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## From Sucre to the 'Big Apple': Roberto Berdecio and the Vanished Murals of 13th Street

Peter A. Stern, *University of Massachusetts - Amherst*



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## **“From Sucre to the ‘Big Apple’: Roberto Berdecio and the Vanished Murals of 13<sup>th</sup> Street”**

**Peter Stern**  
**University of Massachusetts, Amherst**

“The cultural panoply of the Mexican Revolution conjures up a series of images—artist Diego Rivera’s swarthy workers hoisting the red flag of the strike; his depiction of the sumptuous marketplace in Moctezuma’s capital, Frida Kahlo’s Tehuantepec costumes and her incantation of Aztec fertility symbols, gaunt peasants hauling cannon across the stark desert in José Clemente Orozco’s murals, and José Vasconcelos’s flamboyant crusade for education.”<sup>1</sup> These words summarize a whole cultural and artistic movement which flourished between the end of the Mexican Revolution and the outbreak of the Second World War, when, in the words of Helen Delpar, “The Enormous Vogue [for] Things Mexican” captivated artists, radicals, intellectuals, and “cultural tourists” the world over.<sup>2</sup>

It would not be an exaggeration to propose that many of the people who flocked to Mexico shared a common social, cultural and political “vocabulary” which encompassed such elements as modernism in art and literature, leftist or Marxist political views, and codes of personal morality which were defiantly anti-bourgeois. One traveler who came to Mexico to share in its revolutionary culture and to participate in the muralist movement was Roberto Guardia Berdecio.

Berdecio was born in Sucre, Bolivia in 1910; his father was a diplomat, lawyer, and writer. Among Berdecio’s papers at the Bancroft Library is a document entitled “Education and Professional Background,” which by its context was written during his New York period, or around 1936-1937. He relates that in 1923 he began his artistic education in Buenos Aires, but financial difficulties obligated him to withdraw from school. He appears to have worked in a bank for some four years, but two years later he was able resume his studies at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, and in 1927 he entered the Academy of Fine Arts in La Paz.<sup>3</sup> Helga Prignitz-Poda, however, states that in terms of painting he was an “autodidact”; (i.e., self-taught).<sup>4</sup>

Berdecio returned to his homeland, where he had his first exhibition in 1929, in a one-man show in La Paz. In a short article on Berdecio from 1940, the period of his greatest fame and activity in the United States, it was related that the artist traveled “through the Andes down to the jungles in Brazil. In his travels through Cuzco, Manchu [sic] Pichu, Tihuanaco, he studied Inca archaeology and Colonial architecture. From Bolivian and Peruvian landscapes, one accounts for the transparent quality in his own landscapes and the elaboration of detail in textures for which his work is so well known.”<sup>5</sup> In a short, one-paragraph biography printed on TGP (*Taller de Gráfica Popular*) letterhead, Berdecio noted that his long journeys brought him closer to the people, particular [Bolivia’s] indigenous peoples.<sup>6</sup>

In 1934 Berdecio moved to Mexico. Many years later he stated that he left Bolivia and traveled to Mexico in search of other horizons and because of the interest which the Mexican pictorial movement awakened in him.<sup>7</sup> He quickly joined the LEAR, the *Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios*, an explicitly political cultural organization of artists, musicians, writers, and other intellectuals, which had been formed the same year by some 30 individuals, including Leopoldo Méndez, Pablo O'Higgins, Luis Arenal, and Juan de la Cabada. The LEAR rather grandly delineated its principles as combating the culture of fascism, imperialism, war, and internal reaction inside Mexico. The LEAR designated itself the Mexican section of the International Union of Writers and Revolutionary Artists, an organization which had been formed to celebrate the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. This apparently was more of a reflection of the LEAR's desire to link itself with an international organization than a real and official tie; apparently even after a year, the LEAR had not been able to establish contact through the mails with the international organization.<sup>8</sup>

The LEAR published a seminal journal in Mexican cultural history, *Frente a frente*, a *revista* which showcased a brand of politics rather indistinguishable from the official line of the Mexican Communist Party ( *El Partido Comunista Mexicano* or *PCM*), examples of "revolutionary" art, and a vigorous suspicion of the incoming administration of Lázaro Cárdenas. Inasmuch as the PCM had been outlawed by *El Lider Máximo*, Plutarco Elías Calles' successor, Emilio Portes Gil in 1929, and many of its member murdered, jailed, or exiled, the LEAR was understandably wary of anyone designated as President of the Republic by Calles.<sup>9</sup>

