestock or produce. It seems hardly complete when placed alongside evidence offered by Palafox, by other bishops, and by later land transfers of the eighteenth century.

Recent writers hold that from the time of their arrival in the New World the Jesuits quickly became the fastest growing and the richest order.<sup>31</sup> There were no prohibitions in their constitution against material acquisition as a corporate body, whereas in theory the medieval ideal of apostolic poverty hindered mendicant orders such as the Franciscans.<sup>32</sup> By the seventeenth century, the Jesuits had gained powerful friends through their educational system and had increased their holdings in New Spain through donations of the faithful, especially bequests. From 1552 through the eighteenth century the order continued to cultivate the largest flocks of sheep, the best managed estates, and the finest sugar plantations in Mexico. The generals of the order took great care that the patrimony given them

<sup>23</sup> James Brodrick, *The Economic Morals of the Jesuits: An Answer to Dr. H. M. Robertson* (London, 1934). Thomas J. Campbell, *The Jesuits, 1534-1921* (New York, 1921).

<sup>24</sup> Brodrick, *Economic Morals*, 85.

<sup>25</sup> Campbell, *Jesuits*, 223-224.

<sup>26</sup> Brodrick, *Economic Morals*, 77.

<sup>27</sup> Campbell, *Jesuits*, 223.

<sup>28</sup> Brodrick, *Economic Morals*, 75, fn. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Astrain, *Historia*, 402.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 402.

<sup>31</sup> Chevalier, *Land and Society*, 239 ff.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

should flourish and from time to time issued orders for the better maintenance of the great haciendas.<sup>33</sup> Among the faithful who gave freely to the order was Alonso Guerrero Villaseca.<sup>34</sup> He had made his money in mining and contributed large sums to the order as well as to other charities, much to the dismay of his grandson.<sup>35</sup> Another great benefactor of the order was Álvaro de Lorenzano whose liquid wealth was estimated at 800,000 pesos.<sup>36</sup>

Jesuit haciendas were profitable, and the sale of pulque alone at Santa Xavier gained 40,000 pesos in 1770 for the Jesuits.<sup>37</sup> Records of the priest Fernando de Saladana, or Santillana, which are pro-Palafox but which still give an eyewitness account of the events in Puebla during 1641-1649, noted that the College of Saints Peter and Paul had an income of some 2,000 pesos per year from the manufacture of sugar in addition to vast holdings in cattle. Santillana also estimated that the amounts received each year from such items as maize and wheat came to 6,000 pesos and 2,800 pesos respectively, and he estimated that over the years the order received enormous sums.<sup>38</sup> His figures would also seem to confirm those of the Bishop. The famed Jesuit estates of Santa Lucía, Xalapa, and Los Portales were sold to the Conde de Regla in the eighteenth century for the astounding sum of 1,020,000 pesos.<sup>39</sup> After the banishment of the order in the eighteenth century, a mortgage owed to the Jesuits was paid off by the Duke of Terranova to the crown for the sum of 121,622 pesos.<sup>40</sup> No wonder the bishop in his letter to Innocent X railed at the Jesuits for their riches and for their refusal to pay the tenth.

Palafox was not the only one interested in making the Jesuits pay the tithe. Detailed listings of the order's wealth were collected by the cathedral chapter of Mexico City and sent to the Council of the Indies. The list, presented in 1734, showed that the order had in its possession some 250,000 acres of land, 10,109 fanegas of wheat (a fanega was about 1.6 bushels), 65,383 fanegas of corn, 3,554 cahices of barley (a cahiz was 12 bushels), 381 cahices of beans, 10,530 calves, 15,610

<sup>33</sup> *Instrucciones a los hermanos jesuitas administradores de haciendas*, notes by François Chevalier (México, 1950).

<sup>34</sup> *Donación de bienes a la Compañía de Jesús en el siglo XVI* (México, 1946).

<sup>35</sup> *Donación de bienes*, 8; Chevalier, *Land and Society*, 239.

<sup>36</sup> Chevalier, *Land and Society*, 241 ff.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule* (Stanford, 1964), 329.

<sup>38</sup> Santillana MSS., Carta segunda, 12-18.

<sup>39</sup> *Papeles de los Condes Regla* (Washington State University, Pullman) [various].

<sup>40</sup> Helen Phipps, *Some Aspects of the Agrarian Question in Mexico* (Austin, 1925), 57.

horses, 1,733 young mares, 558 mules, and 93,026 lambs.<sup>41</sup> It is surprising that the new edition of *Alegre* makes no mention of these various figures and citations. While earlier writers had access to fewer sources, the authors of the new presentation cannot be excused as lightly.

