

the mayor of Mexico and Supreme Court judges and to hand-pick his successor.¹² Congress and the Supreme Court typically served as loyal extensions of presidential will and processed presidential initiatives.

Second, **revolutionary nationalism** was the ideology that underpinned the new system of governance. Based on the Constitution of 1917, it prescribed a strong interventionist role for the state in the economy and advocated social equality and justice. It promoted a secular state and education at the expense of the traditionally powerful role of the Catholic Church. The nationalist component of the ideology consisted of inward-oriented, protectionist economic policies and anti-American sentiment. The extensive agrarian reform and nationalization of the petroleum industry during the 1930s by then President Lázaro Cárdenas were characteristic of revolutionary nationalism.¹³

Third, a **social contract** underwrote the new order. In exchange for their political support for and acquiescence to the party and its leadership, Mexico's workers and peasants were guaranteed a share of the fruits of economic growth. The contract originated in the egalitarian spirit of the 1917 Constitution and in the efforts to rally disparate social forces under the banner of the new party.

Fourth, the major interest groups in the nascent party were organized according to **corporatism**. The five original corporatist groups were business, labour, peasants, public sector employees and the military.¹⁴ The leaders of these sectors were important members of the party and government. This system of interest representation provided an important communication link between the party executive and the grassroots, allowing the party "to keep its ear to the ground" and impose its control over a large segment of society. It also reinforced the social contract: as the officially-recognized representative for each sector, each corporatist organization and its leadership would receive benefits for endorsing party policies.

¹²The crucial presidential prerogative of hand-picking his successor has come to be known as the "*dedazo*" (finger-pointing) or "*destape*" (unveiling).

¹³Between 1934 and 1940, Cárdenas' government founded some 180,000 "*ejidos*" or agrarian communities, distributing some 46 million hectares to 750,000 families. See Alan Riding, *Distant Neighbours*, 53-4.

¹⁴The military was later eliminated as a corporatist sector, although in practice it continued to be loyal to the party.