Berdecio arrived in Mexico at a turning point in its history. After almost a decade of what is called *El maximato* (after Calles, *El Lider Máximo*), a startling 360 degree turn was about to occur in Mexican politics and society. Lázaro Cárdenas was totally unlike his predecessors; he would, in the opinion of many historians, "redeem" the promise of the Mexican Revolution during his *sexenio*, from 1934 to 1940. Unafraid of the word "socialist" in regard to policies ranging from agrarian reform to education to the arts, Cárdenas sought peace (or at the very least, a wary truce) with the far left. He allowed the PCM to regroup and emerge from the underground in which it had dwelt.

*Frente a frente*, which appeared for several dozen issues between 1934 and the LEAR's dissolution in 1939, initially regarded Cárdenas and his *Plan sexenal* as "social fascist." Gradually, as the nature of the Cárdenas government became clearer, and particularly after the Comintern decreed the end of isolation and the formation of broad "Popular Front movements" in 1935,<sup>10</sup> the LEAR grew less hostile to the government. Four notable strands are distinguishable in *Frente a frente's* philosophy: a fierce anti-fascism at home and abroad, support for the Spanish Republic, admiration for modernism in all the arts, and an unwavering and uncritical admiration for the Soviet Union.

There is little information available on Berdecio's activities in Mexico after he arrived in 1934. He is said to have executed or participated in creating several political murals. The next year, he served as recording secretary (*secretaría de actas*) in an accord between two of *los tres grandes*, following the great Siqueiros-Rivera debate of August,

1935, in the Palacio de Bellas Artes, He was “nombrado por ambos,” indicating that both men named him, presumably as a fair (though hardly impartial) party, to record the subsequent written manifesto.<sup>11</sup>

The following year, 1936, was a watershed one for Berdecio. He was again nominated by his fellow artists to be part of a Mexican delegation to an international artists congress in New York City.

Following the meeting of the American Writers’ Congress in 1935, a call went out in the radical publication *Art Front* in November of 1935 for a Congress against Fascism and War and for the Defense of Culture.<sup>12</sup> The themes to be explored in the conference resonated with the Mexicans. Artists’ incomes and commissions had dwindled during the world economic crisis; government-sponsored art projects gave only temporary employment to a small fraction of artists. The artist also faced a constant attack against his freedom of expression. “Rockefeller Center, the Museum of Modern Art...the Coit Memorial Tower in San Francisco...in these...suppression, censorship, or actual destruction of art works has occurred....”<sup>13</sup>

The call continued: “Oaths of allegiance of teachers, investigations of colleges for radicalism, sedition bills aimed at the suppression of civil liberties, discrimination against the foreign-born, against Negroes, the reactionary Liberty League and similar organizations, Hearst journalism, etc., are daily reminders of fascist growth in the United States.”<sup>14</sup> Only through collective action could artists defend their interests and fight against what fascism had wrought in Italy and Germany.

The LEAR was invited to send a Mexican delegation to New York. On January 23, the LEAR called for an “artists’ assembly” to nominate delegates to travel to New York, and to discuss the bases for a planned presentation entitled “El arte y los artistas en México.”<sup>15</sup> *Frente a frente* reported on this meeting, declaring it a success in its intent, despite the fact that many important artists were absent, and that the Departamento de Bellas Artes first OK’d the meeting in the Teatro Orientación, and then refused permission to meet there. Nor were the discussions on war, fascism, the teaching of art, imperialism, as wide as may have been wished. Still, declared *Frente a frente*, the assembly was important because artists who worked in different media, from different political shades, or were frankly apolitical, approved a general front against fascism, imperialism, reaction, and war. The name of the Mexico’s most famous artists (Diego Rivera) does not appear in the column at all.<sup>16</sup>

Included in the delegation were David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, Roberto Bedecio, Luis Arenal, Rufino Tamayo and Juan Bracho. The delegation was received with thunderous applause from fellow artists in New York. The Mexicans had chosen Orozco to give their address (although the text bears the stamp of Siqueiros).