These later investigations go far to show that the charges made by Palafox in his letter to the Pope were valid.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the drawn-out litigations undertaken by various cathedral chapters in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to force the Jesuits to pay the tithe provide ample evidence that the order was under constant attack, and not solely by Palafox, although he was the most determined critic.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, in 1655 the order was quite conscious of the difficulties that the question of its wealth had created, and a letter from the General Goswino Nickel, answering a petition of his Mexican subjects, showed a willingness to temporize in regard to payment of the tenth. Better to have half a pie than no pie at all.<sup>44</sup> The Mexicans wrote: "The Cathedral churches here institute almost endless suits and trials in relation to the tithes they would collect from our annual revenue, particularly when any new ranches are donated to us. . . . It was proposed, since we are exempt for the payment of tithes, to arrange a substitute, for example, to offer a twentieth or a thirtieth of the fruits, and this not on the former holdings but on those that may come to us in the future."

The answer of the general showed his prudent desire to let sleeping dogs lie: "I am very happy to approve your plan for ensuring peace by striking up an agreement with the churches. I know that several colleges enjoy good revenues. For that reason I am very much inclined toward your suggestion. It will please me quite as fully as it will benefit the colleges, especially since we live in perilous times." Another letter from the general was also concerned with the poor image presented by the order. He spoke of those that had three or four thousand animals, which would bear out Palafox, and of a Jesuit who had so many sheep and goats as to surprise those who saw his

<sup>41</sup> Alberto María Carreño, *Cedulario de dos siglos XVI y XVII, El Obispo don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza y el conflicto con la Compañía de Jesús* (México, 1947), 95 ff.

<sup>42</sup> Palafox wrote three letters to Innocent X. In them can be seen a progression of his thought against the Jesuits, and all three should be taken together. See his *Obras*, XI.

<sup>43</sup> Woodrow Wilson Borah, "Tithe Collection in the Bishopric of Oaxaca, 1601-1867," *HAHR*, XXIX (November 1949), 505, fn. 19.

<sup>44</sup> W. Eugene Shiels, "The Legal Crisis in the Jesuit Missions of Hispanic America," *Mid-America*, XXI (October 1939), 270. These come from the *Colección de cartas inéditas de los Padres generales*.



ranch. Primarily the general was worried lest the crown reduce the alms given for the subsistence of the order.<sup>45</sup>

Jesuit reaction to the approval of Palafox's charges by Innocent X are interesting. Palafox had asked Rome for a ruling concerning property held by the order other than that of the colleges. Could it be taxed? The answer, drawn up by a commission of cardinals, was that the land did not enjoy the same exemption as the colleges and hence could be taxed.<sup>46</sup> The order in Mexico rejected this decision on the grounds that it did not have the exequatur of the Council of the Indies.<sup>47</sup> A strange action for the order whose primary vow was absolute obedience to the Holy See! Innocent felt the same, for he reissued the Brief with a scathing remark about the order which used as a pretext (*praetendentes*) the argument that the other letter was unjustified.<sup>48</sup> It should be added that Philip IV approved the decision on December 12, 1648, thereby further discrediting the order's resistance.<sup>49</sup>

Jesuit historians have also derided the bishop's administrative ability. They were quick to point out that his actions were injurious to good government. They have written that within a year of his arrival he "flung out"<sup>50</sup> or "superseded"<sup>51</sup> the viceroy. It is true that he did take over the viceroyalty, but in doing so he had the full authority and approval of the crown.<sup>52</sup> The fact of royal approbation for Palafox's action has been overlooked by his critics.

In 1641 the situation in New Spain was complicated by news of the Portuguese revolt. Despite Palafox's request, the viceroy, Diego López Pacheco, Duque de Escalona, had refused to remove the Portuguese from sensitive positions, especially the important fortress of

<sup>45</sup> Shiels, "Legal Crisis," 273.

<sup>46</sup> Palafox, *Obras*, XII, *Defensa canónica por la jurisdicción eclesiástica*, 289 ff. See also *Bullarium Diplomatum Privilegiorum Sanctorum Pontificum* (Taurinensis, 1857-1872), XIV, 713 ff.

<sup>47</sup> While no explanation will be satisfactory, the Jesuit conception of morality would allow for the position taken by the fathers in New Spain. It revolves around the spirit of equivocation in both the spiritual and the temporal order. A commoner statement would be "the end justifies the means." The danger to the order from both crown and Church led them to rationalize all the arguments that were presented. Even the danger of disobedience could be rationalized into nothingness if the order were in jeopardy.

