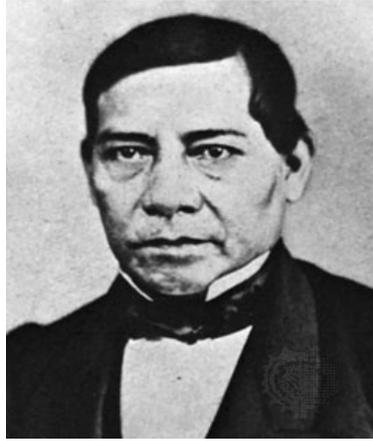


Benito Juarez, Reformist President



Juarez served as state legislator for Oaxaca, and then its Governor from 1847-52; appointed federal Minister of Justice in 1855; became the President of the Supreme Court (and ex officio Vice President of the country). In 1858, executive power was granted to him by a rump congress at Querétaro. After leading the reformist forces to victory, he won elections to the Presidency in 1867 & 1871.

Reforms of his party

Juarez Law (1855) restricted the power of Catholic Church courts to religious issues

Lerdo Law (1856) forced the Catholic Church to sell land not used for specifically religious purposes; forced public lands (including from native Indian communities) to be sold to individuals
Constitution of 1857-- placed the army under the control of the President and Congress; provided a bill of rights; titles of nobility not recognized; refused to grant special status to the Catholic Church.

Reform Wars (1858-61)

- Plan of Tacubaya—opposed the Constitution of 1857 and called for a new one. This Plan was supported by the Roman Catholic Church.
- Coup led by General Zuloaga, who entered Mexico City and took over the government. Juarez placed under house arrest for 9 days.
- In the fighting that broke out, despite initial losses, the Reformist camp won.

War against the Emperor Maximilian & the French

- French troops land in 1861 when Juarez announced a two year moratorium on debt payments
- Victory at Puebla, 5 May 1862, by reformist forces
- Maximilian signs Treaty of Miramar with the French, and lands in Mexico; ultimately ruling as a moderate Emperor
- 1865—Juarez chased to US border
- 1866—Napoleon III announced a withdrawal of French troops (left Mexico in March 1867)
- May 1867—imperialist forces surrounded at Querétaro, with Maximilian executed in June

Postwar Problems

After 10 years of war, Mexico was still heavily indebted, unable to give a pension to its victorious soldiers. Juarez ran for re-election in 1871 and won. General Porfirio Diaz openly rebelled in 1871 when he lost the election that year. Juarez died in 1872 of a heart attack while working at his desk in the National Palace. Juarez was succeeded by Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, who tried to continue Juarez' policies, but failed to contain Diaz in his own quest for power.