The thrust of the Mexican delegation’s argument was that although art was a commodity, subject like all others to the fluctuations of the market, it should not be a luxury enjoyed only by a privileged minority. Here Orozco and his fellow *learistas* echo,

somewhat less stridently, the sentiments of the Syndicate (of Artists, Sculptors, and Technical Workers) in 1923. Orozco stressed that the organization of artists in unions and the relationship of these groups with all working-class organizations was the key to their plan of action. They presented a detailed plan of action for discussion by the other delegates.<sup>17</sup>

Their actions outside of the Congress were even more fruitful. An exhibition of Mexican art was held in the Gallery of American Contemporary Art, during which Siqueiros spoke of the Workshop-School of the LEAR. More exhibitions were hosted by the American Artists' School and the Workers' Bookshop. Siqueiros appeared with the two CPUSA presidential and vice-presidential candidates, Browder and Ford, in a play on Latin America's colonial status. Others produced graphics for the League Against War and Fascism, the journals *New Masses* and *Art Front*.

As a delegate to the artists' congress, Berdecio delivered a lecture at the New School for Social Research in which he outlined his conception of the evolution of Mexican art over the previous decades. In this fascinating address, he strongly echoes his master, Siqueiros, and encapsulates the position of the LEAR on where Mexican art stood two decades after the Revolution.

"To speak about Mexican Art is to speak about the Mexican people, about their long and dramatic struggle for liberation." Berdecio divided 20<sup>th</sup>-century Mexican art into three phases: The initial or romantic period of a folklore character, which began in 1911; the utopian revolutionary period, of a nationalistic character, which began in 1922; and the period of theoretical corrections and revisions, which Berdecio said began in 1935. It was only when artists participated in the Revolution, he stated, when they saw the feudal haciendas, recognized the injustices with which the *campesinos* had been afflicted, that they began to leave their academic ideas behind:

"Their contact with the Indian soldiers who come from the furthest corners of the countries, yakis, juchitechos, mayos, mayas, etc. forever destroy the lies that they were taught in the school; lies which defend the government's war against the Indians by libels that slandered the natives as sadistic savages, occupied only with loot and murder.

That group of young bohemians, artists of the city, by their contact with the struggle, with victory and defeat, with death and gaiety, with blood and brothels, with soldiers, workers, peasants, Indians and artisans, lose the prejudices of their class. They come to love the things the people love. They acquire their taste. They speak their language. They participate in the keenness of their wit and they enjoy the subtlety of the peoples' clear and energetic thinking.

Living in the great drama of Mexico, they become more genuine and more human. Military campaigning shows them every inch of the country; shows them the rotting huts of the workers built with their own hands in the industrial centers; above them the sandy deserts and the snow topped mountain ranges; shows them the tropics and the cool plateaus, the plains. The mountains, the land and the sea.

In this way they transcend the typical geographical limitations of the pettybourgeoisie of the city and acquire a profound sense of the universal beauty of nature.

They can fill their eyes with the architectural wonders, built by the Aztecs and they can realize the outrageous vandalism of the Conquistadores who destroyed them. Throughout this entire period the students have ceased all art activity. But instead, they catch all the vital elements which later will inspire the beginnings of a great muralist movement.

In short, the participation of this group of artists in the military revolutionary fight, gives them a social conviction, a geographic sense, a clear racial appreciation, a knowledge of tradition and the highest and broadest sensitivity to plastic form. It gives to them all that they need to start their work. Between 1917 and 1919 the soldier artists are released from the army.”<sup>18</sup>

Together, artists like Rivera and Siqueiros, with the help of Vasconcelos, create the first folkloric cycle of murals. Later, as first Obregón and then Calles became demagogic, artists like Orozco and Siqueiros break contact with the government. But Rivera continues to work for the government, becoming the official artist of Calles until his downfall, while Siqueiros endures jail and exile. Rivera, says Berdecio, grows fat, fed by the American bourgeoisie.