<sup>48</sup> *Bullarium Diplomatum*, XIV, 705: "Et subinde, cum clereci regulares Societatis praedictae, praetendentes ex pluribus capitibus nostras litteras non esse justificatis. . ."

<sup>49</sup> Palafox, *Obras*, XII, *Defensa canónica*, Philip IV to Palafox, December 12, 1648, pp. 312-313.

<sup>50</sup> Campbell, *Jesuits*, 222.

<sup>51</sup> Brodrick, *Economic Morals*, 74.

<sup>52</sup> Palafox, *Obras*, XI, *Del Duque Escalona*, 543.

San Juan de Ulloa.<sup>53</sup> Palafox, following his obligation as visitor, notified Madrid of his suspicions concerning the loyalty of Escalona and received secret instructions appointing him viceroy ad interim if events warranted.<sup>54</sup> Palafox subsequently felt that the situation justified quick action; he therefore removed Escalona and ruled by himself for four months from June 8, 1642 to November 23, 1642. Given his somewhat stern but utterly loyal nature, the action was not out of character. Moreover, any defense of Escalona as competent should be rejected. When Palafox took over the administration, Mexico City was in straitened circumstances. He immediately took steps to remedy the neglect, replenishing the granaries and repairing the fortifications of Veracruz and Acapulco and the water system of Mexico City. In addition, the bishop removed unworthy alcaldes who had mistreated the Indians.<sup>55</sup>

Palafox felt that the residencia of Escalona would clear up any doubts about the loyalty of the viceroy. In the meantime New Spain was safe, and Escalona "might have been a traitor."<sup>56</sup> Escalona was reinstated as viceroy of Mexico, but he declined the appointment, preferring a similar but more honorific post in Sicily.<sup>57</sup> He and his son remained determined opponents of Palafox and contributed to the Bishop's difficulties.<sup>58</sup> A residencia of 1652, however, when he was in virtual exile in the small diocese of Osma, Spain, gives the bishop a resounding vote of confidence: ". . . I declare the said Señor Don Juan de Palafox . . . to be a good, honest, and just minister, zealous in the service of God and of our lord, the King. . . ."<sup>59</sup> The nine licenciados offered not one shred of evidence to show malfeasance in office or neglect of duty by the bishop.

As visitor Palafox had certain tasks to perform for the crown other than the secularization of the doctrinas. He had been instructed to revive trade between New Spain, the Philippines, and Peru and to

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 545.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 543.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 545. The full study of Palafox's term as Viceroy can be found in González Casanova, "Aspectos Políticos de Palafox y Mendoza," 27-67.

<sup>56</sup> Palafox, *Obras*, XI, *gobierno del V. Siervo de Dios*, 247. He reiterates the position he had taken in the letter sent to the crown in 1642. The crown was concerned that anyone might start a *tumulto* and the earlier difficulties of the Ávila brothers in 1566 and the *tumulto* of 1624 were fresh in the mind of the Council of the Indies.

<sup>57</sup> Ernesto Schaefer, *El consejo real y supremo de las Indias* (Seville, 1947), II, 440.

<sup>58</sup> Palafox was forced to reply to charges laid by the duke and his son, and this is found in his *Obras*, XI, *Del Duque Escalona*.

<sup>59</sup> Santillana MSS., 98 *vuelta*.

keep the crown better informed of the situation in the northern viceroyalty. In the *Cartas Reservadas* he described for the crown the general and specific strengths and weaknesses of New Spain as he saw them.<sup>60</sup> He especially emphasized the tendency of the orders in the mission fields, as in New Mexico, to be somewhat recalcitrant in accepting royal authority. He pointed out the weakness of not having direct control over the far-flung colony and sought a solution.<sup>61</sup> The *Cartas Reservadas* show a man with the interest and ability to perform a general overhaul of the viceroyalty for the crown. Nothing escaped his consideration: the condition of the fleet, the use of the patronato, the state of the missions, the honesty of the oidores and fiscales, and the abuses of the alcades mayores. To deny the administrative skill of Palafox by saying that he was "incapable of ruling" vastly underrates a man who had spent eleven years on the Council of the Indies and was decano, or senior member, when he was nominated for the bishopric of Puebla.<sup>62</sup> Even before he was sent to New Spain he had possessed an intimate knowledge of royal government. In the pastoral administration of Puebla he must be credited with a vast building program which included the repair or the construction of schools, hospitals, and chapels.<sup>63</sup> Above all, in accord with the wishes of the crown, he finished the construction of the cathedral in the space of nine years.<sup>64</sup> Indeed the cathedral of Puebla, the second largest in Mexico, was the first to receive the dignity of consecration in 1649, because of the diligence and work of the bishop in seeing that it was completed.<sup>65</sup>

"Ignorant men filled the doctrinas,"<sup>66</sup> charged the Jesuits and Franciscans. This is harsh criticism, and Palafox's lawyer included

<sup>60</sup> *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación*, II (May-June 1931), "Cartas reservadas del Obispo Palafox al Rey," 507 ff.

