



**La revolución espiritual de Madero.  
Documentos inéditos y poco conocidos**

(Madero's Spiritual Revolution. Unpublished and Little Known Documents)

Manuel Arellano Zavaleta, compiler  
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"Your triumph will be brilliant," a spirit said to Francisco I. Madero, December 5, 1908, "And it will have incalculable consequences for our dear Mexico...We have already told you that General Díaz will be tremendously impressed. It will cause him real panic and his panic will paralyze or subvert all his efforts." Madero had become a medium in late October 1900. He was the organizer and president of the San Pedro Spiritualist Circle and its most advanced and constant medium. Many historians or history aficionados will already know that the "Apostle of Democracy," the architect of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, spoke to spirits, a distinguished spiritualist, seriously interested in theosophy and parapsychology, who fostered his mystical, philosophical beliefs above all through the publication of his and others' books. Few of us, however, had had access to the spirits' communications, written in the hand of Madero himself. The book *La revolución espiritual de Madero* (Madero's Spiritual Revolution) is revealing in that it

transforms—if not radically, substantially—our ideas about the "Mystic of Freedom" and therefore about the Maderista Revolution, that was, as the reader knows, the first of a series of revolutions and revolts that occurred between 1910 and 1929.

With this annotated, commented compilation of unpublished or little known documents, Professor Manuel Arellano Zavaleta has contributed not only to the enrichment of Mexican history, changing our vision of a social and political movement that explains the twentieth century, but also to the appreciation of the figure of Francisco I. Madero from another, totally heterodox angle.

This is a book that unmasks Madero and definitively destroys the "political prudery" that kept his theological, philosophical concepts and spiritualist experiences hidden away. All prudery is dirty, but political prudery—in contrast with other kinds—contributes to the falsification of history or omitting facts. For example, a curious fact is that at the age of 30 (at the end of 1903), Madero made contact with Guadalajara's "Travelers of the Earth Circle" in which some members of the future Youth Athenaeum group like Luis Castillo Ledón, Marcelino Dávalos and Jorge Enciso, already participated. This enriches our image of these three members of the Athenaeum.

But the central part of the book is made up of Madero's ideals, democratic ideals that emerge amidst the wave of adversities arising from the suffocating Porfirio Díaz regime: the absence of a rule of law, terror, a press sold to the regime, the situation Turner describes in his *Barbarous Mexico*. If Madero's key work, *La sucesión presidencial de 1910* (The Presidential Succession of 1910), changed the course of Mexican history, the previously unpublished documents in *Madero's Spiritual Revolution* shows without subterfuges the gradual metamorphosis of Madero himself as an ideologue and as a man, a man who grew spiritually, just as his communications with the spirits also became more and more political to the point of gestating the democratic ideals of someone who belonged, paradoxically, to one of the richest landowning families of the *porfiriato*. This is a book that reminds us that the so-called "transition to democracy" was fostered by Madero in his time, under José Vasconcelos' slogan, "Effective suffrage; no reelection," a motto that implied democracy as a principle of political legitimation.

The book's introduction, written by Jaime Muñoz, is a brief description of the history of democracy, from the Greeks' unjust slave regime in which only free males participated, to

the modern idea of liberal democracy, the true focus to explain the emergence of an ideologue like Madero. Almost 100 years later, and in the profound ideological crisis we are experiencing, it is only just that we remember that one of the men to whom Mexico owes most in matters of democracy was the idealist spiritualist Madero.

The book is divided into three parts, all commented by Professor Arellano: the "spiritualist communications" (from 1901 to 1908), the "spiritualist manual" and the commentaries on the sixth-century-B.C. Indian philosophical poem, the *Bhagavad-Gita*. These commentaries were, in fact, published by Madero in the magazine *Espírita Helios* in 1912 and early 1913. Madero was a reader of the theosophist Helena Blavatsky (*Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*) but he also turned the *Bhagavad-Gita* into his spiritual guide, among other reasons, because in this ancient poem, Krishna

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(one of the names in Hinduism for "universal soul") gives the hero Arjuna the courage to fight the war against the enemy, despite the fact that among them are his relatives and friends, because that is his duty (his *dharma*) as a soldier.

*Madero's Spiritual Revolution* includes most of his communications with the spirits, contained originally in several notebooks: the only ones missing are from 1905 and 1906. Madero's brother Raúl, who died in childhood, is the spiritual protector and guide of the future revolutionary. Later, in 1906, another spirit, named José, makes his appearance. José is more reflexive and energetic: "Arm yourself with unbreakable determination," he tells Madero on one occasion. "Not for a single moment must you stop thinking about the grievous consequences that any weakness will bring you." It was this spirit who prepared him to launch the political struggle since, as Professor Arellano writes, "His participation was determined by a divine plan in which he was told he must struggle to transform the injustice and inequal-

ity Mexicans suffered that originated in the tyranny of the dictatorial government of General Díaz." In other words, our revolution was fostered by a spirit of one José, who, as a guide, encouraged Madero to fight. And it was that spirit who urged him to write *The Presidential Succession of 1910*, as is evidenced by the communications from 1907 to 1909. It is understandable, then, that Madero launched the political struggle for democracy with the total security and assurance of victory, since Providence itself had picked him for the mission. It is interesting to note how the spirit reproached him for not having written a protest with more data and more "fire": "We will be at your side when you do the deed...The result of this protest will not seem so great, but in reality it will cause a profound impression throughout the Republic and will prepare the way very well for your planned book [*The Presidential Succession*] and in general for the campaign you are preparing." Later, it concludes, "However, it will produce a great deal of to-do; the vast majority of the newspapers will publish it; there will be other similar protests; General Díaz will be furious with you; but all those who surround him will be delighted and will respect you increasingly."

Was it weakness that made Madero invent "protecting" spirits? Was it an excess of idealism that made him feel "predestined" to change history? Was his personality—dedicated to a great extent to spiritualist sessions—the most appropriate for carrying forward the revolutionary quest? Was it an excess of idealism and hope in the future or perhaps deep fear that made him resign the presidency a few days before being assassinated by Victoriano Huerta's thugs in 1913? Jalisco-born ex-Athenian Luis Castillo published an article in 1942 entitled "Madero previó y aceptó su sacrificio" (Madero Foresaw and Accepted His Sacrifice). Why, then, did he resign the presidency, which meant that his assassination was not the murder of a head of state?

Madero the revolutionary—a hero for official history; a coward to others; weak and idealistic for still others—is one of the most controversial figures in Mexican history. Without a doubt, *Madero's Spiritual Revolution* contributes to revealing an almost unknown facet of Madero that we have never been taught about, a Madero hidden by filthy political prudishness: the spiritual Madero.

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