“During this period in Mexico, a new generation of painters is developing. With a clear revolutionary conscience and correct understanding of the needs of the movement, we organize in 1934 the LEAR, a league of artists, writers, and musicians. This organization includes among its members, the most outstanding intellectuals of Mexico and today it is the axis of the revolutionary cultural movement whose activities are already widely known.” With Siqueiros’ return from Buenos Aires, his debate with Rivera on the role of revolutionary art in the Palace of Fine Arts, the stage is set for artists and intellectuals to organize themselves. “The revolution now advances rapidly under the progressive government of Cárdenas. The constitution of 1917 signed in Queretaro, providing a legal basis for the government’s revolutionary program and which was ignored by the Calles Government is now fully applied. The Cárdenas Government now passes laws to raise the standard of living. The educational campaign is intensified, in which the LEAR plays an [important role].”<sup>19</sup>

Berdecio stayed on in New York after the conference, to assist Siqueiros in running the Siqueiros Experimental Workshop, or SEW. In fact, given Berdecio’s strong English-language skills, he was well-nigh indispensable; one of his first tasks, in a memo with the hand-written note “*Para Berdecio*,” was to translate into English the program of the Workshop.

The Workshop, explained Siqueiros, would support itself economically in the understanding that it was not a primary or initial art school; its members would not be

people interested in acquiring elementary instruction in artistic techniques, but professionals in the plastic arts. Its members should be painters, sculptors, engravers, photographers, cinematographers, architects, etc.<sup>20</sup>

Laurence Hurlbart has written extensively on the SEW;<sup>21</sup> here it is sufficient to note that its most famous alumnus was Jackson Pollack (whose early work shows quite clearly the influence of both Siqueiros and Orozco). Other attending and assisting were Luis Arenal, Antonio Pujol, Axel Horr, Sande McCoy, George Cox, Louis Ferstadt, and the sculptor Harold Lehman. Together they produced a float (for a May Day parade) which reflected the radical political outlook of many of the Workshop attendees and assistants.

In the spring of 1937 Siqueiros departed for Spain to fight for the Republic. Berdecio remained behind. (In a videotaped interview made in Austin in 1992, about four years before his death, he said that he'd been having a romantic liaison with a dancer from the Martha Graham Dance Company in New York.) An article in the Mexican paper *El Nacional* from September, 1939, related that Berdecio remained in New York experimenting with new methods and techniques in art, including the air spray gun for painting, nitrocellulose paints (which Siqueiros had long been using in his murals), and new theories of perspective, which involved kinetics and dynamics which permitted the spectator to view an artwork from any angle without distorting its forms.<sup>22</sup>

In 1938 he began work on a project for the Worker's Library in New York City. It was not to be a fresco, permanently installed on a wall, but rather several movable murals painted on board, rather like Diego Rivera's series of murals collectively entitled *Portrait of America*, which he executed at the New School for Social Research after the fiasco at Rockefeller Center in 1933.

Berdecio chose as his theme the metropolis itself; the two panels were entitled "Two Portraits of New York," and they were unveiled on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1939, at the Delphic Studios at 44 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street. The Delphic Studios, of course, had long had a relationship with José Clemente Orozco's work. The panels were pressed-wood, measuring 6x14 and 6x16 respectively. Their differing dimensions are due to the deliberate distortion of perspective which Berdecio painted.

At the opening of "Two Portraits of New York," Berdecio, through a Delphic Studio pamphlet, addressed what he felt were key points about his work. Under 'Antecedents,' he cited the critical analysis of the School of Paris, the Mexican movement of "painting of revolutionary tendency," and the Siqueiros Experimental Workshop, all leading, he wrote, from the experimental stage to the practical, i.e., the work unveiled that night.

As for its contents he wrote, "The salvation of art and the salvation of democratic society are one and the same thing. The "TWO PORTRAITS OF NEW YORK", conceived in this moment of tremendous economic, political, and social crisis, is an integral part of the most contemporary reality. Thus the present work offers the sharpest

contrast to that of the abstractionists, cubists, surrealists and the sentimentalists with a 'social view.'"<sup>23</sup> (Sounds like a slap at Diego Rivera, and even André Breton and Frida Kahlo.)

Under "About Its Form", he simply wrote

NEW MEDIUMS AND TOOLS instead of archaic ones. Medium: nitro-cellulose. Tools: compressor and the mechanical brush.

AN ACTIVE RELATIONSHIP between the painting and *active spectator*.

KINETIC PERSPECTIVE instead of the traditional static perspective.

SUCCESSIVE TRANSFORMATION of plastic forms and of content instead of static fixed compositions. (Gestalt Psychology)

A NEW REALISM IS COMING INTO EXISTENCE; A DIALECTICAL REALISM. A NEW FORM AND A NEW VOCABULARY FOR A NEW, VAST AND DYNAMIC PEOPLE, AN ART WHICH SHALL CORRESPOND TO THIS DYNAMIC CONTEMPORARY WORLD.