<sup>61</sup> This aspect has been covered in the work of France V. Scholes, *Church and State in New Mexico, 1610-1650* (Albuquerque, 1937). See also, *Archivo General de Indias, Seville* (microfilm facsimile in the Library of Congress), Patronato, Legajo 244, Ramo 7; also, Cummins, "Palafox," 359.

<sup>62</sup> He was twenty-six when given his first post in government and was only thirty-nine when he was elevated to the bishopric. It would lead one to suspect that he had some ability, especially considering his appointment as visitor.

<sup>63</sup> García, *Palafox*, 58.

<sup>64</sup> *Archivo General de la Nación, México*, Reales cédulas originales, II, July 14, 1643; December 30, 1644. See also Mariano Echeverría y Veytia, *Historia de la fundación de la Ciudad de la Puebla de los Angeles* (México, 1931); Manuel Toussaint, *La Catedral y la Iglesia de Puebla* (México, 1954).

<sup>65</sup> The work on the cathedral had been suspended in 1618. The best source for any discussion of the cathedral is Antonio C. Tamariz de Carmona, *Relación y descripción del templo real de la ciudad de la Puebla de los Angeles en la Nueva España, y su Catedral* (c. 1651).

<sup>66</sup> Campbell, *Jesuits*, 222.

in his brief lists showing that the new holders of the doctrinas were educated men, well versed in the native languages.<sup>67</sup> The pastoral letter that Palafox gave to the diocese laid down the rules by which new curas would be governed.<sup>68</sup> They were rules which echoed the *Recopilación*. No priest could take a benefice unless he knew the native language of the area well enough to preach the gospel and hear confession in it.<sup>69</sup> Palafox admonished his clergy to live a good, holy life and to act charitably toward the former holders of the doctrinas, the Franciscans.<sup>70</sup> To claim that ignorant men took over the missions is unfair to Palafox, for it is clear that he was interested in reform and well versed in the laws that governed New Spain. And he was one of the first bishops to visit his entire diocese in order to see that all was well, especially in the missions.

Like most of the bishop's actions his attempts at reform aroused much censure. An especially good example of this criticism comes from the Jesuit historian of the Church in Mexico, Mariano Cuevas.<sup>71</sup> In discussing the bishop's contribution to Puebla, Cuevas loses all perspective. He minimizes Palafox's role in the construction of the seminary: "There is certainly no reason (unless one refers solely to its endowment) to call Palafox the founder . . . of a seminary which was erected by the entire Church of Puebla."<sup>72</sup> He also depreciates the bishop's contribution to the library: "And there is little reason to call a library 'Palafoxian' which contains only fifty volumes of the above-mentioned gentleman."<sup>73</sup> One author, a priest himself, has pointed out reasonably that Cuevas should not be considered an infallible historian of the Church in Mexico.<sup>74</sup> Palafox did in fact build the seminary. He realized the needs of the diocese of Puebla for secular clergy from the very start of his episcopacy. In accord with the wishes of the Council of Trent, with which he was so united in spirit, he asked for permission from the crown to build a seminary. At the same time he warned that there were groups who opposed such a step.<sup>75</sup> Though his predecessor had received a donation for the construction of a seminary, nothing had been done. In his brief of ap-

<sup>67</sup> *Alegaciones en favor del clero* (1650?).

<sup>68</sup> Palafox, *Obras*, III, part 1, *Carta pastoral II*, 161 ff.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-162.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 134. See also, "Cartas reservadas," 521-530.

<sup>71</sup> Mariano Cuevas, *Historia de la Iglesia en México* (México, 1928), III, 283-312.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Nicanor Quiroz y Gutiérrez, *Historia del seminario palafoxiano, 1644-1944* (Puebla, 1947), 58-59.