On the pamphlet's back cover is printed "The execution of this work has been possible thanks to the collective patronage of one hundred and twenty persons, who have not only given material help, but have participated in the elaboration of these 'Two Portraits' by means of criticism and suggestion."<sup>24</sup> The work, it stated, would be permanently exhibited in the Worker's Bookshop, at 50 East 13<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City. Below, naturally, was the seal of the Allied Printing Trade—Union Label—Council, New York.

In 1992, Berdecio himself admitted that he had no idea where the paintings were; they had disappeared. The address is now occupied by a gym.

The murals themselves are as unsubtle and direct as any of Siqueiros' or Rivera's. Juxtaposed with views of Wall Street and American capitalism are Nazi swastikas, and portraits of the Scottsboro Boys, Sacco and Vanzetti, and labor leader Tom Mooney. Berdecio not only put his radicalism on canvas (in this case, press-board); he also lectured on politics in art.

He spoke at a symposium, "Art and the Popular Front." First he reviewed recent developments such as the Great Rivera-Siqueiros Debate (which revealed Rivera as an opportunist and a Trotskyite, which later resulted in the dethroning of Rivera from his position as the monopolist of Mexican muralist painting). Then he mentioned the LEAR Congress called in Mexico City in January 1937. "The Congress received the full support of the Mexican Government, and President Lázaro Cárdenas himself sent an official representative. The fruits of this cultural revolutionary activity, which give a measure of the progress of the Mexican people, are already well known. Chiefly responsible for



them, in a real sense, are the economic, political and social advances of the workers and peasants movement, which through the Cardenas Government was able to make strides forward. Today these gains are being threatened by a would be Mexican Franco backed by foreign fascist interests. “

“Our meeting together tonight to discuss problems of culture in its relation to politics is not accidental. The progressive people’s movement in the United States is now extending itself into the field of culture in a more organized and conscious manner. Today, American artists are becoming more aware than ever before of the close connection between art and politics. A FREE AND PROSPEROUS PEOPLE MEANS A FREE AND VIGOROUS FLOWERING ART, and the majority of American artists have already shown their realization of this through the “American Artists’ Congress” and by the fact that they have already organized themselves in the United American Artists, a trade union with 2,000 members, that recently has affiliated with the C.I.O. These two organizations guarantee the further development of American art and its defense against attempts by reaction to stultify and pervert it.”

Berdecio went on to ask, rhetorically, “To whom then does surrealism, cubism, abstract art and non-objective art as it is, to whom then does it really belong? Who supports it? The answer was recently published in the newspapers, when it was announced that Solomon Guggenheim, of the Guggenheim Brothers who rode to fortune on the backs of starving Indians in the tin and copper mines of South America, has endowed a foundation whose exclusive function is to encourage the production and appreciation of abstract art. Of course, this foundation will be of small help to the struggling American artist, as abstract as he may be, who has not yet won well publicized recognition. Mr. Guggenheim will only buy goods whose value has been proven in the open market. But let us leave the dying and come back to the living.”<sup>25</sup>

Let us permit the text of a story from the *New York Post* of Thursday, January 19, 1940, speak for itself:

“‘Spray Gun Artist’ Here on Award: Young Mexican Painter ‘Thrilled’ at Chance to Paint 24 Hours Daily.”

Arriving here on a Guggenheim Fellowship: Roberto Berdecio, young Mexican [*sic*] artist, today happily set about being “an artist 24 hours a day.”

“Up to now, I’ve only been an artist once in awhile,” he explained. “One week I’d paint, then I’d have to do something else in order to eat before I could paint again.”

The artist, 29, said he was ‘thrilled and amazed’ to receive the fellowship, which he said he believed was awarded for his development of kinetic perspectives” or “dynamic rather than static perspectives.”<sup>26</sup>

Berdecio thought and wrote a great deal about his ideas on what he termed “kinetics” in art. He had already executed a commission for the Museum of Modern Art

in New York, entitled “Cube Perspective.” As Berdecio’s career developed, he left politicized art behind him and continued to explore new dimensions in perspective.

That he remained at least tangentially involved in politics is shown by a 1956 letter to be found among his archives, in which the National Committee of the National Front of Plastic Arts, asks the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist Party to intervene in a dispute which Siqueiros is provoking among the Front, which is serious enough to threaten the unity of that organization. Interestingly, the portion of the petition which holds the signatories to the letter has been torn away—perhaps deliberately?<sup>27</sup>

But art, not politics, dominated his life post 1940. His future lay not with murals nor with political graphics, but with his own ideas about perspective and movement in art.

Roberto Guardia Berdecio moved fluidly between the nation of his birth, his adopted *patria*, and the capitalist promised land he both loved and excoriated. Speaking not only a fluent English, but also the cultural and political vocabulary of the professional internationalist, his journey typifies the cross-border cultural environment of the Popular Front years, in which he, no less than Modotti, Weston, the Greenwood sisters, Mella, Brenner, and so many others, created their own multinational, multilingual nexus of cultural politics—a nexus which did not survive the end of “The Good War” and the rise of the “Cold” one.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Kay Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> See Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> Bancroft Bedecio papers, MSS 2003.233 Box 1: 3--Autorepresentation and Conversation with Berdecio.

<sup>4</sup> Helga Prignitz-Poda, *El Taller de Gráfica Popular en México, 1937-1977*. Mexico: INBA, 1992, p.282.

<sup>5</sup> “Roberto Berdecio.” *California Arts and Architecture* (October 1940), p.7.

<sup>6</sup> “Biografía—Taller de Gáfica Popular.” Bancroft Bedecio papers, MSS 2003.233 Box 1: 3--Autorepresentation and Conversation with Berdecio.”

<sup>7</sup> “Conversación con Roberto Berdecio.” No place or date; carbon copy of typewritten document. Bancroft Bedecio papers, MSS 2003.233 Box 1: 3--Autorepresentation and Conversation with Berdecio.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.29.

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<sup>9</sup> See Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth Century Mexico*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992, pp.43-45.

<sup>10</sup> Donald L. Herman, *The Comintern in Mexico*. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1974, pp.19-23.

<sup>11</sup> Mimeographed document, with many emendations in ink. No date or place. . Bancroft Berdecio papers, MSS 2003.233 Box 1: 3--Autorepresentation and Conversation with Berdecio.

<sup>12</sup> Stuart Davis, "The American Artists' Congress." *Art Front*, (December, 1935), p.8.

<sup>13</sup> "Call for the American Artists' Congress." Reprinted in *Artists Against War and Fascism: Papers of the First American Artists' Congress*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986, p.47.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Poster, Getty Research Institute, David Alfaro Siqueiros Papers, Accession no.960094, Box 6, folder 3

<sup>16</sup> J. de la Fuente, "La asamblea de artistas en México y el Congreso de Artistas Americanos." *Frente a frente*, Second epoch, no.1 (March, 1936), p.15.

<sup>17</sup> "General Report of the Mexican Delegation to the A.A. Congress," cited in Prignitz, p.39. See also *Artists Against War and Fascism (op cit.)* for a translation of the full text of Orozco's address, pp.203-207.

<sup>18</sup> Berdecio, Roberto. Papers, 1931-1995. BANC MSS 2003/233m  
Box 1: 15 American Artists' Congress. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> GRI, DAS Papers, Accession no.960094; Box 4, folder 38.

<sup>21</sup> See Laurence P. Hurlburt, "The Siqueiros Experimental Workshop: New York, 1936." *Art Journal*, v.35, no.3 (Spring, 1976), pp. 237-246; also Laurence P. Hurlburt, *The Mexican Muralists in the United States*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989.

<sup>22</sup> Newspaper clipping from *El Nacional* (Mexico), dated September 4, 1939. Bancroft-Berdecio papers, MSS 2003/233m, Box 1:4; Newsclippings.

<sup>23</sup> Roberto A Berdecio. "Two Portraits of New York." Delphic Studios pamphlet, New York, 1939.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> "Symposium: Art and the People's Front." No date, but probably 1938 or 1939. Bancroft-Berdecio papers, MSS 2003/233m, Box 1:6, Miscellaneous Documents.

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<sup>26</sup> “Spray Gun Artist here on award.” *New York Post*, Thursday, January 19, 1940. Bancroft-Berdecio papers, MSS 2003/233m, Box 1:4; Newsclippings.

<sup>27</sup> “A la Comisión Política del Partido Comunista de México. Presente.” Bancroft-Berdecio papers, MSS 2003/233m, Box 2, folder 1.