<sup>75</sup> Palafox to Philip IV, September 27, 1641.

proval Innocent X made no note of the previous gift, pointing out that the building was supported out of diocesan funds.<sup>76</sup> As for the donation of the books to the library, Cuevas was wrong in writing that Palafox had donated only fifty books. It was endowed with approximately five thousand books by the bishop, and no historian but Cuevas has seen fit to doubt this.<sup>77</sup>

While Cuevas followed the usual pattern of denunciation of Palafox because of the disputes over jurisdiction and the tithe, it was his concluding statements about the bishop which were the most rash. Concerning the attempts at beatification for the bishop, he wrote: "There is no doubt that the opposition had its effect. But more than that the beatification of Palafox remained and shall remain suspended forever, because His Excellency had the misfortune to be sympathetic toward Masons, Jansenists and even Protestants."<sup>78</sup> An examination of the *Obras* shows Palafox to be anything but sympathetic to those groups. Cuevas evidently did not know the *Obras* or he would have seen the constant references by Palafox to the faith as one, pure, and holy. The Jesuits, especially those in Spain, have always called those who do not agree with them Jansenists.<sup>79</sup>

In one particular work, the *Diálogo político*, Bishop Palafox devoted much space to a debate between two hidalgos on why Spain was so content, although living in a world divided by religious wars and other dissensions.<sup>80</sup> The answer was always that the Catholic faith preserved and unified Spain, from the monarch to the peasant. In his great spiritual work, *El Pastor de Nochebuena*, he revealed a reverence for the Church and the desire to attain greater spiritual strength within it.<sup>81</sup> A recent commentator has described his character as seen through this writing: "This is his finest work"; and he stressed Palafox's "exemplary holiness, his heroic virtue, his great perfection, his ascetic penitence, his mystic prayer, his episcopal laboring, his untiring apostolate, his righteous death, so dear to the eyes of the Lord."<sup>82</sup> To dismiss the contribution of Palafox in the spiritual order

<sup>76</sup> *Bullarium Diplomatum*, IV, 571 ff.

<sup>77</sup> Echeverría y Veytia, *Historia*, II, 572: "Hizo donación a los Colegios de San Pedro, San Pablo . . . de su libería, compuesta de cinco mil cuerpos poco mas o menos. . . ." Also the librarian told the author that it was around 7000, but we will never know for sure.

<sup>78</sup> Cuevas, *Historia*, III, 337.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Herr, *The Eighteenth Century Revolution in Spain* (Princeton, 1958), 14-18.

<sup>80</sup> Palafox, *Obras*, X, *Diálogo político*, 54.

<sup>81</sup> Venerable Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, *El Pastor de Nochebuena* (Madrid, 1959).

<sup>82</sup> José M. García Lahiguera, "Introduction," *El Pastor de Nochebuena*, 24.

and to deride generally his overall contribution to the Church in Mexico as Cuevas did seems somewhat myopic.

Palafox was an enigmatic figure, it is true, and his curious autobiography, the *Vida interior*, reveals little about the man. An assessment of Palafox's historical role is difficult. Perhaps no definitive answer can be given concerning his quest for reform in the colony and his problems with the Jesuits. Yet certain aspects of his career, when viewed with hindsight, appear quite clearly. His character was at odds with the seventeenth-century civil and ecclesiastical malaise. His vigor in seeking reform in both spheres shows an able administrator for the seventeenth century, but one who was not prepared to cope with the combined opposition of colonial officialdom. It was that opposition which negated many of his actions.

While the conflict with the Jesuits seems to have been the dominant theme of his tenure as bishop, the other areas in which he was interested and involved should not be neglected. He was a man capable of governing the colony as viceroy and carrying out the royal wishes as visitor in reforming the missions and Church. His vast building program in Puebla, highlighted by the construction of the cathedral, and his concern for seminaries, hospitals, and churches clearly marked him as a man interested in the material progress of the Church in New Spain. In addition, his interest in the spiritual welfare of the people, the clergy, and above all, the Indians, as reflected in his pastoral letters, merits serious consideration for him as a second Las Casas.

The religious orders, in particular the Jesuits, opposed the reforms which Palafox was charged with accomplishing. His failure was not due primarily to any internal weakness on his part—since he had been well trained in the intricacies of royal government—but rather to the external stress that the Spanish empire was undergoing. By 1641 the Hapsburg monarchy was in a state of incipient decay, and the best administrator would have had difficulties in attempting to solve its financial, political, and economic problems.

If Palafox had been successful in checking the power of the orders, especially the Jesuits, he might well have laid the base for far-reaching reforms, and perhaps the Jesuits could have avoided the traumatic experience of being expelled from the empire in 1767. Whatever can be recorded about Palafox, he tried to be a good servant to both crown and Church, but in attempting to serve both masters he failed to realize their incompatible interests, for each considered the world from its particular viewpoint. Each sought its own goals. Historians

examining the controversy between the Jesuits and Bishop Palafox should seek to avoid a polemic or apologia for either side. Neither should they limit the quarrel to Puebla or to New Spain. Instead they should try to reassess and reappraise one of the most interesting struggles of the seventeenth century in the light of the crisis of the whole empire.